

SPRING THUNDER

THIRD CONFERENCE ISSUE

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ALL INDIA LEAGUE FOR
REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

SPRING THUNDER

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Cover : *Debabrata Mukhopadhyay*

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RUPEES THREE

EDITORIAL

Iron Heel

Things are no better under Rajiv's dispensation than under his mother's. On the contrary, they are worse. What Mrs. Gandhi held out for the people of the Railmen's strike in 1974 assumed an unmistakable shape the very next year, coupled with the populist rhetoric of the 21-point programme the sceptre of Fascism began stalking the land. It was but the political manifestation of the crisis not only in the ruling clique and party but in the ruling class itself. That crisis has been continuing even now, making it necessary for the government of the day to add weapon after lethal weapon to the armoury of repression—NSA, ESMA and the like, capped by the infamous 59th Amendment. No part of the country can now feel itself safe and secure from the threatened proclamation of Internal Emergency, denying to citizens the most basic of rights, viz, the right to life.

The institutions of bourgeois democracy are deliberately being discredited by the very regime whose obligation is to fortify them still further. Not even the Judiciary is being spared. Legislatures have successfully been reduced to little more than rubber-stamps of the overpowerful Executive which is itself bent on shinking as to confine itself to a single individual. Deprived of even the eye-catching facade, the crumbling interior is presenting itself as a sprawling graveyard of a bourgeois liberal complex. Criminalisation of politics and lumpenisation of power-brokers are going hand in hand. The Westminster model of parliamentary democracy has been exhausting itself and hence this naked display of state power.

Even the cultural sphere of the people's life is not free from the incursions by vulgar and ugly elements. Safdar

Hashmi's gruesome murder is a case in point. Com. Vara Vara Rao's prolonged incarceration and com. Gaddar's virtual banishment, the imprisonment of Virendra Vidrohi and Amarjeet Singh Sohi for silly reasons only show to what lengths the present regime can go in the suppression of liberty.

It is becoming more evident with every passing day that people won't take things lying low. Repression engenders resistance. The entire length and breadth of the country is being shaken by any number of struggles. Not all of them are directly linked with the revolutionary upsurge of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. State Terror is being daily challenged in Punjab, even though one may not agree with the Sikh fundamentalists in their frenzied politics of indiscriminate murder. The Jharkhand Movement has taken a turn for the better. The agitation of the Bodos in Assam as much as the apparently successful Gorkha agitation only show that every thing is not as it should be in the body-politic. Casteism and communalism have been challenging the prospects of peace and stability. A storm is gathering.

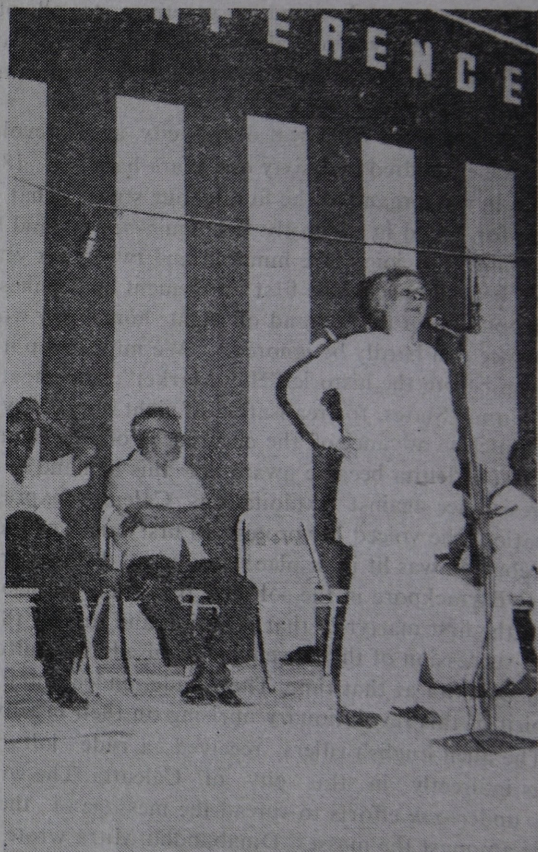
This worsening situation in our public life demands of us all a stronger determination to carry forward our revolutionary struggle in the sphere of culture. We must not only combat the dark forces of the official or Sarkari culture which is composed, as it is, with elements of feudalism and commercialism and decadent imperialism, but also strengthen the emerging forces of people's culture. We must strain ourselves to revolutionise the latter and thus create a climate for the material victory of the New Democratic Revolution.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !
LONG LIVE AILRC !



Revolution has Begun From the Grass Root*

Debabrata Mukhopadhyay



*This was the inaugural speech delivered on the 3rd Conference of AILRC at Calcutta on 28th October, 1988.

Dear Comrades,

At the very outset I extend my greetings to all of you on your auspicious arrival in Calcutta the dear city of ours, the centre of the India's cultural and political awakening in the nineteenth century.

Revolution is the heartbeat of this city, as is revolutionary culture. One hundred and sixty one years back, in 1827, here in this city was organised the first labour strike. That was the struggle for bread in which the palanquin-bearers and boatmen of the Ganga did join. One hundred and twenty six years ago, in 1862 here did occur the first movement and strikes of the daily labourers on the demand of eight hours' day work. Its significance can hardly be ignored. We must keep it in mind that even before the historic "Hay Market" movement of 1886 in the United States, for realisation of eight hours' day demand that is much in advance of the occurrence of the international May Day. Calcutta became aware of this demand at the workers' resistance against exploitation, Calcutta expressed her indignation, she voiced her protest. In first flames of India's first great rebellion was lit in a place not quite distant from this city—at Barrackpore in the soldiers' barracks. Mangal Pandey became the first martyr in that rebellion and that in 1857.

The succession of these events galvanised the cultural workers of Calcutta at that time. They made endeavours to retain the spirit of this revolutionary uprising on their creative activities. The alien English rulers received a rude jolt directly as well as indirectly in this city of Calcutta. The writers and artists undertook efforts to spread the message of these revolutions amongst the masses. Dinabandhu Mitra wrote the play, "Neeldarpan", Hemchandra composed his famous poem "Bharat Gatha", "Bande Mataram", the song to worship the motherland came out of Bankimchandra's pen, the portraits of

Rajput and Maratha heroes were drawn in Rameshchandra's novels. In the well designed cloth stitchings—*Nakshi Kantha* as it is popularly known—composed by women of Khulna and also in the Kalighat *Patas* were painted the pictures of the heroes of these struggles for change of social order.

Along the lives of social consciousness of the predecessors, revolutionary flames were lit in 1905 here in Calcutta again to foil Curzon's effort to partition Bengal. The artists and writers at the time stood by the revolutionary martyrs of this struggle. Rabindranath sang the song of rakshabandhan (bond of communal amity). Abanindranath used his painting brush to worship Mother India. Gaganendranath stood by the revolutionaries with a galaxy of brilliant social and political cut-woods, which became immortal art works. The revolutionary consciousness of those days was given a concrete shape in Mukunda Das's mass theatre yatra. On the stage was abandoned Girish Ghosh's symbolic plays and their places was occupied by 'Durgadas' and 'Alamgir' by Dwijendralal, where the tales of heroes were narrated directly.

At the beginning of the Second World war the artists, poets and writers, the composers, play-wrights, singers and actors were awakened again as the revolution attained its youth. The Anti-Fascist Writers and Artists Association, the Indian People's Theatre Association and the Progressive Writers Association were formed. The hopes and aspirations of the struggling masses received concrete shape in the poems written by Nazrul Islam, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Sukanta Bhattacharya, Jyotirindra Maitra. The people-oriented new play movement was initiated by Bijan Bhattacharya's 'Nabanna'. In the commercial stage too was performed the contemporary people-oriented play, 'Dukhir Iman', written by Tulsi Lahiri and directed by Natyacharya Sisir Bhaduri. In Shilpacharya Nandalal Basu's *pata* were painted such characters as Gandhiji and the toiling masses, workers and peasants, specially prepared for the Haripura Congress. The artists forsook the lure of romanticism and abstraction and became enthused in revolutionary consciousness. Nirode Mazumdar, Rathin Maitra, Subho Tagore, Debiprasad Roychaudhuri, Chittaprasad Bhattacharya, Somenath Hore and such other personalities came

forward to join the stream.

The novelists also joined them in numbers; personalities like Tarasankar, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Narayan Ganguly, Sushil Jana, Nabendu Ghosh, Shanti Bandyopadhyay, Santos Kumar Ghosh, Jyotirmoy Roy etc.

In the field of music there were Debabrata Biswas, Hemango Biswas, Binoy Ray, Salil Chaudhuri, Paresh Dhar and in the dance troupe there were Sakti Nag, Sambhu Bhattacharya, Bulbul Chowdhuri, Santi Bardhan and many others.

In spite of all this the deluge could not be saved. A little before 1947, at the time of the partition of the country, this flame of cultural movement of ours that was kindled time and again with great pains, came to be almost extinguished as it received the shock of communal clashes. The bickerings within the Party shook the foundations of our movement. Almost everything was swept away.

Our unfinished tasks were shouldered by the next generation. They chose the decade of 70's as the decade of liberation. The lively youth throughout the land were organised under the leadership of the old revolutionaries. Charu, Saroj, Sushital and others gave the lead. Saroj's martyrdom encouraged the young revolutionaries. A new batch of cultural workers joined them. Some writers and artists like Samar Sen, Mahasweta Devi, Birendra Chattopadhyay and Sankha Ghosh unhesitatingly became associated with them. An established poet at that time wrote "Chelay gachay Bone". The son has gone to the forest—the lines of that poem still ring in our ears. Ritwik composed the poem of revolution in his film—'Jukti Takko Goppo'. I also tried to the best of my ability to be with them. But this time again we had to stop midway because of confusions in our midst, the decade of liberation, the decade of 70's is a past. Now it is nearing the decade of 90's. But the goal is far away still.

Anyway the left consciousness is on the rise afresh. Though its form is regional, yet under the conscious and correct stewardship the necessary final stage of the revolution of our country will be accomplished. The torch held by the cultural workers assembled here to-day is the guide to revolution.

In my judgement, it should be our task to correctly point out all those mistakes or lapses which did foil our earlier endeavours so as to prevent their recurrence in future. The foremost mistake on our part possibly was that enthused by the success of revolution in our friendly countries, we thought we would be able to accomplish the revolution in our country by copying them in toto. So we raised the cry, "Chairman's China may be attacked". We forgot how to implement the line of protracted people's war. That is why, the revolution in our country could not be hastened.

This time, however, the revolution has begun from the grassroot level, and it is indigenous. The landless agricultural labourers of Bihar and the hungry masses and deprived Adivasis of Andhra Pradesh have rallied themselves in this struggle.

Until now the path is correct, revolution is being organised at a slow pace. With this, the waves of revolutionary culture are again rising in the people's mind. To direct the revolution along the correct course is not only the duty of the soldiers engaged in war but is also the task of the writers, artists and intellectuals assembled here. So it is my request that they should maintain alertness and keep vigil on what goes on so that the past mistakes do not recur; they should fearlessly forewarn the revolutionary fighters and comrades once those dangers are in sight.

Let me remind you Che Guevara's words - "One cannot be an honest revolutionary without being romantic". In Calcutta its last example we find in Saroj Datta. □

Welcome Address

Suniti Kumar Ghosh

Friends and Comrades,

It is my pleasant task to extend to you the warmest welcome on behalf of the Reception Committee of the 3rd conference of the AILRC.

This hall where we are meeting has been rightly renamed for the purpose of the Conference after Com. Subbarao Panigrahi. Com. Panigrahi was one of the foremost revolutionary cultural workers of recent times. He was not unknown to this city. It was in May 1969 that Com. Krishnamurthy brought him here for medical treatment. He was quite ill at that time. Com. Krishnamurthy, on his way back to Srikakulam, was captured and died a martyr's death along with several other comrades. Com. Panigrahi stayed here for some months. At first, his illness responded to treatment. But after some time, there was a relapse. During his stay here we heard from his own lips some of his songs and poems including "We are Communists". A few months after he had felt better and left Calcutta to take an active part in the struggle, the tragic news came that Com. Panigrahi, Com. Nirmala Krishnamurthy and several other comrades had become martyrs. They died so that the people might live lives of freedom. Like them, many other heroes and heroines have laid down their lives for the same cause.

On this occasion I would like to share some of my ideas with you. Please do not think that I am presumptuous enough to give you advice. You who are in the midst of active struggle must be knowing the problems better than I do. Yet I feel tempted to utilise this occasion for an exchange of ideas.

It is true that the reactionary forces seem quite strong today. The enemy is stepping up its offensive against the revolutionary people. Imperialism and Social Imperialism appear to be all powerful in the world today. Counter-revolution has triumphed in China. Like its Russian predecessor, it has been sowing confusion among our people too. But it may be said that though the road is tortuous, the future is indeed bright. Events in the Philipines, Nicaragua and Afghanistan show that U.S. imperialism and Soviet social imperialism are today troubled giants. The inter-imperialist contradictions – contradictions between the USA, Japan, West Germany, the USSR, etc. – are growing sharp. The USA and the USSR, especially the USSR, are being shaken by domestic economic crises. The 'Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee' which Gorbachev placed before the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986 showed how acute was the crisis, economic stagnation, technological backwardness and all pervading corruption. The USSR had restored capitalism, retaining a large part of the socialist facade. Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost are attempts to overcome this contradiction by restructuring the economic and political facade to conform to basic capitalist content. But the new system that is being enforced has already started generating its own crisis. According to reports, price rise and inflation are assuming alarming proportions. High inflation, high and still rising prices and dismaying amount of corruption prevail in China too and the people are, to quote the London Economist, criticising the government, not only for allowing the worst inflation since 1949 but also for breaking their 'iron rice bowl ; with new-tangled ideas of productivity and profit'. It is reported that corruption is at its worst since 1949, that is, when Chiang Kai-shek had fled to Taiwan. The noose of imperialist capital is tightening and the tragic fact is that China is being reduced to a semi-colony. But as Mao Tse tung wrote in a letter to Chiang Ching in 1966, the seizure of power in China by counter-revolutionaries would be resisted by the people and cannot last long. Already discontent is rife among the Chinese people.

In India, about four years ago, the big bourgeoisie continued to build up a hundreds of crores-worth campaign to create the

“Charisma” of an ex-aeroplane pilot, as they had done before in respect of another Gandhi. But where is that charisma today ? The image of Mr. Clean has now been reduced to dust. The images of other Messers Cleans, Hegdes, NTRs, Jyoti Basus, are tumbling down to dust before the eyes of the people. Today the parliamentary practice of all hues—Congress, Janata, Marxist Communist, Socialist and so on, are unmasked. From their own experiences the people can realise two things: first, the leaders of these parties are flunkeys of big native and foreign capital; second, the conflict between them is but a scramble for loaves, fishes and fat commissions.

But as flunkeys of imperialist and comprador capital and feudal elements, these ‘esteemed’ leaders combine to put down the struggles of the people to overthrow this man-killing system. They have reasons to be afraid of. In the days ahead the economic crisis is sure to deepen, and a political crisis which will complete their isolation from the people threatens them. As days pass and as the ballot proves ineffective, they will rely more and more on the bayonet to hold on to power.

No doubt, struggle itself is a great mobilizer of the masses. But to change this night-marish life for a life of freedom and hope, it is necessary that cultural struggle should be an important part of it. At this New Democratic stage of our revolution there must be a new democratic cultural revolution. The greater the revolution in the minds of our people, the greater and quicker will be our success in mobilizing them actively in the struggle to build a new order. Much depends on the army of cultural workers which you represent.

The tasks of the cultural workers are many and they seem stupendous. The influence of revolutionary art and literature on the people is great. Our creative artists have tried to satisfy the people’s hunger for such art and literature. But we expect more from them, art and literature which will truly reflect the people’s life of struggle—their hopes and fears, their strengths and weaknesses, their heroism.

Two things are essential for revolutionary cultural workers: good knowledge of M-L-M Thought and adequate knowledge of the conditions in India. But our knowledge of the conditions in India is far from adequate. A strong Communist Party must

be strong theoretically. But, unfortunately, not much theoretical work has been done. Many theoretical problems concerning Indian conditions like the extent and ways of feudal exploitation in different regions and areas, the various ways in which imperialist capital exercises control over India's economy and politics, the problem of nations and nationalities in the sub-continent, remain mostly unresolved. It is necessary also to study the ideological issues concerning the genesis and growth of revisionism and the process of the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China without studying which we shall not be able to combat the counter-revolutionaries who seek to sow confusion within the ranks of the revolutionary people.

There was a time when leaders of the Communist Party left all theoretical work to be done by others like the leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain. It was a kind of Comprador Communism in which they rebelled. But no comrades of foreign lands can have that intimate knowledge of the specific conditions in India which is possible for Indians to acquire. History of communism furnishes many instances of how interference from the outside in the politics of a Communist Party has done tremendous harm to revolutionary struggle. Without relying on itself for understanding its specific problems and for finding solutions to them, no Communist Party can ever grow and justify its name. It must itself analyse its specific problems and find solutions to them within the general framework of M-L-M Thought. There should be exchange of experiences and ideas between Marxist-Leninist Parties but each party should formulate its own policies in the light of the science of M-L-M Thought. One recalls what Mao told a front of cadres whom Com. Charu Mazumdar had sent to China in late 1967. Mao asked them whether the Chinese Communist leaders had arranged for their education and training. The leaders of this group enthusiastically replied in the affirmative. Mao asked them to forget everything they had been taught when they would cross the border. He asked them to study the problems themselves and formulate their policies on the basis of their own understanding. Mortgaging our brains to others will not help us. Nor will more statements on important issues make any lasting impression.

I believe that the AILRC can accomplish important theoretical work and accomplish it far better than any individual, however gifted, can do, if it undertakes the task. If the league forms teams of cultural workers from different states to study and investigate different problems, much valuable work may be expected of them. Take for instance the issue of feudalism. Study of the classics on the subject, especially the Chinese experience, investigation in different areas and regions mainly with the help of comrades working there, and frequent exchange of ideas and experiences among the members of the team will bring out a wealth of intimate details which no book or report can offer. The results of the investigations should be circulated among all comrades and amended if necessary, before they are published. It is perhaps superfluous to note that the members of the team should have some kind of participation in the anti-feudal struggle, for only such participation can mould their outlook.

I strongly hope that the decisions of this conference will enthuse and provide guidance to revolutionary cultural workers throughout India.

I have taken much of your valuable time. Before I conclude, let me offer you my warmest revolutionary greetings. ☐

General Secretary's Report

3rd Conference of A.I.L.R.C., Calcutta



Comrades and friends,

Three years back we had all met together in a conference in Sindri, Bihar, and we are now holding our 3rd conference in Calcutta.

This great city had once witnessed intense revolutionary unrest among students as a sequel to the Spring Thunder in Naxalbari. It had tasted savage repression and displayed heroic martyrdom in the cause of the New Democratic Revolution. Immortal revolutionaries like Saroj Dutta, Dronacharya Ghosh, Murari Mukhopadhyay, Amiya Chattopadhyay, Timirbaran Sinha, Ashu Mazumdar, Tushar Chanda, Samir Mitra, and Pravir Dutta were themselves writers of note who were done to brutal death in those times of tumult and turmoil. Let us now remember them all before renewing our resolve to follow in their footsteps, to fight like them and even to die like them if need be. Allow me to remind you that it was only to subserve the epochal revolutionary movement that the All-India League for Revolutionary Culture had come to life six years back in the country's capital, New Delhi.

Let us cast a glance at that movement as it stands today. Suffice it to say that it stands today fighting against state terrorism which is increasingly becoming fascist. It stands firm despite eversomany vicissitudes. It certainly is advancing steadily but painfully slowly, pouring out precious blood at every step forward. You are all aware that the agrarian revolutionary struggle is hottest only in a few states though the revolutionary movement is broader in its base and scope in the country. For whatever reason Bihar and Andhra Pradesh are now in the forefront of the struggle, even though their impact could be found on neighbouring states. It is in

these two states that the movement is strongest and it is also here that repression is at its worst.

We have been hearing one harrowing tale after another about atrocities against Dalit agricultural labourers in Bihar. The government apparatus has been spreading terror in Bihar's countryside in collusion with the private 'Senas' of feudal magnates. Caste has been playing a nefarious role in Bihar where society is more semi-feudal in character than elsewhere. There have been massacres of entire families in cold blood at a number of places in Bihar's countryside. But the masses are awake and quick to act, thanks to the splendid leadership that is provided to them. No amount of repression and terror, public and private, has been able to crush their struggles.

Turning to Andhra Pradesh in the south, the revolutionary struggle has reached a new pitch, especially in the northern districts of Telengana. They have recently been witnessing a rising wave of retaliatory actions against State-terror. The people are resisting it as best as they could under the circumstances. The government is being made to feel the pinch and pain so that it is, at times, forced to call for talks with Naxalites, while, on the other hand, continuing its gruesome acts of fake-encounters and lock-up murders against revolutionaries. It is, as it were, a state of war. To be precise, it is a state of undeclared war.

It should not, however, be forgotten that this movement in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh is facing fierce repression at the hands of the state and its minions. In addition to the operation of ever so many black laws such as the Disturbed Areas Act and the Terrorist Act, governments have been indulging in blatantly unlawful methods. Homes and hearths of revolutionary activists are being systematically destroyed, and their relatives are being tortured and harassed. Not even innocent and inoffensive tribals are being spared. Hundreds of tribal hamlets were recently burnt to ashes on mere suspicion of giving shelter and food to the revolutionary armed squads deep in forests. It is a veritable hell in the struggle areas. The presence of police-camps in a number of villages is being felt by the people daily and hourly. Neither property nor limb nor life is safe and secure. The ends of law are being perverted

most callously. Criminal procedure code and penal code are being bent at will. In short, law-lessness is the outstanding characteristic of law-enforcing agencies. This repression has not been sparing even some of us and it is foolish to hope that we will be spared. You all know what has happened to that great people's artist, Gaddar, and his second-in-command, Sanjeevi. Where are they today? Why are they forced to lead a secret existence if not for life and freedom? And what has become of our dear comrade, Varavara Rao? He is being implicated in case after case, all false, so as to keep him behind bars for ever. Com. Rajkishore of Bihar was subjected to harassment while Com. Rambali and Com. Ramvijayakumar Arya of the same state were imprisoned for quite sometime. And you have Com. Sanjay Singhvi of Aavhaan Natya Manch. He is a lawyer by profession and a trade-unionist. The Thane Police could not swallow even trade union activity. They arrested him, beat him in lock-up and then tied him with ropes before parading him in all the bastis of Thane to frighten the people. In Tamilnadu, everytime Rajiv Gandhi visits the state, jails have to be filled with revolutionary activists and sympathisers. It is not a feeling of self-pity that prompts me to cite all these instances. We are only paying the just price for being revolutionary cultural activists. I only say, let us deserve what we have been getting at the hands of a vengeful enemy. We can do this only by devoting ourselves more to the cause of our people and their liberation. But are we doing this? Have we been faithful to the historic movement of our times by projecting their trials and tribulations, struggles and sufferings, death-defying courage and intrepid boldness into the poems and songs, stories and essays, dance and drama that we have been creating? In all honesty, the answer to these questions might not all be positive. It is exactly here that the revolutionary cultural movement will have to exert itself to justify the adjective 'revolutionary' and our further progress as a cultural movement depends upon how satisfactorily we are going to fulfil this task.

Comrades, I feel happy to inform you that AILRC is no longer a fledgeling-association. It is overcoming its teething troubles and expanding its base into new states like Assam,

Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. Let us persist in our attempts to consolidate these new gains and to win new ground in yet other states.

One of the most fruitful of our activities after Sindri was our Madras Seminar on caste and class in August 1987. Almost all our units presented papers, based on conditions in their respective states. It was not a mere academic exercise. We had in mind the actual needs of the revolutionary movement in analysing the socio-economic factors that are at work behind the apparent caste-struggles.

It is a matter of gratification that a fruitful seminar was held on the New Education Policy of the Union Government by PAF and RCM in different parts of Tamilnadu in the course of 1986.

Here I must make a reference to our failure to hold a similar seminar on communalism. We had thought of having it in Hyderabad. But the long absence of Com. Varavara Rao from our midst has come in the way of its implementation. So ANM was requested to organise it in Bombay. I am hopeful that it can do so in October next.

Communalism has long been playing havoc in our social life. It has now assumed a deadlier form known as fundamentalism. No communal group has totally been free from this heady drink. The majority community of Hindus has been falling a prey to its diabolical appeal. This phenomenon is fast becoming all too pervasive. Its presence can be felt as strongly behind a worthless issue like the Ram Janma Bhoomi vs. Babri Masjid controversy in Ayodhya as in the selfdelusive euphoria generated by the TV serial 'Ramayan'. Bal Thackray's fascist outfit, Shiv Sena, has become the willing tool of this fundamentalist line of feeling and doing and its electoral successes in Aurangabad and its surroundings show to what mundane uses this poison could be put by unscrupulous elements in our public life. It evidently thrives on social and cultural backwardness, as evidenced in the Sati of Roop Kunwar and in the subsequent 'Chunri' celebrations in memory of the Sati, in Rajasthan. Other states are not altogether free from this, as it appears that Sati-worship is rampant also in UP and even in West Bengal. The Government did little or

nothing to stem this rot. On the contrary, it is being perceived more and more clearly that fundamentalism, like casteism and communalism—has been deriving its sustenance and strength from government's own policies which are marked by inaction and implicit sanction. At times this support becomes quite blatant as when the Government of India sought to appease Islamic fundamentalists by depriving Muslim women of the most basic social rights by legislation. Hindu communalists and fundamentalists had a field-day in Delhi and elsewhere when murder and mayhem were visited on the Sikhs in the wake of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination. A strong anti-Sikh sentiment has been built up by government agencies as well as the private press. The recent anti-Sikh riot in Bidar, Karnataka, is a further evidence of this human tragedy. You will be surprised and pained to know that our comrades of the Krantikari Sahit Sabha of Punjab expressed their inability to take an active part in the work of the AILRC only because they do not feel it safe for them to travel beyond their state in order to take part in our executive meetings, seminars and conferences. It is a matter of shame for a government which claims to be secularist that a particular community has to appear criminal in the eyes of others and to pay for the sins of its own fundamentalists. In view of all this, it behoves us to take a clear and firm stand against the growing menace of communalism and fundamentalism.

Comrades and friends, the alarming scale of atrocities against Dalits and against women in several parts of the country must arrest our attention. They have naturally led to a spurt in the Dalit movement and in the feminist movement. Both of them have thrown up a wide-ranging variety of opinions and outlooks. Our approach towards them is one of broad sympathy and support. At the same time we strongly feel that these movements should better integrate themselves as far as possible with the revolutionary movement, instead of running counter to it or undermining it in any way, even though inadvertently. We hope that they can fulfil themselves only in a more equitable socio-economic order under the people's own dispensation. This is certainly not to deny or belittle the need of these movements to organise themselves in

order to operate as distinct entities. The removal of social disabilities based either on caste or sex is closely bound up with the removal of every sort of disability and iniquity and therefore, it is necessary for all these movements to have a common aim and objective, namely, the restoration of full dignity to every human being.

Camrades and friends, you are perfectly aware that it is this approach of socialist humanism that prompts and propels the revolutionary movement in all spheres of life. Marxism-Leninism—Mao Dze-dong Thought embodies it as a scientific world-outlook and we are explicitly committed to it. The RWAIA of West Bengal organised a seminar last year in order to clarify to ourselves the meaning and significance of this philosophy. The revisionist parties of USSR and People's Republic of China have been renouncing their revolutionary legacy in the name either of modernisation or of Glasnost and Perestroika. It is one thing to bring about modernisation and to cleanse the administration of bureaucracy and other evils. But it is another thing to bury revolutionary militancy in actual practice, while paying allegiance to it only in words. It is a pity that in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country like our own certain ugly trends are manifesting themselves even in the revolutionary camp to sidetrack the revolutionary movement, leading it back to the quicksands of bourgeois parliamentarism. It is really a matter of shame that these elements still claim themselves revolutionary while their practice is something else. We must, therefore, be watchful against this trend and fight it out. We can do this only by achieving a more complete identification with real revolutionary forces. We are aware that our path is neither short nor smooth nor straight. We know that the revolutionary movement is not very strong right now. But we also know that the prospects of revolution are brighter than ever. It is on this optimistic note that I would like to conclude my report.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !

LONG LIVE AILRC !

Calcutta

—K.V.R.

White, Green and Red

Tulsi Basak

Comrade,
unwinking you were eyeing
flowers falling like rain-drops to the grass
making a white bed of petals.
Ecstatic
they were kissing earth's green lips.
And then
went off the enemy's rifle
and you could no longer see
your own heart's blood turning the white petals
to crimson.
Having lain on the fresh floral bed
you offered your homage to the motherland.
You are not with us this day
to see your every drop of blood
splitting into thousands of birds
winging up skyward
to unfurl a bright Red Flag
crying out
FREEDOM IS OUR BIRTH-RIGHT !
LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !

Liberty of Sacrifice

Vasanta

Sacrifice
of being conscious
of knowing
of cultivating oneself
and
of acting and reacting.

It is not armed with swords or spears
and heads do not roll
nor does blood spill.
Much worse than a severed head
does this one stand on its neck.

No superstitious beliefs here
nor practices sanctioned by custom.
Much worse is this sacrifice
it is demons' sadistic delight.

Prison—
no bars and keys and doors.
Unbound arms but
oh! what a liberty
and how much of it
till hands get worn out !

No proscription at all for feet
to move as much as they can

in twenty-four hours,
and if it is not enough,
in twice as much,
but strictly within the confines of the nest.
Liberty—
oh, how aplenty here !
what better do you need ?
you are at liberty to adorn yourself
as you like—
but only after washing off the dirt and dust—
to kiss your children to your heart's content
clasping them to your bosom,
to eat when you feel hungry
and
above all
fully free to weep your heart out
and so,
what liberty else do you require ?

Song, Song, Where are you ?

Yuvaka

"Song, song, where are you dear ?
covering whose eyes did you merge in moonlight ?"

Breathless emotion is swirling and whirling
only for the sweet breast-milk of songs.

Only for the fond embraces of songs
for their loving lap
for their warm cradle
for their human feel
does the heart' sky see
with star eyes sprouting all over.

Heart !

If eyes could see deep into the womb of time,
is it not song—
the rustle of lip's curtains forcibly rung down ?
is it not song—
the spectacle of heart's flute dripping blood ?

It is song—
the rhythm of committed rhymes echoing in each heart,
the contemptuous smile on lips
when 'he' hurled his lathi across the Sun of syllables,
the hint of scarlet in the angry eyes sky
when humanity is molested where four roads meet,
the shot from the peasant's sling

at locusts settling down on crops,
the recollection of friends who fell by the way
so that their memory could forever be green,
the invocation of undying ideals
when they turn into throaty slogans.

"Song, song, where are you, dear ?"

Song is merged in moonlight,
moonlight fragrant in every heart
and smouldering in each hut
and blossoming in the forest's leafy crest.

Song clasps the entire earth like a creeper
and rains drip-drop on the field's parched lips.
Song is now one with moonlight.

Heart !

Even the struggling respiration
if you but stand up
drawing the circle around you in the ring,
Is that not itself song ?

CONFERENCE REVIEW

**Go to the People !
Grow with their Struggles !**



The paramount need of revolutionary cultural workers in the country is to forge the closest possible bonds with the fighting masses of our countrymen. Agrarian struggles are burning bright today in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar and so, draw your inspiration from them to produce your works of art and, in turn, give back to them the message of revolution, instilling in them the urge to fight on until the New Democratic Revolution is crowned with success.

This, if any, was the resounding note on which the third biennial conference of the All-India League for Revolutionary Culture concluded. It is needless to say that it was highly successful and satisfying, what with the participation of hundreds of delegates from all over the country in the proceedings, a 10,000-strong procession in the streets of Calcutta and 15,000-strong public meeting on the concluding day.

Inaugural :

'Subbarao Panigrahi Griha' was a sea of red on the 28th of October, the opening day of the conference. Delegates pouring from 'Saroj Datta Nivas' gathered round the Red Flag, while cultural troupes sang Panigrahi's immortal song, "we are Communists" in different Indian languages. The main arch in front of the hall was dedicated to the memory of a tribal comrade, Ravan Murmu (Bhakti Da) in the fitness of things. Suniti Kumar Ghosh unfurled the Red Flag while com. K.V.R. unfurled the flag of the AILRC. Bela Dutta, wife of Saroj Dutta, laid flowers at the foot of the martyrs' column, followed by several others.

Recalling his association with the cultural movements of earlier years, Debabrata Mukhopadhyay called upon the delegates to unite all the cultural workers of the country, carefully avoiding the mistakes and failures of the past. Suniti Kumar Ghosh, President of the Reception Committee, recalled his association with the immortal revolutionaries of Srikakulam like Subbarao Panigrahi and Panchadi Krishnamurty. Drawing attention to the growing contradictions among imperialists including social-imperialists, he underlined the need of revolutionary cultural workers to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dze-dong Thought in order to dedicate themselves to the cause of Revolution. Bela Dutta exhorted revolutionary cultural workers to fulfil the tasks left behind by persons like Saroj Dutta.

Com. Raj Kishore took the chair in the first session when messages from distinguished persons like Dr. Purnendu Ghosh of the Tebhaga struggle fame, Amiya Bhushan Chakrabarty, Saibal Mitra and Phukhan were read out, together with those sent by Indian People's Association of North America and

others. Com. Azizul Haque, languishing in prison, managed to send a long message in the course of which he stressed that the revolutionary cultural movement to draw its sustenance from people's struggles all around. The All-India Nepalese Unity Society, Communist Youth League, Bihar Kamgar Union, New Democratic Cultural Centre, People's Cultural Association, Kedayam, Shramik Sangram Sahayak Committee, Shaheed Saroj Dutta Smriti Raksha Committee and some trade-unions greeted the conference. Com. Paresh Dhar opened two exhibitions, one of paintings and another of books and periodicals. Some six books were released on the occasion, the noteworthy being AILRC's book, 'Caste and Class', RWAIA's 'Selected Poems and Songs', and Com. Rambali's 'Revolutionary Songs'.

AILRC General Secretary, Com. KVR pointed out that the League was no longer a fledgeling, with its base now extending to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Tripura. But it only meant that the movement should make greater efforts in consolidating this base and extending it further. He spoke of the heroic struggles of the peasant masses in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh which, however, are facing cruel state repression that is affecting even revolutionary cultural workers. They should really deserve what they have been getting at the hands of the state by a more complete identification with the people and their revolutionary struggles.

Papers and Discussions :

A paper on the 'New Education Policy of the Union Government' was presented by PAF and RCM of Tamilnadu and a discussion ensued. Com. Khagen Das presided over this session on the first day.

Another paper entitled 'Revivalism, Commercialisation and the Media' was submitted for discussion by the ANM of Maharashtra in the morning session on the second day, under the chairmanship of Com. C. Prasad.

Later in the day 40 poets from different parts of the country recited their songs and poems in their respective mother-tongues under the chairmanship of Kamlesh Sen. It was refreshing and inspiring.

Many playlets were produced althrough the conference by troupes from different regions like ANM, JNM, RWAIA and KSS and KBS of Bihar. 'Nagarik', Ritwik Ghatak's Bengali feature-film was shown at the conference, by the courtesy of Surama Ghatak. Two video-shows—'Naya Diganta' (Bengali) and 'Songs of Gaddar' (Telugu) were arranged. Paresh Dhar, Rambali, Shravan Kumar and Meghnad gave exhilarating performances of revolutionary songs, while the Jharkhand Aven, Ranabheri unit of RWAIA, Aavhaan Natya Manch of Maharashtra, Jana Natya Mandali of Andhra Pradesh and Jana Kala Mandali of Karnataka as well as Jana Sangharsh Natya Manch of Gujarat and Jan Zui of Assam gave excellent group-performances. Special mention should be made of the short but splendid piece presented by All-India Nepalese Unity Society. Poems of Subbarao Panigrahi, Benjamin Moliese, Sukanta Bhattacharya, set to music by Rishi Mitra, brought out the beauty of the originals.

The General Body meeting of delegates passed as many as 17 resolutions, demanding, among other things, the release of Com. Vara Vara Rao, Anuradha Ghandy, Veeramani, Tulsi, Siddheshwar Mehta and other revolutionary cultural activists languishing in prisons together with the release of Com. Azizul Haque, Virendra Bidrohi and Nutan. Police repression of the struggles in A.P. and Bihar came in for condemnation. The policy of lock-outs and closures by the factory and mill-owners of West Bengal and the different state governments' plans to set up nuclear power plants in various parts of the country were subjects of some other resolutions.

An executive committee with Com. KVR as General Secretary, Com. Arun Sanyamat as Joint-Secretary and Com. C.S.R. Prasad as Treasurer, of the AILRC, was elected in the plenary session, other members being comrades Khagen Das and Chittaranjan Das (RWAIA of West Bengal), P. Vara Vara Rao, C. Prasad and V. Chenchiah (RWA of A.P.), Raj Kishore, Rambali, Rakhit, and Vijay Kumar Arya (KSS & KBS of Bihar), Govindaswamy (PCF of Tamilnadu), Maruthaiyan and Kathravan (PALA, Tamilnadu), Mareppa (JKM, Karna-

taka), Sanober Keshwan and Sambhaji Bhagat (ANM, Maharashtra), Vijay Kumar (JSNM, Gujarat), Asit Kumar (PCF, Madhya Pradesh), Kanchan Kumar (New Delhi), Barusatwarg (KSS, Punjab) and Rasikranjan Banik (Jan Zui, Assam).

The veteran poet-singer, Com. Paresh Dhar presided over the public meeting and the 15,000-strong audience, a considerable number of which had come all the way from Bihar and from Sundarbans, was greeted by Debabrata Mukhopadhyay, Suniti Kumar Ghosh and Surama Ghatak. KVR and Raj Kishore spoke briefly after which soul-stirring cultural performances were given until late in the night on the concluding day of the conference. Com. Arun Sanyamat thanked one and all for their cooperation and assistance.

Remarkable for the active participation of thousands of people, the 3rd conference of the AILRC is another landmark in the organised efforts to usher in the much-needed changes in today's cultural life, pointing to brighter prospects. □

The Conference Resolved :

- (1) RELEASE COM. VARA VARA RAO, who has been implicated in false criminal cases and kept in indefinite imprisonment for more than three years in Andhra Pradesh ;
- (2) RELEASE ANURADHA GHANDY (released since), who was arrested for having led a strike by unorganised textile workers in Nagpur ;
- (3) RELEASE VEERAMNI, Secretary of the Progressive Youth Centre of Karnataka, whose whereabouts are still a mystery after his arrest in August, 1988 ;
- (4) CONDEMN THE CLOSURE OF MILLS in West Bengal by factory-owners, leading to widespread retrenchment of workers ;
- (5) OPPOSE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS that are proposed to be set up at Nagarjuna Sagar in A.P., Kaiga in Karnataka, Narela in U.P., Koodangalam in Tamilnadu, which threaten the life of the people with harmful effects in a number of ways ;
- (6) HOMAGE TO COM. NAGESH of Shasti colliery, Chandrapur District of Maharashtra, who was murdered by INTUC goondas at the instigation of the local police and the coal mafia ;
- (7) CONDEMN POLICE RAJ IN BIHAR where the Bhagvat Jha Azad's government has launched onslaughts against the people in the course of 'Operation Siddhartha', apparently to effect economic upliftment, but infact to strike terror among the people ;
- (8) CONDEMN POLICE REPRESSION IN ANDHRA PRADESH where the number of 'encounter'-killings since 1985 has exceeded 200 and the number of 'missing' persons has gone upto 20 ;

- (9) **CONDEMN POLICE MACHINATIONS IN PUNJAB** where the police and the army are reported to be sponsoring goondas to kill innocent people and attributing such killings to the Khalistani terrorists ;
- (10) **RELEASE POLITICAL DETENUS** held in various jails without trial, including Azizul Haque of West Bengal, Birendra Bidrohi of Bihar, Nutan of A.P., and also the Sikh detenues at Jodhpur ;
- (11) **OPPOSE ATROCITIES AGAINST DALITS**, specifically the incident in a Maharashtra village where a Dalit farm labourer, Narayan Dhule's eyes were gouged out by Hindu communalists ;
- (12) **EXPOSE THE HOAX OF HARIJAN ENTRY INTO NATHDWARA TEMPLE** of Rajasthan under the leadership of the State Chief Minister and the President of India who themselves represent the feudal order ;
- (13) **STOP T.V. SERIALS OF RAMAYAN AND MAHA-BHARAT** which seek to propagate reactionary ideas of Karma, Punarjanma and incarnations and thereby violate the norms of secularism ;
- (14) **OPPOSE THE NATIONAL TEST RANGE PROJECT AT BALIAPAL** in Orissa where the Indian Government is planning to set up the National Test Range which threatens at least 20,000 lives ;
- (15) **LIFT THE BAN ON 'SATANIC VERSES'**, a novel by Salmon Rushdie, imposed under the pressure and threats by Muslim fundamentalists and leave it to the readers themselves whether it really gives an affront to Muslim religious susceptibilities ;
- (16) **OPPOSE THE PEPSICOLA SCHEM** of the Indian Government since it denigrates the contribution of indigenous technology ;
- (17) **EXPOSE 'PERESTROIKA' AND 'GLASNOST'**, which, in the name of restructuring and openness, will unsettle and undo much of the socialist base of the economy in USSR that had been laid before 1956. □

The Creators

Allam Rajaiah

Tr. Jaganmohan

The sun has not risen as yet. The sky is shining like a washed plate. One or two bits of cloud are clinging to the East with a hangdog look on their faces. The light of the unrisen sun looks like red clay smeared to the sky. Leaves on the trees after the rain in the night are shining with the freshness of the green like the faces of the children who have not yet witnessed evil. The air blows with a leisurely speed. To the swaying wind the fresh leaves of the *teek* beneath the round rock are moving with a hollow sound "Boi-i-i-n". The water that rained in the night is still gliding on the huge boulders. The stream full of red water is moving agitatedly as though several people are furiously arguing about something. Birds on top of the branches are somersaulting as if they are just set free and the whole joy of the world is theirs. On the edge of the forest, the cattle leaving the tender grass alone are chasing each other bounding and playing. Even the old oxen neighing and spilling ant-hills, smearing red clay to their horns and snouts are reveling in heroic ecstasy. The buffalos, as though they have knowledge of all times, transcending happiness and sorrow are eating away at the grass roots that are afloat in the river. From the fields touching the stream worms are awake and wandering. The *arudra* worms are crawling on the ground.

Look, in such an atmosphere the sun rose in the East. With the sun, like his rays with ploughs on their shoulders and crowbars in their hands, people came towards the red field as if emerging out of the womb of mother earth.

The ploughmen stalled the ploughs in the field and began adjusting the ropes. Women started picking up rubble girding up their waists with their *saree*-ends. Those who do not have shirts to cover their bodies, throwing away stubs of leaf-wound cigars, rolling rags around their heads, releasing ropes, calling out every bullock on the edge of the forest by name and leading by nose-ropes brought them near the ploughs. Bowing to the yokes some have set them on the necks of the bullocks. The ploughs have risen.

Red-scorpion-like Ellaiah broke and broke some *teek* twigs from somewhere. Ellaiah's wife brought out four red flags from her tucked-up saree. Ellaiah fixing them on the twigs went and planted them on four sides.

Puffed-mustached Buchilingam surveyed all of them once. In his mind, like a current of water in a stream wordless happiness was rising. He marked the land with a rake. Dwarf Lalaiah bowing to the rock, kneeling to the field and thereafter making an obeisance to the east scattered the seed.

The front plough is on the move. The plough-share pierced the earth. The bullocks waved their tails. One after another not one or two but full thirty ploughs are on the move.

To cattle-grazer Odeani who stood on the feeble leg with the stick stuck in the arm-pit, it all seemed strange. Slitting his *Pooredu** bird-like eyes, he viewed in the direction of the ploughs. He scratched roughly his buffalo-hide-like skin. He fumbled his head. His buffalo-lips-like lips somehow shook. His bird-like-eyes dilated. His childhood, youth, one land, wife and children stirred up his memory. In its wake, the days when he tilled the land with a plough moved before his eyes. The day the land had gone towards the debts – the day his wife died in deliverybed – the days he eked out with his kids, the days he put kids in the earth with his own hands the day the staff came to his hands – the days he turned into a cattle-grazer – all welled up in his memory. How long he stood like that Odelu does not remember.

The sun is blazing in the east. In the sky, the clouds began setting. As though the earth became sooty dragon-flies rose.

*A local bird in Telangana, with small eyes.

The buffaloes rested in water. Somewhere francoline partridge was screeching.

Naked children—some of them fishing crabs and small fish, He turned his look from the children to the ploughs. His eyes were arrested. His face as though some one had hit it became blue. He hurried limping from the other end to this end of the stream and ran with the limp without minding the stones that dashed against his feet.

When Odelu came near the ploughs, all of them came to a rest. The bullocks were fuming impatiently. All the children, women, and men gathered at one place. None could make out what the others spoke.

Pushing the people aside and thrushing his face into the opening, Odelu peered across. Seven policemen with raised guns and bared teeth were shouting like barking dogs. In their midst the Sub-Inspector stood haughtily with his pistol. By his side was Muthyam Rao *Dora** with a scowl on his face. Beside him *Patwari*** Gopaiah with a raised hand was shouting an endless volley of abuses.

For a while, it was not clear what was happening.

In the meantime, the S.I. cried, "hit the bastards, the mother-fuckers."

Phat...Phat..., *Lathi* blows on naked bodies, children began crying. Women were hurling curses. But none moves! A lathi whirled on Odelu's head. He felt with his left hand. Even the blood turned into a blue lump. But in his soul the red rage began rising. What a fury? How long has it been there? Who knows?

"Stop it"

The lathis stopped.

"*Are harrami ke bacche* (You, the evil sons), this land is not yours".

"Why do you get beaten up for nothing. Go. Get out. Or else, you mother-fuckers, I'll shoot you like birds and throw you to the crows and vultures", the Sub-Inspector.

*Literally means 'lord'—Land-lord.

**A village officer who helps the government to collect land revenue.

"You, Sons of bitch, let your mothers be—by dogs. We have settled our score long time back. What have you plucked from me by boycotting my summer agricultural operations. Your party people behind you and you can not pluck my hair. If I wish I'll reduce you into smut", Muthyam Rao Dora.

"Vari",* what is this justice ? Isn't it a sin to grab others' lands. Today, you'll encroach fields and tomorrow you will fall on others' houses and rob. You dared to this extent, though there is police in our village. Otherwise, you will set our houses on fire, pick up popped corns and eat"—Gopaiah.

Kondamma broke her knuckles at this :

"If I become your slave, remember your name, I can't hope to get even a morsel of food"—.

Odelu's lip shook. He opened his mouth to utter something but could not.

"Hey, who is the head of your Sangam** ?", the S.I. bawled out.

No one spoke.

"Get out of this place. Throw out those flags, first. I'll take those Naxalite bastards to the police station".

The constables went for the flags.

Ellaiah took to a sprint. He stood by the staff of the flag. The policeman struck him with the butt of the gun.

People were astir, they formed a ring around the police.

"Beware If you touch the flags here will spill the blood", some one banged his chest and thundered so his throat might snap.

The Inspector fired into the air. There was a trace of fear in the eyes of the dora. Gopaiah's legs were trembling.

The helpless cries of the people rose to the sky. One police constable reached for the flag. He was surrounded by men and women. "One--two--three", the S.I., was shouting hoarsely.

The guns barked.

A woman lying in the furrows of the field was convulsing in pain. The life-blood issuing out of her belly was flowing red

*A fond expression of address by the elder.

**Peasants and workers organization.

in the furrow made by the plough. Somebody jumped on the Inspector. The pistol sounded. And another started writhing in the red clay.

Stones began soaring in the sky. But they were no match to the guns which barked endlessly for ten minutes. The forest was filled with reverberations. People took flight aimlessly towards trees and ant-hills. At the end, along with Odelu, ten men, four women, and four children were caught.

Making them march before the guns, crossing the stream, they reached the other side.

The police van vanished when the sun beat up overhead, vertically.

In the half-tilled land, three red flags were still fluttering.

* * * *

Tying the unarmed prisoners with ropes to the pillars, all those who were to be beaten up, the Sub-Inspector hit and kicked the tender bodies of the children. They perpetrated all kinds of inhuman acts on the women. Men's bodies were like lumps soaked in blood.

Still Muthyam Rao's rancour did not abate. The rancour and anger accumulated in him since the poor people of his village formed *sangam* has not been spent. Gopaiah had been telling him something throughout the night while drinking. The Sub-Inspector held his head in his hands about the cases he had to cook up.

Ideas and plans continued in the midst of brandy bottles. That night the police from the camp raided the village. All the houses were searched. The gruel pots were broken. While the old decrepit men and women that remained in the houses lamented through the dark night, they beat the entire village. That night, along with Ellaiah's hut four more huts were reduced to cinders.

Next morning the captive lumps soaked in blood were taken to the sub-jail in the vans.

* * * *

The fan in the court room whirls like a vulture.

The judge sat with an impatient face in his chair on the raised platform. He looked like a palm-fruit with cleanly shaven beard and moustaches, protruding belly and red, bull-like eyes.

The old clerk was writing away at his table without lifting his head.

Over the head of the Judge, Gandhi is smiling the smiles of non-violence placidly as though unconcerned with the world.

To the right side of the judge, the beautifully-bound records of sins, law books and on them bold letters embossed in gold are darting out.

Some distance away from the Judge's table is a big wooden table in front of it, wearing dark gowns and holding the files of falsehood cautiously in their hands, the lawyers are whispering needless matters.

In the adjoining room, P.P.O.* Lakshman Rao is engaged in a talk with the D.S.P.

The Judge rings the bell. The Court Jawan called out some name hoarsely.

The P.P.O. came running into the courtroom.

Thereafter, with the Sub-Inspector and two policemen exhorting them with faces scared a little-bit, peasants in rags, peasant women and four children entered.

Ellaiah took the witness stand. Behind him Odelu and others stood in a row.

Hatred was gathering in the faces of the lawyers.

The P.P.O., after clearing his throat, looking at the fan aimlessly for a while and scratching over the right moustache cut elegantly, saw the Judge without seeing the peasants.

The judge eyed the peasants.

The P.P.O. threw the paper on the table, took a few steps ahead.

"Your honour !" He put on an act of trying to recollect something for a little bit of time. Looking askance at the adjoining room he became aware of a glasgow *dhoti* hanging around and the movement of hard boots. With a renewed zeal he began arguing.

"The accused look like innocent and poor people, Your honour ! But all that is an outward show. If we know closely about them, we will be convinced how much of cruelty and inequity are on the rampage in this world. Before saying any-

*Police Prosecutor Officer.

thing about the accused, we should know something about the village. This case is interesting politically also.

“Nakkalagudem was free from unrest till 1976. People used to mind their own business. If, of necessity, any small conflicts arose, Muthyam Rao *garu** who looked after them like his children saw to it that they were settled among themselves. It is a noteworthy fact that in the past, not a single case from the village came before this court”.

“While all was going on well with the village, now, Nakkala Ellaiah, the first accused in this case joined hands with the anti-national and anti-social forces. Meetings, emotional speeches, and provocative songs became the order of the day. Thus, they snapped the relationship between Muthyam Rao and the people of the village and incited the latter against him.

“All those who are present here now, were turned against Muthyam Rao in the beginning. Deliberately, they created trouble regarding wages. Muthyam Rao *garu* raised the wages. But not satisfied with it, on some pretext they attacked Muthyam Rao’s house, threatened to beat and kill him. And once on 20th of January 1978 they attacked his house under the leadership of the first accused, Ellaiah, with sticks, knives and axes and broke the furniture. On 2nd February 1978, they destroyed the corn field, lifted the cattle, spoiled the crops, and broke the enclosing wall. Grass, fodder and grain-whatever was available, was carried away by them. Thus, Your Honour ! I can give a list of many such incidents. These instances are only a few of them”.

“This is unjust *dora* ! We’re like birds (driven out of nests) *dora* ! got beaten up *dora* !”, old Venkaiah bowed and bowed with folded hands.

“Order, order,” the Judge banged the table with the mallet. The P.P.O., pausing a while, continued.

“Under those circumstances for the security of his family’s money, honour and life, he approached the police and government with his tale of woe. Consequently, the police opened a camp in that village —”.

“It is not true. *Dora* has brought them to destroy us”,

*An honorific name tag.

Lakshmi protested.

"Your Honour ! These dare-devil anti-social elements do not care even for the police. On 21st June 1979, the entire village collectively stuck the red flags in the hundred acre field of Muthyam Rao *garu* and began to plough it. As usual Muthyam Rao *garu*, S.I. Konda Reddy, and seven other police men went to the field. S.I. Konda Reddy tried to persuade the people. But they did not allow them to listen. Ellaiah, hurling abuses, instigated the people. As a result, the people enraged, attacked the police, Muthyam Rao *garu*, and the Patwari Gopaiah with stones. Added to this, they encircled and were about to attack with spiked sticks. Under the unavoidable circumstances, lathi charge was inevitable. Later, after some scuffle, the crowd had dispersed. As the situation seemed to have returned to normal, the police and Muthyam Rao *garu* went back.

"But that night, once again, about 500 people gathered and under the leadership of Ellaiah attacked Muthyam Rao's house. They burnt the houses of Bairi Ramulu and Bandela Lingaiah whom Muthyam Rao *garu* employed for his security and created an atmosphere of horror in the village. The police intervened and with great difficulty took into custody the persons in the witness box..."

"Deception ! Fraud !", Venkati cried. Somebody gagged him.

"Like this, under the leadership of the first accused Ellaiah, second accused Ankam Nagamallu and the four hundred other accused joined hands to indulge in such nefarious activities as arson, loot, destruction of property and defamation. In addition, they also tried to kill Muthyam Rao *garu*.

"Therefore, the accused are punishable under the Indian Penal Code, Sections 197, 307, 144.

"I pray the Honourable Court to enquire into the matter and do justice and provide Muthyam Rao *garu* with the needed security of life, money, and property."

Sweat oozed on the P.P.O's forehead. He wiped it with a white handkerchief and dropped into the chair.

For a short while, the wind stood still.

Musalaiah who, till now, stood shivering and stiffened

opened his mouth like bird.

"There is none to look after our lives, *dora* ! A hair-do with plenty of hair is nice whichever way it is tied. Whatever is done by a poor man is always wrong. Your slaves, *dora*—We have lived the worst lives for long years like cattle—we suffered beatings, abuses. We did not open our mouth. We pushed the tears into our eyes. No government asked us about our pain. Those who went from house to house for votes have not seen our faces again. The sufferings we have undergone only God knows".

"If there is someone like god why should our lives will be like endless darkness without dawn", Lakshmi grumbled.

"Why don't you wait my girl ! Is he there ! If he is there it is none of our concern wherever he is lying drunk. That *Vakil dora*—how many fraudulent words did he cook up and tell against us ! You have heard it ! Let us tell our own account of grief and joy", Musalaiah cursed her and bent a little ahead.

"I, your slave,* know not the law, cannot speak word after word as though reckoning with every one in the family. I have lived by labour, your slave, not by words. But the time seems to say village (people) belongs to whoever can mouth words. Your slave, you eat rice. How can I, your slave, tell you how hard we work to take the paddy grain out of mud. Though we work like that we do not ask for a rice meal. If we got a little gruel water, we took it as a treat. But our village *dora* does not like us, your slaves, to live even like that. With scant food to eat we wanted to take the land on lease. We begged not to confiscate fields we have made arable by pouring out blood—we prayed not to beat us like cattle—we asked to treat our women like human beings. What can I say *Peddora* (bigger lord), we have gone through indescribable sufferings—if we recount them we lose our honour, if we do not we'll lose our life".

It is our sin to think that we can no longer live like that, *dora* has nursed malice against us.

"Till now the *Vakil dora* talked of many misdeeds we did not commit. He did not say anything about the evil doings of

*A translation for *Nee banchen* necessarily to be used by the lower rank people while addressing *dora*.

the police and *dora*. Our...".

"Oh, old man ! No use telling all those things here. Who will pay his ear to a ragged man's words ?" A youth interjected.

The lawyers were chit-chatting in a disinterested way.

The old man went on submitting the facts. The Judge was intermittently rapping the table with the mallet.

Barla Odelu's face, who had noticed this for a long time, was glowing red. His lips were quivering with rage. From the right side of his mouth, saliva started trickling. Clearing his throat loudly, he said :

"Dora ! What is the use of telling all these things. I have one thing to say, please pay your ear to it, a little. Thereafter, you do whatever you like to do".

The lawyers stopped chit-chatting.

"The *Vakil dora* has said lots of things in favour of our *dora*. Disregarding them our man started reciting *Bharatam**. Whatever hue and cry we make denying the account of the *Vakil*, they will bring witnesses before you."

"*Vakil dora* called us thieves and robbers, called us rogues, made us out to be butchers for people's lives. Not only that *Vakil dora*—".

The P.P.O., frowned.

"Yes, we are thieves *dora* ! If we are thieves as *Vakil dora* tried to prove, we would not have stood like this before you with wasted, enfeebled, stunted bodies without a shirt to cover them. In this country, there are some who steal before our eyes, there are others who can smoothly remove the pot in the middle while the pot on top and the pot below remain as they are. It is those men who are flourishing. Ten years back, I had a first class ten acre piece—What happened to it?—It has merged with the *dora's*. Still, *dora* remains a *dora* (a virtuous man), only I became a thief—My family is gone, house is gone, wife died, not even the kids survived. At this age I am eking out as cattle—grazer. *Dora* has risen high before my eyes, every year. From twenty acres, he has grown into the possession

*('reciting *Baratam*') a lengthy useless discourse. The expression is a popular variant of the title of an Indian mythological poem, *Maha Bharatam*.

of hundreds of acres. Acre, half-acre people licked the dust. The one who licked the dust is a thief—and the one who has risen high is the one who has thrown dust into our lives *dora* !

“It is true. We formed into *sangam*. No reason to hide or undo. If it comes to that *dora* people have as many sangams as there are hairs on my head. They have parties. We do not have enough to eat, true; but what did they give us except kicks and fisticuffs.

“For a means to live, our people yoked ploughs. The man in white who came to our village with the hand-sign said he would get us *banjar* and *Poramboke** land since he is himself *dora*. But when we plough the lands we are called thieves, Naxalites.

“In the end, he (the lawyer) said, we burnt houses and destroyed crops.”

“But *dora* ! please look at this waste, *dora* ! (pointing out to his body) This is dust which is earth. Born in the dust, fed with the dust, we take out harvests out of the dust. How many drops of blood are spent for each grain, cannot be kept count of. When the cloud begins to melt, our hearts become tender. If the wood begins to fill out, it invigorates us. When the fresh leaf sprouts, our hearts begin to swell with excitement. We nurture it like life within our life and protect it. When we reap, file, and turn it into grain, *dora* lifts it away in stitched sacks. We who are left with empty hands are thieves. If we don't have that tenderness which nurtures crops, we'd become hard as stone. Even if we do not benefit, we are still growing crops. We are the ones to grow crops by hard work, we are not destroyers. As we nurse crops by pouring our blood, we have also nourished *dora*, tended his cattle. By denying our lives, we served you. We are the ones to build houses by putting each brick together. We are not the wreckers.

“Then, they said we are killers. But, if we have that daredevilry, how can one man, *dora*, ride the shoulders of so many people. As for myself, I never knew cutting the chicken. At the sight of blood, darkness rushes into my eyes”.

Odelu looked around like a lunatic.

“Look at this courtroom in which we are all present, *dora* !

*The waste lands supposed to be under government control.

The man who built it by turning the mill, making the bricks, and by drinking water, swallowing fire till the hair at the centre of his skull dropped off. Ask him to break it, and see how disturbed he will become. How his tortured being writhes. Whereas one who knows no hard work will destroy it in no time.

"They played havoc with our lives and honour. They lifted our crops, grabbed our lands, burnt our houses and killed us. Unable to look on destruction helplessly, we have united.

"We do not kill our own blood. If another tries to kill we can no longer suffer it. *Dora* ! we are the people who make all things, you and your bungalows — —all. All are made by us. We will not keep quiet when they are being destroyed. You call us anything, call us Naxalities or whatever you like. We do not care, our blood is boiling, *dora* !".

The judge rose from his chair, with a darkened face started shouting hard, "order, order !"

Declaring that the court is adjourned, he ran into the adjoining room.

The police hand-cuffed the peasants and led them to the van.

Ellaiah's face lightened up. He embraced Odelu.

A lean, thin man who stood at a distance lifted his fist and gave the red salute.

The van moved on.

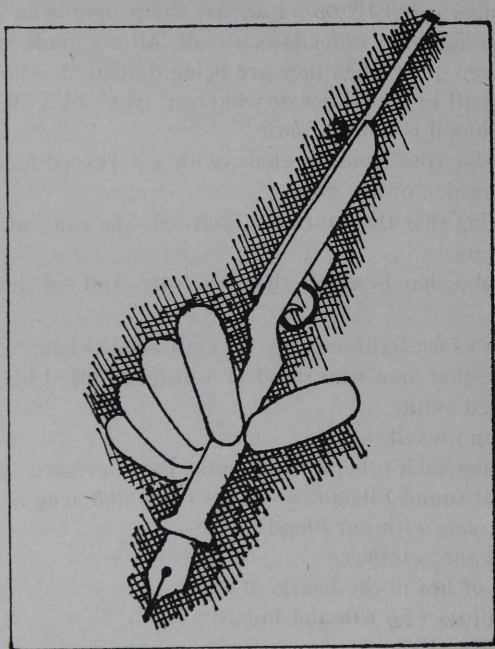
Touching each others' hand-cuffs they created a rhythm and to that sound Ellaiah raised his voice and sang :

"We create with our blood
food grains, clothes —
sparks of fire in the hearts of
the traitors who rob and hide
with capital"

Odelu is still murmuring as though in sleep.

"Our blood, our flesh, our bones, our marrow, our life, our joy and grief, our sweat, our tears—do we destroy them"? □

Greeting the Conference



...I warmly welcome your League's efforts for building up a powerful revolutionary cultural movement as an essential move to resist the all-out invasion by the filthy imperialist culture that, in countless forms, has poisoned the entire social climate in the country. In this context, I maintain the view that work on the cultural front needs to be inevitably based on a clear and correct understanding of India's New Democratic Revolution. Only then, any programme in this sphere would be a

truly meaningful and effective auxiliary to the execution of the fundamental task of developing and intensifying the Indian working class struggles on the correct revolutionary line in alliance with the lower strata of the great peasant masses...

K.D.P.
GAUHATI

Culture is one of the most powerful instruments through which people's consciousness is formed and therefore one of the most powerful weapons in class struggle. Since culture offers a shape to the world we experience, it shapes the way we experience our world, the way we understand it and the attitudes we adopt towards it. Obviously then, in a class society, culture is an arena of struggle in which the culture of the ruling class in all its variations is a powerful instrument of its domination.

It is therefore of utmost importance for progressive and patriotic people to develop a critical and revolutionary struggle in opposition to the culture of domination, to wage class struggle through a criticism which exposes the reality of class oppression, imperialism, feudalism, monopoly capitalism, religious and national chauvinism and sexism, and presents a revolutionary vision which points toward the goal of a classless, free, and democratic society.

CHIN BANARJEE, President,
HARI SHARMA, Secretary,

INDIAN PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION IN NORTH AMERICA.

I hope that our AILRC may turn (out) to be a centre of unity for all the progressive writers and artists.

PURNENDU GHOSH

I hope that there will be no indulgence for 'Art for Art's sake' brand formalist culture in the name of revolutionary culture, nor the bran-stuff presented in the name of left literature...

SAIBAL MITRA

Wishes of the Prisoner

Azizul Haque

Dear comrades,

I feel proud to think that I am one of you all in your great conference. I do not know whether my words would reach you or not ! Because no shackle for the brain has yet been discovered, I am able to write this letter ; but the shackle for hands and feet is with them. For this reason I am doubtful about the fate of my letter. Even though I am isolated with the world of culture, still I always cherish a particular culture in my mind—and that culture is the out-come or logical consequence of our philosophy (political outlook). This philosophy teaches me that you have not acquired this world as a thing of inheritance, it is not your father's property. You can not finish it off by exploitation and consumption, your children have reposed it to you ; you have no right to exploit it as you like. You are only the owner who has to return it to them after you enrich and improve upon the present condition. You have no ownership to exploit it. In the task of enriching this world, it is more important to change it than to analyse and explain the task of revolution.

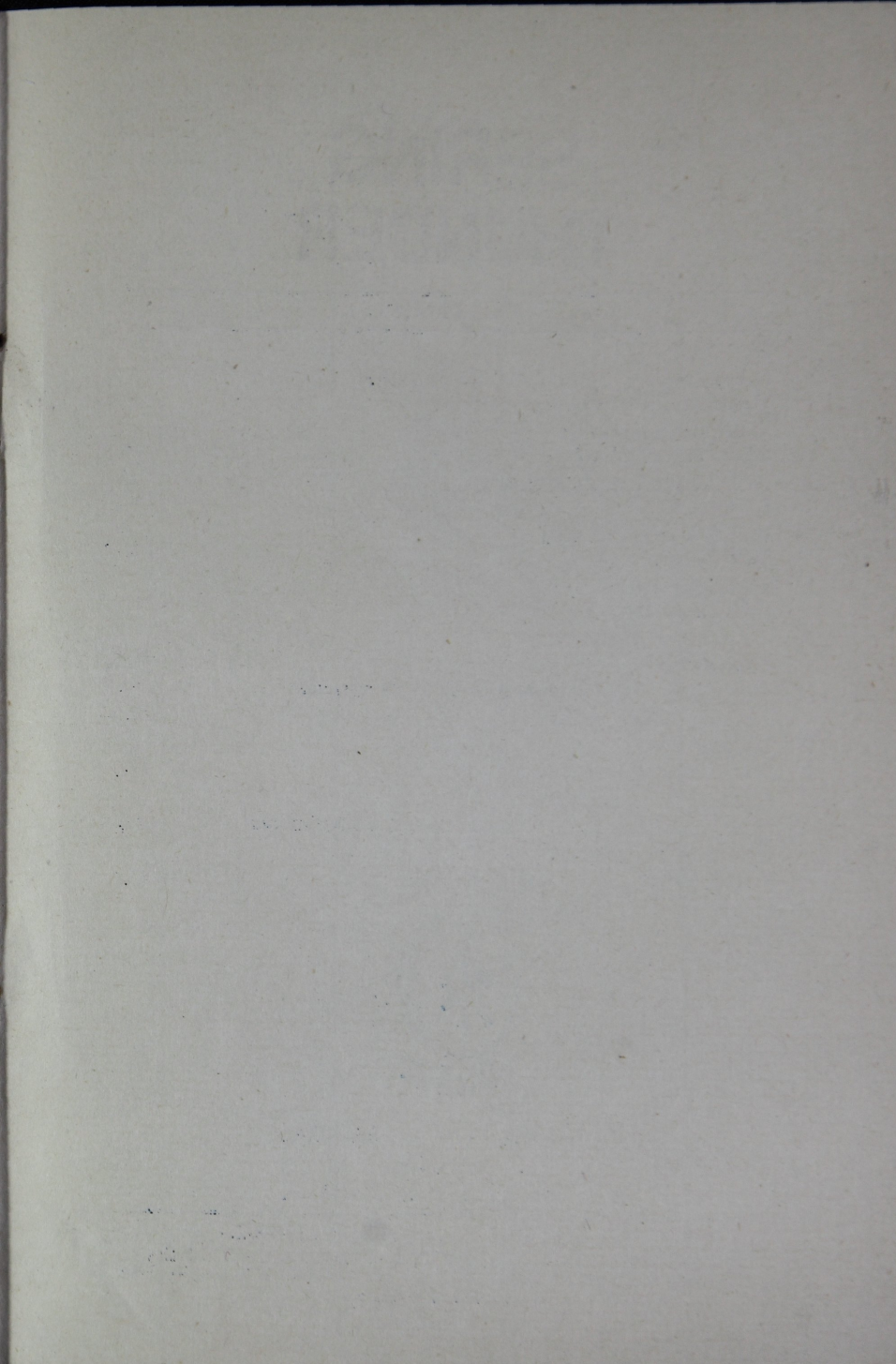
Activists in the cultural fronts are not the leaders of revolutionary change but they are certainly the torch bearers. They are not only the products of struggle, they are also organisers of the struggle. Every social revolution preceeds a Cultural Revolution. If the cultural activists think themselves to be only the drum-beaters, then their role will finish in no time.

Unless they think themselves to be forerunners and organisers of revolution, they can never fulfil their role ; otherwise they would waste their energy in meaningless controversies and debates in minute details. They must have the courage to say what political organisers are not able to say. They must be ready to risk their life. Think over—Marx and Engels repeatedly warned the organisers of Paris Commune, but the Paris Commune poet hailed the tottering steps of the working class and sang “The final battle begins” ! The activists in the cultural front must be imbibed with the idea of seeing the ocean in the drop of water. Another poet wrote “I am the daring drop, I cherish the idea of the ocean in me !” He carried forward this idea at the cost of his life ! How can I forget Saroj Dutta, the leader of Subbarao in whose name the hall has been distinguished ? Of course, the definition of war as given by military scientists is not the same as given in art and literature ! Art and literature may have their own science and certainly have it, science also has literature. But when the terminology of science is applied in literature in the same sense, there is a danger ; in military science ‘Sangram’ and ‘Yuddha’ have different meaning ; qualitatively two stages of the same phenomenon. But in literature, and song we use ‘Yuddha’ (war) in the sense of ‘Sangram’ (struggle). Keeping this in mind, the cultural-activist has to be adventurous (extremist)—struggle of minimal intensity has to be eulogised. It is not wrong, it is desirable. This has given us inspiration in all ages and will continue to do so. This is not exaggeration.

Pardon my audacity—I wish that through your movement, programme and breadth of mind you will bring unity in the revolutionary forces which lie divided into multiple groups. This can be done only by you. You can bring back, compel all of cadre-less leaders into one organisation through pressure of mass movement. It is you who can play the role of the movement of 4th May in China. You can organise movement against ‘Glasnost’, ‘Perestroika’ and ‘New China’ and raise the consciousness of leaders ! That is why I send my heartfelt blood-soaked greeting for your great conference.

In the name of protecting and preserving the old traditions they have started raking up and fomenting religious fanaticism and beating the drum of fascism—'Hope 86', 'Nava Ananda'—are the manifestations which are meant to organise 'Brown Shirts'—go forward and act before they begin. 'Apa', 'Sustha'—these are all rubbish. The culture of the exploiting class—Dr. Faust's Culture—'Lust for flesh and blood' is the kernel of their endeavour. Against them you who represent the culture of the exploited class have to declare : To extinguish the flame of the 'Lust for flesh and blood', 'Blood' is the only liquid that can do that and we are ready !

Dear comrades, I want to warn you, please forgive me. Taking advantage of your generosity I say—there are more possibilities for your becoming self-centred—the cause lies in the process of becoming a writer or artist. An artist or a writer has to collect materials through struggle—social or against nature and when he creates, he has to do it all alone. As a result he thinks—he is the creator ! Around this creation grows the spirit of individual ego and then they feel much embarrassed by the 'notorious' 'Das Capital, Vol. I'. he becomes proud, sensitive. It is necessary to evaluate these feelings. It is wrong to see only trees without the forest, similarly it is also wrong to see the forest only without the particular tree because there can be no forest without these particular trees. It is still a problem how to depict the role of the individual and the collective. 'Glasnost' arises through the hole in this problem. Both collective without personality and the collectivity that destroys personality are to be avoided. You will certainly go forward by solving this problem. Please pardon my outspokenness. Only at the end of a week I can speak for an hour and for the remaining six days I have to stay alone in bed or sitting—I can not but be garrulous. □



SPRING THUNDER

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RUPEES THREE