

xs: PG 1-8+14 Jack, MA, Joe Doug, G.V. Gao  
Minutes of C.S. meeting held on 29th Oct. 1976 held at Baroda

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
Ministry of Labour  
Industrial Disputes Investigation Commission  
New Delhi  
O.D.A. - 34001

Members present:-

1. Magan.
2. Sharad
3. Tagore
4. Pandya
5. Gayatri.

Invitation

1. Asha.
2. Yashpal.
3. Minas.
4. Batiwala.

Proposed agenda:-

1. Political report by Political Secretary.
2. International situation with special reference to:-
  - Draft world Political Resolution of USFI.
  - Peru, Iran, Nicaragua, Afghanistan etc.
3. Women's movement in India - by Asha and Gayatri.
4. Problems of Dalits-Harijans.
5. Industrial Relation Bill.
6. Organizational Report with other organizational problems.

Decision:- Above agenda accepted.

1. Political Report:-

- Presented by Political Secretary- Sharad.

Discussion:-

- Asha suggested three amendments which were accepted.
- Magan, Thakore, Sharad.

Decision:- The overall general outline of the political report accepted unanimously.

- See appendix I for the political Report.

2. International Situation:-

A. World Draft Political Resolution of USFI

Discussion:- Sharad, Magan, Asha, Yashpal.

Decision :- In light of the discussions, to write a letter to U.S.F.I. expressing views of C.S. on the world draft Political Resolution of U.S.F.I. \*- Appendix - II.

D. Peru:-

Sharad, Magan, Yashpal.

C. Iran, Afghanistan, Nicaragua - Yashpal and Sharad.

3. Women's movement in India:-

- Com. Asha presented a draft on the women's movement in India.

- See Appendix III.

Discussion:- Sharad, Magan, Yashpal, Asha.

Decision :- 1. To send the draft to U. sec. of F.I. as the contribution of Indian section on women's question.  
2. Two documents to be written by com. Asha and to be published in Proletarian Politics.

4. Problem of Dalits-Harijan:-

Discussion:- Magan, Asha, Sharad.

Decision:- 1. Com. Asha will submit a report regarding her experience in Marathwada (Maharashtra) incidences.  
2. Com. Asha and Sharad take the responsibility to study Harijan (Dalit) problem and prepare programmatic view point to be submitted to the party at the earliest.

5. Industrial Relation Bill:-

Discussion:-

Sharad, Magan, Asha, Gayatri.

Decision:- 1. To prepare resolution on the Industrial Relation Bill.

2. In accordance to Political Report

- See Appendix IV.

to propagate our views in working

class on the Bill through leaflets, publications, meetings etc..

6. Organizational Report:-

Presented by - Magan.

Discussion :- Gayatri, Asha, Yashpal, Sharad, Thakore.

Bombay Committee Report by:- Gayatri and Asha.

Discussion :- Magan, Yashpal, Sharad, Thakore.

Proletarian Politics:-

Discussion :- Magan, Sharad, Yashpal, Asha, Gayatri

- Decision:-
1. P.P. must be made regular.
  2. A special fund drive to be made amongst our comrades. Firm commitment of Rs.250/- from leading comrades is given as beginning.
  3. P.P. will now onwards be published bimonthly.
  4. Minimum pages 30 to 35
  5. To inquire about the cost of publications and other aspects in Jamnagar and if the cost is reasonable and regular publications assured, then to print PP from Jamnagar.

Contents of 4th issue of PP:-

- 1 Editorial based on Political Report.
- 2 Women's movement in India.
- 3 Atrocities on Harijans - Marathawada movement report.
- 4 Statement of CC against Capital Punishment.
- 5 CS resolution on Industrial Relation Bill

4th issue of PP should be published before the end of November 1978.

Appendix I - Political report by Sharad.

II. Letter of CS to U. Sec. of F.I. on Draft World Political Resolution of U.S.F.I.

III. Women's movement in India

- By Asha and Gayatri.

IV - Resolution of CS on Industrial Relation Bill.

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Political Report.

## Political Situation in India and our Task.

By: SharadJhaveri.

March 1977 General Elections constitute a decisive political watershed in the recent political history of India.

This event was crucial for analysis and in tactics of every left party, group and individuals in India. Those who saw development in India during emergency schematically as an increase in repression failed to recognise the possibility of a democratic opening and hence importance of democratic demands. March 1977 caught them unawares. They were thrown off the balance. In their harping on evolving underground, they could not strike roots amongst the masses even when such opportunities were available during emergency. On the other hand, most saw and evaluated March 1977 as a triumph of democracy over authoritarianism. It was a question of life & death struggle between the two. In this struggle, those who were for democracy were to be politically supported. Hence Janata Party was to be supported. This was the position of almost most of the Left parties, groups and individuals in India.

This position involves an equally schematic view of things. The term democracy and authoritarianism are devoid of their class contents in this view. This view entails a wrong notion that in capitalist society, authoritarianism can stem only from one particular bourgeois political formation - here - Indira Gandhi and Congress (R). It tends to cover up the violence and repression that ensues from the system itself. It is therefore misleading and miseducating.

Further, viewing March 1977 General Elections in terms of democracy versus dictatorship only leads to practice of political class collaboration with one bourgeois political formation as against the other. The issue in reality was not posed abstractly. It was a concrete case of emergency which required to be explained and in theory and in pedagogy needed to be superceded by posing the question of socialist democracy as the final solution for the evil of democracy.

Tactically, March 1977 provided an excellent opportunity to stress the repressive character of the bourgeois state apparatus, the need of overthrow it and how it could be done by pursuing an independent revolutionary Marxist politics. Such a tactic would have helped the masses liberate themselves from the ideology of the ruling class - at least on the question of democracy.

Those groups, parties and individuals who viewed the issue in March 1977 as simply a struggle between democracy and dictatorship and therefore supported Janata Party now find themselves lost as to how to explain the recent developments in Indian bourgeois-democratic polity under Janata dispensation. You cannot explain class phenomena by non-class criteria.

These people, especially CPI(M), cannot now adequately explain

- (1) the crisis of Janata regime and the party at the centre;
- (2) the increase in repression under Janata regime; and
- (3) Vacillations of Janata regime in removing completely legal and constitutional fetters on bourgeois-democratic rights.

They find the source of evil either in lack of implementation of electoral pledges by Janata party or in lack of proper appreciation of the danger posed by raising Indira Gandhi or in obstinancy of individuals like Morarji Desai or Charansingh.

It is important to note that recent political developments in India are not viewed in their totality, in their interconnections but isolatedly as it were, intrinsically episode by episode. For example, Janata Party and Janata regime crisis are viewed quite independently from the character of the state structure in India. It is viewed only from the angle of Janata Party being a savior of democracy and not as a class party representing interests of diverse strata of the exploiting classes, etc.; This is just one example of their way of analysing things. The class background of contending political personalities is not taken into account at all. The class composition of government is not developed upon at all.

Therefore, before we start with the recent political development in India let us check up with some results of March 1977. These are either glossed over or overlooked absolutely by various left parties like CPI, CPI(M), RSP and groups like former platform group or S.N. Sinha group of Naxalites or individuals like Roger Silverman.

In my view, two pitfalls are to be avoided. Both are extremes. One is to view it as a veritable revolution. This is the view of majority of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologues and J.P. Narayan and Silverman. Nothing of the kind. The other danger is to underestimate the difference in period between post and pre-March 1977. The difference is vital: restoration, however partial of bourgeois-democratic rights and trade union rights. CPI(M) RSP overestimate this aspect of March 1977 to justify their political support to Janata Party. In so doing they could not pinpoint the inherent potentiality of Janata Party to curb them when the need arises. If you remember in our statements of that period we had underlined this trend. Underestimating the difference would lead you to persist in ultra-left errors.

We shall try to avoid both dangers while making a realistic assessments of March 1977 "silent revolution".

March 1977 General Elections did not result in revolution-not even a political revolution.

The bourgeois state apparatus was kept intact. The repressive organs like armed forces, bureaucracy, judiciary were untouched. The constitutional-legal structure was kept intact. There was no break-a rupture, revolutionary or otherwise-in the continuity of bourgeois state power in India. This signal political fact of prime importance is missing in analysis or resolutions of all the parties in India. The bourgeois state power did not disintegrate in India.

There was only a change in the governmental regime. This is not made explicit by the left parties because the distinction between the state and the government is absent in their analysis.

Gandhi regime was very narrowly based especially during emergency and it signified an absolute hegemony of monopoly industrial bourgeoisie. Gandhi had successfully contained the challenge of agrarian bourgeoisie for a share in the hegemony at the centre.

March 1977 resulted in a widening of the social base of government in India. While Janata Party government essentially operating a bourgeois state apparatus for preserving and if possible consolidating the capitalist mode of production, it is nonetheless a classic instance of a ruling power bloc where several strata of exploiting classes are represented. In India, several modes of production still co-exist but the dominating one is already the capitalist mode of production, in the sense that means of appropriation of surplus may be precapitalist in appearance, especially in agrarian section; like share cropping, rack-renting, informal bondage servitude before big landowner and (agriculture labourer) real cultivator but the motive force of production process is capitalist i.e. for extracting maximum surplus value. Hence in India, industrial capitalists are not the only exploiters. Agrarian bourgeoisie also exploit. So do the small traders and non-monopoly industrial capital.

Now, for the first time after March 1977, the power bloc which runs the government comprises several strata of several exploiting classes. Thus small traders, industrialists and commercial capital is represented through Jansangh and erstwhile socialists. Farm labour is represented by SD and Charansingh. While industrial capital especially monopoly industrial capital is represented by Congress(O) and stray individuals like Jatal and Patil.

Left parties do not make such analysis but it will have a vital bearing on the question of crisis involving Janata government. But about that later.

Over three decades monopoly industrial capital has had hegemony in the government at the centre. This is the situation that we are facing.



The agrarian capital held away in the states but had failed to obtain any entry at the centre. March 1977 shattered this hegemony. Formation of Janata Party government at the centre did not solve the question of which exploiting strata will wield hegemony over others in the ruling power bloc. It was left open. The career of Janata regime would be marked by incessant efforts of agrarian bourgeoisie & monopoly industrial capital to out do each other in capturing hegemony within the power bloc. Small scale capital would try to reconcile the two or side with one or the other as the exigencies of the situation demanded from such capital-essentially petty-bourgeois.

Another result of March 1977 which has missed attention absolutely of all the parties is the reinforcement of bourgeois ideology as the dominant political ideology on the question of democracy in general and bourgeois-democracy in particular.

We know that in a class society the ideology of the ruling class is the ruling or dominant ideology. It influences the exploited class through various ways and means not the least being the political parties of the exploited classes themselves. In a socio-economic formation in which the capitalist mode of production predominates, the theory of democracy, juridical rights of "free" individuals, people as sovereign, etc; are dominant components of a dominant ruling class ideology. On the ideological front, bourgeoisie maintains its rule by appealing to the democratic illusions or prejudices of the masses regarding neutral character of the state, classless nature of democracy, etc;.

The very abstract posing of the issue in March 1977 as the battle between democracy and dictatorship helped Indian bourgeoisie buttress its ideological dominance over the masses. It was helped in this nefarious game by almost all the left parties and groups. We were the most honorable exception as a party. We refused to play game of the bourgeoisie. We tried to clear the ideological fog on the nature and limitations of bourgeois-democracy in India. The illusions of the masses regarding the real nature and the character of the democracy in India were strengthened. The real class and repressive mask of bourgeois state apparatus could not be exposed. Masses could not be forewarned that as their struggles would develop strength and intensity so would the use of bayonets against them by the Janata party regime. An excellent opportunity to educate the masses regarding all these political aspects of a bourgeois state and polity was squandered by left parties in India with the result that working masses came to pin their faith in Janata Party to deliver the goods and democracy of course.

The left parties in India did not look at all into the ideological aspects of bourgeois rule involved in this case.

For three decades, ideological dominance has helped Indian bourgeoisie to a much greater extent than bourgeoisie of newly liberated countries like Pakistan, Bangla Desh, etc; class collaborationist policy of Indian Stalinism has also played its due role. Between the ideological mode and repressive mode, barring some exceptional situations, ideological mode of exercising dominance predominated. Repression was often selective, disguised, itself ideologically colored as in the case of repression of Naxalites.

Emergency and its aftermath greatly strengthened the repressive mode of its dominance. Complete pro-censorship partially covered it. But Gandhi was shrewd enough to utilize the ideological. Witness her barrage of propaganda regarding emergency.

March 1977 came to place more stress on ideological. The victims of emergency repression helped the process. In the euphoria over partial restoration of bourgeois-democratic rights, left parties forgot two things. First, the ideological mode of bourgeois rule was being buttressed. Second, the repressive mode was quietly receding into the background to return later as we shall see, but did not die its natural death since March 1977 was not a social revolution but partial political restoration of bourgeois-democratic rights in India.

March 1977 did not result in the democratisation of bourgeois state apparatus. Dismantling of RAW or other more nakedly repressive agencies of repression did not touch the core of the problem. Various commissions have revealed the vulnerability of state bureaucracy to emergency demands. Even judiciary is not exempt as shown by Habeas Corpus case and the apologetic reference to it by the chief justice of India. Some democratisation of the government only took place.

I think this much accounting of March 1977 is more than sufficient to provide a good class background to events which have unfolded since we last met in June 1978.

I said that the question of hegemony within the power bloc was not solved. It was an uneasy truce. Agrarian bourgeoisie was striving hard. It succeeded in getting a lion's share for agrarian sector - 40% - in the formulation of economic policy. Small industrial capital also won the day against monopoly industrial capital whether national or multi-national at least in verbal pronouncements and policy formulations through Fernandes and others.

Politically agrarian bourgeoisie made a determined bid through Charansingh to establish its hegemony within the power bloc. Through the exit of Charansingh, momentarily it has been politically defeated. It is keeping a low profile for the moment.

The whole crisis was political in nature. And its specificity was not that it simply was a ministerial crisis or crisis of the government or was due to lack of cohesiveness amongst the constituent units of Janata Party. CPI(M)'s much sought after cohesiveness in Janata Party is going to prove illusory because it is not a question of forging an unitary bourgeois political formation but of making adequate provision for representation in the exercise of hegemony in the power bloc.

The political crisis precipitated by the Janata Party regime is not a reflection of any crisis in the bourgeois economy. I am inclined to think that it is not even an indirect reflection. It merely shows that various strata of exploiting classes - especially industrial capital and agrarian capital - have not been able to solve the question of hegemony.

But let us be clear, qua dominated or exploited classes, the state and its regime represent an unity. It is not a question of sharers of state power as Ajit Roy mistakenly thinks. State power is not that divisible. As fascist state has shown, even qua ruling classes, state represents an unity which is political and indivisible. The crisis of Janata Party has not caused any significant disintegration of state power in India. Administration may be demoralised. Norms might have been debased. Corruption and so called sex scandals might be vitiating the atmosphere. But that is a far cry from the disintegration of state power qua exploited classes.

It follows that we as a working class party cannot be partisans in this dispute within the Janata Party. Perhaps the change in the hegemonic structure of power bloc will hardly change the pronounced rightist character of the regime. Acquisition of hegemony by agrarian capital would mean more conservatism, more ruthlessness towards workers, more of the bias against industrial capital. Charansingh's utterances typically illustrate this. The re-acquisition of hegemony by industrial - especially monopoly industrial capital - would mean more privation for the working class in changed conditions, greater liberalisation for exploitation by MNC, etc.

No. We cannot afford to be partisans in this dispute. For the moment crisis seems to have been resolved in favour of industrial capital. But the question of hegemony has not been solved.

If you remember, our Party had pointed out immediately after March 1977 that with the democratic opening, there will be a rise in mass and class struggles. Pent up grievances will seek expression and new channels for their ventilation. And Janata regime will find it difficult to contain them through mere ideological means.

More and more will it be compared to adopt the repressive mode of dominating masses. This will happen despite its democratic pretensions. We stressed the need to educate the masses on this score to prepare them well in advance to meet such onslaught. Such tactic had the long term advantage of stressing the root source of repression - in the system itself.

And it was not long in coming. Vacillations on the question of amendments to the Constitution, on the question of MISA and Preventive Detention, on the question of release of political prisoners, bayonetting of workers from Kanpur to Pantnagar and other places, Communal riots, Atrocities on Harijans, ruthless oppression on student's agitation, Times of India's thrust - rationalising the excesses of police etc; retention of emergency provisions for quelling armed rebellion, etc; hanging of Chetty fall into a sure pattern.

I want to stress that once again a subtle shift is occurring in the mode of dominance. Repressive aspects of the state power are once again coming to the fore.

It is in this context that the proposed anti-working class industrial relation bill must be viewed. By far, it constitutes the most comprehensive attack legally ever conceived by the Indian bourgeoisie so far on the working class trade union rights. If allowed to pass, it will spell the veritable doom of the organised trade-union movement in India. It is the most massive effort ever made legally to ensure uninterrupted production of surplus value - even absolute surplus value in some cases. Since the party must discuss it separately, I shall touch here only on its political aspects.

In my opinion, it constitutes now the central axis of working class politics in India in the immediate period ahead. All our efforts must be directed to arouse the working class to resist this onslaught. Special edition of PP or Prajasattak must be, if need be, published. We must approach the workers with all our resources to explain this draconian measures. We must appeal to all other working class parties and groups and trade unions to forge an united front on this issue.

Please note. It is not a hopeless case for the ruling class. It has many options. Class initiative still remains with it thanks to class collaboration of various left parties. Class collaboration of forces is still in its favour. A section of monopoly capital is proping up Gandhi. According to a Times of India May 14 report of K.V. Raghunath Reddy former union Labour Minister in Gandhi cabinet big business wants Mrs. Gandhi back at the helm of affairs.

What do left parties propose? Left and Democratic alternative. Even RSP and Rajnarayan Arya (see his article in Clarity) are for it. It has become fashionable now to talk about it.

What type of political animal is this? What is left? And what is democratic?

As originally posited by Left and Democratic front would comprise (1) CPI(M) (2) CPI (3) CITU (4) allies of the Left forces (5) Left and Democratic forces in the Janata Party especially young Turks, radicals from Congress, members of SP (6) Akali Party in the Punjab and (7) AIADMK and (8) DMK in Tamilnadu.

It is obvious that this is a multi-class bloc on a permanent basis.

Its programme will be anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist. Note it will not be anti-capitalist.

So this front is not for Socialist Revolution in India. It is not for dictatorship of the Proletariat.

What will be nature of the State in this dispensation? Well, they are silent about it. But it seems this front will be the form of a government while bourgeois state system will be kept intact. It will be a form of class collaboration on a governmental level.

It is not going to be united front of the classical type of the Lenin era. No. The thrust will not be anti-capitalist but pro-non-monopoly capital. This is not a programme of revolution but reform.

As a party standing for independent proletarian politics, we must energetically fight this idea tooth and nail and expose it mercilessly before the people.

Since we last met in June, some literature is now available regarding revival of Naxalism in West Bengal. March 1977 has caused ideological ferment amongst them. Baring Vinod Misra and Charu Majumdar group, most have had second thoughts about annihilation of class enemy tactics. They thought this to be a terrorist party and terrorism. You know that S.N. Sinha group has opted for participation in parliamentary politics. So does Ashim Chatterji group. I have prepared a separate write-up for IP/Inprecor which is given to you for detailed information. So I will not go into details.

But I want to stress that a sizable section of Naxalites seems to have started questioning their earlier tactics. True, they have not given up Maoist postulates of two stage theory, four class bloc, role of villages and peasantry, soviet social imperialism as the main enemy, etc.;. But an opening has been made to engage them in a fruitful dialogue.

But we as a party are handicapped in that even though we have stray comrades in West Bengal, they are not alive or sensitive to such possibilities. We do not therefore have any means of establishing contacts on a permanent basis. We need to read and review their literature so that we can reply them, counterpose our own analysis and solutions, etc.;. We need to strengthen our own machinery of distribution of our literature amongst them. I am afraid we can't do much in near future except be a good passive onlooker of what is going on amongst them.

We are a small party. We are still a nucleus. We do not have adequate mass base or even well-equipped cadre base to intervene effectively on an all India level. This essentially circumscribes the furum of our activities.

On the political level, our intervention essentially partakes the character of ideological intervention. Complete political clarity, analysis and projection of our programme on each and every issue are required. For that our magazine PP has to be considerably strengthened. Its regularity has to be ensured at any cost.

Our plank is independent revolutionary Marxist proletarian politics. But what it means in the current conjuncture? It means that we refuse to subordinate the working class politically to the needs of the bourgeoisie or any of its strata. It means that we approach every issue from the viewpoint of that which would best advance the proletarian cause of socialist revolution in India. We approach every issue from the standpoint of how best to liberate the proletariat ideologically and politically from the spell of the bourgeoisie and its petty bourgeois agencies working in its midst. We advance the Marxist programme and utilize the method of the Transitional programme to intervene as much as possible in the politics of India.

We therefore don't look to what the bourgeoisie requires. It requires support of the Janata Party or Gandhi or various counts. We refuse to so chain the proletariat. Its petty-bourgeois class collaborators and leaders of Indian workers require that we support Charan faction against Morarji or vice-versa. We refuse to do that. Bourgeoisie wants complete moratorium on interruption of production of surplus value. Hence it wants us to negotiate an Industrial Relation Bill and approve it. We refuse to do so. We don't negotiate. We give a fitting proletarian reply. Massive demonstrations, picketing, occupations, classic forms of proletarian struggles. That is what we advocate and agitate. No negotiations in ministerial anti-chamber over life and death questions. Organised strength of united working class should be the response. We say that working class rights are always won in mass struggles, never given as concessions. Moreover, it is not a question of wresting concessions. It is question of resisting the mortal blow on working class movement in India.

We ask various left parties to unite at least on this issue. But unity or united front should be a fighting one and should not be coloured by their overall class collaborationist politics. Workers' interest should be supreme. This is how we approach problems.

21-10-1978.

Resolution on Industrial Relation Bill.

The proposed Industrial relations Bill introduced by Janata party Regime in the Lok Sabha launches a front attack on democratic and trade union rights of the Indian working class won after many decisive class struggles.

This is the first ever conscious and exhaustive effort by the Indian Bourgeoisie and its state to curb militant trade unionism in India even on an economic level.

Decisively anti-working class in its thrust, this bill reinforced the role of the Bourgeoisie state in repressing workers in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

The Bill must be rejected in its entirety. The regime must be refused the right to intervene in the affairs of the workers.

The Bill signifies one more step in the repression of workers which began brutally with the bayonetting of Kanpur workers.

Communist League of India, Indian section of FI class upon the workers to fight this attack by their own means and methods of struggles such as mass demonstrations, strikes, occupations, track-ins etc.

The communist League calls upon all working class parties and tendencies to forge a fighting united Front on this issue and give a fitting proletarian reply to this attack. Working class from all the parties and trade unions irrespective of their organisational affiliations should come on a common platform to fight against this repressive bill.

No negotiations on IR Bill

Scrap it.

For the right to strike.

For the unity of all workers.





X: cover: Jack, Ma, Joe, Doug, B/C, Gus  
Betsey, Mahli

COMMUNIST LEAGUE  
Indian Section OF  
THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Internal Information And  
Discussion Bulletin. 000



Volume III No. 3. July. 1978

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Some Sections of the revised draft  
of the Party Programme accepted by  
the C.C. for the discussion of the  
Party.