

**Excerpts from Political Resolution
[Adopted at the Tenth Congress of CPI (M), April 2-8, 1978,
Jalandhar]**

Left and Democratic Front

Our Party has been striving for building a powerful front of left and democratic forces for a number of years. Our success in West Bengal has been outstanding, followed by our success in Kerala and Tripura. In these three states, the polarization has taken place between the front led by us and the Congress (West Bengal and Tripura) or the front led by the Congress (Kerala). It is unlike in other states where the major division is between two rival bourgeois-landlord combinations. This is a qualitative difference and it has been our endeavour to bring about this change all over India. It has been an equally persistent endeavour of Indira Gandhi to break the combination and she did it by winning over the Right C.P. for this treacherous course.

The struggle to build this front is part of our endeavour to bring about a change in the correlation of class forces, to end a situation in which the people can choose only between two bourgeois-landlord parties, and get imprisoned within the framework of the present system. By gathering all left and democratic forces together for further advance, the Party makes a beginning to consolidate those forces which in future will participate in shaping the alliance for people's democracy under the leadership of the working class. The left and democratic front is not to be understood as only an alliance for elections or ministry, but a fighting alliance of the forces for immediate advance – economic and political – and for isolating the reactionary classes that hold the economy in their grip.

It is stated in our Programme, "The struggle to realize the aims of the people's democratic revolution, through the revolutionary unity of all patriotic and democratic forces with the worker-peasant alliance as its core is a complicated and protracted one. It is to be waged in varying conditions in various phases. Different classes, different strata within the same class, are bound to take different positions in these distinct phases of the revolutionary movement. The complexities arising out of the shifts in the positions taken by different classes and strata in the same class underline the need and importance of developing the

Communist Party functioning as the vanguard of the revolutionary working class..." (Para 111)

And further, "The Party will obviously have to work out various interim slogans in order to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing political situation. Even while keeping before the people the task of dislodging the present ruling classes and establishing a new democratic state and Government based on the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry, the Party will utilize all the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence Governments pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people." (Para 112). Transitional slogans and platforms have to be worked out at each stage to mobilize the people, and all this constitutes a preparation for heading towards the people's democratic front which is gradually realized through a series of struggles and stages.

The Programme further enjoined on us to defend parliamentary and democratic institutions against threats from the reactionaries: "The threat to the parliamentary system and to democracy comes not from the working people and the parties which represent their interests. The threat comes from the exploiting classes....When their interests demand they do not hesitate to replace parliamentary democracy by military dictatorship. It will be a serious error and a dangerous illusion to imagine that our country is free from all such threats. It is of utmost importance that parliamentary and democratic institutions are defended in the interests of the people against that such threats and such institutions are skillfully utilized in combination with extra-parliamentary activities" (Para 72)

We have had many ups and downs in our efforts to force a united front of left and democratic forces due to the class vacillations of many of our allies. The Madurai resolution of the Ninth Congress of our Party states:

"Most of the traditional left and democratic opposition parties and groups while getting panicky in the face of sharpening class struggle on the one hand and the mounting political ideological pressure of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes on the other, had begun their back-sliding from the anti-Congress democratic fronts by 1959" (Para 103). If the Right C.P. threw in its lot with the Congress in 1969, the Socialist Party joined the grand alliance completing the process of disruption of left unity.

Our Party, however, continued its efforts to build left and democratic unity. It found expression in ceaseless efforts to build trade union unity, develop joint mass actions and develop united front action on several issues affecting the masses.

With the rising mass movement there was growing response from several left parties and their mass organizations. There were joint actions between unions affiliated to INTUC, AITUC, CITY, HMP, UTUC, between organizations of employees – all of which helped to radicalize wide sections. The formation and activities of UCTU helped the process of trade union unity.

The mass actions broke all previous records in their prolonged resistance and wider participation. The number of strikes and mandays lost reached a new record figure between 1972 and 1975. Most of the important industrial centres and industries were involved in joint actions. Militant actions were organized by students, state government employees, teachers, professors, doctors and others.

The high-watermark of these activities was the historic strike of the railway workers, which was the result of unprecedented unity forged in the ranks of the workers following the united actions of several central organizations. It was followed by the gigantic all-India May 15 strike in support of the railway workers. Though the strike was brutally suppressed by the Indira Gandhi Government, it left an abiding impression of unity and common fight. This was further followed by an equally unprecedented anti wage freeze convention drawing together lakhs of workers and employees. Once more the result was due to the united front of several mass organizations led by left parties or under left influence.

Our Party took the initiative for bringing together several left parties in 1973. We opened talks with leaders of the Socialist Party which enabled several left parties to come together to discuss a common programme for agitation and implementation. The joint meeting of the left parties, including the Right C.P., in early 1974 and the agreed platform were important landmarks in the struggle for left and democratic unity. The success of the railway strike was ensured by this unity of left parties. This was followed by the historic action of the working class on May 15 in support of the railway strike. The coming together of left parties, our repeated approaches to these parties and leaders like J.P. for a common left and democratic front were producing good results and through mass actions creating a movement under the leadership of these forces.

Unfortunately once again the unity was disrupted first through the defection of the Right C.P. which under Indira's pressure openly betrayed the railway strike. Since then the Right C.P. and AITUC would have no truck with any left party and confined their united front activity only to the INTUC and Congress.

On the other side, the Socialist Party which had played a notable role in organizing the railway strike and responding to the call for left unity, joined the movement led by J.P. and abandoned the task of carrying forward the struggle for left unity.

Today, once again, we have to shoulder the responsibility of building the unity of the left and democratic forces.

The Role of the Left and Democratic Forces

The left and democratic forces stand in the forefront of the fight against the forces of authoritarianism. The endeavour in all possible ways to organize the broadest possible resistance to the authoritarian danger at present mainly represented by those who openly justify the Emergency, and glorify the advantages of the Emergency rule – the Congress led by Indira Gandhi.

They lend their support to the platform for democratic reforms and advance which brings together all anti-authoritarian trends – even those that are opposed to the economic platform of the left and democratic forces.

Realising the terrible suffering of the masses and the continuing danger of dictatorship from the domination of exploiting classes, the left and democratic forces direct their fire against the monopolies, big capitalists and landlords and against the increasing influence of foreign capital.

By putting forward a political and economic programme distinct and sharply opposed to the platform and practice of the bourgeois-landlord parties, by leading the masses to realize it, the left and democratic forces enable them to move away from the bourgeois-landlord parties and increasingly rally round an alternative leadership.

The left and democratic forces press the Janata Government for implementing the electoral promises regarding democratic reforms, for dismantling the framework of the Emergency period, and welcome all

measures in fulfillment of these. They at the same time oppose and attack the Government's vacillations, backsliding and prevarication and resist fresh attacks on the rights of the people.

The left and democratic forces oppose the economic policies of the Government which help the vested interests and which are mainly the handiwork of the right forces inside the Government and the Janata Party. The left and democratic forces defend the left alliance Governments of West Bengal and Tripura, and fight the conspiracies of the vested interests against them.

The left and democratic forces advocate a consistently secular outlook and are opposed to any deviation from it on the part of the Government. They specially fight the Hindu chauvinist and obscurantist communal ideology of the RSS which is today in a position to influence the Janata Government.

Joint activities on any of the items of this (Left and Democratic) programme will help to build progressively the front of left and democratic forces which will champion the entire programme.

United mass actions must be considered to be a vital instrument of building the unity of left and democratic forces. It is these actions that draw lakhs of people together, develop their solidarity and consciousness and radicalize them. The united struggle of the masses under the leadership of the left and democratic parties or the mass organizations led by them must therefore be given prior importance in the struggle for building left and democratic unity.

The Left and Democratic Forces

(1) The left and democratic forces firstly include our party and mass organizations led by us – the CITU, trade unions of employees, Kisan Sabha, agricultural workers' organization, students' and youths' and women's organizations, organizations of teachers, professors etc.

(2) They include our allies of the left parties in West Bengal, Kerala and their mass organizations; left parties in other states, Maharashtra etc.

(3) They include the Right C.P., its followers and mass organizations headed by it. It is true that the Right C.P. leaders are not yet prepared to give up their policies of collaboration with the Congress which objectively disrupts left and democratic unity. But there is a strong

urge among its ranks to leave these policies behind and join the mainstream of anti-authoritarian struggle. Besides, in the present situation the former inhibitions against mass actions do not operate for them.

(4) The radicalization of the masses following the struggle and victory against the authoritarian forces has added to the strength of the left and democratic trends in several parties. Therefore are large numbers in all parties who take a critical attitude towards the policies of their leaderships and take a radical stand on several issues. This potential force has to be harnessed by nurturing it and developing a proper approach to it from issue to issue.

(5) It should include the left and democratic forces in the Janata Party which consist of the former young Turks, radicals from the Congress, members of the Socialist Party, independents and individuals who take a firm stand against the authoritarian forces and press for democratic changes, radical individuals and groups in all constituents of the Janata Party who press for democratic and social advance and those who oppose the reactionary ideologies of the RSS and stand for a secular democratic outlook. Also the mass organizations led by constituents of the Janata Party which are keen on defending the gains and fighting for the demands of the people.

(6) The split in the Congress took place on the question of reassertion of authoritarianism by Indira Gandhi. The leadership of the Congress led by Swaran Singh compromised its position by agreeing to the formation of a coalition government with the Indira Congress in Maharashtra. However, there are elements and groups in it who not only are against the authoritarianism of Indira Gandhi but also tend to take a radical position on many socio-economic issues. These elements should be cultivated with a view to winning them over to the left and democratic programme.

(7) It includes the democratic forces like the AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, the Akali Party in Punjab and the Republican Parties. Contacts must be established and sustained attempts must be made to bring them into the left and democratic movement.

(8) It includes the organizations of the tribal peoples.

West Bengal Left Front Government

In this vital struggle for building the front of the left and democratic forces the Left Front ministries headed by our Party in West Bengal and Tripura have to play an important role. The spectacular victory of the left alliance headed by us in West Bengal defeating both the Congress and the Janata has made it the object of admiration of wide sections of masses, who are watching every step taken by the ministry and are in full support of its measures.

All left and democratic forces and especially our Party and the working class must carry on a persistent defence of the Left Front ministries of West Bengal and Tripura against the slanders and conspiracies of the Congress and other interested parties and support its progressive measures.

The Party and the entire left forces in West Bengal must continue to defend the interests of the masses in close unison with the ministry.

The working class of West Bengal has played a magnificent role in ensuring victory of our Party and the left forces. While defending its immediate interests it must throw its full weight behind the ministry and support its measures of agrarian reform. In the absence of active working class support, the vested interests in rural areas will be in a position to sabotage ministerial steps and demoralize the peasantry. It must further throw its full weight to support all measures benefiting the people and defeat the efforts of people's opponents to frustrate them. The entire people must join the working class in overcoming the obstacles of the bureaucracy, corruption in administration and defeating the conspiracies and slander campaign of the vested interests.

Our Party has always held that only the left and democratic forces can offer a real alternative in the present situation and the victories in West Bengal and Tripura strengthen these forces throughout India. They show the path to a new crystallization which can secure an abiding advance for the people.

The Real Alternative

This struggle for unity of the left and democratic forces is an integral part of the struggle for people's democratic revolution. Our entire programme with its anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and its anti-monopolist basis has to be popularized. The working class, besides, has to be educated in the spirit of socialism, in the spirit of Marxism, Leninism and made conscious of its vanguard role. Independent political

activity of the working class and its party and its growing strength is therefore necessary to build the front of the left and democratic forces.

The endeavour to build the front does not mean an ideological truce with the varying components of the front. This will be the height of opportunism and will mean merging of the Party with the front, disarming the working class of its ideology to accommodate the ideologies of other classes.

A persistent ideological struggle is necessary against the Gandhian-bourgeois ideology of the Janata Party, against the bourgeois ideology of the Congress; it is absolutely necessary to expose the roots of the opportunism and degeneration of the Right C.P. leaders; it is equally necessary to lay bare the roots of the inconsistency of many left parties and element. It is essential to expose and unmask the anti-revolutionary role of the Naxalite ideology with its revolutionary phrase-mongering. The Hindu chauvinist and obscurantist ideology of the RSS demands serious repudiation as the RSS is now closely connected with the Government apparatus and is able to interfere in policy decisions.

Without relating these policies and ideologies to the class roots and class outlook, without every time asserting the correctness of a line based on Marxism-Leninism, the working class cannot be trained and the left elements cannot grow over into revolutionary fighters and the CPI(M) cannot play its vanguard role.