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SPRING THUNDER

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RUPEES THREE

SPRING THUNDER



ON REVOLUTIONARY CREATIVITY*

Kumarendra Parasnath Singh

This Second Conference of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture, being held here at Cherabandarajunagar, has a special significance for all revolutionary forces of the country, and particularly for us. The venue of Cherabandarajunagar which you have erected in the dazzling memory of the martyr-poet and revolutionary fighter, Cherabanda Raju, is nothing but a symbol of our steel determination to keep our glorious tradition of revolutionary heritage and to advance revolution. On this occasion, I join you in bowing my head in the inspiring memory of the martyr-poet and revolutionary fighter, Cherabanda Raju, and all those martyrs who have sacrificed themselves in response to the call of the mass and of time. I express my respectful gratitude to you for affording me this opportunity to be in your midst to reiterate our revolutionary determination. But I consider it important to clear one point which might appear naive by drawing your attention to it.

In Russia, the Great October Revolution was successfully attained alright, encouraged by and obtaining lessons from the Paris Commune. Later, China, too, advanced on the path of socialist reconstruction after negotiating the long and bloody revolution and the civil war. But in our country, even after the *Tehhaga*, Telengana, Naxalbari and Srikakulam struggles,

*This was the inaugural speech delivered on October 13th, 1985 at the Second Conference of AILRC at Sindri, Dhanbad. The Speech, including the quotations, has been rendered from Hindi.

neither revolution could be stabilised on any scientific understanding and solid national basis, nor people's revolution could be proclaimed, nor could any fitting reply be given to the counter-revolutionary and divisive forces opposing the forces of revolution. I mean, the analysis of the reasons behind this has to be done first here within the revolutionary forces themselves; should there be no leak in the pitcher itself and if kept properly covered, there would be little scope for adulteration and pollution.

Comrades ! Before we venture into the main task, I would like to lodge a small complaint of mine. It is enough to overwhelm somebody by putting the responsibility of inaugurating (the event); and here you have applied just that tactics on me. I am at a loss to understand that what should I do now ? Whether I shall first convey my thanks to you for this, or praise my own wisdom which has equipped me to present myself before you in this capacity ? Of course, I admit—and I hope, you, too, will agree with me—that on such occasions, the importance does not rest on the person who inaugurates but on those who prepare the solid ground to build edifice of great ideas.

And before I express my gratitude for this generosity I would like to beg your permission to state that here the real importance is of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture which has, on the national demand, taken many very risky steps in the direction of cultural regeneration. These should rightly be termed as risk-ridden because nothing could be more risky today than to trod along the right path with a grip on the truth of the time.

And even with good intention, (when a man reaches a certain age and) becomes ready to be available for use he becomes a very interesting subject also. I think, I too, have attained that age. To attain the goal of great height in revolutionary organizations like yours, it is necessary to have ladders which, for convenience, may be termed as ideology. The ladder has two sides; on one side stands the party itself, and on the other are all the forces opposed to revolution whose challenge a party has to face. The greater the combined challenge of these forces of opposition the greater the emergence of the revolutionary party. We have ladders that are mostly made of

bamboos and rungs are needed to hold the sides together. Amidst the wranglings of these two arms one climbs up with the support of the rungs. So, if I am to be used, I would like to offer myself at your disposal as the lowest rung.

Comrades ! In our country and outside, all revisionist and counter-revolutionary forces are quite active in many forms in collusion with the imperialist and the fascist forces. While on the one hand they are trying to take all necessary measures to stop you from advancing on the creative and revolutionary path, on the other, they themselves are locked up in a struggle for survival, too. This struggle for survival (of theirs) can stand only at the expense of our revolutionary solidarity. Taking advantage of our interneccine feud and splits their activities at dismemberment are quite rapid sharp. This is a very serious cause of our concern.

While they are spreading attractive nets around us by enlisting support of pseudo-culture, they have dug up pot-holes too, in the veil of their own 'analysis' of the times and 'thoughts'. They are up in arms to disintegrate our land and sky, and, as a consequence to their undesirable infiltration, most of our revolutionary and creative forces having fallen victims to misconception, started changing to anarchical tendencies of abandonment and disintegration. If the over-laden ox is sitting in a crest-fallen fashion here; the wooden horse is whining to attain martyrdom there—from one end to the other cavalry of wooden horses has started lining up. In our forthcoming battle is to be fought relying on these wooden war-horses then please know of its outcome clearly right now.

I do not stand here to offer any extra comment on this. I am glad that your vigilant eyes are on these facts, that you are also quite vigilant about these tendencies of disruption and disintegration, and what is most heartening is that realising this genuine urgency of consolidating the revolutionary solidarity which is standing erect, you are making ever greater sacrifices for the emancipation and betterment of the nation. This assembly of today's is a proof of this fact as also of your readiness. And in the course of its formal inauguration, I offer my revolutionary salute to you all.

Comrades ! When I am standing before you, it is not fair on my part to dememorize the fact that I am in the course of this

national struggle of ours the forces as are opposed to us and grown from our midst are not less than those from outside. I believe, when I am concentrating your attention to such concealed forces as are coming up from our midst, you would act with greater vigilance and care and the revolutionary solidarity which is emerging from our midst would be stronger and more considered than before.

To start an organization—and especially a revolutionary one—is in itself a very complex job. Unless keeping in view the urgency and far-reaching influences of people's struggle having been forced from self-centeredness, partisan narrowness, disunity and theoretical inertness, its cordon of discipline and programme are not correctly decided, chances are that the process of dissolution would start at the organizing stage itself. I have had some occasions to be associated with certain leftist camps of my time. But there, too, I did not see as much mental preparedness and activities to strengthen the organization as in the hectic activities of a certain coterie usurping the chair claiming their close connection with the leadership. At the outset, even placing myself at the position of a secessionist agitator, I had to oppose such an un-organizational activities and anti-cultural tendencies. I did oppose it openly, and I opposed it not because I was not in favour of any writers' organization but of individuals in such organizations and/or coterie system and the 'retirement-benefit' tendency—to seek nourishment by flag-selling/apportioning the party colour—generated therefrom were to be opposed.

My proposal was to march in the vast national panorama first by making the basic foundation of writers' unity and the creative streams together, whereas they were eager to grind their own axes on their own self-absorption and theoretical narrowness.

Under such circumstances, the main question of organization, instead of remaining attached to, slipped away from, the preliminaries of socialistic revolution on the solid doctrinaire foundation, unentertaining on inducting anybody from anywhere to have a large gathering. And the sad consequence that emerged was that everything worked on the surface; tall claims were loudly proclaimed but the very organization could not be saved from becoming a victim of crippleness. What was

to stand as a source of power of cultural activities and revolutionary creativity ended in the frustrating conclusion of cultural stagnation and *status quo*. What could be a more lamentable situation? Our creative priorities are decided not by our likes and wishes but by the inner necessities of the time and the society and the urgency of the struggle. This is a fundamental difference between anarchical idealists and revolutionary materialists.

Creative imagination and/or abstract idealism is as much fatal as non-revolutionary eagerness for revolution. For want of any proven emotive organization and a solid ideological base, if one remains pseudo-artist in the name of art, then the other stays as a sham revolution in the name of revolution. It is necessary for the class-conscious writer to be very careful about both these two tendencies.

Our struggle should not be for the flag but to add colour, direction and speed to it. Happily, in your mission you are not marching in a closed-mind condition. But, you have consciously discharged your duty by leaving the job of history to history itself, and blending culture with its very dynamism. For you, cultural organization stands on the pedestal of people's struggle, not a centre performing acrobatics for a few art-acrobats to show their expertise; and in essence you neither stand to commit the mistake of being 'the second line of defence of the ruling class', nor do you stand like wooden horses to make the nation over to the enemy. The country is still in the grip of semi-feudal and semi-colonial exploitation and repression; and we are to smash this semi-colonial, semi-feudal structure first. No people's war can succeed in liberating the land ignoring this question. I am even more happy that despite the waywardness of the leftist parties, you have taken note of the historical process of development of class-struggle from a critical angle, and you have underscored the fact that the Naxalbari-uprising is the historical culmination of inherent contradictions of our society; and is the right course for India's struggle for freedom. Still, it will be quite natural that the All India League for Revolutionary Culture, whose foundation you have laid should stand on the experiences and militant elements of all cultural missions and people's struggles waged so far.

Attempts of every person who dreams of a revolution—marches forward with revolutionary intentions and is pledged to March with time—are indeed to establish and realize the exigencies of age. Their entire creativity rests on it. But if any individual or a group, instead of establishing the time, tries to establish oneself, then creativity of the revolution is hampered and a great obstacle stands in the way of the organization. There, neither time, nor revolution but priority of some particular individuals or groups gets precedence, and the priority of time and/or revolution is relegated to the rear. When Marx was studying his time—he was engaged in establishing it ; he had no concern for establishing himself. Lenin was not busy in his own advancement but for the advancement of his time. And Gorky's entire crusade was not in search of Gorky—but in search of his time—to establish the truth of his time. Likewise, when Lu shun, in his endeavour to construct his time, was shedding blood in profusion, and Mao was crossing river after river and scaling mountain after mountain, the chief thought of Lu Shun or Mao was not to project himself but to establish and advance time. In this order also the Communist parties of Russia or China were established. There, the uppermost question was not to establish any particular party but to establish the era ; and parties were organized as a result of correct assimilation of time by some right and devoted people at the proper moment. Those parties among the many blocs of parties emerged unscathed in their scramble for gaining the central leadership because their understanding of their time was very clear, perhaps clearest. Today, it is very important for every conscientious man having concern for his nation and land, to know the actual character of those who are with and/or above him—and on which factor stands their urgency. He is also to observe the character of the system—administrative and judicial—to which he belongs. How much those who have come forward waving slogans for betterment of and obedience for the country intend to do for the land and the people and how much for their own sake ? What is the mystery behind the democratic kitchen garden and people's welfare in a State in which the victims of death and done to death in the name of bread and justice have exceeded tens of millions ? It is very easy to jail or execute

any body in the name of establishment and peace but who comes forward to identify and haul before the docks the real culprits or to bring them to the platform of the people after correctly analysing the reasons to inflict punishment ? How many of these sharks and whales, the big alligators amongst us have been exposed till now ? What is the relation between the crime of the person who, driven by dire straits or panick-stricken at the sense of insecurity, commits a murder, and the social status and prosperity of the big culprits who stand behind the curtain of that crime ?

Whenever someone known as respectable or big is murdered the newspapers get a field day ; but which newspaper and/or government report accounted for the big politician-criminals, thugs, profiteers and hoarders who, living in their safe haven, murder thousands ? Comrades ! Nobody is ready to produce its balance-sheet ; but someday you will have to come forward to settle the account. This is also one of our great responsibilities towards the land.

Even today, and detached from all facts, a picture which stands out before me is one of a very big and live peepul tree. It cannot be said for certain how old it is. But it is far greater and wonderful than it is old. Till now in this eternal India of ours, it is not known how many changes were made and un-made of its outline, rose up again and at the end vanished altogether from the canvas. But the peepul still stands, as it is, Sun, rain, cold or hail made no difference for it. Wave after wave of cyclones and blizzards had been braved, earthquakes withstood, and even catastrophe tried to uproot it by embracing it with its universal destruction. But it did not waver, nor uprooted. Its roots went deeper every day and its branches challenged the infinity of the sky. This peepul stands today spreading its shade high above us—it stands as a very great challenge inspite of the unending stream of our manliness and conscience. At times, its branches are sheared and we look on ; its legs continue in its march ; and occasionally, even its roots are also hit, we still look on. We, over whom it spans its shadow day and night, do not appear to be as concerned about its safety as we are about ourselves. Then—it is to be noted—what meaning our own security carries, after all ?

Yet, it is also true that certain people from amongst us had

been standing up ; people, who, quite oblivious of their own lives, have stretched their heads and heart to save its roots, trunk and branches from murderous attacks, and thereby had their limbs amputated. Fortunately, even today, a very lively and devoted tradition of nourishing it with sweat and blood still survives before us. At the outset, one very important task of ours is to keep that tradition alive—at any cost.

What is surprising is that inspite of its repeated shearing, our peepul goes on growing even bigger and higher day by day. But the authentic history of the long battle which had been waged and the sweat and blood shed to safeguard it has not come before us, although it is extremely essential today. For want of this neither could we learn proper lessons from all our past mistakes, nor could we choose any correct path for our advancement. And the trouble is that what ought to be written in blood in our annals cannot be made the subject to be copied by effemeral ink on paper. That can only be kept steady in blood—by concrete transformation of one's revolutionary belief and constructive determination. But the problem is that as the struggle is gaining in intensity, our revolutionary vision and understanding—certain boundaries of fundamental picture of the struggle—are also becoming automatically clear. You are to break those boundaries first, and at the same time, to reconstruct the tactics and own understanding of the struggle.

Our nation is even higher and shadowy than the peepul standing before me—its roots are even more deeply embedded. We cannot measure by the mountain ranges of the Himalaya and the Aravalli, nor by the flows of the Sindhu, the Brahmaputra, the Ganga and the Godavari, nor by the expanse of the Arabian Sea or the Indian Ocean. It is above these all but is something embracing them all as well. Nobody is a greater patriot, devoted to the nation and a greater maker of history than he who has captured its correct picture in his eyes and is ready to shed—and is shedding— his blood to defend its integrity. His blood flows not for disintegration and destruction but for the unity and in the making of the nation. Persons or classes opposed to him—in whatever garb and character may be—are today most responsible for the disintegration and destruction of the nation. They have the advantage of shouting

from the dizzy height, have the right to decide the destiny of the nation, and they can, forgetting everything, declare themselves to be the supreme guards of time. But then, very soon a time is also to come when every drop of the blood which has flown for the defence of the nation will emerge in full glory again and will settle the question of who is for the nation, and who is opposed to it. There is a great difference between the claimant, by hook or crook, of history by grabbing in deceitful manner all tools of exploitation, repression and inhuman torture of people aroused for their rightful and democratic rights, and to stand in a correct and successful way in the evolution of history of nation's freedom and construction. This very great difference, in my opinion, is being developed by time in its own fashion. Only this much expectation is from you that you stand by it; in its building, as you deem proper, you actively participate in it.

The complex and challenging reality of cultural regeneration and creative mission—truth of time—may be found near about us. By that will be decided all conditions of our art and literature, and our revolutionary creativity will be assimilated with our mainstream following that only. Writing to clarify the essence of ideology and the inter-relation of realism to Margaret Harkness about his novel, the *Town Girl*, Engels wrote in his letter: 'In my opinion, realism apart from the truth of the statement is the re-creation of special characters under special circumstances'. And to amplify this statement he went on: 'being surrounded from all sides by the forces of repression, the rebellious resistance by the working class, its violent attempts to regain its rights as human beings—whether conscious or sub-conscious—are all recorded in history and that is why, it has secured its own place in the field of realism'.

On the surface, the above statement would appear quite simple. But studied carefully, it will reveal that here Engels has given extracts of man's entire creativity—his historic mission standing behind his construction in time-space—with reference to dialectics in only three theories. Re-creation of special characters under special circumstances, the working class, rebellious resistance to forces of repression, and its violent attempts to regain its own rights as human beings, these are

three basic directive theories which not only decide our cultural works but also exposes the alertness of our freedom struggle. Today nothing can be more important than to build and organize conscious people's organized resistance against the disruptive forces of repression and torture. Admittedly, we do not have enough means to make everybody literate and educated ; but if we take proper measures with full devotion, then we can make the most illiterate of men acquired of men's revolutionary building-power and conscious of his social rights. They can be made to stand self-united by arousing in them the power to identify the good and the acquirable simultaneously to posses the good and the acquirable and to take care of their rights. The flower of revolution can be made to bloom in their dreams.

Revolution is first of all creation, thereafter something else. The vision which has no clear-cut blue-print for construction, can not even search the right direction for revolution. Revolutionary excitement is something—may also be correct in its place ; but when it is not nourished by revolutionary intentions, it makes no sense. Revolution has its own conditions and only he can correctly understand those conditions who follows, instead of the written history, the unwritten history—facts hidden in his own soul, and whose understanding of history develops in the midst of struggle. Misfortune befalls when some understanding is thrust on him from above, instead of emanating from struggle. It is the point where the difference of scientificness and unscientificness of revolutionary powers emerges very clearly. Comrades ! This is a very clear matter. To be in the company of one's own time, even if we do not start from the distant part, still, the reasons of why our march in the historic process of progress of the armed struggles of Telengana, Naxalbari or Srikakulam had not been as successful as one wished, have to be searched at first within and amongst ourselves. The process of revolutionary consciousness and creativity being hampered by middle-class vacillation and self-centredness has to be assessed and realized by being above the hesitational and emotional fence. Deviation from revolution orbits very close to revolutionary path. And this can be steered clear of such a situation only when we can unite by rising above the distinction of 'I' and 'we', and its character-

hero—the aroused people—is followed correctly and in entirety.

Here again, it is necessary to understand this aroused mass. The aroused mass in itself, is composed of, in the form of centre of authority, embracing the vast proletariat, is the great class of womb of possibility of its time which has taken its shape by the sum total of the peasant-worker and its allied forces, and which is, today, in some form or the other, deprived of its proper rights and social status—whose own creativity, having worsted by labour relations, has not developed fully, but which is compelled to grab the inevitable of its time in its march to rise against the inhuman fate imposed on it by the ruling class. This compulsion of the aroused mass has great possibilities the final responsibility to organize and develope which to revolutions and irresistible power of creation, is ours today. This responsibility will also be our acid test during struggle of our time to stand in proper manner.

But the people who find it difficult to admit this responsibility view it in the form of false morality. Of course, all such things which emphasise to go together with creation, would appear meaning-less to them ; and they do appear so. And they advise us of a different kind of morality—non-violent—shorn of human pursuit. Today, we are to say to them, repeating Lenin's words : 'In the eyes of communists, all morality is inherent in the united discipline and conscious people's struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in any indestructible morality, and unmark all false wishful dreams attributed to it. The aim of morality is to elevate the human society to a higher plain and to aid in the emancipation of exploitation of labour from the establishment'.

Revolution is, in scientific comparison with labour and productivity re-creation of human relationship, and demands sacrifice of 'I' and 'we' for building its time. Only then the vast united form of time which grows in the womb of revolution can emerge. But the hodge podge system through which we are passing today, it is difficult to say who are in favour of revolution, time and the nation and who are opposed to it. Claim after claim is pronounced on the one side while on the other it is the time revolution and claimants of revolutions are not being saved from splits. We stand divided into blocs

instead of being united and being left behind the era are becoming quite separated. And all these are the outcome of, what may be said, the attempt to negotiate the path with the help of others' sticks closing the eyes. We shall have to cover the field, woods and mountains with our own feet. Today, it is a concrete but horrifying truth of our time ; and to move forward closing the eyes from it is abandonment and could be nothing but suicidal. The talk of great strength in the limbs is being heard since a long time. But the organized and united pictures of those limbs—which are also equipped with correct revolutionary intentions and urgency—have failed to emerge till now. People eager to burden themselves with the sky on their heads should have their feet firmly entrenched first on earth on the revolutionary truth of the earth. A castle in the air stands in air only. We can perhaps manage with thatched cottages even if we do not have castles ; but we must at first have clear brain, heart and limbs and other organs of our own. Comrades ! The striking of the big danger is imminent. Its signs are already discernible. Today, nothing could be a greater blunder than close one's eyes from it and remain absorbed in any carelessness or gaiety. Facing you at this juncture I am unable to suppress this concern and having found you all sharin it I again congratulate you and expressing my gratitude to you for inviting me in your midst I conclude my speech.

The gathering of clouds alone does not appear bad ; rather something like a new challenge presents before us to enthuse us. But the untimely roaring of clouds markes no sense. It becomes meaningful only when they rain too ; and at the right place and time. Only then can they attune themselves with the earth's music.

**GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT
TO
THE 2nd CONFERENCE OF AILRC, SINDRI,
OCTOBER, 13, 1985**

Dear Comrades,
Red Salutes.

It was precisely two years back that the All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) had its inaugural conference in New Delhi with tremendous enthusiasm and brilliant optimism. At that time it consisted of the following cultural organisations.

1. Revolutionary Writers, Artists, and Intellectuals, Association of West Bengal ;
2. Krantikari Navjanvadi Samskritik Sangh of Bihar ;
3. Aavhaan Natya Manch of Maharashtra ;
4. Sangharsh Natya Manch of Goa ;
5. Jana Kala Mandali of Karnataka ;
6. People's Art Forum of Tamilnadu ;
7. Revolutionary Writers' Association of Andhra Pradesh ;
8. Jana Natya Mandali of Andhra Pradesh.

Vast areas of our country were not yet covered and the AILRC was to that extent not wholly representative of the country in a geographical sense. A great responsibility therefore devolved upon it, not only to extend its activities to new regions but also to consolidate itself through further strengthening of its constituent units. It is an aspect of our immense duty to history that has been unfolding itself right before our eyes in the shape of determined revolutionary struggles by the oppressed millions of our countrymen for an altogether new type

of social and political order, based on radical economic restructuring of the present semi-feudal and semi-colonial set-up. This could only be accomplished properly in the light and under the guidance of a scientific world-outlook which meant for us none other than Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dze Dong Thought, applied really creatively with full consideration of our unique realities. And we all grasped 'culture' as an all inclusive mental reflection of material life, without confining the term to literature and arts as usually done. We realised that culture, as everything else, is of the people, for the people and by the people. And for us, the word 'people' means all the exploited and oppressed sections of the population, who have been on the path of revolutionary struggle especially after the Naxalbari uprising of 1967. It is to contribute culturally to this historic struggle that we undertook to strive to the utmost and so, the 'culture' we are upholding is not merely popular culture but the culture of the fighting millions who are seeking consciously to reshape their destiny. It is revolutionary culture, in fine.

Such a conception of culture gives it, its real worth. It clearly demarcates itself from all elitist trends and opposes itself to the culture of the ruling classes. It draws its very life from the aspiration, will and even dreams of the people and goes back to the people to inspire them, enthuse them, fortify their determination and steel their temper in their epochal undertaking. It is at the same time revolutionary and romanticist-revolutionary in so far as it aids the cause of the revolution and romanticist in far as the revolution is yet to succeed and therefore, a deep and strong yearning for such a consummation makes it cultural output and also determines its tone. We are not day-dreamers and much less, lotus-eaters. Nor do we shut ourselves up in ivory towers or confine ourselves to academic groves. Fully awake to the violently-changing reality, grappling with it and seeking to clasp the forelock of the horse of change in order to master it, we are realists in the true sense of the word. But since reality is not yet thoroughly changed and since it still retains much junk that ought to be removed from our onward march, we are obliged to draw swords of criticism against it and, in that sense, aspects of critical realism also find their way in our

cultural work. Our goal being Socialism, a forward-looking, buoyant and bright optimistic outlook is its preeminent characteristic, instead of the bourgeois variety of critical realism which had failed to demonstrate a valid alternative to the criticised social reality of its day.

The people and their immemorial oral tradition is the raw-material for our creative product. This should not be allowed to mislead us into thinking that folk-art and folk-culture are, by themselves, pure and unsullied. Since the ideology of the ruling class in any age happens to be the ruling ideology, people, in their subjugation and ignorance, could not but become victims to it and consequently, folk-culture contain much that is anti-people, superstitions, retrogressive and self-destructive. Pure gold must undergo any number of cleansing operations by fire but it can't be found ready-made at the subterranean levels, i.e., at its source.

The culture of every nation contains two distinct elements. The first, is that of the rulers and the second is that of the ruled. It is the latter which possesses the genuinely popular characteristic that is positive, healthy and therefore, living. This should be separated from the useless chaff and carefully gathered to be given an opportunity for deliberate and well-calculated care and sustinence. It is on this solid base that the edifice of revolutionary culture has to be reared.

A clean slate can't be had even for the asking of it in social life. Our mental world is crammed with any amount of material, some of which can be described as fossilized since it has outlived the social stage in which it had been alive. Our consciousness has retained, in its inner layers, such phantom-like substances of bygone ages of social life like religion, caste and subordination of women. The succeeding stages in man's social progress fastened them only because they suited the books of all the ruling classes hitherto, since they were all exploitative minorities, lording it over the vast multitudes, economically, politically and also culturally. One of the foremost tasks of the revolutionary cultural movement is precisely the elimination of all vestiges of backwardness by means of an uncompromising struggle against them. Otherwise they will certainly retard the growth of our society.

More contemporary is the baneful impact of capitalist culture

on the popular mind. The Indian bourgeoisie is an illegitimate and belated offspring of Indian feudalism and foreign colonialism. In spite of its phenomenal growth after world war I, it did not hesitate to strike a political deal with feudal forces for gaining political power and at the same time it did not flinch from compromising with British imperialism, taking advantage of the tide in the nationalist movement. Having become the ruling class after 1947 transfer of power, it took feudal elements for its junior partner and, together, they bartered away the country's economy to the two super-powers, opening the doors wide to all sorts of 'aid' with visible and invisible strings attached to it. The situation has come to such a sorry pass that the two contenders to global hegemony have succeeded in borrowing into the very foundations of our entire social edifice and eating into two vitals of its opponent independence and sovereignty. This could not but result into a deep penetration of imperialist culture, producing in the process a hideous amalgam of all that is harmful for people's real interests. Capitalist culture is in itself an unmixed evil. It knows only of prices and profits of things, physical as well as mental, but not of their values. Commercialisation is its normal way of deforming and de-humanising every such object because of its utilitarian outlook. Consumerism is the result and it acts so very powerfully on man's mind as no sugar-coated pill of poison could possibly do. Not even art and literature can escape its deadly clasp which is higher alluring and bewitching but false and deceptive.

It is all made-up for public display. It amounts, in short, to window-dressing, done to perfection. It looks 'Mr. Clean', but it is really 'Mr. Foul and Dirty'. All this does not, however, amount to saying that revolutionary culture throws out capitalist culture, lock, stock and barrel. The scientific revolution that capitalism has brought about and the technological leaps it has taken must provide the material basis for the new social order we are fighting for. Proper caution and discrimination must, however, be employed in accepting it, only in order to adapt it suitably to the requirements of that society. In other words, the new culture, for which we are striving, necessarily includes many of the positively beneficent elements of capitalist culture, after ridding it of the motive of

private profit and class-aggrandisement, while simultaneously fostering the genuinely popular elements in our national culture. Only then can a real people's culture come into being.

Generalities apart, let us now turn to the specific and immediate issues that should engage our serious attention.

II

Comrades, we are all witness to changes in our national life after our inaugural conference two years back. Some of them are significant indeed. It was not a mere change in the head of the government that took place after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. Her son could succeed her so very smoothly as if it were only a matter of fact that something like dynastic power has become a marked feature of the Indian variety of bourgeois democracy. Even this aspect does not count as much as the shift in priorities that characterises the regime of Rajiv Gandhi, priorities that are bound to leave a very deep impress on policies affecting the destinies of our countrymen profoundly.

Glib talk of a "leap into the 21st century" has beneath it a new strategy of the Indian bourgeoisie, which is thinking in terms of a technological revolution what with computerisation and other western models, adopted with obvious success in third world countries like South Korea and Taiwan, not to speak of Japan. Impart of advanced technologies is to go hand in glove with increasing 'privatisation' of our economy, thus spelling out death even to the milk-and-water socialism of Jawaharlal Nehru, with his emphasis of "capturing the commanding heights" of the economy and with his pronounced stress on the Public Sector. The 7th five year-plan bears proof of the strident aspirations of the country's big bourgeoisie, which is comprodor, but not merely dependent. All this is going to integrate it into the general framework of the world bourgeoisie, which is subject to the law of periodic crisis. Even the phenomenon of its occational growth can not be taken for a sure symptom of its health, but it is only a transient phase of the general disease, in the course of which, there might well appear signs of improved health. The calm

and compusure of Rajiv Gandhi is only a make-believe. It is a mask, hiding a desparate bid to solvage the country's economy from the mess into which it had sunk under his mother, when the state-bureaucratic capital entrenched itself and extended itself so much that it became counter-productive, stultifying the public sector undertakings and at the same, stifling the growth of the private sector to the extent to which it could reach out. The process of privatisation had indeed commenced in the last years of Mrs. Gandhi by means of relaxation of FERA, removal of export-curbs and a drive for increased productivity. It was she who had begun opening the doors ajar for Multinationals to creep in and then to march in. Rajiv Gandhi has only removed the doors for them to rush in and to take over vital segments, not only of commerce and industry but also of agriculture and irrigation in a all-too-ready collusion of the country's bourgeoisie. It is not even collusion or collaboration but subservience and tutelage. The day is not far off for privatisation of roads and communications. Automation and computerisation are going to replace labour-intensive work with capital-intensive work and so, will increase unemployment of manual work more and more. But the wonder is that all this is being eulogised as 'pragmatism' and 'realism' even by knowledgeable sections of our intelligentia. Besides the much lamented 'brain-drain', there is now brain-mortgage.

Comrades, this short excursion into the country's political economy has been attempted only to place before you the general context, against which should be set the changes that are steadily gaining an increasing hold on our cultural life. Need I have to re-state that for us, revolutionary cultural activists, political economy is no forbidden area but, on the contrary, is in its own way the decisive factor in influencing and shaping our culture ?

Think of the TV now. Think of its so-called 'soft-ware'. And you will not fail to perceive the consequences of the penetration of Imperialist finance into our economy. If the culture of the ruling class has become debased and in fact vulgar, if in the name of popular entertainment the real tragedies of our people are not being exhibited, but only the pettily comic-looking aspects of the life of urban petty-bourgeoisie are

stealing the limelight, this is deliberate mischief on the part of the ruling class, taking forms of misinformation and more, disinformation that is sought to pervert the people's consciousness and to divert it to channels which are safe for the ruling class. Plagiarisation or poor imitation of foreign serials only shows the cultural bankruptcy of the manipulators of this mass-medium. And now think of the advertising time set apart increasingly for private commercial and industrial corporations, Indian or foreign. The serials are getting prepared to their order and tailored for their motives. It is they who are calling their tune, each in its own way, and the TV does only the dancing accordingly. Even the question of language employed almost exclusively by the TV implies the much deeper issue of the predominant section of the Indian Big Bourgeoisie for whom the EKTA and the AKHANDTA of the 'nation' even in the shape of a master-language provides the best opportunity to turn the country into a vast and undivided market, and so a happy hunting-ground for immense profiteering.

Think now of the 'Indian Panorama' displays abroad. Folk-items apart, it is the feudal component of the country's culture that is given the pride of place, whether it is an Anglicised version of the RAMAYANA or sculptural glories of Konarak and Khajuraho or dance items of Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Kathak or music recitals of Karnatak, Hindustani, Ghazal and Tumri styles and gharanas. None of them ventures to give even a glimpse of the conditions really prevailing here degradation of material and cultural life to abysmal levels. Nonetheless, it all succeeds in forging the bonds between the decadent culture of the west and the fossilized culture of India and this is exactly what our ruling classes and their foreign masters need. There is nothing worth the name that the Indian capitalist culture can present to foreign audience with pride and self-satisfaction.

Why this colossal squandering of public money on empty or false shows ? If it is madness, there is a method even in madness. What is it but a cultural conspiracy to conceal the real ? Suppression of the true is suggestion of the false. And how cruel, how hard, how ugly our life's reality is. The country is seething with discontent, torn with strife, wounded

in body and spirit. The strength of the industrial-military complex has become really formidable. Any resolute expression of fighting-spirit by the people is being gagged or silenced with a ruthless employment of fraud and farce. Criminalised politics is giving way to politicised criminality right from the top. The army is employed even against a section of disgruntled population, be the disgruntlement over the question of ascertaining a distinct identity either as a regional or a linguistic or even a religious community. The State has itself become the embodiment of legalised and institutionalised terrorism in this process and it has the cheek to enact a bill penalising 'Terrorism' on the part of individuals or organised groups. It can well afford to be lawless itself but demand from citizens a strict adherence to lawless laws. It can indulge in murders either in so-called encounters or in police lock-ups and shoot down people in broad day light at will but it is out to deal death, brutally and savagely, to citizens for attempts to pay the licensed murderers in their own coin, just because they are said to represent the state and its unchallengeable dictates and commands that do not enjoy any real popular sanction or approval. It can brutalize itself to such an uncivilized and sub-human level that it can alone enjoy the privilege and exercise the prerogative of doing to death even those who ask for civil rights and democratic liberties for the people who are the mainstay of any decent and responsible government. Is it not a matter of utter shame that a so-called democracy should turn into a demonocracy, that too only in the interests of private property either in land or in capital ?

Comrades, the people are passing through really hard times. Their genuine problems are not getting solved. On the contrary, military solutions are being resorted to more and more from one end of our country to another. Force has obtained sanctity just because it is employed by the State. What is the duty of intellectuals not only to the people but to themselves in such a crisis-situation like the present one ? It is a sorry but undeniable fact of life that much more than apathy marks the attitude of the generality of the intelligentsia. It is true that their skins have become hardened into hides, which not even an owl can penetrate. Their consciousness has become blunted so much that, like politicians, they too are

increasingly prone to look upon daily tales of stress and distress, deaths and statemurders as only a matter of routine. There is more than meets the eye in the case of a large chunk of them. It has got absorbed into the Establishment to a point of near-identification so much so its alienation from the people and their vital concerns is tending to get total. So, it is not our special duty to denounce them, to criticise them and to direct our barbed shafts at them, only to arouse them and to try to win at least a fraction of them in the end to jump over the fence to the people's organised camp ?

Comrades, we had thought of this league as a vanguard in the sphere of culture. The duty of a vanguard should not be mistaken for what is derived as 'Vanguardist' in the sense that it advance alone so far ahead of the others that the latter are first lost behind and then lost for ever. A vanguard should, on the contrary, only give a lead which can be followed even by laggards and sluggards, doubting Thomases and late Latifs, though haltingly. The level of their consciousness being what it is, is it not our duty to raise it by slow degrees so that they too can join us in our struggle before long ?

Taking the entire sphere of culture as a single unit, an united front has to be such that includes elements possessing advanced levels of consciousness and those with lower ones. Because of this disparity, the latter might often show a firm will on a deep grasp and they should not be left out solely on account of this. A lot of hard effort is naturally called for in the matter of rendering them our allies at a future date. It is only that segment of intelligentsia that has decidedly and deliberately set its face hard against the interests of the people fighting for New Democracy and Socialism that we should combat with and seek to vanquish in a protracted struggle, marked with uncompromising firmness and merciless hostility. With all other segments, we have to strive for establishing different types of amicable relations with an ultimate view of enlisting their support for this massive cultural effort.

The League can not put up tall claims of solid achievement of the tasks which it had taken upon itself in 1983. It can be said that this period is too short. It is not mere excuse. Most of the constituent units, with one or two exceptions, were new and rather green. But their collective achievement

falls some what short of their professed aim. This should not be allowed to dampen our spirit but, on the contrary, be only a spur for intense effort. The individual record of most of the units is really creditable. Their work has been substantial and their activities have been wide-ranging. No issue of public importance missed their notice and attention which manifested themselves in concrete work, be it the organisation of workshops in various genres of literature and culture, be it street-plays, song-and-dance performances, be it the active participation in people's struggles either in Kashiari or in the Jharkhand region or in Telangana, be it in civil liberties' activities in Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra, be it academic issues touching masses of students as in Goa, be it participation in agitations against evictions of hutmentdwellers in Bombay or in relief-work among the victims of communal violence in Bhiwandi. Cultural tours by one unit in another State have not only strengthened fraternal bonds between different units, but helped in the spread of the message of revolutionary culture. RWAIA's tour of Bihar, JNM's and PAF's tour of Tamil Nadu, JNM and ANM's tour of Maharashtra and Gujarat, KSS (Bihar)'s tour of Sundarbans, and the present country-wide tour by RWA and JNM in the name of AILRC are of major importance. In effect, the constituent units have, by their individual exertions, improved their own image, but made the existance of the AILRC as a force felt in different regions of the country.

It is this simple-looking achievement that has gone into the expansion of the AILRC number-wise and region-wise. Many writers, social scientists and cultural workers have come forward to join the ranks of the League in their individual capacity. The Krantikar Sahit Sabha of Punjab, the Revolutionary Cultural Movement of Tamilnadu and Krantikari Buddhjeevi Sangh of Bihar have opted to become constituent units of the League. This augurs well for it and let me hope, comrades, that its strength in numbers as well as in activities will grow in days to come, provided our will and sense of purpose are translated in terms of devoted and sustained work, committed as we are all to the great and invincible cause of the New Democratic Revolution. Repression is usually the expression of the defeatist spirit of the enemy who

resorts even to extra-legal methods to stem the rising tide of any movement of the people. It is indeed a sign of the people's own strength. Let us, therefore, face the future in the spirit of true revolutionaries working in the wide arena of culture as a revolutionary cultural battallion.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !

LONG LIVE AILRC !

SINDRI
13-10-1985

K.V.R.
General Secretary, AILRC.

Amendments to the Constitution of AILRC

- (1) **Membership** : An individual can become member of the AILRC only when his/her application is placed before the Executive with the knowledge and consent of the constituent unit of the state to which he/she belongs. Similarly, another Association seeking membership in a state must be recommended by the constituent unit already functioning there.
- (2) Representation to constituent units on the Executive should be not on an individual basis but on the basis of authorisation by the said unit.
- (3) The name of AILRC's irregular journal in English and Hindi is 'Spring Thunder'.

NATIONALITY QUESTION IN BIHAR AND ITS CULTURAL MANIFESTATION

Bihar, with an area of 173,876 square kilometres, is one of the major States of India. With the exception of the Gangetic plains, 2/3 of its area is high land which is known as the plateau of Chhotanagpur. It is full of forests, hills and hillocks. Valuable timber and herbs are available in abundance there. Among the wood *gamhar*, *mahua*, *sakhua*, *karam*, *seesham*, *palash* and *kher* grow in abundance. *Kher* is used in producing *katha*. *Bidis* are made from *taindu* leaves. It fetches business worth millions of rupees. Honey is also tapped in quantity in this region. It is the store-house of minerals. Coal, iron ore, copper, aluminium, mica, bauxite and uranium are found there.

As the plateau slopes towards the North and the East, its rivers also flow in both these directions. The rivers, flowing towards North, merge in the Ganga. They are the Sonbhadra, North Koyal, Punpun, Morhar, Phalgu etc. Among the rivers flowing towards East, Barakar, Mayurakshi, Damodar, Swarnarekha and South Koyal are important. Taking the smaller and bigger ones with them, they fall into the Bay of Bengal. On stepping down the plateau adjoining the plains we find 31 per cent of the total population comprised of the *Adivasis*, the tribals. Their language, customs and the way of life are quite different from the rest of the population. The main products of the area are maze, jinaura, Arhar, gondli etc. Paddy is also grown in some places. Sarguja is also cultivated. Oil is extracted from *mahua* seeds. But forests are the main source of livelihood for these tribal people. They also rear cows, goats, sheep and buffaloes.

In the plateau region, there are many sub-castes of the *adivasis*. The chief dialects of the area are Santhali, Mundari, Uraon, Khoratha, Kurmali etc. Their life-style is simple and peaceful. They are far from communal and they still like to be left undisturbed. But they adhere to their old tradition of fighting injustice.

When the big feudals of India were licking the feet of the British Rulers and wagging their tail to express their loyalty, the whole of Jharkhand region set ablaze the fire of revolt like a conflagration against imperialism at a time when the Sun did not set in the British Empire. They expressed their firm determination to uproot British rule from India and also to bury Indian feudalism in the grave with them. For example, anti-imperialist Revolt of 1780 around Bhagalpur under the leadership of Tilka Majhi; the Santhal Pargana Revolt of 1793 against the Permanent Settlement, the Kol Revolt of 1831, and the great Santhal Revolt of 1856 are some of the glaring examples of their tradition. Siddhu, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav were the persons who played a leading role in the Santhal Revolt. Thousands of *adivasis* sacrificed their lives. The glorious history of Jharkhand was not written on paper but with the martyrs' blood on the soil of Jharkhand. Even today, the tale of their martyrdom is giving a lead to their birth-right of revolting against injustice. Birsa Munda had maintained that tradition of martyrdom. Even today, fire is smouldering against feudalism, imperialism and social imperialism that sometimes breaks in the form of demand for Guwa (Singhbhum), Bharjhi and sometimes in the demand of Kolhistan. The administrative wolf will do its utmost to maintain its exploiter ruler system and would not hesitate to turn the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea into a bloody red-sea. Profit has made them mad. However, their designs are bound to fail as is their destruction certain.

We have said that the region of Bihar Plateau is full of minerals. Therefore, big industries are set up there. Beside the giant industries of Tata, Bokaro, Hatia, Muree and the Dalmia cities, there are also smaller industries of cement and paper. Except coal and mica mining, coal washeries are also there, and are growing up day by day. Besides, big dams have been built on rivers to harness electricity. The Damodar

Valley Corporation and its allied units like the Panchet dam, the Maithan dam, the Bokaro thermal plant, the Patratu thermal plant and the Tenughat dam are some of them. Inspite of such colossal investment on river valley projects, not a single drop of water is available to the farmers to irrigate their lands. The Koyal-Karo project is under construction. On its completion, 4500 acres of land belonging to 200 villages will be inundated. There is a scheme to produce 732 megawatts of electricity. Surprisingly, in face of such huge projects not a single *dhibri* (small lamp) is lighted in the houses of the adivasis and the people in general. This region is being used as a grazing ground for the indigenous and foreign exploiting ruling clique. It is the centre of the avaricious interest of American Imperialism, Russian Social Imperialism, Polish and Czechoslovak imperialism and their comprador capitalist. On the one end, boundless wealth of the rich is on the ascending scale and on the other, there is the mushroom growth of uprooted village-folk seen on the roads and lanes of the cities. Corporations, projects, quarries and even big industries destroyed thousands of villages and made the people homeless. Tillers of the soil were made landless and forced to become beggars. Skyscrappers are laughing ruthlessly at the ruins of villages. These are mocking at their destruction.

In 1901, the number of cities in this region was 13. It increased to 96 in 1971; about seven and a half times over a period of so many decades. This cruel exploitation and oppression have forced the people to look back to their traditional and glorious history. Will they let the sacrifice of their ancestors go astray? Will they shed tears on the forest-destruction, village ruination and the landgrab policy of free India? Will the coming generations of the adivasis whose ancestors challenged the British Empire over which the Sun never set merely shed tears? No. Never. They will not let the glorious and heroic history of their ancestors be effaced. Peaceful, just and simple life is their traditional legacy. Their firm determination to revolt against oppression is a part and parcel of their life. Their tradition of fighting injustice and oppression has not left them. Exploiting ruling-class is panicstricken at their heroic historical past. It is only due to this fact that the scheming efforts of the exploiting ruling-class in preparing the affluent, deceit-

ful, dishonest and conspiring leadership from among the people are considered as part of administrative skill to wool the eyes of the public. It has gained success upto now in diffusing the anger against feudalism imperialism and Russian Social Imperialism. Easygoing leadership of Jharkhand has entrenched the morass of the Jharkhand Movement. The glorious and its people into heroic history of the people of Jharkhand is as long as the self-surrounder policy of the leaders of the Jharkhand struggle, though in India the development of communist movement is linked with the national movement.

The so-called communist parties of India are harping with the tune of the ruling class call every national movement as separatist, disruptive, extremist and foreign when Marxism, Leninism and Mao-Tse-Tung thought give active support to the movement of the exploited and oppressed nations of the world. It is the class-struggle that under the leadership of the working class based on the unity of peasants and workers can guarantee the liberation of the exploited and oppressed nations of the world. The movement of self-determination of the Jharkhand people is passing through many a zig-zag path. To give an organised form to that ever-rising discontentment and the efforts to connect their movement with the mainstream of the national freedom struggle have been active prior to the so-called Independence. These movements are gaining height continuously in their solidarity with the peasants' revolution. The slogans like 'Land in the hands of the tillers', 'People's Right To The Forest', 'Goverance in the hands of the Kisan Committee' etc. are being respectively unified with the slogan 'Make Jharkhand and Bharat as Lal-khand'. The call to solve its own problem by standing on one's own feet is gaining height continuously. Consequently, as their struggle is gaining ground, the gates of their all round development are opening that way.

Every one knows that the avenues to the development of Adivasi language, education and culture are more or less closed. Their traditional remnants of people's culture are being obliterated. They do not have the right to education through their mother tongue.

But the Jharkhand people are not mere spectators. The movement of self-determination in unison with the Peasant Revo-

lution is gaining as much ground as the gates of their all-round development are opened. They are continuously marching ahead to preserve and develop their traditional culture and keep pace with the Revolutionary cultural movement.

A lively image of the unbearable condition of their life, economic exploitation of political oppression and people's movement to attain freedom has been portryed into the following rhythmic note :

Beer-Buru maku kate, Kulbana laga kate,

Kanni Reyang phol do baban anni Aeda.

In the couplet Bana expresses the feeling of helplessness saying that we cut down the forests and bushes, level the uneven land, fight the wild ferocious animals and prepare the land for cultivation but it is we who remain hungry. As water gushes out of the edge of the field so the whole fruit of our earnings goes to the coffer of the bandit class.

Dhak raydo setung raydo Abo gbo kamiya,

Ato dhak do jam banuk aa Bohya Izzat bapnook aaa,

It means we work in rain, cold or sunshine but nobody respects us. Now, they are not prepared to forbear this state of affairs. They want honour. They want freedom. No one will give it to them. They shall have to attain it with the strength of their unity.

Maro Bohya Aibhen Pe, Rangayech ma Tetang re.

Building re thas-thas, sajaav akan godam re.

In this song, the exploited and oppressed nationalities are invoked to rise and stand, and called to bring about a change in their condition. Feelings are expressed to take back the fruits of their hard earnings that are stored in the godowns of the exploiting class.

Nana dharti re her jati, mit khusi re janam tobani !

Rus America marang dushman !

All men are one on this earth, even then there are thousands of castes and thousands of laws. It is the conspiracy of the foreign exploiter ruler. In the above song, the feeling of struggle against casteism, regionalism and communalism is expressed. The salvation of the exploited and oppressed humanity lies in rising above the narrow-mindedness.

It is the conspiracy of the class-enemy to fan the feelings of

casteism, regionalism and communalism so that the toiling masses at the instance of their parochial thinking may be divided and weakened to strengthen the state of exploitation.

Yant eenda chalav aena, setaq marcel seter aena,

...
Aado bohya baabon chalaak aa,

...
Porer adhin rengaych hor ko, aari shashit bon tahan kaana,
Gulam sekri bon rangaay tabon.....

Noba Bharat re bar barg bonus yelong kana,

Soshit barg kovak shoshan menat tabon.....

Naga-Mizo, manipur, Tripure kishan janta,
Lal salam, Lal salam.....

Afghanistan re bang barood Sare kana

Bharat disham re kramti reyang sare seter aena.....

Desi dushman wo tuko, videsh baeri bon bhindong ko

...
Siddhu kanhu aybhen Adang, sade kan do bohiya saddang
saddang

...
Marxvad, Leninvad, Mao-Tse Tung vichar deban Laha aaa

...
Chhatees saintees banchhar khon dada vote hewk kana
Vote to do dada cheet ko havk aaa?

...
Jot zamindaryak shoshan ko chalao aaa

Rus, America, Tata, Birla punjipatiyak rofa hewk aaa

Guni garib horak shoshan Hoyuk

...
Aag do'ho jori orag Renge guhuk guhuk menak main,
Dishom re kranti reyang sare setar aena re

...
jewee chalaq reho jori bhayang aatu Rehong
jonom dishom Jharkhand, Bharat dobon rofa rubang aaa

.....
Purab khon Mao Tse Tung, chando teka rakab kon

.....
Jonom disham Jharkhand, Bharat dobon rofa ruaara

In all the above songs the toiling masses of Jharkhand region are moving forward to solve their problems finally. The so-called freedom of thirty-six or thirty-seven years and the mask of the politics of vote is fully exposed here. The firm determination to stand against the bungling of the treacherous leadership and loot of the Seth, Sahukar and money-lender is repeated here. In addition to that a pointer is made in the direction of the success of the Chinese Revolution to find ways and means of attaining liberty. Finger is also raised against the filthy intentions of feudalism, imperialism and Russian Social Imperialism and their pet agents. The loot of imperialism and social imperialism has made our country a pauper. These will have to be chased out. This is the culminating point of the continuous evolution of the People's Culture. It is the indicator of the process of making Jharkhand Lal-khand. This culture of Nav Janvadi Andolon has stirred up every nook and corner of Bihar which has given birth to many cultural organisations such as Jaley Nava Masti (Naye Roshni), Jharkhand Aaibhen (Jharkhand Jagriti) etc. These organizations have launched a crusade on semi-feudal, semi-colonial culture and are engaged in disseminating the New Democratic Culture. They have disembarked themselves to equip fully the people with the consciousness of their rights, encourage them to fight fearlessly and carry forward the movement on the lines of Marxism-Leninism with the help of songs, plays, pictures and picture exhibitions. Today, they are imbibing the necessity to fall in battle array for the unity of gun, pen, tabla and flute. The Janavadi Andolon is stirring up the litterateur, artist, writer and the intellectual and making them conscious of their responsibilities.

THE VISITOR TO CHHOTOBOKULPUR

Manik Bandopadhyaya

The train has been late by an hour.

Of course, dusk almost sets in even if it reaches on time ; the oil-lamps of the station are lit before that. Only a few passengers were waiting on the platform for trains, silently and apprehensively. Generally, at this station many more passengers are seen to gather for late-night trains. Today, a batch of soldiers has filled up the passenger-deficiency.

The train stops for a minute and a half. The busy-ness and noise of this time today appear lifeless on the station. Then the station area, devoid of passengers within a few minutes of the departure of the train, wore a ghostly appear. Those who detrained quickly come down on the road surrendering their tickets at the gate and without looking in any direction. It was indeed abnormal that so many persons bought tickets and left the station surrendering them at the main gate. A glance around reveals that people are not unduly attracted to their homes today ; they are in such a hurry only to leave the station compound to stay away.

None stops even after coming on the road. At the tri-junction adjacent to the station, only two or three shops were lit with light, others were all closed. The light of the tea-shop is the brightest, ordinarily, it remains packed with people ; today, it wears almost an abandoned look. Two peasants are sitting with their humble ware of vegetables under the giant, mounted banian tree ; but today there is as if no curiosity in anybody to enquire of the price of lady's finger or brinjal.

Dibakar's eyes wink like the station's lights. He looks around. The way his known railway station became so desolate in the

wink of an eye appeared like a magic to him. The appearance of the station under siege of a band of armed soldiers does not appear unusual to him. He is accustomed to such scenes. He has heard the description of what had happened here yesterday in the train. He expected a scene like that.

: 'Have you seen what has happened ?'

Pressing the child on her breast,' Anna said in a whispering voice : 'What is to be seen ? There has been disturbance ; guards have been posted. Will they stage a play ? Don't stand like a buffoon. Let's go.'

A few Babu-type people were watching the passengers in a careless fashion, smoking bidis and cigarettes. Questioning one or two, with the station area becoming desolate, their attention fell on Dibakar. The middle-aged short-statured man said distorting his voice : 'Useless peasant, let him go'.

His *khaddar*-clad young accomplice, pouring two betels inside his betel-stained mouth and chewing them, was staring at Anna. Suddenly, spitting a mouthful of betel-spittle, he summoned Dibakar with the signal of his finger : 'Hey ! Come here !'

Of course, Dibakar feigns not to hear or see him. Pressing the bundle under his arm-pit and hanging the pitcher tied with rope, he slowly moves forward with Anna. Three of them now come and stand before him : 'Got tickets ?'

: 'Yes'. Bringing out from inside the pocket of his shirt, Dibakar shows them.

: 'Where do you go ?'

: 'We go to Chhotobokulpur, sir'.

Hearing this, they are taken aback. The betel-chewing youth again drops some spittle. There had been some blood-shed on the red stone-chips of the station in yesterday's disturbance. The fellow, as if, wanted to stain the platform in continuation of that. Dibakar, too, likes betel leaves, he has bought full four pice worth of betel-leaves during his journey. He also presses one into his mouth bringing out from the paper packet. Perhaps because he was standing so near them that the betel tastes a bit bitter. He could see, behind their heads, the lone light hanging from the factory in the distance. As if it has been suspended without support in the dark sky. The disturbance in the station had emanated from the strike in that

factory. While taking away three arrested leaders by train several hundred workers had come here to snatch them away. Firing led to blood-shed then. Dibakar's half-peasant, half-worker mind is disturbed since he had heard detailed description of the trouble in train.

The short-statured man asked : 'You will go to Chhotobokulpur at night ? Do you know what has happened there ? Dibakar said in an unconcerned tone : 'We have come knowing the news. There are relations there. We have come to see if they are alive or have been liberated'.

The short-figure said : 'Oh God ! You use pinching words !' : 'No sir ; I am a poor fellow, wherefrom shall I get words to say'.

Near the tri-junction, two bullock-carts are lying idly. Nearby, lying on the earth, two pairs of bullocks lean and gentle, are ruminating the cud. Normally, two or three horse-driven hackney carriages lay in wait ; the horses are old and the carriages are older. The poor coachmen have not taken out their carriages for fear of being engaged free of charge. Dibakar never had the means to go to his father-in-law's riding a horse-drawn vehicle. But today, he would have taken one ; for this purpose he had fetched money pawning Anna's silver ornaments. They had started knowing that it would be night to reach Chhotobokulpur. But he had hoped to get the horse-carriage to cover the three-mile journey with his wife and child. Now bullock-cart is the only hope.

: 'Where are you, coachmen ?' Dibakar sound his call.

Bo h the owners of the two vehicles appear. In the feeble light it appears as if one came through the old banian tree and the other through the fence of the shop to stand before him. They are not in a hurry ; there's no competitors of bullock carts. In a relaxed, leisurely fashion they wanted to know where he would go.

: 'Chhotobokulpur'.

Both the two nod their heads to refuse : 'Oh God ! Who will go to Chhotobokulpur at night ? There the village has been besieged by soldiers and the police ; regular fighting is going on there'.

All the four look towards the road in front of them. This road to Chhotobokulpur takes a turn after some distance, now

one cannot see thither, it appears that it has lost in the dangerous darkness. Securing her baby in her left arm, Anna pushes Dibakar a step behind, and takes over : 'It won't matter if you do not go upto that place. Take us upto where you like, we shall cover the remainder on foot. You will get your full charge'.

Ram said : 'Who wants to be involved in trouble at night ? What do you suggest, Ghosh ?'

: 'My God ! You are afraid, being males ?' Anna sweetened her voice a bit : 'I am a woman, proceeding with a child ; and being men, you are afraid !'

Ram remained silent. He is old and lacks in courage. Gagan Ghosh said : 'I can go upto Kamaltola'.

Let it be so. Even if he drops them beyond the boundary of Kamaltola, still it would be a half-a-mile's walk. That is far better than to walk full three miles. After the bullocks had been attached to the cart, Anna got up on it and sat. She has the habit. Gagan's cart is dilapidated ; unless the tail is continuously twisted to move fast, the sickly, old bullocks do not like to move a step. Anna eagerly enquires of Chhotobokulpur ; but she does not expect to get good news about his father and brother before reaching the village. Many intimate details of general situation of the village, many fresh news were available from Gagan. From a distance, they had heard that situation in Chhotobokulpur was very acute, the family life of the village has been shattered, smashed by a heavy blow. Gagan reveals that it was not exactly so. Initially, there had been much torture in the village ; however, thereafter the village-folk have so prepared and tightened their resolve that any agents of the Chowdhurys or Ghoshes do not dare to enter the village without at least two dozens of rifles.

It is difficult to stop Gagan once he starts talking. In the midst of twisting the bullocks' tails and shouting his peculiar noise to drive the vehicle, he explains the situation around. According to him, the *Kali-yug* is really coming to its end this time. All omens indicate that. How else could the battle start between the king and his subjects ?

: 'We are sinners of the *Kali-yug* ; we shall die in this fighting. Our forebears will start *Satya-yug* again'.

The cart moves quite noisily on the dark, quiet road. From

some occupied projected open spaces of roadside houses, torch-lights occasionally lit up the cart ; serious voice asks : 'Who goes ? Where do you go ?'

Gagan answers : 'Woman train-passenger. Goes to Kamaltala'. Torchlight continues to glue on Anna till the cart goes behind the cover of houses or trees ; as if it is necessary to see as long as possible that it is really the train's innocent, harmless woman passenger.

The area is densely habitated ; big villages are located close to each other. Still, there is virtually no pedestrian movement on the roads now. Movement of village-folk, too, has become unpredictable, mysterious. people travel from village to village along this road ; but today everywhere, everybody's need to tread long distances has apparently come to an end. It may happen that someone suddenly comes up on the road from its side ; again vanishes in the darkness of the roadside after quickly walking some paces. The necessity of casual movement of one or two such persons makes the silence and loneliness even more abnormal.

A big camp has been pitched at Kamaltala. Looking in that direction, Gagan scratches his head : 'Should I go ahead upto Chotobokulpur ?' Gagan says in a tone to beg permission as if Dibakar has forbidden him to go : 'Well, mother, let me take you there. How can I drop you mid-way, eh ?'

Anna expressed her happiness and gratitude : 'God is partial ; else you would have new cart and young bullock.'

Hardly the fringe of Chhotobokulpur has been touched that lights from three torches focussed on the bullock-cart. Some commotion is felt. It is quite clear that those who have taken position to guard the entrance to the village have besieged it from the outside world. A happy sensation has spread amongst them at the untimely advent of Gagan's bullock-cart. It had only a pair of bullocks, a coachman, a man, a woman and a baby—so, ther's nothing to be feared.

Seven or eight persons surround the vehicle in no time. The fat, middle-aged man, probably he is the unofficial groupleader, while properly placing the cap, asked in a terse voice : 'where from do you come ?'

Gagan said : 'Train passenger from the station, sir.'

: 'Shut up ! Who has asked you ?—What's your name ?'

: 'My name is Dibakar Das'.

: 'What's your father's name ? Where do you live ? What do you do ? Why you have come here ?'

: 'My father's name is Manohar Das. He is dead—during the famine of '53. Not from any disease or epidemic—death due to starvation. Live in Howrah—and work as a labourer in the Ghanshyam Betent Factory. Heard of trouble here—she started crying—whether her father and brother were alive or dead. So I thought that the factory strike is unlikely to be settled within a few days, such is the situation. I ventured out to see with her the situation at the 'in-laws'.

Dibakar submit the reason and description of their visit in a polite, frank and simple language. His explanation does not satisfy them probably because he is not appalled with fear nor does he fall on their feet.

: 'What's there in the bundle ? Bomb or gun ?'

: 'No sir, only rags and old clothes.'

: 'Can you prove that you are real Dibakar Das, professional labourer, coming to you father-in-law's house and no ulterior motive ?'

: 'Pray tell me what proof shall I furnish ? I have not brought any proof of witness with me'.

The fair-complexioned teen-aged volunteer laughs aloud, after scolded by the tall, bulky middle-aged man, stops, and is then exhausted from cough.

Anna said : 'Sirs, why not call some people from the farmer colony of the village. I belong to this village, some of them must recognize me'.

: 'That they would, even if they do not, they would do whom else would they recognize other than those with whom they have connivance ?'

Anna whispered into Dibakar's ears : 'They are afraid of calling the villagers, you see'.

The tall, bulky man, raising his finger, shouted : 'Hey ! what do you whisper, No secret conversation, I warn you.' Dibakar asked : 'Is it forbidden to go to the village ? Have you proclaimed 144 ?'

The round-haired, long-headed, loafer-type youth donning a *Punjabi* said : 'Why forbidden ? There's no ban. The moment it is revealed with what mative you have come here or who

are you, you will be allowed to go'.

: 'Sirs, make arrangements so that these are revealed'.

: 'Shut up ! Cutting jokes? Isn't it ?'

Dibakar and his companions stay quiet in face of the scolding; the baby lodges its protest by crying aloud. Sitting with her back towards them, composing her baby Anna hears their comments and counsels. They are quite embarrassed and fairly confused by the serious and complicated situation created by the sudden appearance of Dibakar and his family riding the bullock-cart. It is impossible to ascertain from their belongings, dress and physical appearance and from their conversation that they are really not innocent, ordinary peasant-stock, nothing other than man-and-wife. But these very facts are the reasons of great doubt. Can any genuine, illiterate, coward, lower-caste fellow come of his own with his wife and child after the anarchy which had reigned at Chhotobokulpur for the last few days. That also after coming of know of the trouble ? How could a man of no consequence must that courage ? Above all these, of greater suspicion is that they are at all not unnerved even after seeing the display of so many guns and rifles ; they are quite unconcerned, fearless in appearance.

One said in a hushed tone : 'It is certain that some dangerous fellow has come in disguise'.

Another said : 'Let us search, then !'

The tall, bulky man orders : 'You ; come down with your belongings'.

Hardly has he finished when two persons pulls Dibakar down. With an overdose either of enthusiasm or excitement, the tied earthen vessel falls from one's hand and breaks into pieces as six live *singi* fish move about in the water of the vessel.

Dibakar said in annoyance : 'See sirs, you rendered this poor man's medical diet useless ! What will the sick woman take now ?'

Someone said in a terse voice : 'Ye, you Dibakar Das. You said you earn your livelihood as a factory-worker ; isn't it ? From when do wives of coolies and labourers take soup of *singi* fish ? A seer of *singi* fish costs five or six rupees !'

: 'Are we forbidden to take *singi* fish, sir ?'

Insulted by the interjection, he shouts back angrily : 'Shut up,

you inpatient fellow !'

The package is opened and thoroughly searched. This caused a mishap. Anna's baby had relieved itself a few times on road ; she had bundled those rags in the package. The searcher's hand is soiled while searching them. Angered by the touch and smell he kicks the bundle like a football without thinking of the consequence. As a result, some muddy material wet his feet ; some spread on the body of the rifle, too.

After searching the straw and fods of the tattered sacking spread on the cart, Dibakar and Gagan are physically searched. The packet of betel is taken out of Dibakar's pocket. : 'Good ! Ready *paan*! Give me one'.

There were three *paans*. Three mouths swallow them. While chewing the *paan*, one is taken aback as if sustained an electric shock by glancing in the lantern light at the printed paper with which the *paans* had been packed. Spreading the paper properly he looks wide-eyed at the bold-type head-line : 'To the brave fighters of Chhotobokulpur'.

In excitement of top-secret discovery, he shouts in a quivering voice : 'Here it is ! The bulletin has been found !'

Bulletin ! Is it so ? A dangerous bulletin ! Even though it is twisted and folded and thoroughly soiled by the juice of lime and betel leaves, yet, with effort, it can be read from beginning to the end. Going through it, one is stupefied.

Still, they heave a sigh of relief. There will no more be searching in the wilderness, no sufferings from wishful doubts and suspicion. The irrefutable proof is in the grip. Now, the conspiracy will be unmasked.

: 'From where did you get this bulletin ?' The question is pronounced in a relaxed, twisted tongue as if it has some taste.

: 'Bulletin ? know rothing of the bulletin ! I bought *paan* for four pice. The *paanwalla* wrapped them in that paper'.

: 'The *paanwalla* wrapped them or you bought the *paan* in a cool brain and wrapped them in the bulletin ?'

: 'Why ? What for should I do that ?'

: 'Play no more ! Now tell your real name'.

Dibakar and Anna look at one another.

POLLUTION BY IMPERIALIST CULTURE

Just as no man can imagine a color that does not exist, so also, any culture can only be based on the society in which it exists. Culture is the mode of thinking of a society. It can have no sharply defined parameters. It includes the Art and Literature, performing arts like Theatre and Music and dance, Media like Radio, Television, newspapers and magazines, language, Education, customs, habits and traditions, religion, caste. It includes life-style and in general, the mentally and aspirations of the society. The culture of a society always is the culture of the classes and social groups dominant in that society. The content of the culture is based on the actual relationships that exist between the different classes and social groups in the society. Events which take place in the society influence the culture.

To do justice to a topic like the above would require not a paper but a series of volumes. Therefore, this paper will not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the history, agencies and manifestations of Imperialist pollution in our culture, but will instead restrict its attention to recent events that point the way to the direction in which our present day culture and society is headed.

A Consequence of History

As our leaders never tire of telling us, Indian Society is thousands of years old. It has a great and glorious cultural heritage extending back thousands of years. Of these, for nearly 200 years, our country was under the British Empire. These 200 years of Imperial British rule saw profound changes in our

society. In fact, it was this period under colonialism that saw more than 500 princely states welded together to form the India we know today. Imperialist pollution in Indian Culture is not something new. Its origins are historical and deeply embedded in the events which have shaped today's India.

This burden of colonialism is reflected in the blind admiration and acceptance of everything that carries the label 'foreign', 'sophisticated' and 'latest' by the highest positioned people in Indian Society. It is reflected in the colonial and slavish mentality that pervades the Indian elite to this day—despite decades of an anti-imperialist freedom struggle and nearly 40 years of so-called independence.

Lack of Genuine National Pride

It is our contention, and in fact obvious to all those who look beyond the surface that our national leaders and the captains of our Industry lack a sense of genuine national pride. But, one may ask, they constantly talk of patriotism, about the need to remember and propagate the freedom struggle, try to boost India's image abroad through Festivals, NAMs, CHOGMs.....here we must make a distinction between national chauvenism and genuine national pride. The former is make-believe, in the realm of rhetoric and phrase-mongering, illusion and myth. National pride on the other hand, is genuine concern for the country's *people*, a fierce desire for their genuine welfare, commitment to their real development and a pride in their achievements.

Examples of the above are to be found in every sphere of national life, but that is too numerous to mention. But since our PM is hell-bent on taking this country into the 21st century, let us look briefly at the field of science and technology. When India has the largest scientific community in the world, why is it that indigenous science and technology have made little progress ? What makes the Birlas look for foreign technology to produce a new car after they have been manufacturing cars in India for over 25 years ? What is it that prevents our industrialists from promoting independent research and development in our own country ? Why does the Indian capitalist class, despite existing and flourishing for nearly 100 years,

seek foreign technology to produce anything from small consumer items like soft-drinks and brassieres to sophisticated machine tools and steel plants ? Is it not paradoxical that after the government owned EC TV developed an indigenous design for manufacture of color television sets, the government still bypassed their claim and imported television sets at the time of the Asiad ? Even after the Indian Crossbar Project (ICP) team had designed a telephone exchange suitable for Indian conditions, their claims were bypassed and the government imported telephone exchanges—which later proved unsuitable ! The government imports T-72 tanks from the USSR when the Indian Main Battle Tank Project is nearing completion. Why ?

For everything, foreign expertise and foreign capital is sought. To determine education policy, for agricultural development, for Industrial development, for urban transport, water supply and housing and drainage, for oil exploration our national leaders and industrialists cannot do without foreign 'experts'. Twentyfive years after it was set up, the Bokaro Steel Plant still needs its complement of Soviet experts. Why ?

Is it because our scientists are sub-standard ? This is not the case, because the record of Indian scientists in other countries shows them to be among the best in the world. In fact it is precisely because our national leaders and industrialists, for their own narrow profitable ends, function as agents of imperialist countries and have no interest in the progress of Indian science and technology. The drive our scientists to frustration, resulting in their becoming cynical bureaucrats, seeking employment abroad in order to fulfil their aspirations or worse still committing suicide.

Our independence is not real. It is illusion. Part of the grand illusion of self-reliance, social justice, equality, socialistic pattern of society and non-alignment created by the Indian ruling classes and national leaders.

What is Indian Culture

India is a vast country, sub-continental in dimension, multi-national in character. India has 16 official languages and hundreds of dialects. Can a country of such diversities have a

composite, single culture ? Each Nationality has its own history, its own traditions, its own culture. But we must not forget that India has been under centralised rule since 1857. Also, the freedom movement, led by the Indian National Congress, contributed to the development of a national culture. Since independence, the central government too, has tried to centralise most powers with itself and even resisted strongly the demand of the various nationalities for linguistic basis of states. However, the militant national struggles compelled them to accede to this demand. Since then, too, the process of centralisation has continued, through centralisation of the mass media like Radio and Television in the hands of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, through propagation of Hindi as a national language and other means.

If there is any single example that epitomises the Indian culture today, it can only be the Hindi Film culture. Of course, the four southern states of Andhra, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka do not fall within the ambit to Hindi Films, as they rank 1st, 3rd, 4th and fifth respectively in the number of films produced per year, but the vast majority of films produced in these states are not very different in content and even in form from Hindi Films. The most popular and far reaching programmes on AIR and Doordarshan are film based. These two are the media with the widest reach in India. Besides, Films reach all but the most backward of regions in the country. With the rise of video clubs, their reach has expanded even more. Of all the magazines produced in the country the total circulation of the film magazines is the same as or more than the circulation of all the other magazines put together.

Our films show the 'latest' fashions, trends, music, dance, hairstyles etc, taken second hand from the west. The typical film hero wears modern clothes, plays a variety of musical instruments and disco-dances with dexterity. But does he possess modern liberal thinking, does he have democratic values ? No. In fact he is a feudal-minded, god-fearing individual, and he is proud of his 'traditional' Indian values. The typical film heroine will dance uninhibitedly on a beach wearing nothing but a bikini, but once she falls in love or gets married, he does an instant transformation to the pati-vrata

Bharatiya Nari, whose identity can only be as someone's wife, mother or sister—never as an individual. Our films promote feudal backward values wrapped up and presented in a package of the most modern imperialist trends.

Take the example of the film SHOLAY. It is an appropriate example, because it is commercially the most successful film ever produced. It had an uninterrupted run in a single theatre for 5 years. The film is made exactly like an American cowboy film, with a large part of the background music lifted from successful cowboy films. Only, the villain is a dacoit who with his gang terrorises an entire district. Opposing him is a zamindar, who represents the forces of good. Our two heroes are jeans-clad friends (in fillums, the bond of friendship, brother and sister, mother and father with son are considered unbreakable). Together with the Thakur (zamindar), they wipe out the dacoit and his gang. The violence rivals that in American gangster films. The cabaret is suggestive, lewd and vulgar. On the way, one of the friends sacrifices his life to save the other, and the heroine dances on broken pieces of glass to save her loved one. The people play no part in this whole drama, except to make fervent pleas to the heroic zamindar. It is only in films that a Union Leader can fall in love with and marry a mill-owner and lead the workers on strike while he is her husband (HAISIYAT). It is only in films that a woman can stay single because the man she loves is already married, marry a man she does not like merely to remove suspicion, and finally commit suicide because the suspicion remains (she remains virtuous throughout), as in SOUTEN. Of course, there are exceptions, but these are few and far between and as soon as they threaten to become a trend, these forms are absorbed by the commercial industry, distorted beyond recognition and made a parody of.

Thus films have become political (INQUILAB and AAJ KA MLA), feminist (AURAT KA INTEQAM, BHAVNA, MERI IZZAT BACHAO and many others) and now even environmental (RAM TERI GANGA MAILI). Then this way, the ruling class adopt the art forms developed by progressive film-makers, use them to make money and at the same time rob them of their essence.

Another new trend is that of joint productions. Two are

worthy of mention. One, the Indo-British production, **GANDHI** which went on to win the Oscar Award. The other, a film on Nehru, this being an Indo-Soviet venture. This second film was shown on the national television network. The film showed Nehru, as a great anti-imperialist. Films like these, and also the freedom struggle series of documentaries produced by the films division are making a futile attempt to make people remember the times of the freedom struggle and make them contribute their energies in Rajiv Gandhi's version of nation building.

Theatre in India today is largely composed of translations of foreign plays or run-of-the-mill productions. A new rising trend of semi-pornographic plays, picturequely calling itself 'hit and hot' drama in Marathi is now seen. The wave of experimental theatre which came up in the late sixties and early seventies is now in its death throes. As far as the folk art is concerned, it is turning to *filmi* themes and disco songs in its struggle to survive.

Gallery Art in India has always remained cloistered in the art galleries. With a few notable exceptions, some of whose works are on display at this conference, most of the artists are lost in the ivory towers of abstract expression. These trends are all influenced by western painting and are patronised only by a select few of the elite.

Another field where imperialist trends permeate is literature, particularly fiction. Wholesale translations or clever adaptations of best seller novels from abroad are becoming vastly popular. Among the more serious writers, the foreign trend of existentialism, particularly has found a number of adherents. The imperialists seek to directly influence this field, with the Ford Foundation funding some publishing houses. In Marathi, *Granthali*, a writer's movement which has been publishing fairly good books and holding campaigns to popularise reading, is partly funded by the Ford Foundation. The Foundation also awards prizes to promising writers and takes them on a tour of the USA. Similarly, the Soviet Union gives its **SOVIET LAND** awards, with a free tour of the USSR thrown in. This is a subtle way to influence the writers. In a country where the size of the reading public is small and publishing costs prohibitively high, writers tend to tailor their works to get awards.

Drugs, a problem restricted to the idle children of the elite till a few years ago, has now gripped the working class unemployed youth of our cities. An alien and Imperialist trend, drugs first made their way into India as a transit point for smuggling to the Western nations. Now, they have taken root here. Brown Sugar, a type of heroin locally known as GARD, is a cheap and highly addicting drug. Youth once addicted are willing to do anything to maintain their regular supply. Thus, it finds many sellers who sell only to maintain their own supply of the drug. The criminals who organise this business in league with the law enforcing authorities find themselves greatly at advantage. For these youths who are addicted would even kill to keep up their supply of drugs. Thus the crime lords get a cheap army of desperate addicts. The future of our cities does not look very bright.

Recent State Cultural Policy

The Rajiv Gandhi government is giving very definite indications that great changes are in the offing. Giving the slogan of "Forward to the 21st Century", Rajiv's government has opened the floodgates to the imperialists. What are the cultural manifestations of his policy ? Let us examine the trends, which have begun since 1980, but have dramatically come out into the open with the coming of Rajiv Gandhi to power.

Television

Television began in our country in New Delhi in 1959, as a UNESCO aided project. Viewing was confined to rural areas on sets funded by the Ford Foundation. At the start of the 6th 5 year plan, television covered 6 percent of the area of the country, mainly the major cities, including Amritsar and Srinagar, and reaching some 16 percent of the population. The 6th plan envisaged that by the end of the plan, television would cover 17 percent of area and 33 percent of population. At this time, each television studio was producing independent programmes. These programmes were in the regional languages. However, in 1982, the national network was created. This meant that from 9 pm to 10.30 pm, the whole country would receive the broadcast from Delhi, which inclu-

ded the Hindi and English news bulletins. With this, a potent centralised propoganda apparatus was centralised in the hands of the Central Government. Policy stated that the locally produced regional language news bulletins would concentrate on local news.

But this was not all. In 1984, the government decided to expand this propoganda network to the rest of the country. To put it in the words of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's 1983-84 report : "A special TV expansion plan was, however, drawn up in the current year by a cabinet decision to cover 70 percent of the population of the country by November 1984, involving total expenditure of Rs. 68 crore." No reasons were given, and no plan drawn up. Consequently the slogan went up : "One TV station per day !" By the end of 1984, a total of 180 TV transmitters existed in the country.

Large parts of rural India are now able to watch Television from 8.30 pm to 11 pm. The programmes are in Hindi and English, neither of which language the majority of the people in all states except UP, MP, Bihar, Haryana can comprehend. Is it not a paradox that remote rural areas of Maharashtra cannot get to see Marathi programmes put out by Bombay TV, but can watch Hindi and English programmes direct from Delhi ?

The objectives of the national network, among others, are (a) National Integration (b) Family Planning (c) To develop a scientific temper (d) To promote appreciation of artistic and cultural heritage. What do these objectives show ? The first, that the process of centralisation in all spheres undertaken by the government need consolidation in cultural terms. The second is the propogation of a myth that poverty in India exists because of over population. The third is a euphemism to prepare the people to accept the on slaughter of automation and computerisation and to accept it as 'progress'. The last is an attempt to rouse up a feeling of national chauvenism and to create a sense of pride in our backward feudal values, and a false sense of pride in a revivalist thinking.

When have we seen TV at its most effective moments as an instrument of propoganda ? First at the time of Operation Bluestar, when the government ran high pressure propoganda for nearly 2 months to whip up hatred against Sikhs. The

second time was at the time of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, when enough passion was generated to enable the Congress (I) stormtroopers to engage in a wholesale massacre of Sikhs in several North Indian cities. The third occasion was during the visit of PM Rajiv to the US when the middle class was hoodwinked into believing that the US was in love with Rajiv. The fourth occasion was at the time of the bomb blasts in Delhi, when the whole nation was terrorised so effectively by the propaganda that the Anti-Terrorist Bill, a measure more repressive than the notorious Rowlatt Acts was pushed through Parliament in a day, and the so-called democratic opposition could not even summon up the courage to vote against it.

Yes, the national television network is the most effective weapon in the propaganda machinery of this new regime, which is bent on marching into the 21st century crushing the people under the iron heel.

Education

In his drive to bring sweeping changes, the Rajiv regime has called for a national debate on the new education policy draft, entitled "CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION—a policy perspective". After sifting through pages and pages of empty rhetoric, the following concrete proposals emerge :

- (a) Lip service to Universalisation of elementary education, a goal originally to be fulfilled by 1960, later pushed to 1970 then to 1980 and now to 1990. The paper admits that literacy today is only 32 percent.
- (b) Setting up of "pace-setting" institutions at every level. This is intended to serve as models for others. What it would amount to in practice is the creation of more elite institutions.
- (c) The document states that educational goals have not succeeded because implementation of policy is in the hands of the State Governments. The policy envisages the setting up of model schools at every district, under control of District boards which would be under direct control of the centre. This means centralisation of education.
- (d) The paper envisages higher education on the lines of

Harvard, Yale and Stanford. Higher education institutions, it is proposed, must be founded only for research. As far the students, those who can afford must pay full costs of their education. The especially disadvantaged or meritorious will get scholarship and the scholastically "weak" well be eliminated from the education process. This means that education will become further elitist (as it is only 3 percent of the relevant age group *enrol* for higher education) and that today's educated unemployed (who the paper warns, can be highly dangerous to stability) will become uneducated unemployed.

- (e) The paper recommends the "de-politicisation of Universities." This means that further repressive measures will be declared.
- (f) The paper repeatedly stresses the "national ideals" of national integration, family planning, scientific temper and pride in cultural heritage.

This new policy seeks to make education elitist, unpolitical, to link the institutions to Industry. Through this policy the same national ideals are emphasised. The closeness of the government to Industry and the amount it identifies with the interests and welfare of the industrialist in urban areas and the landlords in the rural areas comes clearly through this paper, That Mrs. Gandhi was shifting her base from the minorities to the Hindus was becoming very obvious. But Rajiv took the crown when the ORGANISER, the mouthpiece of the RSS, declared before the 1984 parliamentary election that the only party which can replace the erstwhile Jana Sangh and protect the interests of Hindus is Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I).

First it was anti-Muslim feeling, then anti-Sikh feeling after Punjab. Lately it has been anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat. The Congress is slowly but surely moving to a position where a jingoistic Hindu majority is being asked to unite on the basis of religion behind the ruling classes.

The covert support to the Ekatmata Yagna Rathayatra, giving credibility to all sorts of godmen, swamis and sadhus by seeking their blessings, worshipping at every major temple, giving permission to Sathya Sai Baba to start a full-fledged University and awarding UGC recognition to his University. These are the manifestations of the direction in which our regime is

headed.

National Chauvenism in the guise of Patriotism

The propaganda about the freedom movement, the false chauvenism that the government is trying to instill in the people is taking numerous forms. The first is the move to boost the prestige of the country through international circuses like the Asiad, NAM, CHOGM and the festival of India.

The second is the promotion of Big nation chauvenism, by bullying all the nations in the neighbourhood. The recent 'mediation' moves that are being conducted between Sri Lanka government and Eelam groups by the Indian government using a lot of arm-twisting tactics is a blatant example of this.

The third is savage repression of any real opposition within the country by labelling it anti-national activity. Today, the national opposition parties as well as the regional opposition parties have ceased to, be of relevance in the country. The only real opposition left is that of the revolutionaries and of nationality struggles and the civil liberties organisations. The Anti-terrorist Act is a very good example of this. None of the so called left and democratic parties could summon up the courage to even vote against this fascist legislation which is worse than the notorious Rowlatt Act. What does this indicate ? That on the questions of real importance, there is no opposition. The filing of sedition cases on and arrest of the leaders of PUCL and CFD is another indication of the spread of the fascist ideology that to oppose the government is anti-national. The murder of Dr. Ramanatham by the police is a new chapter in repression. It is like the 'death-squads' in Latin American dictatorships and countries like the Philipines.

A new ideology is being propogated. An ideology of 'forward to the 21st century'. This is a policy that will bring misery and pauperisation in the shape of unemployment for the working class. He seeks to mobilise the people behind him on the false chauvenistic slogans of progress and patriotism. The repression the government has unleashed on groups like the CFD has not been seen since the days of the Emergency. And now there is talk of ending corruption, of talking

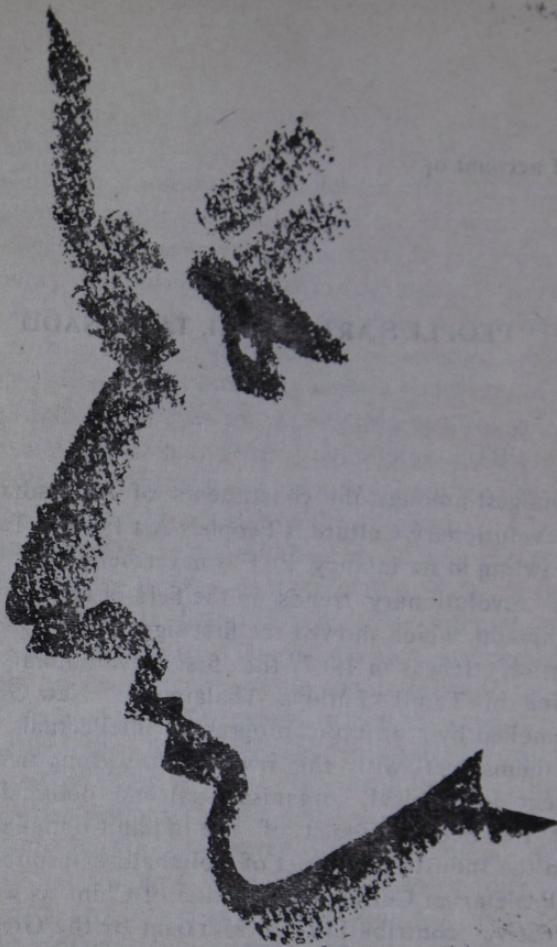
to task dishonest and inefficient government servants.

The police force is to be modernised. The intelligence agencies are to be streamlined. In the last six months, the Supreme Court of India has delivered three of the most anti-people judgments in the last many years. These are the judgement on hawkers, on slums and on dismissal of government servants.

Moving towards a fascist culture

Creation of a highly centralised and a highly efficient and effective propaganda network. A move towards an education system that will be elitist, 'depoliticised', centralised and geared to the needs of a rapidly transforming industry. Propagation of religious fundamentalism, even though in a covert manner by the state. Fearsome massacres perpetrated by stormtroopers of the State. Whipping up of a national chauvinistic sentiment and labelling of any real opposition as 'anti-national'. Repression of a variety not seen since the Emergency.

India is moving towards becoming a fascist-type state. Under the central slogan of 'forward to the 21st Century', and thru the propagation through every available medium of the so-called national goals of national integration (which means further enslavement of the nationalities). Family Planning (so that a convenient excuse exists for deterioration of people's living conditions), to appease the imperialist masters, Scientific Temper (which serves to attune the masses to Rajiv's policy of automation and computerisation), and pride in India's Cultural Heritage (which covers up for propagation of Hindu Chauvinism and inculcates a revivalist sprit), the culture of fascism and slavery to imperialism thru' the consumer culture rapidly being propagated. This propaganda creeps up on the people by way of popular TV programmes funded by the comprador monopoly bourgeoisie like RAJANI and HUM LOG. It is a steamroller culture, with any trend in opposition to the official line being castigated as anti-nation. It relies on the glamour and glitter of the imperialists to attract and awakens the most backward reactionary feudal feelings in the people.



TERRORISM

Kanchan Kumar

When they don't have
answers to our questions
they draw their guns
when we identify the killers
they knock to our door at midnight.

A Brief account of

PEOPLE'S ART FORUM, TAMILNADU

The youngest amongst the constituents of All India League for Revolutionary Culture is People's Art Forum, Tamilnadu. Still crawling in its infancy, PAF is nevertheless the continuer of the revolutionary trends in the field of art and literature in Tamilnadu, which showed the first signs of emergence in the late sixties. It was in 1967, the first revolutionary literary magazine in Tamil 'Puthiya Thalaimurai' (New Generation) was launched by a group of progressive intellectuals who identified themselves with the revolutionary group that waged a consistent ideological, organisational and political struggle against the neo-revisionist of the Indian Communist Movement in the Industrial District of Coimbatore inspired by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of China as well as by the creative contribution to Marxism by the Great Leader Mao. This group of intellectuals closely linked itself with the revolutionaries within the Communist camp. It sought to subject all the existing forms of culture to critical evalution and evolve an altogether new approach towards the cultural practices. The glorious armed struggle of Naxalbari and the emergence of a genuine and revolutionary party of the proletariat guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung thought helped the 'Puthiya Thalaimurai' group to develop a correct orientation. It attracted towards the revolutionary struggles of the peasantry, a number of radical youths and students. Naturally, it had to face a severe repression from the State and was forced to wind up in its second year. In the early seventies, however, the need for a revolutionary cultural

magazine found its realisation in the literary monthly 'Manithan' (Man). Though it was also shortlived, it served as a powerful medium through which an effective propaganda of revolutionary politics could be made. It was a vehicle through which the revolutionary masses were exposed to the revolutionary literature—especially poems that were being written with blood in Bengal, Bhojpur and several other parts of this country. 'Manithan' also served to create a living contact with the revolutionary writers and poets of Andhra Pradesh. 'Neenda Payanam' (Long March) was yet another revolutionary periodical, which, combining political essays with poems, short stories and literary criticism sought to fulfil the growing need for revolutionary literature. After these two magazines ceased to publish there was a long gap which was sought to be filled by 'Sentharakari' (Red Star). It however, did not come out after its third issue. An attempt to bring out a new journal 'Viduvu' (Dawn) was also unsuccessful. Meanwhile there were the unfortunate splits in the revolutionary movement and each group or faction went in its way of evaluating the past deeds and adopting its own tactical lines. Inspite of these setbacks, the revolutionaries attempted to build mass-movements of the poor and landless peasantry in Tamilnadu and they discovered that in Andhra and elsewhere cultural weapons were as important as other weapons in mobilising and organising the working masses and leading them in the struggle against oppression and exploitation. Taking into account the wide-spread illiteracy amongst the broad masses of the people and the prevailing cultural level, they chose the appropriate technique, style and language for the songs which were most suitable for an effective communication. Folk tradition was found to contain the revolutionary potential to create a genuine peoples's culture. Like sappers and miners the cultural squads went round the villages, sang the revolutionary song and sowed the seeds of revolution. The activities of Radical Youth League then followed, to plant the seedlings firmly in the minds of the masses so that through arduous struggle, in their own-life time they could reap the harvest of revolution. The activities of the cultural squads were a battle to win the minds of the people. They were attempts to cleanse their minds of the poison—the decadent amalgam of

feudal and imperialist culture. It was therefore not a surprise that the squads met with severe repression by the police. Undeterred but inspired by the fighting masses in the villages, the cultural squads composed songs from the experiences of the struggling masses and translated and adopted poems and songs from the neighbouring Andhra. Due to the close proximity of Andhra, they were profoundly influenced by such revolutionary artists and poets like Subbarao Panigrahi, Gaddar, Vangapadu Prasad Rao and Cherabanda Raju.

The first encouraging results of the activities of cultural squads were very much visible in Dharmapuri district. Balan, the great martyr from Dharmapuri District, himself played a leading role in organising cultural squads, composing songs and encouraging the youth to take part in cultural activities. Even on the very day he was surrounded by more than 100 armed police men who inflicted fatal wounds on him, he organised one of the powerful cultural performances which preceded his speech. While he was alive he helped to bring out an anthology of songs of People's Art Forum. These songs were almost the sole weapon in the hands of the cultural activists hailing from peasant stock. They withstood the continuous onslaught of the police and landlords for more than three years and with the wounds still in the process of healing have now resumed their mission.

The resoluteness with which the Radical Youth League has led the mass struggles in Dharmapuri has inspired their counterparts in other districts and both in heroically fighting the class enemies and withstanding the attacks, they have followed their pioneer comrades of Dharmapuri. Police resorted to the ugliest method confiscating the revolutionary movie "Ma Bhoomi" from the hands of the Radical Youth League activists in Tanjore District besides unleashing a white terror in the villages that rose to question the landlords-religious heads and police agents. The secretary of Tanjore District Youth League, who himself a talented singer was charged with a murder case. When in Police custody, the reactionary police beat him blue and asked him to sing. This revolutionary singer, without being cowed down, sang in his high pitch glorious song about a communist Revolutionary Seeralan who was killed by the police in 1977. Such was the heroism with

which almost all the members of cultural squads attached to People's Art Forum is charged. Today some of the cultural squads have children below ten years as members and talented singers. A cultural squad comprised of only such children gave a performance in the Annual Conference of RSU of Andhra Pradesh in Tirupathi last February and conquered the hearts of the revolutionary audience. The cultural activists are constantly learning from their counter-parts in Andhra, Bengal, Maharashtra and other regions. Their forms of expression may not have attained a high level of sophistication but they have proved themselves to be appropriate to communicate with the working masses.

Inspite of their continuous participation in the revolutionary struggles, these cultural squads lacked a proper organisational shape which would bring them together and link them up with cultural workers in the urban areas and the revolutionary petit-bourgeois intellectuals so that they can benefit from each other. The first serious attempt to integrate these squads and urban intellectuals into a single, cohesive organization has yielded partial results. Unabated police repression coupled with the disruptive methods carried out by some Petit-bourgeois masquerading themselves as Marxist-Leninists have created many a stumbling blocks in the ways of the revolutionary cultural activists functioning as a full-fledged organisation. Some of the petit-bourgeois cliques bedeck themselves with borrowed feathers and unsuccessfully attempt to hoodwink the revolutionary rank in file by staging certain cultural performances and at the sametime playing safe by confining all their activities to cultural field alone. There are yet other petit-bourgeois groups who peddle watered-down 'revolutionary' literature. People's Art forum was the first Cultural group in Tamilnadu which boldly inscribed in its banner Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung thought as its guiding philosophy. It is in the process of coming of age. It has played its modest role, even in its infancy, in the formation of All India League for Revolutionary culture. It would draw its nourishment from the experiences of its counter-poorts in other regions of this country as well as from the struggles of the rural masses of Tamilnadu with which it has always identified itself and raise itself as one of the best cultural brigades of the revolutionary proletariat of this country.

RESOLUTIONS

**Passed during the AILRC 2nd Conference in Sindri on
13th, 14th October, 1985**

(I) State Repression

The new thrust of the state repression on political, cultural and civil liberties activists, workers, peasants and Government employees, Press and intelligentia and other sections of the people during the last several months is much evident all over the country. The emerging Techno-Bureaucratic-military political order headed by Rajiv Gandhi seeking closer relations with imperialism, unleashed repression under the camouflage of law and order, which is, logically speaking, very much likely to grow severer and severer. One also cannot miss the fact that there has not been even the slightest difference on this question between the ruling classes at the centre or in the different "opposition" ruled states.

Some of the recent instances could well illustrate the point. A bourgeois state presumably cracks down on liberal sections only during a crisis. But the vulgar bourgeoisie of our semi-feudal semi-colonial state, raising the question whether it is already facing that kind of crisis, has heinously murdered Dr. A. Ramanatham, the Vice-President of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC). It has charged Justice V.M. Tarkunde, N.D. Pancholi, Amiya Rao, Dr. Aurabindo Ghosh and Tejinder Singh of the CFD, along with O.P. Gupta, a printing press owner of Delhi, with "sedition", for publishing a first hand report on the police brutalities in Punjab. A little prior to this, the ruling party not only

mounted a malicious attack on PUCL and PUDR for an earlier report on November 1983 riots but also banned its Punjabi version. In Andhra Pradesh, the APCLC activists are already neck deep in several false cases and are constantly facing open physical threats. As recently as in the first week of October, Sashi Bhushan, the Bihar PUCL Secretary, was arrested for no rhyme or reason. And to top it all, the Aurangabad district police ghastly shot dead four of the demonstrators who went merely to protest his arrest.

Another shade of this kind of repression is the one against the press and intelligentia. The proposed Press Bill in Andhra Pradesh on the lines of Bihar Press Bill, the continuation of the Tamil Nadu Press Act, the arrest of the editor of "Barricade" in West Bengal, Amarjit Singh in Punjab and the editor of "Sankalp Times" in Delhi and the recent severe restrictions on Universities holding seminars and inviting professors etc., go to prove this point.

The state policy vis-a-vis culture has acquired two clear dimensions. One is repression of the people's culture and the other is promoting of a high-tech culture to refurbish its own image. The recent highlights of this repression are two sedition cases against K.V.R., Vara Vara Rao, Gaddar and Sandeso Prabhu Desai in Maharashtra and Goa. The detention of four People's Art Forum singers under NSA in Tamil Nadu for the last three months, suspension of a teacher there, lathi charges and harassments of Gurusharan Singh and his theatre group in Punjab, arrests of "Dishari" activists in West Bengal are only some of the recent such instances.

On the other hand, the new political order has initiated a subtle and clever Cultural thrust in the form of T.V. programmes like "Janvani", bureaucratic police corruption, Rajani, Natkhat Narad etc., to give a new illusory image to the Government of so-called Mr. CLEAN.

In their desperate but futile bid to stamp out working class and peasant struggles, the ruling classes are arming themselves with new laws and additional armed forces. The expected Andhra Pradesh anti-terrorist Act and the summoning of four more CRPF battallions, and sophisticated arms indicate the intended blood-bath which demands the revolutionary and democratic forces all over to raise a strong voice against the

impending danger and mobilise public opinion immediately. The Telugu Desam Government of N.T. Rama Rao has already taken a toll of about 40 activists in fake encounters and day-light killings in this year alone. The same kind of repression with almost equal severity is continuing in Bihar, Tamil Nadu and several other states.

The invocation of NSA, ESMA and other such black Acts against workers and the blatant refusal of the Central Government to delete Article 311 (2) B from the constitution which fascistically empowers the State to remove a public servant even without stating reasons thereof are only the wider aspects of this repression.

The above incidents are only the tip of the ice-berg. The new politicomilitary order promises not just to continue but to thoroughly sharpen its repressive policy. In view of this the AILRC not only strongly condemns these acts of repression, but calls upon every citizen to fight back the situation which is going to envelop each and every section of the common masses sooner or later.

(2) Imperialist Culture

In recent years Goa has become a victim of increasing imperialist penetration, in active connivance with the local ruling classes of the territory. While on the one hand, this has intensified the loot and exploitation of the local population, on the other hand it has resulted in erosion of the local culture and the dowsing of the Goan Youth with a culture alien to Goa, which propagates decadent bourgeois values and vices, as an alternative.

In keeping with this trend, the Goa Government has gone all out to encourage the setting off five star beach resorts with foreign collaborations, these beach resorts are the breeding ground of the worst vices. Goa today, has become a heaven for smuggling, drug peddling, prostitution, cabaret shows, call girl rackets and gambling.

The situation has worsened to the extent that even local occasions like carnival are being commercialised and traditional folk culture is being replaced with a disco-drug culture. While strongly condemning these trends, the AILRC calls

upon the people of Goa to resist these attempts of the ruling classes.

(3) Festival of India

The Festival of India, a cultural extravaganza held earlier in London and presently going on in Paris and USA is nothing but an attempt on the part of the Indian ruling classes to present a false image of India and Indian culture abroad. AILRC condemns this colossal waste of resources to whitewash the reality of India.

(4) TV Network

The National TV network is an attempt to centralise the media to serve as a powerful propaganda medium in the hands of the state. TV now reaches 70% of the population of the country direct by relay from Delhi.

Because of this, rural areas in different parts of India are being forced to watch programmes in Hindi and English, neither of which language they understand. Regional languages are being suppressed and Hindi and English sought to be imposed. This country-wide network is being used to control the thinking of the people. Worse, it is also being used to provoke communal sentiments, as for example the use of the TV in connection with Kanishka crash.

(5) On the New Textile Policy

The AILRC condemns the new Textile Policy of the Rajiv Gandhi Government which will spell the ruin of thousands of Textile workers, handloom weavers and peasants across the country. With its policy of "modernisation", the Central Government has completely bowed down before the pressures of the imperialists.

The anti-people policy of the Government is exposed thoroughly when expensive, polyester cloth is encouraged. Further, catering to the desires and tastes of the metropolitan upper middle classes at the cost of the basic needs of the vast majority of people, it is also a promotion of the culture of consumerism.

(6) Konkani Language Issue

The All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) condemns the recent attempts of the ruling classes to set the people of Coa against one another on the question of "official language" issue and to whip-up communalism in Goa as a part of this attempt.

AILRC asserts that the present day Konkani is not a dialect but a language by itself. AILRC therefore demands that Konkani be declared to be the official language of Goa.

AILRC also demands that Konkani language be immediately included in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution.

(7) On Supreme Court Judgement on slums and pavement dwellers

The AILRC unequivocally condemns the recent judgement of the Supreme Court in the Bombay slums and pavement dwellers case, giving the Municipal Corporation of Greater Bombay a free hand to demolish slums built after 1976 and all pavement dwellings within its precincts, without providing any alternative accommodation whatsoever to the dehoused people.

To arbitrarily take away the right to shelter of many thousands of people is tantamount to snatching away their right to life. For the slum and pavement dwellers are peasants and landless who were driven from their villages by extreme poverty, to Bombay city in search of survival.

The AILRC calls upon all sections of the population of Bombay to resist the demolitions and demand that the Municipal Corporation provide the slum and pavement dwellers proper accommodation.

(8) Goa Demolitions

The Government of Goa has undertaken a determined policy of demolishing thousands of so-called "illegal houses" and of razing these long standing shelters of the poor workers constructed on "communidade" land. These lands are then handed over at a price to industrialists and other business concerns. AILRC demands, that these houses be legalised, in the name of the residents.

(9) Goa University

AILRC condemns the hasty and haphazard manner of the Government of Goa in setting up the Goa University in an attempt to make political capital out of it and complete the process of centralisation of education in the territory. The AILRC condemns this centralisation of power which is further manifested by absence of representation of basic sections like students and teachers on decision making bodies of the University, and the packing of these bodies instead by industrialists and others close to the Government at Delhi.

(10) On Sri Lanka

The AILRC strongly condemns the genocidal repression unleashed by the Sri Lankan Government against the Tamils, which is only a culmination of decades of systematic discrimination against them in socio-economic spheres. As against this, the Tamils, begining with peaceful ways to get the situation rectified about twenty years ago, have ultimately given call for Eelam and resorted to armed struggle which, apparently, they saw as the only available option in the present conditions. The AILRC recognises their right to self-determination and extends its full support. At the same time it opposes any kind of intervention by the two super powers or Indian Government and other imperialist proxies such as Israel in the Sri Lankan affairs under the pretext of helping either the Jayawardane Government, or the Eelam forces. The AILRC also opposes the pressure tactics being applied by the Indian Government on the Sri Lankan Tamils to suit its own interests. Because the same Government which pretends to be supporting their cause has been not only suppressing similar struggles within India but also sent its armed power to stamp out the Janata Vimukti Perumana rebellion of the Lankan Youth about 15 years back. While cautioning them to guard themselves against such outside interference, we call upon them to see the truth that national liberation can be accomplished only in the path of New Democratic Revolution.

PASSED

In GB meeting held in Sindri on 14th October 1985

Amendment to S.5(d) on Women's Exploitation and Liberation

The position of Indian women is an epitome of the inhuman and exploitative structure of this semi-feudal and semi-colonial society in India.

Whether she comes from the labouring classes or from the propertied ones, she is first and foremost a private property of the family, accorded the role of looking after the family but denied any decision making powers. Irrespective of the religious community she belongs to, she is accorded an inferior and secondary position.

The age-old position of economic dependence continues and this coupled with unrecognised, unpaid domestic drudgery has reduced her to a position no better than a household chattel. And an almost inviolable marital bond further enslaves her. In such a situation, where feudal traditions act as shackles both socially and culturally, they make a mockery any legislation providing for equal rights in parental property, and prevent her from acting in any real independent and assertive way.

Even women who are working and earning, while in a better position than others are still enmeshed in the position of being exploited both at home and at work. Patriarchal ideology and feudal relations force her to continue to carry the burden of the housework and also make the family control her earnings. Except for the small section of highly educated women from the exploited classes are denied equal wages and other benefits. The crisis in the economy affects their employment

first. And further she is constantly threatened with sexual assault from her employers. As in the past, so today too, sexual assault is one of the special forms of oppression of woman, an assertion of the control over her body, whether by employers, landlords, police or even family members.

Associated with this feudal relations is the hypocritical feudal culture that reinforces her inferior status and her bondage. On the one hand 'pativrata' is branded as an ideal, while on the other prostitution is legitimised and institutionalised. Marriage is considered an inviolable sacred bond, but in reality it is reduced to a commercial transaction with dowry upto the extent of bride burning. Womanhood is glorified to the extent that barbaric practices like sati are worshipped and revived. The control over her body is mystified through practises like bindi, sindoor, tying of mangalsutra (Thali) etc. And as if to seal her fate and cement her position the inroads of imperialist culture through its 'commoditisation' has reduced her to a sex object, denying her the dignity of an individual.

Neither changes in the law nor the spread of women's education have effectively challenged this subjugation and oppressed status of women, most of whom live and labour in villages and small towns. Hence the struggle for their liberation is inextricably linked to the struggle for an agrarian revolution. At the same time the struggle for women's liberation is part of the struggle against feudal system and the patriarchal ideology and culture, that is the struggle for a new democratic society and culture.

Communalism

The recent spurt in communalism is more than meets the eye. It manifests not the religious sentiments of the people, but the use of religious sentiments for base political considerations. Though communalism is a legacy of the British "Divide & Rule" policy, it has gained strength in the post 1947 period. In the past decade as a consequence of not only due to a continuation of this policy by Indian bourgeoisie, but also the electoral games of ruling class political parties seeking power. To confront the growing restlessness of the people, the various oppressed classes, the Indian ruling classes are today

using the twin weapons of communalism and repressing. The betterment of economic conditions of small sections from among the hitherto oppressed castes and communities has expressed itself in self assertion and mobilisation through caste lines and demands for facilities like reservations on the one hand. On the other hand, the impact of the interim economic crisis the imperialist oriented policies of the Indian government have lead to strinkage of employment opportunities crisis ridden economy, has led the established sections to defend their existing status privileges. The ensuing tension is manifested in the form of caste a communal riots.

The Indian ruling classes, in the face of the political & economic crisis are turning more and more towards communalism, specially upholdings of Hindu culture to rally the people.

Their 'yognas' and extension of festivals like Ganapati, Durga Puja etc.

The state and with its increased centralisation is also increasing oppression of minority religions and nationalities. The whipping up of anti-Sikh sentiments leading to their brutal massacre in Delhi, Kanpur, Bokaro and others cities last November is one such example. These state sponsored communal riots are nothing but the tearing away of the mask of secularism worn for all these years by the Congress. Resultings from this centralisation of finance and power is greater deprivation for the oppressed sections and rationalities. Growth of to crime and be lumpenisation is a direct outcome of this complex play of forces. In this situation the state is becoming progressively criminalised and terroristic in its repressive measures.

The growth of state sponsored Hindu communalism has become a source of fear and distrust for minorities and in self-defence, and due to lack of a democratic culture, are resorting fundamentalism. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of AILRC to combat communalism in the light of a study of this phenomenon in death, without tending support to fundamentalism of whatever variety. The call for "Rastriya Ekta" and "Akhandata" in mind be opposed is only an alluring myth of the ruling classes for their unchallenged sway all over the country whose real strength lies in the maintenance of plurality and multiplicity.



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