



SPRING THUNDER

AILRC CONFERENCE ISSUE

NEW DELHI 14-15 Oct 1983



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11-33-957

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-524 202

For copies:

1) EDITOR

SRIJANA, Monthly

HANAMKONDA

WARANGAL (A.P.)

-506 col

2) Peace Book Centre

Sultan Bazar

HYDERABAD-1

Price: THREE RUPEES



A momentous cultural event pregnant with great possibilities was witnessed in the capital city of India, on 14 and 15 October, 1983, with the formation and inaugural conference of the All India league for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC). Even prior to the commencement of the conference, the league comprised the Revolutionary Writers' Association (Andhra Pradesh), Revolutionary Writers', Artists' and Intellectuals' Association (West Bengal), Peoples' Art Forum (Tamil Nadu), Jana Natya Mandali and Aavhaan Natya Manch of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra respectively. In the course of the two day long conference, the Sangharash Natya Manch of Goa, Krantikari Navjanvadi Sanskritik Sangh of Bihar and Jana Kala Mandali of Karnataka also joined AILRC.

The conference hall was named after Saroj Dutta, the committee after Subbarao Panigarhi, and the venue of the public meeting after Sri Sri, the first two famous poet martyrs in the armed revolutionary struggle after Naxalbari Peasant struggle in 1967. The book exhibition was named after the Hindi Poet-journalist Sarveswar Dayal - Saxena, who had been the president of the conference Reception Committee and passed away a few weeks back. And the paintings and photographs section was named Chittaprasad Hall.

The conference began with the unfurling of the Red Flag by the Bengali poet, singer, parash Dhar. Ms Shyamala, the revolutionary life-partner of Cherabanda Raju, laid a wreath on the martyrs' memorial. Whereas K.V.R., the convenor of the preparatory committee of the League made a few introductory remarks prior to the flag hoisting, the cultural team from West Bengal sang Subba Rao Panigrahi's inspiring song "we are Communists" in Telugu, English and Bengali. The other troupes followed suit with their own songs.

After the Secretary, Reception Committee, read out his report, Gorakh Pandey, the well - known Hindi revolutionary poet and a member of the Reception Committee, spoke briefly condoling the sudden demise of Sarveshwaraji

Later, the conference was inaugurated by Gurusharan Singh, the famous dramatist of Punjab. K.V.R. presented his convenor's Report followed by release of different publications brought out on the occasion, which marked the end of the first session of the day.

The all important after-noon session began with K.V.R. submitting the draft Manifesto and Constitution which was adopted amidst a thunderous applause after a good deal of discussion.

Several papers on two pertinent themes 'New Democratic Revolution and its Cultural Tasks' and 'The Current Trends in Literature and Culture in Indian Languages' were presented and discussed in the second day's session which was presided over by Prashanto Chattopadhyay. Whereas R.W.A. of Andhra Pradesh and Sangharsh-Natya Manch of Goa presented two separate papers on the first theme, Birendranath Sasmal (Bengali), Chalasani-Prasad (Telugu), Grusharan Singh (Punjabi), Ramalingam (Kannada), Govinda Swami (Tamil), Sailendra Mehta (Konkani), Himmat Khaturia (Gujrati), Gorakh Pandey (Hindi), and Srilekha (Marathi) spoke on different language literatures.

After-noon session saw the election of Executive body headed by K.V.R. as its General Secretary. Whereas Prashanto Chattopadhyay and Ashwin Tombat were chosen as Assistant Secretaries, C.S.R. Prasad was named to be the Treasurer. The Executive included T. Madhusudhan Rao,

Varavar ~~o~~ Rao, Chalasani Prasad, Gaddar, Arun Sanyamat, L. Govinda Swamy, P. Kalyani, Krishna murty, D. Murty, Sandesh Prabhu Desai and Shailendra Mehta. (The Bihar Unit was expected to name their representative later.). Apart from this an Editorial Board was formed with Ashok Tankasala, A run Samyamat and K.V.R.

The conference was attended by above 400 delegates and observers representing more than 35 literary and cultural organisations from 15 States and Union Territories.

On both the days various revolutionary art-forms of highly popular character were displayed by Cultural ^{troupe} ~~re~~-presenting the above mentioned organisations apart from fraternal teams such as Aahvan Natya Manch and Nishant Natya Manch of Delhi.

The conference concluded with a public meeting on the evening of 15th October blazing a trail of success and amidst great expectations.

ar Comrades and Friends,

A large number of revolutionary cultural activists and intellectuals from all over India have assembled here today to attend the inaugural conference of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC). They have come with the avowed objective and hope of giving a much needed shape, substance and momentum to revolutionary cultural movement at the national level. The Reception Committee extends a warm Welcome to one and all.

But, before saying anything further, we feel it our duty to make a mention about the sad and sudden demise of Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena, who was to have been the Chairperson of the Reception Committee. A great writer and dependable friend of evolutionaries as he was, 'Sarveshwar' was a real source of inspiration and practical help for the Reception Committee. Had he been here amidst us today, we are sure, the conference could have been organised much better. We pay our deep homage to our beloved 'Sarveshwarji'.

The toiling masses of India have always had a culture of their own. This culture which reflected their protest and revolt against an oppressive system through the ages has, since ~~telangana~~ and Naxalbari, begun to give vent to the revolutionary aim of having their own social system established. In consonance with this political and cultural scenario and under its direct influence -- writers, artists and intellectuals, committed to the people's cause, have been forming associations in revolutionary lines in different parts of the country for the past 15 years. or so.

Through their cultural activities and interaction with the masses and in the face of state repression -- they have already travelled a long way gaining considerable experience. They have also made significant contributions in the cultural sphere. They could create the true portraits of people's

sufferings and struggles, and counter the ruling class culture in varying degrees in different states of India.

Now the time has come to create a national stream of revolutionary culture. The deepening politico-economic crises - globally as well as nationally on the one hand, and the steadily growing revolutionary struggles of workers and peasants on the other, are urgently demanding such a parallel development in the cultural arena.

After a decade and half of cultural activities, experiences, successes and failures, it is also time for this kind of organisations and individuals - to sum up their past and come together for collective action.

In fact, efforts have been on in this direction for quite a few years. Now a new lead taken by 'VIRASAM' and Jana Natya Mandali from Andhra Pradesh, Biplobi Lekhak Shilpi Budhijibi Sangha from West Bengal, people's Art forum from Tamil Nadu, and Aahvan Natya March from Maharashtra, is of historical significance. We wish that it led to a truly and comprehensively representative all-India body, even if gradually, in course of time. In fact, this is the deepest wish of all those who are active in this field either present here in this conference or not.

Many people have extended their helping hand both financially and otherwise in organising this conference. In our view the most significant of this is a monetary contribution sent by eight comrade political prisoners from the Central Jail, Hyderabad. In fact, their's was the first response to come from anywhere. We sent them the conference papers only to inform them about the event. But, what prompted them to react in comradely spirit and so promptly inspite of being incarcerated

for several years? It requires no explanation. It was simply thrilling and inspiring to receive their letter wishing all success for the conference. And now it would be our duty to inform them back that it was a real success.

In the course of this conference you are going to discuss the present situation in the cultural field and chalk out your tasks for the future. And the main purpose of this conference is, to borrow a phrase from the earlier part of my address, to create a national steam of revolutionary culture. Thus, these two days are of historic significance and historic optimism.

Once again, the Reception Committee welcomes you all on behalf of the fighting workers and peasants of this great country - wishing, again on their behalf, a fruitful conclusion to the conference.

- ASHOK TANKASALA
Secretary
Reception Committee

..... EXPRESSED THEIR SOLIDARITY

— A welcome phenomenon in our cultural life at the present critical juncture in the country is the determined and Politically conscious effort to break totally from the stagnating, deteriorating values and mores. Such a development is logically bound up with a fundamental change in the socio-economic set-up propped up by exploiters both at home and abroad. Pepulism has failed to deliver goods. On the contrary, it has been able to hoodwink the masses and to lead them into political miasma. The real creators of the material wealth, be they workers or peasants or even the lower strata of the middle class, must wrest state power in order to improve their lot radically. They should be the real masters of all nature's gifts, primarily land.

A cultural movement cannot be regarded as an independent category. It is interwoven with all other aspects of life. The strand of people's own culture has always had its own life. The talk of 'mainstream' only serves to cover the domination of the ideology of the ruling class. A genuine effort has to be made to break it.

The All India League for Revolutionary Culture, now in the offing, will, we earnestly believe and hope, strive to fulfil this historic task, helping the broad masses of our countryment to reach newer and brighter vistas of life.

1) Alok Dhanwa, Patna (2) Lal Bahadur Verma, Gorakpur (3) B.Narasaiah and seven other political prisoners, Hyderabad Central Jail (4) Puran Mudgal, Sirsa (5) Shambhu Badal, Hazaribagh (6) Kulamani Jena, Bhubneswar (7) Bansi Ram, Gurgaon (8) L.A. Prasad, Delhi (9) Surendra Manan, Chandigarh (10) Madhukar Singh, Darahara (11) Jitendra Rathi, Patna (12) Harihara Prasad Mahendru, Bihar (13) Prem Kaidi, Nepal (14) Pradip Sourabh, Allahabad (15) Aahwan - Theatre, Delhi (16) Gobinda Mukhtry, Delhi (17) Sudhir - Vidyarthi (18) Shaival, Darbhanga (19) Dharmendra Gupta,

Delhi (20) Asghar Ali Engineer, Bombay (21) Dr. P. R. Shukla,
Ahmedabad (22) Samar Sen, Calcutta (23) Mahasweta Devi,
Calcutta (24) Prof. Narendra Singh, Mysore (25) Anand-
Patwardhan, Bombay (26) Dr. R. Rajagopalam, Hyderabad,
(27) K. G. Kannabhiran, Hyderabad (28) Vasanta Kannabhiran,
Hyderabad (29) Prof. K. Seshadri, New Delhi (30) Sumanta
Banerjee, New Delhi (31) Prof. T. Venugopal Rao, Waltair
(32) Nimai Ghosh, Madras (33) Prof. S. Pattanayak, Burla
(34) Prof. R. S. Rao, Burla (35) Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty,
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muruval, Madras (38) P. K. Tripathy (39) V. Anoimuthu,
Madras (40) Prof. Saalai Ilanthiraiyan, Delhi (41) Inquilab,
Madras (42) Kalipatnam Rama Rao, Waltair (43) Acharya -
Atreya, Madras (44) Prof. N. K. Singh, Bhopal (45) Racha-
konda Vishwanatha Sastry, Waltair (46) Anuradha Ghandy,
Nagpur (47) Dr. T. K. Moulik, Ahmedabad (48) Prof. Udayon
Misra, Dibrugarh (49) K. P. Atma, Madras (50) Dr. Mulkarj-
Anand, Bombay (51) Manishi Jani (52) Sndhakar Joshi,
Bombay (53) Amar Ramteke, Bombay (54) Roshan Samkuwar,
Bombay (55) Chandrasekhar Ramteke, Bombay (56) Ko. Sadhana-
Hujjenewar, Bombay, (57) Rahul Wankhede, Bombay (58) Prof.
Jayaprakash Bagde, Bombay (59) Govind Khagmare, Bombay
(60) Prasenjit Taksande, Bombay, (61) Vinayak Jamgade,
Bombay (62) S. B. Joshi, Bombay (63) Jemini Kader, Bombay
(64) C. S. Keskar, Bombay, (65) Himansu Sekhar Mahapatra,
Burla (66) Kamal Mahendroo, Rourkela (67) Kaushal Kumar-
Mishra (68) Manohar Rai Sardesai (69) Robi Singh, Orissa
(70) K. Siva Reddy, Hyderabad (71) Bhabagrali Mishra, Orissa
(72) Vijay Tendulkar (73) Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena, Delhi
(74) Prof. K. N. Panicker, Delhi (75) Bela Saroj Dutta,
Calcutta ---- and several others.

Gurusharan Singh Inaugurates ...

I pay my deep homage to Sarweshwar. He fought for a new era and many generations fought in that way to give a great new world to the young generations. And their message has been that the struggle shold be kept on.

Dear friends we all have assembled here on such a day when a slogan and song calling for a fundamental change in the world set-up is being heard aloud. Many things have happened and many other things are happening but, what has to happen is not taking place. This sad situation is further increasing our responsibilities.

When we, the revolutionary culture activists, have gathered here, it becomes our duty to exchange the notes on our respective experiences and try to evolve an effective method of reaching our goal. Today the bourgeoisie culture, which I term the imperialist culture, is having a strangle-hold over our own culture and you all are aware of it. The aim of this imperialist cultural attack is clearly to subjugate us. If we choose to counter this onslaught, it cannot but be through the medium of culture only. We will have ^{to} see how to effectively counter this onslaught which is being done with the backing of sophisticated modern science and technology.

Recently I had an opportunity of visiting Canada, the united states and Britain on the invitation of our friends there and giving some performances of our plays and songs. There I was fortunate enough to see how those who have ^{been} struggling against white and imperialist domina-

tion in South America, Africa and Asia have developed their own theatre. And it struck me that the cultural medium of those fighting oppressed masses was very much similar to that of ours. I met some-one from Haiti. He explained me the meaning of one of their songs. It says - "our oppressors want us to compose songs describing the beautiful landscape and the sea waves so that more tourists went there. But we refuse to be public relations poets and insist upon writing the songs of our struggle and native culture".

When I was asked to inaugurate this all India conference of revolutionary cultural activists, thought of sharing a few of my thoughts and experiences with you. When we talk of revolutionary culture it means we are talking of the ~~revolutionary~~ culture of the struggling masses. I would like to discuss this issue in three ways. The first one is how to catch the culture of the oppressed masses. The second one is what would be the role of women in that culture and what should be our attitude towards them. And my third and last point of discussion is what should be the idiom of the revolutionary culture.

Let me first explain what I think of catching the mass culture and reaching the masses. A film named 'Ankur' was produced about five years ago. The film ends with a boy pelting a stone at the window mirror of the land-lord in a symbolic manner. But I wondered whether the film had reached the masses who really were supposed to throw stones in that manner. When I pondered over it, I found the answer that it had not reached them. Thus the question arises what medium do we revolutionaries have on our part to reach the oppressed sections.

If we plan to spread revolutionary culture not only the content but the form also should be of proletarian nature. The University academicians and bourgeois intellectuals brand ours a mere slogan shouting culture. But we have to tell them on their faces that it is the culture which inspires and encourages masses in the direction of inaugurating a new era. They may call it mean but for us it is a very sacred culture.

When in Punjab we started off with street plays bourgeois artists criticised and abused me in harshest terms. But after about 25 years of ceaseless effort now the street play has forced them to accept it as second to none in every aspect. Similarly when we did the street play 'Gadda' based on Kishen Chander's story in London it was highly acclaimed by the British Press. Earlier we had only a progressive theatre. But later it was recognised that dialectics is a must in it. And in dialectical theatre definitely there will be what you call sloganengineering. When we seek to expose wrongs it is imperative to know what is right. If a writer claims that his duty is confined to exposing wrongs and it is upto a politician to rectify the situation he is gravely mistaken. If that is so it can be argued that even exposing wrongs is the work of a politician. This means that such writers are afraid of taking up responsibilities. They behave like true government servants. I, too, was an officer in Punjab. But, I always thought that it was my duty to comment upon what I had come across. Ultimately I opted for voluntary retirement to be more free with my work.

I am in favour of developing a medium and school of criticism in the sphere of revolutionary culture. Particulary young writers should apply their minds to this.

But at the same time they need not be afraid of the bourgeois criticism. I know several youngsters who write very well but get perturbed when university academicians point out that there is "some sloganeering" in their writings. The academicians also tell them that without that element they could become truly good poets.

Eventually some of such youngsters were taken into the fold of the bourgeois culture. Then I strongly felt the necessity of having our own organisation and a revolutionary school of criticism. But I must state one fact. You read revolutionary literature of any land including India - it sounds like slogans. Because, such is the revolutionary path; it is not an easy one. In order to march forward in that path, we cannot but raise slogans, too. Also it is our duty to defend such slogans and to defend our young writers from bourgeois attacks.

In this context I would like to remind you of what Guru Nanak and his contemporaries such as Kabir, Ravidas and others did. They rejected the criticism of brahmanical writers and successfully propagated their own forms of poetry. Their approach was similar on the question of language used in their writings. We have to do likewise. I am sure that the comrades from West Bengal and Andhra have already reached that stage. We have done it in Punjab and revolutionary cultural activists all over the world have done that.

While rejecting the attacks of bourgeois intellectuals we will have to keep in mind the importance of developing our own cultural forms in a sound manner. The revolutionary intellectuals should pay proper attention to this.

Next I would like to dwell upon the question of

women. Here there is a need to make a demarcation in the women's liberation movement between the demands for a "free woman" and for a "liberated woman". These are two entirely different concepts. The first concept is prevalent in several countries and in many Indian cities. If there is no proper direction the women's movement degenerates into an anti-men and free-sex movement. We visualise a liberated women who while breaking off her own shackles walks hand in hand with her life-partner. She despises the concept of free-woman. We revolutionary writers must keep this ⁱⁿ mind and explain properly to women. When we talk of liberated woman we should know how this concept has taken shape and, what are the impediments that hamper the emergence of such woman.

Religion is one such thing. All the religions everywhere are anti-women. Sikh, Hindu, Islamic and Christian all are alike without any exception in this respect. It is our major duty to challenge anti-women practices which go under the garb of religious preachings. But while doing so, to the general masses, it gives the impression that we are atheists and anti-religious people. To explain them our positions uncompromisingly and tactfully is a truly trying task.

I believe the most singular contribution of any one individual on the question of women's liberation was that of comrade Mao Tse-tung. After the Chinese liberation he called upon the women to change their dress, hairy-style and stop using cosmetics to begin with, to remove even slightest differences between men and women. For this Mao had to face awkward criticism particularly from the bourgeois world press. But this experiment which was later emulated by Cuba, was proved to be very worthwhile practice in the later years. After the death of Mao,

recently while I was in America, a fashion parade was held in Shanghai. It was reportedly attended by a huge gathering. Someone asked me wheather in view of this I consider China to have rejected Mao. To this my answer was that they had not rejected him. But his success lies in the fact that after 25 years of his experimentation today even if the Chinese women dress otherwise nobody could treat them like slaves.

Lastly when I say a few words on the organisational and functional aspects first I would like to offer my spirited red salutes to the Andhra Comrades, who by launching this movement have shown us a definite directon. They with their experience of the past about twelve years have invited us to go along with them.

Now our task becomes clear that we have to take our politics to the people. We ourselves also will have to go them. But when we seek to go, our idiom should be a cultured one. And how do we take our politics to them? I shall explain by giving an example. Suppose we go to tell them that there is oppression against poor and women. When a politician goes to them he explains the economic basis of this oppression in plain terms. Whereas we picturise it in our different art forms. How to reflect this in writings and performances is a very difficult task. On the one hand we cannot avoid some sloganeering. At the same time we will have to develop the art form to suit the present times in a careful manner.

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

- 1) Drawings of Bengal artists was released by Com. Kanchan Kumar.
- 2) 'Raging Storm', a poetry anthology published by A.P.R.W.A. was released by Com. Gorakh Pandey.
- 3) Com. Shiv Nangal Sidhantkar released 'New - Frontiers', a collection of Sri Sri's poetry and 'Sri Sri Chirunama'.
- 4) Com. Shamsul Islam released the poetry anthology of Cherabandaraju entitled 'Sword Song'.
- 5) 'Ganji Neelu' a play by Cherabandaraju was released by Com. M.T. Khan.
- 6) Marathi edition of Cherabandaraju's poems was released by Com. Manager Pandey.
- 7) Com. Darshan Singh Khatkar released 'Hail - Revolution', a collection of poetry from 15 Indian languages.
- 8) Jana Natya Mandali brochure was released by Com. Kakarala.
- 9) AILRC Souvenir was released by Com. Gursharan Singh.

It takes much time for an idea to mature and ripen, if it were not a day-dream or a flash-in-the pan. Steadfastness and patient effort to translate an impossible-looking idea into concrete terms will never go unrewarded. This is exactly what the Inaugural Conference of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture is demonstrating today.

Way back in 1971, it so happened that MAHAKAVI SRI.SRI., then President of the Revolutionary Writers' Association of Andhra Pradesh, had gone to Delhi and contacted Hans Raj Rahbar. At that time, a Conference of Afro-Asian Writers was on. When some of the Indian literary luminaries with a "Progressivist" background were approached, they turned their swollen and muddled heads away at the mere mention of the RWA's name by one of our comrades, M.T. Khan. In fact, they had already become back numbers because they had already been overtaken by events, especially the most significant of them all, namely the outbreak of the armed struggle of the poor peasantry in Naxalbari in 1967.

In quick succession, there was the eruption of similar struggles in Terai, Dabra-Gopiballabhapur, Bhojpur and Srikakulam. A single spark had lit the prairie fire. A decisive break with revisionism had led to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dzedong Thought as its world outlook and Agrarian Revolution as its programme, and the New-Democratic Revolution in our country as its political goal. All this had been missed by most of the purblind intellectuals even of the "Progressivist" School. In fact, they had become blockheads in the matter of creative contribution to the culture of the fighting masses of our people, in their anxiety to become a part of the establishment in effect, or to continue their political affinities

with the Soviet Union which had turned Social-Imperialist. The 'Progressivism' had evaporated in this lucrative process or else it got diluted into a milk-and-water affair, despite their appearances and even utterances in favour of Asia and Africa, which had become pawns on the chess-board of the two imperialist Super-States. Revisionism had entrenched itself in both the communist parties, they being species of the same genus. It was precisely to thwart the nefarious and overmighty schemes of the two imperialist giants on the one hand, and to uproot the State-Power of the comprador, and the State-bureaucratic, bourgeoisie in alliance with feudalism, together in subservience to the two Imperialist States, that broad front of revolutionary classes had been called for. Accordingly, a similar concerted effort in the sphere of our culture so as to serve the cause of the fighting masses of our countryment was also needed. But the time was not obviously ripe and therefore, the initial move in such a direction in 1971 proved to be immature.

More purposeful steps began taking shape slowly but steadily. 1972 saw a few representatives of 'Agradoot' group of Orissa attending the Guntur Conference of R.W.A., while in 1974, Com. Kanchan Kumar, representing the 'Jana Kala Manch' of Banaras and comrades like Hamsraj Rahbar, Trilochan Misra, Alok Dhanwa and Eswaram participated in its Kurnool Conference. Personal contacts were thus established with like-minded individuals belonging to different stats as a first step. After 1977, the situation improved though state repression continued even under the new Janata Party - dispensation, the main feature being revolutionary cultural associations cropping up in States other than Andhra Pradesh. Every avenue for mutual understanding and cooperation was avidly opened and every opportunity eagerly seized upon. The 'Janskeeya Samskara Vedi' (People's Cultural Forum - PCF) came into being in

Kerala, and later, the Convenors' Council of Revolutionary Writers, Artists and Intellectuals of West Bengal was brought into existence. These three organisations began in inviting one another to their own conferences, thus strengthening a fraternal spirit among them all. Exchange of information, translation of works, personal visits and such like things played their own part in the creation of a congenial atmosphere, as for instance, the visit of Com. Gaddar of Jana Natya Mandali (JNM) and Com. Cherabandaraju of RWA to Calcutta on the invitation of the West Bengal Association, and by Com. KVR's visit earlier. But it was by no means a one way-traffic because fraternal delegates from West Bengal, Kerala and Karnataka attended the RWA Conference at Tirupati in 1979, and again in 1980 the cultural associations of these States as well as like - minded individuals participated in the decennial year Conference of the same at Hyderabad.

These oft-repeated incidents reinforced the feelings of comradarie to such an extent that funds began pouring out from all states in response to the appeal for financial assistance to Com. Cherabandaraju who was seriously ill and at the same time, poor. His verses were translated into Gujarati by persons like P.R. Shukla and also into Bengali, Kannada and Malayalam most spontaneously.

This growing understanding took a more practical turn in May, 1982, when the PCF of Kerala held its second state conference in Attoli near Kozhikode. The Kerala comrades were perceptive enough to arrange a meeting of fraternal delegates in between the regular session of their Conference, in order to explore the possibilities of the formation of a countrywide revolutionary cultural body. The RWA, the PCF, the convenors' Council of Andhra, Kerala and West - Bengal respectively, and Cultural troupes, attached to PCF, functioning in Sombay, Delhi and Karnataka put their heads

together and held exploratory talks which were quite promising. Com. Kamcham Kumar, then at Delhi, took an active and constructive part in these proceedings and, consequently, it was unanimously agreed to have another round of talks soon after. This took place on the occasion of the Macherla Conference of RWA early in June, 1982, itself. The outcome was positive. The RWA was authorised now to prepare an "Approach Paper" and to circulate it among the fraternal associations, before it was put to a through discussion later.

This done, the next stage was reached at Madras in November, 1982, when the newly-formed 'People's Art Forum' (PAF) played host to the above three associations, besides the JNM of Andhra Pradesh, Avhaan Natya Manch (Avhaan) of Maharashtra, and then to two cultural organisations of Tamil Nadu bearing the same name 'People's Art and Literary Association' (Pala), with a slight difference, one calling itself Pala (Tamilnadu) and another Pala (Madras). As a matter of fact, Pala, Madras was a splinter of PALA, Tamil nadu. There was also one association from Orissa, calling itself the Progressive Writers', Artists' and Intellectuals' Association. A few individuals also participated in the two-day-long deliberations of the Madras meet. The "Approach Paper" was discussed at length. An invitation had been addressed to "Jana Samskriti-Sahitya Samakhya" in Andhra. It had come into safe existence only after the lifting of the Emergency. But now it put forward a claim that an All India Consultative Committee had been already formed at Calcutta under its aegis and it now chose to deline the invitation to participate in the Madras conclave, on the plea of its fundamental disagreement with the "Approach Paper", especially about the retention of the formulation about Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dzedong Thought as the world-outlook. It held that a mass organisation cannot have any such thing in its manifesto as it might

come in the way of a broad-based united cultural front. The representative of the Association from Orissa took cover under a more liberal plea that his association was holding the view that our country was being ruled by the class of national bourgeoisie itself and so, it was impossible to fit it into this radical and revolutionary scheme of things. It had not yet liberated itself from the trammels of 'Progressivism'. The Pala, Tamilnadu, too, was of the same variety and it gracefully walked out. But Pala, Madras, indulged in vituperation, vilification and obstructionism, while at the same time rejecting the main thrust of the "Approach Paper" in relation to the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist culture. It stubbornly voiced its own views that Indian culture is fascist, without trying to understand the deep implications of such a formulation. It amounted to rejecting the programme of agrarian revolution and by implication, the political aim of New Democracy. The issue of cultural Revolution was also brought into the discussion. The PCF of Kerala let the cat out of its bag by springing a surprise on the participants with the announcement that it had formed an All-India Coordination Committee of PCFs. Good news indeed! But most of the participants were really at a loss to know why the PCF, Kerala, had rushed to form an All-India body, while efforts were actually afoot to form a really more broad-based cultural body on an All-India level. It was but an expression of petty-bourgeois left adventurism in the cultural sphere. The painful thing about this indecent haste was that the PCF, Kerala, had itself been a willing party to the Macherla decision. The representatives of All India Coordination Committee of PCFs offered an ideological criticism of the "Approach Paper", saying that social-imperialism should not be singled out as constituting the principal source of world war, and also that it was the cultural revolution in China rather than the struggle of

Naxalbari here which provided the impetus for the armed revolution in India. It went to the length of presenting what it chose to call a 'Position Paper' which was almost and alternate document. Saying that it would announce its considered decision at Calcutta, the PCF went out and later on presented a distorted picture of what had happened at Madras in its political organ, MASS LINE.

The positive outcome of the Madras meeting was that the RWA was authorised to draft a manifesto, meant for circulation and discussion all the country over. Periodicals like FRONTIER favoured us with enough space in its columns but MASS LINE added its own mischievous comments casting aspersions too, which was unbecoming of them, especially those who were present at Madras. Com. Kanchan Kumar took personal interest in the matter and wherever he went, to Bihar or to Bengal, he tried his best to persuade as many revolutionary-minded writers as possible to move closer towards an All India body.

Subsequently, the Convenors' Council of the Writers', Artists' and Intellectuals' preparatory conference of West Bengal invited all these associations, which more or less found themselves in agreement with the 'Approach Paper' and with the first draft of the Manifesto, to deliberate once more on the occasion of its Conference at Jogeshgung in the Sunderbans early in April, 1983. Delegates of RWA, PAF, JNM, Avhaan, the host-association itself and All India Coordination Committee of PCFs, Nav Janvadi Samskratic March of Delhi and an overnight-changed Pala (Tamil Nadu) got together at Jadhavpur in Calcutta on the 29th and 30th of March, 1983. Some persons also attended it in their individual capacity. Two day-long discussions of the draft manifesto were conducted in a quiet frank and free atmosphere, which was marred at times only by the obduracy of Pala.

Madras only. Navjanvadi Sanskritik Manch expressed its fundamental ideological differences through its representative, Com. Gorakh Pande in as dignified and fraternal a way as possible. However, later, Pala, Tamilnadu chose to come up with startlingly new proposals for a root-and-branch change of the draft in the form of extensively wordy amendments, based on quite incorrect ideological formulations. It amounted to an alternate draft in effect. All reasonable suggestions for improvement upon the original draft were sympathetically considered and most of them were accepted, with the result that there was almost a total agreement on fundamentals.

But the Coordination Committee of the PCFs raised serious ideological objections to the draft. Firstly, they expressed themselves against placing emphasis upon Social Imperialism as constituting the main danger both to India and to the world, lest it meant an acceptance of the Three World Theory as propounded by the present revisionist leadership of China but attributed by them to Mao himself. Secondly, they said that our cultural enemy should mainly be the US imperialism on the ground that social imperialism was itself making use of the Western culture and thus trying to prop up the rotten bourgeois culture in India along with the moribund feudal culture. In effect the two imperialist superpowers were said to be collaborating even at the cultural level. The Navjanvadi Sanskritik Manch expressed itself against the mention of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in a mass organisation like the proposed cultural organisation which, in their opinion, is of the same nature as any other mass organisation. Generally these were the grounds of disagreements. But as they were of a fundamental character any compromise on them was neither possible nor felt desirable by the majority of the participants. Ultimately, it was decided to set up the present All India League for

Revolutionary Culture and an organising Committee was chosen from the RWA, PAF and the Revolutionary Writers' Artists' and Intellectuals' Association of West Bengal, with Com. KVR as its convenor. This Committee was authorised to prepare the final draft of the manifesto and also a constitution. The outcome was the formation of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture which was announced in a public meeting at Jadhavpur in - Calcutta on the 30th of March, 1983.

It was decided to hold the Inaugural Conference of the League at New Delhi in October, 1983, and the Delhi unit of RWA was requested to host it. A press release on that occasion stated as the aim of the league the achievement of New Democracy, with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought as its world-outlook and agrarian revolution as its course. The League declared its opposition to the present "hybrid culture" marked as it is by "feudal obscurantism and bourgeois decadence" in the sphere of the country's culture. It called for mutual exchange of cultural teams, translation of each others writings and compositions. At the same time, the constituents of the League for the present, RWA, PAF, JNM, Aavhaan and the R.W.A.I. of West Bengal would each preserve its individual identity and enjoy initiative of action and at the same time work together in a League. They decided that national outlook, scientific attitude and dialectical materialist way of thinking should have to be fostered. Proletarian internationalism is to guide their activities.

The process has been scrupulously gone through and now this up-hill task is bearing fruit. The League is yet to bring into its fold as many like-minded cultural organisations and cultural activists too by a patient, persuasive and continuous effort. Towards the two All

India Revolutionary Cultural Associations that are already in the field, the League adopts as fraternal and as sympathetic an attitude as possible under the circumstances, avoiding mutual recrimination and fault-finding, and expects the same healthy attitude from them both, in word and deed. But it is found wanting in actual practice. Malicious fabricated stories are found making private rounds although denied outwardly. Our cause is the cause of the broad masses of the people especially in the countryside, who are locked in an antagonistic contradiction with the haughty and cruel relics of feudalism, and waging any number of difficult struggles in the midst of local oppression and police repression of an excessive degree. Therefore, our primary target in the cultural front is a relentless fight against feudal ideology and values, without losing sight of their domestic prop comprador bourgeoisie-and the external twin-dangers of imperialism. To realise our cultural objective in the present context, revolutionary culture should strive its utmost to rid itself of petty-bourgeois character in its ranks, seek to declass itself in favour of the most oppressed sections and, accordingly, to inject a greater element of popularization of culture to whom it is properly addressed. Simultaneously the level of people's own consciousness of and appreciation for, revolutionary culture could be raised. Folk-forms of culture should be cleansed of their pro-ruling class content and rendered serviceable in the cause of the fighting masses. Performing arts should be given more importance and the immemorial oral tradition should be made full use of in a conscious bid to win people's hearts and to give them stronger muscle of fighting spirit, as the protracted armed struggle reaches ever higher stages, as it ought to do.

In conclusion, let me assert, with all the force at my command, that the formation of the League is an event of momentous importance in the cultural history of our

people. Short outbursts of wild enthusiasm should have to yield place to a persistent and unintermittent effort in a planned way. Efforts must be initiated to launch cultural associations with similar political aims in areas where there have been none at all, and to strengthen those associations where they are still like tender saplings. The scope of our activities should be widened because our very understanding of 'culture' is broad enough to cover the entire ideological superstructure which has a very important place of its own, since it can influence the material base itself. This League must assume the role of a Vanguard, spearheading all sorts of cultural efforts of a radical and revolutionary nature, always trying to extend its outer fringe by means of drawing to itself as many genuine popular and radically-democratic cultural organisation and individuals as possible. All this implies that simultaneously we must strengthen the vital core of the League and, I repeat, broaden its bounds more and more, and together-with these twin-tasks, it should deliberately deepen itself--go into the masses, learn from life and enrich their experience before being able to produce better and much more purposeful culture in its myriad forms.

Our confidence should not be mistaken even by ourselves as rashness and false arrogance. Let us be humble but let us defy our four-fold enemy with all our courage and determination. Our cause is invincible just because it is the people's own cause. The tomorrows shall all be ours only because no force on earth can prevent a vast mass of oppressed humanity from seizing the forelock of the Bucephalus of revolution, clasping it firmly through thick and thin and marching forwards to victory in order to effect a historic transformation of our society.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !

LONG LIVE AILRC

K V R

Convenor, Organising Committee, AILRC.

★ Dr. Narayan, representing the Orissa Progressive writers', Artists' and Intellectuals' Association, has protested against what the convenor's Report had to say of the position he had taken in the Madras meeting. He denies having characterised the ruling class of India as 'national bourgeoisie'. The Manifesto of his Association carefully avoids any characterisation of the Indian state and devotes itself to an exclusive elucidation of the tasks of a broad - based cultural movement and organisation. In the course of its response to RWA's approach paper, it reiterated the above and pleaded for avoiding political terminology, and for replacing the word "Revolutionary" with "Progressive" in order that "some of genuine progressive writers, artists and intellectuals, atheists, rationalists, humanists and even Marxists might be rallied round a broad mass based cultural front with a broader aim. The Characterisation of the ruling class, as attributed to Dr. Narayan, is based on the minutes of the Madras meeting.

NEW DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION : OUR CULTURAL TASKS

(Key Note paper by R.W.A., Andhra Pradesh)

There still exist some persons who swoon at the very mention of the word REVOLUTION, and some others who are dead set against Revolution as such. But a majority of people are there who, with an evergrowing awareness, realise that Revolution is an inevitable law of Society. They might not yet be subjectively prepared for it. It might indeed be too much to expect of them any deep knowledge of the dialectics of revolution. But then they strongly feel that fundamental social changes can be effected only by means of revolution.

This feeling is being expressed in various forms and on many occasions. People do not any longer repose full trust in bourgeois leaders and bourgeois political parties, though they might still entertain some amount of hope about them. This explains why people have been going on entrusting power to one or another of the above. An attitude of indifference makes this sort of thinking on the people's part: whoever be in power it is all the same for them. Though real life is reminding them of the need for revolution they are not able to follow the policy which must lead to decisions from out of facts.

All the same, many a struggle is being fought by workers, middle-class employees and students. In certain cases, economic struggles of an ordinary type are assuming the form of anti-government struggles. Street fights with the police, defying death itself, are not rare. Struggles of a major magnitude are being waged in Assam and in Punjab. Different sections of people are taking part in different forms of struggle though they are lagging behind in the matter of defining the proper objective for all these struggles.

Peasants armed struggle took a clear shape with Naxalbari. It brought about a momentous change in Indian Politics as a whole. The naxalbari struggle unmasked Parliamentary Democracy and laid bare the sharp contradictions in rural parts. It exposed the real face of revisionists. Subsequently, we today find country-wide struggles in all its parts and on all the fronts under the impact of Naxalbari and SriKakulam. The exploiting classes are powerless to repress this revolutionary movement, though it is undeniable that they - revisionists and the ruling class combine of comprador- bourgeoisie and feudalism - have been moving earth and heaven to put it down.

Naxalbari and Srikakulam provide the right answer to the question as to what form revolution in our country is to take. Neither is it the form of the old type of bourgeois revolution nor that of socialist revolution just now. The principal contradiction in our society is the contradiction between feudalism on the one hand and the vast masses of the people on the other. Comprador-bourgeoisie is there and imperialism too is there. And they are bound to each other in servant-master relationship. Then there are revisionists also. But the main thrust of the revolution here is against feudalism first and foremost. Our country has gone through imperialist rule for quite long, and imperialists had introduced the bourgeois mode of production right in the midst of the feudal one which then began to decline. Consequently, our country is now semi-feudal and semi-colonial. Imperialist strangle hold over our economy is a glaring fact, despite the absence of direct imperialist presence in our political life. It is also true that the bourgeoisie as a class i.e. long past the stage of providing leadership even for a bourgeois revolution. Indian revolution is, therefore, of the type of a new-democratic revolution under the leadership of the Working Class and the

Peasantry. The Communist Party is naturally the most class-conscious and the most revolutionary vanguard of the working class and, as such, it has to lead the revolution to success. Moreover, this revolution here in our country is only part of World Revolution.

The enemies of our new-democratic revolution are Feudalism and the comprador-bourgeoisie, and U.S. imperialism and Russian Social-imperialism, with revisionists as the Indian agents of the latter. The revolutionary classes comprise the working class and the poor and middle peasantry, national bourgeoisie and rich peasantry. Students, youth and the intelligentsia provide revolutionary elements. A united front of all these classes will bring them together in the cause of New Democratic Revolution. The three splendid magical weapons in the revolution are, firstly, a communist Party with Marxism - Leninism as its ideological basis; secondly, a united front under the leadership of the party; and thirdly, a people's army. The New Democratic Revolution will be of a protracted nature of a continuous class struggle, assuming newer and higher forms in its onward course. Being an Agrarian Revolution it will follow the path of liberating the villages before encircling the cities. The New Democratic Revolution constitutes the first stage, the second being the Socialist Revolution. As Mao Tse-tung wrote,

"For the present period, New Democracy, and for the future, socialism, these are the two parts of an organic whole guided by one and the same communist ideology" (Vol. II, P. 361).

The word 'Organic' implies that these two stages are inseparable from each other, and that the 'Socialist element' is necessarily present even in the first stage, since it is the communist party that leads it. The quote Mao again,

"A New Democratic Revolution is an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the Proletariat" (Vol. II, pp 326-327).

India being semi-feudal and semi-colonial now, the above applies to it equally. The only addition in our case is social-imperialism and its domestic lackeys, the revisionists.

In any final analysis, it is the economic forces that determine everything, including this revolution. But, the revolution needs to be conducted both politically and culturally. The economy, polity and culture of the New-Democracy form an organism and they should all be won through the New Democratic Revolution. Victory will not be total if any of these three were to be left out or even overlooked.

New Democratic Revolution has cultural tasks as it has economic and political tasks to fulfil. As said already, separation of these three will land one in utter confusion. Herein exactly lies the reason for the prevalence of serious differences of opinion in the revolutionary cultural front today. Mao repeatedly stated about their inseparability which constitutes dialectical-materialist methodology too.

"The New Democratic culture is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the broad masses; today it is the culture of the anti-Japanese united front. This culture can be led only by the culture and ideology of communism and not by the culture and ideology of any other class. In a word, new - democratic culture is the proletarian-led anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the broad masses. (Selected works, Vol.II, P.373) on Page 379 of the same volume, he went on to say:

"At the present stage, however, this kind of leadership means leading the masses of the people in an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal political and cultural revolution and therefore taken as a whole, the content of China's new national culture is still not socialist, but New Democratic.".

As he had stated in the Yenan Talks, New Democratic culture can be realized only when revolutionary writers, who can translate revolutionary struggles in the light of Marxism-Leninism, constitute a strong force. It is totally incorrect to argue that the Yenan Talks of Mao's are applicable only for revolutionary writers of the liberated areas. They are applicable for revolutionary writers of the struggle areas equally. In both, it is only they who assume leadership in the fulfilment of the cultural tasks of the New Democratic revolution and stand resolutely in the process of their actual implementation. In other words, they are the only ones who are committed to Marxism-Leninism. It is not possible to carry out the 'Party Line' in the cultural front without revolutionary writers who are Marxists. If they fail to assume such a leadership, bourgeois writers will lead it. Therefore, there is great need for clarity about it all.

The distinguishing feature of New-Democratic cultural revolution is certainly the presence of the 'Socialist - element' which is created by communist writers and artists themselves. Its second feature is their own leadership. The Communist Party can exercise its hegemony over the cultural front only by means of such committed Marxist writers who play the role of a cultural detachment of the army of the revolution.

We can build a united front with whom else, except the Communist Writers? A United front can be either an organisation or a league. It can also take the form of various organisation coming together from time to time in order to resolve the issues that might be cropping up now and then.

But it comes into being as a process depending on the stage of the revolution, but not in response to our own subjective desires. The united front will not get strong and solid, if communist writers were to renounce their Marxist Commitment or fail to pronounce it explicitly. They will be capable of forming as genuine and as democratic a united front as firmly and as highly they held aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism, Mao thought.

The united front might not be as broad and as clear in the cultural sphere as in the political. In the case of cultures, it is formed with Scientists, rationalists and the opponents of superstitions. The organisation of the cultural front depends on the strength of the communist writers. The New Democratic Revolutionary front in the sphere of culture might never see the light of day, unless writers strive to build it up, sharpening their weapon of Marxism-Leninism. There is, likewise, the risk of isolation if friendly contacts are maintained exclusively with those writers who acknowledge Marxism-Leninism.

Mao wrote (Volume II-P.186)

"There are two principles for the united front, the first is to unite, and the second is to criticise, educate and transform. In the united front, capitulationism is wrong and so is sectarianism with its exclusiveness and contempt for other."

It is through criticism and education that we can overcome the obstacles in the formation of a united front. It is but natural and also inevitable for a few to grow weak in spirit, for others to get dejected and enfeebled, and splits of a small size might also take place in a united front. The strength and stability of the united front has to rely on the solid and patient work by communist writers. The creation of such a front is itself like laying the foundation in the process of the New Democratic Revolution. It amounts to getting caught up in the whirlpool of capitulationism if undue haste is shown in the formation of such

front, without objective conditions for it becoming mature enough, and without ourselves helping to make them mature. The process of the formation of a united front should be completed, having the maturity of the objective conditions in constant view.

New Democratic cultural revolution will realise people's culture which is national in form and scientific in spirit. Name it New Democratic culture or anti-feudal and anti-imperialist culture, it means one and the same. As Mao wrote (Vol. II P.382).

"A national scientific and mass culture-such is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the people, the culture of New - Democracy, the new culture of Chinese Nation."

The word 'national' here does not merely connote the sense of 'anti-imperialist'. It is anti-feudal too. The feudal order presents false nationalism, and what it propagates as nationalism is only the culture of the old ruling classes. Nationalism is then mistaken as the culture embedded in the VEDAS, UPANISHADS, RAMAYANA and MAHABHARATA. This culture has won popular reverence on account of a long, long propaganda on its behalf. The nationalism of the New Democratic culture consists, on the contrary, only of the people's ways of life, language and such like unique features. The nationalism of the overwhelming majority of the people is only the nationalism that seeks to safeguard the right of nations to self-determination and other national rights, as integral parts of proletarian ^{na}internationalism.

Coming to the word 'Scientific', it connotes a scientific view of life, which is derived from the harmony of natural sciences and social sciences, standing in opposition to religion and superstitions and to such tendencies as "Go Back to the Ancients". Culture gains a scientific outlook in the struggle against imperialists which, with its loud bragging

of atomic weaponry, engenders terror among the masses, propagating a servile ideology, showing men helpless and little in the face of nature. This scientific outlook is democratic in the sense that it concerns the majority of mankind vitally. The tasks of the New Democratic Revolution are, therefore, of the essential nature of supplying a national, scientific and popular character to culture.

Reformism is the policy and attitude of the comprador-bourgeoisie. Beginning as bourgeois progressivism, it has ended up as a shield for the narrow interest of that class. In our country itself it has been transformed into the world-outlook of Parliamentarist political parties. Gandhism, 'socialism', pragmatism, traditionalism and the like are all reformism in its various manifestations. Private voluntary institutions besides the Akademies have been striving their utmost for the revival of BHARAT NATYA, KARNATAK SANGEET and the like which, even now, can be appreciated only by a few.

Elitism is very much with us like an incubus and it is but a part of the colonial cultural legacy. It has been keeping away a highly educated and sophisticated section in our society from the people who are the real source and sustenance of culture, besides being the creators of material wealth. This separation is in fact the culmination of an important contradiction of class society—the contradiction between manual and mental labour. The New Democratic cultural revolution should aim at narrowing down the gulf between the 'Towns and villages' before it is totally bridged in a communist organisation of society in the distant future.

Likewise, the higher seats of learning in our country have been fostering 'academicism' which has very little

bearing on practice. This is being done very slyly because its ulterior motive is to divert youngsters' reserves of energy into futile channels of 'research.' Marxism is no exception to this perfidy as a victim and something like 'Marxiology' is being promoted at great cost by this educational establishment, which is but a servitor of the present state, whatever be its pretensions and claims.

The next thing to be combated by the New Democratic cultural revolution is what goes by the name of 'New Left'. It has become both a fashion and a passion with our young academics in city and town. This western transplant is adept in the art of vivisection of Marxism and in placing the wrong stress on elements of Marxism as for instance, glorifying the young Marx at the cost of the more mature Marx and bringing over the concept of 'alienation' into prominence. This ultimately serves the interests of the imperialists via the academically-oriented, hair-splitters, misnamed 'New Left' as a group.

And then comes the big issue of 'Show Biz' what with an immense inundation of filth and dirt, all made highly attractive and hence, easily & marketable, taking advantage of the gullibility of our masses. The filmy world is artificial to a degree where even the bourgeois value system is turned upside down. The mental and spiritual energies of our youth are misdirected to this industry-cum-business, while the pockets of the poor are picked on a massive scale every day. The baser instincts in the man's nature are brought out, romanticised and glamourised. Sex, crime, adventure, thrill are all grist to the mill of this giant manufactory of social mischief. The so-called 'New Wave' or 'Parallel Cinema' is neither fish nor fowl, so that it too is not able to rouse the really human in human being, and to supply him with the spiritual muscle to fight against the evil that is lording it over our society as a whole.

whatever be its bonafides. It is a long, long cry for creation of revolutionary cinema. But at least a few steps might be taken in that direction.

Add to this the silent but persistent cultural activities of social imperialists in our country. Apart from financing many a publishing concern each with its own innocent looking name plate social-imperialism has gained a real say in our periodicals by dubious means such as free trips to the 'Heaven of Socialism'. SOVIET LAND Nehru Awards, cultural associations like ISCUS, and lures of the Lumumba University and so on. Russia money is said to have lined the pockets of many a journalist. The revisionists are harvesting rich crops of cash by sales of books brought out by NOVOSTI, A NAUKA and many other Russian publishing concerns and, some of them include Marxist classics themselves. Known for their notorious falsification of history since a long time, they are now bringing out revised versions of the classics which, in a way, are garbled. Moreover, they are used to the dangerous practice of presenting books which compile passages from the classics, torn out of their original context. This is precisely what is termed 'metaphysical' in Marxist terminology - viewing things as disconnected and unrelated. This danger also should be guarded against. Known for presenting some of our epic and Puranic themes regardless of class-content and religious overtones, which the Russians have been doing for a long time in the name of 'art', they are now indirectly encouraging the U.S. imperialist cultural impact since they had themselves fallen prey to it. This amounts to collusion between the two types of Imperialism even on the cultural level. Revisionists in our country have been deflating the popular art forms by taking away its revolutionary content and then by reducing them to cheap levels on occasions like May Day itself. They are also encouraging mass religious festivities. To add to it Russia has been giving some amount of credibility and respectability to things like YOGA in the name of scientific experiments.

And then there is the Russian-backed Afro-Asian Writers' Association and the World Peace Council to lure our intellectuals.

In our country, feudalism is moribund but noted dead yet and so, we see neo-classicism running parallel to realism and the like as a continuous tendency. Bhakti is being promoted on a mammoth scale and in myriad forms. Babas and Mothers are mushrooming, to add to the weight of ACHARYAS and heads of PITHAS and MUTTS. Pilgrimages are ever on the increase. Religion, if it can be called such, is having its second corp. a bumptious one. It is assuming a more serious scale. Even some of our 'liberal' Ex-Progressive' and pseudo- 'revolutionary' intellectuals are themselves developing religiosity by Venerating Babas, Yogis, and Mothers, and even by wearing rosaries of beads around their necks. So also are spreading among our people very dark practices of black magic like Bammati. Our commercial culture is giving wide publicity of course, with an eye on enhanced circulation to all such stuff. A new wave of very cheap historical romanticism is rising. Ghosts and ghouls are stalking the land of feudal bourgeoisie literature of a bastardly species, which is, on that account like a graveyard come alive. Pornography and 'blue films' are becoming more and more open and unashamed. 'Video bars' are rearing their heads. Cricket has become almost the start attraction and a passion even in middle class homes, thanks to T.V. sets, transistors and the like. Theatre too is in the grip of a crisis, as it is torn between traditionalism on one hand, and modernism on the other. None of these two is however of the classical variety because all values have been debased as in other fields of culture. Moribund feudalism clings to the theatre in the shape of 'contract plays' and Jatra plays with puranic themes and with the tin and the tinsel, costumes and the like that naturally go with it. This is confined not only to towns but found 'popular'

Even now in the rural hinterland with illiterate or semi-literate audiences. The second is the so called 'Social play theatre' with the usual love triangle affairs, songs and dances thrown in between for relief. It is not at all realist but only make-believe. Themes are getting poorer in content, though they look contemporary and sound even revolutionary. The 'play of ideas' is confined largely to small sophisticated coteries in big cities, some of it being Indo-Anglian and hence, not at all intelligible to the masses who do not have even an inch of place there. This particular aspect is a shadow of our colonialist and the present imperialist complex. Therefore, we have to build a real people's theatre with none of these trappings, going from village to village and depending upon what little the people can afford in terms of its expenses. It should have the present-day struggles and strivings of the people for their themes and their presentation should offer no difficulty by way of stage, settings, costumes and so on.

Fine arts like Painting and music always aristocratic or elitist are not fine receiving the attention and cultivation they deserve at our hands. Abstract art is above people's heads and also beyond their reach. We can and should attempt to enter this 'close preserve' in order to snatch it away for our own use. The communist movement had, in the past, seen some fine specimens of people's art in painting drawing and the like. We have to restore it but revitalize it in our present context.

In the larger concerns of our social life, communal disturbances, are erupting every now and then and communist forces are getting strengthened in the field of politics, and the present head of the Government is herself promoting these forces both directly and indirectly. Secularism is dead for all practical purposes. Rapism has established

itself as a way of life while dowry deaths have become regular news. The very dignity of man and woman is now in question, just as the sovereignty and independence of the State itself is. Caste is politicised and rivalry and clashes between them are being encouraged. The comprador-bourgeoisie in alliance with feudalism at home and the US imperialism and Russian social imperialism abroad has brought our society to the brink of economic ruin, political servility and cultural degradation.

Bourgeois intellectuals had themselves waged a fight against the evils of society in their own day while the class to which they belonged had been playing a more progressive role. But that class is now rotten through and through and its intellectuals are nowadays ineffectual. If not insidious, and spineless, if not spiteful and arrogant and haughty. Even in the West they have long since lost what little faith they still had in regard to better prospects of soul-destruction, self-effacement and hopeless frustration, which have led their disillusioned younger generations resort to drugs, nudism, rootlessness or else, faith in a redeemer. This phenomenon is finding its feeble echoes and indistinct carbon - copies in our country which has been reduced to the position of a bastard as much in culture as in politics.

It is the New Democratic revolutionary cultural forces that must make it their historic mission to stem this growing rot, and in its place, plant saplings on our soil which will yield tomorrow, wonderful and plentiful flowers of bright red hues. The entire superstructure, including education, morals, philosophy, literature, arts, science and politics need a thorough and violent shake-up. A 'root and branch' transformation has to be effected and that is by none else but the New-Democratic Revolutionary

Cultural movement. Destruction itself implies construction and, therefore, it should be taken in hand with zeal and zest in a concerted way. Our country is vast and it is heterogeneous in essential concerns. There are differing levels of consciousness. All these should be kept in view, when a proper course of cultural campaign is worked out and when the concrete programme is chalked out. Only then will the New Democratic revolutionary cultural forces be doing proper justice to the facts of life as they are in our country. It is an uphill task. But we shall persevere and ultimately succeed in fulfilling it. Whole mountains of ignorance, illiteracy, apathy and indifference have got to be removed from the long and arduous path leading to the New Democratic Revolution.

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A GREAT EXPERIENCE

- Paresh Dhar

It was at the right moment that All India League for Revolutionary Culture officially came into existence with its first conference held on 14-15 October, 1983, at Payare- lal Bhavan in New Delhi. The whole business was ably and successfully piloted by Comrade K.V.R., a renowned revolutionary writer of Andhra Pradesh. I believe that India is now on the verge of a revolutionary cultural upsurge and AILRC will be the fittest organization to co-ordinate and consolidate the cultural activities which are surging in different parts of India today.

A magnificent plethora of cultural programmes that deviated with the conference, impressed and inspired me most. All the items were revolutionary in content and popular in form, brilliantly produced and presented with a professional finesse by troupes of different states coming from all over India. Programmes were given out in various vernaculars, but as melody and dance are two universal languages, they easily crossed the barrier of dialect. Whether a song was sung in Telugu or Tamil or Hindi or Bengali, the multi-lingual audience burst into loud acclaim whenever the ~~recital~~ touched a moving point. The Telugus, the Tamils, the Hindusthanis and the Bengalis equally merged in the same inspiring ebullience. It was really a great experience.

There are intellectuals who think out of ignorance that the toiling people of India are completely under the sway of anti-social culture of the ruling class; that they have been wholly corrupt and degenerated; that revolutionary cultural programmes produced by different groups are to ~~namby-pamby~~ exert any influence ~~with~~ the name. These intellectuals are obviously cynics. They stand aloof from all kinds of mass movements. They are not attached with

any organization that might help them go among the struggling people. They are introverts living absolutely secluded life of their own. Had they had the opportunity of witnessing the grand festival of performing arts at Pyarelal Bhavan, their wrong assumption would have received a severe jolt. All the songs, plays, dances and ballets that were presented, are meant for the common exploited masses. In their own states, the troupes do not hold their programmes on stages by selling tickets to the privileged few. Theirs are open-air and free performances held in parks, fields, street corners, in places adjacent to railway stations and markets, in the industrial area among the workers and in the country side among the peasants. The cultural items faithfully, intelligible and artistically portray contemporary social realities vitally affecting the exploited multitude. The most significant feature of all the productions is the fact that they are imbued with an outlook born of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

How can this unusual phenomenon be explained? Have this unity of ideology throughout India and this culture galore fallen from the sky of their own accord? Not at all. These are the indispensable co-products of revolutionary political movements in different parts of India, which are slowly but steadily gaining ground despite draconian terror and torture unleashed by the state machinery. In fact, revolutionary political movement and revolutionary culture movement always go together, one adding sinew to the other. There cannot be a situation in which one of these two movements exists and the other does not. This is contrary to reality.

The finest cultural programmes were unquestionably presented by Jana Natya Mandali, the far-famed cultural organization of Andhra Pradesh. Its principal artist

Comrade Gaddar is the greatest people's singer in India today. His rich, bold, melodious and sonorous voice is simply matchless. He wears stringed bells round his feet in order to accentuate the effect of his singing with relevant dance movements in folk style. When he sings, not only does his throat sing; it appears that rhythms of all his limbs -- his hands, legs, torso, face and eyes-- have turned musical. His entire song has acquired flesh and blood and has become the incarnation of a sublime figure we can see and touch, besides listening to.

Comrade Gaddar is not only a great singer, but he is a great trainer as well. He has produced more than a dozen Gaddars through his grooming. If we hear any of them sing with our eyes closed, we will inevitably feel that it is the original Gaddar who is singing. Sanju Kumar, Sattyam, Subba Rao, Rama Krishna are such singers, to name only a few, as have faithfully developed the art of their guru. Jana Natya Mandali is not a single troupe at the moment. Not less than eight self-contained troupes have been formed in the eight districts of Andhra Pradesh, each of which holds cultural programmes almost every day among the peasants in the country side.

Next to Jana Natya Mandali, the cultural troupe that enraptured the audience most, was Makkala Kalai Manoram (People's Art Forum) of Tamil Nadu. The readers will be astonished to learn that the team consists of only fifteen teenagers, three girls named Packiam, Senkodi and Ajita, and two boys name Biju and Babu, all aged between 8 and 10 years. They were trained by Comrade Rama Krishna, the disciple of Comrade Gaddar. They sang two remarkable songs with action -- one describing the way the woodcutters are exploited and the other declaring that there are only two castes in society -- the rich and the poor. Each of the

songs was divided into solo and chorus portions. The limbs of the singers spectacularly moved when they sang with their sharp and fluty voice and their faces and eyes wore a terrific expression when they took up arms to resist the class enemies. It seemed that five little Gaddars were acting and singing.

Other teams which presented cultural programmes in the conference, were Nishant Natya Manch (NNM) of Delhi, Aavahaan Natya Manch (ANM) of Maharashtra, Jana Kala Mandali (JKM) of Karnataka, Krantikari Nao Janabadi Sangh (KNJS) of Bihar, Sangharsh Natya Manch (SNM) of Goa and Revolutionary Writers', Artists' & Intellectuals' Association (RWAIA) of West Bengal. NNM presented 'Gaddha' (Pot-hole), a well-directed and well-acted street drama in Hindi, based on a short story written by Kishen Chunder. Another significant and meticulously produced play, focusing on the textile workers' strike in Bombay, was presented by ANM. The song squad of JKM sang brilliantly and moved the audience to a considerable extent. All the cultural teams participating in the conference with their programmes of songs and plays, should now be particularly conscious of one major task before them. It is to fan out more and more among the peasants and workers and raise artists from their communities so that the peasants and workers can organize cultural troupes themselves. This is the only way to strengthen and escalate the revolutionary cultural movement which is throbbing at the moment in its birth throes.

RESOLUTIONS

1) HOMAGE TO MARTYRS

At the outset the Conference of AILRC pays its homage to the martyrs who laid their lives for the emancipation of the down-trodden masses. We cherish with pride the memories of all those who sacrificed their lives for New Democratic Revolution. We pay homage to the cultural activists like Coms. Saroj Datta, Subbarao Panigrahi, Cherabandaraju, and Sri Sri and several others who paved a path in fulfilling the tasks of the cultural front, of the New Democratic Revolution.

2) CONDAMN THE ONSLAUGHT ON CIVIL AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

The AILRC condemns the increasing attacks on activists of Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights movement in different parts of the country. Restrictions on the mobility of members of PUCL in Tamil Nadu, the attack on the combined fact-finding team led by APCLC in Warangal and Karimnagar districts and the continuous police attacks on activists of APCLC in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh, the restrictions on Civil Liberties activists in Bihar are recent instances of repression. The AILRC appeals to all democratic sections to rally round the civil liberties and democratic rights organisation all over the country to protect their right to defend the rights of the people. It extends its fraternal greetings to the human rights cycle rally now being organised by the Association for the protection of Democratic rights(APDR), Calcutta.

3)

HAIL
THE ANTI-FEUDAL STRUGGLES IN THE
BIHAR VILLAGES

The first conference of the AILRC hails the anti-feudal struggles raging in the Bihar country side. The conference notes with deep concern that the State machinery in collusion with the private armies of Zamindars (Bhumi Sena, Brahmrsi Sena, Satyendra Sena, Kunwar Sena, to name a few) has come down heavily upon the revolutionary peasant organisations to exterminate the peasant activists. Within a span of four years several hundred peasants have been thrown in jails, thousands are being regularly harassed and intimidated.

Implication of peasant activists in criminal cases, extortion of money on the assurance of releasing the arrested persons, demolition of houses and molestation of women have become a routine affair in rural Bihar, particularly in Gaya, Aurangabad, Bhojpur, Patna, Kohtas, Nawada and Hazaribagh districts. On an average a peasant is killed every fortnight on one pretext or another by the landlords' men and the police. Murder of four peasants by Bhumi Sena in front of a police camp under Jehnabad subdivision, killing of five peasants by landlords' men at Tarai and murder of five peasants, by the police at Panania are still quite fresh in our memory. In the collieries the mining workers have to bear the brunt of regular humiliation, insult and exploitation by contractors and their mafia. Negligence and callous administration in collieries has been taking toll of workers' lives not quite infrequently. The Chasmala tragedy was repeated at Huraladih, causing least concern for men in power.

The AILRC conference condemns the ruthless repression of the peasant movement by the state machinery

and Zamindars' Senas. It expressess itself vigorously against the mischievous attempts by the feudal forces to foment caste war with an obvious design to create confusion and direct class antagonism along wrong channels.

This conference appeals to all democratic organisations and individuals to express their solidarity with the surging peasant struggles and to condemn in no uncertain terms the repression that has been let loose on the struggles of the toiling masses in Bihar.

4) HOMAGE TO MAHAKAVI SRI SRI

AILRC deeply condoles the passing away of Mahakavi Sri Sri. He revolutionized the Telugu poetry as early as in 1933. For a period of half century he has travelled alongwith the revolutionary ranks. He did not fail to hail Naxalbari and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Hence he became founder President of Revolutionary Writers Association(RWA).

We express our deep noted grief for his sudden demise on 15th June, 1983. In him we lost a warm hearted Comrade in arms who is a literary gaint.

5) CONDEMN THE REPRESSION ON ALL BENGAL JUNIOR DOCTORS FEDERATION BY THE LEFT FRONT GOVERNMENT

The first conference of the AILRC extends its whole hearted support to the nine month long movement conducted by the All Bengal Junior Doctors' Federation, West Bengal, while supporting their basic and action demands, the AILRC expressess grave concern at the undeclared war which the Left Front Government has been continuing against the agitators for a long time. It condemns the brutal police action which the ruling Left Front Government has taken against the doctors while they were protesting against their

pay-cut and non-issuance of completion certificates. It urges upon the Government of West Bengal to come to a settlement with the doctors for the benefit of the general ailing public and to concede the just demands of All Bengal Junior Doctors' Federation, without resorting to any victimisation.

6) ON SRILANKA SITUATION

The Conference vehemently condemns the brutal genocide unleashed against the Tamils of Srilanka by the Sinhalese chauvinists in a systematic and regular pattern and the continuous callous attitude of the Government of Srilanka towards the problem of Stateless persons of Indian Origin. The Conference expresses its full support and solidarity for the just struggles of Sri-lankan Tamils for preservation of their national identity and right of self determination.

7) CONDAMN THE REPRESSION ON CULTURAL ACTIVISTS

The AILRC unequivocally condemns the increasing state repression against poets, writers, singers, artists and other cultural workers all over the country. In Andhra Pradesh, the Secundrabad Conspiracy case against six revolutionary writers among others is still continuing even after nine years. Further, the Telugu Desam Government's massive repression campaign is also affecting cultural workers. Troupes of the Jana Natya Mandali and members of Revolutionary writers Association (RWA) are being obstructed by the police in rural areas, and even violence against them is being practised by the police. Even poor "Progressive" Telugu films are being denied permission by the Censor Board made up of government nominees. In Tamilnadu, the AIADMK government has disallowed the exhibition of "Maa Bhoomi", a Telugu film, and arrested the youth organising the show. The copy

of the film was seized and not yet returned in spite of the explicit demand of important cultural figures all over the country. The cases launched against the six cultural activists still continues.

In Kerala, the Congress (I) government is subjecting the members of Janakiya Sanskarika Vedi to severe repression. In Uttar Pradesh, the government is abetting the attack on journalists of local periodicals and recently one such journalist, an editor, was killed. In Bihar, the harassment of young journalists associated with the Hindi journal "Janamat" is still continuing. West Bengal under a coalition ministry led by CPM is no exception at all to this general bourgeois policy of repression by state machinery.

The AILRC notes that the sporadic attacks on cultural workers are taking place in almost all states and under all kinds of governments. It is clear that wherever culture has become powerful medium in the political struggles of the people, the rulers of all varieties and political colours are feeling threatened by art and culture. It appeals to all democratic sections to condemn this repression.

CONDOLENCE (SARWESWARA DAYAL SAXENA)

The All India League for Revolutionary culture condoles the death of the noted Hindi Writer Sri Sarweshwara Dayal Saxena. Sarweshwar was one of the most versatile writers who expressed himself in many diverse forms such as poetry, songs, short stories, dramas, theatre and essays as one of the few Hindi writers who has been responsible for contemporary social and political developments, he associated himself with many democratic causes. In fact the AILRC conference itself was privileged to have him as the Chairman of its reception committee.

In that sense his greatest achievements has been a conscious attempt to associate in practice with the beliefs he held and causes he championed which he portrayed through his pen. The AILRC deeply condoles his death and conveys its sympathy to his family.

9) DEMOLITION OF PERMANENT DWELLINGS

The AILRC condemns the brutal demolition of permanent dwellings of slum dwellers, arrests of people under the MRTP Act for building a hut, by the Bombay Municipality with the help of police and goondas.

The Bombay Municipality is carrying on the demolition under the slogan of 'A clean City' primarily to create a large tract of land free for real-estate speculators and builders to make profit.

It is this 50 percent of Bomba's population living in most filthy and inhuman conditions who provide cheap labour to the industries of Bombay, who are now being denied the elementary right to housing.

AILRC demands the immediate stoppage of demolition of hutments.

10) THE HUMAN DISASTER

A serious cyclone hit 9 districts of AP on 4th October causing irreperable damage to the crops and lives of people. In West Godavari district itself the estimated damage of the crop is Rs.250 crores. Nearly 123 persons have lost their valuable lives in the floods. By this one can easily understand the severity of the situation. The party at the centre is more responsible for the sad plight of the people because the canals, tanks and other irrigation channels have not been repaired for a long period. So it can be correctly described as the human disaster than that of

nature. The pity is the present ruling party - Telugu Desam and the erstwhile ruling party - Congress (I) are trying to cash this situation by blaming each other and the Sanyasi turned CM, instead of taking necessary steps to rehabilitate the people is giving long lectures on the centre state relationship in all the places he visited.

The first conference of AILRC condemns the inhuman behaviour and the anti people attitude of the state government as well as the central government and to all the people of the country to extend their solidarity to the people of AP, who have been facing severe repression from the reactionary ruling classes, now forced to bear the rage of nature also.

11) DOWRY DEATHS

We cannot skip the daily newspapers without coming across news of the dowry deaths. This has become common phenomenon throughout the country at present.

This monster dowry is sucking the blood of the parents of middle class families. Later the young ladies are becoming a prey to it. Being insulated, humiliated and tortured by their life-partners, many newly married women are burning themselves to death. Not only male chauvinism but also the money hunger are converting the present day youth into callous commercial creatures. The out-dated and heartless joint family system is also taking the toll of young women.

Middle class woman is born and reared up in the narrow confines of the house. She has no social life, worth the name, not to speak of any sort of productive activity that is useful to the Society. For most of the middle class women marriage has become the sole

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