

Necessity for the working class to take political power



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The initiating speech, at the working class conference on the Way Forward held on 23-24 December 2011, was made by comrade Lal Singh, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Ghadar Party of India. The document entitled the necessity for the working class to take political power has been edited based on the discussion in the conference and is being published according to the decision the Central Committee.

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E-392, Sanjay Colony, Okhla Phase-II,
New Delhi - 110020

Phone - 011-20281990

lokawaz@yahoo.com, lokawaz@gmail.com

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Comrades!

I am honoured to initiate this important discussion among communists and political activists on the way forward for the working class at the present time. It is a time when the capitalist system, which is at its final stage, is sinking into an unprecedented crisis on the world scale. It is a time when the capitalist-imperialist powers are threatening to expand the theatre of war and escalate fascist repression in the name of fighting terrorism or defending democracy.

Today, the inherent contradiction of the capitalist-imperialist system is hurtling humanity into one crisis after another, causing untold suffering and unbearable intensity of exploitation. It is leading to wars with unprecedented destructive effect surpassing all previous wars.

The working class and toiling majority of people in all countries are awakening to the fact that poverty, super-exploitation and unemployment, crises and wars of conquest are all fellow-travellers of this man-eating system. World over, people see that the much touted multi-party elections only lead to governments that are committed to facilitating maximum exploitation and plunder by capitalist monopolies and financial oligopolies. Capitalist democracy is losing credibility in the eyes of more and more people around the world.

The conditions of life are themselves giving rise to the necessity for the working class to take the lead in transforming society and setting its future course. This is necessary so as to end the dangers facing humanity and open the path to all-round progress. Communists have the duty to provide the vision and the theory of the political power to be established and safeguarded by the working class, so as to transform the economy and society to the next higher stage of socialism.

This is a very timely discussion. There is an urgent need for the leadership of the working class to address this question today. Do all communists agree that our primary duty is to enable the working class to take the lead and go for political power? That is the key question.

Comrades!

The deepening global economic crisis shows that capitalism is incapable of ensuring the extended reproduction of society. The spokesmen of the capitalist class are trying their best to hide this reality.

Capitalist spokesmen are forever trying to downplay the depth of the crisis. Manmohan Singh says that in spite of the worldwide depression, we need not fear because the Indian economy will once again start growing rapidly from next year. Obama and the leaders of European imperialist states keep saying that they will somehow patch things up and that recovery is around the corner. Of late, even these leading spokesmen of capital have started expressing fear and anxiety about the recession turning out to be a prolonged depression.

Bourgeois economists point to the irresponsible behaviour of some big banks as being the cause of the global crisis breaking out in 2008. They do not probe into what caused the so-called irresponsible behaviour of the biggest global banks in the first place. The cause lies in the objective laws of motion of capitalism at its present stage of monopoly capitalism. It lies in the conflict between the tendency for the average rate of profit to fall and the drive of monopoly-finance capital to pocket nothing less than maximum profits. This is the cause of ever increasing degrees of financial speculation and parasitic credit expansion, of rapid militarisation and war as preferred ways to reap maximum profits.

By pointing to some superficial phenomena as allegedly being the cause of the crisis, bourgeois economists advocate some policy prescription as the solution. For instance, they promote the notion that improved regulation of banks and other financial institutions can prevent crisis. This is an illusion because the financial oligarchy has established its stranglehold over the state, and it cannot be expected to regulate and restrict its own greed.

Driven by the unlimited greed of a miniscule minority, the system is sucking too much out of the toiling majority of people whose labour produces the material wealth of society. As a result, the toiling majority does not have enough purchasing power to buy what the capitalists want to sell. This is the essence of the crisis of overproduction, or under-consumption, also called recession.

Instead of steadily enhancing the productive forces, the system is regularly and periodically destroying them, throwing people out of work and rendering machines idle,

besides destroying cities, villages and entire nations through wars of aggression and occupation.

Marxism teaches us that the only way to end these crises and ensure the extended reproduction of society without any interruptions, and in harmony with nature, is by resolving the fundamental contradiction of the capitalist system. This is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership of the means of production. To resolve this contradiction means to socialise the ownership and control of the means of production, to bring it into the hands of the people as a whole, thereby ending the anarchy inherent in a system based on competing private interests.

Among all the classes and strata that are exploited and oppressed by capital, the working class alone has the interest to carry through the struggle to the end, until private property in the means of social production is eliminated altogether. The working class is that class which creates wealth but is unattached to private property. It is a class that is brought together in production and armed with the strength of collective organisation and productive powers of social labour. The potential of the working class to lead all the discontented masses of people needs to be harnessed by its advanced detachment, the Communist Party. It is the duty of communists to make the working class conscious of the necessity to become the ruling class of society, in alliance with the peasantry.

The key political conclusion that Marx and Engels put forward in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is that the **first step** in the revolution by the working class is to assume the position of ruling class, by winning the battle of democracy.

The first historic attempt of the working class to take political power in its own hands was the *Paris Commune* in 1871. The workers of Paris managed to hold on to political power for a short period, during which they created their own institution of state power called the Commune. Marx and Engels drew an extremely important lesson from this experience, which they considered as deserving special mention in later editions of the Communist Manifesto. This lesson is that in order to *win the battle of democracy* the working class cannot lay hold of the readymade state machine, but must destroy it and create its own institutions of proletarian political power.

The first victorious example of proletarian power was the Russian Revolution in 1917, called the Great October Socialist Revolution. It was a practical proof of Lenin's theoretical conclusion that in this epoch of imperialism, it is both necessary and possible for the working class to take political power and carry out the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism. It is possible to do so in one country or a few countries for a start. And this can happen even in a country that is not advanced in the capitalist sense, like Czarist Russia in 1917.

Lenin discovered the law of uneven economic and political development of capitalist countries in the epoch of imperialism, which leads them to wage wars for re-dividing the world. He predicted that revolution will break out at the weakest link in the global imperialist chain. He headed the Bolshevik Party in preparing the Russian working class to ride the revolutionary tide and establish its rule in alliance with the peasantry and all the oppressed nations, nationalities and peoples. He elaborated the theory of the state power that the working class must build and defend.

Lenin also elaborated the organisational theory and principles of a revolutionary party of the working class as opposed to the old parties of social democracy that were geared only towards the parliamentary struggle. He elaborated and demonstrated in practice the principles of democratic centralism, based on which the vanguard party must lead the working class in carrying out its historic mission.

Lenin's theoretical contributions were tested in practice in the course of building and strengthening the Bolshevik Party and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Our Party upholds Stalin's definition that *"Leninism is Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."*¹ We are still living in the epoch that Lenin analysed and characterised as the epoch of revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

The proof of Leninism lies in the unprecedented achievements of human society that were witnessed in less than 20 years following the October Revolution. The Soviet economy became one of the leading industrial powers of the world, with a flourishing agricultural economy based on peasant cooperatives and state farms. Private property and greed for private profit were eliminated completely from the social production process. And with it, the exploitation of some by others ended. The standard of living of the population advanced in leaps and bounds, without any interruption or crisis of any sort. It stood in stark contrast to the capitalist world economy that went through a prolonged depression during 1929 to 1939.

1 J. V. Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*

The leading imperialist powers of the world colluded in precipitating the Second World War with the hope that fascist Germany would destroy the socialist Soviet Union. However, the outcome turned out in favour of socialism and the peoples, as a result of the anti-fascist united front forged by the socialist Soviet Union.

The United States assumed the leadership of world imperialism and mounted a multi-pronged economic, military and ideological offensive to crush the revolutionary and liberation struggles of the working class and peoples in various countries of the world, and to subvert the socialist camp from within.

The 20th to 22nd congresses of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (Bolshevik), held during the period 1956-61, with Khrushchev at the head, revised the General Line of March of the international communist movement to justify competing with imperialism and colluding against revolution. The Khrushchevite revisionists advocated unity with the social-democrats and other bourgeois parties to allegedly march towards socialism without revolution. Within the socialist Soviet Union as well as on the world scale, they preached that the class struggle had ended.

The Soviet state became transformed into the instrument of a new bourgeois class consisting of the highest echelons of revisionist party bosses, military officers and senior bureaucrats. The working class lost its political power.

The Soviet economy degenerated into a hybrid form of capitalism. All the diseases of capitalism reappeared and became obvious in the sixties, including unemployment, food shortages, corruption and a flourishing black market. Soviet foreign policy became imperialist in nature, establishing and

expanding neo-colonies and spheres of influence, colluding and contending with US imperialism for global domination.

The social-imperialist nature of the Soviet Union became further exposed when its troops invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1978. Rapid militarisation of the economy further aggravated the problem of shortages in food and other consumer articles. In the decade of the eighties, mass discontent broke out in the form of street protests within the Soviet Union. The discontent was manipulated by capitalist forces to push for eliminating the last vestiges of socialism even in form.

Perestroika and glasnost, meaning privatisation and liberalisation, were promoted by Gorbachov in the eighties as the solution to the economic problems of the Soviet Union. By the end of that decade, Gorbachov was replaced by the adventurer Yeltsin. The Supreme Soviet was overthrown by force. The Union itself disintegrated and an openly capitalist Russia emerged in 1991. The capitalists of the world rejoiced. What they could not accomplish through the Second World War, they managed to accomplish through covert sponsoring of internal subversion.

Ever since the Soviet Union disintegrated 20 years ago, the imperialist bourgeoisie has been spearheading a heightened offensive against the working class and other toilers and against nations and peoples. Through intensified exploitation and plunder, and escalated speculation with people's savings, the monopoly finance capitalists have squeezed the purchasing power of the working population in all capitalist countries to an unprecedented degree. This is the source of the present crisis of over-production, which is developing into a deep depression.

The leading capitalist-imperialist powers are seeking to tide over the crisis with their profits intact through wars of conquest. The Anglo-American imperialist strategy is to unleash wars to destroy, re-colonise and plunder independent nations and peoples. They have already done this in Afghanistan and Iraq, are doing so in Libya and threatening to do the same in Syria, Iran and Pakistan. Contradictions are intensifying between the Anglo-French-American bloc and the interests of Germany, Russia and China. Anglo-American imperialists are deploying all their tricks and pressure tactics to prevent any alliance among Russia, China and India. They are egging on India to expand eastward and contribute to their plan to encircle China. The conditions are being created for a Third World War.

Only the working class can avert the terrible dangers that are threatening human society today, by taking up the question of the revolution and socialism for solution. The conditions are calling on the communists to rise to the occasion, to prepare and lead the working class to take political power.

Communists in every country are duty bound to address this urgent and burning question of the day. Do you agree to work with the singular aim of organising and enabling the working class to take power, to lift society out of crisis and open the path to socialism, sweeping away all remnants of old oppressive social systems? Or are you for some other aim? That is the central issue to be debated today.

The very act of setting such a lofty aim will give unprecedented strength to the working class. Establishing this aim in the working class movement is the key to revolutionise the class and prepare it to take political power.

Comrades!

Various leaders in the working class movement of our country say that they agree with the Communist Manifesto in general, that the working class must one day become the ruling class. However, they say that the working class in our country is not yet ready or capable of taking political power.

Some of these leaders point to caste and religious differences, to other divisions in the class, or to the large numbers of unorganised workers, to claim that it is not possible for the working class to go for power at this time. Yet others argue that the working class is a minority and hence the revolution in our country must be based on peasants and tribal peoples.

It is the opinion of our party that the problem does not lie with the working class but with the role that the leaders of the class have been playing.

Starting with the stellar role played by the soldiers of the East India Company in 1857, the first strikes of textile mill workers in Mumbai and the first May Day rally in Chennai, the organised working class in our country has again and again displayed its revolutionary character. It provided the backbone to the anti-colonial struggle.

The Communist Party of India was established in 1925 in response to the awakening of the working class following the victory of the Great October Revolution in 1917. Right from its inception, the leadership of CPI succumbed to the pressure of bourgeois ideology. The party failed to consolidate itself as a Leninist party of revolution. Its leaders conciliated with the aim put forward by the Congress Party, of political independence without social revolution.

When British colonial rule came to an end in our country, it was the capitalist class, that established its dictatorship, in alliance with the big landlords and other feudal forces, by preserving and further perfecting the colonial state and Indian Union. The working class failed to present its own independent program because the CPI tailed the Congress Party.

At the end of the Second World War, when numerous countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America won political independence from colonial rule, the prestige of socialism was very high. In order to prevent the newly independent countries from following the road of socialist revolution, the imperialists collaborated with the bourgeois ruling classes to promote various caricatures of socialism. In our country, the plan of the big capitalists to build a state sector of heavy industry and infrastructure using public funds, to serve their own class aim, was presented as *Nehruvian socialism*. This deception was supported by the Anglo-American imperialists, the Soviet revisionists and by the Communist Party of India.

CPI formally embraced the Khrushchevite revisionist line of *"peaceful and parliamentary path to socialism"*, according to which newly independent countries such as India could march to socialism without revolution, through peaceful reforms and parliamentary struggle, provided the ruling bourgeois class joins the Soviet camp. The leaders of CPI assisted the capitalist class of our country to fool workers and peasants into thinking that Nehru is a socialist; and the government he heads is steering our country gradually towards socialism. They became cheerleaders of the Congress Party and its project of building state monopoly capitalism in the name of socialism.

In the decade of the sixties, discontent grew among Indian communists both within the country and abroad against the revisionist line embraced by the CPI. One faction within the Central Committee exploited this situation to create a split and form a new party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist). This was not a positive development, as it did not resolve the problem of revisionism and class collaboration. CPI(M) merely presented itself as a more militant version of CPI, with the same vision of bringing about gradual changes towards socialism, allegedly by using parliamentary democracy in favour of the workers and peasants.

The struggle against revisionism continued within the ranks of CPI and CPI(M). The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) was founded in April 1969, as the instrument to defeat the influence of Soviet revisionism and to lead the exploited masses of people on the road to revolution. However, within less than five years of its founding, CPI(ML) split into numerous factions.

A key ideological factor for the splitting and disintegration of CPI(ML) is the influence of Chinese revisionism and Mao Zedong Thought. As a result of looking towards Mao's China for inspiration, CPI(ML) was not built as a monolithic party of the proletariat, based strictly on democratic centralism. It was vulnerable to petty-bourgeois diseases such as cronyism and feudal allegiance to individual heroes. Mao's teaching that the Communist Party develops through '*two-line struggle*' was used by individual careerist elements to justify factional and splittist activities.

The path of relying on the peasants and organising to encircle the cities from the villages led CPI(ML) to leave the workers' unions to be manipulated in the interest of

parliamentary games and vote bank politics. This led to further weakening of the working class movement. The single communist association of trade unions, the AITUC, was split in 1970 by the CPI(M), thereby effecting a major blow to the unity of the working class.

The ideological struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism, instead of being focused on the main political aim of the working class, got diverted into contrasting one method or form of struggle with another. Armed struggle was contrasted to parliamentary struggle, leaving in the shade the main content, the aim of establishing the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In spite of the confusion and divisions that took place, the working class mounted powerful strike struggles in the sixties and seventies. The historic Railway workers' strike of 1974 shook the rulers of our country and deepened the political crisis at that time. The Indira Gandhi regime responded by imposing a National Emergency in 1975, exposing the true character of Indian democracy as nothing but the dictatorship of reactionary monopoly capitalists. Even in such a potentially revolutionary situation, the leaders of the major communist parties in the country did not place on the agenda the necessity to prepare the working class to take power.

CPI supported Indira Gandhi's emergency while CPI(M) and various factions of CPI(ML) supported the alliance of capitalist opposition parties that subsequently formed the Janata government headed by Morarji Desai. Our party was born in the course of the struggle of revolutionary communists against these diversionary trends.

The Communist Ghadar Party of India was born on 25th December, 1980. From its inception, our party has been

committed to defend the scientific doctrine of Marxism-Leninism from all forms of revisionist distortions, including the Soviet and Chinese variants. Rejecting the notion of encircling the cities from the villages, our party has been built starting with basic units in the cities, among workers in large-scale industry and services. We have been committed to providing leadership to the working class and enabling it to play its historic mission as the grave-digger of capitalism and the harbinger of the new socialist society. We have persisted in fulfilling this commitment over the past 31 years.

In the opinion of our party, the most urgent task facing all communists today is to enable the working class to take political power. Our party calls on all communists to concentrate on this task and leave behind all other diversionary aims that one may have pursued in the past.

The working class has grown to become the majority class in our society today. If we examine the official data published by the Census of India, the reality is that families that depend on wage or salary income for survival make up more than half the population.

The working class in our country is no longer an illiterate mass. The class now consists of those who work with the hammer as well as those who work with desktops and laptops.

When the Air India workers launched their heroic struggle earlier this year, with the pilots at the head, they showed the fighting capability of the modern working class. They boldly exposed the plot of the monopoly capitalists and the central government to liquidate and privatise this large state-owned airline company.

The working class is more capable today than ever before of becoming the leading political force in society. However, as long as workers receive conflicting signals from different parties calling themselves communist, the political unity of the class around its single aim cannot be achieved. That is why we say that the problem lies in the leadership of the class.

Today, the situation is squarely posing the question in front of every communist: *Are you ready to take up the most important communist duty of organising and enabling the working class to become the ruling class?*

The issue is not to debate which party or individual did what in the past and why. The issue is to address the burning problem at the present time, which is the necessity for communists to prepare the working class to take power.

Comrades!

To become the ruling class in our society, it is essential for the working class to win over the peasantry as its reliable political ally. Workers and peasants are the creators of social wealth, and they together make up over 90% of the population in every region and in the country as a whole.

The peasants of our country have a long history of revolutionary struggles against colonial enslavement and plunder, against feudal oppression, and against being robbed by monopoly corporations in a globalised capitalist market.

Peasants are a major target of the diversionary propaganda of all the capitalist and reformist parties and political leaders, aimed at cultivating their respective vote banks.

Parties that play the parliamentary game typically blame whichever party is in power at the state level for the problems of the peasants. They thereby divert the peasants from targeting the capitalist monopolies headed by the Tatas and Ambanis, and their aggressive imperialist drive. They spread the harmful illusion that peasants can find prosperity and protection if only capitalism is managed properly.

The followers of Mao preach to the peasants that feudal remnants are the main enemy. This is also a diversionary line. Communists must help the peasants to recognise the truth that the common main enemy of the toiling majority is the capitalist class headed by the monopoly corporations. It is the dominant system of state monopoly capitalism that is also responsible for the perpetuation of feudal and caste-based oppression and discrimination.

Today, the vast majority of peasants, from the smallest to large land holders, are facing increasing insecurity and danger from the monopoly capitalists and their offensive to grab land, to establish and dominate supply chains to feed giant retail trade business, and to further expand the scope for peasant debt and interest extortion by the big banks. Monopoly corporations and banks are extracting more and more out of the value produced by peasants' toil.

Life experience shows that the capitalist path, based on individual private property in land and other means of production, will not liberate the toiling peasantry from old and new forms of exploitation and oppression. Competing in an increasingly globalised capitalist market has brought prosperity only for a few peasants and that too only for some time. The vast majority of peasants have been driven into debt and ruin already, as a result of the liberalisation of agricultural import

and export policies and the penetration of Indian and global monopoly corporations and banks. Further domination by monopoly capital will only make things even worse.

Only the path of socialist collectivisation can liberate the toiling peasants from their misery. This means that the working class must not only resolutely defend the rights of the tillers to secure possession of the land they till and to stable and remunerative prices for their crops, The working class must also convince the small plot holders that their future lies in voluntarily pooling their meagre assets to create collective farms and demand technical and financial support from the state.

A workers' and peasants' state will extend free technical assistance to collective farms, along with machines on lease at zero rent. It will make sure that more is put into the rural economy than is taken out of it, so that the gap between rural and urban living standards narrows over time. This is the revolutionary perspective with which the working class must rally the peasants and lead the political alliance against the monopoly capitalists and their aggressive drive, with the aim of becoming the masters of society.

Comrades!

Indian society is composed of varied nations, nationalities and peoples with their distinct cultures, languages and territories, united by common civilizational roots, philosophical heritage and the history of a common anti-colonial struggle. The British colonialists established a state power that negated all national rights, and enabled them to plunder this rich land and industrious peoples who inhabited it. They created a centralised bureaucracy and armed forces to divide and rule over India, recognising no nation or people

but only a majority '*Hindu community*', a minority '*Muslim community*' and other religious minorities.

Once colonial rule came to an end, Nehru and other capitalist spokesmen declared what the people wanted to hear, that they would strengthen "*unity in diversity*". In actual fact, they preserved the colonial character of the state power. The 1950 Constitution legitimised the arrangement and institutions of power left behind by the British rulers.

The Indian Union is based on a Constitution that negates the existence of historically formed nations, nationalities and peoples. While proclaiming itself as a federation, the Indian Union is in fact an instrument of colonial suppression of national rights within its territory. It is a prison house of nations, nationalities and peoples. The striving of every nation, nationality and people is either subverted by accommodating regional bourgeois interests in the state power, or violently suppressed in the name of defending "*national unity and territorial integrity of India*".

Those fighting against national oppression by the central state are potential allies of the working class in its struggle against the Indian ruling class. An extremely harmful role is being played by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and others who repeat the ruling class propaganda that those who are fighting against national oppression pose a threat to "*national unity and territorial integrity of India*". They are thereby serving to perpetuate national oppression and to preserve the existing dictatorship of the capitalist class headed by the monopolies.

In 1972, just eight years after its formation, CPI(M) openly embraced the official ruling class position of suppressing national movements within the country in

the name of defending the unity and integrity of India. It rejected the Leninist principle of defending the right of nations, nationalities and peoples for self-determination. Its justification was that there is no single oppressor nation in our country. However, national oppression by a single oppressor state, serving the interests of big capitalists, is not any less oppressive just because there is no single oppressor nation. There is one oppressing class and one central state, whose foundations are colonial in character.

One of the key conclusions of the international communist movement in the 20th century, before the major split engineered by Khrushchevite revisionism, was that it is the responsibility of the working class to champion the cause of national self-determination, a banner that has been trampled in the mud by the bourgeoisie in this epoch.

In our country, the working class movement must champion the cause of reconstituting India as a voluntary union of consenting nations, nationalities and peoples.

The working class and the peasantry together make up the vast majority of the population within every nation, nationality and people. Workers and peasants must constitute the nation in each case, and such workers' and peasants' republics must unite to form a powerful voluntary union of India. Every nation, nationality and people will voluntarily join such a union and defend it because of the benefit it brings to one and all.

This is the vision of the modern Indian working class, which is multinational and multilingual in composition. This is the vision that is reflected in the program of our Party for the Navnirman of the Indian state. Winning over the peasantry and winning over the oppressed nations, nationalities and

tribal peoples as political allies, united around the program of Navnirman, is the key for the working class to become the ruling class.

Comrades!

In the present post-Cold War period that began in 1991, the working class in our country has been bombarded with the line that our immediate political aim is to defend the secular fabric of the state and society from the communal danger posed by the BJP and its allies. Presenting this as the justification, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led over 60 leftist members of Parliament to help the Congress Party form the government in 2004.

The Congress Party has been called the “lesser evil” as compared to the BJP because it espouses the ideology of secularism. The working class was even told that it is possible to have a common program with this most trusted party of the capitalist monopoly houses. Left leaders sat in an advisory body headed by Sonia Gandhi to monitor the so-called common minimum program.

What has been the outcome of Congress Party-led UPA rule since 2004? There has been a tremendous increase in the degree of exploitation of workers in all sectors, robbery of peasants and tribal peoples, and plunder of natural resources including aggressive corporate land grab. State terrorism and jingoism against Pakistan in the name of opposing individual terrorism has continued to be the official policy. Bomb blasts and other forms of indiscriminate violence and terror continue to take place without the guilty ever being identified, let alone convicted and punished. What then has been gained by supporting this so-called “lesser evil”?

Communists have to recognise that the State in our country is a legacy of colonialism and is communal at its very foundation. Our people are not communal. They have lived for centuries respecting everyone's right to conscience. Communal violence is one form of state terrorism.

Communalism and secularism are both weapons in the hands of the ruling class to divert the working people, divide their ranks and drown their struggles in blood. They are two sides of the divide and rule strategy inherited from British colonialism and further perfected by the Indian bourgeoisie. The official ideology of secularism is based on the slanderous colonialist propaganda that our people are communal, while the State established by the Europeans is the instrument to restore communal harmony.

After four years of close collaboration with the Congress Party-led UPA government, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) admitted at its 19th Congress held in 2008 that *"the UPA government's overall direction has been to push through policies which are to the benefit of big business and foreign capital"*. It follows from this that what CPI(M) said in 2004 was wrong. The Congress Party is not a lesser evil. Both Congress Party and BJP are committed to implement the same program of the big capitalists. They only differ in what they say and preach but not in the class interest they serve.

In the opinion of our Party, identifying the immediate aim as the defence of secularism against the communal danger is a harmful line that has diverted and weakened the working class movement.

The so-called fight between the secular and communal camps hides the reality that the big capitalists are the main

enemy and their anti-social program accompanied by state terrorism poses the main danger to the livelihood and rights of the people. It diverts attention from the fact that the rival fronts led by Congress and BJP are in fact committed to implement one and the same program of the big capitalists.

By diverting the working class and its political activists, the line of supporting the lesser evil in the name of fighting the communal danger has served the big capitalists to pursue their aims even more aggressively than before.

Comrades!

A great deal of confusion has been created by those who advocate unity of the working class with some section of the capitalist class, for the sake of some kind of middle road between capitalism and socialism.

As we have noted, CPI(M) and its allies promoted the illusion that the first UPA Government headed by Manmohan Singh was going to implement a “common minimum program” that would benefit the capitalist class as well as the working class and peasants.

CPI(ML) Liberation and CPI(Maoist) appear to be bitter opponents of CPI(M). However, they too promote the vision of a joint rule of workers and peasants united with a patriotic section of the capitalist class. They claim that capitalism can be made to serve the toiling majority if it is managed cleverly by a Communist Party. CPI(ML) Liberation promotes the vision of a “*vibrant capitalism*” during the so-called stage of new democracy.

Marxist-Leninist science teaches us that widening disparity between a rich minority and the toiling majority is an

inevitable tendency under capitalism, a result of economic laws that operate independent of anyone's will. To claim that capitalism can be given a human face, through so-called pro-people policy measures, or made vibrant and progressive, means to hide the reality that capitalism is thoroughly parasitic at the present stage of its development. To suggest that there can be a new stage of capitalism, without its ugliest features, means to negate the basic Leninist conclusion that imperialism is the highest and last stage of capitalism.

Marx proved that the class interests of capitalists and workers are in antagonistic contradiction with one another. Hence there cannot be a political power that serves both these classes. To pretend that there can be a common meeting ground is to spread harmful illusions. It serves to divert the working class from its aim of establishing its own rule.

China is a clear example of what happens when a revolutionary party advocates a joint rule by capitalists and workers along with peasants and other middle strata. The Communist Party of China, with Mao at its head, argued that the rule of the working class must not be established in the conditions of China. It advocated a *"joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes"*, including the working class and the national bourgeoisie. This joint rule has today revealed itself to be the rule of the Chinese capitalist class, which has developed into an imperialist power.

The notion of a joint dictatorship of several classes, promoted by Mao, is theoretically unsound. It contradicts the basic teachings of Marx and Lenin on the state, that it is necessarily the organ of dictatorship of a single class. In the present epoch, the state can either be the dictatorship

of the capitalist class or of the working class. It cannot be anything else.

The outcome in China proves that if the dictatorship of the proletariat is not established, then the bourgeoisie will consolidate its dictatorship sooner or later.

In our country, state monopoly capitalism is the dominant system and the capitalist class, headed by the monopolies, is on an imperialist drive. In these conditions, to talk of uniting with some patriotic section of the capitalist class to allegedly establish some intermediate stage is a harmful illusion. It is harmful because it diverts attention from the necessity to prepare the working class to take power.

Comrades!

Workers' unions have put forth a set of immediate demands. This includes halting the capitalist offensive against labour rights, halting the privatisation program and establishing a universal public distribution system with wide coverage of essential articles, among other things. The question is: ***who or which political force will fulfil these demands?***

Will the present Congress Party-led government fulfil these demands? Will an alternative BJP-led government fulfil them? Will some kind of Third Front of regional capitalist parties in alliance with some 'left' parties do so? Life experience has shown that all these parliamentary fronts represent political arrangements for pushing the program of the monopoly capitalist houses.

What kind of political power will actually take steps to eliminate the private profit motive from being the driving factor of the economy? This is the key question.

Whether it is the struggle in the Maruti factories or in Air India, the workers can see that the government is not a neutral party in the struggle between capital and labour. The government is an instrument of the capitalist class. The Radia tapes exposed how the monopoly houses even dictate which member of the ruling coalition should take charge of a particular portfolio.

Every struggle is pointing to the necessity to tackle the question of political power. As long as the central and state governments act in the interest of the Tatas, Ambanis, Birlas and other capitalist monopolies, to serve their global imperialist aims, the working class cannot expect anything other than intensified exploitation and violation of rights. This is the plain truth.

We need a power that will act to restrict and eliminate the *"right to maximum profits"* demanded by capitalists, so as to fulfil the rights of workers and peasants, as well as the human rights of every member of society. We need a power that will, step by step, convert the means of social production from being private property into social and collective property.

In all the capitalist democracies, parties change places, new faces replace old ones, but the course of society continues to be dictated by the interest of the biggest capitalist monopolies.

The situation is pointing to the need for a new kind of democracy, that is, proletarian democracy. Communists have to put forward the vision of a superior and most modern democracy that will enable the toiling majority to steer society on the road of socialism and communism.

Those within the working class movement who preach that parliamentary democracy must be defended and used in the interest of the toiling masses of people are hiding the reality that this is capitalist democracy. It is a system designed to concentrate decision-making power in the hands of one or another capitalist party or front.

In the existing system and political process the ruling party becomes the supreme authority while the people have a marginal role, and that too only on polling day. Vesting sovereignty or the supreme power in the hands of one party or coalition in the legislative body, with the others making up an 'opposition' camp, is a state form and political process suitable for the dictatorship of the capitalist class, which is naturally split into rival camps.

The working class is characterised by the unity of its class interest. It must be led by a vanguard Communist Party so as to realise its single class aim of eliminating all forms of exploitation. The rule of the working class requires the elected body as a whole to be responsible and accountable to the electorate for all decisions and for their execution, without any split between ruling and opposition camps.

In the Russian revolution, workers in the largest factories and industrial centres built their own organs of power. They built decision-making and executive bodies called Soviets. Led by their vanguard party, they established and strengthened these organs in one city after another. They inspired peasants in many regions and soldiers in the army to establish such soviets. They strengthened these organs in the course of the struggle against the rule of the bourgeoisie, and when the time was ripe, they declared *"All power to the soviets!"* One by one, the nations and

peoples who had been oppressed by the Czarist regime established soviet power and joined the voluntary Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The democracy of the working class must guarantee to every adult member of society the right to elect and be elected, which means to have a decisive say in the selection of candidates. The political process must enable not just political parties but all workers' unions, peasant associations, women and youth organisations to put forward candidates for election to legislative bodies. The final list of candidates must be approved by the people before voting can take place. This was the way elections took place in the Soviet Union in 1936, soon after the new Constitution was adopted. When the Khrushchevite revisionists started changing the character of the party and the state power, they concentrated all decision-making power in their own hands, using force and threats to silence all dissent.

Proletarian democracy must protect the right of the people of every constituency to recall those they elect at any time, as well as their right to initiate legislation. It must ensure that executive power is accountable and subordinate to the elected legislative body, which in turn is accountable and subordinate to those who elected them.

In the course of summing up the experience of the rise and fall of Soviet power in the 20th century, our Party drew the conclusion that the Communist Party must fight for the principle that the people hold supreme decision making power, of which they delegate only a part to those they elect. The Communist Party, along with numerous mass organisations of workers, peasants, women and youth, must enable the masses of working people to exercise

supreme power and hold elected deputies to account. We must fight for the redefinition of the role of political parties as instruments for the empowerment of the people, which means no space for criminal and corrupt parties that seek power only to partake of the fruits of the loot and plunder of the people.

For the Indian revolution to succeed, the working class must find appropriate forms of institutions and mechanisms to exercise its power, as the working class in Russia did in those conditions. Our Party has taken some initial steps in this direction, by building local elected organs in places where workers and peasants live. These are samitis elected by the general assembly or sabha of those living in a particular locality. They are being built to unite the people to deal with their common problems, rising above narrow party rivalry. Joint effort by all communists would ensure decisive advance in this work of building the organs of workers' and peasants' power at the base of society.

Comrades!

The deep crisis of capitalism on the world scale poses grave dangers of fascist repression and imperialist wars. The political crisis in our country also presents grave dangers of diabolical diversions, bomb blasts and escalation of state terrorism, including communal violence. At the same time, they also offer a golden opportunity for the working class to go for political power. The working class can do so if and only if it has a unified communist leadership and is not pulled in conflicting directions.

The first condition for the restoration of communist unity is to agree that the prime duty of all communists today is to prepare and lead the working class to go for political power.

In other words, the first step is to agree on our political aim.

Let us agree to take up the aim of establishing working class rule in alliance with the peasants and all the oppressed nations, nationalities and peoples. Let us agree to make a clean break with all notions of a middle path, joint rule of capital and labour, or an intermediate stage between capitalism and socialism, which have all been shown to be harmful illusions.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the main points on which I would like to hear the views of all the participants. These are:

- ◆ **The crisis of capitalism points to the urgent need for the working class to organise to take political power and open the path to socialism, sweeping away all remnants of old oppressive social systems.**
- ◆ **The Indian working class has the capacity to become the ruling class, provided communists play their rightful role.**
- ◆ **Communists must make peasants recognise that their main enemy is the capitalist class headed by the monopoly corporations, which is also the main enemy of the working class.**
- ◆ **The existing Indian Union is a legacy of colonialism, a prison house of nations, nationalities and peoples; far from defending its *“unity and integrity”*, we must fight for its reconstitution on a voluntary basis.**
- ◆ **Both Congress Party and BJP are committed to implementing the same program of the big capitalists;**

they differ only in what they say and preach but not in the class interest they serve.

- ◆ There can be no middle road or intermediate stage between capitalism and socialism; political power will either be exercised by the working class or the capitalist class and there is no other possibility.
- ◆ The existing state and parliamentary democracy cannot be the instruments for the working class to exercise power – we must build new organs of power at the base of society and fight for a system of proletarian democracy that vests sovereignty in the people.

Let us all express our opinions frankly. Let us not be motivated by any disputes of the past, in blaming or defending anyone. Let us focus purely on the way forward for the working class.

Down with capitalist democracy!

Fight for proletarian democracy!

Let all communists unite to prepare the working class to take power!

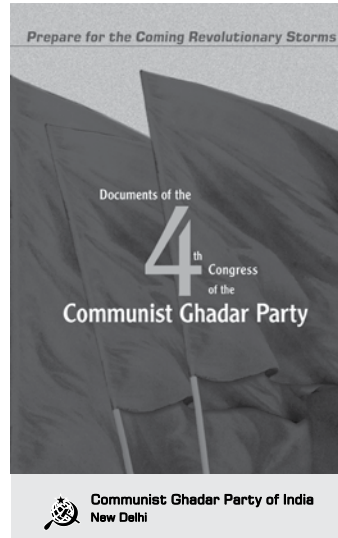
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