

Communist Party of India (M-L) Naxalbari**On the Present Situation of the RIM and the Challenge of Regrouping Maoist Parties at the International Level**

The Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) is now defunct for all practical purposes. The only remaining sign of its presence is the 'A World to Win News Service'. Even this is reduced to mere tokenism, incapable of providing direction and at times misused as a mouthpiece of sectarian views. This situation is both grievous and challenging.

The RIM used to present itself as the 'embryonic centre of the world's Maoist forces'. Its formational process and practice justified this. Foremost among these is its initiation from a worldwide rebellion that emerged from among Maoist parties and organisations against the capitalist coup and restoration in China. Though a tiny minority and mostly isolated, these Maoist forces dared to swim against the revisionist, centrist tide. Most of them could be part of an international process of regrouping that ultimately led to the formation of the RIM in 1984. Since then this movement had been instrumental in promoting the proletarian revolutionary cause with ideological consistency. It could draw immense energy and greater clarity from the presence in its ranks of parties leading the two glorious people's wars initiated in the later part of the last century. It could bring out the authentic and united voice of Maoism on major world developments. It initiated and led several internationalist campaigns of solidarity and resistance. The journal 'A World to Win' inspired by the RIM acquired a prestigious position. Most important of all, it advanced to the height of adopting Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and playing a key role in gaining wider adherence to this ideological position within the international Maoist movement.

It is therefore extremely grievous that the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples have been deprived of this international weapon right at this time of global imperialist crisis. The Maoist forces are once again faced with the challenging task of seeking out principled, ideologically consistent, unity amongst themselves and regrouping at the international level. This broadly presents two options - reorganise the RIM or build a new international organisation. In either case, a summation of the RIM experience, even if initial, is necessary. This should not be limited to participatory parties of the RIM. It must strive to draw upon and incorporate inputs from the greatest number of existing Maoist parties.

Whatever maybe the limitations or even errors of the RIM, it is an indisputable fact that it was the most advanced one among the various international initiatives of Marxist-Leninist forces. This is particularly true in the matter of ideology. Therefore, regardless of whether one opts for reorganising the RIM or prefers to build anew, its experience must be struggled over and synthesised. In view of the advanced position achieved by the RIM we hold that it is appropriate to reorganise the RIM, rather than striving to build something new. But such reorganisation must go beyond an organisational regrouping of the participatory parties and organisations of the RIM. We cannot simply

reactivate the RIM and continue as before, even with a new CoRim. There are two reasons. First of all, the present predicament of the RIM stems, in some measure at least, from its very constitutive concepts and methods of functioning. They must be addressed and a resolution attempted to achieve meaningful reorganisation. Apart from this, a number of Maoist parties, some leading people's wars, are outside the RIM. Reorganisation will be incomplete without pooling their views and experiences.

No single party can arrogate to itself the task of summing up the RIM. It must be done collectively. Yet a beginning must be made, to initiate debate and struggle. The following positions are being advanced in this spirit. They are preliminary in nature and open to revision. We focus on the drawbacks, since the positive features are broadly known and already mentioned in brief. Besides, the pressing need is to identify and resolve those negative factors which have brought the RIM to the present stalemate.

The capacity of the RIM to function as a cohesive body was grounded in its insistence on ideological unity. This made it possible to proceed beyond a co-ordination and achieve the formation of a committee to lead it and its centralised functioning. The committee was conceived as an embryonic political centre. This conformed to the stated aim of working towards the formation of an International of a new type. The qualification 'new type' was incorporated precisely to distance this future International from the Comintern conception of being the 'world party of the world proletariat'. Hence the centralised functioning of the committee, the CoRIM, was to be guided by the recognition, explicitly mentioned in the Declaration of the RIM, that the formation of a new International demanded an appropriate form of democratic centralism, apart from a new General Line. The CoRim was given the responsibility of carrying out various ideological, political and organisational tasks. It was to take guidance for this from the general positions collectively adopted by the participatory parties and organisations. Furthermore, it was allowed an active role in the process of generalising and synthesising the experiences of the individual parties by bringing these to the attention of all the participants, through its circulars and reports. Thus the ideological unity, lying at the foundation of the Movement, was sought to be transformed into a material force by manifesting it in an appropriate organisational form and method of functioning. This was the distinctive feature of the RIM. The positive gains achieved by the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples through this Movement are closely bound up with this feature. Yet, the present situation of stagnation too is located precisely in this, in the paralysis of the CoRim.

This paralysis is related to sharp ideological and political differences among the parties in the CoRim on the Nepal issue. No doubt these differences are widely present within the Movement itself. But we highlight those in the CoRim because it is primarily responsible for the present

stalemate. However, the problem of the present situation is not rooted in such differences as much as it is in the methods adopted to deal with it and arrive at a resolution. This is not the first time that sharp differences have come up. The RIM and its Committee have been marked by 'wranglingism' from the very beginning. But, in the past, this was overall handled in a manner ensuring collective participation. This allowed the RIM to identify points of unity and advance on that basis, without papering over differences. When deviations from this correct method took place, ideological struggle tended to get diverted into secondary issues and unprincipled methods. It needed the collective intervention of the Movement to check this. The sharp differences on the Peru issue, the problems of handling associated with this and the achievement of a level of unity in 2000, through collective struggle, may be recollected. But in the present instance the CoRIM failed to discharge its responsibility of consulting and involving the whole Movement. The reasons for this must be sought in the current outlook of the concerned parties, not just on the specific issue of difference, Nepal, but on the whole range of ideological, political and organisational positions. An analysis of these matters is beyond the scope of this note. What is to be noted is that the present paralysis of the CoRIM leading to the RIM becoming defunct is not an 'inevitable' consequence of its structure that granted the role of an embryonic political centre to the CoRIM. It is the unavoidable product of deviations from the points of unity in the understanding that led to the formation of the RIM.

Yet this does not absolve the embryonic centre concept from all blame. A tendency of promoting the central role of the CoRIM at the cost of bilateral relations among parties, even to the extent of discouraging such direct ties, existed within the CoRIM and the Movement from the very beginning. This tendency emerged from the failure to rethink the issue of international organisation in the light of the initial criticism made of the 'world party' concept made in the Declaration. It was squarely rooted in visualising a new International more or less in the pattern of the Comintern. More and more, political exchanges and contacts became routed through the CoRIM. This led to a situation where bilateral contacts among the participating parties were weakened, and often abandoned. As a result we have the present predicament where the freezing up of the CoRIM has caused immobility of the whole Movement. This is more than an organisational, structural, problem. Let us recollect that the initial contacting of the late 1970's and early '80s was actualised through various initiatives of individual parties, in circumstances far more adverse than those existing today. The present stagnation is mainly an ideological problem, one of outlook. The extent to which this stems from the 'embryonic political centre' concept remains to be assessed, but its role is undeniable.

The tendency of 'absolutising' the central role of the committee was opposed and criticised by some parties pre-

cisely on the grounds that it was tending to go beyond the points of unity leading to the formation of the RIM and the CoRIM. It was even pointed out that this reflects an outlook of recreating the centralisation seen during the Comintern period, in one or another manner. At each instance these parties demanded that bilateral ties must be promoted and that the tendency within the CoRIM that opposed this must be rectified. But this was not taken up with the importance it really demanded. And it did not get due recognition. Quite often such matters were posed and dealt with as issues solely concerning the style of functioning of the CoRIM or deviations from the Maoist methods of leadership. Given the differences on the vision of a new International, it was inevitable that the very concept of 'embryonic political centre' would be a site of unity and struggle from the very beginning. Yet this was not explicitly recognised and dealt with as such.

This is an important lesson that should be taken and applied in the present initiative. We must therefore review the position on 'embryonic political centre' and deal with the structural form of leadership accordingly. The Declaration of the RIM has correctly observed, "The concept of world party and the resultant over-centralisation of the Comintern should be evaluated so that appropriate lessons from that period can be drawn as well as from the positive achievements of the First, Second and Third Internationals. It also is necessary to evaluate the overreaction of the Communist Party of China to the negative aspects of the Comintern that led them to refuse to play the necessary leading role in building up the organisational unity of the Marxist-Leninist forces at the international level." Both these aspects must be addressed in any attempt to build an international organisation of the proletariat, even in its preliminary forms or stages.

Since the adoption of the Declaration, the thinking and practice of Maoist parties, within and outside the RIM, has changed significantly. New parties have been founded. In this situation, the Declaration, though still correct and relevant in many aspects, can no longer be the basis, even for a reorganisation of the RIM. It is therefore necessary to initiate a process of debate on various ideological, political and organisational issues. This must necessarily be broad enough, in the topics selected as well as participation, so that the present reality of the international Maoist movement is properly represented. Through this process the points of unity and differences can be identified and a relatively advanced platform can be arrived at, to become the basis of reorganisation. We once again clarify: such reorganisation must go beyond an organisational regrouping of the participatory parties and organisations of the RIM. We cannot simply reactivate the RIM and continue as before, even with a new CoRim. In this sense it will be a new initiative. But this new initiative must build off from the advanced positions attained by the RIM, taking lessons from its experiences, both positive and negative.