

## A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BY KRANTI KUMAR AND OTHER COMRADES

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**Introductory Note:** Kranti Kumar, long under detention, was a member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the CPI(ML) – May 1970 Party Congress.

The 17th June 1974 meeting of "the organising comrades of two different CPI(ML) factions working in different districts of West Bengal", which discussed "the problems of unification of the Party and of other revolutionary forces in the present situation", was a step in the right direction. We broadly agree with its formulations and we call upon all genuine Marxist-Leninists especially the different CPI(ML) groups, to heed to the call for unity and act.

The positive contributions in the context of the Indian revolution rendered by the CPI(ML) are inexorable facts of history.

To deny this is to deny reality, re-write and twist history. But it is also a fact that from the very inception of the CPI(ML) and even before, the leadership had turned its back against many revolutionary groups, slammed the door on some and squeezed yet some others out. Indeed, the leadership tried all along to keep the CPI(ML) insulated from all other revolutionary groups. This erroneous trend has to be rectified.

The Eighth or the First Congress of the Party was as much a victory over right opportunism as it was a surrender to left-sectarianism. The erroneous line of annihilation as the "highest form of class struggle and the beginning of guerilla warfare", came to be politically theorised as "the only way to mobilise the people", out of the non-political non-organisational but purely military principle. "Guerilla action alone can mobilise the people.., etc .... ", advocated by Lin Piao at a time when the Chinese revolution went adventuristic by resorting to positional and mobile warfare, abandoning Mao Tse-tung's strategy and tactics of guerilla warfare. Later on the 'annihilation line' was so much blown out of proportion and so much dogmatized as to be blindly believed in as the cure for all ills – the panacea. It was believed that it would solve all the problems of the Indian revolution; that it would alone mobilise the people, arm the people, organise the people, build the army, establish the base area, spread politics, fight revisionism, build the party and to cap all, create the New Man. Preposterously enough, a communist came to be defined it. (It was said, he was not a communist who had not dipped his hands in the blood of the class enemy).

So much is indisputable. Much is left unsaid, as the right to criticise is the sole right of the Party as a whole. No individual, however 'big', nor any group of individuals, nor any group of the CPI(ML) can arrogate to himself or itself, the right to review the past: Such arrogance would amount to self-righteousness and self-boasting, of claiming himself or itself as the 'only one', the 'only successors to the CPI(ML)', the only upholders of the correct line etc. It may lead to saying that C.M. was the villain of the piece or that C.M. was all correct.

By turning out tons of documents, by producing a plethora of programmes, the concerned have done great disservice to the cause of unity of the Party. The heaps of documents mushrooming every day have done enough mischief by confusing the mind of the common man and the understanding of the cadre. The cause of the unity of the party would be best served if the concerned desist from dumping in the public their necessarily subjective stuff

and coolly and collectedly await or act for the unity of the party. This is said without prejudice to the principled struggle between lines going on all through. The absence of a united party, i.e. its present existence only in groups and individuals, tends to anarchy and indiscipline ruling the roost. Even responsible comrades in jail forget their limitations, ignore revolutionary norms and practice and hardly resist the temptation of rolling out their tons of documents, only to add to the prevailing confusion outside. The free-for-all attitude must immediately be put an end to for unity's sake.

The tall claims of different CPI(ML) groups, each claiming itself as the only true successor to the CPI(ML), stand in the way of unity. Liquidationists of all hues are active all around. Just now they pose the main danger. A species of them throws up its hands, tears and fists the air in a show of frustration to demonstrate that there is no more any CPI(ML), that the party is in a shambles and prescribes a fresh beginning right from scratch. Another variety of liquidationists makes conspiratorial soundings for recalling the armed revolution and disbanding the party. This betrayer-brand quotes the one-time declaration of Ho Chi Minh for dissolving the party. It underplays, rather suppresses, the fact that in the best interests of his country's revolution. Ho Chi Minh only changed the name of the party to 'the Workers' Party' and sent the whole organisation underground, thus saving the whole party.

Then, you have lin Piaoists. This funny group has the betrayer, the careerist and the double-dealer as its inspirer. There can be no common ground with this group for any purpose, let alone for unity. Modern revisionism remains the main danger. We should never lose sight of this nor minimise its danger at any time in view of its being headed by the Soviet social-imperialism. While salvaging the Party from left-sectarianism there is always the danger of receding again into the trap of right opportunism. We should at all costs be vigilant about this danger.

#### **FRIENDLY CRITICISM**

We endorse generally the decisions of the June 17 meeting; and urge on the participant comrades to take concrete follow-up action on what they had decided in the meeting. But before thinking aloud about the concrete steps to be taken, we should like to put in some friendly criticism. The meeting held, "At the same time, it should be clearly stated, that if the CPi(ML) leaders do not do anything about this, the cadres are not bound to wait... the CPI(ML) cadres will have to take the entire responsibility of reviving the Party". Is it not a threat? Is it necessary to say this just now? Does this help unity efforts? Let first things be attended to first; and last things last. Wily presume that the CPI(ML) leaders will not do anything about this? In fact, their not doing anything will be known only after some time. So, first comes your concrete action in bringing about unification. Should you not wait for the outcome of your call followed by action? Are you not giving rise to a misgiving that yet another centre is about to sprout, from your combined group, at some point of time whenever you would feel it right to say that the leaders did not do anything about unification?

We on our part, of course, understand your zeal, earnestness and genuineness.

It is high time the party was united. It is only a unified CPI(ML) with a proper stance of uniting with other revolutionary groups and forces that can lead the Indian revolution. We

would like to recall that there was the 'Open Letter' signed by the Six Comrades in jail, which for the first time called for the unity of the different groups.

You have rightly recalled Comrade Ashim Chatterjee's statement regarding tire evaluation of Comrade Charu Mazumdar and the need for unity. But you did not, for whatever reason, mention the 'Open Letter' even as referred to by him in his statement, exhorting comrades to heed its call for unity. (It is reliably learnt that only a synopsis of the 'open letter' as just a new item was contemplated by the signatories. But by a lapse, either intentional or unintentional, the text originally meant for cadres only was made public. It was any way a serious lapse and a grave error).

For principled unity, at least a minimum basis is necessary for the different groups of the CPI(ML) to rally round. Will the fact of their once belonging to the CPI(ML) which led the armed struggle provide enough basis for bringing about the unity of the Party? Is it not a reality that the different CPI(ML) groups have taken strong and separate postures, supported by their respective documents of programme, tactical line, and self-critical report? It is not also a reality that each of them claims to be the 'only one' and at that 'the only correct one' and its document to be the 'only basis around which others should rally for any unity? Well, in this context, will a mere call for unity or a call for giving up such claims suffice for achieving unity? There are groups, once belonging to the CPI(ML), but now showing themselves off as Lin Piaoists. It is a pious hope that all groups including those with antagonistic stances will positively respond to the unity call. A call for unity should not merely be a call in the air. Concrete action should follow it. A call should not be allowed to go abstract or idealistic.

### **SOME SUGGESTIONS**

To begin with, there must be a minimum basis; i.e. an area of maximum agreement, a common plane to which different groups can be made to converge. By whatever name you call it – this meeting of the different groups for the purpose of achieving a new unity of the CPI(ML) – it is not a co-ordination committee to organise a new party from scratch. What basis can there be other than the "Spring Thunder Over India" article? Add to this the fraternal suggestions by the CPC. The 'Open Letter' carried a pruned version of the fraternal suggestions. The fraternal suggestions are none other than the rich experiences of the great Chinese revolution. A complete version of the fraternal suggestions along with the 'Spring Thunder Over India' article should be the main props of the unity efforts.

With the inviolable, incontrovertible basis for dialogue ready at hand, meet the different groups and individuals once belonging to the CPI(ML) and prepare them for a dialogue across the table on that basis. Take your own time to draw as large a number of the Central Committee members of the CPI(ML) as possible to the common table, for the purpose. Let them search for further areas of agreement and develop them into carrying out step by step what you decided at the June 17 meeting. Let all comrades involved in and responsible for this unity effort remember Comrade Mao's teaching:

"Practise Marxism, not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and above board, and don't intrigue and conspire."

It should also be remembered:

"Everything in the world is divided into two, and the same is true of the Party. The struggle within the Party between unity and split will continue as long as there is class struggle in society and the struggle between the two lines within the Party. Outside the party there are other parties. Inside it there are groupings. This has always been so." (IX Issue of Red Flag, 1973).