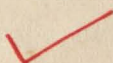


CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS

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The question of Centre-State relations has now acquired importance in the context of the political situation emerging in India after the traumatic experience of the emergency dictatorship. It is no longer treated as a heresy to be hunted down—no longer regarded as a separatist fad and disruptionist slogan of the CPI(M). It is becoming quite respectable with several bourgeois ministers openly or privately supporting it. Even the President some time back expressed the opinion that the Centre-State relations deserved a fresh look. Life's realities have posed it as a problem of Indian democracy, of its advance which cannot be ignored without doing harm to the democratic process. The fact that the notorious 42nd Amendment Act reduced the States to the position of a subordinate dependent of the Government of India, showed that the attack on their powers was an inevitable requirement of dictatorial rule. The Centre-State relations have become an issue in the struggle between the forces of dictatorship and democracy.

It was therefore no surprise that the West Bengal Left Front ministry headed by the CPI(M) should take initiative in placing the issue squarely before the people. The new ministry was positively aware that it would not be able to fulfil its electoral commitments and expand democratic rights unless the strangulating grip of the centre was removed or at least relaxed.

The response to the West Bengal ministry's call came from many quarters and showed the urgently felt necessity of a change in the Centre-State relations. Open support came from some ministers while mute support was lent by others. All feel that the financial grip of the Centre paralyses them. The allies of the Janata Party like the Akalis and the

AIADMK are openly demanding a change in the existing relationship:

The problem can no longer be ignored. The top Janata leaders first tried to do so but had to engage in a debate. The Prime Minister took a reactionary view of no change, trotted out the familiar arguments about disruption of national unity and boasted that he was opposed to the formation of linguistic states. But the debate could not be suppressed.

However, all those who support a change in Centre-State relations do not necessarily represent the democratic urge behind it. This important issue of Indian democracy is often reduced to the narrow proportion of provincial and regional claims and attempts are made to rouse chauvinistic feelings. To present the issue as one between eastern and western regions for instance, to demand exclusive privileges at the expense of other States and peoples, constitutes a degradation of its democratic content and opens its advocates to the charge of disrupting national unity.

For instance, Mr. Umrangal, Punjab Revenue Minister commenting on the Centre-State relations is reported to have made the following observations according to a Times of India report, appearing in the 2nd June 1978 issue of the paper. "At his press conference in New Delhi, Mr. Umrangal stated that there had been no end to discrimination against Punjab for the last 31 years. No compensation had been paid to the dependents of four to five lakh Punjabis killed in partition riots while the Bangladesh refugees who came in 1971 have been helped, he said.

"The Minister had also said that injustice had been done to Punjab in the sharing of water with Haryana. Besides many Punjabi speaking areas, as also Chandigarh had not been given to Punjab. The State also did not have control over the Bhakra Project either. He had said that while raising the demands he was speaking on behalf of the Punjab Government."

This has nothing in common with the democratic demand for State autonomy, expansion of democratic rights, and end to concentration of power at the Centre. It only demands more facilities at the expense of other States and peoples and

rouses chauvinism and is disruptive of democratic and national unity.

The existing Centre-State relations are not based on greater democratic or economic freedoms to any State, but on the suppression of freedom for all States. The central point in the struggle is the subordination of all States to the Centre and not favour shown to this or that state.

This degradation of the movement suits the reactionary vested interests in the States, especially the landed gentry who by appealing to chauvinism hope to sidetrack class and democratic demands, and get into power to loot the State budgets. The havoc that this gentry did in Andhra with its separate Telangana movement is still fresh in our minds. Chauvinism roused on any issue—whether Centre-States or regional fights constitutes enemy number one of all class movements, all movements for democracy.

What is the crux of the problem ? How do we view it is as Marxist-Leninists ? Those who do not see beyond our Constitution, who view it as a problem created only by the Congress leaders are blind to the fact that similar problems were created by the ruling bourgeoisie and their allies in a number of countries. The point at issue is not whether the Congress Govt. violated the earlier understanding regarding the promise of a federal constitution; but the behaviour of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes when faced with the problem of democratic rights for compact linguistic nationalities in a state.

Secondly, it should be further understood that a proper solution of the problem is no panacea for solving the basic ills of present-day society. Such fantastic claims are made by well-meaning fools, and opportunists and reformists of several hues. The fantastic claim that a proper solution of Centre-State relations problem will lead to social salvation, and restructuring of social relations is the nonsense uttered by many. Such idiotic claims were also made when the struggle for linguistic States was going on. These struggles by themselves do not solve the question of political power, they do not change the reality of class domination—this is conveniently forgotten. At the same time, it should be recognised that the solution of the problem, the expansion of democracy resulting from it,

does constitute an important aid in the struggle for democratic and social advance. It removes a number of hindrances in the development of class struggle and brings the people and the working class face to face with the reality of class domination in each State. Similarly, it places in the hands of an awakened people more power and strength to fight against domination and suppression.

The question of Centre-State relations—embodies an important problem of national capitalist States—how to keep the unity of the different national or linguistic units of the country. Where the State or country is based on a single language and does not have multilingual population that problem does not exist. But it becomes a serious menace in countries, especially third world countries, with multilingual and multinational populations. The protracted civil war and the massacres taking place in a number of African countries, the suppression and massacre of these minorities—for instance, Baluchis and Pakhtoons in Pakistan and the emergence of Bangla Desh through a war of liberation—all point to the danger in the absence of a proper solution.

The issue is connected with the rise of the national capitalist state after the downfall of feudalism. As Lenin said, "Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speaks a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. This is the economic foundation of national movement. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity and unimpeded development of language are the most important conditions for genuinely free and extensive commerce on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for free and broad grouping of the population in all its various classes and lastly, for the establishment of a close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or little, and between seller and buyer." (P. 396, Vol. 20, Selected works.)

The role which language and a homogeneous linguistic

territory plays in the establishment of a national State and its connection with the development of capitalism and the market is outlined clearly.

But many States were not unilingual and they had their own problems. India, a newly liberated country, comprised of many linguistic nationalities. The national State after the ousting of the British was faced with the existence of diverse linguistic groups. The problem is essentially how under a bourgeois-landlord regime the sense of unity and equality can be preserved for the various linguistic units, how sense of inequality does not overpower unity of the State and lead to its disintegration.

The leaders of the Congress who represented the interests of the big bourgeois-landlord combine had already developed the ideas of India as one nation without any reference to its diverse constituents. This was a typically big bourgeois idea which looked upon the country only as a vast single market to be exploited by the big bourgeoisie. Anything going against it was denounced as anti-national and anti-unity. The idea worked for a long time, especially during the period of independence struggle when the people were facing British imperialism; when every one perceived the dominant contradiction between oppressing imperialism and the oppressed people. It was naturally expressed in the feeling of one nation, one people. All the more so since the British imperialists taunted that the Indians were a conglomeration of several peoples and not a nation.

But the real unification of the people at the same time presented problems. The sense of bourgeois equality, national unity had to fight at each step casteism, communalism and all other feudal and semi-feudal institutions and ideologies. The bourgeois leaders of the national struggle, themselves guilty of a compromising attitude towards the feudal institutions, were assailed by the anti-caste movements, by the demand for equality from the untouchables. They however championed some of the demands in a liberal way adjusting their conservative outlook to the needs of immediate unity in face of imperialism. Their efforts at Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability were liberal adjustments towards the feudal

institutions. As is now clear these policies did not solve the problem. Caste and religion continue their disruptive role at present as in the past.

It is clear that the unity required for a national capitalist State of modern times could not be reached only on the basis of anti-imperialist struggle. To achieve it pre-capitalist ideology and institutions and relations had to be fought and eliminated i.e. agrarian revolution had to be completed.

Along with this arose the problem of equality among the modern constituents of the new State. The problem was arising in the course of the independence struggle, with the awakening of people in all States. This was a modern problem of ensuring equality and democracy for all the linguistic, national and tribal constituents of the new State, of doing away with modern or traditional inequality among them. The ideologues of one-nation failed to understand the importance of the problem as one of Indian democracy. They only smelt fissiparous tendencies in it. Those whose concept of Indian unity did not exceed beyond that of a huge unified market at their disposal, free from British competition, naturally resisted the demand. But concessions had to be made to the new force in the course of the independence struggle. The biggest defeat of those who refused to recognise the separate existence of linguistic national units was when the Constituent Assembly could not incorporate Hindi as the official language of the new State. The multilingual State refused the status of national language to one language. It refused to accept a subordinate status for other languages. Since then the struggle against Centre's domination has often taken the form of opposing the imposition of Hindi in one form or another.

The opposition to Hindi has in many instances led to anti-Hindi linguistic fanaticism from the other side. This is equally a chauvinist reaction serving the vested interests in the States and has nothing to do with the unity of the people or the struggle for democracy and equality of the constituent units.

In no country in the world has the bourgeoisie ever succeeded in uniting the nationalities on the basis of equality. An inequitable class system is not the instrument for solving this problem. As Lenin pointed out the only way the bourgeoisie

tries to solve it is through suppression, chauvinism, and setting one nationality against another.

This process is now operating in India threatening the integrity of the country. The attempts to suppress the struggles of border nationalities, the repeated conflicts in these areas involving the use of armed forces and police terror constitute a menacing warning. The delicate balance in Kashmir with its many klaedoscopic changes and the developments in Nagaland and Mizoram mark out the deteriorating situation.

For the rest of the country though there is as yet no outburst of comparable proportion, except in West Bengal, where a sense of alienation has been developing. The semi-fascist terror in that State and the rigging of 1972 elections represented the instruments of the bourgeois-landlord ruling party to keep a dissident State people under its subjugation. All democracy was to be denied, a second class citizenship was to be imposed if the people of a state chose elected representatives of their own choice, representatives who refused to accept the dictatorship of the Centre.

In the context of Indian conditions the problem of the equality of constituent units does not present itself as an oppression of several backward nationalities by an advanced nationality as was the case for instance in pre-revolutionary Czarist Russia, but one of stifling and stagnating the economic growth of all units and undermining and curbing their democratic freedoms, in the interest of the big bourgeois-landlord alliance and its State. What determines economic planning for instance is the profit-making need of the big capitalist class and not immediate interests of the people. The former leads to economic growth in certain States, regions and parts and resulting in unequal economic growth and backwardness of certain regions. This creates a profound sense of inequality, leads to discontent and is diverted to chauvinistic channels, setting of one region against another by interested parties, leaving the initiative and power in the hands of the Centre. The main culprit is allowed to escape.

“The question of nationalities or, to put it in popular terms, the issue of linguistic States and the so-called Centre-State relations stands on a different footing. The principled question

here is not one oppressed nation dominating, economically and politically, one or several oppressed nations, but a question of the big bourgeois-landlord classes of different big and small nationalities of the Indian Union holding political power and pursuing the capitalist path of development in collaboration with foreign finance capital. Such a class regime and such a path of development can neither liquidate the economic dependence nor can it complete the still unfinished tasks of the bourgeois-democratic stage of the revolution. What we find today is more in the nature of class exploitation and oppression by the bourgeoisie, landlords and the foreign monopolists rather than the **political oppression** of the Indian people by the foreign imperialists or the oppression of different Indian nationalities at the hands of one or other oppressing nation of India." [Note on Nationalities, Madurai Congress of the CPI(M).]

The monopoly of the Centre regarding finance, its increased financial powers, the dependence of the States on the Centre's loans, the distribution of tax resources, the items included in the three lists—State, Concurrent and Central lists—are all intended not so much to show favouritism to this or that unit but to safeguard the interests of the big monopolists and capitalists; to ensure that the economic development and the expenditure of public resources conforms to their interests; to ensure that the States do not cross this magic line.

For the same reason there has been an open turn to growingly attack on the democratic rights of the people in the States, curtail the powers of the assemblies and the ministries, use the bureaucracy as the Centre's watchdog to exercise vigilance over the ministries and finally to use the Governor as the overlord of the State, fully authorised to conspire against and overthrow a recalcitrant State ministry. Here there has been no favouritism or partiality.

As a document of the seminar on Federal Polity convened by the Indian School of Social Sciences says, "In pursuit of their path of development, the rulers of India have resorted to growing centralisation of power. This has brought in its wake multiplication and diversification of the coercive apparatus of the State; and the emergence of an overweening executive to meet the deepening discontent of the people. The rulers have

invaded the domain of the States and unilaterally taken away States' rights. They have reduced the states to the position of clients so far as the resource mobilisation and allocation are concerned. They have shown a dictatorial attitude to opposition parties in office in the States, especially the left and democratic parties. They have also controlled key administrative services for fashioning a bureaucracy to be utilised at their behest. The Emergency intensified this process tremendously and the 42nd Amendment Act of the constitution was its most constitutional institutionalisation. Thus, the issue of Centre-State relations has got integrally tied up with the growing attacks on the democratic rights and civil rights of the people."

The struggle for proper Centre-state relations is an integral part of the struggle for retention and expansion of democracy in India, part of the struggle against centralisation and dictatorship - a struggle in which people of all States are vitally interested. Those who divert it into the channel of state rivalries—more privileges for one state or present it as a fight of favoured versus non-favoured States do not understand the vital issues involved and take the fight into reactionary chauvinistic channels. The struggle can not be successful in isolation from the struggle for ensuring greater fundamental rights in the Constitution and their expansion.

The question of language policy of the Centre however is based on national inequality: The persistent attempts to impose Hindi on the non-Hindi people, the denial of equality of all languages, and the manifest injustice done to Urdu and some other languages constitute a discrimination which has often led to explosive situations, threatening the feeling of unity and the integrity of the country. Not that all the opponents of imposition of Hindi take a correct democratic position regarding the issue. Instead of insisting on equality for all the languages the efforts of some of them are concentrated on securing a permanent status only for English, by which they reveal their real class affiliations. The real demand representing equality and protecting unity is equality of all languages.

The recent developments on this question are summed up in an editorial of the Times of India dated 2.6.1978:

"In practice the Janata Government has been pushing Hindi (Pondicherry is the latest instance). Moreover, Janata-ruled states in the north, like Bihar, U.P., Madhya Pradesh, have made no bones about promoting Hindi while at the same time devaluing English though that language is an essential part of the three language formula to which the whole country has subscribed. The Janata government can hardly expect to press ahead with propagation of Hindi without triggering off the kind of well-grounded opposition that Mr. Ramachandran, the head of the State most staunchly opposed to Hindi creeping in through the backdoor instead of with the explicit consent of the people, is now seeking to muster." And it must be remembered that non-Hindi speaking people form the biggest single linguistic bloc.

The struggle for unity of the country and advance of democracy, for sense of equality among the constituents demands an end to the discriminatory language policy of the Government and above all to the policy of concentration of power at the Centre.

The charge that such struggle and demand must necessarily disrupt national unity is the stale worn out argument of the advocates of a unitary state and opponents of state autonomy—those who act as the hatchet men of the bourgeois-landlord alliance. No doubt if the question of Centre-State relations is raised in a charismatic way putting one state against another, one region (Eastern Region) against another (Western Region) it will be disruptive of unity. But only those who are governed by selfish motives, or represent local vested interests will indulge in such an approach.

A question may be asked to those who argue that more powers to the States will endanger the unity of the country. Why do these people think that all patriotism is concentrated at the Centre so that whatever power can be given to it will be used in national interests; while powers to the State will be used to betray national interests, on the contrary today the unusual concentration of political and financial power at the Centre is undermining sense of unity and integration and alienates the people from the Centre which is supposed to represent the will of the united nation.

Our Party firmly stands for the unity of the country and fights all forms of disintegration; we definitely stand for an effective and efficient Central Government capable of defending the country; organising and consolidating its economic life and fully armed with powers to discharge its other responsibility like foreign policy etc. Our Party stands for a big united India, Indian Union based on autonomous States, because such a big state when taken over by the democratic people led by the working class can take rapid strides to Socialism; we are vitally interested in maintaining the unity of our country and of our people.

Such unity is possible only on the basis of a status of equality and freedom to the constituent linguistic units and not on the basis of the domination of the Centre and subordination of States to its needs.

That is why the struggle against the present set-up must be vigorously pursued and the opponents must be defeated. The struggle must be linked with the present demand to introduce changes in the Constitution. The following proposals and changes suggested in the West Bengal Government's Memorandum on Centre-State relations should find common acceptance.

"To protect States' autonomy, an amendment to Article 248 should be made to the effect that the legislature of a State should have exclusive power to make any law with respect to any matter not enumerated in the Union or Concurrent List, as against the present provision which reserves this right to Parliament. In other words, the residual powers of the federation should lie with the units and not with the Centre.

"The States have to act in such a way while exercising their full rights in their own sphere that they do not transgress the sphere allotted to the Central Government; the latter too on its part should not interfere in the sphere of the States, both legislative and executive.

"Article 249 giving power to Parliament to legislate on a subject in the State List under the plea of national interest should be deleted.

"While enlarging the scope of the States' sphere, we must also try to preserve and strengthen the Union authority by subjects that could be carried out by the Union authority

and not by any single State, such as defence, foreign affairs including foreign trade, currency and communications and economic coordination. The role of the Centre should be one of coordination. In areas such as planning, fixing of prices, wages etc, the Centre may not only coordinate but also issue general direction.

“In the matter of planning and economic coordination, however, the Centre will have to conform to the general guidelines laid down by the National Development Council, in which the States will have representation along with the Centre. At the moment, neither the Council nor the Planning Commission is specifically referred to in Constitution. This lacuna may be closed by introducing a separate Article, which should also state clearly that the composition of the Planning Commission will be determined by the National Development Council. Loans and grants for developmental purposes are now the prerogative of the Planning Commission. It is thus important that the States have some say in the manner of operation of the Commission. But nothing beyond foreign relations, defence, communications, currency and related matters should be the exclusive domain of the Centre. The latter should help the States develop in their own way, with more powers and resources at their command.

“The right of the Central Reserve Police or other police forces the Union Government may raise to operate in the States is to be withdrawn. The subjects of law and order and the police should be fully in the State sphere, and Centre should not interfere with its own specially created forces.

“The Articles regarding the Finance Commission and the distribution of revenues should be amended to provide for 75 per cent of the total revenues raised by the Centre from all sources for allocation to different States by the Finance Commission. This is necessary to end the mendicant status of the States.

“In what proportion and on what principles this 75 per cent of the total realisation shall be divided between the States shall be decided by the Finance Commission.”

“The States must also be accorded more powers for imposing taxes on their own, and to determine the limits of public borrowing in their respective cases. Further, the right of the

Union Ministry to put restrictions on trade and commerce and intervene within a State as provided in Article 302 should be deleted. To achieve these objectives, the Seventh Schedule enumerating Union, State and Concurrent Lists should be suitably amended.

Articles 356 and 357 which enable the President to dissolve a State Government or its Assembly or both should be deleted. In the case of a Constitutional breakdown in a State, provision must be made for the democratic step of holding election and installing a new Government as in the case of the Centre. Similarly, Article 360, which empowers the President to interfere in a State administration on the ground of a threat to financial instability or credit of India should be deleted.

Article 200 and 201 which empower the Governor to reserve Bills passed by the Assembly for President's assent should be done away with. The State legislatures must be made supreme in the State sphere and no interference by the Centre in this sphere should be allowed on any ground.

"In order to enforce the principle of equality of the federating units and to protect further erosion of States' autonomy, it is suggested that elections to the Rajya Sabha also should be directly by the people at the same time as Lok Sabha elections, all States must have equal representation in the Rajya Sabha except those with a population of less than three million. Both houses must have equal powers.

"Languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule should be allowed in the work of the Governments at the Centre and in the States at all levels. Any citizen of India will have the right to use his mother tongue in his dealings with any branch of the Government upto the highest stage. English should continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union along with Hindi as long as the people of the non-Hindi regions so desire."

Rousing of public opinion to support these constitutional amendments is absolutely necessary. Success cannot be achieved through discussions in seminars alone. The masses must be invited to participate in the struggle for democracy and against concentration of power, struggle which should determine whether the bourgeois-landlord classes split the unity

and integrity of the country or whether the working class leading the people defeats the disruptors and strengthens the bonds of Indian unity. We must once again refer to Lenin. How did he formulate the national programme of the Bolsheviks in Russia. "And at the same time, it is their task, in the interests of a successful struggle against all and every kind of nationalism among all nations to preserve the unity of the proletarian struggle and the proletarian organisations, amalgamating these organisations into a close knit international association, despite bourgeoisie striving for national exclusiveness.

Complete equality of rights for all nations, the right of nations to self-determination, the unity of workers of all nations such is the national programme that Marxism, the experience of the whole world, and the experience of Russia, teach the workers." (Vol. 20)

In India's conditions the demand for self-determination and right to secession is not raised. The reasons were fully discussed at the Madurai Congress of the Party : that demand is replaced by the demand for State autonomy, residual powers to the States and other amendments suggested above.

The other two items of Lenin's National Programme are fully valid. They are; fight against the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie of the big and small nations (in Indian conditions against the chauvinism of those who support Centre's domination and of those who oppose it in a chauvinistic way) and the all India unity of the working class. When Marxists talk of unity they know that the main base for the country's unity is the working class and its movement which can quickly overcome chauvinistic appeals and fight them. The all India unity of the working class and its movement must be strengthened and made an instrument of checking and fighting all chauvinistic trends disruptive of the unity of the country.

The Note on National Question in India adopted by the Madurai Congress of the CPI(M) correctly warned in this connection :

"While the proletariat and its genuine Communist Party shall have to unequivocally champion the real equality and autonomy of the States in the Indian Union and oppose

any and every manifestation of national oppression, it cannot but take serious note of the alarming developments that seriously threaten the unity of the working class and the toiling people of India at the hands of narrow nationalists and chauvinists of the different nationalities. Issues such as setting up a major industry like a steel plant or oil refinery, or a shipyard in the public sector are exploited to rouse and mobilise people of a particular linguistic State against the Union Centre as well as some other brother States. Border disputes between States are utilised to whip up national chauvinism while leaving out the main culprit, the Central Government which opportunistically refuses to enforce a principled solution. Urban unemployment in key industrial centres is sought to be traced to the influx of this or that linguistic group to these centres, and anti-minority riots are organised to disrupt the unity of the class and mass organisations of the people. Different linguistic and nationality groups in Government services at the Centre as well as in the States often become victims of narrow nationalism and chauvinism, fostering mistrust and animosity between different nationalities in the Indian Union. Hidebound religious divisions are exploited by certain interested forces even to disrupt the same language-speaking nationality as seen in the case of the Punjab. Warring landlord-bourgeois factions do not hesitate to incite people of one region against another region of the same nationality as witnessed in Andhra Pradesh, with the slogans of separate Telangana State. The separatist movement in Vidarbha, Saurashtra and the like—all don the cloak of perverted and distorted nationalism and regionalism. The big bourgeois leaders at the Centre and their apologists seek to utilise all those disruptive agitations in order to deny the status of real autonomy to the States, and even undo the reorganisation of States on linguistic basis—a demand achieved after a bitter and prolonged struggle.

“The working class movement in India, at the present stage of development, facing the threat of disunity and disruption by the class policies of the big bourgeois-landlord Government on the one hand and the narrow nationalist and regional disruptive forces in the States on the other, is called upon to evolve its own specific and concrete policy on the issue of nationalities and their integration in the Indian Union.”

The advanced forces can ignore this warning at their own peril when they conduct the struggle for State autonomy. To ignore it will amount to surrendering to reactionary, chauvinism, disruption of national unity and the struggle for democracy and autonomy for States.

The warning was given six years back. Since then the situation has deteriorated still further as can be seen from a despatch in the Times of India dated June 29.1978, "Slogans like "Go Back Indians", "Arm yourself", "Boycott non-Assamese socially and economically" and "we want sovereignty" written on the walls in Gauhati give the visitor an uneasy feeling...

"Naturally when none of the local, young, qualified engineers can be absorbed in a huge public sector undertaking here or when there are only two locals among the forty recruited by a nationalised bank, it may become an issue of legitimate grievance and resentment and draw sympathy from all quarters.

"But what is of immediate and serious concern is that instead of viewing these economic difficulties in the right perspective, they are being focussed as if these are due to linguistic and other chauvinistic considerations; and are being used as the thin end of the wedge not only to distract attention from the causes of the economic malaise but also to divide and antagonise the different linguistic and communal groups and set them on a collision course.

"It will be difficult to prove the interconnection of a similar situation developing in the north-eastern states, but their common pattern is unmistakable."

This chauvinistic appeal was used in the recent elections to fight the left and democratic movement led by the CPI(M).

"Most political leaders here agree that the particular phase of hate in Assam politics has been developing since pre-election days when most of the major contestants labouriously projected the slogan, that a vote for left parties, especially the CPI (M) meant inviting Bengali domination.

"The immediate facts are that the hate campaign has been stepped up so much that at formal press conferences, Assamese newsmen refuse to sit side by side with a non-Assamese colleague and the latter's questions are resented in the

next day's publications. This points to the depth of feelings being generated by a section of the press."

The decisions of the recent Finance Commission and certain further concessions made by the Central Government in the matter of redistribution of resources have not satisfied the States. Because the problem cannot be solved by fringe concessions and benefits and marginal adjustments. It demands a thorough overhaul of the existing Centre States relations.

The earlier understanding that the present plan will be finalised in consultation with the Development Council has not been adhered to. It is but proper that the Development Council which consists of representative of the Centre and the States should be the real planning authority. But the Central authorities are yet unable to agree to this proposition.