

THE LETTER OF NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE – A REVIEW

(23rd July 1950)

By Jyoti Basu (Party Name: Bakul)*

1. The CC letter purports to give in brief some of the main features of our new political line and understanding of situation in India. It also contains in a summarised way an analysis of the Titoite crimes of the leadership in the sphere of methods adopted and new organisational decisions are suggested. My review will deal in a summarised way with the main points in the letter.

2. Since the publication of the Information Bureau editorial on India, the party members in general in Bengal have been carrying on intense political discussions and reading basic Marxist and Soviet, Chinese and international literature as never before, in order to bring back our party on the correct rails at this critical juncture. All of us began to understand the enormity of the mistakes made and crime committed by the PB and PC and as a last resort a bold lead was expected from at least a section of the CC with regard to our organisational and political task in this situation. But for 5 months the CC was silent and allowed the PB and PC to further worsen the inner party situation. Now when the long waited letter of CC has come, it has failed generally to fulfill our expectations. It will be my endeavour to deal mainly with the weak points and wrong formulation as they appear to me. The points with which I agree I shall mention only in passing.

3. POLITICAL: Main formulations on the present situation (p 4, English letter). The role of the Soviet Union, as it has been formulated here, does not stand out as of decisive significance in the national liberation struggle of colonies including China and India. As neither in our Thesis nor other subsequent PB documents this point was correctly pointed out, I think it is imperative to do it now. The role of the Soviet Union cannot be equated with other favourable factors which have arisen after 2nd world (sic), Com. Li Li Sang (sic) pointing out the favourable international conditions for the victory of the Chinese people makes the following formulation:

“But with simply those conditions there could be no victory, which must also have favourable international conditions. And they are the existence of the Socialist Soviet Union and the sympathy and support of the Soviet Union and world working class. The victory of the Russian October Socialist Revolution pointed out to the Chinese working class the road to liberation and gave them great inspiration and encouragement. The victory of the anti-fascist second world war led by the Soviet Union resulted in the defeat of the German-Italian Japanese-fascist bloc and the establishment of the various new democracies in East Europe, and inspired the heroic struggles of the working class in the west and of the oppressed nations in the East. The main attention of the imperialists was drawn to Europe, thereby enabling China to break through the imperialist and its running dog Chiang Kai-shek, and win and complete victory. Just as Chairman Mao Tse-Tung said: “If the Soviet Union did not exist, if there were no victory of the anti-fascist Second World War and no defeat of Japanese imperialism, if the various new democratic countries

did not come into being, if there were no rising struggles of the oppressed nations in the East, if there were no struggles of the masses of the people in the United States, Britain, France, Italy, Japan and other capitalist countries against the reathese (sic) things, could we have won victory? Obviously no. It would owe us therefore to express here our gratitude and respect to the working class of the Soviet Union! Our gratitude and respect to the working class of the whole world. Our gratitude and respect to the great teacher of the world working class - Stalin! (*China Digest*, Vol. VII, No.6 p.20).

It is correctly emphasized that India is colonial country and the bourgeoisie junior partners of imperialism and the only change is from direct to indirect rule. This colonial character and dominance of imperialism was denied by od (sic) PB as was done in China by the Trotskyites.

The two essential characteristics of the Chinese path (a) united front of all anti-imperialist classes - the broad masses of the peasantry intellectuals, petty-bourgeoisie who suffer from vexations and restriction from imperialism and (b) armed struggle of the country side etc., are generally correctly stated in line with the Information Bureau editorial.

But I think the formulation on Middle Bourgeoisie is confusing and incorrect. It is clear that the dominating purpose of the CC is to restrict and negate the united front with this section of the bourgeoisie. There is only a formal recognition that they must be treated as allies in the national liberation movement. This (sic) continuation of the left sectarian policy. Intimate connection with feudalism and big bourgeois interests does not by itself make the middle bourgeoisie enemies of the democratic revolution. It is necessary to warn that the middle bourgeoisie are not stable or reliable members of the anti-imperialist camp and to point out that there are rightist elements among the middle bourgeoisie and blows must be delibered (sic) at their reactionary political tendencies. But it is also necessary to state why it is also necessary to state why it is a basic task to unite and struggle with them (middle bourgeoisie as a whole) with unity as the main point for whatever temporary period of time and that it is possible to do so. I can do nothing better than quote some relevant passages from Stalin and Li-Li- san on the question of a alliance with the middle bourgeoisie, Stalin in refuting the Trotskyite line on the Chinese problem said: "The principle of the necessity for the Communist Party in every country of utilising the smallest possibilities of seeking mass allies for the proletariat, even if they are temporary, vacillating, wavering or unreliable. "Further; "It is necessary to have a flexible and well considered policy of the proletariat and to be skilful in utilising every fissure in the camp of the enemy in finding allies for oneself." (Stalin; Comment on Current affairs on China; quoted by Chen Po-ta; *China Digest*, Jan'50.)

Comrade Li-Li-san on the basis of this policy recounting why the working class could lead the revolution to victory said among other things the following:

"Finally, the Chinese working class could built up the mighty national united front and establish the leadership in the national united front because it found the correct

policy on dealing with the Chinese national bourgeoisie, differentiating the national bourgeoisie who oppose imperialism from the comprador bourgeoisie who have capitulated to imperialism, not opposing the national bourgeoisie as a national enemy but treated them as allies in the national liberation movement, and adopting the policy of both uniting and struggling with them with the former as the main point. This is because, generally speaking although the national bourgeoisie in a country like China have many connections with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, they have at the same time suffered from their fettering, exclusion and restriction. That is why, although the national bourgeoisie are prone to wavering and compromising in the national liberation movement it has been possible to unite with them and win them over to the side of the revolutionary masses of the people while the struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism were going on. In this connection, it is required of the working class on the one hand to be skilful in using tactics of winning them over and uniting with them, while on the other hand, to be skilful at all times in exposing and opposing their wavering, compromising, and even designs of betrayal by a certain part of them." (Li Li san (sic): *China Digest*, Vol. VIII, No. 6' 49: pp.18-19).

It is because of the dual nature of the National bourgeoisie the following conclusion is drawn by Yu Huai in the article in Peoples China on the National Bourgeoisie; "It is exactly because of this fact that struggle must necessarily continued in an appropriate manner against the national bourgeoisie while uniting with it.

The contrast between CC's formulation and the above formulations are quite clear.

Whilest (sic) it is correctly emphasised that feudal relation are dominate and agrarian revolution is the axis in India at the present stage and armed struggle is on the agenda, the way armed struggle and prevailing conditions have been explained is to my mind misleading and confusing. I do not know what other fuller documents will certain on these points but my criticism is based on what is written in the letter.

It is correct to state that in India at the present time armed struggle is the main form of national liberation movement and Telengana, Andhra, Hajong areas of Mymensingh point the way. It is dangerous to have illusions the attack of the Nehru Govt. can be defeated and national liberation achieved in any other way but armed struggle as the main form of struggle. Guerilla war is not only necessary but possible in many parts of India because of 1) terrible economic condition of all sections of the people – workers have seen their conditions deteriorating all their democratic rights trampled underfoot by the Govt. The politically advanced workers are conscious that the Congress Govt. is responsible – peasants lack land, are oppressed by feudalism and famine conditions prevailing many parts the petty bourgeoisie in towns are pauperised and have seen the Congress government depriving the people of all democratic liberties – the middle bourgeoisie similarly have experienced during last 3 years, the mounting restrictions from big bourgeoisie and imperialists and their business is declining. They have been the hoax of all reconstruction schemes and so called planning.

Together with these the refusal of the Congress government to solve the question of nationalities and linguistic provinces, the highly centralised administration etc. are embittering large sections of the people.

The people in general do look forward to some change and there has been a rapid disillusionment with the Congress government. Hence it is true to say that these are sufficient grounds for revolutionary action of these masses in many parts of India contrary (sic) that "the national liberation movement in Indian has entered into a new and higher phase of its development and that it will develop at an even more quickening pace" (Balabushevich). But it is untrue to say that the illusions with regard the Congress have been completely shattered (underline mine). It is untrue to say that it is only the leadership of the Socialist Party who are spreading Gandhian ideology. This is all oversimplification and a refusal to see the difficulties which have to be overcome. It is carrying forward the left- sectarianism of the party and will again lead to adventurist actions. The following warning of Balabushevich must be given serious attention.

"It must, however, be noted that in spite of the fact that the peasant movement has in certain districts attained a high level, it is still distinguished by great unevenness and does not bear an all India character."

Dyakov, similarly, in 'Crisis of British Rule in India and the new stage in the liberation struggle of her peoples' points out that "the unity of the present movement has been won to an even lesser danger".

And again:

"The working class and the Communist Party of India have to overcome serious difficulties in the fight for the peasantry. The influence of reactionary Gandhism is still strong amongst the peasants. In spite of the treachery and the betrayal of leading top sections of the National Congress, the Congress still continues to retain considerable influence amongst the peasant masses and the fact that the disruptive All India Kisan Congress led by the proteges of Patel and Nehru (Ranga and others) finds soil for its treacherous activity amongst the peasants can be explained by the illusions with regard to the National Congress which have not yet been dispelled. The Socialist leaders are also trying to carry out their disruptive activity amongst the peasant masses. Not long ago they formed a parallel peasants' organisation aimed at undermining the developing revolutionary struggle of the peasantry and the growth of the influence of the Communist Party". (Balabushevich: *Colonial Peoples struggles for liberation*, p. 52)

"It is impossible not to take account the fact that the National Congress will enjoys a certain influence among the masses. This can partly be explained by tradition since in the course of a long period of time the Congress was considered to have been in considerable opposition to the policy of British imperialism in India. This can also partly be explained by the nationalist demagoguery of the Congress leaders by which they are trying to screen their compromise with British imperialism. But the reactionary policy of the National Congress in beginning to arouse greater and

greater dissatisfaction and indignation amongst the Indian workers. With the exposure of the reactionary Gandhism, the influence among the masses of the National Congress is being more and more rapidly dispelled." (Ibid; p.59)

Hence unless these 2 factors are borne in mind 1) that the big bourgeoisie through Congress leadership are spreading Gandhian ideology together with the Socialist leadership, 2) that there is 'unevenness' in the peasant movement, we are likely to seriously minimise our task and plunge into adventurist actions.

The CC has refused to see the whole reality and not understood all the tasks and hence it says that only certain organisational (underline mine) tasks have to be fulfilled, party machinery smashed by left sectarianism as to be reorganised and comrades educated on new line in order to start armed actions. The C.C. forgets that one of the factors of Trotskyite deviation was that we had forgotten the peasantry; we had split up the peasantry and made enemies where allies should have been mobilised; we had not systematically fought against Gandhian, not only reformist ideology; we had liquidated the Kisan Sabhas and party organizations. To see only the organisational side and not the urgent political tasks and other important factors will lead to failure again. This does not mean that propaganda alone can fulfill these tasks; it means that propaganda, different forms of mass struggles, armed guerilla resistance and organisation of Party and Kisan organisations have to be combined and carried on simultaneously. There cannot be any stereotyped, hard and fast scheme. I cannot understand what is meant by the CC formula that "We cannot sit quite (sic) when either the enemy attacks us or the masses are on the move under the plea of not having fulfilled the above mentioned minimum jobs. In that case, we have to fulfil them while leading masses and carrying on resistance against the Fascist attack of the enemy". When the masses are on the move, we certainly lead them but does it mean that if we are attacked by numerically superior and armed forces of the enemy then in every case we resist face to face? Does it rule out manoeuvre retreats etc.? I am sure it does not mean so but the formulation can be misinterpreted.

To sum up by point on this section. Armed struggle is on the agenda in the sense that it is no longer a remote possibility but has started in a few places in India and can be rapidly extended to many places provided the party performs its political and organisational jobs. The favourable objective factors are there for the masses to learn quickly from their experience and they are learning. But to oversimplify this and assert that all over India and Pakistan everything is ready for armed guerilla action and only some organisational tasks have to be fulfilled is blindness to reality and will lead to dangerous adventurist conclusions. It must be remembered that there are other forms of actions besides guerilla actions, which must be used to resist and oppose the enemy and prepare the masses. The forms of struggle will depend on an estimation and analysis of the concrete situation.

With regard to our task in cities and industrial areas, there is practically nothing in the letter. There is no recognition of the disunity in the working class, the influence of national reformism among a section, the smash up of all our trade unions due to the policy of the PB. It is not realised that the CPI does not command influence over

the majority of the working class. These are various obstacles in the way of effectively building up working class hegemony. Hence Balabushevich warns:

“The Indian working class and its Party in its fight for the masses will have to overcome serious difficulties and above all, it must fight to establish unity within its own ranks. In the Indian Union, the reactionary leadership of the National Congress and Socialist Party are trying to split the trade union movement. Apart from the All India Trade Union Congress which is led by progressive leaders, including Communists, since the time of partition three new parallel trade union centres have arisen inside the country - the National Trade Union Congress, which is a Government owners’ organisation and is the creation of the leaders of the national Congress and the Pt.ed-Nehru Govt. (sic) the Hind Mazdoor Sabha which was formed at the initiative of the leadership of the Socialist party and the United Congress of Trade Unions which has recently been formed in Calcutta, An notwithstanding the fact that these latter three organisations are considerably weaker than the All India Trade Union Congress, the disruptive and splitting activities of their leaders constitute an obstacle in the way of the struggle of the working class. A clear example of this is the disruption by the Socialist leaders of the general strike of the eight hundred thousand railway workers, scheduled to take place in March 1949, and for which 95% of the members of all the trade unions of the railway workers had cast their vote. The trade union movement in Pakistan is also split”. (*Balabushevich*: p. 45-46).

Lessons must be drawn from Chinese history. Maslennikov writes the following in the article ‘On leading role of working class in the National liberation movement of the colonial peoples’:

“The hegemony of the proletariat in the Chinese revolution would have been impossible if the Communist Party of China had not from the very beginning of its activities created powerful mass proletarian organisation if (sic) these organisations, and above all the trade unions, and not succeeded in leading the working class movement and leading along the revolutionary path, the path of uniting it with Socialism”.

Other factors also which we must overcome must not be minimised. In China the bourgeoisie was weak and unorganised unlike in India and national reformism had never such a strong influence as in India.

The Peking Manifesto is correctly quoted with regard to tactics in the working class front. It is also true that political general strike and insurrection is not exclusive methods of establishing hegemony over the peasant masses and in the struggle for national liberation. But the concrete situation in the working class front is not takes into account stall (sic). Where is there the call for building up working class unity, mass organisations of workers and establishing the ideological and organisational leadership of the CPI over the working class and its organisations.

The old PB had deliberately in the name of proletarianisation, fostered enmity against the petty bourgeoisie. It is surprising therefore that the CC letter of

contains no mention of the role of the petty-bourgeoisie. Li Li san said the following in the Peking Conference.

“In the second place, it united with the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie in the cities, specially the revolutionary intelligentsia: In countries which suffer from imperialist and feudal oppression and which are culturally backward like China, the intelligentsia frequently play a particularly important role. They are not only the initiators and propagandists of an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal ideology but are also frequently vanguards of the revolutionary movement. The working class should pay special attention to uniting this revolutionary force though attention should be paid to taking precautions against the tendencies of hastiness, flightiness, running to extremes and adventurism etc. inherent in their class origin so that they cannot affect the whole revolutionary movement.” (*China Digest*. Vol. VII. No. 6: p.18.).

Similarly the old PB and declared all left parties as enemies and saw it that they leave our organisations as soon as possible. In this letter also it is stated that we must contend against the leadership of the left parties and groups, but nowhere is there a call for uniting all parties, groups and individuals opposed to imperialism. Left sectarianism dies hard.

Lastly I feel there should have been a paragraph clearly stating that we are fighting for Peoples Democracy and not a socialist revolution or a mixed revolution.

ORGANISATIONAL:

From the organisational steps taken, I think neither the old not the new CC have realised the nightmare that was created by the Trotskyite politics and Titoite methods, nor the consequences which followed therefrom. Of course some hard words against the old leaders have been used but in practice the whole affair has been treated most light heartedly.

It was second after the 2nd Congress that Titoite methods were put into operation in Bengal i.e. BTR, Babi, Gour. The Bengal PCMs generally were opposing the highhandedness of the PCMs and hence had to be dealt with. Truths, half freely used to save Gour and Robi in Ananta Singh affair. Reports about him were known to Robi and Gour but were hidden from other PCMs for a long time. Whilst the PBMs went scot free, other PCM were reprimanded for delaying actions. In S.K. Acharya's case the whole truth was not revealed and he was expelled by PB flouting the opinion of PCMs who recommended lesser punishment. Robi his adviser made him the scapegoat and himself became the hero. It was deliberately arranged that no PC meeting be called despite our requests, Robi wrote a document to prove the necessity for dissolving the PC. Some of us demanded a PC meeting on it, and circulation of our opinion. But no such thing was done and the elected Bengal PC was dissolved, in a summary fashion. Thereafter through a nominated PC of the PB's choice, systematically all DCs in Bengal were broken up and reorganized. Later after 9th March other provinces were similarly deal with. Besides lies, slanders, intrigue, a system was evolved by PB for perpetrating mental agony on comrades confining them in Dens under certain shock trooper and surrounding them with

suspicion. Then when their spirits broke self-criticism was wrung out of them. The other Titoite methods of PB are mentioned in the letter. It is revolting. Yet as a sort of concession this (is) written in the letter that "Titoite methods of the PB had not yet reached the extreme form as in the Yugoslav Party." What a consolation: what else could the PB do I wonder, without a state power. Whilst on the one hand this was happening, documents were being suppressed by Adhikari who was reprimanded for doing it previously in the 2nd Congress. It also seems that Tito's explanation after the expulsion from Cominform, was circulated to PBs and Tito's trade agents visited our Bombay head quarters. Mao was slandered in line with the imperialist press. The letter is written in such a way that ultimately just as in the 2nd Congress Joshi alone was the scapegoat, so now BTR alone is being made the culprit as a GS he does bear the gravest responsibility but what about the other PBMs on the spot? What about Adhikari? What about Gour the PBM attached to Bengal PC. Bengal PC will have to go for having acted as the shock trooper committed of the PB but Gour continues in CC. Why this double standard again? Gour is not a child he is one of the oldest leaders of the party - he knew what was happening. He was more left at times than the PB. He himself shares equally with the Bengal PC the crime of establishing terror and other Titoite methods inside the Party. If cynicism, indifference and vacillation are certificates Gour deserves them. Hence the least that should have been done is to mention by name BTR, Robi, Gour Adhikari and their guild pinned down. But Gour is taken in the CC and Robi is not even mentioned.

In the letter the ranks are eulogised for their criticism and vigilance as was done in the 2nd Congress. But it is stated that the 2 vacant places may be filled up amongst others by members of the old CC on the basis of further discussions and practical work. Similarly old members of PB and CC are again specially mentioned in point 4 of principles and assurance given that they will be taken to CC and PB when they move they are fit. Why particularly mention old CC at PB members? Anybody may be elected in CC by ranks. Why this special consideration? The point is that their crimes are not taken seriously and it is thought that such people can easily correct themselves. The principle of correction is right and comrades should not be punished in the old PB but are CC and the higher committee the only places where correction may take place?

It is also stated in p 3 that the criticism of the ranks enabled PB to come out of its bureaucracy and brought it to its senses and helped CC to make a complete turn. This it is claimed is a hopeful sign for the great future of our Party. I think such complacent, light and casual remarks are signs of great danger. Trotskyism and Titoism must not be treated so lightly. Comrades who have practised this for a long period of time have to be seriously watched and will take a long time to come health.

The old CC have laid down 4 principles which must be kept in view for selecting personnel of a new CC. Why were such high principles laid down when it is obvious that except to some extent 2 or 3 of members of CC from Andhra, no other comrade inside or outside CC could be found to fit these principles? More modest principles would have been better. These sound so hollow though sonorous. I think

the 1st 3 principles fit to some extent only about 3 comrades of Andhra but not Sundarayya and Namboodripad (Kerala). They do not fit any other member of the old or new CC. The 4th principle in the main fits BTR, Robi, Gour, Professor, Jatin Raghu as far as I know.

Anyhow, there are serious questions about Madhab, Parulekar and Sundarayya and their self-criticisms are urgently required. Azad is the only member from Bengal who can be in the CC because of his leadership of the Hajong struggle.

Basically it is a wrong decision not to hold the party congress and has to be altered. Once again it is clear that the effects of Trotskyite policy and Titoite methods are not being treated seriously. The Party has been brought to such a pass that fullest inner-party democracy and discussion, conference in Provinces and Central Party Congress can unify the party politically and organisationally. Without these iron discipline and strict centralisation have no meaning even if on a restricted scale, conferences and Congress must be held. It is the political necessity of the time. This alone in one of the basic guarantees that a correct policy will be followed. I am doubtful whether CC can thus reorganise itself without a Congress when there is a charge in the basic policy. Gradually seeing the inner party situation I have come to the conclusion that party Congress is necessary.

It surpasses my imagination why the old CC did not pass a resolution condemning itself for its criminal inactivity and for betraying the trust reposed in it by the 2nd Congress. Many of the CC members were those old CC members who had readily fallen under the spell of Joshi and having got rid of him fell under the spell of BTR and Co. They seem to be rather unfortunate. I do not think they should be taken in CC.

There is no pledge in the Letter to electing a Control Commission who are to deal with the cases of individuals and PCs against whom action was taken by PB?

Decision of the new central committee

The CC should circulate the self-critical reports of PB members and minutes of old CC meetings to all comrades and not only to PCs. This along will help in pol-org unification.

The CC thinks that the methods of the old PB created ideal ground and fertile soil for the growth of disrupters, careerists and spies. But no commission is set up to investigate into this matter specially on top beginning with some old PB members. A commission is appointed with a vague term of reference about lack of vigilance against Titoite spies. What this means I do not understand.

Nowhere in the letter is it admitted that section of PB has violated the party Constitution 1) by arrogating (sic) to themselves all powers of CC and not convening CC meetings, 2) by reorganizing all PCs under the plea of exceptional circumstances (when in fact there was no such circumstance and by not getting then endorsed either by CC or a party Congress or Conference, 3) by forming one

PC for East Bengal and West Bengal. The resolution of 2nd Congress does not allow this. A co-ordination committee might have been elected for unity of movement.

It is reported that the new CC has allowed a shock trooper to act as the PCs in Bihar. No comments are necessary on this unprincipled decision.

I am of opinion that the new CC has not understood the necessity and urgency of the fight against Trotskyism-Titoism. Hence guarantee for inner party democracy is unreal and the present CC as a whole cannot yet get the confidence of the ranks.

In conclusion I must say that though the Andhra comrades have gained our respect for their creation Telengana and for saving Andhra from the evil designs of the PB. But they have not done their duty as PB or CC members and it was not until the Information Bureau Editorial came out, that they dared to move for a correct line for our whole party. Even now their efforts seem to be halting the conciliation and liberalism on the question of both organisation and political principles seem to be their watchword. This bodes ill for our party.

BAKUL

23. 7.50

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* *Full forms of mentioned names:*

BTR: B.T. Ranadive.
Joshi: P.C. Joshi.
Namboodripad: E.M.S. Namboodripad.
Parulekar: VIS. Parulekar.
Sundarayya: P. Sundarayya

Party names mentioned in the text (in alphabetical order):

Azad: Moni Singh;
Bakul: Jyoti Basu;
Gour: Somnath Lahiri;
Jatin: Arun Bose;
Madabda: Biresb Mishra;
Professor: G. Adhikari;
Raghu: Sunil Mukherji;
Robi: Bhowani Sen.