

DOCUMENTS OF
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
IN INDIA

VOL. XXV
(1994-96)



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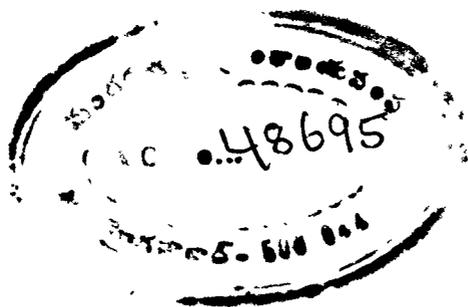
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List of Abbreviations Used

CI	—The Communist International
ECCI	—The Executive Committee of the Communist International
CP	—Communist Party
CPI	—Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	—Communist Party of India (Marxist)
LM	—The Labour Monthly, Published from London
CPGB	—Communist Party of Great Britain
CPSU	—Communist Party of Soviet Union
CPC	—Communist Party of China
CPVN	—Communist Party of Vietnam
INPRECOR	—International Press Correspondence ^{ist} of the Communist International
BCI	—Bulletin of the Communist International
CC	—Central Committee
PB	—Political Bureau
Polit Bureau	—Political Bureau
INC/Congress(I)	—Indian National Congress
Congress(R)	—Ruling Congress
AITUC	—All India Trade Union Congress
INTUC	—Indian National Trade Union Congress
CITU	—Centre of Indian Trade Unions
AIKS	—All India Kisan Sabha
CKC	—Central Kisan Council of All India Kisan Sabha
WFTU	—World Federation of Trade Unions

AISF	—All India Students' Federation
SFI	—Students' Federation of India
DYFI	—Democratic Youth Federation of India
Govt.	—Government
UF	—United Front
RSS	—Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha
BJP	—Bharatiya Janata Party
JP	—Janata Party
JD	—Janata Dal
RSP	—Revolutionary Socialist Party
FB	—Forward Bloc
SP	—Socialist Party
PSU	—Public Sector Undertaking
EMS	—E.M.S. Namboodiripad
BTR	—B. T. Ranadive
PS	—P. Sundarayya
MB	—M. Basavapunnaiiah
PR	—P. Ramamurti

Introductory Note

This Volume (Volume No. XXV) contains 243 documents of the Communist Movement in India for the period 1994-96, a most important period in the contemporary political history of India.

The New Economic Policy pursued by the Congress(I) Government headed by Narasimha Rao brought disastrous results affecting the whole Indian economy and the most high rate of inflation and the abnormal rise in the prices of essential commodities dragged the ordinary people to a miserable existence. Besides, the Narasimha Rao Government was immersed in corruption and one after another scandal came out in the open. In the Political Resolution adopted in the 15th Party Congress of the CPI(M) held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995, it was most emphatically stated that:

“2.8 Economic liberalisation has unleashed a shocking level of corruption. It has become institutionalised and is brazenly practised. The multi-crore securities scam, the fraudulent disinvestment of public sector unit shares and the sugar scandal illustrate this degeneration. There is no accountability of ministers even when indicted by the enquiry reports. The Congress(I) Government has become synonymous with the loot of public funds.”

At the dictates of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund, the New Economic Policy was formulated and implemented by the Narasimha Rao Government and its disastrous consequences can be fairly measured from the observations made in the Political Resolution adopted in the 15th Party Congress of the CPI(M), quoted below:

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“2.18 The economic policies have led to severe reverses for indigenous development of science and technology. In the name of globalisation and integrating with the world economy, the substantial progress in development of indigenous infrastructure is being systematically dismantled. The opening of the power sector to foreign capital is being done in such a manner as to undermine the BHEL which can provide power equipment at significantly cheaper rates than the imported equipment. Privatisation has meant the curtailment of the indigenous research and development programmes with the import liberalisation of all types of goods. The opening of the infrastructure and core areas to foreign capital further undermines the indigenous pace of development. The new policy in power, oil, mining and telecommunication will harm the development of indigenous technology apart from heavy cost of profit outflow due to highly inflated capital costs”

“2.23 The price of rice and wheat through the fair price shops has almost doubled in the last three years. For instance, the price of rice which was Rs. 3.77 per kg. in 1991, has risen to Rs. 6.90 per kg. in 1994. In the case of wheat, it has increased from Rs. 2.80 per kg. to Rs. 4.27 per kg. in the same period. . . .”

“2.16 The total external debt (of India) stood at Rs. 2,83,000 crores by the end of 1993. The total internal debt (of India) stands at an enormous figure of Rs. 4,83,545 crores”.

“2.20 The nature of foreign investment that flows into India shows that the bulk of foreign funds is not coming in for productive investment but into the stock market. The 19 billion dollars foreign exchange reserve boasted of by the Rao Government actually comprises nearly two-thirds of ‘hot-money’ which can flow out of the country at any time depending on the speculative interest of the foreign financial institutions. . . .”

The documents included in this Volume will reveal to its readers that our Party, CPI(M), played the leading role in uniting all Left and democratic forces in carrying on most effective struggles against the New Economic Policy of the Narasimha Rao Government and against its most treacherous role in surrendering to the GATT treaty. The massive Rally in New Delhi on April 5, 1994 defying the police repression and all sorts of government imposed restrictive measures, will provide tangible proof to the effectiveness of this joint movement. The nationwide civil disobedience movement organised jointly by the CPI(M) and other Left and democratic parties in August-September, 1994 was a very significant and more effective movement in exposing the Narasimha Rao's Government in regard to its New Economic Policy and surrender to the GATT treaty. During this civil disobedience movement, there was participation of 6.25 millions of people all over India, of whom 1.25 million volunteers courted arrests all over the country.

Thus, the Congress(I) Government, headed by P.V. Narasimha Rao, lost its credibility and usefulness as the paramount political party of India and was relegated to the second position in terms of seats won by it in the 1996 Lok Sabha elections while the first position was secured by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) though it failed to secure single-party-majority in the Lower House of the Indian Parliament. As the non-Congress(I) democratic parties in the Northern India states could not reconcile their differences and failed to fight the election battle unitedly, the division of votes helped BJP to win a sizable number of seats and become the biggest party in the Lok Sabha in 1996 elections.

The President of India called BJP to form the government as it became the single-biggest party in the Lok Sabha in 1996. The government was formed by BJP but after remaining in government for thirteen days, it had to quit as it failed to secure majority support in the Lok Sabha.

Thereafter, the Janata Dal was called by the President of India to form the Union Government. Twelve parties of the United Front requested the CPI(M) to participate in the U.F. Government and lead it with Jyoti Basu as the Prime Minister. The Central

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Committee of the CPI(M) declined the offer but agreed to support it from outside through a Steering Committee. The new coalition government of Janata Dal, headed by Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, was formed with the support from Left Parties and Congress(I). The Congress(I) initially gave unqualified support to the Government of Janata Dal but, subsequently, they violated their own commitment. The Common Minimum Programme worked out jointly by the Left Parties and the Janata Dal was unique in its nature and the new coalition government was committed to implement it. Our Party, i.e., CPI(M), supported this coalition government from outside while CPI joined this government with two cabinet rank ministers. Despite vacillation in many spheres and tendency of some ministers inclined towards the New Economic Policy of the Narasimha Rao Government, this coalition government established a record of good performance and introduced for the first time the principle of 'co-operative federalism' recognising the rights and obligations of all individual states.

The formation of coalition government by the Janata Dal had unravelled the fact that in Indian Parliamentary set-up formation of government on the basis of one-party-majority was no more feasible and the era of coalition government was the order of the day. This was a very big change in the political set-up of India.

The Congress(I) supported the coalition government of Janata Dal to keep BJP away from the seat of power and also to avoid another Lok Sabha election in quick succession and this ushered in a new phase of struggle against the religion-based fascist party like BJP which is, in fact, the political platform of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS) the aim of which is to establish 'Hindu Rashtra' in India. But the Congress(I) did not, subsequently, follow its anti-BJP stand consistently and honestly due to its inner-party strifes and contradictions and its extreme anxiety to keep the facts regarding various scandals that took place during Congress(I) Governments, concealed, and withdrew support from the coalition government of Janata Dal on baseless excuses leading the whole country to a great political uncertainty and a further Lok Sabha elections—the documents of which will be given in the next Volume of this series.

The biggest event of the Communist movement in India during this period was the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995 and all its documents are included in this Volume. The documents—‘On Rectification Campaign’, ‘Review Report on 1996 General Elections’, ‘Polit Bureau on Post-Election Situation’, CPI(M) Central Committee’s statement ‘On Joining the Government’, CPI(M)’s Election Manifesto of 1996 Lok Sabha Elections, and, ‘CPI(M)-CPI Joint Statement on Third Alternative’ included in this Volume are most valuable in importance and political significance.

The CPI(M) Central Committee’s statement ‘On the Role of West Bengal Left Front Government in the Context of New Economic Policy’ is also an important document included in this Volume.

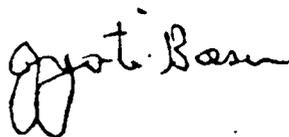
This Volume also includes statements of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee of the CPI(M) on important international events like the historic victory of the African National Congress, Israel-PLO Agreement, formation of Government by Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Beijing Women’s Conference, on provocation in Korean Peninsula, Proposal of Sri Lanka for Restoring Peace, Release of Aung San Suu Kyi by the Military Junta in Myanmar and others.

The stand of the CPI(M) on important national developments as outlined in various statements of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee are also included in this Volume. The various steps of the Chief Election Commissioner, damaging effects of the New Drug Policy of the Government of India, deployment of Indian Troops in Haiti and Somalia, proposal for entry of Multinationals in Insurance sector, foreign entry into Indian Print Media, on situation in Kashmir, on Union Government’s Policy on Sugar, Urea Scam, Ms. Robin Raphel’s Visit to India, Invasion of Foreign Banks in India, Telecom Deals, Cauvery Issue, on Disinvestment Schemes on Public Sector Undertakings, Indo-U.S. Military Pact, Enron Deal, various activities of VHP and BJP, on Charar-e-Sharif incident in Kashmir, on Bill for Reservation for Women, developments in Tripura, Kerala, West Bengal and other states—these are the major events on which documents are included in this Volume.

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During this period, our Party, CPI(M), established more closer links with the Communist Parties of China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Vietnam, Russian Federation, France, Portugal, Italy, Greece, USA, Canada and Workers' Party of Bangladesh. This has tremendously enhanced the recognition and standing of CPI(M) as a consistent adherent of Marxism-Leninism, constantly endeavouring to build solidarity and unity of Communist Parties of various countries in today's situation. Our Party, CPI(M), carried on a consistent and a most vigorous campaign against U.S. interference in Cuba and was able to mobilise hundreds of thousands of people all over India.

This Volume is a very useful compilation of political documents and I am confident that the readers will be greatly benefited by it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jyoti Basu'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first letter 'J' being particularly large and prominent.

(JYOTI BASU)
Chief Editor.

August 17, 1998

Foreword

The period between 1994 and 1996 had seen the Congress(I) Government's drive towards capitulation before the IMF-World Bank dictates and allowing the multinationals a free hand even at the cost of indigenous industries. Nobody is today opposed to investment of foreign capital in areas where we need modern technology. The liberalised import policy, not balanced by matching exports, had contributed further to industrial sickness, closures, growing unemployment and rapid rise in prices, placing the burden of the 'development' on the shoulders of the common man.

The Congress(I) Government also showed the disregard to the democratic institutions, judiciary and the Constitution. This period saw the Supreme Court returning to the President the reference, made under Article 143 of the Constitution, as to whether a Hindu religious structure ever existed on the site of the Babri Masjid, as non-maintainable, thus reviving all the Ayodhya related cases pending in various courts of the land. The country also saw the government dithering on a pointed query as to whether it would abide by the apex court judgement. The Supreme Court had upheld the dismissal of BJP Governments in U.P., M.P., Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and also upheld the secularism as the basic structure of the Indian Constitution, defining secularism as the complete separation of religion and politics. These verdicts only vindicated the demand of the Left and secular parties that all Ayodhya related cases be clubbed together and referred to the apex court under Article 138(2) of the Constitution for a binding decision.

Yet, the Congress(I) Government went on with its manoeuvring about formation of a trust with Hindu religious figures for construction of a temple on the very spot where Babri Masjid stood.

It alienated the minorities further. However, the government appeared to have learnt no lesson from the debacle of the ruling party in the last Assembly polls in northern States.

During this period, the BJP stretched all its muscles to raise once again the slogan of Hindutva but to little avail. It had to face growing resistance from the people and suffer isolation. While the BJP had not given up its support to the pro-imperialist new economic policies, it did not appear to be blatantly supporting them. Without taking leave of its senses, the BJP came out with a slogan of a 'Swadeshi Alternative' mouing the mass discontent as a fallout of the new economic policies. The people's perception of RSS slogan of Swadeshi as a facade for hoodwinking the people, might, at least, partly be the reason why it had failed to move the masses. It is more explicit today than before. Within months of its rule at the Centre, the BJP has gone about megating its own 'Swadeshi Pledges' without any qualms through an even greater commitment to the neo-liberal agenda dictated by the IMF and World Bank. There are literally scores of examples which go to show that the BJP is now pursuing the same economic policy of the Congress(I) Government with greater exuberant zest to appease imperialism desperately.

Thanks to the Rao Government's utter recklessness that national unity was made subordinated to its cynical manoeuvre for keeping its narrow political interests. The issue of corruption also came up in a big way in this period and the Congress (I) Government was exposed as a government of the corrupt, run by the corrupt.

With the growing resistance of the people, the crisis within the Congress(I) was assuming acute forms. As the General Election drew nearer, for the first time after long years, the debate inside the Congress(I) had started on the issues of economic policies, compromise with communalism and the rampant corruption.

The election results in some important State Assemblies in early 1996 was a pointer to what the shape of thing would be coming in future. The Congress(I) faced almost a rout in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra, Karnataka, and Bihar. The Congress(I) and the BJP were rejected in Andhra and Karnataka where the Telugu Desam and the Janata Dal gained a massive mandate respectively. In Maharashtra, Congress(I)'s tally had come down from

150 to 80. For want of a viable secular alternative to the Congress(I), the BJP in Gujarat and the BJP-Shiv Sena combine in Maharashtra succeeded in cashing in on the people's discontent. In Orissa, the Janata Dal headed by Biju Patnaik earned hatred and distrust from the people who expressed their anger by reducing the Janata Dal strength from 123 to 46. In the absence of a Left and secular alternative, the people of Orissa voted for the Congress(I). In Bihar, the Congress(I) and the BJP were united in thwarting the democratic process for different reasons but both were drubbed in the election.

This period had also witnessed intense imperialist offensive. The prolonged recession in the advanced capitalist countries had belied all the claims put forward for capitalism as the only future for mankind. In the erstwhile socialist countries, significant resistance was developing with people, being faced with hard reality, coming to the conclusion that the earlier system was better than the miseries which capitalism brought in. In fact, emerging from the ruins, the Communist Party of Russian Federation was growing fast to become a significant force in the Russian Parliament, the Duma.

It was unfortunate that when the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces was of utmost necessity to meet this challenge, the National Front-Janata Dal, in the absence of any coherent policy, began to disintegrate. Our Party then was faced with the task of mobilising people and strengthening the Left unity by its joint actions, trying to involve other secular forces as much as it was possible to do. It was on this basis that though not yet in a position to change the situation, the Party and the Left were able to exert some influence, with the result that the people beyond the purview of the Left began to look upon it with respect as a principled force.

Our Party has been the only consistent and vocal opponent of the Rao Government's succumbing to U.S. pressure. Although, the BJP showed its disinclination to oppose the yoking of India's self-reliance, foreign policy and security interests with USA. The other bourgeois Opposition parties have been least concerned about the relentless U.S. pressure on our economic sovereignty. Therefore, our Party and the Left would have to carry on exposing the government, mobilise patriotic opinion and conduct anti-imperialist struggles.

It was in this background that the Party Congress met in Chandigarh from April 3-8, 1995. Though the current political situation was extremely complex, the atmosphere inside the Congress(I) exuded confidence and determination to strengthen the Left, democratic and secular forces to meet the challenges.

As compared to the 14th Congress, some changes in a positive direction in the international situation had taken place. In Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland and several former Republics of USSR the erstwhile Communists were replacing the counter-revolutionary forces that had overtaken the socialist power. That did not imply that the process was getting reversed but it slowed down the IMF-dicated reforms and undertook some pro-people measures. Belying the dream of the imperialists to turn back the wheel of history—China, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea, were developing their own forms and structure to pursue the socialist path. In the rest of the world, the Communist movement had started asserting itself. The old euphoria at the so-called collapse of communism had receded into the background because of the prolonged recession in capitalist countries, the growing resistance among the working class of these countries—both developed as well as developing—and the increasing contradictions between the imperialist countries themselves.

The discontent against the growing hardships of the people in some of the advanced capitalist countries resulted in the defeat of the ruling parties. The right-wing Freedom Alliance in Italy got defeated by the centre-Left Olive Tree Alliance. The Communist Refoundation Party of Italy increased its votes from 6 to 8.6 per cent. In Greece, the Social Democratic Party won a majority and the Communist Party and the Left Alliance increased its popular support. After 30 years of uninterrupted rule, the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan failed to get absolute majority. The Communist Party of Japan increased its strength remarkably. The wave of anti-government militant actions rocked Indonesia during this period and Suharto dictatorship was threatened. The popular movement has forced Suharto to quit power recently.

People's protest against the neo-liberal economic policies especially in the third world countries were also being manifested

The election results and the protest movements illustrated the change in Eastern Europe too. With the growing exploitation of the third world countries, the non-aligned movement was required to reorient itself to provide a countervailing force to the desperate efforts of imperialism for a new world order and play the role to put a resistance to the blatant attempts of the United States of America with a view to enforcing its will over the world. But the 11th Non-Aligned Summit held in Cartagena in Columbia in October 1995 showed its vacillations and failed to concentrate its fire against this menacing drive.

However, most of the issues confronting the third world countries, i.e., reducing the debt burden, free flow of technology and trade without protectionism, democratisation of U.N., disarmament, found mention in the declaration. Thus, the contradiction with the third world and imperialism was growing unabated.

The Party Congress reiterated that the central contradiction in today's world still remains between the imperialism and Socialism with the U.S. imperialism doing its utmost to defeat the Cuban revolution. It was also exerting pressure on North Korea over the nuclear inspection issue and issuing threats to China on trade related economic issues. Despite the renewed U.S. offensive, resistance was also developing. The international support and solidarity which rallied behind Cuba was significant factor in thwarting U.S. imperialist designs. Our Party trained in an international outlook, expressed its solidarity with the socialist countries. We took the lead in campaigning for solidarity with Cuba. Similarly, we expressed our solidarity with North Korea where the U.S., using the nuclear reactor issue, was trying to intervene.

With regard to the international situation, an important point highlighted was the failure of the Party to implement the assurance of an in-depth study of the cause of the serious setbacks to Socialism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Though the resolution on "Certain Ideological Issues" which was discussed at the Madras Congress had provided guidelines for analysing the causes, the 14th Congress had felt this insufficient to enrich the ideological understanding of the Party ranks. The 15th Congress renewed the need for extensive study on such vital questions of twentieth century and draw our own lessons.

Elaborately analysing the national economic and political situation, we warned that the danger from the communal forces could be underestimated only at a heavy cost, since, taking the country as a whole, the BJP had emerged as the second biggest party in the country bidding for power at the Centre. Under no circumstances would the BJP be allowed to capture power at the Centre and we must rally all the Left, secular and democratic forces to oppose this. If this force is allowed to grow, it will disrupt the unity of the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers and other toiling sections. Without doubt the compromising role of the Congress(I) was mainly responsible for this growth of the BJP. While the Left had carried out a consistent struggle against the communal forces by arousing the people to be on guard against this danger and appealing to their patriotism, the Congress(I) had always encouraged and placated these forces. The role of the Congress(I) in the Babri Masjid/Ram Jammabhoomi controversy and its ultimate betrayal were clear examples of this. Both the Congress(I) and the BJP ignore the fact that the Indian people are basically patriotic, and will not tolerate machinations weakening the secular ideology.

As regards separatist movements, the ruling party had failed to go to the roots of the problems of Kashmir, Assam and the North-East. Their only solution was administrative measures, using the para-military forces and the army to suppress the terrorist activities. The Congress(I) Party had also failed to utilise the discontentment of the people against the extremists and was instead pursuing a course which only aggravated the situation.

The Party Congress pointed out that the only situation to the problem in Kashmir lies in protecting the identity of the Kashmiri people, and this can be done by strengthening Article 370 and ensuring the autonomy of Kashmir. The same applies for the North-East. The government should draw the necessary lessons and fulfil the aspiration of the people of Nagaland, Manipur and Assam, and stop wasting public money mainly on the armed forces to deal with the situation.

An inevitable result of the capitalist path of development pursued by the ruling classes is not only widening the disparity between

the rich and poor but also causing accrescent uneven development across regions. Certain areas in the country have remained awfully neglected and backward. This has resulted in their urge and demand for separate States. The government must realise that unless the backwardness is overcome and their aspiration fulfilled, no solutions are possible. Their demand in this respect can be primarily redressed through the setting up of autonomous councils in each of these regions—Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh.

The tribals are suffering in a similar fashion; misled, the exploitation and repression against them continue on a greater scale. The Party Congress had decided that our Party must concentrate on the problems of the tribals along with those of the Scheduled Castes, to defend them and demand autonomous councils in the contiguous areas where the tribals reside.

A good debate also took place on the OBCs. In years, there had been a new awakening among them to overcome their backwardness. The Party had endorsed the 27 per cent reservation as recommended in the Mandal Report. It had also stated that the creamy layer should not avail of this concession at the cost of the poorer sections. If, however, vacancies remain, they can be filled, if necessary, even from the creamy layer.

There are certain political forces, however, which in reflecting the demand of the OBCs are distorting it to perpetuate the caste division among the toiling people. This will prove very dangerous, because it not only disrupts the unity of the toiling people, but also because all those belonging to the upper castes are not well-off. They include poor sections as well, for example, the so-called upper castes of Uttarakhand are mostly engaged in menial jobs. The Party Congress warned against perpetuation of caste divisions and disruption of the democratic movement which would only provide a strong base for the disintegrating forces.

The main debate in the Political Resolution centered round the direction of the movement and it appeared that some confusion existed. Three types of alternatives were mentioned in the Resolution and their place in pursuing the tactical line. The first of three was the People's Democratic Front which alone can achieve the People's Democratic Revolution, a long range perspective to

complete the stage of the democratic revolution and march to the ultimate goal of Socialism. This is a strategic objective fighting for which requires a class alliance of the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, based on the worker-peasant alliance, led by the working class. The building of this front requires a radical change in the correlation of class forces when the working class will be able to acquire leadership. Only when this strategical line is forged can we claim to be on the verge of revolution. This perspective must be kept in mind and all other slogans in the interim period are directed to achieve this objective.

Secondly, it is the interim slogan of the Left Democratic Front which can be termed as a tactical slogan. This Front will lead to the achievement of the People's Democratic Front. The only difference between the two fronts (the People's Democratic Front and Left Democratic Front) is that, in the latter, the leadership of the working class is not yet ensured. In other words, the process of advancing from one to the other involves bringing about the necessary change in the correlation of class forces that ensures the leadership of the working class. It is possible that during this process the bourgeoisie may itself split with some sections forming new parties at the national or regional level. They may even join with the Left on the basis of a minimum programme which could eventually emerge as an alternative to the bourgeois landlord parties.

However, at the present moment, neither the People's Democratic Front nor the Left Democratic Front can be immediately realised but to be realised as a tactical slogan which ultimately helps achieve the strategic goal of the people's democratic revolution. The requisite conditions for reaching this stage can be created through mass actions by the Party and the Left as a whole, with class struggle as the motive force.

This Front is not the immediate alternative because as yet the correlation of class forces is not in our favour. Then how should we meet this complex situation where on the one hand, in the wake of political instability, the Congress(I) was pursuing economic policies endangering economic independence, and on the other, the BJP with like-minded groups was posing a grave threat to national unity?

To meet both these challenges from the BJP and the Congress(I) requires, huge fight against both, rallying the secular forces along with Left, where the slogan of unity of Left and secular forces presents an electoral alternative. Knowing the limitations of the secular parties, we continue to warn them to have a cohesive programme because of the bad experience the people have had to them in the past. In spite of the victory of the BJP in the Western States, by and large, the country would not like the BJP to rule, aware of the consequences it would pose to national unity. Such a situation would strengthen the forces of fundamentalism even inside the minorities where each would supplement and complement the other. Given the huge size of the minority community, these forces would be bound to disrupt national unity.

While the Party Congress decided that both the Congress(I) and the communal forces would have to be defeated by rallying the Left and secular forces, the question was asked, which is the main enemy? The answer to this will depend on the concrete situation, of which force at a particular moment comes to the fore. How does this assertion of ours come true today can be ascertained by the present-day reality when BJP constitutes the main danger after its assumption of state power early this year.

The people would like a Left and secular alternative, but the secular parties were not clear on their economic objectives, or sufficiently aware of the dangers arising from the Centre's economic policies. We have to constantly warn them that the people would not repose their confidence in them unless the objective of social justice was kept in mind, not only with regard to the castes but in regard to the general poverty and backwardness without tackling which no political party could rally the people.

We were confident that, with the developing crisis in the Congress(I), the rising prestige and initiative of the Left would succeed in advancing this limited objective. The Party Congress gave the clarion call in this respect.

But, as the debate in the Congress emphasised, on the basis of the three years of experience, even to achieve this, a further increase in the influence of the Left is necessary, particularly of

our Party. This can be done through unleashing mass struggles and movements against the economic policies, against communalism and in defence of secularism. To that end, we must consolidate the mass organisations of the working class, peasants, agricultural labourers, youth and students, women, employees, and from these struggles draw the militant cadres into the Party.

The 15th Congress specially debated on the state of Party organisation, essential for developing the mass movements and mass organisations, building Left unity and uniting the different forces to meet the challenges in the trying situation. In 1978, the slogan of building a mass revolutionary party was formulated in Salkia Plenum. The 15th Congress called upon to carry this forward by strengthening the Party ideologically and expanding its mass influence. A mass revolutionary party does not mean enrolment of mass membership. The membership of the revolutionary party will grow with the growth of revolutionary consciousness and political development of its cadre. Thereby, it expands its mass base. The debate outlined the big gap existing between the Party's prestige acquired through interventions on all the political and social issues coming before the nation, and the weak Party organisation. Unless this lag was overcome, it was stressed, we would not be able to discharge our responsibilities and turn the tables on the bourgeois-landlord regime. Otherwise, our intervention would be limited to temporary interventions to ward off immediate dangers. The 14th Party Congress at Madras had discussed the organisational shortcomings and deviations of serious nature and stressed the need for correcting them with sustained effort. Yet, such tendencies and weaknesses continued to manifest themselves in the Party. Certain deviations from the principle of democratic centralism, liberalism or over-centralisation, criticism and self-criticism had been seriously noted.

The Party Congress also noted that with the decentralisation, a very large number of elected posts had been created at every layer of administration. The lure of these posts, particularly in West Bengal where we are in office for nearly two decades and in Kerala, was leading to parliamentary deviations among Party men. This apart, certain bourgeois vices are also creeping into the Party

with some cadres opting for an easy life etc. Notwithstanding the usual corrective measures thereabouts, the Party Congress had warned that, being a revolutionary Party, it cannot allow any scope for such tendencies and deviations. It emphasised that each post assigned to any Party member has to be considered as a job to intensify the class struggle to achieve our goal. No assignment or post should be considered a life-long one—the only permanency is the dedication of the revolutionary to the sacred cause to serve the objective of a people's revolution.

Certain factional tendencies were also noted, particularly in Kerala and to a certain extent in West Bengal. The Congress decided that the factional tendencies must be terminated and no quarter be given to those who indulge in factionalism. The Party is based on the principle of democratic centralism—every member has a say in the formulation of policy and raising any political-ideological or organisational issues. Once a decision is taken no one is allowed to play a disruptive role. The Congress authorised the Central Committee to take firm action to weed out factionalism, and also federalism wherever and at whatever level it emerges.

There should be no hesitation in eliminating these tendencies emerging inside the Communist Party. The Party is judged not only for its outlook based on the historical-dialectical materialist philosophy but also its outlook on life as dedicated revolutionaries.

The Political-Organisational Report of the 15th Congress reviewed that, 'The majority of the Party members have been recruited during the last decade. Though we have made some attempts to educate the Party members and to raise their political-organisational consciousness, they are not sufficient to meet the situation. There is also need to re-educate the old Party members. The education of the new entrants to the Party and the reeducation of the old comrades should be a continuous process. Political education is not confined to political classes alone. It includes self-study, participation in discussions, attending general body meetings and public meetings, participation in campaigns, struggles, and political propaganda, etc. The organisational

review report of the state conferences reveal that a considerable percentage of the Party members are not attending Party branches regularly or getting involved in Party activities constantly and 50 per cent of the branches, etc., are not functioning properly. The lower level of political-organisational consciousness of the Party members, the existence of a considerable number of inactive Party members, the defective functioning of a large number of Party branches, etc., are restricting the Party's attempts at expansion. This state of affairs is also responsible for making the Party members vulnerable to bourgeois ideological influences. There are also reasons for bourgeois organisational practices like factionalism, individualism, careerism, corruption, parliamentary opportunism and wrong style of work creeping into the Party."

Therefore, it stressed, "The Party members and units should always keep intimate and live contact with the people, take up their problems, give class orientation to the issues, organise campaigns and struggles for the redressal of their grievances, etc. Party members should behave well with the people and live as one among them. They teach the people and also learn from them. Communists should always try to strengthen collective functioning and should not show any sort of bossism towards the people.

"Lack of proper political and organisational education and the alien ideological influences are responsible for the erosion of Communist standards. Some Comrades and units are imitating the style of functioning of bourgeois parties and are affected by bourgeois vices.

"Corruption has become a problem particularly in a state like West Bengal where we have been the ruling Party for over 17 years. There can be no compromise with corrupt elements as they will corrode the revolutionary character of the Party. The Party members and units should show extreme vigilance against this menace and weed out such elements.

"We have to initiate a rectification campaign in the Party to eradicate the reformist style of functioning and all the accompanying bourgeois vices. All Party units should make a self-critical review of the present situation and should start rectifying

the defects and shortcomings." The new Central Committee, after elaborate discussion, concretised the document for rectification campaign after the Party Congress. The entire Party had taken up campaign seriously. Even though it did not produce the desired result, it indicates the lines on which we will have to revitalise our organisational work in striving to discharge the stupendous political tasks facing our Party ahead.

In the aftermath of 15th Party Congress, many important developments had taken place till the end of 1996, which in various counts confirmed the direction of the political analysis made by the Party Congress.

Before the general elections in April-May 1996, the ruling party was trying to recover some of the lost ground by announcing a series of popular schemes and sops to the electorate. But it was next to impossible to white wash the record for brazen and rampant corruption of the Congress(I) government, the record of the horrible fallout of the IMF-World Bank dictated new economic policies and its shameless record of compromise with communal and divisive forces. Added to this was the factional infighting inside the Congress(I). On the whole, the ruling party stood exposed and discredited. The position of the unmasked BJP, which was frantically, after making alliances with any regional party, was no better. As a matter of fact, the people were displaying their willingness to support a secular alternative to the Congress(I) by not falling prey to the communal appeal of the BJP.

In order to present an effective third alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP, it is our Party that took the initiative to broaden the unity of the democratic and secular forces. Due to the lack of coherence and consistency in the Janata Dal, the sincere effort for unity was hampered to an extent.

The poll offered a fractured result, for no single party or combination could assume power on its own. It led to a new situation with the decisive defeat suffered by the ruling Congress(I) which got the lowest percentage of votes and seats since the first general election in 1952 and menacingly the BJP had emerged as the single-largest party, though far away from mustering majority. The non-Congress(I), non-BJP secular parties constituted a

significant bloc in the Lok Sabha. In the given situation, as no party or combination was in a position to dominate the scene, the regional parties had acquired a crucial role to play.

We reviewed the results of the election in depth and self-critically evaluated our performance which was very important in the continuing phase of political developments in the country. This self-critical estimation prompted our Central Committee to translate into action the 15th Congress call for a rectification campaign within the Party to remove wrong trends and defects within the organisation, as stated above.

The developments relating to staking the claim to form the government by the BJP and its allies constituted a dangerous signal for the whole country. Our Party resolved to make all efforts to rally all the non-Congress(I) secular parties in order to forge a broad-based combination which could stake its claim to form the government which the Congress(I) could support from outside. The Party expressed itself against any coalition government with the Congress(I) as it would be counter to the anti-Congress(I) verdict given by the people.

When the BJP was making all efforts to placate the regional parties, it was primarily our efforts which helped to rally them. The DMK, the Tamil Manila Congress, the TDP and the AGP came together and decided to join the wider formation. It was this alliance which was named the United Front and which elected Deve Gowda, the then Karnataka Chief Minister, as leader of the alliance. The final decision of the President, after a long confusion, led to the formation of the 13-day aberration of the BJP government which did not have the confidence of the majority in the Lok Sabha and which was only banking on the hope that having formed the government, it could allure some of the secular regional parties and organise large-scale defections even from the Congress(I). Its failure to materialise the ill-design led to the formation of the United Front government. Indeed, the success in uniting all the non-Congress(I) secular parties, in which our Party played a key role, resulted in the fall of the BJP government in less than two weeks and the formation of the United Front government.

As a framework for the government's policies to be pursued, the United Front set up a Steering Committee and adopted a Common Minimum Programme. While the Common Minimum Programme had a positive content on issues such as secularism, Centre-State relations, commitment to social equality and democratisation of the polity, however, in the key areas of the economy, the thrust was towards carrying forward the liberation policies of the Congress(I) government contrary to the principled stand of the Left. The Congress(I) was compelled to support the government unconditionally from outside. With the invitation of all participating parties in the United Front extended to our Party, the question of leading and participating in the government came up for discussion and debate at our Central Committee which met twice to adopt the tactical line to be followed. After elaborate deliberations, we came to the conclusion with the majority decision to decline the offer and support the government wholeheartedly from outside. While extending overall support being in the Steering Committee and pushing for implementation of the positive features of the Common Minimum Programme, we had also maintained our independent positions to support or demarcate on specific issues.

In the situation of tardy implementation of the Common Minimum Programme, the fractures and bickering in the Janata Dal, infighting in the Congress(I) organisation and the multiplying problems of the United Front government, the Central Committee of our Party in its meeting in October 1996 underlined the tasks:

"There is no doubt that the important task of fighting communalism remains and will continue to remain one of the main tasks till we are able to bring some change in the correlation of forces and in this respect isolation of the BJP and forging cooperation with other secular forces will remain on the agenda. Secondly, the old economic policies being pursued are throwing more burdens on the people and providing more facilities to the foreign monopoly houses to make inroads in all spheres of our economic life. Unless we put up a stiff resistance against them, we will be only tailing behind the bourgeois parties. It is necessary to

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build up broad resistance to the economic policies so that the communal forces are not able to utilise the discontent created for reactionary purposes. We will be able to make use of this situation by strengthening Left and democratic forces."

This period saw rapid change in the situation and tactical political line, thus evolved, of our Party and also of the different parties and combinations. This Volume will definitely help the readers understand and assess the stand of the CPI(M) in the complex situation.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet

(Harkishan Singh Surjeet)

General Secretary

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

August 15, 1998

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Polit Bureau on Scam Culprits*

Statement Dated January 1, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) denounces the attitude of the Congress(I) Government and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao towards the Joint Parliamentary Committee report on the securities scam. The ruling party has come out brazenly in defence of all those indicted by the JPC report as being accountable in the worst corruption scandal since independence. The action taken by the Prime Minister in rejecting the Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's resignation has struck a blow at the concept of a minister's accountability for gross failure of his ministry to check such a mind-boggling swindle of public funds. The orchestrated campaign by big business and foreign lending agencies in defence of the Finance Minister shows how powerful vested interests, bent upon undermining India's economic sovereignty, are active to cover up the loot of public funds in the name of liberalisation and deregulation.

The Congress(I) has gone to the extent of shamelessly defending the other ministers indicted by the JPC report such as Shankaranand and Rameshwar Thakur. Its spokesman Mr. Gadgil's criticism of the JPC's indictment of the two Ministers shows utter contempt for the unanimous report submitted by the JPC and for parliamentary democracy itself. The multi-thousand crore swindling of public funds caused by the Narasimha Rao Government's policies cannot be covered up by such Congress(I) machinations. The people will demand punishment for all those guilty for the scam and a movement to expose them must be pursued vigorously both inside and outside parliament.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 9, 1994.

CPI(M) Opposes Malhotra Commission's Recommendations*

**Statement Dated January 8, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its strong opposition to the recommendations made by the Malhotra Committee for reforms in the insurance industry. The Malhotra Committee has recommended the privatisation of the insurance industry including Life Insurance. The proposals range from allowing private companies to enter the insurance industry to allowing foreign insurance companies also to operate in India. It is well-known that both the IMF and the United States of America have been exercising pressure for opening up the entire financial sector including the insurance companies to foreign capital and for privatisation. The Malhotra Committee was constituted only to formalise these conditionalities.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the entire working class movement and all forces opposed to the erosion of India's economic sovereignty to unitedly oppose these retrograde and dangerous recommendations.

The Narasimha Rao Government must be forced not to proceed with the privatisation of the insurance industry by building up a powerful united movement.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, January 16, 1994.

Shiv Sena's Attacks on Dalits*

**Statement Dated January 10, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The naming of the Marathwada University in Dr. Ambedkar's name had been long overdue and the decision taken has been welcomed by all political parties and progressive social opinion. The only exception has been the Shiv Sena, an ally of the BJP. The virulent opposition of the Shiv Sena to the renaming of the university stems from its rabid anti-Dalit character. In the bandh call given in the Marathwada region, the Shiv Sena has launched vicious attacks on the Dalit community and many houses have been burnt down.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the reactionary stand of the Shiv Sena and calls upon all democratic forces to unitedly counter the provocative activities of Bal Thackeray and his cohorts in the Marathwada region. It calls upon the Maharashtra State Government to take firm steps to curb all attempts to provoke caste riots and to perpetrate atrocities on the Dalit community.

Polit Bureau on Invasion of Foreign Banks in India*

Statement Dated January 20, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands the cancellation of the decision to allow the Bank of America and three other foreign concerns to set up financial companies in India. The Bank of America is one of the four foreign banks indicted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee in the securities scam. The JPC had recommended the suspension of the licences of these foreign banks to operate in the country.

In utter contempt of the JPC, the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has presided over the meeting which cleared the proposal of the Bank of America. The attitude of the Finance Minister underlines once more his commitment to foreign finance capital to the detriment of India's economic sovereignty. The Polit Bureau calls upon all democratic forces to oppose the opening up of the financial sector to foreign banks and companies.

Polit Bureau on Santosh Dev's Threat*

Statement Dated January 21, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the outrageous statement of Santosh Mohan Dev, Union Minister of State for Steel, that the Left Front Government in Tripura would be overthrown. This statement cannot be construed just as a vicious outburst by an irresponsible politician. The fact that the person is a Union Minister and as such very much part of the Central Government, and that he used words like we will find out how the government should be dismissed, clearly indicate the seriousness of the threat. The minister's disclosure that the Union Home Minister, S.B. Chavan will be visiting the state to study the law and order situation also confirms the existence of a sinister plan hatched by the Central Government and the Congress(I). The CPI(M) had earlier exposed the role of the Governor of Tripura, Romesh Bhandari, who, from the very outset, had been functioning more as a Congress(I) leader than as a constitutional head and openly expressed his hostile intentions towards the elected government. Santosh Mohan Dev's threat is only an extension, more serious in nature, of the game initiated by the Governor with the implicit guidance from the Centre.

The Polit Bureau warns that all efforts to destabilise the elected Government of Tripura, enjoying an absolute majority, will be firmly opposed by all democratic forces. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Left and democratic forces and those who are interested in upholding the basic democratic principles to condemn this sinister move.

Polit Bureau on U.S. Interference in India's Affairs*

Statement Dated January 23, 1994 Issued to Press

President Clinton's reply to a U.S. Congressman on Punjab betrays the same outlook as his letter on Kashmir. Both have scant regard for India's territorial sovereignty and obliquely encourage the secessionist forces. On Punjab, Clinton has raised the dangerous concept of protecting "Sikh rights", which will encourage the Khalistanis. There is no word of condemnation of the brutal terrorist outrages.

The Narasimha Rao Government must make it amply clear that the stance of the American President is inimical to India's interests and protest this gratuitous interference in India's internal affairs and encouragement to secessionist forces on the pretext of concern for human rights.

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, January 30, 1994.

Buta Singh Affair Strikes at Secularism*

Statement Dated January 29, 1994 Issued by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of The CPI(M) to Press

The appearance before the Akal Takht and the acceptance by Shri Buta Singh of the "punishment" awarded by the high priests will only help strengthen the forces of fundamentalism and those who want to establish the supremacy of religious authority over the secular affairs of the state.

It is strange that Buta Singh has found it necessary, after more than nine years, to realise his "mistakes" while in government. It is not an issue of a personal act violating religious tenets but a minister acting as part of a government. If anything, it is the government which is accountable for its policies to the people and not any individual minister to a religious body.

Our Party had been critical of the way the extremist movement was handled by the Centre leading to the Operation Blue Star and its consequences. But this cannot be a cover for the anti-national activities of the extremists backed by Pakistan. The high priests and the Akali leadership never denounced those who amassed weapons inside the Golden Temple or misused the place for terrorism. Nor did they take action against those who desecrated the holy place during Operation Black Thunder. They never took action against those who massacred innocents aided by the Pakistani ruling circles. This stance cannot be justified on the basis of any religious principles.

The current action of Buta Singh in following the high priests' injunction strikes at secularism. It underlines all the more the need for separation of religion and the state and politics.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, February 6, 1994.

Polit Bureau Condemns Price Increases*

Statement Dated February 1, 1994 Issued to Press

The Narasimha Rao Government has dealt another vicious blow at the people, particularly the urban and rural poor, by savagely increasing the price of wheat and rice supplied through the public distribution system. The enormous increase of 72 paise per kilogram of wheat and Re. 1 to Rs. 1.30 per kilogram for rice is a calculated attempt to drastically reduce the food subsidy provided by the Centre. This is the step by step implementation of the IMF-World Bank conditionalities to do away with the public distribution system and bring the regulated prices on par with the free market prices. Coming on top of the hike in sugar prices, this Rs. 2,000 crore additional burden has to be borne by the people.

This attack on the people must not go unchallenged. The Congress(I) Government and the Prime Minister, who is now at Davos to woo multinational corporations, must be told in no uncertain terms that they cannot rule by depriving the poor of food.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls for vigorous and sustained protest movements to get this price increase annulled. It calls upon all its Party units to launch protest actions immediately from February 3 to 10 and mobilise public opinion against this anti-people onslaught.

CPI(M) Opposes Increase of Sugar Price*

**Statement Dated January 28, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the decision of the Central Government to increase the price of levy sugar by 75 paise per kg. This follows the steep increase made in February last year when the price of sugar was increased by Rs. 1.40 per kg. This announcement by the Narasimha Rao Government is typical of the spate of pre-budget price hikes which are being resorted to every year. The rise in the price of sugar through the public distribution system will add another burden on the poor and needy.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands the cancellation of this price increase of sugar and calls upon the Rao Government to desist from adding further burdens on an already suffering people.

Polit Bureau Against Use of TADA in Kerala*

Statement Dated February 15, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the authoritarian act of the UDF Government in Kerala of invoking the provisions of the TADA against the activists of the CPI(M) in Kannur district. The unpopular Karunakaran Government, finding itself isolated from the people, is making use of the provisions of the TADA to suppress the democratic expression of the people's opinion against the anti-people policies of both the Centre and the State Governments.

When TADA was introduced in Parliament, it was made clear by the Union Government that the Act is meant to tackle the extraordinary situation created by the terrorists and would not be used against the activists of political parties. The Karunakaran Government did not invoke the provisions of the TADA when the communal forces in Kerala let loose a reign of terror in certain parts of the state after the Ayodhya incidents. This blatant use of the provisions of the TADA against the activists of the CPI(M) exposes the authoritarian character of the UDF Government.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) appeals to all democratic forces in the country to come forward to oppose this heinous attack on democracy and democratic rights.

On Bihar Rajya Sabha Elections*

**Statement Dated February 16, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

For nearly two decades, the CPI(M) has been sincerely supporting the CPI candidates for the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council elections in Bihar with a view to strengthening Left unity and sending Left representatives to these Houses. However, in the elections to the Rajya Sabha this year, negating all the previous assurances, the CPI leadership had unilaterally decided to field their candidate. Strangely, they did not even consider discussing with the CPI(M) before taking this decision. The CPI(M), therefore, had decided to field its candidate for the Rajya Sabha elections. Even after this, the CPI's intransigence continues. The CPI will do well to recollect that with a mere six legislators in West Bengal, the CPI has been regularly sent to the Rajya Sabha, in the interests of Left unity. The attitude of the Bihar state unit of the CPI is not only inimical to Left unity but borders on disruption.

However, given the political situation in Bihar, the CPI(M), with its consistent and principled position of defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP, would not like to create any opportunity that can be utilised by these forces for their advantage. Under these circumstances, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau, keeping in mind the larger interests of Left unity, has directed the Bihar state committee of the CPI(M) to withdraw its nominee from the contest and strengthen Left, democratic and secular forces in the state.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 20, 1994.

On Parliament's Resolution on Kashmir*

Statement Dated February 22, 1994 Issued by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of The CPI(M) to Press

The resolution, adopted by the Lok Sabha today, rightly highlights the role of Pakistan in training extremist to destabilise Kashmir, harmfully affecting Indo-Pak relations. It, however, fails to nail down the role of the Clinton administration, which under the garb of "protection of human rights" is encouraging such activities with a view to imposing its hegemony over the country. The resolution, however, unnecessarily raises the question of Pak-occupied Kashmir—an issue that has to be tackled through negotiations, as per the Shimla Agreement. Our country has always stood for good neighbourly relations with Pakistan and are opposed to all efforts of the Pak Government to disturb them.

CPI(M) Demands: Karunakaran Must Resign*

**Statement Dated February 22, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands the immediate resignation of the Chief Minister of Kerala, K. Karunakaran, in view of the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the Palmolein import deal. The CAG report has indicted the Chief Minister and the UDF Government for signing the Rs. 6.44-crore deal to import Palmolein at highly inflated prices through a Singapore-based company, which led to a loss of Rs. 3.84 crore to the state exchequer. Further, the CAG report states that the Chief Minister was instrumental in getting the deal through.

Instead of accepting responsibility for such a major scandal, the Chief Minister has sought to question the Comptroller and Auditor General's motives in making a reference to him in the report. Earlier, a Union Minister from Kerala, Krishnakumar, had cast aspersions on the integrity of the CAG. Such an attitude towards a constitutionally appointed authority is intolerable from ministers who have sworn to uphold the Constitution.

Public accountability and morality demands that the Kerala Chief Minister immediately tender the resignation of his ministry.

Akali Leaders Refuse to Learn from Mistakes*

**Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of
The CPI(M), Issued Statement Dated February 17, 1994
to Press**

While political forces throughout the country are vociferously condemning the U.S. designs to destabilise the country by encouraging Sikh fundamentalists in Punjab and separatists in Kashmir, as revealed in U.S. President Clinton's remarks, various Akali factions passed a resolution at a seminar held in Ludhiana stating that *"the Sikh nation expresses profound gratitude to President Bill Clinton and 24 U.S. Congressmen for raising the issue of the plight of the Sikhs in Punjab"*.

This resolution negates the revolutionary anti-imperialist traditions of the Akali movement of the twenties and thirties. It reveals that the present Akali leaders have lost confidence in the people of Punjab and in the national political forces for the solution of the genuine problems of the state. Instead, they have started relying on U.S. imperialism, which is trying to impose its hegemony over the world. These Akali leaders fail to recognise that their present plight is a consequence of their anti-national stance of supporting the Sikh extremists, who have been acting at the behest of Pakistan and U.S. imperialists, under the cover of Khalistan.

The Akali leaders do not have a word of condemnation of the Sikh extremists who have been killing innocent people, indulging in extortion of money, molesting women and had created a situation of terror and instability in the Punjab. They should understand that the people of Punjab who heave a sigh of relief today will not be misled by their slogans.

Akali Leaders Refuse to Learn from Mistakes 17

Their reliance on Clinton exposes them as becoming mere tools of imperialist forces in the country. The Akali leaders are still toying with the idea of creating a wedge between Hindus and Sikhs, instead of raising the genuine demands of the Punjabi people, necessary to bring stability to Punjab.

On Election Symbols Order*

**Statement Dated February 17, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly criticises the decision of the Chief Election Commissioner to amend the Election Symbols order empowering the Election Commission to withdraw or suspend the recognition of political parties. The Chief Election Commissioner has gone ahead with this amendment despite the unanimous opinion of all the national political parties that the Election Commission cannot be empowered with such arbitrary powers. By this order, Mr. Seshan has sought to arrogate to the Election Commission, wide and sweeping powers to penalise political parties by the act of derecognition. These are not tenable under the election laws of the land.

Instead of heeding the opinion of all the political parties that the measures to curb malpractices as specified in the model code of conduct be taken through the due process of legislation and law, the step taken by the Election Commission will only undermine the role of political parties in a parliamentary system. This action by Mr. Seshan does not contribute to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy nor serve the purpose of electoral reforms.

The current situation underlines all the more the necessity of a multi-member Election Commission, the steps for which have not been properly taken by the Central Government, despite big support for the move in Parliament. It is incumbent on the Centre to take all necessary steps, both judicial and legislative, to ensure that the multi-member commission is forthwith made functional.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) has decided to challenge the election symbol amendment order in the courts of law at the earliest.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 29, 1994.

CPI(M) Condemns Railway Budget Proposals*

**Statement Dated February 24, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the Railway Budget proposals presented in Parliament, which will increase the burdens on the people who are already suffering from continuous price-rise.

The Budget proposes to increase both freight charges and passenger fares by an additional Rs. 997 crore. The increase in the freight charges will affect vital commodities such as coal, iron ore, cement, oilcake and other raw materials which will fuel inflation in the economy. Not even foodgrains and pulses, apart from those under the public distribution system, have been spared. In the case of passenger fares, the Railway Budget attacks once more the ordinary travellers in the second class and monthly season ticket-holders by increasing second class fares up to a maximum of Rs. 20 and monthly season tickets up to a maximum of Rs. 40. Despite popular demand, the sleeper class fares which were increased by 25 per cent last year, have not been reduced.

The Railway Budget figures reveal the very bad state of the railway finances and development. The shortfall in traffic earnings, both in freight and passenger categories as against the targeted estimates in the 1993-94 Budget, have to be seen along with the cut in the 1993-94 plan outlay by Rs. 300 crore affecting railway development. The annual plan outlay for 1994-95 of Rs. 6,515 crore is a fall in real terms from the 1993-94 allocation, if the rate of inflation is considered. Of this also the expectation of over Rs. 1,000 crore to be raised from market borrowings will prove illusory. The deterioration in maintenance is affecting safety as seen by the spate of railway accidents.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 6, 1998.

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The extremely bad shape in which the Indian railways finds itself is due to the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government which have cut down on public investment in infrastructure, including railways, and encouraging privatisation of sectors in the railways. The lack of sufficient expansion of the railway network will have a deleterious effect on potential for employment in many areas. Emphasis on new trains is to cater to the elite sections and ordinary passenger trains are being systematically reduced.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) denounced the new burdens through the increased passenger and freight charges on the people. These new measures must be opposed and they must be reversed. The Polit Bureau called upon all Party units to launch protest actions and mobilise the people against these new burdens.

Polit Bureau Calls to Resist Budget Proposals*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement on February 28, 1994:

In keeping with the direction of economic policy over the last two years, the Union Budget of 1994-95 attacks the working people to offer concessions to the rich, as part of a World Bank-IMF inspired strategy of seeking to stimulate growth by appeasing private capital. To set the tone for such a budget, the government mobilised through hikes in the issue prices of foodgrains and sugar, administered price of petroleum products, and railways fares and freight, a total of about Rs. 5,000 crore. That additional burden on the population at large is now used not to enhance expenditures aimed at development or welfare, but in direct and indirect tax concessions of Rs. 4,081 crore, ostensibly aimed at stimulating investment by Indian and foreign capitalists. Past experience shows that such concessions merely constitute one more means of handing largesse to the rich at the expense of the poor.

To shroud this actual character of its budget, the Government has chosen to bandy about a set of figures on rural development expenditures (which are estimated to rise by 40 per cent). What needs to be noted, however, is that by the Finance Minister's own admission the target for employment generation in 1994-95 is 1,150 million man-days, compared with 1,080 million in last year's budget, i.e., an increase of just over 6 per cent (up to September 1993, the actual employment was only 309 million).

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 6, 1994.

The budgetary support for the Central Plan outlay is slated to rise by a mere 8 per cent or Rs. 2,200 crore. Even this amount has been mobilised by cutting central assistance to the states and Union territories by around Rs. 1,800 crore. Moreover, if we take account of the fact that Rs. 4,000 crore are being mobilised through sale of existing public sector assets, the actual net budgetary outlay registers a decline.

Despite all of this, the Finance Minister has announced tax concessions totalling Rs. 4,081 crore. It is presumed that this would not result in any revenue loss due to better compliance, a feat never achieved in the past. The fiscal deficit for 1993-94 was Rs. 58,551 crore as opposed to the budgetary estimate of Rs. 36,959 crore. By this trend, the estimated fiscal deficit of Rs. 54,915 crore this year, is bound to grow much further. In a situation of low growth, this only means further hikes in administered prices and greater burdens on the people to bridge this growing gap.

The way the budget seeks to contain the burgeoning fiscal deficit, is by attacking subsidies for the poor. Subsidies on food and fertilisers will be reduced by Rs. 2,000 crore from the revised estimates of last year.

The government presumes that the tax concessions and reduced capital goods prices would stimulate growth. The fact that the last three years of reform have also been the worst three-year industrial growth experience in post-Independence India, should expose the hollowness of this presumption which is supported by no economic theory, but only by the ideology of the IMF and the World Bank.

This attack on the working people is accompanied by a squeeze on the states. The states have been cheated in three ways: they lose from a strategy which depends on non-shareable imposts like administered price hikes for additional resource mobilisation; they are squeezed by the decision to cut shareable duties such as direct taxes and excise duties to the tune of Rs. 400 crore; and at the end of the exercise, they bear the brunt of the cuts in capital expenditure.

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These budgetary proposals will only continue the recessionary effects on domestic industry, reduce employment, gradually dismantle the public distribution system and heighten inequalities through socially adverse taxation proposals. This budget has once again exposed the Rao Government's disastrous policies of surrendering economic sovereignty and attacking the livelihood of the people. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon all sections of the people to resolutely strengthen the struggle to reverse these economic policies.

Polit Bureau Communique on Current Developments*

**Issued Following its Meeting Held in
New Delhi on February 24-26, 1994**

Kashmir : Brazen Interference by the U.S.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) noted with serious concern the growing hostility of the Clinton administration towards India on the Kashmir issue. The latest statement by President Clinton endorsing Pakistan's charges about human rights violations in Kashmir is part of a calculated plan to pressurise the Indian Government. The Polit Bureau condemned the resolution on the Kashmir issue tabled by the Pakistani Government at the United Nations Human Rights Commission. It deliberately violates the bilateral framework of the Shimla Agreement to resolve the dispute. The U.S. stand is only encouraging the Pakistan Government to adopt a belligerent posture and complicating Indo-Pakistan relations.

It is unfortunate that, while making diplomatic protests, the Narasimha Rao Government has not criticised the U.S. administration's stand on Kashmir either in the President's address to Parliament or in the resolution adopted by both Houses of Parliament. This weak-kneed stance is the logical outcome of the surrender to U.S. pressures on the economic front and the indiscriminate opening to foreign capital.

The Polit Bureau noted that despite three months having passed since the Hazratbal shrine crisis was defused, the Rao Government has yet to take any step towards a comprehensive policy on Kashmir. Reliance on administrative measures alone will not provide a political solution.

Economic Onslaught on the People

The Polit Bureau reviewing the economic situation in the country, sharply condemned the administered price hikes announced on the eve of the budget session. The hike in the prices of sugar, wheat and rice sold through the public distribution system and of petrol and diesel are the results of the callous policy which transfers the burdens of the harmful economic policies on to the common people. The Narasimha Rao Government is going ahead blindly with its liberalisation and privatisation policies. The decision of signing the GATT agreement by ignoring Parliament and defying public opinion, the two Ordinances for facilitating privatisation in the airline and banking industry, all show gross contempt for parliamentary democracy.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) noted that with the increasing attacks on existing jobs through large-scale closures and privatisation, including the banking and insurance sectors, tens of thousands of workers and employees are faced with joblessness; the move to privatise IISCO instead of modernisation of the plant by the Steel Authority of India Ltd. despite the unanimous demand of the workers has to be resisted; similarly the threat of closure of many NTC mills and fertiliser units have to be fought back by the united resistance of the workers and trade union movement. The campaign to force the government not to ratify the GATT treaty must be intensified. All steps to restrict the public distribution system by excluding workers and employees of the organised sector out of its purview and by raising the prices of commodities being sold through the system must be checked.

Growing Resistance

The Polit Bureau reviewed the ongoing movement all over the country launched by the Left Parties against the economic policies. In many states, *jathas* and rallies are being held till the end of March. The Polit Bureau discussed steps to make the April 5 March to Parliament by the National Platform of Mass Organisations a big success.

The Polit Bureau discussed how to build up further resistance to these policies by mobilising all sections of the people and within Parliament. The Polit Bureau warned the government not to go ahead with the Bill to amend the Trade Union Act, which would constitute a serious attack on the rights of the trade unions and the working class.

The P.B. called upon all its Party units to launch protest actions against the hike in freight and passenger fares in the Railway Budget.

Ayodhya Issue

The Polit Bureau reiterates its stand that the Central Government withdraw the reference to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution and put up all the previous cases connected with the dispute for a full judicial verdict by the court under Article 138(2) of the Constitution. In this connection, the P.B. hoped that the Uttar Pradesh Government would take a stand before the Supreme Court similar to that taken by the West Bengal Government.

Cynical Defection Game

The Polit Bureau deplored the cynical way the Congress(I) has utilised defections to engineer a majority in the Lok Sabha. The reward of a cabinet post to one of the defectors, Ram Lakhan Yadav, shows Narasimha Rao's blatant disregard for democratic norms and the spirit of the anti-defection law.

Suspected Illegal Pay-Offs

The Polit Bureau noted that charges about illegal payments to 42 politicians by hawala dealers have surfaced in newspaper reports quoting evidence tendered by the CBI in the Supreme Court. Neither has the government contradicted this report nor launched an investigation. It is essential that the truth about this matter be made public.

Kerala

TADA Arrests: The Polit Bureau denounced the use of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) by the

Karunakaran Government to arrest four important CPI(M) cadres in Kannur district of Kerala. Eight more CPI(M) activists are sought to be arrested under this preventive detention law. This is a gross misuse of TADA, which was passed ostensibly for combating terroristic activities. It is now being misused by the Congress(I)-led Government in a district where the CPI(M) has been firmly struggling against the RSS and other communal forces. The UDF Government, instead of combating the communal forces, is using the TADA against the CPI(M). This dangerous game of helping the communal forces must be exposed. The Polit Bureau demands the immediate withdrawal of the use of TADA against political activists in the state.

Chief Minister Should Resign: The Karunakaran Government has been enveloped by another major corruption scandal. The Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the palmolein deal has indicted the Chief Minister and the UDF Government for paying grossly inflated prices for the import of palmolein. After such a report, the Chief Minister has to accept responsibility for the swindle of public funds and resign.

West Bengal

The Congress(I) has stepped up its provocative activities in the state in its efforts to create disturbances and malign the Left Front Government. The Barasat incident of clashes with the police and the bandh call in its wake are typical of the pattern of bankrupt politics which is not able to mobilise the people on any policy issues. The P.B. expressed confidence that the Left Front, supported by the people, will foil these designs.

Updating Programme

The Polit Bureau had a joint session with the Programme Commission to discuss the preparation of a draft updating the Programme of the Party. The Polit Bureau decided to meet once again in March to finalise the draft to be placed before the next Central Committee meeting for discussions.

Condolence on Comrade S. Y. Kolhatkar*

Veteran CPI(M) leader and one of the pioneers of the working class movement in Maharashtra, S. Y. Kolhatkar passed away on March 13. He was 85.

Comrade Kolhatkar joined the Communist movement as far back as 1933 and was the first Secretary of the Maharashtra State Committee of the CPI(M) when it was formed in 1964. He remained state Secretary of the Party for two decades.

He was prominent in the trade union movement and was the Maharashtra Secretary of the AITUC in 1945. He went on to become the President of the Maharashtra unit of the CITU and was elected Vice-President of All India CITU at its first conference, retiring from the post only in 1991.

After the formation of the CPI(M), he was elected to the Central Committee at the Seventh Congress in 1964. He continued in the Central Committee till the 13th Congress in 1988.

He made a significant contribution to the trade union movement in the newspaper industry and was the President of the All India Newspapers Employees' Federation (AINEF) and Chairman of the National Conference of Newspapers and News Agencies Employees Organisation for many years.

For the past few years, he was not keeping good health though he continued to work as a member of the Maharashtra state Secretariat of the CPI(M). His wife died a few years ago and he suffered a stroke last year, following which he went to stay with

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, March 20, 1994.

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his son in Dubai to recuperate. He died in Dubai on March 13, after suffering a heart attack. He is being cremated in Dubai.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M), in a telegram to the Maharashtra State Secretariat, has expressed deep sorrow at the passing away of Com. Kolhatkar and recalled his services to the Party and working class movement.

CPI(M) Condemns Assembly Speaker's Murder*

**Statement Dated March 19, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) condemns the dastardly murder of the former Speaker of the J & K assembly, Mr. Wali Mohammad Ittoo. Mr. Ittoo, as a leader of the National Conference, had played an important role in the state's politics in the past.

The brazen manner in which the murder took place in broad daylight in Jammu indicates the seriousness of the situation in the state where the extremists are able to strike at will to prevent the return to normalcy.

It is very clear that Pakistan and its agencies, along with anti-national forces in the country, are determined not to allow any process of restoration of normalcy in the state. This must be seen in the light of the fact that this murder took place barely three days before the proposed meeting convened by the Union Home Minister to work out a package to launch a political initiative in the valley.

In this background, the Government of India must with urgency take steps, both political and administrative, for restoring normalcy in the state. The CPI(M) in the past suggested various measures and unless such measures are taken one cannot pave the way for restoration of normalcy in the valley and the state.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country to be vigilant against the provocations of the extremists.

Central Committee's Call: Month-Long Campaign in April 1994 to Increase Party Papers' Circulation*

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in December 1993, decided that a month-long intensive campaign must be conducted by the entire Party to step up the circulation of *People's Democracy* and *Lok Lehar*, in April 1994. During this campaign state units will also conduct a drive for increasing the circulation of their Party papers.

The Central Committee took this decision after reviewing the state of the circulation of the central Party papers. It noted with concern that the circulation of *People's Democracy* has remained stagnant since the 14th Party Congress, while *Lok Lehar* has registered only a slight increase. The Party newspapers play the vital role of equipping the Party members and supporters with the understanding of the Party's policy on various issues and its line on various developments. In a situation where the Communist movement is faced with major ideological challenges, both at the international and national levels, it is essential that every Party member subscribes to and reads Party papers to follow events and develop his or her political understanding. It is also the duty of all Party units and members to sell the Party papers amongst supporters and the people.

The month-long campaign in April should involve the entire Party and should be geared to enrol new subscribers and agencies. Every Party unit must set targets for increasing the circulation. In the Hindi-speaking states, every Party member must be motivated to subscribe to *Lok Lehar* and sell the paper. For *People's Democracy* a special drive should be conducted by middle class units and in cities where English-knowing subscribers exist. The Central Committee has appealed to the entire Party to make this campaign successful both inside and outside the Party.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 20, 1994.

Polit Bureau Communiqué : Enact Law to Delink Religion and Politics*

**Issued Following its Two-Day Meeting in New Delhi
on March 16-17, 1994**

The government must immediately bring forth a legislation to legally enforce the separation of religion and politics on the basis of the landmark Supreme Court judgement on the use of Article 356 of the Constitution, the CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said at New Delhi on March 18, 1994.

Addressing a Press conference on the two-day Polit Bureau meeting, Surjeet said the Supreme Court judgement, upholding the dismissal of the three BJP-run state governments because of their anti-secular and thus anti-constitutional activities, was a major contribution in protecting secularism. On the basis of this judgement, a Bill separating religion and politics must be immediately moved in order to prevent the misuse of religion for political purposes.

He also welcomed the judgement for its criticism of the gross misuse of Article 356 and said it set out important criteria which would prevent further misuse of this draconian law. He said ever since the first Communist government in Kerala was dismissed in 1959, the Centre had abused the provisions of Article 356 for partisan purposes. The Supreme Court verdict should be followed in letter and spirit by the ruling party, he said.

Surjeet said the Polit Bureau also reviewed the preparations for April 5 rally at New Delhi at the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations and was satisfied with the campaign now under way by the Left parties throughout the country. He said jathas were moving, rallies and demonstrations taking place in every state and a huge mobilisation being undertaken to make the

April 5 March to Parliament a big success. The opposition to the government's new economic and industrial policies and the GATT proposals had further intensified followed the blatantly pro-rich Union Budget and Rail Budget this year, he said.

In reply to a question on the convention being organised on Tibet, Surjeet said the Janata Dal was not organising it, only some individuals were behind it. He sharply criticised the organisers of the convention and said they were working against national interest. Tibet was an integral part of China and raising the question of Tibetan independence not only affected Sino-Indian friendship but also provided a handle to anti-India forces to intensify their campaign about Kashmir. He said Americans were clearly behind such moves because the U.S. did not want the two great Asian countries—India and China—to come closer. The U.S. was fuelling movements for the independence of both Kashmir and Tibet because it did not want a strong India or a strong China to emerge.

Regarding Kashmir, Surjeet welcomed Pakistan's withdrawal of its resolution at the U.N. Human Rights Conference in Geneva but said the Government of India should not be content and complacent about it. The government was wrong in believing that other countries fully supported India's stand. While many countries wanted India and Pakistan to settle the issue bilaterally, they do not accept India's position on the issue. The only solution to the Kashmir problem lay in a political approach which would give maximum autonomy to the Kashmiri people and fully protect their identity. Surjeet regretted that the government was wasting precious time and not taking adequate steps to initiate a political solution.

Surjeet also criticised the Chief Election Commissioner's arbitrary position on the identity cards issue and said an all-party meeting must be immediately convened to discuss electoral reforms including the I-card issue. He also demanded an all-party meeting to discuss the question of an effective multi-member Election Commission which had been hampered because of the attitude taken by the present CEC.

Speaking on the increasing attacks on the Left in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, Surjeet sharply attacked the Karunakaran Government for using TADA against CPI(M) activists in Kerala and extended support to the movement to scrap TADA. On the situation in Tripura, he said the Governor Romesh Bhandari continued his open campaign against the Left Front Government. He said even when a Congressman was killed by another Congressman in Tripura, the party used it as a pretext to organise a bandh against the Left Front Government. In the context of attacks on the Left, Surjeet criticised Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar's open attacks against the Left's opposition to the new economic policies in Calcutta. Pawar was the biggest champion of so-called liberalisation and entry of multinationals into the country, he said.

The main agenda before the Polit Bureau this time was discussion on the draft of the updated programme of the CPI(M) prepared by the Programme Commission. Now that the Polit Bureau has discussed the draft, it will be placed before the Central Committee at its next meeting in Hyderabad on April 12-15. The updated programme will be the most important issue before the next Party Congress, Surjeet added.

The Polit Bureau communique released on this occasion is being reproduced below:

Supreme Court Judgement

The Polit Bureau welcomed the judgement delivered by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court regarding the use of Article 356 of the Constitution to dismiss state governments. The nine-member Bench has made a significant contribution in protecting secularism and the federal principle underlying the political system. In upholding the dismissal of the three BJP-run state governments, the court has spelt out clearly that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution and no political party which utilises a religious platform can be considered secular. Such party's activities which are non-secular should be viewed as unconstitutional. The judgement has given a clear direction on separation of religion from the state and politics. With this

landmark judgement, the highest forum of the judiciary has upheld the true spirit of secularism.

It is imperative that this judicial clarification be followed up immediately with legislation to legally enforce the separation of religion and politics and to see that religion is not misused in the political sphere.

The Supreme Court judgement has also made a major contribution to check the gross misuse of Article 356 by the ruling party at the Centre to dismiss elected state governments only because they belong to other political parties. By declaring the dismissal of the Karnataka, Nagaland and Meghalaya Governments in the recent past as unconstitutional, the court has laid down clear parameters by which this Article can be used. By asserting the right of judicial review; the right to examine materials connected with issuing of proclamation under Article 356; the dissolution of the Assembly to be done only after the proclamation is approved by Parliament; the court's rights to restore a dissolved Assembly and a state government if the proclamation is found invalid—all these are important safeguards on the arbitrary use of this draconian clause. The CPI(M) which has consistently opposed Article 356 in the Constitution welcomes this judgement which will act at least as a deterrent to the politically motivated use of the clause. It is for the ruling party at the Centre to follow the letter and spirit of the judgement and not violate the federal principle which has been upheld by the court.

Election Reforms

The Polit Bureau strongly criticised the arbitrary stand of the Chief Election Commissioner that no elections will be held after January 1, 1995 if identity cards are not issued to voters. The entire question of electoral reforms including the issuance of identity cards must be discussed by all the political parties and decisions taken on the Dinesh Goswami Committee's proposals for electoral reforms. The government must convene a meeting for this purpose.

It is essential that the government in the meantime take suitable steps to make the multi-member Election Commission functional and effective.

Kashmir

Following the withdrawal of the Pakistani Government's resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the Narasimha Rao Government, instead of being satisfied with the outcome, should realise that unless it formulates an effective political approach to the Kashmir problem there can be no solution. The Rao Government must immediately take steps to work out a plan whereby maximum autonomy can be given so that the Kashmiri people can be assured of their identity.

Scrap Military Ties with U.S.

At a time when the Clinton administration is considering the sale of seventy-one F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan, the Congress(I) Government is continuing with the proposals for military collaboration with the U.S. armed forces. Right now, discussions are being held for stepping up cooperation between the U.S. and Indian air forces. The Polit Bureau demanded of the government a halt to the military collaboration with the U.S. armed forces as they are detrimental to national security.

Attacks Against the Left

The Polit Bureau noted that the Congress(I) is stepping up its attacks on the CPI(M) and the Left-led Governments in West Bengal and Tripura. Any pretext is being used to create confrontation with the police and to disturb normal life through disruptive activities. Apart from the use of TADA in Kerala, there have been murders of CPI(M) cadres in Palakkad and Trissur. In West Bengal and Tripura, incidents which have no connection with politics are sought to be twisted and sought to be utilised against the Left. Top Congress(I) leaders at the national level are joining in the campaign to malign the Left-led Governments. The Polit Bureau, while condemning such tactics, called upon all the Left, democratic and secular forces to unitedly rebuff this offensive.

Kerala : Stop Use of TADA

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demanded that the Karunakaran Government immediately withdraw the use of TADA in the state

against the CPI(M). Four CPI(M) cadres from Kannur district have been arrested under this preventive detention law and eight more warrants have been issued against other CPI(M) leaders. It is shocking that TADA has been used against the CPI(M) which is consistently struggling against the communal forces in the district. The CPI(M) called upon all democratic forces to stop the use of TADA in Kerala. The Polit Bureau extended full support to the broad protest movement being built up in the state against TADA.

April 5 Rally

The Polit Bureau reviewed the joint campaign being conducted by the Left parties all over the country and the preparations for the April 5 rally at New Delhi by the National Platform of Mass Organisations. The Union Budget proposals, the hikes in the railway budget—all constitute an intensified effort to burden the common people and to give further concessions to the rich. The Polit Bureau called upon all Party units and appealed to all mass organisations to make the April 5 mobilisation at New Delhi a resounding success.

Party Programme

The Polit Bureau completed the discussion on a draft of the updated programme of the Party prepared by the Programme Commission. It decided to place this draft before the next Central Committee meeting to be held in April at Hyderabad.

Polit Bureau of CPI(M) on Ms. Robin Raphel's Visit to India*

Statement Dated March 26, 1994 Issued to Press

The Narasimha Rao Government has accorded undue importance to the visit of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, Ms. Robin Raphel. After the series of hostile statements made by Raphel and President Clinton, the entire political spectrum in India had come out strongly against this gross interference in India's internal affairs. Despite this, the Government of India has taken the unprecedented step of setting aside protocol for the Union Home Minister and other cabinet ministers to meet her. The ruling party has also gone out of its way to placate the American official even when she has reiterated her views on Kashmir.

The stance adopted by the Narasimha Rao Government is totally out of tune with the sentiments of the Indian people and is a graphic illustration of how far independent foreign policy making has been eroded under the Congress(I) regime.

On Provocation in Korean Peninsula*

**Statement Dated March 26, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep concern at the aggravation of the situation in the Korean peninsula as a result of the aggressive stance adopted by the U.S. administration. The Polit Bureau condemns the decision of the Clinton administration to hold joint military exercises with the South Korean troops and to place Patriot missiles in South Korea. These provocative acts have disrupted the negotiations for defusing tensions and normalising relations between North and South Korea.

The Clinton administration is adopting an unreasonable stand on the question of inspection of nuclear installations in North Korea by raising the bogey of nuclear weapons being manufactured clandestinely. The United Nations Security Council should adopt an impartial stand free from American pressures which can help restore the process of normalcy through negotiations.

75th Anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) issued a call to all party units on March 30 for the observance of the 75th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13. It was on this day 75 years ago, in 1919, that British troops fired on a public meeting at Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar, killing hundreds of people.

The party should observe this day by holding hall meetings and other activities to educate the younger generations, on this heroic chapter in our anti-imperialist struggle in which Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims stood together to face the British bullets.

The day assumes special significance in the background of the growing surrender to imperialist pressures by the Congress(I) Government, the danger of erosion of our-economic sovereignty and the signing of the GATT treaty scheduled to take place on April 15. The Polit Bureau has called upon all party units to mobilize the people against the threats from imperialism.

CPI(M) Condemns Attack on Mulayam Singh Yadav*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) has sharply reacted to the attempt made on Mulayam Singh Yadav's life by an assailant hailing from Pune on April 4 morning.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemned the attempt on the life of Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and expressed relief at the assassin's failed attempt. It also called for a thorough investigation to find out the identity, links and motives of the assailant.

On Goa Governor's Misdeed*

**Statement Dated April 3, 1994 Issued by The
Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The outrageous action by the Goa Governor, Mr. Bhanu Prakash Singh, in dismissing the D Souza Government and citing the Governor's constitutional authority to do so, deserves the strongest condemnation. The Governor has subverted parliamentary democracy by removing the Chief Minister and appointing another in his place. It is a perversion of the Constitution when the Governor insists that he has the prerogative to dismiss a government which commands a majority in the state assembly. The right of electing or changing a Chief Minister lies with the elected members of the assembly, and decidedly not with the Governor.

The Congress leadership has condemned this action of the Governor. It should realise that the Congress, as the ruling party at the Centre, has been the major culprit in contributing to such unconstitutional activities of Governors by using them for partisan purposes.

The recent Supreme Court judgement has categorically asserted the democratic rights of state governments and assemblies which cannot be tramped upon either by the Governor or by using presidential powers. The Goa Governor must be removed forthwith by the President to uphold constitutional norms.

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, April 10, 1994.

CPI(M) Congratulates Rallyists, Condemns Repression*

**Statement Dated April 5, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warmly congratulates the lakhs of people who gathered at Delhi to protest against the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government at the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations which was supported by the Left parties. Hundreds of thousands of people marched towards Parliament and defied the ban on the rally at Boat Club grounds. They refused to accept this gross denial of democratic rights by the Central Government.

The Polit Bureau severely condemns the repression unleashed by the police against the marchers near Rajghat. The police used large quantities of tear gas, lathi charges, mounted police and water cannons at various places including in front of Parliament House to disperse the demonstrators. Despite all this, the protestors reached Parliament. Scores of people have been injured and hundreds have been arrested.

The Polit Bureau greets all those who responded to the call to March to Parliament braving the police repression. Their militant spirit is a strong warning to the Narasimha Rao Government to desist from pursuing the harmful economic policies dictated by the IMF and the World Bank. The April 5 rally is also a powerful protest against the Congress(I) Government's signing the GATT treaty which will seriously erode India's economic sovereignty.

The Polit Bureau calls for intensifying the mass movement against the economic policies and the GATT treaty.

Homage To Comrade C. Rajeswara Rao*

**Statement Dated April 9, 1994 Issued by The
Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep sorrow on the passing away of Comrade C. Rajeswara Rao, one of the most outstanding leaders of the Communist movement in India. Comrade Rajeswara Rao joined the anti-imperialist national struggle early in his life when he was a student of Benaras Hindu University. As an active leader of the struggle, he soon joined the Communist Party. Ever since, he has been in the forefront of every type of revolutionary mass activity. As a foremost pioneer of the Communist movement, his role in building up the Party organisation and the Kisan movement in Andhra will be always remembered. His abilities as an organiser and a leader led him to occupy various position in the party—a Secretary of Andhra State Committee, member of the Central Committee, member of the Polit Bureau and General Secretary of the party in different periods. He was the General Secretary of the CPI for nearly 30 years beginning with 1963.

Comrade Rajeswara Rao will be ever remembered and his memory honoured for his very important role in the historic Telangana struggle, which he led along with Comrade P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah and others. Comrade Rajeswara Rao's absolute dedication to the revolutionary cause, his immense organisational talent, his courage and his great spirit of sacrifice and his willingness to face hardships and sufferings will undoubtedly be a source of inspiration to all Communists.

The Polit Bureau pays its homage to the memory of C. Rajeswara Rao, veteran revolutionary. The Polit Bureau conveys its heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family and to Communist Party of India.

Central Committee Communique*

Issued Following its Meeting Held in Hyderabad on April 12-15, 1994

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in Hyderabad from April 12-15, 1994. It issued the following statement on April 15, 1994:

Surrender on GATT

The Narasimha Rao Government has gone ahead with its decision to sign the GATT treaty at the Marrakesh conference in spite of widespread opposition to the terms of the treaty in India. The adverse consequences of the GATT treaty, based on the original Dunkel draft proposals, in the various spheres of India's economy is of no concern to the Rao Government which is compromising India's sovereignty by pursuing economic policies which are making it helpless before imperialist pressures. The latest instance of succumbing to such pressures the Indian Government's decision to hold negotiations with the US administration on the latter's demand for greater access of the Indian market for its textiles.

The Central Committee noted that the living conditions of the people have worsened with the administered price hikes before the budget and after the Union budget proposals. The increase in the wholesale price index is well over ten per cent and the inflationary spiral has been sparked off as a result of the budget. The economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government for the past three years have resulted in growing unemployment, closure of factories, particularly small-scale industries, ruin of artisans and small peasants and further pauperisation of the agricultural

labour. Even the meagre public distribution system available to the poor is being curtailed.

It is against these policies of privatisation and giving up of self-reliance that tens of thousands of people participated in the historic April 5 rally in New Delhi, defying the ban and braving police repression. It is a significant indication of people's discontent and anger. The Central Committee decided to intensify the movement against the economic policies of the Rao Government

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Central Committee fully endorsed the call of the Left parties to launch a civil disobedience movement in the month of August and enrol at least one million volunteers for this movement. The Central Committee called upon all its state units to chalk out plans for enrolment of volunteers for this important struggle.

Counter Communal Campaign

The Central Committee condemned the decision of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad sponsored "Sadhu Sammelan" at Hardwar to begin a campaign to force the Government to hand over the disputed site at Ayodhya to it for construction of the temple. The 'sadhu yatra' planned from the Dusshera festival is designed to whip up communal feelings. The new RSS chief has already made it clear that the next targets would be the Varanasi and Mathura sites.

The BJP, along with the RSS and VHP, is bent upon diverting the discontent of the people from the economic policies of the Rao Government to disruptive channels. The Left and secular forces must unitedly foil this design and take the initiative to keep the focus on the central question of defence of economic sovereignty and people's livelihood.

The Narasimha Rao Government seems to harbour hopes of getting the temple built at the disputed site by enlisting the support of some Shankaracharyas and religious figures. The only dispute seems to be as to who will build the temple. Such a stand only helps the communal forces. The CPI(M) reiterates its demand that the Government cancel the notification acquiring the land and give up the reference to the Supreme Court under article 143 of the

Constitution. All the earlier cases connected with the dispute should be taken up by the Supreme Court for a full judicial verdict under article 138(2) of the Constitution.

Kashmir

Despite the favourable situation which arose after the lifting of the siege of the Hazratbal shrine and in the face of the hostile US stance against India on the Kashmir question, the Narasimha Rao Government has failed to work out any effective plan to address the political problems connected with the Kashmir issue. With the US intervening clearly in favour of an independent Kashmir, the drift in the Government's handling of Kashmir is inexcusable. The Rao Government has been unable to offer any proposals which can ensure maximum autonomy and assurance of the identity of the Kashmiri people.

The Central Committee strongly condemned the Clinton administration's decision to supply F-16 planes to Pakistan. This is blatantly provocative move designed to heighten tensions in the sub-continent.

Initiate Election Reforms

The various evils which undermine the electoral system and the arbitrary functioning of the Chief Election Commissioner highlight the need for urgent electoral reforms. The Central Committee called upon the Government to initiate steps to evolve an all-party consensus for the implementation of the recommendations of the Dinesh Goswami Committee on electoral reforms.

The Central Committee demands of the Rao Government to immediately take steps to make the multi-member Election commission a functional body.

Attacks on Left Stepped Up

The Congress(I) leadership has intensified the political attacks on the Left-led Governments of West Bengal and Tripura and against the CPI(M) in Kerala. Every incident of crime in West Bengal is sought to be given a political colour and, with the help

of a section of the bourgeois Press, to malign the CPI(M). In Kerala, the Karunakaran Government has taken the unprecedented step of using TADA to detain four CPI(M) cadres in Kannur district. Eight more important leaders have been warranted under this black Act. Two important functionaries of the CPI(M) were killed by Congressmen in Pallakad district.

In Tripura, the Congress(I) group in the Assembly is boycotting the entire budget session. The Congress(I) is raising the bogey of breakdown of law and order in the state while combining with the TUJS to create violent incidents and ethnic tensions. The Tripura Governor, Romesh Bhandari, is aiding and abetting these actions. The Central Committee demands the removal of the Governor to ensure that constitutional norms are upheld.

Forthcoming Assembly Elections

The Central Committee discussed the line to be adopted by the party in the assembly election to be held in the various states by the end of the year. The Central Committee decided that in the background of the serious onslaught of the economic policies on the people by the Congress(I) Government and the continuing threat from the communal forces, it is essential to see that the Congress(I) and the BJP are defeated in these polls. The Left and secular opposition forces should work together in a spirit of mutual accommodation and understanding to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Party Programme

The Central Committee held detailed discussions on a draft of the updated programme of the party. Since the discussions were not complete, it was decided to take it up again in the next meeting of the Central Committee.

Party Congress

The Central Committee decided to hold the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) at Chandigarh in the first half of April 1995. The exact dates will be decided after the schedule of the assembly elections is known.

International Situation

The Central Committee strongly condemned the provocative steps taken against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by the US administration. It demanded the calling off of the joint military exercise between the US and South Korea and the stationing of patriot missiles in South Korea.

The Central Committee expressed concern at the efforts of the Inkatha and while extremists to disrupt the forthcoming elections on April 26-28 in South Africa. The internal reactionary forces backed by imperialism would like to see the failure of a smooth transition from the hated apartheid system to a democratic South Africa. The Central Committee is confident that the people of South Africa will rally behind the African National Congress to usher in the final stage of ending the hated racist system.

The Central Committee demanded that the US administration end the economic blockade of Cuba and accept the UN general assembly's resolution to this effect.

The Central Committee condemned the vicious repression on the Palestinian protests in the occupied territories against the gruesome Habron massacre. The Israeli Government is not implementing even the limited terms of the peace agreement with the PLO, and the USA which backed the agreement is openly supporting Israelis in their intransigent stance.

The Central Committee condemned the continuing US efforts to intimidate Iraq. The incident of US fighter planes shooting down their own helicopters in the "no fly zone", resulting in the killing of 20 people, shows the constant threat to Iraq by these military measures.

Note on Political Developments*

Adopted by The Central Committee of
The CPI(M) in its Meeting Held in
Hyderabad on April 12-15, 1994

INTERNATIONAL

U.S. imperialism continues to mount pressure on the socialist countries. In the recent period its main target has been the DPRK. Despite progress in talks between U.S. and North Korea in February, the Clinton administration has used the pretext of North Korean obstruction to inspection of nuclear facilities in one laboratory to escalate the confrontation. In a major provocation the USA announced resumption of the "Team Spirit" joint military exercises with South Korea. It is also dispatching Patriot missiles to be stationed in South Korea. The North Korean Government has denounced these aggressive steps and warned of the danger of war breaking out in the Korean peninsula.

Due to the refusal of China to condemn North Korea, the U.S. and its allies have been unable to get the UN Security Council to legitimise its aggressive steps or to call for sanctions.

Despite the General Assembly calling for an end to the economic embargo against Cuba, the U.S. continues its blockade of Cuba to try to subvert the socialist system. The Clinton administration has sought to pressurise China on "human rights" with the usual threat of not renewing its Most Favoured Nation status. During the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, China firmly told the U.S. administration not to dictate on issues concerning its internal affairs.

In the advanced capitalist countries while there are some signs of a slow recovery in the USA from the prolonged recession, in Germany and Japan the economic slow down continues and all

*Published as a booklet

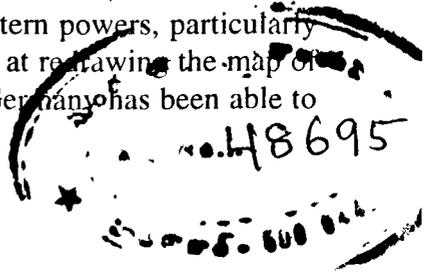
measures to stimulate the economy have not yielded results yet. The results of the Italian elections show that the Left alliance, though gaining overall support fell short of majority. The Left did well in the central region. South is traditionally rightists' base. In the north the bulk of the Christian democratic voters shifted to the right-wing combination. Though the right-wing has won the elections, the results of the recent elections to the Speaker of the Italian Parliament shows the lack of a clear cut majority. Like elsewhere, in Europe particularly in Germany and France, the right-wing forces continue to grow making use of the growing popular discontent as a result of the continuing recessionary trend.

The continuing recessionary trends in the advanced capitalist countries are setting in motion newer expressions of inter imperialist rivalries on the economic front. The three main centres of USA, integrated Europe with Germany as its core and Japan continue to conflict with each other's interests in order to improve their economic recovery relatively

In Russia, after the elections to Parliament, the reverses suffered by the right-wing reformers has visibly weakened Yeltsin's political authority. The new Parliament declared an amnesty for all those arrested after the savage assault on the old Parliament and the earlier leaders of the August 1991 takeover attempt. Despite Yeltsin's opposition, the leaders of the erstwhile Parliament have been freed. The Communists in the last Parliament elections came first or second in 72 out of the 89 constituencies where elections were held on party lists.

However, the neo-fascist right-wing forces backed by imperialism are trying to channel the popular discontent on nationalist lines.

The civil war conditions in former Yugoslavia continue unabated. The situation in Bosnia, following the NATO sanctions continues to be belligerent. Though the economic sanctions have begun to impose immense hardships on the Serbs, the cessation of the conflict does not appear so far. Western powers, particularly Germany continue to make their efforts at redrawing the map of former Yugoslavia to their advantage. Germany has been able to advance its interests in Croatia.



The crucial elections in South Africa are slated for April 26-28. In the run up to these elections, the Inkatha Zulu leader, Buthelezi and extremist whites have tried their best to disrupt the electoral process. The large-scale violence unleashed by the Inkatha has now forced the Transitional Council to impose a state of emergency in the Natal province. Imperialist forces are trying their best to disrupt the unity of the people and to utilise the consequent discontent to its advantage. There is an upsurge among the masses as seen by the popular rebellion which uprooted the ruler of the Bophuthatswana homeland who was refusing to hold elections. The entire world democratic forces are extending their full support to the ANC for the final transition from the hated racist set-up.

The Israeli-PLO agreement, which aroused great controversy within the Palestinian liberation movement due to the limited concessions, ran into trouble from the outset. It was only natural that in a situation of compromise, many difficulties arise. The Hebron massacre perpetrated by a Zionist fanatic has inflamed the masses in the occupied territories. The Israeli armed forces have shot down scores of protesters. Another agreement between Israel and PLO to station 160 international observers has been arrived at. It is to be seen how the "peace treaty" will be implemented when so little has been provided in the name of Palestinian "self government".

A feature of growing concern is the continued rise of Muslim fundamentalist forces all over the middle east. Even in Algeria which has strong traditions of the democratic revolution, the fundamentalist forces continue to endanger the present set-up. This if it succeeds will also adversely affect have a grave consequence for the struggling Saharawian people under the leadership of Polisario. Though the United Nations has accepted the plan for a referendum in Western Sahara this has not yet been implemented thanks to the efforts to sabotage it by the Moroccan regime and its imperialist mentors.

•• In Somalia the situation continues to remain uncertain.

The recent uprising amongst the indigenous population in Chiapas in Mexico clearly reveals the extent of growing hardships

and discontent. These are the direct result of the policies of economic liberalisation that Mexico was forced to adopt, which got further aggravated after the coming into existence of NAFTA. Though an agreement has now been reached between the Mexican Government and the Emiliano Zapata Liberation Front, this uprising is bound to intensify the struggles of the most oppressed sections of the American continent.

The right-wing forces ARENA have won the elections in El Salvador. As a result of the agreement between the FMLN and the U.S. installed regime in El Salvador last year these elections were held. The FMLN and the Leftist forces retain their base in the liberated areas while in other parts imperialist financed and inspired anti-communist offensive has been whipped up. The war-weary people looking for an opportunity for peace were intimidated and threatened by the right-wing forces. Despite this the FMLN and its allies won 38 out of the 84 seats in the Parliament thus denying the right-wing the crucial 2/3rd majority which is required for any constitutional amendment.

NATIONAL SITUATION

The last meeting of the Central Committee held in December 1993 had reviewed the results of the elections to the six State Assemblies. It had noted that with the electoral setbacks suffered by the BJP and the communal forces, a favourable situation had developed to carry forward the continuing struggle against the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government. The Central Committee had given a call to intensify the all India movement against these policies in the background of the stepped up efforts of the Rao Government to further speed up the liberalisation and privatisation programme. The report adopted by the Central Committee had stated:

“It is essential that the fight against the economic policies launched through the united platform be carried forward after the success of the September 9 Bharat Bandh called by the National Platform of Mass Organisations. Building on the success of this nation-wide protest action, it is necessary now for an intensive

campaign in all parts of the country to rally more sections, particularly the rural masses to gear up for the next phase of the struggle. A nation-wide programme of *jathas* and a rally in Delhi should set the stage for launching the next phase of the struggle. Here again it is the initiative of our Party, the Left forces and the mass organisations which must be commonly pooled for taking the struggle against the economic policy to new heights.”

It is in keeping with this approach that the Left parties gave a call for a countrywide joint campaign in the months of February and March in the form of conducting *jathas* within the states and the holding of state level rallies. This intensive campaign would also support and supplement the call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations for a march to Parliament on April 5. The rallies conducted during this campaign have provided a big fillip to the ongoing movement against the economic policies. Lakhs of people have participated in the joint rallies held at Vijayawada, Bhopal, Calcutta, Bombay, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneshwar, Bangalore, Thanjavur, Agartala and Guwahati. Preceding these rallies there were state level *jathas* in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Kerala, Karnatak, Orissa, Tripura, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

April 5 Rally

The rally of April 5 galvanised the atmosphere in opposition to the new economic policies and the provisions of GATT. At our initiative, despite the harvesting season, there was a large turn out. The bulk of the mobilisation came from the peasantry and the agricultural labour. A noteworthy feature was the large participation of women. The march to Parliament defied the ban on the procession and the use of Boat Club grounds. The militant defiance in the face of police repression has given a fillip to the ongoing struggle. The campaign conducted by the Party jointly with other Left forces has now got to be carried forward. The Left parties met on April 7 and decided to launch a nationwide civil disobedience movement in August-September, 1994. The process of enrolling volunteers must begin immediately. The target being at least one million. Our Party should take the initiative once

again to make this programme a success. This civil disobedience movement must be made successful in a big way exposing the difficulties people are facing as a result of the new economic policies and GATT. While the bulk of the activity will come from non-working class mass organisations, the trade unions will move synchronising their solidarity during this period. The enrolment of the volunteers will begin from the May day, whose observation must highlight the ruling class offensive through these policies. In the concrete working out of the details of this programmes at the state level, local issues, affecting the toiling people should be incorporated.

The initiative taken by the Party and the Left unitedly in mobilizing for the next phase of the struggle against the economic policies has been very timely and appropriate. The Narasimha Rao Government is signing the final act of the GATT treaty on April 15 at Morocco. By doing so it has bartered away India's sovereign decision making powers in vital spheres of the economy. Despite widespread opposition and protests, the Rao Government which has completely tied itself to the IMF World Bank dictated path has betrayed the country. The debate in Parliament on the GATT treaty has exposed the felonious arguments being trotted out by the Rao Government to justify signing the treaty.

The surrender on the GATT treaty is a logical corollary of the new economic policies which is eroding the country's economic sovereignty. The Rao Government has one further ahead on the disastrous path of opening up to imperialist finance capital and pampering the big bourgeoisie.

Preceding the Union Budget, the Rao Government callously announced a series of administered price hikes. The prices of sugar, wheat, rice, petrol and diesel were sharply increased in quick succession adding to an extra burden of Rs. 4,000 crore on the people. Following this the Railway Budget has added another Rs. 1,000 crore in the name of passenger and freight fare increases. Alongwith this Rs. 5,000 crore onslaught on the common people, the Union Budget has given further liberal concessions to the rich. Corporate taxes have been lowered. The various direct and

indirect tax concessions of Rs. 4,081 crore will end up enriching the pockets of the affluent. On the other hand, the budget proposals have cut the subsidies on food and fertilisers from the revised estimate of the previous budget by Rs. 1,800 crore.

The changes in excise and import duties have been so done as to benefit foreign finance capital and adversely affect certain sectors of the domestic industry. The worst affected are the small and tiny sectors and vital industries like steel. The future of small scale sector which catered to the needs of a large section and employed lakhs is seriously threatened. Another retrograde feature of the budget is that there is a further squeeze on the State Governments finances. Administered price hikes, instead of increase in shareable taxes, deprives the states of their share. The budgetary support for plan outlays for the states has been actually reduced. Further the state governments will have to bear the brunt of the increased administered prices.

The budget has exposed the tall claims of the Finance Minister with the fiscal deficit reaching an unprecedented figure of Rs. 58,551 crore against the estimated Rs. 36,459 crore which is 7.3 per cent of the GDP. The revenue deficit has gone up to Rs. 34,058 crore against the estimated Rs. 17,630 crore. This indicates that the government has lost control over the economy. The recessionary conditions in industry continues and despite the claims for the budget there are bleak prospects for overall growth of the economy.

The adverse effects of the administered price hikes and the budget proposals are already seen. The inflation rate has gone up sharply and is in double digits. The wholesale price index is now over 10 per cent. This provisional estimate will rise when the final figures are available.

The government is boasting of a substantial foreign exchange reserve of \$ 11 billion. The bulk of this increase is due to the inflow of "hot money" through foreign financial institutions' investment through the stock market which is volatile and can flow out of the country also.

The reactionary impact of the entire economic policy is being savagely felt by the working people. While the government has

retreated from immediately implementing an official exit policy, the drive to close down various public sector concerns or privatise them has been stepped up. Many NTC mills face this threat and thousands of workers will lose their jobs. The government has pushed through bills to privatise the civil aviation sector, open up the banking sector and even the mining industry. All these bills were passed in the current session of Parliament against determined resistance of the Left and secular opposition parties. The relentless onslaught against the public distribution system continues. The recent increase in the issue price of rice and wheat have further damaged the system. In a place like Kerala where the public distribution system is relatively well developed, with the recent increase, the price of rice is more in the fair price shops than the open market. In many tribal areas in the country starvation and hunger related diseases have taken their toll of lives. With the new onslaughts through the changes in excise duties and import duties thousands of workers in small units all over the country are going to be thrown out of jobs.

The sustained efforts by the Left parties, the platform of Mass Organisations and other democratic forces have succeeded to some extent in checking the BJP from diverting the attention of the people into communal channels. The BJP adopts a basic position of supporting the new economic policies. It has brazenly supported the three bills of privatisation which were presented in the Parliament in the budget session. But the BJP also is faced with the pressure from the mass discontent over the economic policies. Despite their initial reluctance, the BJP is now trying cashing in the situation and has come out against the GATT treaty in their recent Hyderabad session. The AIADMK Government in Tamil Nadu has also opposed the treaty. With all the opposition political parties in the field opposing GATT there has been a wider awareness among the rural masses about the dangers of the GATT terms.

This has facilitated the drawing in of the peasantry against the economic policies. The struggle against the economic policies which has begun by the industrial working class has step by step

now encompassed the rural masses. A situation has now come about where both the urban and rural masses can be brought into a single united movement against the disastrous economic policies. The momentum given by the April 5 rally must be carried forward so that this movement becomes the central focus and by drawing in more and more sections of the people into the struggle.

BJP Reiterates Hindutva

The BJP in its recent national executive session in Hyderabad has made it clear that it will continue to communalise its basic platform and continue to take up all the issues like Ayodhya which can rouse communal feelings. The recent RSS *prathinidhi sabha* at Nagpur which preceded the BJP session set out the guidelines for the BJP. Both the BJP and the RSS would like to utilise the GATT and other mass issues to forge broader opposition unity as a way to overcome its present political isolation. While we must utilise the overall atmosphere against the economic policies among the people, we should guard against any attempts to smuggle in the BJP into the common platforms. There is no question of such a common platform as the BJP/RSS aim at disrupting popular unity of common masses through their communal platform thus strengthening the ruling classes. In this connection our Party firmly opposes the views of Chandra Shekhar and George Fernandes who advocate an understanding with the BJP/RSS for a joint movement to defend economic sovereignty.

Learning from past experience, we must, while advancing the movement against the economic policies simultaneously be vigilant to see that the BJP and allied forces do not succeed in renewing communal issues and appeal. Already a series of "*dharam sansads*" have been held by the RSS-BJP. This has culminated in the meeting of the sadhus at Hardwar on April 4. This meeting has given a call for a sadhus yatra from Dussehra to Diwali to demand handing over of the disputed site to the VHP for building a temple. Thus seeking to divert the growing unity amongst the people against the economic policies, once again. The RSS/VHP/BJP/Bajrang Dal will once again try to whip up tensions and strive for a communal polarisation.

On the question of Ayodhya, the Left and the secular forces must continue to demand that the reference under Article 143 to the Supreme Court for an opinion be scrapped. The Mulayam Singh Government has also now taken the stand before the Supreme Court that the current reference be rescinded and all the cases be taken up for a full bench verdict under Article 138(2). This has been the stand taken consistently by our Party and many other forces. In spite of the fact that the minorities are prepared to accept the counter verdict under these conditions, the Rao Government is adopting a dangerous game of trying to build the temple at the disputed site through some Shankaracharyas, thus attempting to reduce the whole dispute to the question of who will build the temple instead of resolving the controversy once and for all through a court verdict that will be binding on all parties.

Supreme Court Judgement on Secularism and Article 356

In the struggle against the communal forces, the recent Supreme Court judgement on the use of Article 356 of the Constitution will have a significant bearing. The judgement has categorically asserted that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution. The nine member Constitution bench has unanimously upheld the dismissal of the three BJP run governments on the grounds that its activities were not secular. The judgement has provided a clear direction that religion and politics cannot be mixed and is impermissible under the Constitution. This directive of the Supreme Court should provide the basis for the government to bring legislation which can enforce separation of religion and politics in all spheres.

At the same time the Supreme Court has also upheld the federal principle. In a landmark judgement, the majority of the judges have held that Article 356 cannot be used merely to dismiss governments belonging to parties other than the one ruling at the Centre. It has stipulated the necessity of Parliamentary approval. It has asserted the right of judicial review of presidential proclamations under Article 356 and the right to examine material

connected with such a decision. The judgement declared the dismissal of the Bommai Government in Karnataka and the non-Congress(I) Governments in Nagaland and Meghalaya as unconstitutional. This judicial directive can be given political weight and authority by popularising and campaigning in defence of the secular basis of the Constitution and also demand that federal principles be strictly abided by the Centre.

KASHMIR

The Narasimha Rao Government has so far failed to utilise the favourable situation after the lifting of the siege of the Hazratbal shrine by moving promptly to address the political problems connected with the Kashmir issue. In the meantime, Pakistan sought to use the UN Human Rights Commission forum by moving a resolution on Kashmir to internationalise the issue. It failed in this effort.

The ruling classes in Pakistan, due to their internal political difficulties are also taking a strident anti-India position in order to divert the attention of the popular discontent domestically. But the Rao Government is under intense pressure from the USA. Prior to the Geneva Conference the Clinton administration has been making hostile statements against India on Kashmir. Recently, when the assistant secretary of state, Robin Raphel visited India, the Rao Government accorded her undue importance not warranted by her official status. The USA is intervening clearly in favour of the creation of an independent Kashmir over which it hopes to have direct influence.

The efforts to pressurise India has heightened with the decision to sell F-16 planes to Pakistan bypassing the Pressler amendment prohibiting such sales to Pakistan. It is essential that patriotic feelings be aroused against the U.S. manoeuvres.

Janata Dal Disarray

In the national political scene, after the assembly elections in certain states last November, the Janata Dal has suffered big

setbacks. After its debacle in Uttar Pradesh, 10 out of 27 MLAs and sizable chunks of the party have joined the Samajwadi Party. The differences in the leadership have also come out in the open and the party has been trying to maintain unity by asking V. P. Singh to become the President of the party. V. P. Singh himself has expressed his reluctance to take up the post and this has created further confusion in the party. In Orissa, Biju Patnaik pursues his own path of supporting the economic policies of the Rao Government. There are differences within the Janata Dal in Karnataka. Among the other National Front partners, the DMK has also split with a sizable section having gone out with V. Gopalaswamy. Only in Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam is meeting with a good response from the people.

A feature that needs to be noted is the growing feeling amongst the oppressed castes particularly the dalits against the exploitation heaped against them. This was reflected in the last elections in U.P. when large sections of these communities came out and voted against the Congress(I) and the BJP. However, caste leaders especially like Kanshi Ram seek to utilise this discontent for their political benefit and prevent the oppressed sections from joining the democratic mainstream. It needs to be reiterated that such an approach will neither improve the conditions of these sections nor advance the democratic movement for social equality and justice. While we openly have to intervene in all instances of high-caste oppression, instances of which have occurred after the last elections in UP, our Party must take the initiative to join these sections in the broad democratic struggles that are taking place. Experience has shown that neither the rights of the minorities can be safeguarded through isolated movements separating them from the general democratic struggles nor can the issues of social justice and struggles against oppression be conducted in isolation from the democratic struggles. Experience of the states where the Left is strong vindicate this. While exposing the motives of the caste leaders, our Party should take the initiative in highlighting the issues concerning the oppressed sections and leading their struggles.

The developments in the U.P. unit of the CPI are indeed unfortunate. Even leaders of the stature of Z. A. Ahmed after decades of communist activity have deserted and joined the Samajwadi Party. Our Party should take the initiative in drawing together the vast mass of the Left support base in the current struggles.

Congress Position

Narasimha Rao have been able to strengthen his position in the post assembly election period. At the national level there is no immediate challenge to his leadership. However, intense factionalism and infighting continues to plague the party in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and other states. Due to this as well, the Congress continues to get weakened. The recent CWC meeting has clearly shown this factionalism as a result of which all pretence of inner party democracy has been given up. All posts are to be filled through nomination by Rao.

In a situation where the secular opposition combination is in disarray, the Congress(I) has moved to take advantage. After the assembly elections, the Congress(I) was able to engineer defections thus making a mockery of the anti-defection law. Ajit Singh along with his MPs joined the Congress and helped it to acquire a narrow majority. After this cynical manoeuvre the Congress(I) has become more impervious to public opinion and brazenly violates democratic norms.

Instances of corruption have reached scandalous heights under the Rao Government. While Bofors continues to remain, the Rao Government has refused to take any action in the biggest corruption scandal since independence, the securities scam. Another scandal which came to light recently involves a list of 42 politicians mostly belonging to the Congress(I) and some leaders of other parties who are reported to have received big sums of money illegally from some hawala dealers. In many countries like Italy and Japan we have seen governments falling due to such scandals. However, in India, the Rao Government continues to unashamedly remain violating the most elementary norms of a democratic polity.

Electoral Reforms

The various evils which undermine the electoral system and the arbitrary functioning of the Chief Election Commissioner highlights the need for urgent electoral reforms. The government must initiate steps to evolve an all-party consensus for the implementation of the recommendations of the Dinesh Goswami Committee on electoral reforms.

The Rao Government must immediately take steps to make the multi-member Election Commission a functional body.

Forthcoming Assembly Elections

The elections to various state assemblies by the end of this year will take place in the background of the serious onslaught of the economic policies on the people by the Congress(I) Government and the continuing threat from the communal forces. It is essential to see that the Congress(I) and the BJP are defeated in these polls. The Left and secular opposition forces should work together in a spirit of mutual accommodation and understanding to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Attacks on Left Stepped Up

Emboldened by its acquiring a majority in the Lok Sabha, the Congress(I) has also targeted the Left for attack. The offensive against the Left in its strongholds by the Congress(I) is because the Left is the only force which can put up determined resistance against the pro-imperialist and pro-monopolist economic policies. With the BJP a silent partner in support, it is only the Left parties which are in the lead of popular resistance. The Congress(I) is adopting an anti-Left posture in order to facilitate imperialist subversion of the economy and for helping a narrow strata of big business.

The Congress(I) leadership has intensified the political attacks on the Left led Government of West Bengal and Tripura and against the CPI(M) in Kerala. In West Bengal, there have been a series of violent agitations with incidents of attack on police personnel. There have been a series of visits by Union Ministers

and top Congress(I) leaders like Sharad Pawar, Jharkhar, Salve and Manmohan Singh who have incited the Congress(I) followers. Sharad Pawar gave a call to throw out the Left Front Government. Every incident of crime in the state is sought to be given a political colour and with the help of a section of the bourgeois press to malign the CPI(M). The Youth Congress leaders went with a memorandum signed by 35 Congress(I) MPs demanding the dismissal of the West Bengal Government.

In Kerala, the Karunakaran Government has taken the unprecedented step of using TADA to detain four CPI(M) cadres in Kannur district. Eight more important leaders have been warranted under this black act. The reason for the use of this repressive act is because the CPI(M) is firmly countering the terror tactics of the RSS in the district. The Congress(I) led Government wants to punish the CPI(M) for fighting the communal forces by using an act which was intended against the foreign backed terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir. There have also been murders of two important CPI(M) cadres in Pallakad district by Congressmen.

In Tripura, the Congress(I) group in the assembly is boycotting the entire budget session. The Congress(I) is raising the bogey of break down of law and order in the state while combining with the TUJS to create violent incidents. The Tripura Governor, Romesh Bhandari is aiding and abetting these actions which are being master minded by Santosh Mohan Deb. The anti-extremist campaign initiated by the Left Front Government has achieved considerable success. While many of the former extremists are surrendering, sections of the Congress(I) are once again trying to hobnob with these elements for its petty political gains. Thus it is once again proving to be a party which does not hesitate to jeopardise national unity for its political gains. It is now known that two groups are operating from across the border trying to create trouble in Tripura as well as the other states of the North East. The Congress(I) instead of tackling this problem is creating obstacles in restoring peace. Our Party is exposing this game amongst the people and rallying them.

Strengthen Left's United Activities

The response to this attack should be to further strengthen the unity of the Left forces. In the present political situation, the rallying of all those affected by the economic policies and the struggle to isolate the communal forces can be carried forward only with the ever expanding intervention of the Left. It must unitedly rebuff the anti-democratic manoeuvres of the Congress(I). The Left must be in the forefront of the struggles against the Congress(I) Government at the Centre and the communal forces. The struggle against the communal forces must be strengthened by rallying all secular opposition forces. This will help in reforging the unity of all the secular and democratic forces to fight back both these dangers. The enthusiasm and impact generated by the big CPI(M)-CPI rallies in Vijayawada and Thanjavur must be taken forward.

CPI(M) Hails Historic Victory of African National Congress*

Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) Issued Statement Dated May 4, 1994 to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) hails the historic victory of the African National Congress in the South African elections. These results mark the end of the hated and universally condemned apartheid regime and herald the process of establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa.

While congratulating the people of South Africa, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) recalls the glorious struggle of the South African people led by the ANC in one of the longest and most bitter of struggles for human dignity and liberty. The South African people have triumphed, thus rekindling the determination for the onward march of humanity.

In this moment of triumph and rejoicing, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) joins the celebration recalling the bonds of solidarity that existed all through the period of struggle between the people's of India and South Africa. The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon all its units to observe 10th of May, the day when Nelson Mandela assumes the office of President of South Africa, as a victory day all over the country.

CPI(M) Opposes Centre's Move on Rajya Sabha*

**Statement Dated May 9, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its strong opposition to the Central Government's proposal to amend the nature of representation in the Rajya Sabha. The government has proposed an amendment to the Representation of People's Act whereby the qualification prescribed for a candidate for the Rajya Sabha that he or she belong to the state concerned by being ordinarily resident there, is to be done away with.

Such an amendment violates the fundamental basis of the Rajya Sabha which is designated as the council of states in the Constitution. The members of this House, unlike the Lok Sabha, should represent the states and not any constituency in the country.

By deleting this vital feature, the federal principle underlying the constitutional arrangement of an Upper House, which represents the states, will be undermined.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all political parties not to tamper with the federal principle and the basic principle of a House of the states for short-term considerations of electing members to the Rajya Sabha somehow or the other.

The Polit Bureau refutes the Press reports that the Left parties have supported such an anti-federal and anti-democratic move. It calls upon the Central Government not to proceed with such legislation.

Homage to Comrade Bijoy Modak*

Comrade Bijoy Modak, a member of the CPI(M) West Bengal state committee and secretary of Hoogly district committee, breathed his last at 7 a.m. on May 9, 1994. Born in 1906, Comrade Modak joined the freedom struggle while still in school. He was associated with the then revolutionary group, Jugantar. During the 1930-32 non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement, he was jailed twice. He joined the Communist Party in 1934 and devoted himself to organising the peasant movement. After independence, he took a leading role in organising the refugees. He also participated in the Tebhaga movement. He was again thrown into jail by the Congress Government in 1949-50. With the formation of the CPI(M), he joined it and since then continued as the secretary of the Hoogly district committee till his death.

He was elected to the West Bengal Assembly in 1957. Subsequently, he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Hoogly constituency for three terms in 1967, 1971, 1977. Then his constituency was changed. He contested and defeated P. C. Sen from Arambagh Lok Sabha constituency.

Truly, he was one of the pioneers of the Communist movement in West Bengal. With his death, West Bengal has lost one of the veterans. The CPI(M) Polit Bureau has also condoled his death and sent the following message to West Bengal comrades:

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep sorrow at the passing away of Comrade Bijoy Modak, veteran leader of the Communist movement of West Bengal and a member of the state

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, May 15, 1994.

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committee of the Party. Comrade Bijoy Modak was one of the pioneering builders of the Communist Party who joined the anti-imperialist movement while a young student. He joined the Party in 1934. Since then, in the past sixty years, he played a leading role in developing the peasant movement. His rich and varied contributions saw him emerge as one of the important leaders of the Party. Having joined the CPI(M) at its inception, he served as the secretary of the Hoogly district committee of the Party till his death.

Comrade Bijoy Modak was a Communist leader who embodied the finest values of a revolutionary. In his death the Communist movement in West Bengal and the country has suffered a big loss. The Polit Bureau pays homage to the memory of this veteran revolutionary.

On BJP's Attitude to Supreme Court Judgement on Secularism*

**Statement Dated May 19, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The BJP leadership has come out against the Supreme Court judgement on secularism and the use of Article 356. The reasons given by the BJP make it amply clear that it is opposed to the court's directive that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution and that mixing of religion and politics is prohibited in a secular state. The BJP has sought to justify its communal platform and its mixing of religion and politics on the Ayodhya issue by stating that the theory of the basic structure of the Constitution cannot apply to political speeches and party documents. This is nothing but a declaration that the BJP will continue to utilise religion for political purposes. By characterising the court's landmark judgement upholding the dismissals of the BJP governments as "a post facto justification to a void action", the BJP has explicitly decided not to delink itself from communal politics.

The legal hair-splitting indulged in by the BJP in rejecting the Supreme Court judgement only exposes its refusal to accept the constitutional definition of secularism. All the talk of the increased misuse of Article 356 due to the court judgement is false as the verdict has simultaneously declared the dismissals of the Karnataka and Meghalaya governments as unconstitutional and provided for judicial review of use of Article 356. All the democratic and secular forces in the country will demand that the Supreme Court judgement has to be the guideline for all future steps to separate religion from politics which harms the secular basis of the Indian state and the Constitution.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 29, 1994.

CPI(M) Criticises BJP's Opposition to Election Reforms Bill*

**Statement Dated May 23, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The BJP leader, A. B. Vajpayee, has expressed his party's opposition to the provision in the Election Reforms Bill which empowers the High Courts to deregister political parties which are found to mix religion with politics. This is one of the amendments proposed to the Representation of People's Act.

The BJP's opposition stems from its refusal to give up the use of religious issues for political purposes based on its *Hindutva* ideology. No secular party can subscribe to this stand. The BJP must realise that such a provision fully conforms to the requirements of a secular state under the Constitution as the recent Supreme Court judgement has authoritatively confirmed.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is also of the opinion that a multi-member commission will strengthen the independent basis and functioning of the Election Commission. However, the CPI(M) is opposed to the mode of appointment of the election commissioners which has been left solely to the government, in the constitutional amendment Bill. The Dinesh Goswami committee's recommendations providing for consultations in such appointments should be followed.

On Prime Minister's U.S. Visit*

Statement Dated May 20, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The stand taken by Prime Minister Narasimha U.S. visit on the question of nuclear non-proliferation rights and Kashmir reflect the vital concerns of the country. These policy positions have been powerfully expressed in opinion and articulated in parliament in response to the international pressure on these issues. The talks with President Bush that America refuses to appreciate India's administration will continue to mount pressure on the Indian government to curb its independent development in missile technology, and this must be resisted.

The Prime Minister has, in his speeches, sought to convey that there is a wide consensus in the country on the economic policies of his government, particularly in the political sphere. The Prime Minister has claimed this, knowing very well that there is no such consensus, in his eagerness to solicit investments by American multinationals. There is major opposition in the country to the new economic policies of the Rao Government and the liberalisation of the GATT treaty, and popular resistance to privatisation is growing.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its strong opposition to the reported decision to enter into military cooperation between the U.S. and India. Such a step would be fraught with dangerous consequences to India's security interests, especially in the light of the administration's decision to supply F-16 fighters to India. U.S. designs are to co-opt India within its security framework, offering a security relationship. The people of India oppose such a plan which will be detrimental to India's

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, May 29, 1994.

Homage To Comrade Erich Honecker*

Statement Dated May 30, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) mourns the death of Erich Honecker, a German Communist leader and one of the builders of the Socialist German Democratic Republic. Born in a working class family, he joined the Communist movement in his youth and played an important role in the anti-fascist struggle. He was a prominent figure in the GDR regime. After the war, Honecker worked for the construction of socialism in the German Democratic Republic and rose to become the general secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and its head of state.

During the dismantling of the GDR, Honecker was persecuted and imprisoned. He was put on trial after being imprisoned. The fabricated charges were a travesty of all legal norms. Living his last days in exile in Chile, Honecker died retaining his staunch commitment to Marxism-Leninism.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) pays homage to his memory. His contributions to the working class movement in Germany and the struggle for socialism will forever be cherished.

Polit Bureau Communique*

Issued Following Its Meeting Held in
New Delhi on June 3-4, 1994

There is no substance whatsoever in the wild speculations in a section of the media that the CPI(M) has given up its well-considered position on electoral reforms after the Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan, met the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu. This was asserted by CPI(M) general secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet, who was addressing a Press conference at the Party headquarters on June 6, 1994 afternoon. On this occasion, he also released the communique of the Party's Polit Bureau that met at New Delhi on June 3-4, 1994.

In fact, it is the other parties, for instance, the BJP which have gone back on their earlier position about a multi-member Election Commission, Surjeet added.

According to the CPI(M) leader, the Party is also opposed to the appointment of Election Commissioners by the government on its own which can only compromise their independence. He wanted that the recommendations of the Dinesh Goswami committee be implemented in this regard. As a minimum, the government must, at least, consult the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to ensure independence of the Election Commission, a vital pillar of Indian democracy.

In reply to a question, Surjeet opined that the earlier arrangement of a multi-member commission did not work precisely because there was no constitutional amendment to define its constitution, the Election Commissioners' powers etc.

The CPI(M) leader also lambasted the government for the strange amendment it has proposed regarding the Rajya Sabha

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, June 12, 1994

and said it attacked the very federal structure of the Constitution. But he welcomed the move to incorporate the Supreme Court ruling on secularism being the basic structure of India's Constitution, in the form of constitutional amendments, so that politics could be delinked from religion.

Regarding the recent by-polls, Surjeet cited concrete facts and figures to establish that the Congress has lost ground in various states. In U.P. and Bihar, it has been relegated to the backyards while in prestigious constituencies like Kurnool and Baramati it has suffered an erosion of votes. It could gain only in Himachal and Madhya Pradesh where its main rival was the BJP and there was no Left and secular alternative available to the people. In Punjab too, its propaganda about restoration of peace did not bring it any benefit while in Guruvayoor its ally, the Muslim League, lost the seat to an LDF-backed candidate though it was a safe seat for the League. In Tamil Nadu and West Bengal too, its performance was worse than the last time. The fact that the BJP won the Meerut parliamentary seat was due to the background of riots there and does not indicate any significant gain for that party which, on the whole, did not fare any better.

Discussing the economic situation, Surjeet lambasted the liberalisation policy of the government which has led to the recent sugar scandal, for instance. It is ridiculous that sugar is now selling at Rs. 18 to 19 a kg in open market while the public distribution system is made to suffer a shortage and sugar magnates are allowed to reap super profits. The continuously galloping inflation, now at the level of 11.09 per cent, also debunks the tall claims made by the proponents of globalisation and liberalisation. Surjeet also quoted the example of Maharashtra where the MNCs have been ensured a 16 per cent profit on their investment in power sector which will only crush the common man under the weight of exorbitant power tariffs.

That is why the Left parties have given a call for civil disobedience movement from August 16 and, Surjeet added, their preparatory campaigns are receiving encouraging response from the toiling masses.

The CPI(M) leader also reiterated his Party's stand on the issue of Tripura Governor's removal and informed about the Polit Bureau's call for observing June 25 as a day of solidarity with Tripura. About Kashmir, he criticised the Centre for not making use, through political initiatives, of the favourable situation arising out of the people's growing abhorance of extremism. He was of the opinion that the Centre must also clearly demarcate between those who want to merge with Pakistan and those who want to protect Kashmiris' identity though under the misguided slogan of an independent Kashmir.

On this occasion, Surjeet also congratulated the Indian scientific-technical community for the successful test firing of Prithvi missile.

The communique issued by the Polit Bureau on this occasion is being reproduced below:

Electoral Reform Bill

The Polit Bureau considered the 82nd Constitution Amendment Bill and the Representation of People (Amendment) Bill being brought before the special session of parliament from June 13. The CPI(M) has been advocating comprehensive electoral reforms. It is in this respect that it has demanded that the Dinesh Goswami committee's recommendations be considered the basis for such reforms. One of the important recommendations of the Dinesh Goswami committee is the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission. The CPI(M) has consistently stood for the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission as a step towards strengthening the functioning of the Election Commission as an independent body. However, in the proposed constitutional amendment, the appointment of the election commissioners has been vested solely with the government.

The Polit Bureau decided that it cannot support an arrangement where the election commissioners are appointed purely at the behest of the government which can detract from their independent constitutional status. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) decided therefore that it will support the Bill for setting up the multi-member commission only if the mode of appointment of the

election commissioners is changed and its independence ensured.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterated its strong and total opposition to the amendment suggested in the Representation of People's Act which changes the nature of representation in the Rajya Sabha. This self-serving proposal is a blatant attack on the federal feature of the Constitution which provides for the Rajya Sabha being the council of states. The existence of such an amendment in the People's Representation Bill is totally unacceptable and therefore the CPI(M) will oppose the Bill if such a clause is included. Deletion of the clause is essential. Another major provision in the Bill for deregistration of political parties by the High Court decision on the grounds of mixing religion with politics is welcome and is in consonance with the recent Supreme Court judgement which defines secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution.

By-Election Results

The Polit Bureau reviewed the results of the by-elections to the eight Lok Sabha and 16 assembly constituencies. The results show the declining influence of the Congress(I). It has won the five Lok Sabha seats which it held previously and has not wrested any seat from the opposition. Even, in the seats that it has won, there is a trend of substantial loss of votes polled. Even, in a prestigious seat like Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, where the Chief Minister Vijay Bhaskar Reddy's son contested and where it misused official machinery, its margin has come down heavily. In Punjab, where it had made the restoration of peace its main election plank, it was only able to win in Nakodar, where too its margin has been reduced from 13,000 to 5,000 as compared to the last elections. In Ajnala, its candidate was defeated by more than 10,000 votes. The Congress party continues to be a diminishing force in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where it has been unable to win any seat and has been relegated to a poor third position. In the south, apart from the loss of support in Kurnool, the party has fared miserably in Tamil Nadu and its ally, the Muslim League, has lost one of its safe seats Guruvayoor to the LDF supported independent. It is only in

Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh where the BJP is the main rival that the Congress(I) has fared well. The Congress has done badly wherever the Left and secular opposition parties have been the main alternative.

The BJP has also done badly. It has not been able to win any seat in Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. It has also lost ground in Uttar Pradesh in the assembly seats while its sole success in the Lok Sabha in Meerut is in an area which has seen communal riots.

The Polit Bureau noted with satisfaction the performance of the Left. The victory in Guruvayoor is an effective blow against the UDF, the Congress(I)'s alliance with communal parties. In West Bengal, the CPI(M) has retained its assembly seat with a bigger margin and the RSP has won the Behrampore Lok Sabha seat. The results have once again exploded the myth of rigging as these elections were declared to be free and fair by the state Congress(I) leadership themselves.

Economic Situation

Sugar Scandal: The Polit Bureau noted that the continuing inflationary spiral and escalating price rise is a direct result of the Union budget proposals for 1994-95. The scandalous way the question of supply of sugar has been dealt with has thoroughly exposed the government. Ministers and bureaucrats are openly squabbling and blaming each other for the mess. The liberalisation policy as applied to the sugar sector has led to drastic fall in supply of sugar to the public distribution system. The absurdly high price of Rs. 18 per kilo of sugar in the open market and its shortage in the public distribution system is a bonanza for sugar mill owners and big traders. All those responsible for this criminal policy must be punished. Immediate steps should be taken to supply at least a million tonnes of sugar through the public distribution system.

The onslaught on jobs in the industrial sector and public sector undertakings continues unabatedly. The policy of encouraging outright closures by private employers and the privatisation of public sector units has already cost the jobs of thousands of workers and employees. Along with the deleterious effects of the GATT

agreement, foreign capital is being allowed indiscriminate entry into all spheres of economic life. The Polit Bureau expressed its strong opposition to the new telecom policy which facilitates privatisation of telephone services.

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Polit Bureau called for full mobilisation by all the Party units to make the forthcoming civil disobedience movement beginning from August 16 a big success. The preparations for the Left parties call for this countrywide movement to fight back the pro-imperialist and harmful economic policies is meeting with a good response. The Polit Bureau, after reviewing the preparatory work, is confident that the target of one million volunteers prepared to go to jail will be exceeded substantially. This movement should mobilise all patriotic and democratic-minded sections who want the protection of India's economic sovereignty.

Kashmir

The Polit Bureau sharply criticised the government of India for its failure to pay serious attention to tackling the Kashmir problem, even while Pakistan is making all efforts to internationalise the issue. It is not making use of the favourable situation arising from the tackling of the Hazratbal crisis as well as the discontent among the people due to the anti-social activities of the extremists. It has failed to make use of the opposition of certain groups which are opposing the Pakistani moves and are advocating independent Kashmir, to protect their identity. The Polit Bureau felt that it is not sufficient merely to reiterate that Kashmir remains part of India. It is also necessary to win the confidence of the people of Kashmir by assuring the protection of their identity on the basis of a political solution. Mere reliance on the security forces to deal with the situation is not going to help in resolving the Kashmir question and restoring peace in the valley.

Tripura

The Polit Bureau condemned the tactics of the Congress(I)-TUIJS combination which are actively trying to widen the gulf between

the tribal and Bengali communities. The CPI(M) has played the key role, over the years, in fostering inter-ethnic unity and communal peace in this sensitive north-eastern state, while the Congress(I) is encouraging chauvinist forces. The TUJS and certain Congress(I) leaders are sponsoring certain tribal extremist groups to launch attacks on the non-tribal people. In the recent period, there have been a spate of killings of CPI(M) workers which shows a premeditated plan.

The situation is being aggravated by the role of the Governor, Romesh Bhandari whose partisan activities are encouraging the disruptive elements in the Congress(I) at the cost of the interests of the state. The Polit Bureau reiterates the demand that the Governor be forthwith removed. The Central Government must provide the state government with adequate paramilitary forces to deal with the extremist groups operating from shelters from across the border.

Observe Solidarity Day

The Polit Bureau decided to call upon all its Party units to observe a day of solidarity with the Tripura Left Front Government to foil the conspiracy to destabilise the situation, for maintaining ethnic unity and in defence of national unity and for removal of Romesh Bhandari from the post of Governor. This day should be observed on June 25.

Successful Test of Prithvi Missile

The Polit Bureau hailed the successful test firing of the surface to surface Prithvi missile in the user trials for induction into the armed forces. This marks an important stage in the self-reliant capabilities of the scientific and technical personnel of the country.

On Government's Policy on Sugar*

**Statement Dated June 2, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The way the Narasimha Rao Government has handled the skyrocketing sugar prices is truly scandalous. While retail sugar prices average Rs. 18 per kilo, putting it beyond the reach of the poor, the ministers and bureaucrats of the Central Government are busy squabbling and blaming each other for the mess.

The loot going on through the escalating sugar prices must be traced to the sugar policy of the GOI which is motivated towards providing super profits to the sugar barons in the name of liberalisation. The supplies to the public distribution system (PDS) have been drastically reduced with the policy of exempting new sugar mills from supplying to the PDS for nine years and systematically reducing levy sugar quotas.

The PDS has to be immediately supplied with one million tonnes more of sugar and strict levy must be imposed on the entire sugar industry including the new units. There has to be penal action against big traders and millowners who hoard stocks.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all its units to organise protest actions to demand curb in sugar price and for easy availability of sugar through the public distribution system.

CPI(M) Condemns Price Hikes*

**Statement Dated June 10, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the increase in urea prices, the central issue price of rice, the issue price in the public distribution system and the de-control of prices of nitrogenous fertilisers. The hike in urea prices and the de-control of prices of nitrogenous fertilisers will put an additional burden of Rs. 1,165 crore on the peasantry. The price hike imposed earlier on fertilisers has already caused a decline in the use of fertilisers which has an immediate bearing on the agricultural production in India.

The increase in the support price of agricultural produce declared by the government cannot reduce the burden put on the peasantry by the price hike of fertilisers as the poor and middle peasantry have very little surplus to sell. These steps will also fuel the hike of foodgrain price in the market which is already very high.

The rise in prices of rice supplied through the public distribution system is another callous attack on the poor.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 19, 1994

On Multi-Member Election Commission*

**Statement Dated June 14, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is unfortunate that the 83rd Constitution Amendment Bill proposing to set up a multi-member Election Commission had to be withdrawn in parliament. The passage of the Bill would have provided the basis for the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission which would have strengthened the independent functioning of the Election Commission. All major political parties have been committed to the formation of such a multi-member commission.

The government accepted the amendment that the appointment of election commissioners would be made on the basis of consultations with a committee of judges. By this, the vital principle that such appointments should not be the sole prerogative of the government would have been established and the independence of the commission ensured.

Some of the political parties which were committed to the Dinesh Goswami committee's recommendations on a multi-member commission have now backed out. The BJP's opposition to the Bill is understandable given their resistance to the package of electoral reforms which includes prohibition of mixing religion with politics. But the CPI's opposition to the provisions of the Bill is inexplicable. It has argued for the primacy of a single CEC contrary to the united stand taken by the Left so far. It has thereby contributed to the scuttling of the consensus of the secular political parties essential for the passage of the Bill.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon all democratic forces concerned about election reforms to continue to strive for the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission on a sound footing which alone can avoid arbitrary functioning and ensure free and fair polls.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 19, 1994.

CPI(M)'s Concern Over Meghalaya Situation*

**Statement Dated June 23, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Shillong, Meghalaya. Tension prevails as the movement for detection of foreigners and their deportation is taking the turn of attacking the non-tribal Indian citizens.

It is necessary that illegal immigrants living in the north-east must not be allowed to do so. However, the Central Government has not been taking the required steps in this direction. This is permitting the rise of chauvinist sentiments that damage the people's unity.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the Central and State Governments take immediate steps to protect the life and property of all Indian citizens in Shillong. Further, the CPI(M) demands that the rights of the tribal population including job reservation must be seriously implemented.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) appeals to the people of Meghalaya not to fall prey to chauvinist passions and uphold peace and amity in the interests of the country's unity and for speedy socio-economic development of the region.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 3, 1994.

On Split in Janata Dal*

Statement Dated June 24, 1994 Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The split which has taken place in the Janata Dal parliamentary group is unfortunate and inopportune. Regrettably, the differences which have emerged do not seem to be based on any basic policy or programmatic matters. The division stemming from inner organisational conflicts, if not resolved, will weaken the secular opposition forces which are cooperating with the Left parties in the struggle against the Congress(I) government's policies and the BJP's communal politics.

While it is for the concerned groups which owe allegiance to the Janata Dal to sort out the current problem, the CPI(M) wishes to emphasise that nothing should be done to destabilise the Janata Dal Government in Bihar. Despite the many failings of the Bihar Government, any move to topple it would be playing into the hands of the Congress(I) and the BJP, both of whom the people of Bihar have decisively rejected.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 3, 1994.

Resolution on Kashmir Situation*

**Adopted by The Central Committee of The CPI(M)
in its Meeting Held on July 4-6, 1994 in New Delhi**

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) expresses its grave concern at the situation in Kashmir.

The recent spate of killings in the valley, by the extremists which included prominent personalities like Qazi Nissar and CPI(M) members have shown that they continue to receive arms and material from across the borders. Many foreign nationals according to reports have also joined their ranks. The people of Kashmir are fed up with such activities. This is evident from the fact that thousands of people demonstrated against the extremists in protest against these killings.

Instead of utilising this situation and the opportunities to evolve a political settlement, the government appears to have no clear cut policy direction. Instead it gives confusing and contradictory signals. The CPI(M) had all along suggested that the Kashmir problem can only be solved through a political approach of safeguarding the Kashmiri identity by granting greater autonomy to the state. The government, however, is treating this as a mere law and order problem and seems to have only one policy, that of using more and more armed forces. The mere reliance on the military will not solve the problem and the CPI(M) demands that the government immediately initiate concrete political measures to rally the Kashmiri people by inviting political leaders and isolate the extremists.

The rising murderous attacks by the extremist elements and the migration of minorities has created a very tense situation in Doda district. It is by now a known fact that the ISI of Pakistan has

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continuously been trying to engineer communal polarisation in this sensitive border state. These anti-Indian designs are bolstered by the U.S. imperialist signals that suggest the trifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir on communal lines. The current events in Doda are part of this anti-India conspiracy. The people of Doda have long traditions of communal harmony and coexistence. What is required today is the unflinching unity of all patriotic forces to strengthen these traditions and defeat this anti-Indian conspiracy. Instead, however, the BJP leadership has chosen to utilise the current events to sharpen the communal polarisation in the state for its political ends. Such a stand is utterly reprehensible.

The CPI(M) appeals to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country to come forward and foil the imperialist efforts to destabilise our country and threaten its unity and integrity.

Homage to Comrade Kim Il Sung*

**Statement Dated July 9, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses deep shock and profound grief at the sudden and inopportune demise of Comrade Kim Il Sung, President of the DPRK and General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea. The CPI(M) Party flags all over the country will be lowered to half mast on Saturday and Sunday as a mark of respect and homage to the great leader Kim Il Sung.

Comrade Kim Il Sung, founder of the Socialist North Korea was born on April 15, 1912 in a poor peasant family. By this time, Korea was already under Japanese occupation. Since his early years, Comrade Kim Il Sung was involved in the anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean people. In 1926 he founded the "Down With Imperialism Union" which unified the various Korean groups fighting against the Japanese. This gave the impetus for evolving a unified anti-Japanese struggle which culminated in the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule.

Simultaneously, Comrade Kim Il Sung also played an important role in unifying the various Communist groups in Korea. The Communist Party of Korea was founded in 1925 but by 1928 it was disbanded. Comrade Kim Il Sung had played an important role in bringing various groups together, a process which had eventually culminated in the formation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

Leading an active underground movement while in occupied Manchuria, Comrade Kim Il Sung was the chief architect of raising the Korean People's Army. In 1934 he joined the Chinese

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, July 17, 1994

Communist Party and was later forced into exile by the Japanese imperialists. Even in exile he continued to organise the Koreans against the Japanese invaders.

No sooner did the people's struggle culminate in the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation in 1945, U.S. imperialism militarily intervened and perpetuated the division of the Korean nation and people. For three full years, the Korean People's Army under Kim Il Sung's leadership had to wage a struggle this time against U.S. imperialism which culminated eventually in the defeat of U.S. army and the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948.

After more than two decades of struggle, first against the Japanese imperialists and then against U.S. imperialism, Comrade Kim Il Sung assumed charge of North Korea to establish a socialist society. North was the least developed part of Korea with very adverse conditions for economic activity. Yet during these four decades, North Korea achieved self-sufficiency in all major aspects and established a society free from the capitalist curse of unemployment, poverty and misery.

While carrying forward the construction of socialist society, the DPRK under Comrade Kim Il Sung's leadership consistently advocated a path of peaceful reunification of the Korean nation and its people. During the recent months Comrade Kim Il Sung was actively leading the Korean people's resistance to U.S. imperialist designs to create a crisis with military implications on the so-called nuclear inspection issue. His death is indeed inopportune in the sense that it has come as the U.S.-Korean talks in resolving this crisis had begun in Geneva and barely two weeks before what was to have been the first ever summit level meeting between the North and the South Presidents. The CPI(M) is confident that the Korean people under the leadership of Kim Jong Il will carry forward this process.

Staunch Marxist-Leninist and Communist revolutionary, Comrade Kim Il Sung adapted the creative science of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of Korean situation. Advocating what is called the Juche idea, he made significant contributions to the Marxist theory, which centre around man as the principal object of social history. This stress on independence

and the creative application of the Marxist science and method in charting out the course of socialist construction in the DPRK is a significant contribution to the international Communist movement. During his nearly seven decades of service to the people, anti-imperialist struggles and socialism, Comrade Kim Il Sung emerged as an important leader of the international Communist movement.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) dips the red flag in homage to this departed leader. It conveys its heartfelt condolences to the Workers' Party of Korea and the entire Korean people.

Central Committee Communique*

**Issued Following its Meeting Held in New Delhi
on July 4-6, 1994**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi between July 4 and 6, 1994. It issued the following statement:

Make Civil Disobedience Movement A Grand Success

The Central Committee discussed the preparations for the forthcoming civil disobedience movement initiated by the Left Parties from August 16 to September 9. Active preparations are on and till now the CPI(M) alone has enrolled over three million volunteers who will participate in this struggle. Earlier, the Left Parties had together targeted a million volunteers to be enrolled for this struggle. This enthusiastic mass response shows the growing popular discontent among the Indian people at the effects of the new economic policy. Inflation continues to increase in double digit rates, unemployment and closure of factories continues unabated while reckless privatisation is looting the country's resources on the one hand and throwing a number of workers on to the streets, on the other. In this situation, the Central Committee decided to intensify the efforts to make this movement a big success and force the Government to retrace these anti-people policies.

The Central Committee decided to extend full support to the call of the national platform of mass organisations for intensifying the struggle against the new economic policies culminating in a nation-wide industrial strike on September 29, 1994.

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, July 17, 1994

Political Developments

The Congress(I) continues to proceed with the implementation of its economic policies unconcerned about the effects that is having on the people. The BJP and the RSS on the other hand have reiterated their resolve to whip up communal passions. This is aimed precisely at disrupting and diverting the ongoing people's struggle against these economic policies. In these circumstances when there is utmost necessity to unite all patriotic and democratic forces against the Congress(I) and the BJP, in the interests of the country and the people, it is indeed unfortunate that the Janata Dal has split. This can only favour the Congress(I) and the BJP. The unscrupulous moves employed by the Congress earlier to engineer defections and institutionalize immorality in politics is there for all to see. The crisis facing the Janata Dal must make its leadership ponder over the fact that what is required is an overall alternative policy framework to strengthen the struggle against the Congress(I) and the BJP and not merely on slogan of social justice.

In this situation, the Central Committee decided that Left unity is of utmost importance in meeting the challenges being faced by the Indian people. Unfortunately, the CPI leadership which backtracked on its earlier stated position over the decades on a multi-member Election Commission has permitted the government to withdraw the bills that would have democratised the functioning of the Election Commission in the interests of strengthening parliamentary democracy in our country. As a result of this, the BJP has got the bonanza of scuttling the provision that would have prevented it from misusing religion for electoral purposes.

Forthcoming Assembly Elections

In the background of these developments, the continuation of the economic policies and the consequent growing discontent amongst the people, the forthcoming assembly elections acquire significance. The Central Committee decided that the foremost objective of the Party would be to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP in these elections. In this task, the Janata Dal and the National Front have an important role to play. The CPI(M) will seek to unite all democratic and secular forces alongwith the Left to

achieve the objective of defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP in these elections.

Kashmir

The Central Committee adopted a separate resolution expressing its grave concern at the Kashmir situation. The CPI(M) had repeatedly demanded of the government that it should take political initiative to safeguard the Kashmiri identity by granting greater autonomy to the state. But instead, the government has been treating the Kashmir issue as a mere law and order problem and thereby compounding the crisis. The BJP utilising the grave situation in Doda is seeking to communalise it for its petty political advantage by demanding declaration of "disturbed area" and thus deepening the conflict in the state.

The situation in many parts of the North-East are also assuming grave proportions which threaten the stability and integrity of our country.

Punjab

It is unfortunate that Prakash Singh Badal, after having demarcated from the extremist Akali positions, has chosen to ally with the communal forces, the BJP. This will have a disastrous consequence for the future of the people of the state. It is the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces alone that can serve the interests of the Punjabi people and the country.

Tripura

The Central Committee reiterated its demand for the removal of Shri Romesh Bhandari as Governor of Tripura. His conduct has been in more in the nature of a Congress(I) activist rather than the Governor of the State. The Congress(I) in the meanwhile continues to engineer strife and tension between the tribals and non-tribals targeting the CPI(M) with murderous attacks. It is this unity on the basis of which stability and normalcy can be maintained in this sensitive border state. Those who seek to disturb this unity act in the interests of anti-national forces. The Central Committee reviewed the observation of the all India Tripura Solidarity Day

call given by the Party and noted the enthusiastic response that it received throughout the country. The Congress(I) and the TUIJS reportedly have decided to boycott the forthcoming panchayat polls. It is clear that being unable to face the people they are seeking to sabotage the democratic process itself.

Party Congress

The 15th Congress of the CPI(M) will be held in Chandigarh in April 1995. The exact dates will be announced by the Polit Bureau later. The Central Committee has decided to start the process of local-level conferences from the 1st of October in preparation for the Party Congress.

On Updating The Party Programme

The Central Committee decided in view of the important and urgent tasks before the Party in the coming months to take up the task of updating the programme after the Party Congress.

The Central Committee hailed the victory of ANC in the recently held South African elections and sent a message of congratulations to President Mandela. After a struggle of epic proportions which continued for a large part of this century, the South African people under the leadership of the ANC, SACP and COSATU alliance has finally dismantled the hated apartheid regime. This success is a source of inspiration for all the peace-loving people across the world who are in the midst of the struggle against domination and for liberation.

Civil war conditions continue in many parts of the world and tension continues to grow. The strife in the former Yugoslavia centering presently around Bosnia continues. The intervention of the imperialist powers particularly Germany in creating this unfortunate situation leading to the merciless killing of thousands of people is there for all to see. In Rawanda and Somalia also the situation continues to remain tense.

PM's Visit To Russia

The Central Committee noted that the recent visit by the Prime Minister to Russia has yielded positive results for strengthening

the relations between the two countries. The common concern expressed in the joint statement on the activities of the fundamentalist forces and the reiteration to maintain the unity and integrity of both the countries which are multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic is a true reflection of the common conditions in both the countries.

Korean Developments

The Central Committee noted that despite all its efforts, U.S. imperialism could not engineer a situation of conflict and tension in the Korean peninsula on the issue of the nuclear inspection of North Korea. It has been obvious for quite some time that this issue was only a cover for intervention against the socialist North Korea. The firm position taken by China has prevented repeating of a situation like the Gulf war that U.S. imperialism had sought to create in the region. The recent proposals of the summit between the North and the South are positive for resolving the issue.

On Updating of Party Programme*

**Resolution Adopted by The Central Committee
of The CPI(M) in Its Meeting Held on July 4-6, 1994**

Important national political developments have taken place which require the immediate intervention of the Party. Therefore the Central Committee has decided to postpone the discussions on the updating of the Party Programme. This has been necessitated due to the urgent task of intensifying the mass movement against the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government. There is also the forthcoming assembly elections in major states where the Party will be engaged in the task of defeating the Congress and the BJP.

Changes in the international and national situation need to be evaluated and the Programme updated. However, since the basic postulates of the Programme concerning the stage of the revolution, the character of the State and class alliance remain valid, there is no difficulty in working out the tactical line of the Party.

The 15th Congress will evolve a suitable mechanism to proceed with the updating of the Programme.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, July 17, 1994.

Report on Political Developments*

**Adopted by the Central Committee of
The CPI(M) in Its Meeting Held on July 4-6, 1994**

INTERNATIONAL

The international situation continues to be complex. Though the USA and its allies are still in a commanding position after the dismantling of the Soviet Union, there is a discernible trend of growing resistance to the U.S. drive for hegemony. The ushering in of an ANC-led government in South Africa, the successful rebuffing by North Korea and China of U.S. pressures are indications of this trend.

Victory in South Africa

The most important and historic development in this period has been the successful conclusion of the first democratic elections in South Africa held in April. This marked the end of the imperialist-backed racist regime. The last minute agreement brought the Inkatha Freedom Party into the election process, averting its boycott call and the threat of large-scale violence. The election saw unprecedented enthusiasm among the people. The African National Congress got 62.6 per cent of the votes, just short of a two-thirds majority. The new interim government of national unity has been sworn in with Nelson Mandela as the President and which includes representatives of the National Party and the Inkatha Party.

The peaceful holding of the election marked the final chapter in the dismantling of the hated apartheid regime which had caused so much suffering and misery for the black people. It marked the successful conclusion of the heroic movement led by the

*Published as a booklet in July 1994

African National Congress for liberation. The liberation struggle was a prolonged one with continuous mass movements and armed struggle. The South African Communist Party played a big role in the national liberation movement as a part of the ANC. It has some of its leading members in the interim government. The new Parliament has set up a Constituent Assembly to frame a new Constitution for which protracted negotiations will take place.

The strong showing of the Inkatha Party in the Kwazulu-Natal province and the concessions given to it will create difficulties for the ANC-led government. There is also the enormous task of ensuring economic justice to the oppressed black masses in a situation where big business backed by imperialism controls the economic levers.

The end of the reactionary racist regime in South Africa will have a positive impact in all of Southern Africa including the erstwhile frontline states like Angola and Mozambique.

North Korea

During this period, the USA stepped up its manoeuvres against the socialist countries; it also failed in its endeavours. The most glaring example is the U.S. attempt to browbeat North Korea on the nuclear issue. After months of intimidatory tactics, the USA moved towards getting the U.N. to impose trade sanctions on North Korea. For this, it mustered the support of its two close allies, Japan and South Korea. Faced with the mounting pressure orchestrated by the USA, North Korea decided to leave the International Atomic Energy Agency after it suspended assistance for the North Korean nuclear programme. With this, the American bluff was called.

China opposed any move for sanctions or the involvement of the U.N. Security Council in the issue. The U.S. draft for an arms embargo resolution for the Security Council saw both China and Russia opposing it. Faced with the failure to use the U.N. for its onslaught on North Korea, the Clinton administration has now been forced to back down specially after the former U.S. President Carter's visit to Pyongyang. The North Korean proposal mooted during this visit for a summit meeting between the Presidents of

North and South Korea to defuse tensions has now been accepted by South Korea. The significance of the U.S. climbdown must be noted.

This was the first time since the Gulf war in 1991 that the USA was not able to get the U.N. Security Council to endorse its punitive action against a country defying its will. The firm stand taken by the D P R. Korea and the support it received from other countries especially China has helped it to rebuff U.S. threats. This assertion by North Korea of its sovereignty and independence is significant in the background of the hegemonistic efforts by U.S. imperialism.

China: MFN Status

The Clinton administration suffered another setback when its much publicized threat to withdraw the Most Favoured Nation status to China backfired. President Clinton had threatened to cancel the MFN status unless China conformed to the U.S. demands for 'human rights' observance. China refused to succumb to the U.S. pressures and finally the Clinton administration was forced to renew the MFN status for China and moreover announce that in future trade and human rights will not be linked. This was a significant victory for a major Third World country which shows that U.S. bullying can be successfully fought back.

Both the North Korean and Chinese examples of successful resistance to U.S. pressures indicates that the hopes of the USA, as the sole superpower, to impose its imperialist domination is not materialising as it wishes. The socialist countries including Cuba are resisting such manoeuvres in a complicated international situation.

As for the economic blockade of Cuba, the recent summit of 21 Latin American heads of states held in Colombia has come out against the continuing U.S. blockade. Following the earlier U.N. General Assembly resolution on the subject, this shows the growing unpopularity and disapproval of the USA's coercive and illegal action.

Resistance to Capitalist Onslaught

In the former socialist countries, the series of elections which have been held in the past few months beginning with Lithuania

and Poland show growing resistance among the people to the severe attacks on their living standards arising from the imposition of the capitalist system. The most striking result has been in Hungary where the Socialist Party, comprising former Communists has won an absolute majority in parliament bagging 209 out of the 380 seats. In Ukraine also, Communist candidates have done well in the elections by bagging 107 seats. The rampant unemployment, dismantling of social services and galloping inflation are making large sections of the people realise what benefits they have been deprived of which were assured to them in the earlier system. The former ruling Communist Parties which changed their names and policies have come to office. The results reflect the opposition to the naked free market policies.

Western Europe

The elections to the European Parliament held in June show a mixed trend. National issues have dominated the voter's choice in Western Europe. The post-Maastricht closer European identity is still a distant goal. The socialist/social democratic parties have lost ground in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. The conservative and right-wing parties have benefited in these countries. But the social democrats overall tally was maintained with the significant gains made by the Labour Party in Britain. While the ruling conservatives lost in Britain, they won in Germany. The socialists lost in France and Spain. In Italy, the former Communists now the social democrats, Party of Democratic Left suffered a serious reverse with its vote coming down to 19.1 per cent from the earlier 27.6 per cent in the 1989 elections, while the Communist Refoundation has managed to maintain its existing number of seats and the percentage of votes polled at 6.1 per cent. Among the Communist Parties in Western Europe, the only gain has been in Spain where the Communists and their allies have increased their percentage of votes to 13.4 per cent from the previous 1989 figure of 6.2 per cent.

The conflicts between the partners of the European Union came out clearly in the election of the new President of the E.C. Britain vetoed the candidature of the Belgian Prime Minister who was

backed by Germany and France. The situation is deadlocked while efforts are on to find an acceptable candidate.

The recovery in the advanced capitalist countries is sluggish and uneven. Both Germany and Japan have been unable to fully reverse the prolonged recessionary spell. While Germany is expected to expand its economy only by 0.9 per cent in 1994, Japan's industrial production fell by 1.3 per cent in the twelve months ending May 1994. The overall slow recovery in Europe is moreover not able to dent the high levels of unemployment. The current period has seen major currency fluctuations and instability in the financial markets. The value of the yen against the dollar rose to its highest level in the post-war period. This, along with the continuing trade dispute, has exacerbated the differences between the major imperialist powers.

The ruling parties and leaders of the governments of many of the advanced capitalist countries are faced with losing credibility and tarnishing of their image among the people. John Major, the British Prime Minister is struggling against odds against the rapid loss of electoral support and a Tory Party badly hit by a series of sex scandals. Similar allegations against U.S. President Clinton have been made. In Japan, the resignation in quick succession of two Prime Ministers heading a rickety coalition has finally led to another opportunist combination between the former socialists and the former ruling LDP. In the background of the economic downturn, the political instability has added to the uncertainties about Japan's recovery.

Civil Wars

Many Third World countries are riven by civil wars. The strife in Somalia continues with no sight of any solution. In Angola, imperialist-backed UNITA continues its activities creating instability. Rwanda has been ravaged by ethnic tribal-based conflict which has led to horrific killings of civilians. A new entrant to civil war is the unified Republic of Yemen. After three years, when North and South Yemen merged, contradictions between the differing perceptions of the Northern and Southern leadership and the growing intrusion of fundamentalist forces in the North has

led to war breaking out and the secession by the Southern leadership. The U.N. did not militarily intervene. Its mediated ceasefire did not hold. The North has won decisive victories and is poised to take over the South. In a reversal of the past alignments, Saudi Arabia is not favourably disposed to the Northern regime.

In Afghanistan, the battle has been raging in and around Kabul by the rival factions of the former alliance to fight the Najibulla regime. The Rabbani-Ahmed Masood faction has succeeded in beating back the forces of Hekmetyar and Dostum. The mindless and internecine warfare is a legacy of the imperialist-backed anti-Communist resistance whose main feature was a backward looking fundamentalism riven by tribal rivalries. The people of Afghanistan as a result are the worst sufferers.

As far as Bosnia is concerned, a ceasefire has been called for a month in June between the Serbs and Muslims. The possibility of a negotiated settlement is appearing following the Russian intervention. It remains to be seen how far this will succeed.

Palestine

After many obstacles and difficult negotiations, the Israeli-PLO agreement to provide Palestinian self-government in Gaza and Jericho reached the stage of implementation. Israeli troops were withdrawn from these two areas and Palestinian police forces have taken charge of law and order. The status of Jerusalem and the violent activities of Israeli settlers in the occupied territories continues to fester and create uncertainties about the smooth implementation of the accord.

Religious Fundamentalist Offensive

In the last C.C. meeting report, we had noted the serious situation in Algeria due to the religious fundamentalist offensive. The armed attacks of the fundamentalist forces continues and there is every danger of the secular state founded by the national liberation struggle being destabilised. In Sudan, Egypt and Turkey, the Islamic religious fundamentalists are stepping up their activities. In Bangladesh, the writings and statements of Tasleema Nasreen are being distorted and used by the religious fundamentalists to launch

a counter-offensive. The rising wave of the religious fundamentalist activities will be used to disrupt the democratic movement and foster authoritarianism. Imperialism is making full use of these trends for dividing and disrupting the growing anti-imperialist consciousness of the masses.

NATIONAL SITUATION

Mounting U.S. Pressures

The recent period saw the intensification of American pressures on India on the eve of Narasimha Rao's visit to the USA. The exposure of the secret talks between the two governments held in London revealed the intense pressure on India to accept curbs on its nuclear and missile technology on a regional basis. During the visit of the U.S. under secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, the Prime Minister agreed to hold the talks on an agenda concerning multilateral negotiations for South Asian regional non-proliferation agreement. After the strong opposition in parliament and the public outcry, the Prime Minister was forced to take a stand resisting the crude pressure for a regional non-proliferation agreement which would cap India's nuclear and missile technology.

The Americans are insistent that the short-range Prithvi missile be not deployed by the Indian armed forces and the further development of the Agni missile be halted. The new U.S. Ambassador appointed for India has reiterated this demand. On the other hand, the Americans are offering to supply F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan and trying to inveigle India into a strategic military cooperation with the USA. Invoking its so-called concern for human rights U.S. imperialism is seeking to interfere in India's internal affairs.

India has been made vulnerable to such pressures concerning its vital security interests because of the growing penetration of imperialist capital and the new economic policies. The theory propagated by the Rao Government that increasing business stakes in India for American companies would help counter the political pressures from the U.S. administration is a dangerous illusion.

More and more penetration of U.S. capital into vital sectors of the Indian economy will only heighten the vulnerability to America's pressures eroding independent foreign policy positions and sovereignty.

The CPI(M) and the Left must take up the issue of imperialist pressures in a big way to the people. The imperialist designs to erode India's sovereignty and for establishing its hegemony over the subcontinent must be countered by rousing anti-imperialist feelings and linking this up to the struggle against the economic policies.

During this period, there have been two positive developments in foreign relations in the background of the mounting U.S. pressures. The Rao Government has continued to pursue the goal of improved relations with China. Various steps on increasing economic and trade relations have been taken. The recent visit of the Prime Minister to Russia has resulted in agreements on defence production and a declaration on common agreement to combat forces of fundamentalism and secessionism which threaten the two multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic states.

Economic Policies

The Narasimha Rao Government, after signing the GATT Agreement despite widespread opposition, is steadily going ahead with the programme of liberalisation and invitation to foreign capital. The new telecom policy announced on the last day of the budget session is a major step marking the privatisation of telephone services. It also has an adverse bearing on India's security interests. This policy which is similar to the power policy will facilitate the large-scale entry of foreign multinationals into a vital infrastructural sector of the economy. This is in line with the World Bank's latest report on India which has criticised the government for not doing enough to invite private investment in telecommunications and oil exploration.

There has been no relaxation in the privatisation drive. The budget session saw the passing of bills for entry of the private sector into civil aviation, mines and minerals and banking. During Narasimha Rao's visit to the United States, strenuous efforts were

made to sell India as an attractive place of investments for the U.S. multinationals.

The indiscriminate opening up to foreign capital has already resulted in adverse effects for the Indian capitalists. Through preferential share allotments, foreign companies have been tightening their grip over the Indian companies by shares being given to them at low prices. The Central Government was forced to announce certain norms for preferential share allotments to prevent the easy takeover of Indian companies by foreign shareholders. Already, there are complaints of dumping of goods in certain sectors due to the lowering of import duty and regulations. Much of the foreign investment coming in is not for industrial development but through foreign financial institutions investing in the share market. There is more foreign capital coming into the share market than for industrial production. Even the much touted figures of direct foreign investment in the industrial sector show that despite the clearances given to many projects nearly 50 per cent of such projects have not yet taken off.

The biggest exposure of the claims for the success of government's policies has been the rising inflation. The double digit inflation is a direct result of the massive administered price hikes and the Union budget proposals. This coupled with the sluggish industrial production is a glaring indictment of the nature of the economic reforms.

Sugar Scandal

The pernicious effects of the policy of liberalisation has been strikingly illustrated in the enormous sugar scandal. The liberalisation policy as applied to the sugar sector has led to a drastic fall in supply of sugar through the public distribution system and a bonanza for the sugar millowners and big traders. The scandal involving ministers of the government has led to the open loot of the people with sugar prices reaching the absurd level of Rs. 18 per kilo. Even though it was clear that there would be a drop in sugar production in this season, no arrangement was made in time. The Food Minister Kalpnath Rai brazenly announced that mill owners have agreed to supply sugar at Rs. 14 per kilo for sale in

the open market at prices between Rs. 14.50 and 15.50. Such concessions to the sugar barons while starving the public distribution system of adequate supplies is the hallmark of the new rapacious economic policy. The open squabbles between the ministers and bureaucrats have exposed the whole corrupt system. The Prime Minister has allowed such a shocking scandal to go on without any intervention. There has to be a high-level enquiry to identify those responsible for the present swindle and to punish them.

The massacre of jobs in industry and the government sector continues apace. Latest statistics show a drop in the employment in the Central Government establishments by 4.6 per cent between 1992 and 1994. By the end of the 8th Five Year Plan, the country will have a backlog of 42 million jobs instead of the 15 to 18 million envisaged in the Eighth Plan.

The IMF/World Bank dictated policies have led to a serious decline in investment in the infrastructural facilities essential for economic development. The latest World Bank report of 1994 has noted this decline in investment in the infrastructure.

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Left Parties have given a call for a massive civil disobedience movement all over the country from August 16 to September 9. The movement should involve the widest sections of the working people both in the rural and urban areas. All Party units and mass organisations must step up the drive for enrollment of volunteers for the *jail bhara* movement. After the success of the April 5 rally, this Left initiated struggle should become the rallying point for all those who wish to defend economic sovereignty and fight back the Rao Government's harmful economic policies.

September 29: General Strike

Apart from the Left Parties civil disobedience movement, the National Platform of Mass Organisations has announced its next phase of the movement against the economic policies. In the convention held at Delhi on June 21, the platform has called for a mass campaign culminating in a general strike and hartal on September 29. All Party units must make the best efforts to make

this strike a success. The months of August and September should, therefore, be a period of continuous mass struggles against the Rao Government's economic policies.

Bye-Election Results

The bye-election results to the 8 Lok Sabha and 16 assembly seats show that the Congress(I) has failed to make any major gains. It has won only those 5 parliament seats which it had earlier held and in most of them the percentage of votes polled have been reduced. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, its plight has worsened. It lost its deposit in the Vaishali parliamentary seat and came a poor third in most of the 6 assembly constituencies in U.P. In Tamil Nadu it lost its deposit in both the assembly seats. In Punjab, it lost the Ajnala seat by over ten thousand votes and retained Nakodar with a substantially reduced margin. Only in M.P. and Himachal has the Congress(I) done well against the BJP. The BJP has got a drubbing in both Himachal and Madhya Pradesh. It could manage to win only the Meerut Lok Sabha seat, an area which had experienced communal riots.

The defeat of the Janata Dal in Vaishali and the election of an independent with strong upper caste backing is a warning to Laloo Prasad Yadav and his party. They should realise that taking up the issue of social justice in a manner that perpetuates caste divisions in the absence of a broader socio-economic programme only leads to sectarian castiest polarisation.

The CPI(M) and the Left have done well in West Bengal and Kerala. The Guruvayoor seat has been won by an independent candidate supported by the LDF defeating the Muslim League which had won this seat in the last four elections. The result is a serious blow against the UDF, the Congress(I)-led alliance which includes communal parties. In West Bengal, the Left Front retained the Behrampore Lok Sabha seat and the Sandeshkali assembly seat. In Sandeshkali, the CPI(M) candidate won polling 60.23 per cent of the votes compared to the 55.03 per cent polled in the previous elections. In the other assembly seat, Srirampur, which was previously held by the Congress(I), the Congress(I) margin of victory has come down by nearly 5,000 votes.

That the mass support for the Left Front remains intact is also seen by the results of the elections to 17 Municipalities and 2 Corporations held on May 15. The Left Front has won nearly 60 per cent of all the total number of seats and 46.5 per cent of the votes polled (excluding the 3 Municipalities in Darjeeling district). In comparison with the 1990 civic polls in these areas, the results show an increase in the percentage of votes polled for the Left Front.

AICC Session

The AICC session at New Delhi was marked by the supremacy of Narasimha Rao's leadership in the party. The session was notable for its lack of any direction or thrust in its political and economic resolutions. The official stand was one of self-satisfaction and complacency, while the discussions showed considerable unrest from the delegates of U.P. and Bihar over the reported decline of the party in these two states. There was no attempt at self-criticism or analysing the causes for the Congress(I) debacle in U.P. and Bihar. There was no specific mention of the Ayodhya dispute while talking of the need to combat communalism; nor was there any attempt to probe the reasons for the loss of Scheduled Caste support in some parts of the country. There were no concrete proposals for addressing the serious Kashmir problem except the pious hope that peace will be restored there in due course just as in Punjab.

The economic resolution signified the party's total acceptance of the new economic policy and the endorsement of all the measures taken so far without any concern for the people's sufferings. In fact, the resolution calls for further dismantling of the public sector by calling for full implementation of the Rangarajan and Goswami Committee's recommendations. Organisational elections have been postponed once again; the Congress(I) Working Committee decided to hold the elections after a year. The Congress(I) President was authorised to nominate the Central Election Committee just as he was earlier asked to nominate the PCC Presidents.

The bitter infighting and squabbles in U.P., Bihar, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Orissa—all present the picture of a Party in organisational disarray. The AICC's placid show of unity could

not cover up the undercurrent of anxiety among Congressmen at the prospect of facing elections in major states within a few months. In Kerala, the squabbling and Karunakaran's manoeuvring on giving the second Rajya Sabha seat to the Muslim League has led to the resignation of Oomen Chandy as Finance Minister who belongs to the Antony group.

Counter-Communal Appeal

The policies of the Rao Government is leading to growing discontent among the people; the crisis of the bourgeois-landlord system is also manifested in the breakdown of social norms and the growing trends of police repression in many areas. The communal forces pose a threat as they seek to exploit this situation and the discontent of the people. The social alienation of the people due to the economic hardships is sought to be catered to by the communal ideology with its false sense of solidarity against an imaginary enemy.

The BJP and its allied outfits are not yet able to rouse communal feelings to a pitch as in 1991. Serious attempts are being made. The VHP will be launching its *yatras* of sadhus during Dussera in October. The agitation for the Ram temple at Ayodhya and for raking up the Mathura and Benaras issues are being planned.

The BJP National Council session at Baroda highlighted the inability of the BJP leadership to come to grips with the failure of its grandiose expectations which were first shattered in the assembly elections in December 1993 and by the decline which continued to manifest itself in the recent bye-elections. The BJP finds the Hindutva platform unable to rally votes as in 1991. The series of issues it has taken up particularly on the economic policies have met with half-hearted response from its ranks and failed to rally the people given its basic pro-liberalisation approach. The BJP supported all the three bills for privatisation in the budget session of Parliament. On the one hand, the Baroda session reiterated its commitment to the Hindutva ideology and talked about projecting "cultural nationalism" which is just a euphemism for majority communalism. Wishing to reap benefit from the growing discontent and mass struggle against the government's

economic policies, the BJP seeks to take up such issues as GATT and Swadeshi and wants to enter the broader opposition camp

Both by continuous struggle to isolate the communal forces and stepping up the struggle against the economic policies these manoeuvres can be checkmated. The BJP's efforts to join the united opposition platforms must be prevented. Similarly, the Party and the Left must stand against the forces of minority communalism which are active in places like Kashmir and the North East.

Casteist Polarisation

A systematic effort is being made to divert the growing awareness of the socially oppressed sections belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes for social justice and equality. This awareness is sought to be channelised in such a manner that it perpetuates cast divisions and weakens the democratic movement. Instead of taking up the concrete issues and organising specific struggles against caste oppression and discrimination, BSP leader Kanshi Ram and some other leaders of bourgeois parties are engaged in creating casteist polarisation for narrow electoral gains which can be utilised by the BJP also. The Left and democratic forces must actively take up the real issues affecting the socially oppressed and integrate it with the wider movement of all oppressed sections belonging to all communities for basic socio-economic transformation.

Janata Dal Split

The last Central Committee meeting in its report had noted the disarray in the Janata Dal. Ten of its U.P. MLAs had joined the Samajwadi Party. The question of the presidentship of the party had not been settled. With the categorical refusal of V.P. Singh to take over the presidentship, the inner organisational conflict and personality clashes led to 14 MPs of the Lok Sabha splitting away. ten of them are from Bihar who belong to the anti-Laloo Yadav group, 3 from U.P. and one from Orissa. They have formed a separate party under the presidentship of George Fernandes.

The crisis and incessant splits in the Janata Dal underline the fact that bourgeois opposition parties relying only on some issues

for immediate electoral appeal and without basing on an alternative programme will not be able to last long. The way the slogan of social justice was reduced to the Mandal issue and a credible and comprehensive socio-economic programme eschewed has contributed to the sharp divisions in the party and splits in the mass base. V.P. Singh has also contributed to the debacle by his refusal to give the lead organisationally at a critical juncture for the party.

The disarray in the secular opposition parties also underscores the necessity for strengthening Left unity and widening its activities. Unity with the secular opposition parties can be forged on issue to issue but only when Left unity and intervention is strengthened in a big way will it be possible to rally these forces more and more in the struggle against the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Electoral Reforms Bills

Our Party has been advocating the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission and other electoral reforms based on the Dinesh Goswami Committee's recommendations. Last year, all the Left Parties, alongwith the other secular opposition parties, had demanded the setting up of a multi-member commission during the monsoon session of parliament. The government, instead of bringing legislation or such a multi-member body, promulgated an ordinance appointing two Election Commissioners. This matter was taken to court by the present CEC and therefore, the multi-member body could not function.

With the consistent demand being voiced for election reforms, the Rao Government brought two bills. The first, a Constitution amendment bill for setting up the multi-member commission and the other, a bill to amend the Representation of People's Act. The Polit Bureau, after studying the two bills, decided that unless two important changes are brought in the bills, it could not support them. Firstly, for the multi-member commission, the mode of appointment had to be changed so that it is not left in the hands of the government solely but through a process of consultation as suggested in the Dinesh Goswami Committee report. Secondly, the CPI(M) strongly opposed the amendment

to change the nature of representation to the Rajya Sabha which would have undermined the constitutional and federal provision for it as the Council of States.

Due to the firm stand taken by the CPI(M), the government made both these changes. Subsequently, due to the pressure mounted by the CPI(M) and the Janata Dal, the government agreed to *not only* consultation with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court but also with two more senior judges. Despite the stand taken by the CPI(M), Forward Bloc and the RSP consistent with the Left position for a *multi-member commission*, the CPI decided to oppose the key clause in the Constitution amendment bill giving voting powers by majority in case of difference among the Election Commissioners. It sought to maintain the overriding powers of the CEC on the plea that Mr. Seshan is ensuring free and fair polls and he is popular among the people. Their real argument was reluctance to be seen as acting against Seshan, which according to them would help the BJP.

CPI's Misguided Stand

The CPI stand of focussing only on one individual detracted from the basic reform necessary to strengthen the Election Commission and its independence. Due to this about-turn by the CPI from its previous stand, the election reform package could not be pushed through parliament as the two-thirds majority in the Rajya Sabha could not be assured without the votes of the CPI.

There is a systematic campaign to project the attempt to form a multi-member commission as a fight between the Congress(I) Government and Mr. Seshan and with the latter being projected as the defender of clean elections. What is not being highlighted by the media is that the Congress(I) Government would have been deprived of making pliant appointments through the consultation process which would have found constitutional sanction. It is due to the misguided stand of the CPI that the bill was scuttled. In the process, the RPA bill was also stalled which included the vital provision for deregistration of political parties for mixing religion with politics. It is only the BJP which has gained from the opportunist stand of the CPI.

The CPI stand at variance with the other Left parties has affected Left unity. However, the CPI(M) will continue its conscious efforts for strengthening Left unity and united intervention of the Left on national issues.

Tripura

The situation in Tripura has deteriorated in the past few weeks with the systematic efforts by the Congress(I)-TUJS to heighten tensions between the Bengali and tribal people. Certain steps taken by the government like the amendment to the land reforms Act for plugging loopholes in the restoration of land alienated from the tribal people are sought to be used to create apprehensions among the Bengali people. The CPI(M) and the Communist movement had played a key role over the years in fostering inter-ethnic unity and communal peace in this sensitive North-Eastern state. The Congress(I)-TUJS are playing the dangerous game of trying to disrupt this unity. The TUJS is sponsoring certain tribal extremist groups to launch attacks on the non-tribal people. The Congress(I), on the other hand, attempts to rouse Bengali chauvinism. The game is to try and create a 1980-like situation when riots took place and with TNV-type killings.

In the recent period, there have been a spate of killings of CPI(M) workers and tribal activists which shows a premeditated plan.

The situation is being aggravated by the role of the Governor, Romesh Bhandari, whose partisan activities are encouraging the Congress(I)/TUJS to undertake such activities which are detrimental to the interests of the state. The Central Government has not provided the minimum paramilitary forces required in order to deal with the violence perpetrated by the extremist groups. All democratic sections must be mobilised to demand the removal of the Governor forthwith and insist that the Centre provide all necessary financial assistance and paramilitary forces to the State Government to meet the situation. The observance of Tripura Solidarity Day on June 25 all over the country was a first step in defence of the Left Front Government

Situation in North-East

In Assam, widespread violence broke out with the attack by Bodo extremist elements on Muslim migrant settlers in Kokhrajra district. More than 30 people were killed in the attacks. This violence is a setback to the possibilities of implementation of the Bodo agreement which has already run into trouble due to the narrow and opportunistic approach of the Saikia Government.

The Supreme Court has upheld the striking down of the Election Commission orders on revision of voters list by the Assam High Court. With this a major threat to the minorities of disenfranchisement has been averted. As per the court's order only those identified as foreigners by the tribunals can be struck off from the voters list.

The activities of the NSCN, the Naga extremist organisation, has been stepped up in the region in the recent period. The Naga-Kuki clashes in Manipur have seen the NSCN spearhead attacks from the Naga side.

The agitation launched by the Khasi Students Union and the Federation of Khasi Jantia and Garo People against citizens from outside Meghalaya residing in Shillong is again threatening to take a violent turn. In the name of driving out foreigners, the chauvinist forces are seeking to create an atmosphere as in 1992 when gruesome attacks took place against the Indian citizens who are not the indigenous people. The agitation which has been launched in June has led to acts of intimidation and assaults on non-tribal people. Both the State Government and the Centre has not acted in a decisive manner to prevent such attacks or to provide security for the people.

It must be emphasised that while foreigners who have infiltrated into Meghalaya from Bangladesh should be detected and deported, there should be no compromise on the right of Indian citizens to live peacefully in the state within the laws and regulations set out for such residence.

The Central Congress(I) Government has totally failed to take a comprehensive approach to the problems of the North-East where priority has to be given for socio-economic development in a planned manner. The tactics of patronising corrupt cliques in power who misuse development funds on a large-scale has deprived the

North-East of the fruits of development which could have checked the alienation of the people from the Indian State. Similarly, the complex ethnic composition and the numerous minorities require a principled approach which assures equal rights and opportunities for the development of the diverse ethnic and cultural identities. The chronic problem of insurgency and separatism is also a standing testimony to the failure of the Indian ruling classes to evolve a democratic nationalities policy.

Jammu & Kashmir

The recent killing of Qazi Nissar, a popular religious leader of Anantnag district, by pro-Pakistan extremists has led to a popular reaction against Pakistan and the fundamentalist forces backed by it. The funeral procession of the Mirwaiz was marked by anti-Pakistan slogans and the demand for severely punishing the culprits. Enraged by the consistent stand our Party took in support of autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir and for national unity, the extremists have started concentrating against our Party and have killed four CPI(M) members in Anantnag district

The popular current among the people is for independence and not accession to Pakistan. Even the Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has acknowledged this in an interview and condemned the demand for independence. As after the Hazratbal mosque episode, the situation is still right for taking the initiative to demarcate the hardcore fundamentalist pro-Pakistan elements from those asserting the identity of the Kashmir people.

There is no progress whatsoever despite further assurance by the Rao Government to tackle the problem of revival of political process through some concrete steps like setting up an advisory committee. Though the people are getting increasingly fed up with the extremist anti-social activities, the sole reliance on administration and police measures will not be able to achieve any breakthrough in isolating the pro-Pakistan elements.

In the meantime, the situation in the Doda district of the Jammu region has further deteriorated with the stepping up of killings by

the extremists who have infiltrated into the forests and hilly terrain. Many of them are Afghan mercenaries. The killing of two BJP leaders and some other Hindus created panic and led to migration of the Hindu families from some villages to Himachal Pradesh. In this area, Muslims and Hindus have been living together peacefully over the years and the attempt by the ISI-backed terrorists is to create a communal divide. The sinister aim is to create a backlash among the majority Hindu community in Jammu so that Jammu and Kashmir can be permanently divided. The BJP has seized the opportunity to come out in defence of the Hindus and carry out anti-Muslim propaganda. By whipping up anti-Muslim feelings, and demanding that Doda be declared a disturbed area, the BJP is playing into the hands of the Pakistan-supported terrorists who also want a permanent communal divide.

The Central Government has criminally neglected to take firm action for the past six months when it was clear that Doda is being targeted by the extremists. By allowing things to drift, communal clashes took place which could have been averted by firm administrative action and adequate deployment of security forces to check the terrorist activities.

Punjab

Even here, despite normalcy being restored, there are no moves for any political settlement. On the Akali Front the coming together of 6 Akali groups under the auspices of the Akal Takht jathedar is a retrograde development. The statement adopted in this merger again talked in terms of a Sikh homeland if a confederation is not achieved. The Badal Akali group which is the main faction has refused to join the imposed merger. Its victory in Ajnala Assembly seat should strengthen its position vis a vis the Amritsar Dal. But Prakash Singh Badal after having demarcated from the extremist Akali positions has started advocating communal programmes and unity with BJP. This will only help the strengthening of the very same forces that he had earlier demarcated from. This will have disastrous consequences for the future of the people of the state. It is the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces alone that can save the interests of the people of Punjab.

Conclusion

The present situation demands that the Left and democratic forces step up their efforts to defend economic sovereignty and fight back the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government that cause price rise, inflation, closure of factories, unemployment, pauperisation of the middle and poor peasantry and growing miseries to the people. The civil disobedience movement beginning from August 15 must be taken up on a priority basis and carried out successfully. The united movement called for by the National Platform of Mass Organisations which will culminate in the general strike on September 29 will follow. Therefore, the months of August and September should be a period of continuous struggles against the Congress(I) government's economic policies.

The CPI(M) and the Left Parties must at the same time ensure that the BJP and the other communal forces do not succeed in disrupting the people's unity or divert attention by raising issues which foment communal passions. Vigilance against the communal designs must accompany the mass mobilisation on economic policies which will guarantee the failure of moves to refocus on divisive issues.

The CPI(M) and the Left Parties should go among the people in a big way to rouse anti-imperialist and patriotic feelings against the continuous U.S. attempts to intimidate India and erode its economic sovereignty. This struggle is integrally connected with the struggle against the economic penetration by imperialist capital facilitated by the new economic policies. An important aspect of the anti-imperialist campaign is the struggle against the divisive forces and the defence of national unity. The Party must advocate a democratic ethnic/nationality policy to combat separatism.

The strengthening of Left unity has utmost importance in the present context. The CPI(M) should sincerely strive to further strengthen and widen Left unity and cooperation with secular opposition parties. In the coming elections to the state assemblies, the CPI(M) should work out tactics to defeat both Congress(I) and BJP by strengthening Left unity and in cooperation with secular opposition parties.

To take up these above tasks successfully, it is necessary to gear up the Party organisation. All the state committees must seriously study the organisational situation and take steps to revitalise the Party units and Party members by involving them fully in the civil disobedience movement. Simultaneously, serious attention should be paid to the functioning of the mass organisations in an independent and democratic manner. Special efforts must be made to see that the persisting weaknesses in expanding and consolidating the mass organisations are tackled without delay.

Polit Bureau on Barpeta Violence*

Statement Dated July 21, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses deep concern at the outbreak of communal clashes between Bodos and Muslims in Barpeta Road and surrounding areas in Assam. Reports indicate that Bodo extremists set fire to villages in which minority settlers live, and this resulted in clashes between the two communities in various places. Though the violence erupted on the evening of July 19, the state administration had not been able to effectively intervene to curb the violence till the afternoon of the 20th. It is feared that many persons have lost their lives or have been injured.

The Assam State Government has shown lack of vigilance and complacency in view of the fact that there have been serious ethnic violences at Kokhraj in May, sparked off by Bodo extremist attacks. Apart from firm measures to curb violence, the state administration should immediately take steps to provide security to the affected people of all communities and ensure sufficient compensation and rehabilitation for those rendered homeless. All secular political forces must unitedly intervene to see that the situation does not worsen.

On Rao Government's Shameless Cover-up*

Statement Dated July 27, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Action Taken Report submitted by the Narasimha Rao Government on the JPC Report on the securities scandal is nothing but a shameless cover-up. The action taken actually amounts to defending all the guilty persons and rejecting the concrete evidence pointed out by the JPC. By refusing to recognise the enormity of the worst corruption scandal since independence, the Rao Government has taken the unprecedented step of rejecting a unanimous report submitted by a Parliamentary Committee in which all parties were represented.

The government has exonerated all the three ministers, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Shankaranand and Rameshwar Thakur, who were indicted in the report. The entire finance ministry which bungled in allowing such a scam is let off the hook. No top officials including the former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India have been proceeded against. The government has adopted a criminal attitude in not taking any strong measures against the four foreign banks found guilty of breaking every law and regulation. The Goldstar case is also being hushed up.

Such a massive cover-up is also motivated by the Rao Government's desire to delink the gigantic corruption from its policy of liberalisation and indiscriminate deregulation.

The outright rejection of the JPC Report and the immoral protection of all those responsible for the public loot of funds is an outrage against the people of this country and gross contempt of Parliament. The Narasimha Rao Government should not be allowed to get away with this brazen stance. Both inside Parliament and outside all democratic forces must firmly assert the principle of accountability and punishment of the guilty. The government must be forced to be accountable to the people and to Parliament.

On U.S. Manipulated Decision on Haiti*

**Statement Dated August 7, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) condemns the U.S. manipulated decision of the U.N. Security Council to invade Haiti ostensibly for the purpose of restoring democracy. While the Polit Bureau deplores the fact of a coup replacing the duly elected government of Haiti by a military junta, the Polit Bureau at the same time emphatically states that it is none of the business of the USA or for that matter any outside country to interfere in the internal affairs of another country. It should be the prerogative of the people of every country to choose its government. The recent decision of the Security Council at the instigation of the USA once again underscores the fact that at present, for all practical purposes, the United Nations and the Security Council have been hijacked by U.S. imperialism.

The Polit Bureau calls upon the people to voice their protest against this thoroughly autocratic way the USA is trying to invade Haiti.

Rise Against This Perfidy*

**Statement Dated August 2, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Rao Government's obduracy and shameless defence of corruption in high places have led to an intractable impasse in the parliament's functioning by forcing the Opposition to quit parliamentary committees and boycott the rest of the parliament session.

The so-called Action Taken Report on the JPC recommendations is a mere white-wash to shield the involved ministers, bureaucrats and the foreign banks. Following a mockery of consultations, the government has refused to accept reason and to punish the guilty who have swindled the nation in one of the biggest frauds in independent India. The contemptuous manner in which the government has treated the unanimous recommendations of the JPC has exposed its irresponsible and cavalier attitude towards the parliamentary committees. The scant respect shown towards these committees left the Opposition parties with no option but to resign from these committees in protest.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) considers the present stand of the government as undermining the very basis of parliamentary institutions and making a travesty of the principle of ministerial accountability. Under these circumstances, the Polit Bureau has decided that the CPI(M) members of parliament will tender their resignations from all parliamentary committees and boycott the rest of the current session.

The Polit Bureau appeals to the people of our country to rise as one-man against the Rao Government's perfidy and stop this loot of public assets being done in the name of the new economic policies. The CPI(M) has decided to take this issue to the people in a big way during the forthcoming civil disobedience movement beginning from August 16, 1994.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 7, 1994.

On BJP's Communal Manoeuvres*

**Statement Dated August 16, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is regrettable that four persons have died in police firing in Hubli town on independence day. This is the result of the confrontation engineered by the BJP which has adopted a provocative stance to communalise a dispute over the Idgah grounds which is now pending before the Supreme Court. For three decades, the issue of the Idgah grounds has been before the courts without any communal colour being given about the use of the property.

It is the BJP which has, since 1992, injected a communal bias and gone in for a confrontation on the lines of the Ayodhya dispute. Such activities of the BJP and the RSS have already created communal tensions in certain parts of Karnataka in the past few years.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the divisive tactics of the BJP which seeks to divert the attention of the people from the serious problems afflicting them and the country. It calls upon all sections of the people of Karnataka to foil such provocative activities and maintain communal peace. The BJP must realise that the people will not tolerate the violence which it has been instigating for communal polarisation.

On Election Commission's Strange Circular*

**Statement Dated August 17, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is surprised at the latest proposal of the Election Commission to have common platforms for political parties and candidates to address public meetings.

The Polit Bureau appreciates the concern expressed by the Election Commission to curb the role of money power that is playing a "pernicious role". However, it finds it strange that the Election Commission has chosen public meetings as the method to curb the use of money power.

In Indian conditions, public meetings are held during the elections at virtually every nook and corner of the country to reach out to the maximum number of the electorate. Putting an end to this practice would mean curbing the rights of the political parties to reach out to the electorate and put forth their views, since the number of people that would attend meetings with common platforms would be determined by the capacity of various parties to bring people from different areas to these common platforms. Moreover, people are mobilised by different political parties on their respective programmes and slogans. This would not be possible on a common platform. Instead of curbing money power, this step may well be utilised by the "privileged few". Only those, with greater resources, can undertake such a task while others would be at a relative disadvantage. Far from curbing the role of money power, this step by the Election Commission will only enhance it.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) would have appreciated if the Election Commission had made some concrete proposals regarding the curbing of expenditure and material including blatant corrupt practices during the election process. Unfortunately, such proposals are not coming forth. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) hence opposes this proposal suggested by the Election Commission contained in its circular of 11-7-1994.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 21, 1994.

Polit Bureau Condemns U.S. Designs Against Cuba*

Statement Dated August 23, 1994 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the punitive measures announced by the U.S. administration against Cuba. Over the past week, the Clinton administration has put a ban on sending of money into Cuba by Cuban emigres and cancelled chartered flights into the country. The U.S. administration was not issuing legal visas to Cuban citizens and encouraging illegal immigrants. Now, reversing this stand, it has announced that USA will not receive any Cuban refugees on its soil but will instead detain them.

All these hostile and provocative steps have now culminated with the threat of a naval blockade by a senior U.S. official. The Clinton administration is now set upon heightening the confrontation with Cuba in order to try and destabilise Cuba's government and internal social system. The economic embargo imposed on Cuba over the years has led to serious difficulties for the Cuban people. The USA is arrogantly trying to subvert the socialist system in Cuba by intensifying the sufferings of the people.

Such intimidation and illegal measures which violate all international norms should not go unchallenged. Public opinion all over the world should condemn this shameless and cynical interference which violates Cuba's independence and sovereignty. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Government of India to unambiguously criticise the U.S. action and ask the Clinton administration to desist from such subversive activities directed against a friendly Third World country. The Polit Bureau calls upon all democratic and anti-imperialist sections in India to unitedly express their solidarity with Cuba and condemn USA's aggressive manoeuvres,

On The Role of V. C. Shukla on ATR Impasse*

**Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of
The CPI(M), Issued a Statement Dated August 18, 1994**

While everybody welcomed the announcement by the presiding officers of both Houses of Parliament, ending the ATR impasse, unfortunately, the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, V. C. Shukla has, in a Press conference addressed by him, issued a provocative statement denigrating both the prestige of parliament as well as the presiding officers. Ignoring the identical statements read out in both Houses of Parliament by the presiding officers, Shukla stated that following discussions with the Opposition leaders on the Action Taken Report and the JPC report, a supplementary report will be prepared. The agreement, as read out by the presiding officers, stated the "points on which the action is not taken, the points on which the action is partly taken and the points on which the objections have been raised by the Opposition shall be reconsidered by the government and revised and modified report on these points shall be submitted by the government to the parliament as early as possible". In the background of such an agreement, V. C. Shukla had no right to negate it by stating that what will be submitted will be but supplementary report. He, in fact, went to the extent of stating that no action would be taken against any minister! Clearly, this is an issue which the government is now bound to reconsider. The CPI(M) and the rest of the Opposition cannot tolerate such statements.

It may be recalled that, earlier, Shukla had tried to sabotage the negotiations between the government and the Opposition parties on the ATR issue. This time too his utterances indicate the same.

If the Rao Government has any respect for such agreements and parliamentary institutions, it should instruct Shukla to keep his tongue tied.

*Published in **PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY**, New Delhi, August 28, 1994.

'ATR' means 'Action Taken Report' Refer Documents under Item Nos. 52 and 54 of this Volume.

Tripura People Congratulated*

**Statement Dated August 29, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau congratulates the people of Tripura for overwhelmingly supporting the Left Front in the panchayat elections just held. The initial results that are just coming in unmistakably show the people's faith in the CPI(M)-led Left Front. Anticipating such a rout in the panchayat elections, the Congress, at the initial stage, was toying with the idea of not participating in the poll at all. In very many places, the Congress was hard put to find any candidate willing to contest the polls on its ticket. Such was the isolation of the Congress from the people at large. In order to cover up such alienation from the people, the leader of the opposition Congress party in the Tripura Assembly has made wild charges of rigging against the CPI(M).

The Polit Bureau condemns the attempts of the Congress goons on the life of the Tripura Education Minister, Anil Sarkar, yesterday when he was on his way back to Agartala after the panchayat elections. Being sure that the Congress will fare miserably in the panchayat elections, now it has started resorting to violence. But violence will not pay as it failed to pay during the five years of semi-fascist rule of the Congress(I) in Tripura.

The Polit Bureau hails the victory as a milestone in the journey of the people of Tripura in, once again, attempting to restructure the panchayat system in the state and to restore to the panchayats the rights and privileges they had enjoyed under the earlier Left Front regime.

CPI(M) on Uttarakhand Issue*

**Statement Dated August 29, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

A big agitation is going on in the Uttarakhand region of Uttar Pradesh on the issue of reservation, spearheaded by students. This agitation has received the support of major political parties. Educational institutions have been closed and people are responding to the calls for bandhs. The agitation started after the announcement by the Uttar Pradesh Government of 27 per cent reservation in educational institutions and jobs in the state. The state government notification also makes it applicable to the hill areas of the state which have remained backward. This agitation is sought to be used by interested forces against reservation for OBCs as a whole, or to advocate a separate state of Uttarakhand. The genuine grievances of the hill people and the mishandling of the agitation by the state government have aggravated the situation. Efforts are also on to pit the people of the hills and the plains against each other.

The CPI(M), from the beginning, has been consistent in its support to the Mandal Commission recommendations and the consequential reservation for OBCs, and this stand remains an essential part to overcome economic and social backwardness for the backward communities. The CPI(M) cannot be a party to any concept which opposes reservation to OBCs. But, in doing so, due consideration has to be given to the concrete situation prevailing in certain specific areas whose population remains as backward as the OBCs. In this context, we have to examine the specific features obtaining in the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh, comprising eight districts now known as Uttarakhand. This area has long been neglected. Neither has agriculture made any advance nor is

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there possibility for industrial growth except in the few areas adjoining the plains. Even the limited development of agriculture requires a heavy capital investment, which is not available with the people, nor is the government providing it. Their conditions are marked by poverty and unemployment. Bulk of the rural population including the educated youth have to migrate to the plains in search of jobs either as house servants or as class IV employees. Landholdings on an average are two bighas per family. Even here, owing to the geographical conditions, it cannot be made productive. Women of the area have to face a very hard life to run the household, facing drudgery.

It is because of the above factors that, in 1962, this area was recognised to be treated as backward area. Therefore, it was decided to grant reservation in professional educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh to students from these areas (four per cent in engineering and six per cent in medical, which is almost equivalent to the population of these areas). When this provision was challenged in the Supreme Court, the court upheld its validity in 1975. Even the Mandal Commission had treated these areas as backward. This, however, is not to deny the existence of affluent sections here. They are numerically small and can be treated separately.

Similarly, the number of OBCs in the hill areas does not exceed two to three per cent of the total population of these areas. While their interests have to be protected, the filling of 27 per cent quota in education and jobs is bound to lead to depriving the people of the hill areas of their meagre opportunities by those who come from outside of these areas to fill up these quotas. The fear is fuelled also by the fact that the ownership of land and other resources is already alienated from the hill people.

Certain political forces are trying to disrupt the unity of the common people of the hills and the plains from a narrow political angle. Their game has to be defeated. The demand of the people of the hill areas to treat them as backward is legitimate. Access to education and jobs should be granted to them within the hill areas on a preferential basis.

The CPI(M) calls upon all sections of the people to maintain their bonds of unity and solidarity. Quotas for jobs and education are limited palliatives in the face of the gross social inequalities perpetrated by an exploitative socio-economic system. The problem of reservation which is of a specific nature in the hill areas should not be mixed up with extraneous issues such as the creation of a separate state.

It is necessary to move towards setting up an autonomous regional council with maximum autonomy for the hill districts to tackle some of the specific problems of the hill areas. This, along with the common struggle to be waged unitedly for economic progress, removal of poverty and class exploitation, is the correct and democratic alternative. It will be in the interest of the hill people to gain maximum autonomy to decide the course of their own development while maintaining wider access to jobs and education in the bigger entity of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

CPI(M) Opposes Foreign Entry into Print Media*

**Statement Dated September 4, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates its strong opposition to the entry of foreign print media into the country to publish newspapers and journals. The sudden announcement by the Congress(I) spokesman of the ruling party's approval of foreign print media operations is a reversal of the long-standing prohibition on foreign print media from 1955. It will open the floodgates for external interference in the country's internal affairs and democratic system which is the concern of India's citizens.

The CPI(M) calls upon the Rao Government to desist from any such step which will have incalculable consequences for India's sovereignty and democratic polity. The Rao Government must consult all sections of public opinion, political parties and intellectual opinion before taking any decision on the matter. Any unilateral step in this regard should be firmly resisted.

CPI(M) Demands Withdrawal of Indian Troops From Somalia*

**Statement Dated September 1, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its grief and sorrow at the killing of three Indian doctors in Somalia.

This killing comes after the death of seven Indian soldiers last week.

The CPI(M) had outrightly opposed India's involvement in the operations in Somalia and reiterates its demand for the immediate withdrawal of the Indian troops from Somalia. The government has to answer to the Indian people as to what our forces are doing in the civil war in Somalia, especially at a time when the American forces are withdrawn from there. Indian people cannot tolerate our government's yielding to U.S. pressures and treating our armed forces as cannon-fodder for U.S. imperialist designs in Somalia or the world over.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

*Published in PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, September 11, 1994

Tripura Gives Fitting Rebuff to Congress(I)*

**Statement Dated September 1, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) salutes the people of Tripura for the unprecedented confidence that they have reposed in the CPI(M) in the recently concluded three-tier panchayat elections. The massive support for the CPI(M) and the Left Front clearly reveals once again the support the CPI(M) receives in this sensitive border state. The Congress(I) should draw proper lessons from this victory and stop hatching various conspiracies to disrupt the unity between the tribals and non-tribals so crucial for stability in the north-east. The people have given a fitting rebuff to the Congress(I) designs of aiding and abetting extremist activities for its petty political gains. The CPI(M) reiterates that, at least, now, the Congress(I) recall the Governor Romesh Bhandari who has been openly functioning as a Congress(I) activist.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to Socialist Republic of Vietnam*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warm fraternal greetings to the people and government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the occasion of the 49th anniversary of their National Day. The CPI(M) recalls the great contribution of Comrade Ho Chi Minh to the cause of Marxism-Leninism and the freedom of Vietnam. It was under his leadership that the millions of Vietnamese people were inspired to join the liberation struggle and make valuable sacrifices for this cause. The conviction and grit with which this liberation struggle first against the French imperialism and subsequently against U.S. imperialism was fought over a time span of several decades, will remain for ever a saga of courage and sacrifice. For such an inspiring leadership, Comrade Ho Chi Minh today occupies a position of pre-eminence in the galaxy of revolutionary leaders of the world. The liberation struggle of the people of Vietnam, fought under the glorious banner of the Vietnamese party, will for ever inspire all the people throughout the world groaning under the jackboot of exploitation and oppression.

Now, for the last few decades the valiant people of Vietnam have been straining their every nerve to rebuild their country and forge the socialist reconstruction of their society ahead. The whole world is looking to Vietnam with bated breath to see the outcome of this equally prolonged struggle for a new society.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) has every reason to be confident that, in this different kind of struggle, Vietnam will come out with flying colours and build a society where people will live in a free atmosphere devoid of exploitation. We wish the people and the Communist Party of Vietnam all success in this endeavour

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, September 11, 1994

CPI(M) Greets Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its greetings to the Workers Party of Korea and through it to the people of Korea on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Forty-six years ago, under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung, the Korean people succeeded in liberating Korea from Japanese occupation after a bitter and prolonged struggle. Within five years, however, the people of Korea were forced into yet another struggle, this time to defeat U.S. imperialist manoeuvres in the Korean peninsula. In this struggle the people of DPRK heroically fought back the imperialist army and foiled its designs to crush the infant socialist state.

Since the success of the revolution, the people of the DPRK under the leadership of the Workers Party of Korea have been striving to build Socialism, basing themselves on the concrete conditions prevailing in Korea, popularly known as the Juche idea.

After 46 years, today, the DPRK has successfully turned a once backward economy into a fast developing socialist economy.

During these four decades however, imperialist manoeuvres have kept Korea divided. Conspiracies and attempts to destabilise the socialist regime in the DPRK by imperialism continue. The DPRK has successfully resisted and foiled all such attempts and machinations by the regime in the South and its imperialist mentors. The success achieved in the negotiations on the nuclear issue is a clear indication of the intentions of the DPRK for peace and stability. The DPRK is currently engaged in a struggle for the

peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. The initiative taken by the DPRK and the proposals put forward by it have received wider acceptance of the world community. We wish the Korean people all success in this struggle.

On this occasion, however, we cannot fail to recall and pay tributes to the contributions made by great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung both to the success of the revolution and in socialist construction in the DPRK. His untimely death has left a deep void.

We are sure that under the leadership of Comrade Kim Jong Il, the DPRK will be able to further consolidate Socialism and defeat the imperialist designs in the region.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) once again conveys its greeting to the Workers Party of Korea and all Korean people on the 46th anniversary of the foundation of the DPRK and wishes them all success.

Solve Ayodhya Dispute Under Art. 138(2) of The Constitution of India*

**Statement Dated September 9, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The CPI(M) has been opposed to the reference to the Supreme Court for an opinion under Article 143 of the Constitution on the Ayodhya dispute. The Party and all other Left and secular opposition forces had wanted that all the cases pending on the Ayodhya dispute be referred to the Supreme Court for a full judicial verdict under Article 138(2).

The Supreme Court, while hearing arguments to decide whether it should accept the reference and give its opinion, has correctly asked the Central Government to state clearly whether its opinion would be binding on the government. The response of the Solicitor General on behalf of the government has been ambiguous by stating that the precise manner in which the government will settle the dispute cannot be said at this juncture, while at the same time stating that it would be in accordance with the opinion of the court.

The Supreme Court felt it necessary to ask the government to commit its stand because the Narasimha Rao Government has been engaged in the dubious exercise of sponsoring a trust consisting of the Shankaracharyas and other religious figures to build a temple at Ayodhya. It is also evident from the Shankaracharyas' statements that the trust will build the temple with the sanctum sanctorum at the disputed site. The Rao Government has been legitimising the stand of the VHP and trying to complete with it to appropriate the temple platform.

By being asked to commit to abide by the opinion of the Supreme Court, the Narasimha Rao Government's manoeuvres to

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, September 18, 1994
Refer Document under Item No. 80 of this Volume

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legitimise the temple construction at the disputed site have been exposed. Even with regard to the reference it has made to the court, it is not prepared to give a categorical assurance that it will abide by the court's opinion.

The present situation once again underlines the necessity of allowing the Supreme Court to go into the entire dispute under Article 138(2) for a judicial verdict which would be binding on all sides.

CPI(M) Congratulates People on Success of Movement*

**Statement Dated September 12, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warmly congratulates the working people of the country who enthusiastically responded to the call of civil disobedience by the Left parties against the new economic policies and the GATT agreement and to safeguard the country's economic sovereignty. According to preliminary reports, the number of volunteers who defied law and were arrested all over the country is over 11.5 lakhs, far exceeding the target of 10 lakhs fixed by the Left parties.

This civil disobedience movement was, by far, the biggest mass mobilisation in Independent India against the hardships being imposed on the toiling people. Invoking the patriotic sentiments of protecting our country's economic independence and self-reliance, lakhs of people, braving torrential rains at places, floods at others, and drought conditions in different parts, came forward and joined the movement in thousands of centres across the country from August 16 to September 9, 1994. The movement took place in every state of the country during this period. Big mobilisations took place in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Bihar and other states. In Kerala alone, 4.46 lakh volunteers were arrested including former Chief Minister E. K. Nayanar and CPI(M) Polit Bureau member V. S. Achuthanandan. Senior leaders of the Party including the General Secretary were arrested in various parts of the country. In Punjab, the volunteers were subjected to brutal lathicharges. Lathicharges also took place in Hyderabad and other places in Andhra Pradesh, in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Haryana,

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 18, 1994.
Refer Document under Appendix (III) of this Volume

Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. Thousands have been detained in jails. The 'jail bharo' call was completely successful as the government had to open many 'camp' jails as regular jails were filled up.

Overcoming the divisive appeals of communalism and caste, which not only disrupt the unity of the people but divert their struggles away from basic issues, lakhs of toiling people joined this movement to safeguard our country's economic sovereignty and uphold its unity and integrity.

The Polit Bureau congratulates the CPI(M) units all over the country, which took the issues of this movement to crores of people across the country resulting in an unprecedented mass mobilisation.

Following the grand success of this civil disobedience movement, the Polit Bureau calls upon all Party units to make the September 20 call of 'Rail Roko' and September 29 (1994) call of a 'nationwide industrial strike' given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations, a bigger success. The Polit Bureau appeals to all patriotic Indians to join in these struggles to defend our country's economic sovereignty.

The Polit Bureau warns the Narasimha Rao Government that unless it reverses this process of undermining our country's sovereignty and self-reliance, the people of our country will not tolerate the growing economic hardships being imposed on them.

Polit Bureau Congratulates Activists of Rail Roko Movement*

**Statement Dated September 21, 1994
Issued to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) congratulates all those who participated in the September 20 Rail Roko movement at the call of the National Platform of Mass Organisations. The widespread picketing of railways in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, U.P. and Kerala paralysed rail services substantially.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all sections of the working people to take forward the struggle against the economic policies of the Rao Government by making the September 29 general strike call by the mass organisations a big success.

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY , New Delhi, September 25 1994
Refer Document under Item No 67 of this Volume.

CPI(M) Opposes Deployment of Indian Troops in Haiti*

**Statement Dated September 15, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The decision of the Indian Government to participate in the United States sponsored invasion of Haiti is shocking. According to the external affairs ministry spokesman, India has expressed willingness to send troops for the second phase of the operation.

This decision has obviously been taken at the behest of the U.S. administration. Just as in Somalia, the U.S. troops will occupy Haiti and then withdraw, leaving it to troops from India and other countries to deal with the internal situation and possible unrest.

The Indian armed forces should not be used as a mercenary force to suit the U.S. global designs. The Rao Government is shamelessly placating the U.S. administration on its Haiti operation when even the U.S. Congress is not convinced of the wisdom of such a step.

The Polit Bureau calls upon the Rao Government to immediately annul its decision on participating in the U.S. action in Haiti. Failure to do so will meet with strong public protests.

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY , New Delhi, September 25, 1994

CPI(M) Denounces New Drug Policy*

**Statement Dated September 16, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly denounces the new drug policy announced by the government as it will lead to unbearable rise in the prices of essential drugs.

The virtual abolition of the price control and the increase in the profitability ceiling for the production of bulk drugs will lead to immediate and massive hikes in the drug prices. It is indeed strange that the government has increased profitability ceiling when, during the last two years, both the profitability and the turnover of the drug industry were higher than that of the rest of the industry.

Except for five drugs the production of all others has been delicensed. Henceforth, therefore, drug production will not be based on the health needs of the Indian people but on the basis of profitability. Such a policy, particularly when epidemics are raging in the country including the resurfacing of plague, will lead to disasters.

As a direct consequence of the terms of the GATT treaty, the government has permitted 51 per cent equity participation for foreign companies and committed to treat them on par with Indian companies. This move will immediately expose the Indian drug industry to the MNC monopolies which would be free to dictate their own prices. This will adversely affect the domestic drug industry which today controls 70 per cent of the Indian market.

These three major steps, put together, are bound to send the prices of drugs soaring. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M), while condemning this move, calls upon the Indian people to unitedly resist this fresh onslaught on their livelihood.

Polit Bureau Communique*

Issued Following Its Meeting Held in
New Delhi on September 14-15, 1994

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warmly congratulated the people who responded enthusiastically to the call of the civil disobedience movement. Surpassing the target of ten lakh volunteers set by the Left parties, over 11.5 lakh volunteers defied the law and were arrested during the movement. At many places, the volunteers were subjected to brutal lathi-charges. This mass response clearly shows the growing discontent among the people at the economic hardships being imposed by the new economic policies. It also demonstrates the patriotic sentiments of the people who are protesting against the bartering away of our country's economic sovereignty.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) has decided to carry forward the struggle against the disastrous effects of these economic policies. It has called upon all the Party units to make the call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations for a nationwide industrial strike and hartal on September 29 a grand success.

The government in the meanwhile, however, continues to brazenly implement its new economic policies imposing greater burdens on the common man. The price of sugar has once again started rising and is bound to reach unprecedented levels before the coming Dussehra and Diwali season begins. The recent decision by the Finance Minister to allow large-scale imports of consumer goods will worsen the domestic recessionary conditions leading to greater unemployment and further hardships.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 25, 1994

On Entry of Foreign Media

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly opposed the move of foreign control of media in India. It is heartening to note that the Indian Newspaper Society has also categorically come out against this move and suggested the banning of any foreign ownership of shares or control of the print media in India. Such a move will only allow the media in the country to be controlled by foreign monopoly sharks and will undermine the very institution of the freedom of the Press.

Stop Joint Military Exercises

Despite growing protests against the joint military exercises with the U.S. armed forces, the Government of India is once again currently engaged in these exercises off India's Western coast.

The Indian Government's decision to send our troops to Somalia and now in a shocking move to Haiti clearly exposes its succumbing to U.S. pressures. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates its demand for the immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from Somalia and annulling the decision to send troops to Haiti.

Forthcoming Assembly Elections

The Polit Bureau discussed the tactics to be pursued by the Party for the forthcoming assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The CPI(M) will work for the unity of all Left, secular and democratic forces to defeat the ruling Congress in these states. In doing so the Party will ensure that the communal forces are not allowed to succeed in their attempt to divert the popular discontent among the masses for their political gains. Preliminary reports indicate that in both these states the combination of Left, democratic and secular forces is gaining popular support.

Election Commission's Threats

The Chief Election Commissioner has once again threatened that no elections will be held in 1995 unless photo identity cards are issued to voters. There is nobody who disagrees with the issuance of such identity cards. But the differences arise on the manner and timeframe of its implementation. The CEC has arbitrarily announced his own time-table without consulting the

Central Government or the State Governments. The Central Government and the State Governments have met several times to work out its mechanics. However, the CEC stubbornly refuses to recognise the actual difficulties being faced by the State Governments. Further, enumeration of the electoral rolls is going on in many states and is to be completed by the 1st of January 1995. The process of issuing photo identity cards can arise only after this enumeration is completed. Otherwise many genuine voters may be deprived of their right to vote. The CEC cannot arrogate to himself the authority to deny the right to vote to any voter. This will only result in hampering the election process and undermining democracy.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) therefore, demands that the government promulgate an ordinance amending the Representation of People's Act in such a manner to as prevent the EC from hampering the election process.

Uttarakhand Agitation

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses grave concern at the ongoing agitation in the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, which has already claimed a number of lives and disrupted normalcy in the region. The CPI(M), while supporting reservations for the OBCs, demands that due consideration has to be given to the concrete situation prevailing in this area, whose population remains extremely backward. In fact, since 1962, the eight hill districts in U.P. were recognised to be treated as backward area; the people of the hill areas to be treated as backward and access in education and jobs should be granted to them within these areas on a preferential basis. It is necessary to set up an autonomous regional council with maximum autonomy for the hill districts to deal with their specific problems. It will be in the interest of the hill people to gain maximum autonomy to decide the course of their own development while maintaining wider access to jobs and education in the bigger entity of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Party Congress

The Polit Bureau discussed the preparations for the 15th Party Congress to be held in Chandigarh in early April 1995. The process of lower level conferences has already begun.

The Central Committee will meet from October 23 to 24, 1994 to finalise the details.

Combat This Menace on War-Footing: Call Given by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) to Resist Outbreak of Plague in Surat*

Statement Dated September 24, 1994 Issued to Press

The outbreak of plague in Surat and the earlier reports of the disease affecting people in Beed district of Maharashtra have caused grave concern. It is surprising that despite the first reports of plague cases in the Marathwada region nearly two weeks ago, neither the state nor the Central Government authorities showed the necessary seriousness and urgency to meet this threat. Even after a number of cases were reported in Surat city, the Gujarat Chief Minister, as late as September 23, was maintaining that it could be a case of viral pneumonia.

Now that cases of pneumonic plague have been confirmed in Surat, it is essential that all the concerned authorities, both at the state and Centre, act in concert to ensure prompt identification of victims and quick treatment and all other necessary measures to prevent an epidemic. The people have to be assured and educated that the disease is curable with prompt treatment. Adequate precautionary measures have to be taken in Gujarat and the neighbouring states. The Gujarat Government and the neighbouring state authorities must also ensure that supplies of antibiotics and other relevant medicines necessary to combat the disease are made available without delay. There should be stern measures taken against those who try to profiteer from the calamity by hoarding and blackmarketing essential drugs.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, October 2, 1994.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to China*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) conveys its warm fraternal greetings to the Chinese people and the Communist Party of China on the 45th anniversary of the triumph of the Chinese Revolution and the foundation of the People's Republic.

Along with the Great October Revolution of 1917 and defeat of fascism in the Second World War, the Chinese Revolution was one of the greatest events of this century. Its triumph galvanised the people's struggle the world over and irreversibly cemented the decolonisation process.

The efforts of the Chinese people under CPC's leadership to build socialism with Chinese characteristics have met with remarkable success in recent years. The high economic growth rates are generating all-round improvement in the living standards of the people. The growing economic strength of China upholding the principles of socialism, is in itself a major contribution to the international Communist movement.

On this significant occasion the CPI(M) wishes the CPC and the Chinese people all success in their endeavours to build socialism in China.

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, October 2, 1994

CPI(M) Condemns U.P. Firing*

**Statement Dated October 3, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the brutal firing by the Uttar Pradesh police on unarmed people at Muzaffarnagar early yesterday morning which left ten persons dead and scores grievously injured. Those fired upon included women and children from the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh who were on their way to Delhi to attend the Uttarakhand rally. The October 2 rally had been announced days in advance and the Delhi administration had given permission to hold it. But the U.P. administration sought to deny the right of the people to proceed for the rally by putting up barricades and preventing them from reaching Delhi. In Muzaffarnagar, thousands of stranded rallyists tried to negotiate with the police to lift the barricades for several hours from midnight till dawn. Instead of allowing them to proceed, the police resorted to unprovoked firing.

The Muzaffarnagar killings are part of the continuing pattern of violence unleashed by the state authorities. Exactly one month ago, several innocent persons were killed in police firing at Khatima on September 1 and Mussoorie on September 2. The State Government is yet to institute a judicial probe into the first two firings. The current agitation in the hills requires a political solution instead of being treated as a law and order problem. The use of repression and violence is only aggravating the situation.

The CPI(M) calls upon both the State and the Central Governments to realise the gravity of the situation and work towards a peaceful solution which can meet the legitimate demands of the hill people.

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 9, 1994

The CPI(M) warns against the disruptive manoeuvres of certain political parties and forces which are trying to exploit the genuine grievances of the people for narrow political gains. It stands by the hill people in their quest for an end to backwardness. The CPI(M) demands that for this purpose these areas be characterised as backward areas, be provided with institutions with maximum autonomy, and vigorous efforts be undertaken to forge development of these areas on an urgent basis.

The CPI(M) expresses deep condolences to the families of those killed in yesterday's firing and demands a thorough judicial enquiry into all three firings as well as compensation for the families of the victims.

CPI(M) on Bangalore Violence*

**Statement Dated October 8, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses serious concern over the violent incidents in Bangalore as a result of which the police opened fire leading to the death of many persons and imposition of curfew in parts of the city.

The Congress Government bears responsibility for these tragic developments. It is clear that the communal forces, particularly the BJP, are utilising the situation to whip up communal frenzy. It is unfortunate that linguistic fanaticism is leading some groups to resort to actions which play into the hands of the communal forces.

The Polit Bureau demands that the Government of Karnataka immediately take necessary steps to prevent aggravation of the tensions. The Polit Bureau appeals to the people of Karnataka not to fall prey to the provocative designs of sinister forces and uphold peace and harmony.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to Third Congress of Workers' Party of Turkey*

The Third Congress of the Workers' Party of Turkey was held from October 14 to 16, 1994 at Ankara. Comrade Sitaram Yechury was to attend it representing CPI(M). But due to the disruption of international flights following the plague outbreak in parts of India, he could not attend. The Central Committee sent the following message:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its fraternal greetings to the Third National Congress of the Workers' Party of Turkey.

This Congress of the Workers' Party of Turkey is taking place in the background of a very complex international situation. In the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the reverse and setback to socialism in the countries of East Europe, U.S. imperialism is accelerating its efforts for global hegemony. The imperialist vision of a 'new world order' is unfolding itself in political, military and economic spheres. These imperialist efforts mean the strengthening of the double exploitation—by the domestic ruling classes and by imperialism—for the people of the developing world. For the CPI(M), in this situation, the urgent task facing the progressive and Communist movement in the world is to toughen the anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world.

It is of utmost necessity in this context to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the Communists and progressives the world over. As opposed to the forecast made by imperialism and its media regarding the demise of socialism and the eternity of capitalism, the Communist movement, drawing

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lessons from past experiences, is regrouping and re-emerging as the most consistent fighter against exploitation. Defence of the socialist ideal and Marxism is of vital importance in this struggle.

The ever declining conditions of the bulk of the people in the capitalist countries and the intensified exploitation establish yet again the validity of Marxism for putting an end to the system based on exploitation of man by man. The struggle to establish an exploitation-free society on the principles of scientific socialism is therefore humanity's future.

The Workers' Party of Turkey has a glorious tradition of struggle and sacrifices. The CPI(M) has been closely observing the struggles being conducted by the Workers' Party, and earlier under the banner of the Socialist Party, which was subsequently banned by the government a few years back. The CPI(M) expresses its solidarity with the working class and other toiling people of Turkey who are in the midst of the battle to end exploitation of man by man and nation by nation.

The CPI(M) is confident that the Workers' Party, with its glorious tradition of anti-imperialist struggles, will continue to strengthen its contribution and be part of this united endeavour.

✽ The Communist Party of India (Marxist) once again conveys its revolutionary greetings to the Workers' Party of Turkey on the occasion of its Third National Congress."

CPI(M) on Government's Dabbling in Religious Matters*

**Statement Dated October 16, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The trust formed by the Shankaracharyas for the construction of the Ram temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya has come about as a result of the sponsorship of the Narasimha Rao Government. This trust intends to take over the job of construction of the temple from the hands of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad controlled body. The Shankaracharyas have repeatedly made it clear that their trust aims at having the sanctum sanctorum at the disputed site where the idols have been kept. They also want the entire land acquired by the Government to be handed over to them. This makes it clear that the aim of the present trust is similar to that of the Visha Hindu Parishad, the only difference being the trustees and the management.

The motives of the Narasimha Rao Government to patronise such a trust are dubious and can prove extremely harmful. It is the same government which has made a reference to the Supreme Court for an opinion under Article 143. The term of this reference is itself defective and it will not be a binding judicial verdict on the dispute. Yet, the Rao Government has not even waited for the Supreme Court's decision before sponsoring a trust composed of religious figures. It is the Rao Government which had also announced that it will form a trust to build the mosque.

The only conclusion that can be drawn is that the Rao Government is bent upon appropriating the temple platform from the VHP by legitimising the VHP's demands which are a challenge to the Constitution and secular values.

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, October 23, 1994 Refer Documents under Item Nos 66 and 80 of this Volume

CPI(M) on Government's Dabbling . . . 155

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the Rao Government disassociate from all moves by any trust or body set up for construction of the temple. The only course open to it is to refer the entire dispute to the Supreme Court for a binding verdict under Article 138(2) of the Constitution. It warns the government to cease dabbling in religious matters in such a manner which will only compromise the state's secular character.

On CEC's Overstepping His Powers*

**Statement Dated October 18, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The order passed by the Chief Election Commissioner warning of possible derecognition of political parties if they fail to constitute their leading bodies as per their party constitutions within four months, is untenable and beyond the powers of the Commission. The Election Symbols Order does not confer the power to the Election Commission to issue any directive about the internal functioning of political parties.

Whatever deficiencies are there in the functioning of political parties as per their constitutions, it is not the job of the Chief Election Commissioner to ensure democratic functioning within the parties. The rectification of defects in inner-party functioning can be judged and acted upon by the members of these parties and by the people who are asked to support these parties.

The CEC has made sweeping charges about the political parties not acting as per their constitutions which is wrong particularly in the case of a party like the CPI(M). The remarks of the CEC displays contempt for political parties which have an essential role to play in a parliamentary democracy.

*Published in PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, October 23, 1994.
'CEC' means 'Chief Election Commissioner'.

CPI(M) Condemns Sri Lankan Assassination*

**Statement Dated October 24, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep shock and strongly condemns the assassination of Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, leader of the United National Party of Sri Lanka and its candidate for the forthcoming presidential elections. Mr. Dissanayake was a key negotiator of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord while a cabinet minister under President Jayawardene.

The murder of this prominent Sri Lankan politician is a brazen attempt to scuttle the peace process initiated by the new government and the talks to be held with LTTE. The Polit Bureau hopes that the people of Sri Lanka of all communities will see through this game and extend their full support for solving the ethnic problem in a peaceful manner.

CPI(M) Hails Supreme Court Verdict on Ayodhya Dispute

**Statement Dated October 24, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) deeply appreciates the Supreme Court's decision not to entertain the reference under Article 143 asking for its opinion on the Ayodhya dispute. By doing so, the Supreme Court has once again taken a principled stand in defence of secularism. The terms of reference framed by the Rao Government for seeking an opinion under Article 143 of the Constitution was itself flawed and motivated. The Supreme Court could not have given any authoritative opinion whether a temple or a Hindu religious structure had existed more than four centuries ago.

The Narasimha Rao Government's action of promoting a trust set up by the Shankaracharyas whose aim is to build a temple at the disputed site, now stands exposed and should be forthwith abandoned.

The Supreme Court has also correctly revived the title deed, suits and legal claims which were extinguished by the land acquisition by the Centre, while asking the Central Government to keep possession of the land. This has opened the way for the Central Government to transfer all the original pending cases before the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court to a Special Bench of the Supreme Court for a full judicial verdict under Article 138(2) of the Constitution. This is the only course open to the Rao Government if it wants to adhere to secular values and the rule of law.

The Polit Bureau also welcomes the Supreme Court's judgement holding Kalyan Singh, former Chief Minister, guilty of gross contempt of Court in allowing construction at the disputed site in July 1992. Though symbolic, the punishment administered is an assertion of defence of secularism and rule of law.

Central Committee Communique*

**Issued Following its Meeting Held in New Delhi on
October 20-23, 1994**

The Supreme Court's decision to reject the government's reference under Article 143 of the Constitution was the second significant verdict in defence of secularism in recent months, the CPI(M) General Secretary Harkishan Singh Surjeet has said. Addressing a Press conference at New Delhi, October 25, 1994 on the recently concluded Central Committee meeting (October 20-23), Surjeet hailed the Supreme Court verdict and said it exposed the anti-secular positions of both the Congress (I) and the BJP. While the Supreme Court verdict (both in this case and in the earlier case on the dismissal of the BJP-led state governments) clearly upheld the principle of secularism as the basis of the Indian Constitution, the Congress(I) sought to portray secularism as equal respect to all religions while compromising with religious forces. The Supreme Court verdict also debunked the BJP's stand that religious issues were above the law. By reviving the title deed, suits and legal claims over the disputed land, the verdict had reaffirmed the legal basis of the Ayodhya dispute. Surjeet also reiterated the CPI(M)'s long-standing demand that the Central Government transfer all the pending cases before the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court to a Special Bench of the Supreme Court for a full judicial verdict under Article 138(2) of the Constitution.

Regarding the situation in Kerala where the ruling UDF was riven with factionalism and charges of corruption, the Central Committee had decided that the Kerala unit of the Party must build a powerful mass movement to remove the coalition, Surjeet said.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 30, 1994.

This Press Communique was released at a Press Conference held in New Delhi on October 25, 1994.

He said the Central Committee had reiterated its stand of not aligning with any communal party. In reply to a question whether the CPI(M) considered Sulaiman Sait's Indian National League a communal party, Surjeet said he had replied that question many times. "It is not for me to say whether it is a communal party or not but for the people to decide whether a party can overnight become secular by just changing its name," he added.

Surjeet also said the Central Committee had discussed the industrial policy statement issued by the West Bengal Government recently and decided that the Polit Bureau should prepare "a document explaining the role the Left Front Government should play in the economic development of West Bengal in the background of the Centre's economic policies and liberalisation".

Answering a spate of queries on this issue, Surjeet said there was no difference of opinion on the issue because the Party was agreed that private sector as well as MNCs were necessary in areas needing sophisticated foreign technology. Surjeet also pointed out that "West Bengal is not an independent state and we are not building socialism there. We are functioning within the capitalist system with extremely limited powers. There is no Soviet Union to help us any longer. But we cannot lag behind other states. Moreover, there has been constant discrimination against West Bengal because of political reasons. Despite the fact that West Bengal has all the facilities for industrial expansion, it has been subjected to gross discrimination". Pointing out that the West Bengal Government's industrial policy statement was a compilation of the statements made by Jyoti Basu over the last few years on the need to rapidly industrialise West Bengal, Surjeet said some questions had been raised within the Party. The Polit Bureau had decided to prepare a document to answer these questions as well as explain the role played by the Left Front Government in West Bengal and what should be done, he said.

Surjeet also reiterated the Party's position on Kashmir, the Uttarakhand agitation, against foreign media entry, against the arbitrary decisions of the Chief Election Commissioner and came out strongly against the nefarious role of the Congress(I) and TUIS in Tripura where as many as 20 CPI(M) comrades had been killed in this month alone.

The Central Committee communique issued on this issue is being reproduced below:

Ayodhya: Dubious Policy

The Central Committee noted that the formation of the trust by the Shankaracharyas has been actively encouraged by the Narasimha Rao Government. The aims of the trust as publicly declared by the Shankaracharyas, is to build the sanctum sanctorum of the temple at the very spot where the idols are kept at the disputed site. Without even waiting for the Supreme Court's decision on the maintainability of the reference under Article 143, the Rao Government has sought to appropriate the platform of the RSS-VHP-BJP combine. This cynical manoeuvre can only legitimise the communal platform and seriously harm secularism.

The Central Committee demanded that the Central Government stop associating with any trust to build the temple at Ayodhya. It must transfer all the original cases and the entire dispute to the Supreme Court under Article 138(2) for a full judicial verdict which will be binding on all sides.

Economic Situation

The Central Committee expressed its serious concern at the continuing increase in prices of essential commodities despite the government's claims of controlling inflation.

The Central Committee criticised the deregulation of banking rates by the RBI. The right of the central bank to fix the prime rate has been abandoned and this will only help the foreign banks operating in India to influence the banking and monetary policies. The expectation that lowering of bank rates will step up investment in the productive sector is also not warranted as the sluggishness in industrial production stems mainly from the lack of demand. The Central Committee opposed the reduction in the interest rate for savings deposits which will affect the small deposits of ordinary people.

The Central Committee noted that the overflowing stocks of foodgrains with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) is a direct result of the attacks on the public distribution system (PDS).

With the continuous hiking of issue prices and the curtailment of the PDS, the offtake of foodgrains has rapidly declined. This is a shocking state of affairs brought about by the new economic policies when millions are unable to get enough food to eat.

The Central Committee reviewed the wide participation in the civil disobedience movement called by the Left parties which saw over 13 lakh volunteers join the court arrest programme. It noted the good response to the September 29 general strike called by the National Platform of Mass Organisations and called for widening and intensifying the protest movement against the economic policies of the Congress(I) Central Government.

Strengthen Public Health System

The Central Committee noted that the public health system proved totally inadequate to meet the menace of the plague which badly affected Gujarat and Maharashtra and spread to other centres. Due to the liberalisation policy, there have been drastic cuts in public health expenditure both at the Central and State level. The Central Committee demanded adequate provision for public health programmes for the control of communicable diseases. The widespread incidents of cerebral malaria in western Rajasthan further underlines the necessity to strengthen the public health system and not rely on privatisation of health services.

Remove Shankaranand

The Central Committee reiterated the demand for the removal of B. Shankaranand, the Union Health Minister from the cabinet in the wake of the CBI's adverse report on his involvement in the illegal diversion of funds of the Oil Industry Development Board. Since the JPC reports finding, it was incumbent on the Prime Minister to remove the minister who has to be held accountable for the corrupt practice.

Assembly Elections

The Central Committee discussed the forthcoming assembly elections to be held in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The Central Committee gave a call to the people of these two states to reject

the Congress(I) which is responsible for policies adverse to the people's interests and which have a record of misrule and corruption for the past five years. The Central Committee called upon the people to vote for the CPI(M) and CPI candidates and other secular opposition parties to defeat the Congress and to thwart the advance of the communal forces.

Kashmir

The Central Committee welcomed the discussions in the national convention held on Kashmir recently. A broad opinion has emerged that it will be counterproductive to hold elections immediately in Jammu and Kashmir as desired by the Central Government without a political package which will help to assure the Kashmiri people of their identity by providing for maximum autonomy. Any election without the people's cooperation will only provide a handle to Pakistan. The Central Committee called upon the Rao Government to immediately come forward with a package of political measures and negotiate without preconditions with all those forces prepared for autonomy before contemplating the holding of elections.

North-East Region

The Central Committee expressed concern at the continuing violence and separatist movements in the north-east. The situation in Manipur, in particular, continues to be serious with the administration unable to check the activities of various tribal armed groups which are indulging in fratricidal violence.

Foreign Media Entry

The Central Committee demanded of the Rao Government that it reiterate the policy, so far implemented, of not allowing foreign media to own or run newspapers in the country. The proposal to allow foreign media ownership and right to operate in the country is totally unacceptable. The print media is a sector which is a vital part of the democratic system and no foreign citizen can enjoy the fundamental rights given in the Constitution to Indian citizens. The entry of foreign media will allow interference in the political system and distort a key opinion making sector of society.

Uttarakhand Agitation

The Central Committee endorsed the stand taken by the Polit Bureau regarding the application of reservation for OBCs in the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh. The State Government should not mechanically apply the reservation policy in the hill districts and must keep in view the backwardness of the region and the special problems of the hill people.

The Central Committee sharply criticised the repressive policy adopted by the Mulayam Singh Government towards the popular agitation in the hill districts. The Central Committee is of the opinion that a negotiated settlement must be there for providing regional autonomy to the eight hill districts with sufficient powers being decentralised to the elected council. This will go a long way in meeting the problems of overcoming the economic backwardness and protecting the cultural identity of the people of the region.

Kerala

The Central Committee noted that the UDF Government is raked by inner dissensions and tarnished by a series of corruption scandals. The inner-party squabbles in the Congress(I) have come out in the open with the demand of 21 MLAs for a change of the Chief Minister. Serious charges of corruption have been levelled against the son of the Chief Minister. The UDF is a house which is collapsing under the weight of its inner contradictions. The Central Committee called upon the people of Kerala to rally around the CPI(M) and the LDF in their struggle to expose the misdeeds of the UDF Government and to build a powerful mass movement to oust the UDF Government. The Central Committee called upon the Kerala unit of the Party to step up its efforts to draw the masses belonging to the minorities into the common struggle against the UDF Government which has compromised their interests. The Central Committee reiterated its stand of not aligning with any communal party.

West Bengal

The Central Committee discussed the industrial policy statement issued by the West Bengal Government. The Central Committee

decided that the Polit Bureau should prepare a document explaining the role the Left Front Government should play in the economic development of West Bengal in the background of the Centre's economic policies and liberalisation.

Tripura

The Central Committee greeted the people of Tripura and the Left Front of Tripura for the big victory of the CPI(M) and the Left parties in the panchayat elections. The Central Committee strongly criticised the Central Government for not cooperating with the state administration by complying with its request for more paramilitary forces to meet the situation created by the armed extremist groups. The Central Committee also condemned the wave of killings of CPI(M) cadres by the armed extremist gangs aided by the Congress(I) and the TUJS.

Election Commission

The Central Committee deplored the stand taken by the Chief Election Commissioner who has sought to dictate to the political parties how to conduct their internal organisational affairs and given an ultimatum of four months to comply with the Commission's directive. While recognising that undemocratic practices prevail in certain political parties it is for the members and sympathisers of these parties to rectify them. The job of the Election Commission is to ensure free and fair elections. The Election Symbols Order cannot be used for widening the powers of the Election Commission in a matter over which the Commission has no jurisdiction.

The Central Committee demanded that the Representation of People's Amendment Bill which now being considered by the Standing Committee of Parliament be taken up in the winter session of Parliament for adoption. This Bill provides for certain steps to reform the election system.

Party Congress Preparations

The Central Committee discussed an outline for preparing the draft political resolution for the 15th Congress of the Party. There was broad agreement on the thrust and direction set out in the

outline. The Central Committee will meet in the last week of December in Calcutta to discuss and finalise the actual draft political resolution before releasing it for inner-party discussions.

The Central Committee finalised the dates of the 15th Party Congress to be held at Chandigarh as April 3-8, 1995

November 7: Observe Twin Anniversaries

The Central Committee called upon all Party units to observe November 7, the anniversary of the October Revolution as a day to declare Socialism and also as a day to observe the 30th anniversary of the 7th Congress of the CPI(M) (the first Congress was held with the formation of CPI(M) in 1964).

CPI(M) on Rao Government's Evading Issues on ATR*

**Statement Dated November 12, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

It is extremely disturbing to note that the government, instead of coming to settle the disputed issues arising out of the Action Taken Report (ATR) submitted to the Parliament, is now trying to go back on its words. The understanding reached between the government and the opposition parties was to submit a revised report to the Parliament, taking into consideration the objections raised by the opposition parties. Instead, the government is now once again resorting to the dubious tactic of evading the issues.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warns the government that unless the substantive issues are settled to the satisfaction of the opposition, differences between the government and the opposition cannot be bridged.

The government must, honouring the principle of accountability, relieve the two indicted ministers from the ministry. Secondly, the government must take stringent actions against the foreign banks responsible for the scam. And thirdly, the government must take legal action against the officials indicted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 20, 1994.
Refer Documents under Items Nos. 52, 54, and 58 of this Volume.

On Karnataka Reservation Act*

Statement Dated November 12, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Supreme Court's order staying the operation of the Karnataka Act of 1994 on reservation has created a difficult situation. The responsibility for such a situation rests solely on the shoulders of the Congress(I) Government in Karnataka. Spurred by sheer opportunism, the Congress(I) Government in Karnataka has been engaged in bringing forward ill-considered and hasty pieces of legislation, capped by the latest act, just on the eve of the current state Assembly elections.

The question of ensuring safeguards for the sections of people who were enjoying certain rights for years together has to be dealt with in a realistic and sober manner. It is obvious that this can be done only after the elections are over, by the new government that will be brought into existence.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 20, 1994.

CPI(M) Demands : Pawar Government Must Resign*

**Statement Dated November 24, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau expresses deep shock and anguish at the death of around 120 adivasis, mostly women and children, due to the stampede¹ caused by the police action outside the Maharashtra state legislature at Nagpur. The adivasi demonstration was being held to demand inclusion in the scheduled tribe category. The ~~and~~ refusal of the ministers to come out and meet the gathering sparked off the trouble. The gruesome tragedy highlights how the adivasi people are treated as less than human beings in the country and denied elementary democratic rights.

The Polit Bureau demands prompt action against those police officers responsible for this tragic incident. Political responsibility lies with the Sharad Pawar Government and its ministers. They should forthwith resign accepting moral responsibility.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 4, 1994.

Homage to Comrade Uddaraju Ramam*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) mourns the passing away of Comrade Uddaraju Ramam, veteran Communist leader of Andhra Pradesh and a prominent kisan leader. He died on November 27 in Hyderabad at the age of 85. Uddaraju Ramam came to prominence in the freedom struggle and participated in the non-cooperation movement in 1930. After making his mark in the independence struggle, he joined the Communist Party in 1934. Since then, Comrade Uddaraju Ramam served the Communist Party with total dedication and played a key role in developing the kisan movement in Andhra Pradesh. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957.

After the split in the Party, Comrade Uddaraju Ramam stood firmly with the CPI(M) and served as a member of the state committee and state secretariat for a long period till ill-health forced him to retire. He also served as the all-India President of the Kisan Sabha.

Comrade Uddaraju Ramam was highly respected for his selfless services to the people and his fine qualities as a patriot and a Communist. The Polit Bureau pays homage to the memory of this revolutionary leader and conveys its heartfelt condolences to his wife, sons and daughters.

Refer Ayodhya Cases Under Article 138(2) of the Constitution of India*

Statement Dated December 6, 1994 Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

December 6, this year, is a reminder of the nefarious deed committed two years ago at Ayodhya of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The issues connected with the Ayodhya dispute and its solution have to be addressed from the standpoint of the secular basis of the state and the Constitution.

The Supreme Court judgement on the presidential reference on Ayodhya has made it clear that the dispute can be resolved by the judicial process. The Narasimha Rao Government, which was toying with the idea of promoting a trust for the construction of a temple at the disputed site, has to draw proper lessons from the Supreme Court's declining to give an opinion as per the reference. The only course open to the government is to refer all the pending cases (now revived by the court decision) for a speedy judicial verdict by invoking Article 138(2) of the Constitution.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 11, 1994.
Refer Documents under Item Nos 66 and 80 of this Volume.

CPI(M) Congratulates Nepal Comrades*

**Statement Dated December 1, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau on Electoral Success and
Formation of Government by
The Communist Party of Nepal (UML)**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) warmly felicitates the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) on the formation of the new government in Nepal with Comrade Manmohan Adhikari as the Prime Minister. The electoral success of the CPN(UML) in emerging as the largest single party in the recent elections is a reflection of the growing aspirations of the Nepalese people for social progress and strengthening national independence.

The Polit Bureau is confident that the new government of Nepal will work towards fulfilling the expectations of the people, strengthen the democratic framework and deepen the close friendly relations between India and Nepal.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 11, 1994.

CPI(M) on CEC's Arbitrary Deadline on Issuance of Voters Identity Cards*

**Statement Dated December 1, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The announcement by the Election Commission extending the so-called deadline for the issuance of identity cards to January 15, 1995 for the six states going to the polls early next year and for the other states to 31st January, does not make either legal or practical sense.

The experience of issuing identity cards in some of the states and Union territories shows that much more time and sufficient care has to be taken to see that identity cards are provided to all citizens in the voters list. The new "deadline" announced by the Election Commission is equally arbitrary considering the fact that the final electoral rolls are going to be published only on 4th January, 1995 in many states. It will be absurd to expect new voters enrolled in the electoral rolls to be provided with identity cards in the space of 10 days.

The Chief Election Commissioner should stop being adamant and cease to give "deadlines" for issuing identity cards. The process of providing all citizens with multipurpose identity cards must be taken up in a more serious fashion with periodical reviews and phased implementation. In this connection, it becomes all the more essential that the proposed amendment to the Representation of People's Act to provide for prior approval of the Central Government for pursuance of identity cards be passed in this winter session of parliament.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, December 11, 1994
Refer Document under Appendix (iv) of this Volume.

On Defeat of Congress(I) in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh*

**Statement Dated December 14, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) congratulates the people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for inflicting an unprecedented defeat on the Congress(I). In both these states, the Congress has never before suffered a defeat of such dimension.

The defeat of the Congress(I) and the election of secular forces reflects the overwhelming rejection of the Congress(I)'s economic policies which are imposing unprecedented hardships on the common people. This also reflects the rejection of the politics of opportunism and rampant corruption indulged in by the Congress both at the state and central levels. Equally important is the people's rejection of the communal forces. The BJP which claimed to be the alternative to the Congress(I) has suffered erosion, losing nearly seven per cent of the votes it polled in the 1991 parliamentary elections in Karnataka and virtually drawing a blank in Andhra Pradesh.

During the last three years, the people have been subjected to vicious hardships as a result of the new economic policies resulting in price rise, dismantling of the public sector, closure of factories, growing unemployment and increasing burdens on the vast mass of the poor peasantry. The compromising attitude taken by the Congress(I) leadership towards the communal forces has also alienated the vast mass of secular and patriotic citizens and the minorities. The obnoxious and rampant corrupt behaviour of Congress(I) leaders and the misuse of the state administration for self-aggrandisement totally ignoring people's welfare has led to such a humiliating defeat.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, December 18, 1994.

On Defeat of Congress(I) in Karnataka 175

The elections have been a referendum rejecting the Prime Minister's policies. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the Congress(I) to draw proper lessons from the popular verdict and reverse the disastrous policies which are, on the one hand, mortgaging the country's economic sovereignty and on the other, imposing hardships on the people. Otherwise, the Congress(I) under the stewardship of the Prime Minister has no right to continue in office.

CPI(M) Demands : Sack Kalpanath Rai*

**Statement Dated December 17, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Gyan Prakash Committee report on the sugar scandal has shown conclusively that the people and the country had to pay a heavy price for the delay in importing sugar. The deliberate delay facilitated huge profits for the sugar barons and importers and corruption in high circles. The Food Minister, Kalpanath Rai, is the main culprit; alongwith the blame is to be shared by other ministers.

However, all the evidence and statements of the ministers and senior officials reveal that the Prime Minister was in the know of the impending sugar shortage and the conflicting stands of his ministers. He did not intervene in time to get a correct decision taken. More damning is the fact that he did not remove the food minister even after the findings of the enquiry he ordered. The question remains why the Prime Minister behaved in this fashion.

The food minister has to be removed forthwith but Prime Minister Narasimha Rao cannot be absolved from responsibility in the matter.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, December 25, 1994.

Rao Government Shielding The Guilty*

**Statement Dated December 23, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The removal of the three Union ministers from the Central Government has come about because of the sustained pressure by the opposition parties and public opinion. The Prime Minister who had earlier shamelessly exonerated the Food Minister, Kalpnath Rai's dubious role in the sugar scandal and refused to take action against Ministers Shankaranand and Rameshwar Thakur indicted in the joint parliamentary report, has now been forced to act.

But this is not sufficient. The Prime Minister cannot absolve himself from responsibility. The Gyan Prakash report does not comprehensively probe the guilty involved in the sugar deal. There has to be full probe conducted by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. As for the Action Taken Report on the securities scandal, the government has brazenly violated the commitment given in parliament by presenting some rehashed sections of the old Action Taken Report. This is totally unacceptable. The government is still trying to shield the guilty and cover up the worst corruption scandal since independence. The Rao Government must be forced to fix responsibility and to implement the recommendations of the JPC and take action against all guilty persons identified in the report. It has to be forced to come up with a revised version of the ATR.

The Congress(I) Government under the Prime Minister has become notorious for shielding corruption in high circles. The struggle to make the government accountable for the misdeeds of people holding public offices and other responsible positions, must be carried forward vigorously.

CPI(M) Central Committee's Homage to Giani Zail Singh*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condoles the death of former President, Giani Zail Singh, on December 25 morning. As is well-known, Gianiji's death came about a four-week-long treatment at PGI Chandigarh following a road accident in Ropar.

Born in village Sandhwan in Faridkot district on May 5, 1916, into a family of artisans turned agriculturists, Gianiji plunged into the state people's movement at a very early age and organised the people against the Maharaja of Faridkot where he set up a branch of the Indian National Congress and, for this suffered five years of solitary confinement in the autocrat's prison. Later, he launched the national flag movement in the princely state in 1946. He first became a minister in the erstwhile PEPSU province and eventually the Chief Minister of Punjab in 1972. In 1980, he became the Minister for Home Affairs in the Union Cabinet and on July 22, 1982 the President of India.

Coming from an ordinary family, Gianiji rose to the highest office of the land. He carried with him the noble traditions of our struggle for independence.

The CPI(M) Central Committee conveys its condolences to Giani Zail Singh's bereaved family members.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 1, 1995.

Rank Opportunism of Congress(I) in Manipur*

**Protest Statement Dated December 23, 1994 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The installation of a Congress(I) ministry headed by Mr. Risheng Keishing in Manipur and the subsequent developments are shocking. The present strength of the Manipur Assembly is 57 and the new Chief Minister needs the support of 29 MLAs to win a vote of confidence. Yesterday, the Speaker of the assembly, defying the Guwahati High Court order, disqualified 23 MLAs and the Governor submitted his resignation over the differences between the Governor and the Central Government over the question of postponement of the trial of strength on the floor of the assembly. Today, the Speaker and 11 MLAs assembled and passed a no-confidence motion against the Keishing ministry.

The rank opportunism of the Congress(I) and the Central Government are solely responsible for these unsavory happenings in Manipur and the rot in the democratic system.

The Polit Bureau demands immediate dissolution of the Manipur Assembly and for holding fresh elections.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to Cuba*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its warm revolutionary greetings to the Socialist Republic of Cuba and the people of Cuba on the 36th anniversary of the triumphant Cuban revolution.

This year too the people of Cuba will mark their anniversary in the background of the heinous U.S. imperialists blockade of their country. For 32 years, the people of Cuba have withstood the heavy hardships imposed on them by this unprecedented and totally uncalled for blockade, aimed at stifling the Cuban revolution and undermining the successful process of the socialist construction of the country. The last five years, in particular, have been extremely difficult, facing Cuba with an unforeseen challenge, when the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union and the East European socialist countries, cut off Cuba from its vital supply of oil and foodstuffs and market for its products, particularly sugar.

The U.S. imperialism, with typical cynicism and callousness, has sought, and is still seeking to utilise these circumstances to paralyse the economy and bring socialist Cuba to its knees. But with an ignorance bred by arrogance, it have failed to understand that all its manoeuvres and flaunting of economic might, far from weakening, has only resulted in strengthening the resolve and ability of the Cuban people to throw back this challenge in their face. The revolution has given a new definition to man and installed in him a sense of pride and patriotism. It is this pride which is the bedrock of the support to the socialist regime.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 1, 1995

With inspired innovation and a readiness to sacrifice, the Cuban people, men, women, youth and the aged, have adapted themselves to the situation and still managed to engineer amazing results—e.g., in medical research where in some fields they lead the world.

But, year by year, American imperialism is finding itself more and more isolated. This was epitomised in the U.N. last November when the General Assembly in effect administered a slap in the face to U.S., when in the vote on the resolution calling on the U.S. to lift the economic embargo against Cuba, the U.S. found only client state Israel, standing by its side, even its G-7 friends were not to be seen. No less than 104 nations voted against, while 48 abstained, clearly indicating where they stood on this matter. Compared to the vote on the same resolution placed in 1993, the sentiment for lifting the embargo has seen a great enhancement.

In fact, many of the advanced but recession-hit capitalist countries are already defying the U.S. and trading with Cuba. Today Cuba has established economic and business links in 98 countries. Only a few months back, a group of 70 Americans deliberately violated U.S. regulations to visit Cuba as a demonstration of their opposition to the Administration's policy vis-a-vis Cuba.

Then, in September of 1994, the U.S. was again cornered when its past policy of encouraging illegal immigration bounded on itself. After 30 years of encouraging Cubans to leave the country illegally, the U.S. government was forced into a commitment of granting 168,000 visas for legal immigration per year. In fact, it granted only 11,000 or roughly 6 per cent of the committed total, over the entire decade; but granted 12,375 visas to illegal immigrants in the last four years.

Forced by the Cuban ultimatum that it would no longer prevent illegal immigration, and overwhelmed by the rash of Cubans trying to reach American shores in July and August, the U.S. finally signed an agreement to accede at least 20,000 legal immigrants every year.

Apart from the climbdown by the U.S., this agreement also proved not only Cuba's willingness to negotiate on a basis of

equality and mutual respect but also that Cuba is not in crisis, and certainly not on the verge of collapse, for no one negotiates, let alone reaches an agreement with a government on the verge of collapse. And secondly, the number of immigrants, leaving because of the extremely difficult economic conditions, is minuscule; there are ten million Cubans who have remained in Cuba, supporting the revolution under very hard material conditions.

And the latest demonstration of Cuba's growing prestige and the international solidarity it enjoys was the presence of the 2,200 delegates hailing from 105 countries at the International Conference of Solidarity with Cuba, in Havana, November 21 to 26, 1994.

While Cuba's struggle today to safeguard socialism is as important as the struggle which triumphed to wrest its independence and establish the basis for a socialist system, Cuba under the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba and Fidel Castro has emerged as a tremendous source of inspiration and enthusiasm for people in struggle everywhere.

The Cuban people today are not fighting only for Cuba but for the people everywhere. The CPI(M) joins the people the world over in expressing its solidarity, politically, morally and in material terms with the Cuban people in this critical period. The Indian people expressed this solidarity by making an unprecedented contribution to the Cuban struggle in 1993. The CPI(M) assures the Cuban people, at this moment, of its continued resolve to strengthen such solidarity.

The battle in tiny Cuba today is the symbol of the determination and efforts not only of the people of the socialist countries but also of the people of the Third World who aspire to a life of liberty and dignity in a non-exploitative social order. This is a struggle confined not just to Cuba alone but has taken on an international character.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its solidarity with the heroic people of Cuba, salutes the inspiring struggle that they are carrying on and extends its warmest revolutionary greetings on this occasion.

Central Committee Communique*

**Released to Press Following its Meeting Held in
Calcutta on December 27-29, 1994**

The Congress(I) is getting rapidly isolated from the people, and the verdict of elections held recently in two states clearly shows how the Indian masses are looking for a secular alternative to the Congress(I) while also disdainfully rejecting the BJP and its brand of communal politics. This was how Harkishan Singh Surjeet, CPI(M) General Secretary, spelt out the policies and perspectives that had emanated from the meeting of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) that was held over December 27-29, 1994 in Calcutta. Surjeet was addressing the Press at the Muzaffar Ahmad Bhavan where the state committee offices of the Party in West Bengal is located.

Releasing to the Press the Communique that was drawn up on the occasion, Surjeet said that the Draft Political Resolution to be for placing in the 15th Congress of the Party, to be held in Chandigarh in April, had been finalised and that the draft would be released within a few days for discussion in Party units at all levels.

Elaborating on the points raised in the Communique, on the immense political significance of the debacle that the Congress(I) had to suffer in the elections held in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, whilst extending felicitations to the people of the two states, Surjeet underlined the three crucial factors that had made the people reject the Congress(I). These, said the veteran leader of the Communist movement in India, were: the downright rejection by the people of the disastrous new economic policy of the Rao regime; the constant compromises being struck by the ruling

Congress(I) with communal elements with impunity and with scant regard for the unity and integrity of the country; and the massive amount of corruption that had stood exposed in a thoroughgoing manner, especially in the past few years.

Surjeet noted that the way the ruling Congress(I) at the Centre was shielding corruption had become evident right from the days when it had desperately sought to organise 'cover up' actions to try and bury the issues thrown up in the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which probed the 'scam' scandal. Describing the so-called 'action-taken report' of the Congress raj as a "lot of fake", Surjeet pointedly highlighted the role of the Left and democratic forces in the parliament in raising a "storm of protest" over the ATR, and how in a shameless demonstration of culpable guilt-complex, the Rao Government would not indict the ministers named in the JPC report as having been responsible for the "scam" in the financial sector.

Much in a similar vein, continued the CPI(M) leader, had the Congress(I) Centre chosen to alienate the masses by "doggedly defending the corruption indulged in by certain ministers in the sugar deal". Such, said Surjeet, was the state of affairs within the corruption ridden Congress(I) that even after an enquiry done on the sugar deal had 'named' the food minister, Kalpanath Rai, as having been squarely responsible for the shady affair, Rao would not dare sack Rai. It was only mounting pressure and fear of political survival that had forced the Central Government to get to accept the resignation of three ministers including Rai. Surjeet called upon the Rao regime to organise a full-fledged probe into the sugar deal by a Joint Parliamentary Committee to ensure that the guilty did not go unpunished in any circumstances. The Central Committee, noted Surjeet, also opined strongly in favour of a vigorous pursuit of the Bofors affair that had been allowed to lapse at the behest of the Congress(I).

The rapidly-attenuating image and authority of Prime Minister Rao, said Harkishan Singh Surjeet, had been further dented due to his failure to organise electoral reform through amendment of the People's Representation Act despite the existence of a specific set of recommendations in this regard on behalf of standing

committee of the parliament. "The patent aim", said Surjeet, "was to allow the arbitrary deadline set by the Chief Election Commissioner for the issuance of voters' identity cards to try and bring about a constitutional deadlock in states such as Bihar." This was a dangerous ploy for it went a long way in seeking to deprive the people of the right to exercise their franchise. The Central Committee, said Surjeet, also assailed the Central Government for its machinations in Manipur and in Tripura. The goings-on of the Congress(I) in the former state, said Surjeet, reminded one of a similar set of ditherings in Kashmir and he warned the Centre of the portents of danger that were involved. Surjeet also noted the stringent criticism of the Central Committee of the way the ISRO espionage case was being handled by the Rao Government, leaving a great deal to be desired.

Surjeet explained how the Central Committee had approved the draft prepared by the Polit Bureau on the role of the Left Front Government in the context of the new economic policies of the Centre. He said that the document, dealing with the policy of the Left Front Government to forge the industrialisation of the state in the background of the overall economic development of West Bengal, would be released very shortly.

Concluding, Surjeet mentioned how the Central Committee had reviewed the ongoing preparations for the Party Congress where 30 foreign delegations from five continents would be invited.

Replying to a wide array of questions from the members of the Press, Harkishan Singh Surjeet noted that efforts were being stepped up to ensure that the Congress(I) and the BJP were defeated in the upcoming elections at the hands of the secular and democratic forces, with the "CPI(M) and the Left providing full support to the latter in areas and regions where we on our own would not be able to bring about and ensure electoral reverses of the Congress(I) and the BJP". Rejecting out of hand a suggestion from a member of the Press that the CPI(M) was "perhaps itself interested in bringing about a split in the Congress(I)", Surjeet said, "We are more interested in ensuring a defeat of the Congress(I) in the ensuing elections which would be a certainty if the Congress(I) refused to change its basic economic policies and

its attitude of compromise vis-a-vis the forces of communalism". Answering a question on the Arjun Singh affair, Surjeet said "there were some in the Congress(I) who were blind to the rapidly changing pattern of the mass mood in their eagerness to adhere to the corridors of power whilst a few others were a little more sensible—however, we are sure that the Congress(I) is quite capable of splitting itself up without any assistance from extraneous sources". Surjeet also ruled out any possibility of alliance with the Naxalites so long as they continued to stick to a stand where "they were more opposed to the CPI(M) than they were to the Congress(I)". Responding to another query, Surjeet said the Central Committee was very much aware of the corruption that existed in such public sector institutions as the Steel Authority of India (SAIL) and that the political draft that had been adopted did contain a sharp critique of the role of the Central Government in this regard.

The text of the Communique issued on the occasion is being reproduced below:

Draft Political Resolution for 15th Congress

The Central Committee finalised the Draft Political Resolution to be placed before the 15th Congress of the Party to be held in Chandigarh in April. The full text of the draft resolution will be released soon for discussion by the Party units at all levels.

Verdict Against Congress(I) Policies

The Central Committee greeted the people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka who inflicted a decisive defeat on the Congress(I) in the assembly elections. The significance of the election results should be properly understood. Never before has the Congress suffered such a bad defeat in these two states. It represents a clear rejection of the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and its compromising attitude to communalism. The election results have shown that the people will not tolerate any attack on their livelihood in the name of liberalisation.

The results show that the Congress(I) is getting rapidly isolated from the people. This has deepened the crisis within the ruling

party at the Centre. The resignation of Arjun Singh from the cabinet is a reflection of the policy issues which confront the Congress (I) leadership, howsoever it may seek to avoid them. The panic reaction in condemning the resignation shows that the real policy issues cannot be wished away.

The verdict in the two states also shows that the people are looking for a secular alternative to the Congress(I) and do not want the BJP with its communalised politics.

The next round of assembly elections in five states in February will be another crucial test. Without reversing the basic economic policies and its compromising attitude to communalism, the Congress(I) will face a further rebuff. The Central Committee of the CPI(M) discussed the forthcoming assembly elections and decided to work for the defeat of the Congress(I) and the BJP and for the victory of the secular opposition and the Left forces.

Shielding Corruption

Another factor for the rejection of the Congress(I) and the alienation of the people is the shameless manner in which the Prime Minister and the Congress(I) government are dealing with the shocking cases of high level corruption. In the just concluded winter session of parliament, the Narasimha Rao Government has sullied its image further by doggedly defending the corruption indulged in by certain ministers in the security scandal and the sugar deals. Even after the enquiry ordered by the Prime Minister indicted Kalpanath Rai, the Prime Minister chose to exonerate him in parliament. The government refuses to act on the recommendations of the JPC and presented a farcical Action Taken Report. Despite the resignation of the three ministers, forced on the Prime Minister, uncovering the full nexus of corruption remains. A full enquiry by a Joint Parliamentary Committee has to be ordered on the sugar scandal and there can be no relaxation on the action to be taken to punish those guilty for the security scandal. The Central Committee also demanded that the enquiry into the Bofors kickbacks be pursued vigorously and no cover-up be allowed. The recent session of parliament has only added to the diminishing of the image and authority of the Prime Minister who had already lost the referendum on his policies in the Andhra and Karnataka elections.

Election Reforms and Identity Cards

The Central Committee condemned the failure of the Rao Government to bring forth legislation to amend the People's Representation Act for urgently needed election reforms. These proposals have been unanimously approved by a standing committee of parliament and it also includes the provision of issuance of identity cards by the Election Commission with the approval of the Central Government. The Congress(I) has deliberately refused to bring such a legislation hoping that the CEC's arbitrary deadline for the issuance of identity cards by January 15 will create a constitutional deadlock in states like Bihar. The Central Committee warned the Central Government not to play such a dangerous game and take steps forthwith to see that the elections are held on schedule and the people are not deprived of their basic right to vote in the polls due in the states.

Manipur

The Central Committee criticised the efforts of the Central Government to impose a Congress(I) government in Manipur and demanded the immediate dissolution of the assembly and holding of fresh elections.

Tripura

The Central Committee strongly condemned the Congress(I) demand in Tripura of calling upon the Centre to intervene and declare the state as a disturbed area. It is the Congress(I) in the state which is encouraging the extremist forces and provoking incidents to disturb the peaceful atmosphere. Such tactics will not gain any support from the people who endorse the Left Front Government's stand of preserving the unity of the tribal and non-tribal people while combating the extremist activity.

ISRO Spy Case

The Central Committee took serious note of the espionage incident at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Kerala. The involvement of scientists and other top level personnel including a senior police officer of the state in the leakage of

sensitive technological information has serious ramifications. The report that the Chief Minister of Kerala is shielding the senior police officer in the concerned case is disturbing. The Central Committee demanded prompt and impartial action to be taken to ensure that all those guilty are brought to book and punished.

Left Front Government's Industrial Policy

The Central Committee discussed a document prepared by the Polit Bureau on the role of the Left Front Government of West Bengal in the context of the new economic policies of the Centre. It endorsed the Polit Bureau document which explains the policy the Left Front Government will have to pursue for the industrialisation of the state and for overall economic development in the present situation. The finalised document will be released shortly.

Party Congress Preparations

The Central Committee reviewed the preparations for the 15th Party Congress and decided to invite 30 foreign delegations from all the five continents to attend the Congress to be held in Chandigarh from April 3 to 8, 1995

On the Role of West Bengal Left Front Government in the Context of New Economic Policies*

**Statement Adopted by The Central Committee of
The CPI(M) Held in Calcutta on December 27-29, 1994**

Recently there has been a lot of comment on the industrial policy measures announced by the Left Front Government of West Bengal. An industrial policy statement was placed in the state assembly in the end of September 1994. Prior to this, there was a big campaign in the bourgeois Press that the CPI(M) is adopting double standards in opposing the liberalisation policies of the Narasimha Rao Government at the Centre while accepting them and inviting multinationals and big business houses to invest in West Bengal. From the other end, an attack was launched that the Marxists have abandoned their opposition to multinational corporations and foreign capital and is now fully accepting the IMF/World Bank dictated path for India just as the Congress(I) government. Even the Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, is deceitfully using West Bengal as an example to show that the liberalisation policy is accepted by all shades of political opinion in the country.

All this motivated campaign has reached a climax with the industrial policy statement announced by the West Bengal Government. This has caused widespread confusion and misgivings in the Party and Left circles. When we are in the midst of the ongoing struggle at the all-India level against the economic policies of the Rao Government, the propaganda that the Left Front Government is also adopting similar policies is sought to be used to confuse and disorient the working class and other fighting contingents.

It is essential to firmly counter this propaganda of the ruling classes and to explain to our Party ranks and the Left circles how

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the CPI(M) is conducting the struggle to reverse the economic policies of the Congress(I) Central Government and the role played by the strongest contingent of the working class and democratic movement, the West Bengal Left Front; it is also necessary to educate our ranks on our understanding of the role being played by the Left Front Government in West Bengal as per our Party Programme and current tactical line.

Programmatic Understanding

The Party Programme sets the goal of people's democracy to replace the existing bourgeois-landlord rule. To proceed towards this aim it is necessary to build up a powerful movement of the working class, the peasantry and allies at the all-India level through the mass struggles and build a powerful Left and democratic alternative. In the process of this struggle to build the Left and democratic front at the all-India level, it is possible that the Party, the Left forces and its allies will become strong enough to acquire a legislative majority in any of the states. The Party Programme sanctions the participation of the Party in such governments while keeping in mind that the states of the Indian Union have very limited powers and it is the Centre which controls state power and all its instruments.

Para 112 of the Party Programme has set out the tactical line regarding the Party's participation in state governments and the role envisaged for such governments. By participating in such governments we should utilise the limited powers accorded to these governments in the Constitution to carry out measures to give immediate relief to the people. Even modest steps in this regard would help strengthen the mass struggles and the building of the revolutionary movement. At the same time, the programme warns that such governments cannot alter the basic structure of the socio-economic system or solve the problems emanating from the bourgeois-landlord class rule.

It is in line with this important tactical direction given in the Party Programme that the CPI(M) formed government in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura from time to time after its formation in 1964. During the formation of the first United Front

Governments in 1967 the Central Committee adopted a document entitled "New Situation and Tasks" in which the perspective and tasks for such governments are further elaborated. The 1967 document stated :

"Our Ministries, without either entertaining undue illusions about giving relief in a big way, or courting despair that nothing can be done under the present set-up, should always bear in mind that they, as the Party's representative, should strive to tender our bona fides to the people. Any failure on this score compromises the Party's political line in the eyes of the people; and adversely affects the independent mobilisation of the people."

Our experience of running the United Front Governments in the 1967-70 period in West Bengal and Kerala, the 10-year rule of the Left Front in Tripura from 1977 to 1987 and the 17-year continuous stint of the Left Front Government of West Bengal has confirmed the validity of the programmatic understanding of our participation in the state governments to use them as instruments to 'give minimum relief to the people and thus strengthen the mass movement'. In all the three states, participation in the state governments led by our Party has enabled the Party to expand its mass base and withstand the onslaughts of the class enemies.

So, to sum up, it is clear that, the programme and the tactical line which flows from it envisages that such governments when formed can (1) utilise its limited powers to provide minimum relief and safeguard democratic rights of the working people, (2) skillfully utilise the state machinery to neutralise or restrain the oppressive character of the state against the developing struggles of the various sections of the toiling people; (3) provide a fillip to the mass movements and strengthen the Party's mass base and thereby help the all-India struggle against the bourgeois-landlord order.

On the other hand, our programmatic understanding on CPI(M)-led Governments does not envisage: (a) a government which can implement basic policies which are outside the framework of the present Constitution and the bourgeois-landlord order; (b) a government which can implement in totality the Left and democratic alternative programme in one or two states alone

because the governments are led by us; (c) that such governments can by themselves alter the correlation of forces in the country as a whole though they can help the all-India struggle of the Left and democratic forces by the policies they implement.

If the role of the Left-led Government is seen on this basis, then much of the confusion on the role it can play in West Bengal and what it can do and cannot do will be dispelled. A deeper understanding of the role and the constraints under which the state governments function must be acquired by our Party cadres.

Experience of Left Front Government's Functioning

The long years of experience of running such governments have confirmed both aspects pointed out in the programme. (1) Effective use of the state administration despite its limited powers has helped the CPI(M) to expand its mass base and rally wider masses around the Left and democratic platform. Under the present Indian Constitution the limited powers given under the states' list have been used more effectively by the Left-led governments. These pertain to the areas like land reforms, primary and school education, panchayat system, and partial use of the police and labour machinery. (2) Those areas where substantial powers exist only with the Centre, and these are the key levers of state powers, like bureaucracy, financial resources, judiciary, economic policy making etc., the state governments function under severe constraints and the struggle for alternate policies has to be conducted in West Bengal as part of the all-India movement. The central framework of policies cannot be altered or transcended in West Bengal alone.

The 17 years' experience of the Left Front Government in West Bengal reveals both these aspects stated above. The Left Front Government has to its credit significant achievements in the area of implementation of land reforms, functioning of the three-tier panchayat raj system and decentralisation of powers up to the gram panchayat level; expansion of primary and school education and setting up of small-scale industries. In no other state has implementation of land reforms and panchayati raj been seriously pursued as in West Bengal. This has become a model for the rest

of India. In the sphere of agriculture where the state government has some purview, the Left Front Government has, through the package of above measures, been able to make remarkable strides in increase of agricultural production and productivity.

In contrast, in the areas where the Central Government has the relevant powers under the Constitution, the state government is unable to implement alternative policies except to propagate them and mobilise the people. A large area of the economy falls under this category. The entire financial resources are monopolised by the Centre including the control of the key financial institutions. The entire fiscal structure is heavily weighted in favour of the Centre. Industrial policy is in the Union list and all laws regarding industrial development fall under the purview of the Central Government. This concentration of powers at the Centre, political, legislative, administrative and fiscal has militated against the interests of all state governments particularly of non-Congress governments as the Centre has been ruled by the Congress since independence except for two small periods.

Given the bourgeois-landlord character of the successive Central Governments and the nature of the Constitution and the state structure determined by this class character, the edge of the Central bias has been more against the Left-led Governments even amongst the non-Congress(I) Governments. The CPI(M)-led Governments have been targets for special discrimination and onslaughts by the Centre as they have firmly stood for strengthening the working class movement and for a federal structure.

With the assurance of democratic rights and communal amity, a political atmosphere has been created which has been conducive for the steady expansion of the mass base of the Party and the Left forces. The accretion in the strength of the Party and the Left in West Bengal due to the policies and activities of the Left Front Government have made an important contribution to the all-India Left and democratic movement.

The CPI(M) has not been the victim of the bourgeois parliamentary illusion that winning a majority or forming a government at the state level will mean acquiring real power to be able to bring about any fundamental socio-economic

transformation. In all election platforms and manifestoes of the CPI(M) and Left-led alliance, the goal of the government has been spelt out as providing minimum relief to the people utilising the limited resources of the state governments, adopting pro-people policies and making sure that the police and the bureaucracy are not wielded against the struggles of the working people, enlargement of democratic rights, and carrying on the struggle for alternative economic policies which are directed against the Centre. Within the framework of the limited powers devolving to the states, concrete slogans and commitments have been made to implement them within the framework of the Constitution. It is by the relentless struggles and mass mobilisation over decades that the Left-led Governments have been able to survive and rebuff the anti-democratic onslaughts from the Centre. The impact of the alternative policies which can be implemented by the Left-led Governments and the strength and support it provides for the all-India Left and democratic movement played a significant role in rallying some of the opposition bourgeois-landlord sections which were fighting the Congress(I) to adopt more democratic positions and come out in defence of federalism. It is these splits and conflicts within the bourgeois-landlord classes themselves which have also contributed to the existence of the Left Front Government in West Bengal over such a long period.

The existence of the Left Front Government over a long period in a stable manner after winning successive elections also posed the question of how this government must address the issue of economic and industrial development. While projecting alternative policies and mobilising the people for the same, the Left Front Government is also responsible to the people to provide them with the minimum needs with regard to their livelihood and standards of living. It has to deliver results as compared to other state governments working within the capitalist system. It cannot ignore the questions of development. But when we pursue policies for development/industrialisation, the priorities set out by a Left-led Government for serving the interests of the working people and the poorest sections must be evident in our implementation, whatever be the constraints. That shows the

difference between governments run by us and other bourgeois party governments.

History of Discrimination

In the pre-independence period, West Bengal and in particular, Calcutta and its hinterland was the most industrially developed region in the country. After independence, industrial licensing and planning by the Centre was meant to ensure balanced development and end the neglect of the backward regions. However, the powers concentrated in the Centre were utilised to discriminate against West Bengal. Low central investment, discouragement of potential investors, problems created by freight equalisation and low credit-deposit ratios of the nationalised banks all contributed to lack of development. The central industrial licensing policy was meant for balanced development and to check monopolies but the Congress(I) governments used it for political discrimination against Left-led states and also for helping monopolies to grow. The eastern region and in particular, West Bengal suffered from political and policy discrimination both in the political and economic spheres.

Twelfth Congress Discussion

In 1985 at the 12th Party Congress, there was a discussion on whether the CPI(M)-led Government in West Bengal is justified in entering into a joint sector agreement with an Indian big business house for the Haldia Petrochemical Project. This question had come up in the West Bengal State Conference and it was debated there and finally clinched at the Congress. It was pointed out that the Central Congress(I) Government is conducting an all-round fight against the Left Front Government. The Left Front Government, by its existence and policies, is an expression of this class struggle against the bourgeois-landlord state. The tactic of the big bourgeois-led Central Government is to ensure that West Bengal is starved of economic development by imposing a sort of embargo on capital investment. Within the existing capitalist system and the parameters set out by the big bourgeois-led government, it is not possible to develop industries autonomously in West Bengal with the limited resources of the State Government. Nor is it possible to change

the nature of the capitalist path of development in one state alone when all the powers vest with the Centre. The West Bengal Government cannot by itself break from this bourgeois-landlord system. It is, therefore, essential in order to carry forward the Left Front programme and mobilise wider sections of the people to the Left and democratic movement to counter the blockade and discrimination by the Centre. It is, therefore, necessary that West Bengal also industrially develops within the capitalist system in order to create some jobs and alleviate the growing unemployment. The Congress(I) policy of trying to convert West Bengal into an industrial desert must be countered. While entering into such agreements for new projects with big business houses the CPI(M) would continue to fight to develop the class struggle against the big bourgeois and foreign big capital. The strategic goal of people's democratic revolution of fighting the main enemies of big monopoly, imperialism, and land-lordism will be steadfastly maintained and this is the struggle which has to be carried out at the all-India plane.

This was the understanding formulated by the 12th Party Congress which saw the Left Front Government's role in its totality as part of the struggle to build a Left and democratic front around an alternative programme.

Capitalist Path: Qualitative Change

This was nearly a decade ago when the Centre's policies were still within that framework of the capitalist path of development which sought to utilise the state, to develop the public sector and aid from the Soviet Union to develop the big bourgeois-led capitalist path while at the same time collaborating with foreign capital. This policy framework has now undergone a major change. The economic policies undertaken by the Narasimha Rao Government from 1991 mark a qualitative shift in emphasis from the old Nehruvian path of development of capitalism. No doubt the shift began in the mid-eighties but it is from 1991 that the IMF/World Bank dictated path has been adopted. The international situation saw a dramatic transformation with the setbacks to socialism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It facilitated

the global offensive of imperialism and the relentless drive of international capital to further penetrate and exploit the Third World countries. The IMF-World Bank dictated path is just an expression of this global offensive of imperialism with the distinctive features of globalisation of finance capital and the rapid spread of multinational corporations.

India is bearing the full brunt of these changes as it is a relatively more developed economy within the Third World with a huge market. There is relentless pressure to integrate the Indian economy fully with the global world capitalist system. Such an integration on the terms set out by imperialism and due to the internal compulsions of the big bourgeoisie has led to the now liberalised policies whose prominent features are: (1) the deregulation of the economy and the delicensing of industries by the Centre; (2) the curtailing of the public sector, its outright dismantling in certain areas and privatisation; (3) the opening up of India's economy to foreign capital with special facilities for them; (4) the opening of the financial sector to foreign capital; (5) the reduction in state intervention in the development of industries and the economy including the sphere of infrastructure and social expenditure.

With these new policies there has been a further pronounced shift in the balance of forces against the state governments. The state governments are today further handicapped with the cut in the central funding in the spheres of public sector, infrastructure development and social welfare. The state governments are being coerced to adopt the path of dismantling state public undertakings, go for privatisation and allow the free entry of foreign capital and big business at concessional terms. There is tremendous pressure to open up the infrastructure development to the private sector by the Centre. All these policies are being implemented at various degrees of speed in the last three years.

The West Bengal Government was the first state government to put out an alternative economic policy package when the Narasimha Rao Government came to power in June 1991. The state government submitted its alternative economic policy document to the Centre in July 1991 itself. This was parallel to the effort made by the Party at the all-India level to mobilise Left

economists and present an alternative policy statement to the path dictated by the IMF-World Bank. It is this alternative perspective which is being updated and used as the platform to fight against the unfolding of liberalisation policies. The attacks on the public sector, the onslaughts against the working class, the opening up of the financial sector, the GATT treaty, the imperialist pressures to stunt indigenous science and technological development, the efforts of the MNCs to penetrate Indian agriculture, the opening up of the consumer goods sector to the multinationals—all these have become live issues of struggle in the various sectors by the working people and their organisations.

The economic policies are not just the policies of the Congress(I). It has wider support among the Indian ruling classes. This is seen by the support extended to liberalisation by the BJP, the vacillations and the inability to come up with any coherent alternative by the Janata Dal and other centrist parties. It is in this background that the CPI(M), the Left parties and the mass organisations have been engaged in waging a continuous struggle to defend economic sovereignty and fight back the onslaughts of the new economic policies. The working class has been in the forefront of this struggle and with the wider unity achieved through the National Platform of Mass Organisations four all-India general strikes and bandhs have been conducted from 1991 to 1994 drawing in millions of workers, peasants, agricultural labour, women, students, youth and employees. In these struggles, the CPI(M) and the Left Front of West Bengal has been the strongest, most organised contingent. It is the strength provided by the Left bastion of West Bengal and the strong contingents of the Party like in Kerala, Tripura and other pockets which has enabled the CPI(M) to play the leading role and help widen the resistance to the new economic policies.

This point should not be underestimated. It is the strength of the organised working class and other sections of the toiling people in West Bengal—the total membership of the mass organisations led by the Party alone in West Bengal is over two crores—that has helped in the struggle against the economic policies. The existence of the Left Front Government continuously from 1977 onwards

has contributed in building up this organised strength and spearhead of the Left movement.

However, to expect from the Left Front Government that it alone can implement basic alternative policies in the face of this all-India liberalisation and privatisation is to do violence to our own basic Party understanding and the programme. The Left Front Government can only play a limited role in alternate policy implementation while it can play a big role in mobilising the people against the Centre's policies. It is the Left Front Government's big achievement that it has been able to achieve a breakthrough in the areas where it has a greater degree of power—implementation of land reforms and stimulating agricultural production, decentralising power to the panchayats and involving them in development work and to expand the democratic rights of the rural poor using the state machinery to neutralise the police and repressive measures against the working people's struggles, and to use the limited resources to stimulate small-scale industrial development.

New Policy Needed

In the changed milieu the tactics of the mass movement and the Left Front Government's policies must also change. Earlier the trade union movement would demand the state takeover of sick units when the policy of the Centre was to provide for such steps and to allocate resources. Before, the struggle used to be to force the Central Government to direct the financial institutions to extend credit in order to enable the state takeover of sick units. The trade union movement and the working class can see by experience that state takeover of fresh units or an industry is made difficult by the basic policy of the Centre. In such a situation, the struggle has focussed on how to prevent the privatisation of existing PSUs. The state governments while not agreeing in principle to the opening up of the core sector to foreign multinationals where indigenous technology is available cannot fight and force the Centre to keep these core sectors within the purview of the state/public sector. For instance, the state governments today are not able to get the Centre to finance the purchase of BHEL equipment for fresh power projects even though the Left Front Government wants it.

When in the entire country new power projects are being opened up to private sector and foreign capital collaboration, it is not possible in West Bengal alone to take the position that there can be no fresh power projects as we will not accept any private sector investment. The question, therefore, has concretely arisen that, given the constraints of the central policy, what are the tactics that can be adopted to facilitate infrastructural and industrial development in the state.

There can be no dispute on the need for industrial development of West Bengal. The state has been sliding back from its prime position at the time of independence and the share of West Bengal in the national industrial production has come down from 22.9 per cent in 1951 to just 8.1 per cent in 1984-85. The successful implementation of land reforms and the significant advance in agricultural productivity have laid the basis and the necessity for the expansion of industry. In contrast the industrial scene provides a disturbing picture. While the old industries like jute and engineering are in crisis and closing down, no fresh industrial development with new technology is replacing the declining industries. West Bengal, therefore, suffers from the double handicap of the large-scale closure and elimination of the old industry and the paucity of fresh industrial development which can enable the growth and development of the working class itself. The threat of deindustrialisation is real with the consequent dangerous implications for the physical development and growth of the working class. If this trend continues, the achievements registered by the Left Front Government will suffer a serious setback. Registered unemployment is already over 40 lakhs. There is a vast pool of educated manpower which is not being utilised and the political base of the Left Front's appeal will get weakened. It has become all the more necessary, much more than in the 1985 situation, to be able to attract fresh industrial investment in the state.

With the new economic policies, the uneven development of capitalism will only further be exacerbated. With the end of licensing and deregulation industrial investment which is mainly private is flowing to those areas which provide attractive incentives, facilities and infrastructure. Between August 1991 and August 1994—the three-year period of liberalisation—West Bengal got

only 2.5 per cent of industrial investment while Maharashtra got 20.5 per cent, Gujarat 16.7 per cent. Eastern India as a whole is being deprived.

Unlike in 1985, when the struggle was against the discrimination of the Centre, with its power of licensing and regulation of industry against West Bengal, today, with deregulation and delicensing, it is up to the Left Front Government to initiate steps to attract capital investment in West Bengal. This can be done only by allowing greater investment of private capital in various sectors. This is the basis on which the Left Front Government has to adjust its policies in West Bengal to meet the new situation brought about by the Centre's policy of liberalisation. While doing so, the CPI(M)-led government has to be conscious of not accepting any such terms of implementation which are only due to the unjustified pressure of foreign capital or big business. It should not go against available indigenous technology or lead to diversion of limited capital resources to inessential sectors. For instance, the West Bengal Left Front Government has correctly worked out a power policy which does not accept the ENRON type agreement in Maharashtra which will lead to big increase in the cost of production of power and the tariff rates for the people. Such an agreement also means high rates of return of profits based on inflated capital costs with the connivance of the Central Government and its financial institutions. Instead of hundred per cent foreign ownership, in West Bengal joint sector projects are contemplated with equipment to be bought locally by competitive bidding. The cost of power generation works out to much lower rates than in the foreign owned plants. The Left Front Government must be constantly alert to protect the interests of indigenous industry and technology where available. It must stand firmly for the interests of the workers and their legitimate rights.

While orienting the policies and regulations in the state to facilitate greater private investment, the people should constantly be told that such industrialisation and expansion of the private sector cannot solve the basic problems and class exploitation will continue and increase with the overall liberalisation policy of the Centre.

It should be the endeavour of the Left Front Government to ensure that new industrial projects will generate employment and protect the interests of the workers who are employed in such ventures. The Left Front Government should continuously strive to strengthen the public sector undertakings and assist in preventing the privatisation of such units especially in the core sector. The public sector units in key industries in West Bengal are the central undertakings. The policy of the Centre is to starve them off fresh investment or orders to dismantle them. The Left Front Government will resist such a policy and strive to protect the jobs of the workers and make these units viable in cooperation with the working class movement. The current policies of the Centre militate against the small-scale and cottage based industries. We must strive to strengthen these sectors and expand their employment potential.

In West Bengal itself there are many sick and closed units in which the workers have been fighting for long to save their jobs and rights. In many such units which are closed by the private capitalists there may be agreements for revival which the workers agree to in order to save their jobs and livelihood which may entail some adverse terms. Such agreements are accepted by the CITU unions only when the workers consent to them after being exhausted in the struggle and despite the negative aspects having been pointed out to them. There cannot be any one-sided call to the workers to 'sacrifice' without an appropriate response from the employers.

In the changed situation, the CITU-led trade unions and the Left-led movements will doggedly fight all efforts to impose privatisation and increase the exploitation of the workers. The class struggle and the defence of the working class rights will not be compromised by the trade union movement and the Party.

At the same time the necessity for developing industry requires the consciousness that industry has to be updated and productivity increased. New technology being introduced should be seen from this perspective while at the same time ensuring that workers are not victims of job-loss and retrenchment in the name of high productivity and new technology.

The West Bengal working class movement and the trade unions have also the difficult task of conducting prolonged struggles while keeping in mind the all-India correlation of forces and the strength of the working class movement in that industry outside West Bengal. Such experiences have been there in the past in the struggle against computerisation and in other sectors. As the party of the working class it is the bounden duty of the Party to take the workers into confidence in all difficult situations and to explain to them what we can do, what is possible and how far the struggle can be conducted.

No Justification of Central Policy

While implementing policies for industrial expansion and inviting private capital both Indian and foreign into West Bengal, care should be taken to see that our government and ministerial spokesmen do not subscribe to any policy statement which justify the liberalisation policies and the economic reforms set out by the government. For instance, we do not accept the argument of the Centre that it is solely due to the resource crunch that they are forced to allow the private sector into the core and infrastructure areas. While the resource crunch is real for the state governments because of the squeeze by the Centre, it is not the same situation for the Central Government. The Centre is refusing to mobilise all the resources which are available to them with its wide and comprehensive powers and instead is giving into the pressure of international finance capital. The "resource crunch" is often the excuse to allow foreign multinationals into areas where it would be much cheaper to use Indian technology and equipment like in the power sector. In fact by allowing foreign capital with big concessions much more resources will be spent in power generation than if it is done indigenously. Even the World Bank has come out against the counter-guarantee offered by the government of India to foreign companies. We should see that in all those areas, where indigenous technology is available, we champion its use, while not hesitating to allow technology imported from abroad where we have no such capacities.

Similarly, the big capitalists and the Congress government are calling upon the workers to make sacrifices to make industry and their goods more competitive by adopting a work culture suitable for this. On the other hand, the corporate sector is making enormous profits and the top executives are earning huge salaries. We should be careful to see that the rights of collective bargaining of the workers is in no way curtailed by endorsing such calls.

Left Front Government: Distinctive Approach

While the industrial policy statement issued by the Left Front Government has broadly indicated the new orientation necessary in the present situation to attract investments, there are certain points which need to be properly emphasised:

(a) While striving for rapid industrialisation utilising all the available resources of both the public and private sector, we should underline the key role of the public sector in the core areas. Necessary steps must be taken to streamline the management of public sector undertakings and make these units more efficient. The working class in these units must be involved by democratic methods in steps to increase productivity.

(b) It is to be made clear that while private investment is being solicited in the power sector, the Left Front Government does not accept ENRON type agreements which actually will result in greater outflow of capital resources and highly inflated power tariffs.

(c) The necessity to expand and improve the infrastructural facilities has been correctly stressed. The primacy of state intervention must be maintained in this sector even while going in for joint sector projects.

(d) While striving to speed up industrialisation and attract new investments, the Left Front Government will continue to defend workers' interests and trade union rights. The trade unions must be consulted and involved in the task of industrialisation.

The Left Front Government's policies should be in defence of the public sector in core areas, retaining the state intervention in the infrastructure development and in social infrastructure like

health and education while actively canvassing for fresh capital investment in the sectors such as electronics, petrochemicals and other specialised areas which cannot be developed with government funds. In every forum where official policies are debated, the Left Front Government must clearly set out the alternative policies possible in the present situation and in the long term and this should be the basis for our Party's propaganda and mobilisation among the masses.

The CPI(M) and the Left Front in West Bengal have the big responsibility of leading the all-India struggle against the economic policies of the Centre. The Left Front Government by its existence and performance can aid the struggle in a big way. The Left Front Government's role will immensely strengthen the all-India struggle not only against the economic policies but also in building the Left and democratic front which is essential to bring about a change in the correlation of forces. It is by keeping this basic perspective in mind that we should judge current policies, review them from time to time and make adjustments.

Parliament Must Discuss WTO Terms*

**Statement Dated December 31, 1994
Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands of the Central Government a public statement as to how it proposes to meet the obligations and commitments enjoined upon it with its formal entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) with the signing of the agreement on December 30 at Geneva.

The WTO terms require India to amend the Indian Patents Act and take other measures which are inimical to the country's interests. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Rao Government not to issue any ordinance to amend the concerned laws. The Polit Bureau appeals to the President of India to advise the government not to promulgate any ordinance and place the matter before Parliament for a full and open discussion.

CPI(M) Demands Ordinance to Amend P.R. Act*

Statement Dated January 4, 1995

Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly disapproves the Election Commission's postponing the dates of polls in Bihar to March and giving a new deadline for the issuance of identity cards in the state as February 28. Earlier, the CEC had postponed the dates of elections in Gujarat and Arunachal Pradesh. There is every possibility of such a postponement in Orissa also. The current crisis is being foisted by the CEC because of his unreasonable insistence on conducting elections only after all voters get identity cards. This would mean indefinite postponement of election. Constitutionally and legally, the people of Bihar and the other states cannot be deprived of their right to exercise their vote on the plea of no identity cards.

The Narasimha Rao Government is responsible for this crisis as it refused to bring the legislation finalised by the standing committee of Parliament in the winter session which would have averted the problem of the CEC's arbitrary deadlines. The Congress(I) which does not want to face elections in Bihar would like to use the CEC's stance to bring about President's rule in the state. This conspiracy has to be exposed.

The CPI(M) demands that the Centre promulgate an ordinance forthwith so that the Representation of People's Act is amended to ensure that elections are not held up on the pretext of identity cards.

Homage to Comrade Joe Slovo*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) deeply mourns the passing away of Joe Slovo. Comrade Joe Slovo symbolised the finest traditions of the South African Communist movement and the national liberation struggle. He headed the armed wing "The Spear of the Nation" of the African National Congress at the head of the bitter struggle against the hated apartheid regime. Remaining underground and in exile, he worked tirelessly to build the organisation and armed struggle of the ANC and the Communist Party. The racist regime targeted him as enemy number one and sought to hunt him down. His wife was assassinated by a parcel bomb sent by the South African racist secret service. Yet he dauntlessly led the struggle.

As General Secretary and later Chairman of the South African Communist Party, Slovo headed the militant multi-racial party of the South African proletariat through every complex and difficult stage of the successful movement. He played a key role in the negotiations for the peaceful transition ending the apartheid regime. He was the Housing Minister in the interim government.

Comrade Slovo had been suffering from cancer for the past few years. Yet he courageously discharged his responsibilities at a crucial time in the history of South Africa. His death is a big loss to the people of South Africa, the Communist Party and the ANC. The Polit Bureau conveys its respectful homage to this outstanding leader, patriot and humanist.

Condolence on Comrade Madhu Limaye*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) mourns the passing away of Comrade Madhu Limaye, a major figure of the socialist movement in the country. Limaye was a leader moulded in the freedom struggle and an intrepid advocate of the people's cause. Belonging to the socialist stream in Left politics, notwithstanding the ideological differences, he advocated close cooperation with the Communists to advance the Left and democratic movement. He was Chairman of the Socialist Party when an agreement of CPI(M)-Socialist Party cooperation was signed in 1973.

Madhu Limaye played an important role in the struggle against the communal forces and for upholding secularism. In his parliamentary career, his was the fearless voice against all the anti-people policies of successive Central Governments.

The death of a leader of such high integrity and dedicated public service is a big loss for the democratic forces. The Polit Bureau conveys its heartfelt sympathies to his wife, son and other family members.

On Supreme Court's Directive On Identity Cards*

Statement Dated January 17, 1995

Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) welcomes the Supreme Court directive staying the operation of the orders and direction of the Election Commission threatening not to hold elections in Bihar and Orissa in the absence of photo identity cards.

The CPI(M) had all along maintained that the CEC is transgressing his authority by issuing such orders and that no citizen of India above 18 years can be denied the right to vote if his name appears on the electoral rolls. The CEC's authoritarian high-handedness has again once been rebuffed by the apex court.

The CPI(M) had all through welcomed the issuance of photo identity cards to all Indian citizens without discrimination, but the cost of this must be shared by the Centre and the states, the modalities of which must be worked out mutually. Further, adequate time must be provided so that all citizens can be reached without discrimination.

The CPI(M) calls upon the CEC to now proceed with the electoral process without further hindrance.

On Defence Deal Inimical to India's Interests*

Statement Dated January 12, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau expresses its strong opposition to the Indo-U.S. cooperation agreement to be signed during the visit of the U.S. Defence Secretary, William Perry, to New Delhi. The Central Government has made this sudden announcement on the eve of the visit of the U.S. secretary without any public discussion of this serious policy measure. This is in keeping with the surreptitious style adopted by the Rao Government on matters affecting India's vital security interests and sovereignty.

For the past three years, at the initiative of the U.S. administration, the Congress(I) Government has entered into areas of defence cooperation such as joint exercises and training programmes. This has covered the army, naval and air forces. Now, it is proposed through the new agreement to extend these relations by establishing cooperation between the Indian defence ministry and the U.S. defence department. This has ominous implications for India's traditional non-aligned policy.

The U.S. administration has been hostile to India's development of an independent nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and is bent upon curbing the deployment of the Prithvi missiles and the development of the Agni rocket technology. It is the same administration which imposed sanctions on ISRO and got Russia to cancel the contract on the sale of the cryogenic rocket engines. The U.S. maintains the Diego Garcia military base with nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean about which the Rao Government is silent. The yoking of India's defence establishment with the Pentagon through a full-fledged defence agreement is inimical to

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India's security interests and will have adverse effects on an independent foreign policy.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all patriotic and democratic sections to strongly oppose the defence agreement with the USA and demand that the Rao Government consult all political parties before proceeding with the agreement.

On Opening up Insurance Sector to Foreign Multinationals*

**Statement Dated January 19, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) opposes the opening up of the nationalised insurance sector to foreign multinationals and Indian private capital climaxing the behind-the-scene negotiations that have been going on for quite sometime now.

In the course of the negotiations with the U.S. business delegation headed by Commerce Secretary, Ronald Brown, the government has not only committed itself to open up the insurance market to foreign companies but also a protocol has been signed between the Tata group and a U.S. company for promoting a joint insurance venture.

The Malhotra Committee report is yet to be placed and discussed in parliament. The government is thus confronting the parliament with a fait accompli. Such a step undermines and subverts parliamentary democracy.

Opening up the insurance sector is against vital national interests. The two public corporations—LIC and GIC—have performed commendably and together constitute the only social security available in India. Besides, they are the biggest investors in the crucial social sector.

The Malhotra report has evoked strong protests from the public, trade unions and the insurance employees. The Polit Bureau demands that the Rao Government refrain from taking any step to privatise the insurance sector.

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Proposed Amendments to CPI(M)'s Party Constitution*

The Central Committee of the CPI(M), in its meeting held from December 27 to 29, 1994 at Calcutta, decided to propose the following amendments to the Constitution at the Fifteenth Party Congress. These proposals have been finalised after consultations with the Central Control Commission. As per the provisions of the Party Constitution, the proposals for amendments to the Constitution should be circulated two months before the Party Congress. The Party state committees should translate these amendments in their own languages and circulate to all Party units.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

1. Amendment to Article IV:

Add the following to Section 4:

"In exceptional cases the Central Committee or the State Committee can admit such members to full membership of the Party."

There is no enabling provision in the Constitution for admitting a person coming from another political party to the full membership of the Party. The present amendment is intended to provide for that in special cases.

2. Amendment to Article VII:

Add the following Section 3 to Article VII:

"(3) There shall be right of appeal on decisions of droppage from Party membership."

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The proposed amendment is to provide for appeal against cases of arbitrary droppage from Party membership at the time of renewal.

3. **Amendment to Article XVIII:**

Substitute Section 2(c) as follows:

"Cases involving expulsion, suspension from full Party membership and decisions of droppage from Party membership against which an appeal has been made to the State Committee or to the State Control Commission and rejected."

The proposed amendment is to widen the jurisdiction of the Control Commission to entertain appeals on suspension from full Party membership and decisions of droppage from Party membership. As per the present provisions, the Central or the State Control Commission has no jurisdiction to entertain any appeal on suspension from full Party membership or droppage from Party membership decided by the lower committees other than the next lower level committee.

4. **Amendment to Article XVIII:**

Add the following as Section 3 and the present Sections 3 and 4 may be renumbered as 4 and 5.

"(3) The decision of the Central Control Commission will be final and binding."

The Fourteenth Party Congress made the Central Control Commission an independently elected body by the Congress. Hence, its decisions will be final and binding. The proposed amendment is to clarify this.

5. **Amendment to Article XIX:**

Section 7 may be substituted as follows:

"No disciplinary measure involving removal from the post held in the Party, suspension from full Party membership other than suspension pending enquiry, or, expulsion from the Party, shall come into effect without confirmation by the next higher committee. In case of expulsion, the person expelled shall be removed from all Party activities."

confirmation. The expelled member stands suspended from the Party till the expulsion is confirmed by the next higher committee. The higher committee will have to communicate its decision within 6 months."

The proposed amendment is meant for protecting the rights of the Party members from arbitrary removal from the post held in the Party and suspension from full Party membership. At present, confirmation by the next higher committee is required only in the case of expulsion of a Party member from the Party.

6. Amendment to Article XIX:

Add the following sentence to section 10:

"This summary suspension and removal from all responsible positions in the Party cannot be extended for a period of more than three months."

At present, there is no time limit fixed for suspension pending enquiry. The present amendment is meant for this.

Homage to Comrade Robin Sen*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep grief at the passing away of Comrade Robin Sen, prominent leader of the CPI(M) and the working class movement of West Bengal. Robin Sen was a member of the secretariat of the state committee of West Bengal and a member of the Central Control Commission of the Party. He was one of the key organisers of the Party and an able trade union leader. He was 71 years old and unmarried.

Comrade Robin Sen joined the freedom struggle and was active in the Congress before working with the Communists in organising the working class. During the second world war, he joined the Royal Indian Air Force. His anti-imperialist organisational activities in the armed forces led to his court-martial. Subsequently, he rejoined the Communist Party in 1953 and worked as a wholetime functionary. He was responsible for building the trade unions in the main industrial areas of the state, particularly in the Asansol-Raniganj belt. He made a major contribution to building the Party in Burdwan district of which he was the secretary for fifteen years.

Comrade Robin Sen stood firmly for Marxism-Leninism and fought against the revisionist trend in the united party. He was a member of the state committee of the CPI(M) from 1964 onwards and was elected to the state secretariat in 1989. He was elected to the Lok Sabha twice and was a member of parliament from 1971 to 1980. He was the all-India vice-president of the CITU.

Comrade Robin Sen was a staunch upholder of Communist standards and was widely respected for his total integrity and dedication. His organisational work in upholding Communist

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norms and discipline was invaluable. He was elected to the Central Control Commission for carrying forward this task.

The death of Comrade Robin Sen at this juncture is a big loss for the Party. The high standards he set as a Communist leader is worthy of emulation by all. The Polit Bureau pays its respectful homage to his memory and conveys heartfelt condolences to his colleagues and comrades.

On Jammu Bomb Blasts*

**Statement Dated January 27, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the bomb blasts at the Republic Day function at Jammu which has killed eight persons and injured many others. This extremist act was designed to create terror and the Governor has narrowly escaped the attempt on his life. That the extremists could strike in Jammu in a function where security would normally be tight, shows that there have been serious lapses in the security system. It is essential that the people of Jammu maintain peace and communal amity in the face of such provocations. The incident underlines the necessity not to be complacent about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. An impression has been sought to be created in the recent period that the situation is improving and that elections can be held.

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, February 5, 1995

On RSS-VHP-BJP Designs in Varanasi*

**Statement Dated February 27, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its serious concern at the deliberate building up of tensions in Varanasi by the RSS-VHP-BJP combine utilising the occasion of Mahasivaratri.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, through various outfits, has organised the 'Jai Abhishek' programme with the avowed aim of destroying the Gyanvapi mosque adjoining the Vishwanath temple. Openly rejecting the law of the land which calls for protection of the status quo of all religious places as of August 15, 1947, these so-called religious leaders are whipping up a communal frenzy. Though the BJP has, for the record, stated that Kashi and Mathura are not on its agenda, the RSS chief has made it abundantly clear that Kashi and Mathura are next in the line of their attack for demolition of the mosques.

While a confrontation is sought to be built up in Varanasi, the BJP MPs have openly associated themselves in whipping up communal frenzy, making a mockery of its earlier commitment to the nation and completely exposing its contempt for our Constitution, its secular democratic foundations and the rule of law. With an eye on the 1996 general elections, the BJP is moving once again with a game plan that can plunge the country into fratricidal strife, murder and mayhem.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warns these forces that the people will not allow the country to go up in incendiary communal flames. The CPI(M) appeals to all secular and democratic forces to defeat this diabolical game of the saffron brigade.

*Published in PEOPLES DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, March 5, 1995

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The CPI(M) notes with satisfaction that the provocative activities of the VHP and Bajrang Dal were checked and controlled on Mahasivaratri day. The U.P. Government and the Centre must remain alert to foil any provocative steps by the communal forces and to ensure the security of minorities.

On Murder of CPI(M) Candidate in Bihar*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the ghastly murder of Comrade Santudas, the CPI(M) candidate from the Chatra assembly constituency in Bihar. He was forcibly taken away from Dumri Pahari by armed hoodlums of the Maoist Communist Centre to a secluded spot and shot dead. The security guard attached to Santudas was also killed. Five CPI(M) activists were also injured in the attack.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warns the perpetrators of this dastardly crime that the people will not tolerate such cowardly acts. The Polit Bureau calls upon the people of Bihar to unitedly come forward to uphold democracy and democratic rights.

On Postponement of Bihar Elections*

**Statement Dated March 1, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the postponement of the Bihar assembly elections.

Instead of conducting a free and fair poll in Bihar, the Chief Election Commissioner by postponing the elections has, once again, indulged in sabotage.

It seems that the postponement is the result of a conspiracy to impose President's rule in Bihar to help the fortunes of the ruling party at the Centre.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands immediate revocation of this order and adherence to the earlier schedule.

CPI(M) on General Budget, 1995-96*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Union Budget presented by the Finance Minister is an exercise aimed at generating popular support in an election year for the ruling party while confirming the trend of succumbing to the IMF/World Bank prescriptions and the GATT-94 provisions.

The budget has, for all practical purposes, announced the formal government's withdrawal from any support to plan expenditure so vital to the development of the country's economy. In fact, the comparison of the revised estimates for 1994-95 with the budgetary estimates for 1995-96 on the budget support to the plan expenditure, both Centre and states, shows an actual reduction. In real terms, this would mean a much higher amount. Thus, the policy of state withdrawal from its economic and consequent social obligations to the Indian people is virtually complete as evident by the fact that almost all of the increase in revenue expenditure this year has been for non-plan purposes.

The entire budget exercised by the government is clearly marked by its populist approach and aimed at garnering electoral support. Of the total revenue loss of Rs. 1,582 crore, the government has not proposed any substantial levies while at the same time asserted that the fiscal deficit will be maintained at 5.5 per cent of the GDP. This assertion comes on the strength of an invisible confidence in greater tax compliance. It must be recalled that the Finance Minister used the same rhetoric last year while the figures now reveal that the fiscal deficit had jumped up to 6.7 per cent instead of the declared 6 per cent. The specious plea that this is because of increased small savings is ridiculous.

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Savings can never add to the fiscal deficit. In fact, the overall savings rate has declined. It can safely be asserted that the fiscal deficit in this budget is also bound to go up and the government sooner than later will resort to administrative price hikes in order to bridge this gap. Thus, the inflationary pressure which is already soaring in double digits is bound to get worse imposing greater burdens on the common man.

In the name of reducing the fiscal deficit, the Finance Minister has stepped up the selling of the public sector to the tune of over Rs. 7,000 crore. In any case, selling public assets does not reduce fiscal deficit. The country is now aware that thousands of crores have been siphoned off through various scams. Strangely, the Finance Minister has made no mention to this which can reduce the fiscal deficit substantially.

While inflation will thus be permitted adequate measures to ensure the food security for the majority of the Indian people has also been virtually abandoned. The food subsidy has just about been maintained with a nominal increase of Rs. 150 crore, which in real terms, taking into account, inflation amounts to an absolute decline. Thus, while the Finance Minister sheds enough rhetoric for the ideal of social justice in real terms his budget will only make the lives of the working people more miserable. The employment figures given are extremely suspicious. Ground realities show a decreasing employment marked with freeze on appointments and closure of lakhs of industries.

It is not strange that such a withdrawal by the government from public investment in plan expenditure comes simultaneously with bemoaning the lack of sufficient investment in infrastructural facilities. While making cosmetic provisions through the NABARD and financial institutions, the Finance Minister has echoed the IMF philosophy that the users of infrastructural facilities must pay for it. Thus from power, water, to roads and communications costs for the common consumer are bound to escalate adding further to their miseries. The philosophy of adequate return for infrastructure investment will actually guarantee inflation to rise faster.

While providing a five-year tax holiday for infrastructural investment, it has ensured that the costs for the consumers of these facilities would rise. This is bound to further affect domestic industry which is still to emerge completely from the recessionary spell.

It is precisely with this recession in mind that the Finance Minister apparently has reduced across the board excise duties for many articles and further liberalised imports in all items of luxury consumption from synthetic fibre, electronic goods to computers. Thus, the entire strategy is based through growth pattern catering to the luxury consumption of the rich while the safety and security commitments of the government to the working people and the poor is being abdicated. Thus, we have a situation where the fiscal deficit is bound to grow adding further to the inflationary pressures. But all this expenditure is not for investment purposes that strengthen our economy but essentially for non-plan expenditure.

The Central Government while adopting this populist posture for its political purposes has through these proposals mounted a severe attack on the states. The tax relief proposed by the Finance Minister deprives the states of Rs. 808 crore of revenue which is more than half of the total loss of Rs. 1,582 crore that would be incurred by the Centre. Thus, with no increase in budgetary support to the plan, this reduction will further squeeze the states' economic activity and impose greater burdens on the people.

Thus in, fact, we have a budget which takes India further down the road of the IMF's structural adjustment programme, "liberalisation", relief for the richer sections and the corporate sector while the commitment to the goals of self-reliance and social justice are diluted.

CPI(M) on Rail Budget, 1995-96*

**Statement Dated March 14, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The railway budget proposals presented to Parliament will lead to a spurt in inflation with the proposal for seven per cent increase in freight charges for all commodities. Equally retrograde is the burden placed on ordinary commuters by the increase in the suburban monthly season ticket fares. The emphasis of the railway budget is to commercialise the railways without paying any attention to the social needs of the people. The introduction of new trains like Shatabdi Express and other high tariff services is being done at the expense of ordinary passenger trains being used by the common people.

The increase in the annual plan outlay for the railways, of Rs. 1,245 crore over the previous year, is insufficient in real terms given the double digit inflation. The announcement of increase in trains and other services has been made with an eye on the general elections next year. Without adequate increase in infrastructure expenditure and on improved maintenance, the deterioration in train services will continue at the cost of the passengers. The spate of railway accidents in the recent period is also due to the failure to improve maintenance and observe safety standards.

The entire policy on the railways is dictated by the liberalisation policy and stress on privatisation of various sectors of the railways.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands the withdrawal of the proposals for freight increase and hike in second class fares for suburban services. It calls for a change in the government's policy towards railways so that sufficient investment is made for strengthening infrastructure and expansion of railway services to meet the needs of the people all over the country.

On Election Results in Gujarat and Maharashtra*

**Statement Dated March 13, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The defeat of the Congress(I) in the Gujarat and Maharashtra assembly elections is a reaffirmation of the people's rejection of the economic policies of the Congress governments at the Centre and the states, their compromise with the communal forces and the gross corruption and misrule. The election results show the continuing erosion of mass support for the Congress. In both these states, the secular opposition and Left Parties were not strong enough to provide an alternative and the BJP and the Shiv Sena have cashed in on the popular discontent. The BJP coming to power in Gujarat and the emergence of the Shiv Sena-BJP combination as the largest bloc in Maharashtra does not augur well for the country given their commitment to the communal platform.

In the case of Orissa, the defeat of the Janata Dal must be ascribed to the Biju Patnaik Government's enthusiastic support and adoption of the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and various anti-people measures. The resultant discontent and the corruption scandals have resulted in the people registering a negative verdict on the state government's performance.

The Polit Bureau considers the overall election verdict to be a rejection of the Congress(I)'s economic policies and its record of brazen corruption. Spiralling inflation and price rise, growing unemployment, impoverishment of the masses due to liberalisation and loot of public funds through corrupt practices have led to the Congress(I) debacle. Unless these policies are reversed, the country cannot be saved from ruin.

CPI(M) Decries Wild Allegations*

**Statement Dated March 21, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is reported in a section of the Bengali Press that Comrade Nripen Chakraborty, Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M), in an interview, has made wild allegations against the state governments of Tripura and West Bengal and the two state units of the Party.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) considers the contents published as slanderous and utterly baseless. These charges are the same as those the Congress(I) has been fabricating over the years both in West Bengal and in Tripura. Despite this, the people of both the states have repeatedly reposed their confidence in the CPI(M). Especially in Tripura, despite all the machinations of the Congress(I) to create trouble following the last assembly elections, the CPI(M) has demonstrated its popular support in the recently held Panchayat elections.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) decries the allegations appearing in the interview and strongly refutes them.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 26, 1995

Welcome Address to Delegates of 15th Congress of CPI(M) Read by Mangat Ram Pasla, Chairman of The Reception Committee, on April 3, 1995 at Basavapunnaiah Nagar, Chandigarh*

Respected Delegates, Fraternal Delegates from abroad and friends:

I am extremely happy to greet you in the land of Jallianwala-bagh, Gadr heroes, Babbar Akalis and the land of Bhagat Singh and his colleagues and innumerable martyrs and patriots who laid down their lives in the struggle for the national independence and for Socialism. We can take pride in the fact that among the patriots who were hanged by the British imperialists and became martyrs, Punjab takes pride in remaining on the top.

During the struggle for independence, the October revolution had a big impact on the people of Punjab and they linked up the question of national independence with the question of social revolution and because of that Punjab was one of the first states where Communist groups came into existence in the early 20s. And again, it was one of the first states where the Workers' and Peasants' Party came into existence in 1927.

We also take pride in the fact that the Communist Party in Punjab carries the best revolutionary traditions with a rich heritage because the revolutionaries of the early period rallied round the red flag and began working in the working class and the peasantry giving a new content to the struggle for freedom. It had become a powerful force in the body politic of the state. Punjab was also one of the first states to develop the peasants' movement both against the landlords as well as against the government. It was not an industrially developed state. Even then, in the earlier days, along with the textile workers, we

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concentrated on the railway workers and built a strong union named North Western Railway Workers Union with Mirza Ibrahim as its President.

When the Communist Party became illegal, along with the workers' and peasants' movement, it began to take an important part in building the Congress organisation particularly in the rural areas, especially after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the President in 1936 and began talking about Socialism.

During the war it had to face severe repression but even in those difficult days, it raised the banner of proletarian internationalism and boldly supported not only the struggle for national independence throughout the world but after the attack on Soviet Union roused the people in the struggle against fascism and in defence of Socialism.

The INA, which played an important role in the post-war upsurge, had a bulk of the cadre from Punjab. They made tremendous sacrifices in the struggle for freedom. Prominent among them were Gen. Mohan Singh, Shah Nawaz Khan, Col. Dhillon and Col. Sehgal. In the Naval revolt also, a good number were from Punjab. The Communist Party in Punjab was looked with high esteem by the people. In the state's people's movement also, the Communists were in the forefront.

But unfortunately, the partition of the country came about. In Bengal and also other parts of the country people suffered a lot from its impact. But Punjab became the worst sufferer because the Government of India had to agree to a total migration of population from both sides which resulted in the assassination of six lakhs of people on both sides and the migration of 15 lakh people. People had to leave their hearth and home with the loss of many kith and kin. It was not easy to heal these wounds. This naturally led to the spread of communal violence but in those days too, when other political parties got affected, it is the Communist Party which remained in the forefront of defence of the minorities of both states even at the cost of their lives. Later, the Party took the task of rehabilitation very seriously and began working for the resettlement of the refugees and was able to influence the government to provide twelve and half acres of land

to each family without any discrimination whether they were land-owners or tenants. This sustained working helped the party to reforge its links with the people. Slowly, it began to organise the working class, the peasants, agricultural workers, students and others.

Later on, it succeeded in building the class and mass organisations. In 1959 it was able to develop a very powerful movement against the Betterment Levy. It was the biggest movement led under the leadership of the Party after the Telangana struggle. But because of certain mistakes, we could not consolidate the gains of this movement.

As the division of the country had left the seeds of the virus of communalism, the Party had to face great difficulties. It has faced very difficult period during the last 4/5 years but championed the cause of the defence of national unity when innumerable comrades, leaders and workers, laid down their lives. It heightened the prestige of the Party very much in the eyes of the people. Thanks to the political line pursued by the Central Committee, both against the economic policies and the struggle against communalism, its prestige is quite high. Even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and dismantling of Socialism in Eastern European countries, not a single member deserted the Party. In fact, there is a regular growth, though slow, in building the trade union movement, agricultural workers' and women's organisations. The political scene is very complicated in the state but in the complex situation, we have succeeded in making a breakthrough.

Punjab has had the honour of holding two Party Congresses: one in 1958 in Amritsar and the second in 1978 in Jullundhar. This is the third time we got the opportunity of hosting the Party Congress. This is a great honour for us. In preparation for the Party Congress, we have tried to cover all the villages in the state and we got a tremendous response from all sections of the population. The Party was able to make collections to the tune of Rs. 3 million in the last 2 months and every unit was able to fulfil its quota. The message of the CPI(M) has reached among all sections of the population.

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It is a big responsibility which we decided to shoulder in a critical time in the country's history but the correctness of the Party's political line remained a source of inspiration to fulfil this responsibility. We may not succeed in providing all the facilities for successful work of the Party Congress as the stronger units of the Party like West Bengal and Kerala are able to, but we can assure you that we will do everything to enable you to successfully carry on with the work of the Party Congress. We are sure that as every Party Congress is the landmark in the history of Communist movement, this Party Congress will help not only in the further development of the Communist movement in the country but also in our state. In the end, I request you to forgive if any shortcoming is found in our arrangements.

Thank you.

Political Resolution Adopted by The 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held at Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995*

INTERNATIONAL

1.1. Important developments have taken place since the 14th Congress. Meeting just after the dismantling of the socialist system in the Soviet Union and East Europe and the formal disintegration of the USSR, the 14th Congress upheld the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism, and unified the Party on ideological and political issues.

1.2. The Congress, amongst others, had come to the following conclusions, which need to be considered on the basis of the developments that have taken place during the intervening period.

(a) The dismantling of the socialist system in the Soviet Union and East Europe had occurred due to certain serious distortions in the process of socialist construction, deformities in socialist democracy and deviations from the creative application of the science of Marxism-Leninism. Hence, these developments do not constitute the negation either of Marxism-Leninism or the pursuit of the socialist ideal.

(b) As a consequence of this, the balance of class forces in the international arena has shifted, albeit temporarily, in the historical frame, in favour of imperialism.

(c) Notwithstanding these developments and the relatively favourable situation for imperialism, capitalism cannot offer any solution to the basic and pressing problems faced by humanity. On the contrary, it continues to consign vast millions to a life of squalor, destitution, starvation and misery.

*Published in December 1995 in a compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) and also published as a separate booklet in April, 1995

Further, capitalism as a system is not and can never be crisis-free. But in the given correlation of class forces it is able to manage its own problems, by utilising scientific and technological advances, by the expansion of the international market, and more importantly, by intensifying exploitation domestically and internationally.

(d) Consequently, all the four fundamental contradictions of the present epoch continue to intensify, i.e., contradiction between imperialism and Socialism, contradiction between imperialism and the Third World countries, inter-imperialist contradictions and the contradiction between labour and capital in the capitalist countries. The character of the epoch continues to remain the transition of humanity from capitalism to Socialism, which began in 1917, hence the central contradiction, the one between imperialism and Socialism.

(e) In this situation, U.S. imperialism is intensifying its efforts to impose its hegemony which is manifested in the political, military and the economic spheres.

(f) The process of restoration of capitalism in the former socialist countries will not be easy and simple as is being conceived.

(g) The disarray in the international Communist movement that appeared in the wake of these developments, accompanied by a renewed ideological offensive against Marxism-Leninism, is also a temporary phenomenon. As the capitalist crisis intensifies, the working class is bound to regroup and rejuvenate itself in these struggles.

1.3. The developments of the last three years have vindicated the correctness and continuing validity of these conclusions.

World Capitalism: Sluggish Recovery

1.4. Despite the favourable international climate, the world capitalist system, owing to the inherent nature of capitalist production dynamics is undergoing a difficult recovery from the recession that had gripped it for the longest spell since the second world war.

1.5. The GATT annual review in January 1994 concluded that world trade increased only by 3% as against a modest forecast of 4.5%, while world output grew at 2%, far less than the anticipated target for 1993, "confirming that the period of slow growth for the world economy which began in 1989 continued in 1993". The IMF forecast (semi annual 1994) states that the world economy slated to grow at over 3.2% actually grew at a little less than 3%.

1.6. However, available indicators for 1994 and projections for 1995 by the World Bank show that just as the recession set in unevenly, so has the recovery. Apart from taking a longer time than the normal cyclical crisis of capitalism, the recovery seems uneven and sluggish. The USA is estimated to reach a growth rate of 4% while the projection for 1995 is only 2.9%. Britain and Canada, which were the earliest to manifest the recession are now slated to grow at more than 3% in 1994 and 1995. Likewise, Germany and France are projected to grow at more than 2%, while Italy remained sluggish at 1.5% in 1994. Japan is still to overcome the recession; official sources admit that during the fiscal year April 1993 to March 1994 the GDP was expected to record a negative growth of minus 1.0%.

1.7. However, this recovery has had no significant impact on the employment situation. Though in the USA the unemployment rate has dropped from nearly 8% to less than 6%, in the long term it still remains one of the highest since World War II. Most of the new jobs have been in the nature of temporary, piece-meal and not regular employment. What is being witnessed today is a new type of structural unemployment associated with this stage of capitalist development.

1.8. This halting recovery is thus universally described as "jobless growth". The OECD (comprising 25 developed capitalist countries) ministerial council in June 1994 estimated that 8.5% of the labour force, or 35 million, were unemployed, with the forecast for 1995 showing a marginal drop to 8.3%, though in absolute numbers unemployment would be higher due to additions to the labour force. The G-7 summit in July 1994 estimated an unemployment of 24 million in the seven most industrialised capitalist countries.

1.9. The developments during the last decade or so have shown newer methods being adopted by capitalism to overcome its own crisis. The massive centralisation of international finance capital has been facilitated by the dominance of multinational banks and corporations. This has helped world capitalism, despite recessionary conditions, to maintain and increase its rates of profit, particularly at the expense of the Third World countries. Further, the various types of regional integration that are taking place now have helped various capitalist centres not only to retain their economic position but to consolidate and expand. In the process newer methods of exploitation are being evolved.

1.10 The main consequence of this process, however, has been the intensification of capitalist exploitation both domestically in capitalist countries as well as internationally against the Third World countries.

Intensification of Contradictions

1.11. Following the collapse of the socialist countervailing power in world politics, world imperialism led by the USA, with grand visions of imposing a "new world order" has desperately set about to establish its hegemony. The period since the 14th Congress has, hence, been a period of intensification of all the four fundamental contradictions, marked by the continued aggressiveness on the part of imperialism in the political, economic and cultural fields.

Contradiction between Imperialism and Socialism

1.12. During these years, U.S. imperialism has mounted sustained pressure on the remaining socialist countries, intensifying the central contradiction of the epoch.

1.13. The heartening feature has been the firmness with which these countries are resisting imperialist onslaughts.

1.14. Imperialism is trying to use its weapon of internal subversion to achieve its ends but does not hesitate to use or threaten military pressures. Cuba is the latest example whereby making use of the difficulties arising out of the criminal blockade by U.S.

imperialism, ignoring the overwhelming U.N. general assembly resolutions calling for its lifting, the USA conspired to intervene in its internal affairs. But this was firmly rebuffed by the Cuban people who demonstrated an inspiring unity in defence of the socialist system. This received worldwide support and solidarity, not allowing the USA to succeed in its aim. As a result, the U.S. administration was compelled to sign an agreement with Cuba on repatriation and immigration in September 1994. At the present juncture such an agreement is a victory for Cuba.

1.15. The U.S. imperialism tried desperately to create a situation like that preceding the Gulf war in the Korean peninsula, by threatening sanctions and military intervention against the DPRK on the pretext that it was not allowing inspection of its nuclear installations. This pretext was resorted to despite the fact that on a number of occasions the International Atomic Energy Agency of the U.N. had certified that the DPRK does not have any nuclear weapons, nor is it close to producing any. The USA initially refused to accept any reasonable proposal by the DPRK and it was only the firm stand taken by the DPRK and supported by China in the U.N. Security Council which thwarted the U.S. military threat. As a result, in August 1994, a fourth round of bilateral talks between the DPRK and the U.S. were held where the U.S. was forced to reach a compromise with DPRK. In the background, the agreement also envisages the ending of the persisting isolation of the DPRK and the beginning of diplomatic relations with the USA.

1.16. The USA is trying to pressurise China to change its course of social development using 'human rights' as a pretext. The U.S. had threatened to withdraw the Most Favoured Nation status to China. But the massive trade surplus that China enjoys vis-a-vis the USA frightened U.S. business circles with possible Chinese retaliation, which in turn persuaded the U.S. administration to continue the M.F.N. status. But the USA is still blocking the entry of China as a full member of the GATT and the WTO.

1.17. The U.S. continues to play the Taiwan card disregarding the territorial integrity of China, through a renewed attempt at arming Taiwan with sophisticated weapons. The British colonial

administration in Hongkong is also trying to create complications in the restoration of Hongkong to mainland China which comes into effect from July 1, 1997, using one pretext or the other, the latest being 'democratic elections'.

1.18. Despite all its efforts, U.S. imperialism has not been able to have its writ run in blackmailing these socialist countries and in trying to subvert the socialist system there. It has, in fact, been compelled to lift the economic blockade of Vietnam.

Contradiction between Labour and Capital

1.19. The halting recovery in the advanced capitalist countries noted above, is intensifying the contradiction between the working people and capital in the capitalist countries. This is manifesting itself in growing unemployment, poverty and homelessness. The total employment in the manufacturing sector in Britain, according to the Federation of British Industry, fell by a whopping 40 per cent between 1979 and 1993. In Germany, 8.5 lakh persons lost their jobs in 1991, and another 5 lakh are projected to lose their jobs in 1994; 7.25 million people are being forced to live below the poverty line and 8 lakh are homeless. Unemployment in Germany is 8.9 per cent while in the eastern part it is 17.1 per cent. In Japan, unemployment has reached around 1.5 million at the rate of 2.7 per cent which is the highest in post-war Japanese history.

1.20. The governments in many countries have adopted a policy of privatisation, disinvestment and selling off of the public sector created for people's welfare, including service sectors like railways, airlines, post and telegraph, banks, etc. No longer have they the compulsion to face the socialist challenge as they had in the immediate post-war situation, when, in response, capitalism adopted the concept of the welfare state. One of the immediate casualties of the setbacks to Socialism has been the severe cuts in the welfare expenditure in capitalist countries. In the USA, the share of federal dollars going for welfare measures declined further by 1.1 per cent in 1992. Clinton recently announced the decision to cut a further 7 million dollars from the existing social security programmes.

1.21. These are naturally mounting an unprecedented burden, on the working people, which is finding reflection in the growth of popular movements. Massive strikes by the working class to defend their rights and position against these attacks have taken place during these three years.

1.22. This growing resentment and discontent is also manifesting itself in the elections in various countries. In the June 1994 elections to the Euro Parliament, ruling rightists and conservative forces have lost ground. The ruling Tory Party in Britain lost 14 seats. In Germany, the Christian Democratic Party got only 40 per cent of the vote. In France, the ruling centre-right alliance managed only 25.5 per cent of the vote. In the Netherlands the ruling Christian Democratic Party lost one third of the seats. In the Congressional elections in the U.S., the ruling Democrats have lost both houses to the Republicans. In Japan, the LDP lost after decades of ruling. In many capitalist countries, corruption scandals rocked the ruling parties, leading to election routs as in Japan and Italy.

1.23. On the other hand, social democrat and former Communists have improved their standing. In Italy, though the rightist neo-Nazi alliance captured 366 seats in the national parliament of 630 but the PDS and the party of Communist refoundation Left alliance emerged close as the largest opposition party. Prior to this, the municipalities of all major cities in Italy were won by the Left with a big majority. In Spain the Communist Party increased its percentage of vote in the Euro Parliament elections. The Party for Democratic Socialism of the former GDR won 30 seats in the recent elections and qualified for representation in the German Parliament, the Bundestag.

1.24. Both these aspects put together, the growing strike and protest actions and the setbacks to the right wing-ruling parties in almost all the advanced capitalist countries, clearly shows the growing discontent amongst the people. Wherever the Left and Communist Parties are there in the forefront, channelising this discontent into progressive and democratic struggles, they have gained.

1.25. However, in the absence of a coherent and strong Communist-led Left movement, right-wing forces are trying to exploit the popular discontent to their political advantage. The growth of neo-fascist forces in France, Germany, and more so in Italy, shows that the period ahead, will be one of intense political struggle between the Right which seeks to exploit people's discontent for its advantage, and the Left which seeks to defend people's rights and advance them further.

1.26. There is today a growing coordination between the Left and the Communist Parties all over Europe with renewed efforts at opposing both the European Union and the policies generating intensified exploitation at home.

1.27. The intensification of this contradiction reflecting the internal crisis of capitalism, is manifesting itself in the attempt by imperialism and capitalism to emerge out of the crisis by shifting the burden on to the Third World countries through intensified exploitation. This is also leading to increased conflicts between imperialist countries themselves as each tries to emerge from its own crisis at the expense of the other.

Inter-Imperialist Contradictions

1.28. During the last three years, the process of regional integration has become more manifest with each of the three capitalist centres—the USA, Germany and Japan—trying to consolidate their positions.

1.29. With the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, the process of European Union has further advanced, which in essence aims at the integration of European monopoly capital and its assuming a supranational character undermining the national sovereignty of individual nations. This expresses the need of monopoly capital to achieve a higher degree of free movement without restriction by any national policies of member countries in crucial economic and social sectors. The European Union's authority is now not confined to economic levers alone, but has extended to political, military and foreign policy fields as well.

1.30. Apart from creating conditions for the unhindered movement of capital across Europe facilitating MNCs expansion, such

an integration strengthens the position of European capital internationally, and within European capital that of the strongest economy, Germany. Politically, moves are also afoot for joint military commands within Europe threatening the U.S.-NATO domination which has existed so far. The USA, on the other hand, is seeking to extend the domain of NATO beyond the borders of Western Europe. Though they have not been granted full membership of NATO, by end 1994, 22 states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics had joined the "Partnership for Peace" programme of NATO.

1.31. But this process has been marked by conflicts amongst the European countries themselves. The lurking fear of a renewed German domination with all its consequences is widely held in Europe. A referendum in Denmark recently rejected the Masstricht Treaty. The issue of a common European currency is in trouble with Britain's reservations. Even the commonly agreed Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) had to be abandoned.

1.32. A similar process is on in the American continent with the coming into effect of the NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement) between the USA, Canada and Mexico. Clinton has recently made it clear that this agreement will not be confined to these countries alone but is visualised to involve the whole western hemisphere by the year 2005. The USA has been the main beneficiary of such an agreement exploiting the cheap labour and raw material resources of Mexico and dumping its finished products in Canada. In 1993 alone, U.S. multinationals repatriated profits of 40 billion U.S. dollars from Mexico which is one-third of Mexico's total debt. The U.S. is trying in this process to re-establish its economy which has been relatively weakened during the last decade and more as compared to that of Japan and Germany.

1.33. Japan has become the major economic power in Asia. With its strong economy and yen it has utilised more profitable overseas investments for increasing its profits. Between 1987 and 1990 Japanese direct foreign investment in Asia increased dramatically from 2 to 8 billion U.S. dollars. Japanese investment in East Asia grew five-fold. As a result, its giant multinational

corporations have a greater production outside Japan than domestically. Such domination of Japanese capital and consequent dependence of many Asian countries, has political implications as well, strengthening Japan's position vis-a-vis the European Union and NAFTA. Efforts are on to formalise the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) as an economic trading bloc.

1.34. These three centres are contending with each other for consolidating their relative economic positions. The conflicts have assumed a fresh dimension in the trade wars that are intensifying between these three centres. For example, Japan enjoys a 60 billion dollar trade surplus which the U.S. wants to reduce by pressurising Japan to revalue its yen. Japan naturally is resisting this because its products would then become more expensive in international trade. Notwithstanding, Japan's yen has been continuously appreciating resulting in domestic problems of stagnation and recession while facilitating overseas investments since the latter is relatively cheaper.

1.35. In the political sphere, this contradiction is reflected in many issues that have come to the fore during the last three years. Even with regard to the invasion of Haiti, France had come out in opposition, and again in Rwanda, France and U.S. differed. In the unfortunate situation in former Yugoslavia and the continued civil war in Bosnia, America and many European powers find themselves on opposite sides.

1.36. In the period to come these contradictions are bound to intensify further.

Contradiction between Imperialism and the Third World

1.37. Notwithstanding the inter imperialist contradictions, on the question of exploitation of the Third World, imperialism has shown a certain degree of unity. The G-7 regularly met not only to settle economic affairs but arrive at coordinated political and foreign policy positions as well. This has manifested itself in the intensification of this contradiction more rapidly during this period. In the new favourable situation that imperialism finds itself in, both economic and political, pressures on the Third World continue to mount.

1.38. In the economic sphere, imperialism has succeeded in bringing together the GATT 1994 treaty and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation sorting out its internal differences. This treaty gives a legal licence to multinational corporations and imperialist capital to intensify the exploitation of the Third World economies and also to repatriate the profits thus made. The treaty imposes many domestic changes in the Third World countries that infringe upon their sovereignty and economic independence.

1.39. These attempts go hand in hand with the continued IMF/World Bank domination over the Third World and their conditionalities which have resulted over the last decade in a negative transfer of resources away from the Third World to the advanced capitalist world. According to the World Bank annual report, September 1994, there was a net outflow of 731 million U.S. dollars from all debtor countries in the first 6 months of 1994. The World Bank's report on Africa (March 1994) admits that 20 of the 26 countries following IMF prescriptions have failed to improve their economies. The rest of the 6 will take at least 30 years to eradicate poverty. The recent collapse of the Mexican economy is a classic example of the final outcome of the Fund/Bank prescriptions. The Mexican peso was devalued by 40 per cent; there was massive flight of capital and the heavily indebted country has had to mortgage its oil reserves to the U.S. and other creditors in order to get a \$ 50 billion loan package. The working people have suffered a drastic erosion in their real wages. Increasingly, the IMF/World Bank dictated policies carried out by the ruling classes in Third World countries are intensifying the onslaughts on the people. The struggles of the working people of these countries against imperialism and their ruling classes are an important arena of revolutionary and democratic struggles at the present juncture.

1.40. The GATT treaty comes in the background of the already impoverished situation in the Third World. For instance, 61 per cent of the rural population in Latin America in 1994 lived below the poverty line (Economic Commission for Latin America). In Africa,

20 of the world's poorest countries recorded 5 per cent decline in Gross Domestic Product. According to the ILO report 1993 by the year 2000, 50 per cent of the world population will be forced to live under the poverty line.

1.41. The total debt of the developing world continues to mount. The World Bank has estimated that the Third World debt had increased to 1.66 trillion dollars by the end of 1992. This means an increase of 56 billion or 3.5 per cent over the previous year. The bank estimated an increase of another 6.5 per cent in 1993, which means that the tendency of negative transfer of resources is bound to intensify further.

1.42. The so-called "end of the cold war" was trumpeted to result in lasting peace in the world. Despite the dismantling of the Warsaw Pact, not only does the USA maintain NATO and its military bases but its activities are also expanding. The so-called "peace dividend" that was expected to follow the 'end of the cold war' has been illusionary. From 1987 to 1994, armament expenditure fell by a whopping 935 billion. But as the World Development Report 1994 notes, "It is frustrating that, just as social and human agendas were pushed aside at a time of rising military budgets, they continue to be neglected even when military expenditures are being reduced".

1.43. The GATT agreement and the continued Bank/Fund stranglehold that is growing stronger is bound to impose further hardships on the millions in the Third World. The situation has already reached such a pass that the richest 20% of the world's population corners 87.4% of world's GNP, while the poorest 20% gets a mere 1.4% (Human Development Report 1994). The intensification of this contradiction in this background is bound to lead to unheard of increase in poverty, homelessness, misery and virtual collapse of the health and food security of the Third World countries.

1.44. Often the experience of East Asian countries like South Korea, is given as an example of the success of 'liberalisation' Seldom is it noted that all these countries adopted a high degree of State protection and intervention. Further their economic success

was preceded by land reforms under post-War occupation that liberated the productive forces in agriculture.

1.45. In the political sphere, imperialism's hegemonistic designs are reflected blatantly in the military interventions, economic blockades and hijacking the U.N. security council. Following the Gulf war came the invasions in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia and Haiti. Against Iraq, the USA is continuing to impose its sanctions, inhuman in content, for furthering its interests.

1.46. But protests against such interventions are also developing all across the world. In Latin America, the Sao Paulo forum has brought together Left and progressive forces on the question of economic exploitation, debt and for social transformation. The armed uprising of the indigenous people of Mexico, in Chiapas, manifests the growing protests of the people against intensified imperialist exploitation.

1.47. Though NAM's strength has been considerably weakened, the stand taken at the 10th summit in Jakarta is significant. The North-South divisions have also found expression in various international conferences like the U.N.-sponsored Earth Summit in 1992, the Conference on Human Rights in Geneva in 1993, the Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in September 1994 and the Social Development Summit in Copenhagen in March 1995.

1.48. However, the strong movements that had emerged in the Third World countries in the form of NAM, League of Arab States etc. are generally losing their anti-imperialist content and either stand paralysed or have been disrupted. In this situation, U.S. imperialism has been able to foist its agreements on many national liberation movements. The PLO under American pressure, has been forced to come to a settlement with Israel without resolving the major issues involved and disregarding the U.N. resolutions asking for vacation of occupied Arab territories. As a result, PLO unity has been affected with the Communist Party of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine deciding to disassociate from this agreement. Arab countries are being pressurised by the USA to

come to a settlement with Israel without solving the problems which led to the confrontation. They have succeeded in roping in Jordan and are mounting pressures on Syria. These efforts are disrupting Arab unity. In fact, even on the question of Jerusalem Israel has been intransigent and refusing to settle it. Meanwhile, the barbaric destruction of areas of South Lebanon by Israel continues, while the fate of the Palestinian refugees has not yet been decided.

1.49. In Northern Ireland the IRA which has been waging a struggle for British withdrawal, has agreed to a ceasefire and negotiations with the British Government. While this may lead to a welcome respite from the armed conflicts it can only be hoped that the British occupation of Northern Ireland will cease.

1.50. The U.N.-supervised elections in Cambodia have been successfully held. The understanding between Sihanouk and Hun Sun ushered in a period of stability in the strife torn country. But imperialism through Thailand continues to extend support to the rebels while looting the diamond rich area.

1.51. In Latin American countries, progressive movements are regrouping to carry forward the struggles against U.S. imperialist domination and exploitation resisting the imperialist puppet regimes with tremendous sacrifices. In many of these countries, like El Salvador, in the present context, they are coming into negotiated settlements while retaining their base and influence in their areas. The U.S. imperialism, however, continues to intervene in the Central and Latin American countries to subvert the advance of the Left-wing forces.

1.52. Prior to the 14th Congress, imperialism succeeded in removing many progressive regimes in Africa like Ethiopia and Mozambique. This process has continued. The recent case being that of Yemen. This blatant intervention in Africa also continues at the political plane. The U.S. imperialism is utilising the present world situation in order to browbeat many of these countries into submission.

1.53. In Western Sahara, the long standing U.N. referendum has not come into effect. Despite U.N. directives the process is being thwarted by U.S. backed Morocco.

1.54. However, despite all its efforts imperialism could not stop the forward march of the heroic South African people who achieved a great victory in the recently concluded elections. The assumption of power by Nelson Mandela as President, represents the successful culmination of the long, heroic and arduous struggle of the South African people led by the African National Congress of which the Communist Party is a part, against apartheid. South Africa so far, had been used as the imperialist bulwark against the progressive movements in Southern Africa. With this historic transformation, imperialism has lost its vital foothold. In Angola and Mozambique, despite all efforts it has not been able to thwart the people's aspirations and have its writ run. In Angola, despite imperialist support to UNITA to thwart the democratic process, the MPLA has registered a significant victory. In Namibia, SWAPO-led by Sam Nujoma has recently gained an impressive victory polling over 70% of the vote.

1.55. This victory in South Africa has created confidence in the African people and is a source of inspiration. But in the concrete situation the ANC had to form a government of reconciliation including De Klerk and Buthelezi. However, the levers of economic power in the hands of the white minority backed by imperialism, in the present world situation, are mounting pressure on the ANC. The great expectations of the masses remain to be fulfilled. This has created a difficult and complicated situation for the progressive forces.

1.56. This period has also seen the rise of the forces of Islamic fundamentalism. These forces disrupt the unity of the working people and the common struggle against imperialism. Fundamentalism weakens the Left and democratic and progressive forces. The example of Algeria, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and other countries can be seen. Imperialism will intervene to utilise these forces to divert the attention of the people.

1.57. Notwithstanding these, however, conditions are growing for anti-imperialist struggles and solidarity movements among the Third World countries.

Former Socialist Countries

1.58. The conclusions of our 14th Congress are vindicated by the situation in the former socialist countries. That the restoration of capitalism and market economy are not the solution to the people's problems has been dramatically brought out by a near complete erosion of the social security that the socialist system had provided these people. The living conditions have immensely declined. The consequent moral and cultural degeneration is evidently manifested.

1.59 Imperialist intervention has been the most tragic and inhuman in former Yugoslavia. While it encourages and foments ethnic strife and consequent instability for its ends, imperialism has succeeded in dividing Yugoslavia into five separate entities. It is aiming at further dividing it into nine. German designs are apparent in the dismemberment, and the conflict in Bosnia continues heaping miseries and trauma on the people.

1.60. The U.S. imperialism is pressurising the former Soviet Republics that have nuclear weapons to de-nuclearise. Further it is encouraging ethnic and religious strife. In the Central Asian republics, Islamic fundamentalism is threatening stability in the entire region.

1.61. In Yeltsin's Russia according to the World Bank, between 1991 and 1992, the per capita income declined by 17 per cent in nominal terms, in real terms it is much greater. The average purchasing power is 42 per cent of what it was in 1990. According to the Russian journal *Trud*, 54 million Russians or nearly 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. The rouble has devalued dramatically. One U.S. dollar fetches more than 4,000 roubles.

1.62. The Western version of democracy has transformed Russia into the ruthless autocratic regime of Yeltsin. Even the Parliament building was stormed and parliamentary democracy

suppressed in a brutal and bloody action in October 1993, clearly showing the real face of counter revolution. The popular protests in the meanwhile are also growing. In the 1993 parliamentary elections, Yeltsin suffered a severe setback. In various parts of Russia, Communist rallies have now become a regular feature and are growing in numbers. In the elections the Communist Party of the Russian Federation along with allies, polled nearly 37 per cent of the votes. They are now in a position to influence the decisions of the Russian Parliament, the Duma, which has come into conflict with Yeltsin. The brutal armed conflict in Chechenya initiated by Yeltsin has heightened the regime's isolation. The Second and Third Congresses of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation held during the period since our 14th Congress is a significant step for uniting the Communist and Leftist forces. At the same time, the growing popular discontent is being exploited by the right reactionary forces as well with the rise of pro-fascist parties. Increasingly the struggle in Russia is going to be between the Left and the Right with big mass mobilisation going in favour of the Communists and the Left.

1.63. Similarly, in Ukraine and Bylorussia, the former Communists have received big support from the people in the elections. In the other Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Azerbaijan counter-revolutionary forces lost the elections. In Mongolia too the former Communists have gained.

1.64. Significantly, in Hungary and Poland, former Communists have formed government after winning elections. Though Lech Walesa continues to be the President of Poland, he has absolutely no control over parliament. In Bulgaria, the former Communists won a resounding victory in the recent elections.

1.65. These developments, however, do not mean the restoration of Socialism in these countries. As we noted in the 14th Congress the process is going to be prolonged and arduous.

Some Developments in Some Socialist Countries

1.66. In China, the 14th Congress of the CPC held in October 1992 had resolved to implement the process of developing a

1.57. Notwithstanding these, however, conditions are growing for anti-imperialist struggles and solidarity movements among the Third World countries.

Former Socialist Countries

1.58. The conclusions of our 14th Congress are vindicated by the situation in the former socialist countries. That the restoration of capitalism and market economy are not the solution to the people's problems has been dramatically brought out by a near complete erosion of the social security that the socialist system had provided these people. The living conditions have immensely declined. The consequent moral and cultural degeneration is evidently manifested.

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Some Developments in Some Socialist Countries

1.66. In China, the 14th Congress of the CPC held in October 1992 had resolved to implement the process of developing a

“socialist market economy” to further economic growth and development. The Gross Domestic Product in China for the year 1993-94 increased at 13.4 per cent over the previous year surpassing the planned growth rate of 8 per cent. Foreign trade continues to expand with an increase in the total value of imports and exports by 18.2 per cent over 1992. It has today a huge trade surplus with the United States of America.

1.67. The CPC has all along reiterated that these reforms are initiated with the firm adherence to the four cardinal principles (adherence to the socialist road, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought, people’s democratic dictatorship and the leadership of the Communist Party) and that the new socio-economic imbalances that may arise due to such rapid growth will be resolved within this framework. We hope that these reforms would further strengthen Socialism in China.

1.68. In Vietnam, the mid-term national conference of the Communist Party held in January 1994 has charted out the task set forth for the coming period. As per the document of the conference, Vietnam has recorded signal achievements. Inflation has been pushed back from 67 per cent from 1991 to 5.2 per cent in 1993. The GDP has increased by 7.2 per cent on an yearly average surpassing the target of the 5-Year Plan of 5.5 to 6 per cent. Both agricultural and industrial production have surpassed the targets.

1.69. In Cuba, despite the most adverse of circumstances, the Party’s 4th Congress held in 1992 has demonstrated the determination of the Party and the people to uphold socialist principles and defend the socialist system. Overcoming the utmost provocations and criminal blockade, Cuba has steadfastly held on to Socialism.

1.70. The DPRK, pursuing a sovereign and self-reliant development has achieved self-sufficiency in food, clothing and shelter and overcoming difficulties being imposed by the USA on the installation of nuclear generators, has been advancing Likewise, Laos is trying to overcome its acute backwardness through reforms.

Future Direction

1.71. As a result of all these developments, the situation in the international Communist movement which was characterised by disarray at the time of our 14th Congress is giving way to a process of regrouping and regeneration. The Italian Party which had abandoned the name Communist and the red flag saw within a year an influential section of more than a third of the former party regrouping to form the Italian Party for Communist Refoundation, and reasserting the relevance and adherence to the revolutionary tenets of Marxism. Likewise in many European countries, the resurgence of the Communist Parties and movements notably in Spain, Portugal, France, Greece has also resulted in the beginning of co-ordination between the parties at the European level. In Latin America Communist Parties met to chalk out joint strategies for resisting imperialist imposition of NAFTA. Likewise the electoral victory of Communists in Nepal signifies a step forward. The international seminar on Marxism hosted by the CPI(M) in 1993 at Calcutta provided an opportunity for Communist Parties from around the world to reaffirm the relevance of Marxism in the contemporary world and to assert that the distortions that occurred in the building of Socialism do not constitute a negation of the theory of Marxism-Leninism. As the capitalist crisis deepens and with the intensification of the four fundamental contradictions, the Communist and Left-wing forces based on the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism are bound to march forward. But as the 14th Congress noted, “the national and social liberation process of the people has been irregular, complex and will take a long time to complete”.

1.72. In this international situation to face the imperialist offensive, we must heighten our solidarity with socialist countries, with the people of the Third World in their struggles to defend independence and social transformation and with the working people’s struggles in the capitalist countries. The CPI(M) is pledged to fulfill its internationalist duties by mobilising all sections of the Indian people in the struggle against imperialism.

NATIONAL SITUATION

2.1. The 14th Congress noted that the country was in for a period of political instability. In a short time the country had had to face two general elections with no party getting a majority. Even in the 1991 elections, the Congress(I) could not get a majority. Later on, they managed a majority by organising defections. Such an acquired majority has not, however, prevented the erosion of its support. It has become clear that the Congress(I) has lost the monopoly of power. The Party Congress had noted "This marked a significant break from the long period of one-party dominance". The rout suffered by the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka and the results of subsequent assembly elections confirm the trend that the Congress(I) is increasingly getting isolated from the people.

2.2. *The 14th Congress had concluded:* "In the coming days the new economic policies are going to worsen the situation for all sections of the working people. These will aggravate the contradiction between the ruling party and the people. The growing discontent will be sought to be diverted by the BJP and other disruptive forces into divisive channels. It has to be the foremost endeavour of the CPI(M) and other Left and democratic forces to direct this discontent into democratic channels by ceaselessly struggling and mobilising in defence of the interests of the working class and toiling people." The analysis and direction given by the 14th Congress has proved correct. It gave a call to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and to strengthen the Left democratic and secular forces.

Main Events Since the Last Congress

2.3. The three years since the 14th Congress have witnessed a rapid stepping up of the economic policies initiated in 1991 which have led to an unprecedented threat to our economic sovereignty. Step by step various sectors of the economy have been opened up to foreign finance capital. Deregulation of the economy has proved a bonanza for the Indian monopolists. The dismantling of the public sector and cuts in public expenditure goes on. All these

have resulted in an all-round attack on the working class and toiling sections of the people. The resistance to the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government has been intensified in the face of this onslaught. Four general strikes in a four-year period illustrate this widening and growing resistance.

2.4. These economic policies have had their impact on India's foreign policy, with its non-aligned content being eroded. The period witnessed growing U.S. pressures on India for signing the NPT and for curbing India's rocket and missile programmes. The struggle against imperialism and in defence of India's sovereignty assumes great significance in this context.

2.5. The warning of the 14th Congress about the growing danger of the communal forces proved correct. The demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6th December 1992 and the widespread communal riots unleashed by this event were a serious onslaught on secular values. The Congress(I) Government miserably failed to fulfill its constitutional duty. Aggressive majority communalism vitiated the democratic atmosphere. The BJP/RSS/VHP combine, however, suffered a setback in the five assembly elections held in the northern states in November 1993. The Rao Government continues with a policy of vacillation and compromise with communalism as seen in its efforts to resolve the Ayodhya dispute by promising to build the temple. The minorities were largely alienated from the Central Government and the forces of fundamentalism have been trying to grow based on the acute discontent among the Muslim community. The period saw a widespread anti-communal campaign by primarily the Party and the Left forces drawing in other secular forces also. Though immediately checked in its advance to power at the Centre, the strength of the BJP combine remains and requires to be continuously fought.

2.6. The continuing secessionist and extremist violence in Kashmir is the most serious threat to national unity. The Pakistani ruling classes are openly organising and equipping the armed groups and this has strained the relations between the two neighbours enabling imperialism to play one country against the other. In the North-East the separatist activities and terrorist groups remain a chronic problem. The ruling party refuses to deal

with the basic cause of these movements which is the failure of the Centre to protect the identity of these people and to provide them with sufficient autonomy.

2.7. Due to the capitalist path, there is uneven development of various states and regions of the country. Many areas have remained very backward without any scope of employment and improvement of economic life. Where some industrial development has taken place, the benefits have been denied to the people of that region. The refusal of the government to tackle these problems is leading to movements for separate states within the Indian Union, and such movements are backed by parties like the BJP and other bourgeois-landlord parties. The demand for restructuring Centre-State relations has assumed urgency. The refusal to give the states more powers is aggravating the situation and encouraging fissiparous tendencies.

2.8. Economic liberalisation has unleashed a shocking level of corruption. It has become institutionalised and is brazenly practised. The multi-crore securities scam, the fraudulent disinvestment of public sector unit shares and the sugar scandal illustrate this degeneration. There is no accountability of ministers even when indicted by enquiry reports. The Congress(I) Government has become synonymous with the loot of public funds.

2.9. Since the last Party Congress there has been a greater assertion by the dalits and backward castes for social justice and for an end to caste discrimination. This has manifested itself in various anti-caste platforms and the demand for implementing reservations. However, the period also saw narrow sectarian appeals based on caste as a vehicle for electoral mobilisation and to divide the unity of the working people. These forces do not raise the question of land reforms, wages for agricultural labour or fight the roots of caste oppression. It is necessary to combat such casteist trends and to firmly set out the line of unity of all oppressed sections to fight the exploitative social and economic order, which alone can render social justice.

2.10. The period saw the continuing fragmentation of the secular opposition formations like the Janata Dal and the National Front. There were further splits in the Janata Dal, riven by factional

and personality differences. The crisis and incessant splits underline the fact that the bourgeois opposition parties cannot maintain their unity for long without having a coherent socio-economic programme.

2.11. It is in this context that a stepped up effort for Left intervention took place. The nationwide campaigns launched by the Left parties culminated in the three-week-long civil disobedience movement in August-September 1994, which saw the maximum mass participation ever in such a sustained programme. The period saw more coordinated and expanded united Left actions. This helped in forging wider unity as seen in the emergence of the National Platform of Mass Organisations and the widespread strike struggles and protest actions unleashed by it.

2.12. The Left alone has put up consistent and firm resistance to the new economic policies. This has led to intensification of the attacks on the Left by the ruling party at the Centre against the Left strongholds of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. These have been met successfully and the victory in the Tripura elections after the severe repression there has strengthened the Left and enhanced its prestige all over the country.

2.13. The crisis of the bourgeois-landlord order is manifested in an acute form in the attacks on the institutions under the Constitution. Parliament is often treated with contempt by the ruling party. The rapid decline in democratic norms is also seen in the rampant police excesses against ordinary citizens, especially the poor, a sharp increase in atrocities on women, adivasis and dalits and the rise of mafia gangs which have become a common phenomenon. The rank commercialisation and consumerism fostered by the policies of liberalisation have intensified the moral decay and eroded the credibility of the institutions of the State.

2.14. A significant development has been the solidarity movement with Cuba. True to the proletarian internationalist outlook, our Party took the initiative in developing the solidarity movement through the Cuba Solidarity Committee. It succeeded in making mass collections throughout the country involving all

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sections of our people and succeeded in sending a shipload of foodgrains and other goods to Cuba worth Rs. 50 million as an expression of solidarity.

Economic Situation

2.15. The economic policies adopted by the Narasimha Rao Government have been nakedly pro-rich and beneficial to big business and foreign capital. They constitute a total reversal of the basis of India's self-reliant development. Beginning with the acceptance of the IMF-World Bank structural adjustment programme, the Rao Government embarked upon the dismantling of the public sector and large-scale privatisation; deregulated the economy and removed all checks on monopoly houses; opened up the economy to foreign capital in all sectors; and under IMF-World Bank dictates cut public investment and public expenditure in a big way.

2.16. Liberalisation has resulted in a bonanza for foreign capital and Indian big business. In the name of stimulating growth, the corporate sector has been given big tax concessions and foreign companies have been given even more facilities than Indian firms in certain areas. Such measures have not helped the economy which has witnessed stagnation, a sharp escalation in the rate of surplus value and the curtailment of productive investment which is going to affect future growth. The Gross Domestic Product which grew at an annual average rate of 5.3% during 1981-91, saw an average growth rate of only 3% in the last three years. Agriculture has had an annual growth rate of about 1% during the last three years and the corresponding growth rate of industry was 2%. This unimpressive performance has been recorded at a high price. The total external debt stood at Rs. 2,83,000 crores by the end of 1993. The internal debt stands at an enormous Rs. 4,83,545 crores.

2.17. The benefits of these pernicious policies have accrued to the urban and rural rich. The whole policy is geared to meet the needs of the top ten per cent of the population and the market they provide. The Rao Government's policies are shaped by the big business bodies such as CII, FIICI and ASSOCHAM. The ne

profits earned by 1,200 large private sector companies rose by 83% in 1993-94, higher than in any other Asian country. The disinvestment of shares in the public sector units has led to public assets being sold at scandalously cheap rates and causing a loss of Rs. 12,000 crores to the government in the first three rounds. Income inequalities have grown rapidly during the last three years while the direct taxes on the rich have been reduced. The ongoing new economic policies have heightened uneven development, with delicensing and deregulation leading to the neglect of backward states and regions for infrastructural and industrial investments.

2.18. The economic policies have led to severe reverses for indigenous development of science and technology. In the name of globalisation and integrating with the world economy, the substantial progress in development of indigenous infrastructure is being systematically dismantled. The opening of the power sector to foreign capital is being done in such a manner as to undermine the BHEL which can provide power equipment at significantly cheaper rates than the imported equipment. Privatisation has meant the curtailment of the indigenous research and development programmes with the import liberalisation of all types of goods. The opening of the infrastructure and core areas to foreign capital further undermines the indigenous pace of development. The new policy in power, oil, mining and telecommunication will harm the development of indigenous technology apart from heavy cost of profit outflow due to highly inflated capital costs. The new power policy has led to notorious agreements like the ENRON project at Dabhol; power tariffs will shoot up and affect the consumers and the farmers in a big way. The opening up of the financial sector is fraught with serious consequences. Already privatisation and entry of foreign banks in the banking sector is proceeding apace; the insurance sector is targeted next.

2.19. The generous concessions given to foreign capital have led to further penetration of the Indian consumer goods market by foreign companies and the takeover of indigenous companies. Foreign capital has grown rapidly with the dismantling of FERA

and the scrapping of the 40 per cent ceiling on shareholdings. Import liberalisation across the board has helped the foreign multinational companies to capture the domestic market and export performance has not shown any breakthrough. The increased exports are in primary commodities. This is the pattern sought to be imposed by the GATT agreement which the Rao Government has signed. The GATT treaty may lead to more exports of agricultural commodities while opening the domestic market for manufactured goods and services from the advanced capitalist countries. The acceptance of the GATT terms and the precondition for entering the World Trade Organisation requires the amendment of the Indian Patent Law which will seriously affect indigenous research and technology and entail an enormous increase in the price of medicines for the people. The big bourgeoisie is by and large united behind the Rao Government's economic reforms, as they have been the major beneficiaries. But sections of the medium and small bourgeoisie have been adversely affected by liberalisation. Even sections of the big bourgeoisie are coming into conflict with specific policies favouring foreign capital.

2.20. The nature of foreign investment flows into India show that the bulk of foreign funds is not coming in for productive investment but into the stock market. The 19 billion dollars foreign exchange reserve boasted of by the Rao Government actually comprises nearly two-thirds of 'hot-money' which can flow out of the country at any time depending on the speculative interest of the foreign financial institutions. The huge foreign exchange reserves do not represent success for the new economic policy but indicate its big failure. This foreign exchange is not being used for any productive investment. Instead, the government has to pay interest on this amount which is higher than what these foreign funds will get abroad. In short, the foreign financial institutions by keeping their funds here are gaining more while the country does not benefit from any productive investment.

2.21. The liberalisation policy and the privatisation drive have led to creation of unemployment through large-scale destruction

of existing jobs and blocking avenues for employment generation. The severe cut-back in public investment and expenditure has reduced future employment potential. The Rao Government is committed to an exit policy to please the foreign investors. Apart from the tens and thousands of jobs eliminated in the public sector, the type of investment flowing into the elitist consumer goods sector with its stress on high technology is not leading to the creation of new jobs. The workers of closed factories, the handloom weavers, the artisans and women workers are all facing joblessness and poverty. Especially affected are workers in small-scale industrial units which have closed down in their thousands. Latest statistics show a drop in employment in the Central Government establishments by 4.6% between 1992 and 1994. By the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan, there will be a backlog of 42 million jobs instead of the 15 to 20 million envisaged earlier.

2.22. The government has failed to check inflation by its fiscal policies. The rate of inflation as per the index number of wholesale prices was 13.6% during 1991-92, 7.0% during 1992-93 and 10.8% during 1993-94. During 1994-95, the inflation rate is still in double digits. This inflation is taking place despite good harvest and foreign exchange reserves which shows that it is a deliberate policy to increase the rate of surplus value through price hikes and subsidy reducing measures. A series of sharp increases in administered prices, usually on the eve of the Union Budgets have imposed heavy burdens on the common people by raising the prices of petrol, coal, railway and freight fares, sugar and foodgrains issued through the public distribution system.

2.23. The worst victim of the IMF-World Bank dictates is the public distribution system. In order to cut the food subsidy, the government has been increasing the issue price of all foodgrains and other essential commodities along with hikes in the procurement prices. In the name of targeting the recipients of the PDS to the poorest sections, the network has been shrunk. The prices of foodgrains in the PDS have been brought up to the level of the open market prices to discourage those who need cheap

food. As a result, the foodgrain stocks with the government have expanded to 38 million tonnes with the offtake by the PDS drastically reduced because of lack of demand. The absence of cheap foodgrains coupled with the loss of employment-generating activities has led to a situation of extreme deprivation and even starvation-related deaths amongst the most vulnerable sections, mainly the tribal people. The price of rice and wheat through the fair price shops has almost doubled in the last three years. For instance, the price of rice which was Rs. 3.77 per kg. in 1991, has risen to Rs. 6.90 per kg. in 1994. In the case of wheat, it has increased from Rs. 2.80 per kg. to Rs. 4.27 per kg. in the same period. As for sugar, the phenomenal price rise in the open market led to sugar being sold at Rs. 18.00 per kg. in mid-1994. The poor have been the worst affected as the prices of foodgrains have increased the most among all other essential commodities.

2.24. The agrarian policy pursued during the last three years has consciously sought to benefit the landlords and the rich peasants. High procurement prices have benefited the upper sections while the plight of the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers has deteriorated. Substantial sections of the landlords and the rich peasants are looking forward to increased benefits from the liberalisation policies, but the bulk of the peasantry and the agricultural labourers who have borne the brunt of reduction in public investment, rise in fertiliser price, the cost of other inputs and lack of availability of cheap credit have suffered. In certain areas where irrigation facilities exist, the phenomenon of landlords and the rich peasants leasing in land from the poor peasants has become widespread. The emphasis on investment in horticulture and agro-processing commodities is leading to stagnant growth in foodgrains production. The multinational corporations in agri-business are setting up farms for seeds production and for export of agricultural products. In the coastal areas extensive prawn farming is leading to degradation and loss of agricultural land. This coupled with the impact of the GATT treaty will lead to a serious threat to food security in a couple of years with the shift to commercial crops and exports by the richer sections. At the same time, fluctuations in the prices of commercial

crops are causing tremendous hardships for the small peasants. The export of items such as pulses, onions and foodgrains is pushing up prices in the domestic market for consumers.

2.25. Instead of ensuring the implementation of land reforms based on existing laws, the economic liberalisation has led to not just non-implementation, as in the past, but demands for relaxation of ceiling laws in the name of allowing business houses to buy land for industrial purposes or for commercial agriculture. The Congress(I) Government in Maharashtra has already amended the land laws in this direction. The curtailment of the public distribution system and rural poverty programmes have hit hard the poor peasants, agricultural labourers, women and artisans in the rural areas. The entry of foreign and Indian big business into the fishing sector and their use of mechanised trawlers has led to loss of livelihood for thousands of fishermen and women.

Alternate Policy

2.26. All through the period since the implementation of the economic policies, the government has sought to propagate the myth that there is no alternative to the policy of the so-called 'globalisation'. From 1991, the CPI(M) and the Left forces have outlined an alternative path of development which preserves national sovereignty and at the same time opens the way for all-round economic development. The alternative approach calls for raising domestic resources by increasing direct taxes including corporate, income, wealth and gift taxes and reduction in inessential government expenditure so that there can be greater public investment and expenditure. The loopholes in the tax laws should be plugged and the tax evaded, running into thousands of crores of rupees, must be recovered. Black money should be curbed through punitive measures. Those who have benefited the most, the monopoly houses and the landlord, should pay wealth tax. Such measures will reduce the revenue and fiscal deficits and reverse the trend of relying on indirect taxes and administered price hikes. The industrial policy should streamline the public sector to play its key role while adopting a technology policy which encourages indigenous

technology and imports advanced technology in areas required by national priorities.

2.27. This alternative path requires implementation of radical land reforms and rural employment guarantee schemes which can expand the domestic market; a significant increase in public investment in agriculture for generating higher agricultural growth; a public distribution system, which covers 14 essential commodities, to be expanded to all areas in the country. There has to be an expansion of primary education, literacy and health services for the people. For implementing these measures, there has to be greater decentralisation of powers and larger devolution of financial resources from the Centre to the states and down to the panchayat level.

2.28 The measures outlined above for an alternative path debunks the charge that the Left wants a return to the old Congress model of development worked out in the fifties. It seeks a change but not on the path dictated by international finance capital. The CPI(M) is also not advocating closing the economy to the world. It wishes the entry of technology and foreign capital according to the priorities of national development.

Foreign Policy

2.29. The 14th Congress resolution had warned that with "the Narasimha Rao Government getting deeper into the IMF/World Bank quagmire, the pressures to shift and change the foreign policy have mounted". This warning is being vindicated now. Instead of the Rao Government making efforts to revive the non-aligned movement and strengthening South-South cooperation, it sent troops to Somalia in the civil war to subserve the interests of U.S. imperialism. Recently, it offered to send soldiers to Haiti in the name of maintaining peace after the American intervention. In the world fora it is not seen championing the cause of the Third World countries. Defence cooperation between U.S and India is being stepped up with regular joint military exercises and training programmes. Joint steering committees for army-to-army cooperation have been extended to the naval and air forces. The military collaboration with the USA as formalised in the

Indo-U.S. Defence Cooperation Agreement has dangerous implications for India's security interests and foreign policy. The Rao Government has stopped talking of the U.S. military base in Diego Garcia stocking nuclear weapons.

2.30. The USA has mounted sustained pressures to force India to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or a regional multi-lateral treaty on proliferation; it got Russia to cancel the agreement to sell cryogenic rocket engines to India and imposed sanctions on ISRO. Further, the U.S. and G-7 countries have been pressurising India not to proceed with the Agni long-range and Prithvi short-range missile programmes.

2.31. However, it is not possible for the government to bring about a complete shift in foreign policy because of the compulsions of the present international situation. Certain issues like Kashmir force it not to submit fully to the dictates of imperialism. This is proved by the fact that simultaneously, it is trying to strengthen its relations with China, Russia and Vietnam. It is important for the Left and democratic forces to fight against the shift toward imperialism and ensure that India's foreign policy retains its non-aligned content. This is necessary to ward off the imperialist pressures on Third World countries including India.

Developments Regarding Neighbouring Countries

2.32. *China*: There is further improvement in relations with China which is of great significance. Relations have developed in the economic sphere not only in respect of trade but also joint collaboration in certain areas. The visit of the Indian Prime Minister to China, the exchange of visits of many dignitaries and the agreements signed, go to indicate the determination of both countries to further improve relations. Agreement has been reached on the withdrawal of forces from the line of actual control. On the issue of Kashmir, China has declared that this is a bilateral issue with Pakistan and should be settled between the two countries under the terms of the Shimla Accord. There is a realisation among both the countries of the need to go forward in improving all-round ties. This will help in strengthening economic relations and resisting imperialist pressures.

2.33. *Sri Lanka*: The last Party Congress sharply criticised the policy of President Premadasa which proved adverse for mutual relations between India and Sri Lanka and its refusal to resolve the problems of the Tamil population there. This year there has been a change in the government and a new favourable situation has emerged with the victory of the People's Alliance, with Chandrika Kumaratunga as the President and Mrs. Bandarnaike becoming the Prime Minister. It will help in improving relations between India and Sri Lanka as well as finding a solution to the Tamil problem within the framework of Sri Lankan unity. Some talks with the LTTE have already begun in this direction.

2.34. *Pakistan*: The relations with Pakistan have worsened. The ruling classes of Pakistan are making Kashmir the central point. Both the major parties in Pakistan are vying with each other to highlight this issue and openly state that, they will continue to intervene in Kashmir. By this they intend to divert the discontent of the people. The Pakistan Government is openly helping infiltrators who are not only of Kashmiri origin but also Afghan mujahidin who were earlier used in Afghanistan. Despite India's diplomatic efforts, Pakistan has succeeded in rallying the Islamic countries behind its policy, even though India has strong economic relations with most of them. With the present policy pursued by the government on Kashmir it is not easy to foil the efforts of Pakistan to internationalise the issue. We should combat jingoistic efforts at rousing hatred against the Pakistani people and stress the necessity of improving relations between the two countries even while combating interference in Kashmir.

2.35. *Afghanistan*: In the last Party Congress it was noted that Pakistan, backed by the USA, was trying to sabotage the Geneva agreement on Afghanistan; ultimately they succeeded in doing so and this resulted in the total disruption of unity among the people of Afghanistan. For the last two and half years different groups which were earlier ranged against the Najibullah Government, are fighting each other. The efforts of Pakistan and the USA to bring about an agreement have failed to end the civil war. Neither U.N. intervention nor Pakistan's efforts have

succeeded in bringing peace. There are many ethnic nationalities living in Afghanistan and there is every danger of disintegration of Afghanistan into different tribal regimes. The U.S. and Pakistan have succeeded in destroying the unity of the Afghan people and their policy has led to large-scale destruction and killing. India has to continue to work for the unity of Afghanistan and to defeat the game of imperialism.

2.36. *Bangladesh*: The people of Bangladesh had won a big victory against the authoritarian rule of Ershad and by the restoration of parliamentary democracy. However, the hopes raised for strengthening of secularism have been belied. Unfortunately, the present government has curbed democratic rights and encouraged the forces of fundamentalism. The rise of religious fundamentalism is detrimental to the minorities and the future of the democratic system and it will have its repercussions in India. The Bangladesh Government has not checked the illegal immigration into India. Recently, a powerful movement has developed against the government's policies, the demand for fresh elections has been raised by the entire opposition which have resigned their seats in parliament. The CPI(M) wishes success for the Left, democratic and secular forces as it will also strengthen relations between the two countries.

2.37. *Nepal*: After a prolonged struggle parliamentary democracy was restored in Nepal. In the first elections, the Nepali Congress won a majority and the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) emerged as the main opposition. But due to serious differences within the Nepali Congress their government could not last and mid-term elections were held in November 1994. In these elections the CPN(UML) secured a big victory gaining 88 seats and becoming the largest party in Nepal. Though it does not command a majority it has succeeded in forming the first Communist Government in Nepal. This has had a big impact in the whole region in the background of the imperialist propaganda about the defeat of Socialism. The victory of the Communists in Nepal is of great significance. The Party will continue to work for strengthening fraternal ties with the CPN(UML) and the relations between the two countries on the basis of equality.

2.38. *Burma:* The CPI(M) supports the struggle for restoration of democracy in Burma (Myanmar). It condemns the refusal of the military junta to respect the wishes of the Burmese people and the continued detention of Aung San Su Kyi.

2.39. *Bhutan:* The Party calls upon the Bhutanese Government to ensure democratic rights for all ethnic groups in Bhutan. The Bhutanese Government must settle the problem of the thousands of evicted citizens of Nepalese origin. Equal treatment of minorities will strengthen the independence and integrity of this small country bordering India.

2.40. The CPI(M) considers it vital to ensure that India's foreign policy remains one of non-alignment with a clear cut anti-imperialist orientation. The changed correlation of class forces in the world and the liberalisation policies have a negative impact on the country's external policies. The Party will continue to mobilise the people and struggle to ensure that the foreign policy is oriented in defence of non-alignment, strengthening bonds with the Third World countries and for South-South cooperation and friendly relations with neighbouring countries. The Party has to firmly oppose all imperialist attacks on the Third World countries and national liberation movements.

The Communal Menace

2.41. The 14th Congress had warned against the growing communal offensive and assault on secularism by the BJP-RSS-VHP combine. In less than a year, the country had to face a grim situation due to the demolition of Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992. The BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh was systematically used to subvert the state machinery to make this dastardly deed a success. No less culpable was Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who refused to act even after the unanimous support extended to him to defend the Constitution by all the secular parties. The betrayal of the secular duty of the state had disastrous consequences. The country was engulfed in a wave of communal riots, the like of which had been never seen since the partition days. More than a thousand people were killed in Bombay; in the space of two months terrible riots took place in the cities and

towns of U.P., M.P., Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Hyderabad. Surat symbolised the savagery of communal frenzy. The Muslim minorities were the main victims and sufferers, their plight being further worsened by the partisan role of the police and civil administration in several states.

2.42. The Congress(I) Government refused to draw any lessons from its dismal role and the Prime Minister has continued with the compromising attitude to the communal forces. From the outset the CPI(M) strongly opposed the Ayodhya package announced by Narasimha Rao. Along with acquiring the disputed land at Ayodhya, the government asked the Supreme Court to give an opinion as to whether a temple or Hindu religious structure had existed at the site before the mosque was built four centuries ago. Narasimha Rao began his efforts to sponsor a trust to be set up by the Shankaracharyas to build the temple. This further alienated the minorities already shocked by the demolition. The recent directive to minorities in Bombay to prove their citizenship before issuing voter identity cards, and the instances of deletion of their names from the voters list in Assam show how sections of the administration are infected with a communal outlook. The aggressive and illegal actions of the Hindu communalists have strengthened the forces of fundamentalism within the minority community.

2.43. The CPI(M) and the Left and secular forces launched a countrywide campaign to mobilise the people against the communal danger. There were widespread mass mobilisations to foil the communal designs of the BJP and its allied organisations. The treachery indulged in by the BJP leadership and its State Governments became exposed before the people. The communal passions roused were countered by the popular sentiments for peace, communal harmony and national unity. The endeavours of the joint secular forces contributed to the setback to the BJP in the assembly elections in the five northern states. It lost the governments in U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. The Supreme Court judgement on the dismissal of the BJP Governments was a vindication of secularism. The Court defined secularism as separation of religion from politics and declared

secularism to be a basic feature of the Constitution. Also, the Court's refusal to entertain the Presidential reference for an opinion on Ayodhya further exposed the game of Narasimha Rao in trying to appropriate the BJP platform by sponsoring a trust to build the temple at the disputed site.

2.44. The BJP continues to raise anti-minority and communally motivated issues along with Ayodhya, like scrapping Article 370 on Kashmir, magnifying the infiltration from Bangladesh and the flag-hoisting incident in Hubli. The RSS-VHP combine has also launched a disruptive campaign on the Gyan Vapi mosque at Varanasi and the mosque at Mathura. The BJP is a party with a right-wing economic platform and has no basic difference with the new economic policies, notwithstanding the periodic noises it makes about *swadeshi*. Sections of the big bourgeoisie favour the BJP as an alternative to Congress due to its pro-big business stance. The failure to evolve a credible platform detached from the temple issue has generated internal dissensions and factionalism in the party in many states. Nevertheless, the continuous communal campaign and injection of communal ideology has led to the BJP retaining substantial mass support in certain states. Though it suffered reverses in the assembly elections in the northern states and it could not do well in Andhra Pradesh subsequently, it managed to emerge as the main opposition party in Karnataka. The formation of the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra and the BJP capturing power in Gujarat with a two-thirds majority has provided the communal platform with renewed opportunities at the national level. The Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray's threat to drive out Bangladeshis and Pakistanis from Bombay is meant to intimidate the minorities. The communal appeal should not be underestimated in a period of acute discontent among the people and chronic instability in the secular bourgeois parties. The Party should make the fight against communal forces a major plank, as communalism is disruptive of the unity of the working people and is an obstacle to the advance of the movement for social progress.

2.45. The CPI(M) will steadfastly oppose majority communalism and protect the legitimate rights of the minorities. The

CPI(M) stands for equal opportunities for Muslims in education, jobs and social facilities and an end to all forms of discrimination. For this, it will constantly strive to draw the Muslim masses into common movements. The CPI(M) will not compromise with minority communalism which is a hindrance to the above effort and which feeds and strengthens Hindu communalism. In the period after the Babri Masjid demolition, the fundamentalist forces have been active to exploit the strong feelings of betrayal and hurt felt by the Muslim community. Fundamentalist outfits have sprung up to fan the feelings of separatism and to resort to extremist actions. Activities of organisations like the Jamaat-e-Islami are designed to foster minority communalism. The Party will unite with all secular forces to safeguard communal amity and peace.

Problems of National Unity

2.46. The 14th Congress had pointed out that the policies of successive bourgeois landlord governments at the Centre have failed to stem the threats to national unity emanating from the forces which are operating from across the border, backed by imperialism.

2.47. *Kashmir*: The U.S. Administration is actively working behind the scenes to promote the idea of an independent Kashmir after detaching Ladakh and Jammu from the Valley. The last three years have seen no improvement in the Valley as the secessionist forces are still active. The minority community is still forced to live outside the Valley. The depredations of the fundamentalists backed by Pakistan spread to the Doda region of Jammu, threatening traditional communal amity in the area. The only change is that people have become increasingly fed up with the disruption of economic life and the anti-social activities of the extremists who molest women and extort money. But it would be wrong to assume that the people are not feeling alienated. The security forces deployed to combat the terrorist violence often commit excesses on the people which further fuels the alienation. There are two streams among those engaged in armed activities: those for merger with Pakistan and motivated by religious

fundamentalism and those represented by the JKLF and other forces which stand for independence and fight for the identity of the Kashmiri people. A demarcation has to be made between the two

2.48. The problem can be tackled if the Kashmiri people are assured of their identity; this can rally the secular sections. To achieve this maximum autonomy will have to be granted with the regions of Jammu and Ladakh being provided regional autonomy within the state. Instead of taking steps in this direction, the Rao Government is concerned with holding elections citing the example of the Punjab elections. Such a step will not succeed in Kashmir and it will only help Pakistan internationalise the issue.

Punjab

2.49. With the suppression of extremist activity peace has been restored so far as terrorist violence is concerned. But it does not mean that full normalcy has been restored. No effort has been made to implement the Rajiv-Longowal Accord and satisfy the genuine demands of the Punjabi people. Since the problem which created the situation is yet to be resolved, at any time instability can be created. Most of the Akali groups are still not free from their fundamentalist and communal links. The Amritsar declaration by six groups shows that they have learnt no lesson from their disastrous succumbing to fundamentalist forces. The Akali Dal (B) has demarcated itself from the secessionist platform though it is not able to separate its political stance from religion. With the growing discontent against the Congress(I) Government's policies and the rampant corruption in the administration, communalism and fundamentalism can surface again in some form which will prove dangerous as Punjab is a border state.

Uttarakhand Movement

2.50 The eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh have been a long neglected area and suffer from economic backwardness. There is meagre industrial and agricultural development. This has forced people to migrate to outside areas in large numbers. The announcement of reservation of 27 per cent in jobs and education in the hill areas, alongwith the whole of U.P. has caused widespread

apprehensions that outsiders will use these quotas, as the OBC population is very low in the hills. The popular movement for a separate state was met with repression by the Mulayam Singh Yadav Government from the narrow view point of mobilising the backward classes. This further fanned the demand for a separate state. The genuine problems of the hill region can be tackled if a regional autonomous council with adequate powers is set up which will enable the hill people to manage their affairs through local self-government.

North-East Region

2.51. The situation is very serious in the North-East region particularly in Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya. In Manipur, the Naga-Kuki armed clashes have claimed hundreds of lives. The extremist groups are having a free run with the writ of the administration not enforceable in many areas. The agreement signed in Manipur under President's rule in November 1994 setting the cut-off date of 26 January 1950 to detect foreigners will set a dangerous precedent. The activities of the NSCN, the Naga extremist organisation, have been stepped up in the entire region in the recent period. In Meghalaya, the agitation to drive out foreigners has been targeting genuine citizens from outside the state. In Arunachal Pradesh also an agitation to throw out outsiders has been going on. The Congress(I) Governments in this region often either patronise or appease the separatist forces.

2.52. In Assam, the agreement to set up an autonomous Bodo Regional Council ran into trouble due to the opportunistic and partisan approach of the Saikia Government. The extremist Bodo activities have led to killings of Muslim migrant settlers. Though the ULFA activities have substantially reduced, the Congress(I) Government tactics of dividing people on ethnic lines is fomenting new tensions.

2.53. The Central Congress(I) Government has totally failed to take a comprehensive approach to the problems of the North-East where priority has to be given to socio-economic development in a planned manner. The tactics of patronising corrupt cliques in power who misuse development funds on a large-scale, has

deprived the North-East of the fruits of development which could have checked the alienation of the people from the Indian State. Similarly, the complex ethnic composition and the numerous minorities require a principled approach which assures equal rights and opportunities for the development of the diverse ethnic and cultural identities. The chronic problem of insurgency and separatism is also a standing testimony to the failure of the Indian ruling classes to evolve a democratic ethnic and nationalities policy.

2.54 In Tripura, the CPI(M) is firmly defending tribal-non-tribal unity in contrast to the situation in other states. Even after the Left Front Government's coming into office scores of comrades have been killed by the tribal extremist group, some of whom are operating from across the border.

2.55. The Party has remained in the forefront of the struggle against all separatist movements to defend the unity of the country. Many of our comrades have sacrificed their lives in this struggle. This has enhanced the prestige of the Party amongst the people. Along with the Left and democratic forces, the struggle to defend national unity must be carried forward.

Centre-State Relations: Decentralisation of Powers

2.56. The problem of Centre-State relations has existed since the formation of the linguistic states and became a major issue after the formation of non-Congress (I) Governments in eight states in 1967. Subsequently, the government was forced to appoint the Sarkaria Commission. Though its recommendations are not fully satisfactory, the Commission tried to tackle the problem. But even though many years have passed, its recommendations remain unimplemented. With uneven development in the country and the urge arising to overcome backwardness in different states, the growth of the separatist movements in some parts of the country is also the result of the lack of autonomy for the states. In a multi-national country like India, this aspect cannot be ignored and national unity can be maintained only on the basis of sufficient autonomy for the states. At the moment all resources are concentrated in the Centre and the states are at its mercy.

2.57. With liberalisation and the new economic policies fresh attacks on existing states rights have taken place. With cuts in Central Government expenditure, states are left with fewer resources for development. Since the monopoly of power of the Congress(I) has gone, political parties that have come to power in the states are unable to implement their promises without the restructuring of powers to the states. This issue cannot be left unattended. As for Article 356, the Supreme Court judgement making Presidential proclamations dismissing State Governments subject to judicial review, and declaring the dismissal of the Bommai Government in Karnataka as unconstitutional, is a salutary check on the ruling party's misuse of this draconian power. The CPI(M) will continue to fight for restructuring of Centre-State relations giving more autonomy to the states.

2.58. The Rao Government has boasted that it has ushered in a new era of panchayati raj with the adoption of the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Bills pertaining to the three-tier panchayats and urban municipal bodies. But the experience of the laws adopted by the Congress(I) State Governments has exposed the inherent hostility of the ruling party to democratic decentralisation. Perverting the spirit of the Constitutional enactment, in states like Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the panchayats have been subordinated to the bureaucracy and their self-governing powers curtailed. In contrast it is West Bengal, which has held four successive panchayat elections. In the last round, over 60 per cent of the seats were reserved for women, scheduled castes and tribes. West Bengal has shown how vibrant the panchayati raj system can be.

Meaning of Caste Appeal

2.59. The recent period saw the growing assertion of the dalit and backward castes for social justice and revolt against caste oppression. The Party recognised the democratic content of this awakening, reflecting the aspirations of the most oppressed sections of society. It also helped to some extent in countering the rising Hindu communal chauvinism. The demand for 27 per cent reservation for backward classes was only one indication of this

urge for social equality. While supporting the cause of social justice the Party should emerge as the champions of the fight against caste oppression by taking up all the issues which are the cause of the basic oppression of these sections—the class issues of land for the landless and wages for agricultural labour. The concept of social justice should not be narrowed to just reservation of jobs and mobilisation of vote banks on caste lines.

2.60. However, recent events in Uttar Pradesh go to show the extent to which caste appeal in the name of reservation can go. The parties which work in the name of caste are not concerned with the interests of the dalits and the OBCs. Their main interest is to utilise them to remain in power. The CPI(M) has supported 27 per cent reservation for the OBCs in central services. At the same time the Party has pointed out that the Mandal Commission report had stated that the real problems of poverty and backwardness could be solved only by land reforms. But none of the parties championing reservation raise this demand. The use of caste appeal has become sectarian and divisive. The Party has to warn the people against this danger and champion the unity of the working class and the toiling people of all communities and castes against the bourgeois-landlord order. The distinct standpoint of the Party which recognises the democratic character of the fight against social oppression and combines it with the independent class-based struggles must be vigorously pursued.

2.61. While implementing reservations for OBCs the Supreme Court directive not to exceed 50 per cent reservation for all categories should be generally observed, except in those states where greater reservation has been in force for a long period. As regards excluding the 'creamy layer' within the OBCs from the reservation quota, the CPI(M) is for the introduction of economic criteria so that the needy sections are truly benefited. If the posts within the economic criteria are not filled up, then such posts will be open to persons within the same community. The State Governments cannot claim the right to increase OBC reservation as they wish, as bourgeois parties seek to use it to competitively hike quotas for narrow electoral gains which heighten caste divisions.

In Defence of Oppressed Sections: Dalits and Adivasis

2.62. While striving to build a powerful mass movement of all sections of the toiling people, the CPI(M) will pay special attention to the struggle against oppression of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes who are the dalits of society.

2.63. The fight to change the conditions of the dalits requires the building of a strong movement of the agricultural labourers and landless. The scheduled castes who comprise a major part of the agricultural workers are subjected to brutal exploitation on the question of wages, social equality and access to means of production. The even feeble assertion of their rights leads to vicious retaliation. Rapes of scheduled caste women and arson of their hutments are still common forms of punishment and efforts to retain domination by landlords and upper castes. The CPI(M) will have to pay special attention to the development of the agricultural labour movement while taking up the struggle against social oppression as a major plank in the mobilisation of the rural poor.

2.64. The adivasi population which numbers seven crores in the country has seen its exploitation enhanced with the liberalisation policies. They are the first to be evicted from lands for industry or development projects without appropriate compensation. Their meagre earnings have been depleted with the cuts in rural anti-poverty programmes and they have suffered starvation deaths in places like Kalahandi, Sarguja, Thane and Wynad in the past three years due to the dismantling of the public distribution system. The callous treatment meted out to adivasi people was shockingly illustrated in the gruesome death of 113 Gowaris mostly women and children, in Nagpur in the stampede caused by the police lathi-charge.

2.65. The caste system treats the adivasis as outcastes from society and they are often kept as bonded labour and their women as chattel. The growing aspiration to protect their ethnic and cultural identity is not recognised by the bourgeois-landlord system. The CPI(M) has consistently advocated the formation of regional autonomous councils for the tribal people like the Bodos in Assam, the Jharkhand region in Bihar or the Bastar region in

Madhya Pradesh. In both Bodo and Jharkhand areas the setting up of a democratically elected council with maximum autonomy has become imperative. Neither the Saikia Government in Assam, nor the Bihar Government has shown sufficient awareness of the importance of genuinely autonomous structures to serve tribal interests. The Party must overcome its deficiency in working amongst the tribal people all over the country and in mobilising them for protection of their elementary rights.

Women's Rights

2.66. The period saw a steady increase in the attacks on women both on the social and economic plane. The crimes against women in the form of sexual attacks, dowry deaths, trafficking and custodial rapes and domestic violence are widely prevalent. Increasing incidence of female foeticide is an alarming phenomenon. The shocking story of exploitation of young women in Jalgaon by a nexus of politicians and businessmen exemplifies the debasement and abuse of women. The commercialised and privatised electronic media is portraying women as sex objects and demeaning their status. Communal and caste organisations are actively working among women. Such organisations mobilise women through the garb of religious activities for narrow sectarian goals and to prevent the development of an emancipatory consciousness. Religious fundamentalist forces are inherently hostile to women's equality and rights.

2.67. The unequal status of women and discrimination against them has been heightened by the new economic policies. Women have suffered the most due to shrinkage of job opportunities particularly in the rural areas. More and more female headed households owing to male migration are faced with the big burden of maintaining the family. Women are being forced into the unorganised sector with its extremely low wages.

2.68. The resistance to such crimes, and the movement for asserting the rights of women and against gender discrimination have been growing. The provision of one-third reservation for women in the panchayati system has opened the way for greater participation of women in public life. The Party must

actively work to raise the vital issues connected with women's emancipation and play a supportive role in the development of the democratic women's movement.

Relations Between Bourgeoisie and Landlords

2.69. During the last three years, the bourgeoisie has tried to placate the landlords to consolidate its political position. Higher prices are provided for their produce and they benefit the most from the subsidies. Therefore the main burden is falling on the agricultural workers, poorer sections of the peasantry and the working class. The bourgeoisie is not touching the question of land reforms. On the contrary they wish to reverse them.

2.70. The bourgeoisie is now entering the agrarian sector and the capitalists are setting up big farms in the sphere of horticulture, joint stock companies for plantations, and in fisheries and aquaculture, investing crores of rupees. Multi-national companies and the corporate sector are also entering the field of seed production, agro-processing and other such spheres. Conversely, in the areas where capitalist relations have developed in agriculture, landlords are investing their surplus in industry and trade.

2.71. As resistance against the economic policies grows, conflicts are bound to arise between the landlords and the bourgeoisie. The GATT terms will also adversely affect farmers and landlords will be forced to an extent to share the burden. The Party has to continue to concentrate on developing the movements of the agricultural workers and the peasants particularly the poorer sections, who are the worst affected.

Defend Education For All

2.72. The entire educational system is crisis-ridden because of the government's retreat from its commitment to expand state sponsored education. The drive for privatisation and commercialisation of education is motivated by the liberalisation policy. The cuts in educational outlays come as part of the cuts in social sector expenditure. This has led to closure and decay of public educational institutions up to the primary school level.

Simultaneously there are steep hikes in tuition fees and naked profiteering through capitation fees in professional courses in higher education.

2.73. Privatisation is increasing the grip of caste-communal organisations over educational institutions, with its concomitant effect on secular and democratic values imparted in education. In the last three years many struggles have been conducted to fight privatisation and commercialisation of education. The student struggles in Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and the joint movement of students and teachers in Kerala recently, are notable in this regard. There has to be better standards and diversified courses in the public educational institutions. The fight for expanding education, and forcing the state to fulfill its commitment to ensure education as a right for all citizens is to be vigorously carried forward.

Neglect of Public Health

2.74. The outbreak of plague in Gujarat and Maharashtra highlighted the glaring deficiencies of the public health system. The liberalisation policies have had harmful effects on public health expenditure with the emphasis on privatisation of health. This has occurred when diseases like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, kalaazar and gastroenteritis are affecting large sections of the people. The new drug policy of the Central Government is brazenly in favour of the multinational drug companies. The decontrol of prices of many drugs will go against the interests of the common people with medicines becoming costly. The government is backing out of its commitment to ensure "Health For All".

For a Democratic Culture and Media

2.75. At the time of the 14th Congress an important arena of struggle in the cultural sphere was the combating of communal and obscurantist ideas. Much has been done by democratic and progressive organisations in this sphere but the major task of fighting the revival of communal ideology in all spheres of culture remains. With the weakening of the bourgeois-landlord state's commitment to secular values, there has to be constant vigilance

to see that the creative arts are not subverted by the anti-humanistic ideology of communalism.

2.76. A new danger is the unprecedented invasion by the foreign television broadcasts through the electronic media. It has helped the widespread penetration of reactionary western values glorifying sex and violence. The government instead of regulating such programmes has joined in the race to compete in purveying such decadent programmes for commercial revenue. The government has been formally considering the entry of foreign print media and news agencies. Foreign newspaper barons would take over substantial sections of the newspaper sector if they are treated as foreign investors. This will constitute a direct interference in our political system as newspapers play an important role in moulding public opinion.

2.77. The CPI(M) will oppose all attempts at imperialist penetration of the mass media. Instead of privatisation, the Party reiterates the demand for the implementation of the Prasar Bharati Act for the electronic media. It will support all efforts by creative artistes and intellectuals to create a democratic, secular and vibrant atmosphere in which culture flourishes for the ordinary people.

Democratic Values Under Siege

2.78. The institutions of parliamentary democracy are being corroded and subverted. Criminalisation of political and electoral activities; suborning the bureaucracy for partisan and corrupt activities; non-accountability of the ministers and bureaucrats for misdeeds; attacks on democratic rights and trade union rights; intimidation of the judiciary are increasing. Misuse of TADA has become widespread. The police often trample on the law with impunity. Killings in police custody and violation of fundamental rights of ordinary citizens are a common feature. Even the selection boards for services have been made redundant by the State Governments. Many strictures have been passed against them.

2.79. Even the judiciary is being subverted. The impeachment proceedings against a Supreme Court judge show the threat to the integrity of the judicial system. However, the Supreme Court has

played an important role in defending secularism and the rights of citizens who are subject to the attacks of the police and the state

2.80. All the democratic institutions are being made ineffective by the interference of bourgeois politicians and bureaucrats. All the undemocratic methods, money power and the state machinery are increasingly used by ruling class parties to control various institutions whether it be the panchayats, block samiti, zilla parishads or cooperatives, ignoring the democratic verdict. The fight for democratic rights has become very important. Otherwise a situation can be created where in the worsening economic situation the discontent among the youth can be diverted to imbibe fascist ideology.

Need For Electoral Reforms

2.81. All bourgeois parties, particularly the Congress(I), have been perverting the electoral system with the use of illegal money power and muscle power. Even the civil servants are suborned for the ruling party's purposes. The Dinesh Goswami Committee on electoral reforms set up during the National Front Government had unanimously made some recommendations. These have not yet been implemented. One of the major proposals was for the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission. The country's electoral system cannot be in the hands of one individual. The arbitrary actions of the present CEC have marred his otherwise raising of genuine questions of reform. One such instance is the deadline set for the issue of identity cards. The CPI(M) is committed to the issuance of identity cards for all citizens. But this must be done in such a manner that does not exclude any section of the people, particularly the rural poor, whose voice is not heeded by the bureaucracy. Electoral reforms require serious attention which must include the separation of religion from politics in the electoral process.

Institutionalised Corruption

2.82. The liberalisation policy has led to the liberalisation of corruption. Corruption has become a way of life for the ruling party in running the administration. This deprives the common people

of their legitimate rights as the power of money is used to convert government policies for private gain. The recent instances of corruption in high circles in the Central Government have further exposed to what extent democratic values have been eroded through rampant corruption. In spite of the unanimous recommendations of the JPC report exposing the biggest corruption scandal since Independence, involving thousands of crores of rupees, in which ministers have been indicted, and even after a CBI enquiry the government is keeping mum. In spite of the continuous protests in Parliament the government still tries to cover up. The ruling party is bent upon shielding the guilty in the Bofors kickbacks case. Other scandals like the PSU disinvestment of shares, the sugar scam and the hawala scandal are symptomatic of the institutionalised corruption pervading the entire system which has got a fillip through the liberalisation and privatisation drive. The uncovering of an espionage ring at the Indian Space Research Organisation project at Thiruvananthapuram shows how the cancer of corruption will undermine the country's security interests. Even in such a vital case, efforts are being made for a cover-up at the behest of the Kerala Chief Minister. A consistent struggle has to be waged against this corruption if democratic values are to be saved from further erosion and accountability of public servants upheld.

Impact of The Political Situation: Congress(I) Weakened

2.83. It has been pointed out that the Congress(I) has lost the monopoly of power. Narasimha Rao came to power without a majority at the Centre, and later got a majority by organising defections from the Telugu Desam and the Janata Dal violating the spirit of the anti-defection law. Despite these unscrupulous manoeuvres, the Congress(I) Government is losing mass support because of its economic policies, compromise with communal forces, failure to cement national unity and its rank corruption. This was shown in the elections to the ten state assemblies where the Congress(I) lost in all major states except Orissa. It must be remembered that after the Emergency regime in 1977 when the Congress(I) was routed in the north, it was able to maintain its

base in the south. Today there is no state in the south which it can claim as its stronghold. At present the Congress(I) has lost power in 11 states in the country, comprising 60 per cent of the population. These results will have a further bearing on the Congress(I) and highlight the issues of economic policies, attitude towards minorities and fight against corruption. These results are bound to have their impact in the coming elections in various states in February-March. The Congress(I) is getting further weakened. This is to be seen not only in the growing isolation from the masses but the intensification of the fights inside the Congress(I). There is not a single state where different factions are not fighting. The picture is the same in the Centre today. The removal of three ministers facing corruption charges was forced upon Narasimha Rao. The authority of the leadership is eroded and there is no democratic functioning at any level of the party. The resignation of Arjun Singh has highlighted the crisis over policy issues within the party.

Role of The Secular Opposition

2.84. The experience of the people of the bourgeois opposition parties has not been a happy one. The Janata Dal-National Front which came to power in 1989 could not maintain its unity for long. Since then various splits have taken place in the Janata Dal. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party of Mulayam Singh Yadav has become the main force supplanting the Janata Dal. The Congress(I) succeeded in winning over Ajit Singh and others to its side. In Tamil Nadu the DMK has split and V. Gopalaswamy has formed a new party. The state governments and units of the Janata Dal pursue varying policies. The Biju Patnaik Government in Orissa by fully supporting and implementing the economic policies of the Central Government invited defeat in the assembly elections. In other states, the Janata Dal has not consistently mobilised the people against these policies. The splits in the Janata Dal show that these formations have no cohesive policies. Personality differences and factional issues have been the main consideration. The Janata Dal based itself solely on Mandal and the defence of minorities. This was not enough to keep the party together.

2.85. The success of the Telugu Desam and the Janata Dal in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is a result of growing discontent amongst the people against the Congress(I) and their quest for a secular alternative. This electoral alternative will succeed only by giving due consideration to the people's verdict which is against the economic policies as well as against communalisation of politics. Unless these parties draw correct lessons from the true meaning of the verdict, the reposing of people's confidence in them cannot be taken for granted.

2.86. In developing resistance against the economic policies, in the struggle against communalism and separatism and combating corruption, we should strive to ally with the secular bourgeois opposition parties. But in doing so, it should be clear that their opposition to the economic policies is not on the same plane as ours. Similarly, they will tend to take opportunist positions in the struggle against communalism if it affects their electoral prospects. Therefore, while uniting with them and appealing to their mass base to enable the rallying of wider forces, we have to demarcate ourselves from them on basic policies whenever it is necessary.

Impact of the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura

2.87. The West Bengal Left Front Government has contributed to the development of the Party and the mass organisations. It has shown that within the present framework the Left can implement certain alternative policies. Within the limitations of the Constitution it has done a great deal for the people, particularly the working class, the toiling peasantry as well as the middle class employees. The Left Front Government has been unequivocally on the side of the working people and restrained the police from interfering in the class-based struggles. The land reform measures enacted by the West Bengal Government have not only helped to consolidate the mass base among the agricultural labour and the peasantry but also shown how the problems of poverty can be tackled and the internal market for industries expanded. These reforms have led to an increase

in agricultural production and now West Bengal is the largest producer of rice in the country. To ensure industrialisation, the State Government has adopted an industrial policy which seeks to attract more private investments without undermining the public sector existing in the state. Decentralisation of powers introduced by the West Bengal Government, particularly, the panchayati raj system stands as a model for the rest of the country. The state has an atmosphere of communal amity with the State Government firmly upholding secular values.

2.88. In Tripura, it is a matter of pride that in spite of the semi-fascist terror against the Party during the Congress(I)-TUJS regime, in the elections the CPI(M) and Left Front won a big majority. Despite the discriminatory attitude of the Central Government and the encouragement to terrorist activities by the Congress(I) and the TUJS, the Left Front Government maintains intact the unity of the tribals and non-tribals. The recent panchayat and zilla parishad elections confirm that its mass base is getting further strengthened. These governments are a source of inspiration for the Left and democratic movement in the country.

Independent Activities of the Party

2.89. The 14th Congress had called for expanding the independent activities of the Party and pointed out its significance: "The degree of success we have in this task of building mass struggles and simultaneously keeping at bay the communal forces will determine the advance of the Left and democratic forces when the confrontation between the Congress(I) Government and the people develops". Following this understanding, during the last three years, the Party has taken the initiative to develop mass movements against the economic policies as well as the struggle against the communal forces. As a result, we have succeeded in mobilising the support of new sections of the people as well as among the minorities. However, this is not sufficient. To meet the tasks set out for the Party, there has to be an all-sided increase in the Party's strength by ever-expanding political, ideological and mass activities.

Strengthen Mass Organisations

2.90. The Party can expand its influence only by widening its mass base which can be done by unleashing mass struggles and on that basis building and developing the broadest mass organisations of the workers, agricultural labour, peasants, youth, students, women, employees and others. The many struggles and campaigns conducted by the mass organisations must be stepped up to reach out to those masses outside their purview who follow other parties and mass organisations. These sections are all in ferment due to the anti-poor policies of the Rao Government and their implementation by their State Governments. The trade unions, kisan, agricultural labour, youth, women, student and other mass organisations have a key role to play in mobilising different sections of the working people and in uniting the widest masses for joint struggles. The Party must assist the development of these mass movements and pay due attention to imparting political consciousness to the militant masses drawn into the struggle.

Left-Sectarian Groups

2.91. The 14th Congress had noted the change in some of the naxalite groups and their participation in mass political activities. As for the IPF-CPI(ML) group, the Party Congress had considered the changes it had undergone in a positive direction. However, the experience of the past three years has shown that the IPF-ML trend is unable to overcome its unremitting hostility to the Left Front in West Bengal. Pitting itself against the Left Front Government instead of being a critical supporter, and adopting a negative attitude in joint mass platforms, the CPI(ML)-IPF grouping has shown itself incapable of shedding its sectarian legacy.

2.92. Another major naxalite group, the PWG in Andhra Pradesh, continues to indulge in terrorist and anarchic violence and has been weakened by inner-conflicts in the leadership. The MCC in Bihar is also in the same category. The CPI(M) will continue to combat such disruptive activities while it will adopt a positive attitude to those former Left-sectarian groups which seek to join the Left mainstream.

Strengthen the Left Forces

2.93. The 14th Congress had stressed the vital necessity of expanding Left intervention in a big way to meet the twin attacks of the new economic policies and communalism. The basis for a rapid increase in Left intervention was to be the strengthening of Left unity. The past three years have seen serious efforts by the Party to achieve these goals. At the national level, the Left parties CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc and RSP stepped up their joint activities significantly. The joint Left campaigns of 1992 and the February-March 1994 *jathas* and joint rallies had their favourable impact on the mass mobilisations against the economic policies. The militant April 5 rally at New Delhi and the three general strikes culminating in the September 29, 1994 general strike manifested growing Left coordination at the level of the mass organisations. The National Platform of Mass Organisations played a pivotal role in widening the united resistance. The united campaign against communalism after the Ayodhya demolition was conducted between January and April 1993, and it was primarily a Left initiative in which other secular forces joined. The biggest and most sustained struggle launched by the Left unitedly was the three-week civil disobedience movement in August-September 1994. It saw an extensive preparatory campaign and the participation of 62.5 lakh people, of whom 12.5 lakh volunteers courted arrest all over the country. These Left mass campaigns and movements have definitely contributed to the popular mood of opposition to the Rao Government's liberalisation policies. This has enhanced the prestige of the Left. The experience of these joint movements must enable the Left to continuously launch movements and struggles which will become part of the ever-expanding Left intervention in national politics.

2.94. On major national political issues relating to economic policies, the communal danger and imperialist pressures, the Left parties and in particular, the CPI(M) and CPI have had an identity of views. However, despite closer coordination, differences persist or surface on some issues. The CPI struck a different note on the

Constitutional amendment to set up a multi-member Election Commission by refusing to support it; the CPI persists in not supporting the application of an economic criterion within reservation of OBCs and has come out against the creamy layer concept enunciated by the Supreme Court; the CPI also supports demands for separate states wherever it has arisen whether it be Jharkhand, Uttarakhand or Chattisgarh. The Assam unit of the CPI still adopts a compromising line towards chauvinistic forces. There have also been shortcomings in implementing commonly agreed decisions at the national level in some states with regard to mobilisation for the civil disobedience movement. But such differences have not hampered the dominant trend toward closer coordination and unity in action. The setting up of state level coordination committees, though not functioning in a proper manner in many states, is in the correct direction. The realisation by all the Left forces, that strengthening the independent projection of Left policies and expanding Left intervention in the form of joint struggles is the key to the success of building a Left and democratic alternative, is the basis on which Left unity can grow overcoming all the difficulties.

2.95. The Left platform and the struggles launched by the Left parties must be constantly addressed to the masses following the other political parties including the Congress(I). It is these masses who constitute the majority of the population who are adversely affected by the Congress(I) Government's policies at the Centre and in the states. The Left has to wean these masses away from the influence of the bourgeois parties. The growth and unity of the Left forces will also enable them to utilise the conflicts and differences among the ruling classes and the bourgeois-landlord parties to advance the interests of the people and the class struggle. The growing strength and unity of the Left forces will also help avoid the tendency of trailing behind the bourgeois opposition parties. A strengthened Left force will be able to rally the other democratic and secular forces. It is imperative that the Left grow in strength and mass influence if the people's quest for a genuine alternative is to be successful.

Present Situation and Tasks

2.96. The major challenge in the present situation continues to be the onslaught of the pro-imperialist economic policies which are eroding India's economic sovereignty. These policies are advocated by the ruling classes as the solution to overcome the structural crisis of the capitalist path. However, they will only deepen the crisis of the bourgeois-landlord system. These policies will completely undermine any possibility of a self-reliant, independent path of development. The results of these policies are severely affecting the livelihood of all sections of the working people. Fighting back these policies, rallying all sections of the people in the broadest resistance movement and exploiting all fissures in the bourgeois-landlord classes under the impact of these policies, remains the central task today.

2.97. The other major threat which exists, as during the time of the 14th Congress, is the danger of the communal forces as represented by the BJP-RSS and its allies. Notwithstanding the electoral setback in the assembly elections in the north, the BJP still commands substantial support. The victories in Gujarat and Maharashtra are an indication of this. The widespread communal riots and poison spread after the Ayodhya demolition have had a deep impact. The discontent generated by the bourgeois-landlord rule has been channelised in some areas by these reactionary forces. The compromising policies of the Rao Government towards communalism only encourages these forces.

2.98. The struggle against communal forces must continue in right earnest. This requires the mobilisation of all secular sections. The disruptive effect of communalism on the unity of the working people must be countered.

2.99. The Kashmir question is becoming a crucial question before the country. The government is not prepared to go to the roots of the problem and solve it. If this drift continues it can lead to very serious consequences. The CPI(M) and the Left have to rally all the democratic and secular forces to ensure that the Kashmiri people are assured of their identity by providing for maximum autonomy within the framework of India. The Party has to mobilise public opinion to force the Central Government to

politically tackle the problems of the North-East where separatist movements have so far succeeded in channelising the discontent into disruptive channels.

2.100. The fight against rampant corruption and criminalisation of politics is also of great importance since it is corroding the democratic fabric of society and the elementary rights of citizens.

2.101. The present situation is very complex. Because of the economic policies, the compromising attitude to communalism and rampant corruption, the Congress(I) is rapidly losing mass support. Though the BJP has been trying to utilise the popular discontent it has not fully succeeded. However, its recent successes in Gujarat and Maharashtra elections have emboldened it to redouble its efforts. The people have shown that they prefer a secular alternative wherever there exists an effective secular opposition force. This is the experience of the Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar elections. An effective secular opposition formation at the national level can come into being only when a programme distinct from the Congress(I) policies is evolved. Such a programme can become effective provided it is backed by mass struggles and united movements in which the Party and the Left will have to play an important role. It is through the intensification of the mass struggles that the economic policies of the Rao Government can be fought and the danger of communalism be warded off. Such mass struggles will also influence the secular bourgeois opposition parties to shape an alternative platform. While initiating the mass movements the Party must shun a sectarian approach and actively strive to mobilise the masses ranged behind other parties. This will enable us to forge a broad unity of the working class, peasantry and other sections of the working people. It is by this path that we can advance towards defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP.

2.102. The CPI(M) and the Left must try for an understanding with the secular opposition forces to present an effective electoral alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The Left alone cannot, in the present situation, defeat both these forces. The secular opposition parties have, though constrained by the absence of a coherent programme, an important role in projecting the immediate

electoral alternative. While forging such an understanding we should avoid either a sectarian approach towards these parties which hampers cooperation with them citing their opportunist positions on various issues, or, trailing behind these parties because of electoral opportunism. It is by meeting the challenges facing the country stated above, that the CPI(M) and the Left can play a rightful role in advancing towards building Left and democratic unity.

Platform for Left and Democratic Front

2.103. The CPI(M) is committed to its basic aim of building a people's democratic front led by the working class. Only such a front can ensure the success of the people's democratic revolution. The programme and activities of the Left and democratic front are to be visualised as a necessary stage in the struggle to build up the people's democratic front. The struggle for building a Left and democratic front would require taking up a minimum programme consisting of the following demands:

(i) Continue the fight against the IMF-World Bank dictated policies; preserve economic independence and self-reliant economy; increase direct taxes, curb black money; cut inessential imports and wasteful government expenditure; fight against all changes that will be brought about in accordance with the GATT treaty, which are harmful for our economic independence.

(ii) Reverse the policies which undermine the key role of the public sector through privatisation, closure of the factories and increasing unemployment and protect the small-scale, cooperative and traditional sectors like coir, cashew, handlooms, fisheries and handicrafts.

(iii) Implement radical land reforms and distribution of land, enact laws to plug loopholes in land reforms; correct land records, issue joint *pattas* for women; develop irrigational facilities to overcome the lopsided development of agriculture; and central legislation for agricultural labour; ensure minimum wages for agricultural labourers.

(iv) Measures to curb the price-rise of essential commodities; stop administered price hikes; expand the public distribution

system to cover 14 essential commodities all over the country; adequate food stock to be procured by the state for this purpose; oppose all measures that adversely affect the food security of the country.

(v) Right to work to be embodied in the Constitution as a fundamental right; provision of unemployment benefits; concrete plans to generate rural and urban employment.

(vi) Need-based minimum wages for the workers; recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot; statutory provision for workers' participation in management; end to all discriminations against women workers; abolition of child labour.

(vii) Compulsory primary education and universal elementary education; free education up to the secondary stage; revamping the educational system on democratic, secular and scientific lines; reversal of indiscriminate privatisation and commercialisation of education. Promote mass literacy campaigns to end illiteracy. Equal treatment and development of all national languages. Inclusion of Dogri in 8th Schedule of the Constitution.

(viii) Defend democracy against authoritarian onslaughts by the Congress(I); defence of democratic rights of citizens; withdrawal of repressive legislations like ESMA, NSA and TADA.

(ix) Restructuring of Centre-State relations with more powers to the states; decentralising powers by revitalising panchayat system; abrogation of Article 356 of the Constitution; defence of Left Front Governments.

(x) Defence of national unity against separatist, communal and divisive forces. Political solution of Kashmir and North-East problems meeting the genuine demand of the people of these states within the framework of Indian unity. Resolution of the Babri Masjid dispute by reference to a Special Bench of the Supreme Court under Article 138(2) and not allowing this issue to be made use of for narrow political ends.

(xi) Check atrocities against scheduled castes and tribes by stringent action. Stern measures against untouchability and caste discrimination. Ensure that quotas of reservation for them are filled.

(xii) Protection of land, development of culture and language of tribal people and regional autonomy for tribal compact contiguous regions where necessary.

(xiii) Stern measures against atrocities on women; end of all discrimination against women; ensuring of equal rights and other legal and Constitutional guarantees; equal rights in property for women.

(xiv) For developing a secular and democratic culture which will combat all forms of obscurantism and decadence, encouragement to the diverse and composite cultures of all regions; promotion of a scientific temper; make cultural facilities available to all sections of the people.

(xv) Electoral reforms to eliminate malpractices; proportional representation system; multi-member Election Commission to be set up.

(xvi) A science and technology policy which encourages scientists to do creative work and nurture the self-reliant basis of India's development. An environmental policy which is integrated with the needs of rapid and sustainable development.

(xvii) The public health system to be improved and expanded. Oppose all measures to cut public health expenditure. Expansion of primary health centres with adequate stocks of medicine all over the country. Housing to be accorded the status of a basic right.

(xviii) Firm fight against corruption which is eroding the vitals of the democratic polity.

(xix) Defence of non-aligned foreign policy, friendship with socialist countries, world peace, and support to anti-imperialist struggles and the struggles for democracy in neighbouring countries.

2.104. The Left and democratic platform outlined above constitutes an alternative path of development for India. A path of development that ensures that the fruits of economic growth are more equitably distributed. The implementation of land reforms and the development of agriculture through providing the landless and poor peasants with means of production will lay the basis for a rapid expansion of the productive forces, employment and

incomes for the rural population. The development of industry needs high technology in advanced and sophisticated sectors provided with different levels of industry with appropriate technology suited to utilising the vast agricultural raw materials and abundant manpower available. The public sector will play a key role in the core areas. Such a path which will foster self-reliance fully exploiting the vast scientific and technological potential available with the country and importing technology on the basis of priority needs. India's all-round development will be aimed at providing people with educational, health and cultural facilities currently so tragically absent in the lives of millions. The state will fulfill its social responsibilities to expand the social sector within the reach of all citizens. A secular and democratic system is essential for social equality and pro-people development. A system of democratic decentralisation which devolves powers to the states, to the districts and to the villages is essential to involve the people in the process of development and to check the vested interests. It is based on this domestic model that India as a major Third World country can play its due role with a non-aligned foreign policy which opposes imperialist hegemony and contributes to building a more equitable international economic order. The Left and democratic forces have the vision of an alternative to the IMF-World Bank dictated path. Without the struggle for such a path of development, India will not be able to enter the 21st century as a country set on the road to progress.

Role of The Party

2.105. The struggle to establish an India free from social and class exploitation can advance and succeed only if there is a strong Communist Party and a powerful Left movement. The Party has to ideologically and politically be the pace-setter for all progressive and democratic forces. On the ideological front, the Party has been able to unify its ranks on the basis of the ideological resolution adopted at the 14th Congress, in upholding the creative application of Marxism-Leninism in the context of the setbacks to Socialism. Politically, the Party has been in the lead to strengthen Left unity and to launch the united movements

of the working people. The independent intervention of the Party to counter the ruling class policies and the bourgeois and feudal ideologies must be stepped up. For this, the Party must expand and grow as a well-knit force organisationally. The shortcomings analysed in the Salkia Plenum and the immediate tasks pinpointed in the 14th Congress organisational review have to be taken up earnestly.

2.106. The Party has countered the anti-Communist ideological offensive of the past three years and met the political challenges creditably. However, much more remains to be done. The defence of the country's economic sovereignty requires the ongoing struggle against the Congress(I) Government and its economic policies be taken forward more steadfastly; the defence of secularism and national unity calls for waging a consistent struggle against the BJP and other communal and divisive forces; the people must be organised to fight back the many-sided oppression of a crisis-ridden bourgeois-landlord order. The Party dedicates itself to taking up these tasks in order to discharge its responsibility to the people and the country.

Political-Organisational Report*

Adopted by the 15th Congress of The CPI(M)
Held at Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995

PART I

INTERNATIONAL

The 14th Congress had reviewed and assessed the radical changes in the world situation following the dismantling of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. It noted the consequent shift in the world balance of forces in favour of imperialism and the efforts of U.S. imperialism to impose its 'new world order'.

The political review report of the 14th Congress summed up the assessment made by the CPI(M). Vindicating this assessment, the intervening period saw that the initial offensive that imperialism unleashed following the dismantling of Socialism in the USSR has been met and the resistance to its efforts to impose its hegemony is growing. Though the virulent ideological offensive against Marxism-Leninism continues, the international Communist movement characterised by disarray at that time, is now showing signs of regrouping. The people's struggles against the growing miseries imposed by the intensification of all the fundamental contradictions of our epoch, are developing in the advanced capitalist countries, former socialist countries and the Third World.

The concrete tasks before the CPI(M) at the 14th Congress, in this international situation, thus, amounted to the following:

*The incumbent internationalist duty of a Communist in this situation to unflinchingly defend the remaining socialist countries and their struggles to safeguard and consolidate Socialism against

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imperialist offensive. This was increasingly manifested during this period by imperialist attempts to use the weapon of 'internal subversion' in order to undermine Socialism.

****Expression of our unflinching solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles growing worldwide especially in the Third World countries. While at the same time strengthening the anti-imperialist consciousness amongst the Indian people and our struggles against imperialist attempts to impose its hegemonic designs on India. The Political Resolution of the 14th Congress had noted:**

"We must in the face of the imperialist offensive heighten our solidarity with the socialist countries; with the Third World countries determined to defend independence and social transformation; with the national liberation movements; with the working people's struggles in the capitalist countries and the forces of world peace. The CPI(M) is pledged to fulfill its internationalist duties by mobilising all sections of the Indian people in the struggle against imperialism".

*****Capitalism's inherent crisis continues to impose fresher burdens on the working people, resulting in growing popular discontent. The consequent protests and struggles of the working people in defence of their rights is an area which required active support and solidarity.**

The political review report of the 14th Congress had noted:

"Capitalism cannot provide any answer to problems facing humanity. Even for the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries capitalism shows a bleak future. Market economy laid out under orders from above will not be realised in accordance with its blueprint. If this process is forced on the people, it will certainly give rise to many contradictions which are bound to threaten the people's living conditions."

******From this followed our task of extending our support and solidarity to the people of the former socialist countries in their struggles to defend the gains of the socialist system which were increasingly being eroded by the vicious attacks of Capital. An important task before the CPI(M) in this situation was to unhesitatingly and unflinchingly uphold the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism.**

The 14th Congress Political review concluded: 'It must be realised that the socialist revolution which results in the emancipation of mankind from exploitation, is a very arduous process. And in today's international situation, the Communist Parties have to exert more influence through struggles. This is not confined only to the economic sphere. It extends to all spheres of social life, drawing in more and more people towards Marxist ideology which alone can provide a solution to the present ills of society. Therefore, the setbacks which have occurred in the international sphere, are not of a lasting nature; and difficulties can be overcome.'

Solidarity with Socialist Countries

During this period U.S. imperialism tried all weapons in its arsenal to stifle socialist Cuba and generate a process that would lead to the undermining of Socialism. The Cuban people under the leadership of the Communist Party and Fidel Castro uncompromisingly withstood these attacks braving many an offensive and are continuing to safeguard the socialist system. The criminal economic blockade imposed by U.S. imperialism despite an overwhelming U.N. general assembly resolution calling for its withdrawal (only U.S. and Israel voted against this resolution), continues creating unprecedented economic difficulties for Cuba. However, it is heartening to note that despite this blockade some advanced capitalist countries have begun economic relations with Cuba and politically U.S. imperialism is more isolated on this issue.

Imperialism simultaneously is attempting to generate internal tensions and staged the so-called "refugee crisis" by orchestrating a highly publicised attempt to show that the people are fleeing Cuba. However, Cuba's response and the firmness with which its people rallied behind its socialist system ultimately forced USA to come to a negotiated agreement which in the present circumstances represents a victory for Cuba.

Under these circumstances, responding to our internationalist commitments, the CPI(M) took the initiative in organising a countrywide campaign of solidarity with Cuba with the aim of sending a shipload of foodgrains as a token of Indian people's solidarity.

A big countrywide campaign was conducted under the auspices of the National Committee of Solidarity with Cuba. The total cost of sending a shipload of foodgrains to Cuba was over Rs. 5 crore. This was collected in the process and commendable work was done by our units of West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Punjab and others. It was for the first time since the days of the heroic Vietnamese struggle that the Indian people engaged in such a direct expression of solidarity with the socialist cause. The fact that the target which initially appeared distant could be fulfilled reflects the tremendous success of the programme undertaken by the Party. All Party units responded enthusiastically to this campaign.

An Indian delegation led by Comrade Surjeet went to Cuba to receive the ship which was flagged off from Haldia port. A big reception was organised in Havana where Fidel Castro expressed his sincere gratitude to the Indian people and the solidarity committee for this concrete expression. Forced by our move the Government of India ultimately fulfilled its earlier commitment on the quantum of rice to be sold to Cuba.

Subsequently, in 1994 another 300 tonnes of detergents and bathing soap was sent to Cuba in response to the appeal for assistance in the light of Cuba's shortages. The overwhelming bulk of the mobilisation of resources and material was undertaken by us. Some Congress and Janata Dal Chief Ministers had helped in this effort.

North Korea

During this period U.S. imperialism intensified its efforts to pressurise North Korea into submission on the so-called nuclear inspection issue. But North Korea displayed a strong sense of will and determination not to allow U.S. imperialism to get away with its schemes. As a result of this, bilateral negotiations between DPRK and USA progressed. The fourth round ended on 21st October 1994 with an agreement that the West will provide alternate nuclear reactor technology to DPRK. The USA, however, is now seeking to sabotage this by asking South Korea to fulfill this obligation. The DPRK has objected to this stating

that the USA is not only backing out but is seeking to give the South a potential political leverage.

During this period the CPI(M) supported the various positions that DPRK took and expressed solidarity with the Korean people in their struggle to strengthen Socialism and peacefully reunite their motherland.

China

During this period, as noted in the Political Resolution, imperialist pressures continued to mount against China. Under the pretext of so-called human rights' violations, on the Most Favoured Nation status, Super 301, threats of trade retaliation and blocking China's entry to GATT, U.S. imperialism continues to mount pressures. China has been successfully resisting these attempts.

The process of reforms continues in China with its efforts to establish the 'socialist market economy'. This process has generated tremendous economic successes. The CPI(M) hopes that this process will help overcome the weaknesses and strengthen Socialism in China.

Vietnam

During this period the USA was forced to withdraw its unilateral economic embargo against Vietnam. The establishment of official U.S. relations with Vietnam is a significant success. The Vietnamese Party also adopted certain reforms aimed at strengthening Socialism which have yielded some positive results. The CPI(M) hopes that these efforts will help Vietnam in overcoming its weaknesses and strengthening Socialism.

Solidarity with Struggles in the Third World

The Political Resolution notes that in the changed world situation favouring imperialism temporarily, the anti-imperialist content of many Third World fora such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Arab League etc. have been diluted. In this situation, in many Third World countries the national liberation forces were forced to seek out compromise settlements. The F.M.L.N. in El Salvador thus entered into agreement and ceased its armed struggle with the

promise of universal democratic elections and implementation of land reforms. In the elections, while the Communists won in the areas where it had control, the government was formed by the rightist forces which won in the other parts. Though denied a two-thirds majority, the right wing Arena government has refused to carry out the agreement on land reforms. But it has been able to reverse the land reform gains in the areas controlled by the Communists. The focus of the struggle, hence, has now shifted from armed struggle to that of political electoral battles.

The PLO under Arafat finally agreed to a settlement far short of its avowed aim of establishing a Palestinian nation. Israel continues to be belligerent and is systematically settling Jewish population in the occupied areas. But on the question of Jerusalem, a part of which was to be the capital of the Palestinian state, Israel has remained intransigent. This settlement has been seen by many Palestinian groups as an unfair compromise and has created a lot of dissensions within the ranks of the PLO. Thus, though the settlement has been reached, the period will see continued tensions and strife. The religious fundamentalist group Hamas has intensified its activities and seeks to exploit the popular discontent for its political ambitions.

While welcoming any effort at restoration of peace in West Asia, the CPI(M) has been critical of the compromise which failed to fulfill the aspirations of the four-decade-long heroic struggle and innumerable sacrifices of the Palestinian people.

During this period our solidarity with the developing struggle in South Africa deepened. Despite all efforts of the reactionary forces, the South African people under the leadership of the ANC, SACP and COSATU registered a stunning electoral victory ending the abominable apartheid regime culminating one phase in the saga of human struggles of epic proportions. Nelson Mandela's first ever visit to India generated widespread enthusiasm. The reception accorded in Calcutta was indeed historic and of such proportions that Mandela himself was visibly moved.

The CPI(M) has been consistently supporting the cause of the people of Western Sahara led by the Polisario. The U N. sponsored referendum continues to be sabotaged by U.S.-backed Morocco, denying the Saharwi people their homeland.

The situation in Afghanistan, notwithstanding U.N. resolutions, continues to deteriorate. Civil war conditions persist with a total breakdown of any governance. The contending groups are battling for control of Kabul. In the process, irreparable loss of life and property continues unabated.

International Communist Movement

In pursuance of the urgent necessity to strengthen the ideological campaigns and build up international solidarity among the Communists, the CPI(M) took the initiative of organising an international seminar commemorating the 175 birth anniversary of Karl Marx "On the Contemporary World Situation and the Validity of Marxism". This was the first major event to take place anywhere in the world following the dismantling of Socialism where the Communist Parties met to discuss ideological issues. The three-day seminar attracted worldwide attention and its proceedings, which were promptly brought out by the Party, received a good international response. Nineteen parties from different countries of the world and the CPI attended the conference and presented papers. Three parties sent their papers but could not physically be present while 8 parties sent messages. Thus of the 31 parties invited all of them responded.

This exchange of views led the participants to the conclusion that, despite the setback to Socialism as was seen in the Soviet Union and East European countries, Marxism-Leninism remains valid as a lodestar for the activities of fraternal parties. At the same time, it was agreed that serious mistakes were committed in the process of building Socialism causing great damage, leading to the final collapse of Socialism in the USSR and the East European socialist countries. The participants in the seminar pledged themselves to renew and develop the tenets of Marxism in the light of experience gathered in the process of developing the revolutionary Communist Movement over the century.

The West Bengal State Committee made excellent preparations to host this seminar and it became a focal point of our ideological campaign.

Following this, reports have reached us of regional meetings of Communist Parties in many areas. The European parties met at the invitation of the Communist Party of Portugal to coordinate their immediate struggles against the process of European unification and discussed some ideological issues.

The Communist Parties of Latin America met in Mexico. From outside the region only the CPI(M) was invited to this meeting which we attended.

Fraternal relations with various Communist Parties have developed during this period. Contacts with the SACP continue to improve. Despite severe attacks by the reactionary forces, such as the brazen assassination of its General Secretary, Comrade Chris Hani, the SACP continues to play an important role in present-day South African developments.

Our relations with the united party in Nepal have steadily grown. The death of its General Secretary Madan Bhandari and PB member Jeevraj Ashrit, in a road accident under mysterious circumstances was a big loss. The CPN(UML), however, scored an impressive victory in the recent elections. By emerging as the single largest party, it has formed the government. In the present international situation, this is a big victory.

During this period intense ideological struggles took place within many Communist Parties around the world. In USA and Canada, though the parties split, the struggle culminated finally with the victory of those pledged to the adherence to Marxism-Leninism, Proletarian Internationalism and Democratic Centralism. Our relations with these parties are developing.

Fraternal relations have been established with the Communist Party of Russian Federation, during this period. The CPI(M) attended its 3rd Congress in January, 1995. The CPRF has a sizable presence in the Russian Parliament. Its influence is growing and it is revamping its organisational structure.

Our contacts with the parties in former Socialist countries, like the PDS of Germany, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party have grown during this period.

During this period our fraternal ties with the Communist Parties of the advanced capitalist countries have also steadily improved—

the Japanese Communist Party, the Communist Refoundation of Italy and with parties in Spain, Portugal and France

Imperialist Efforts at Economic Hegemony

This period saw the intensification of the imperialist efforts to impose its hegemony over the world economy and force the Third World countries to change their economies to suit its interests. The World Bank/IMF prescriptions and the recent GATT treaty have been major forms through which this is sought to be imposed. The recent world summit at Copenhagen was utilised to endorse the IMF structural adjustment programme as the only panacea for the Third World.

This intensification comes as an attempt by the imperialist countries to emerge from their crisis at the expense of the Third World. As noted in the political resolution, capitalist recovery from the longest recessionary spell in recent years is both uneven and sluggish. This is characterised by growing unemployment. The 24 OECD countries had in June 1994, 8.5 per cent of their workforce or 35 million unemployed. In the G-7 countries in July 1994 there were 24 million unemployed.

This has imposed greater burdens on the working people in capitalist countries. Homelessness and poverty is on the rise. In Germany, 7.25 million live below the poverty line and 8 lakh are homeless. Welfare expenditure by the state is being curtailed. In USA, Clinton recently announced the decision to further cut 7 million dollars from existing social programmes.

The working people responded with big strikes in the advanced capitalist world in the last two years. In the political sphere the ruling parties suffered major electoral reverses in many countries. The Left and Social Democrats have gained in some countries.

It is in this background that the village of the Third World is being intensified. Already, 61 per cent of Latin America's and 50 per cent of Africa's population lives below the abysmally low poverty line. The ILO estimates that by the year 2000, 50 per cent of the world's population will be starving. Third World debt has risen to 1,662 billion dollars and projected to grow by an additional 6.5 per cent in 1993. The World Bank estimates that during the

first 6 months of 1994 there was a net outflow of 731 million dollars from the Third World to the advanced capitalist world. According to the ILO there are a thousand million illiterates and nearly 30 per cent of the people eligible for work are jobless or underemployed in the world today.

The Left and progressive forces are registering voices of protest against these imperialist prescriptions throughout the world including in many capitalist countries. Coordinated efforts are emerging against the specific manner in which this hegemony is sought to be imposed. In the Latin American region in particular, the establishment of the NAFTA and its disastrous policies has created a situation where the progressive forces are seeking to coordinate their struggles. Similarly, the process of European integration has also seen coordinated activity amongst various forces in Europe in organising their protests. It is incumbent on us, while strengthening the struggles against these economic policies within the country highlighting the anti-imperialist content to coordinate with the regional forces in these struggles. This is the concrete manner in which the anti-imperialist struggles in the coming period will have to be coordinated. We have to do much more to strengthen the campaign against imperialism among the people.

However, despite these various activities undertaken by the Party in pursuance of the political understanding adopted at the 14th Congress, there are certain shortcomings that need to be noted. The 14th Congress had enjoined the Party to continue to undertake the study of the development in the former socialist countries as well as in the remaining ones in order to enrich our understanding and to draw correct lessons. This process has been going on through various exchanges with the Communist Parties of various countries. We must take into account the discussions with the various parties and further take up this task to enrich our ideological understanding.

Reaffirming its commitments to Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism and anti-imperialist solidarity the CPI(M) is pledged to intensify the ideological struggles to meet the enemy's offensive.

NATIONAL

Implementation of the Political-Tactical Line of 14th Congress

The Central Committee and the Polit Bureau had to concretely apply the political-tactical line evolved at the 14th Congress in January 1992 to the developing situation. The Political Resolution of the Congress had set out two major tasks before the Party—fighting back the offensive of the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and the growing communal danger. From this flowed the slogan of defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Implementation of the political-tactical line to defeat both the Congress(I) and the BJP in a situation fraught with political instability required proper assessment and prompt intervention in the developing situation. Depending on the issue, we had to concentrate our attack against one or the other at different junctures. In the case of the struggle against the economic policies, our constant efforts were directed against the Congress(I) Government. Without relaxing our struggle against the economic policies we also had to simultaneously pay priority to the struggle against the BJP and its allies whenever issues of communalism and threat to national unity arose. We had to also take into account the disarray in the secular opposition—the Janata Dal-National Front combine. In this period many such issues arose such as the Presidential elections in June 1992; the grave situation emerging after the December 6 demolition of the Babri Masjid; the tactics to be adopted in the elections to the assemblies of the North Indian states; the struggle in Parliament against the Narasimha Rao Government's economic policies and the rampant corruption, the parliamentary steps to move no confidence motions and to oppose the budgets etc. The understanding arrived at in the 14th Congress helped us to arrive at correct conclusions and tactics. We had to judge each issue from the standpoint of whom we had to fight on that question and how to further advance the Left and democratic forces.

Struggle Against Economic Policies

The first major action at the all-India level against the economic policies of the Rao Government had taken place in November 1991

through a general strike called by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions. Following the 14th Congress, the Polit Bureau immediately took the initiative for the Left parties to call for a joint movement against the effects of the economic policies on the people like price rise. The Left initiative was necessary as only it had a clear-cut and firm stand against the new economic policies and the Janata Dal was riven with dissensions at that juncture. The first phase began from February 15, 1992 with local protest actions and culminated on March 4 with statewide rallies and a mass dhama by MPs and MLAs from Left parties in Delhi. In the next phase we approached the National Front constituents to support the trade unions' call for general strike on 16th June. This general strike drew in more sections of the workers and employees than the November 1991 action. On November 25, 1992 a massive rally of the working class was organised by the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions at Delhi. April 1993 saw the formation of the National Platform of Mass Organisations, a body which for the first time brought together the organisations of the working people apart from the trade unions. It is through this platform that the Left mass organisations intensified the movement against the economic policies with the *jail bhara* movement in August and the nationwide September 9 bandh. This bandh was another step in widening the resistance to the economic policies and brought in the rural masses in an organised way into the struggle. The growing anti-GATT feeling among the peasantry also contributed to their wider participation.

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee were constantly reviewing the ongoing struggles against the economic policies and had decided on a twin approach. Firstly, there had to be constant initiative and intervention of the Left parties independently to mobilise the people in the struggle against the economic policies and to project the Left. This was essential as only the Left had a consistent critique and stand against the economic policies and as the years 1992-93 saw the continuing disarray in the secular bourgeois opposition parties and the splits and inability to present a united front. The bourgeois opposition parties, by and large, did not mobilise the people against the onslaught of the new economic

policies. It was the Left intervention which widened the mass movement and brought in new sections. Secondly, in light of the experience of the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions which saw wider trade union unity after the November 1991 and 16th June 1992 strike, it was decided that this platform should be widened to include all other sections of the people affected by the liberalisation policies. It is the National Platform of Mass Organisations which conducted the 1993 and 1994 nationwide protest actions, giving it a broader sweep and character.

The Central Committee had decided in its meeting in December 1993 to intensify the Left-led movement which provided the setting for a wider mobilisation through the mass organisations in 1994. The Left parties again chalked out a two-stage programme. In the first phase in February and March, joint *jathas* in the states were followed by big state-level rallies on a charter of demands against the Rao Government's policies and presenting alternative policies. Notable were the big rallies jointly conducted by the CPI(M) and the CPI at Vijayawada and Thanjavur.

This two-month campaign culminated in the April 5, 1994 rally called by the National Platform actively backed by the Left parties at Delhi which saw a militant demonstration after the police prohibited the march from proceeding to Parliament. This was followed in the second stage by the call for a mass civil disobedience campaign between August 16 and September 9. Widespread preparations were undertaken for this movement by enrollment of volunteers, the target being 10 lakh volunteers to court arrest and go to jail. This three-week *jail bhara* campaign saw the biggest mobilisation conducted by the Left with the participation of 12.5 lakh volunteers in the court arrest programmes and another 50 lakhs participating in the mass sit-ins organised in West Bengal. Reviewing this movement, the Central Committee noted the good effort made by the Party as a whole in this campaign. At the same time, it pointed out that while it succeeded in mobilising the masses under our influence, it could not draw in the non-Party masses into the actual struggle; also, in a few states the requisite effort to enrol volunteers for court arrest commensurate with our strength was not undertaken.

This mass mobilisation and struggle led by the Left provided the momentum for the National Platform of Mass Organisations call for rail roko on September 20 and the September 29, 1994 general strike and hartal. Initially, the Polit Bureau was apprehensive that the rail roko call coming soon after the civil disobedience movement would affect the 29th September general strike. However, the widespread response to the rail roko call showed that we had underestimated the mass mood. The strike saw the participation of 25 million workers and employees making it the biggest protest action since the November 1991 strike. The strike assumed the form of bandh in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. There was a total shutdown of banks and insurance establishments; the participation of public sector and State Government employees was good in most centres; most of the defence production units joined the strike. The strike also covered sections of the unorganised workers in some states.

In keeping with the call given in the 14th Congress to intensify the resistance to the new economic policies, the Party was to a large extent successful in ensuring joint Left intervention in a consistent manner to build up resistance to the policies. The three all-India general strikes and bandhs and the Left-led actions including the April 5, 1994 rally at Delhi showed that it is only the Left which is the firm defender of the people's rights against the onslaughts of the IMF/World Bank dictated policies.

The Party also sought to reach out to the rural masses by organising the mass campaigns and *jathas* to explain the impact of the economic policies on the peasantry and agricultural labour. For the anti-GATT treaty campaign, the Party brought out booklets from the centre and in the states to oppose the harmful provisions which would have a direct impact on the people. The Party also took up each policy measure which dismantles the public sector, erodes self-reliance and opens the core areas to foreign capital and privatisation. The fight against the privatisation of banking and insurance; the financial sectors reforms as a whole; the disinvestment of public sector unit shares; the opening up of the telecom, power and other infrastructure sectors to foreign multinational corporations indiscriminately—all these were taken

up to rouse the people and to defend the country's interests. The Party actively supported all the trade union actions against the privatisation and dismantling of the public sector and raised these issues in Parliament along with the other Left and democratic forces.

It is the Party's consistent role and the united Left intervention which succeeded in intensifying the resistance to the economic policies of the Rao Government. It is due to this protest movement that the Congress(I) Government was stopped from going ahead with a wage freeze, the enforcement of an exit policy was stalled and closure of certain nationalised banks and public sector units halted. The Party and the Left reflected the mass discontent through the countrywide protest movements. This has had its impact within the Congress(I) also where rumblings on economic policy is being increasingly heard with the revolt of Arjun Singh.

At the same time we must note the necessity of sustaining and widening the mass resistance to the liberalisation policies further. The Rao Government is far too committed to the imperialist dictated path to change it unless it becomes politically needed to remain in power. So far the Rao Government has been able to rally the big business and landlord sections with this policy but fissures are appearing. While the Party by and large has moved when there is an all-India call, nevertheless in many places we are not able to link the general slogans against the economic policies to the concrete problems affecting the people and lead struggles on local issues. Every section of the people is affected by price-rise, loss of jobs, traditional occupations and earnings. The cost of inputs for their meagre production are growing. The recent struggle of fishermen against the entry of multinationals, the travails of the weavers, the scarcity of cheap food and essential commodities, the plight of small growers of commercial crops—all these are issues to be taken up and movements built. We must be able to go amongst the unorganised sections and draw them into struggles. We must accept self-critically that in most places the Party and the mass organisations led by us are yet to undertake this task seriously.

Communal Danger

The other major task enjoined by the Party Congress was to step up the struggle against the communal danger which was correctly foreseen and warned against in the political resolution. One of the major areas of concern for the Polit Bureau and the Party Centre was to follow the developments regarding the Ayodhya dispute and intervene promptly to isolate the BJP and to be vigilant regarding the compromising tendency of the Rao Government. Utilising the accretion of strength gained in the 1991 elections and its control of the U.P. State Government, the BJP-RSS-VHP combine set out to implement its nefarious plan to demolish the Babri Masjid. The year 1992 saw systematic efforts to put this plan into operation with the Narasimha Rao Government remaining a passive and compromising spectator. The Polit Bureau and the Party Centre had vigilantly monitored the situation and in the two National Integration Council meetings (which were also called under our pressure) took the initiative to press for Central intervention to prevent the assault on the mosque. The unanimous resolution adopted in the Council in its November 1992 meeting authorising the Prime Minister to act to uphold the Constitution was moved by Comrade Surjeet. In this period the Party stepped up its anti-communal campaign. August 15 was observed as a day to defend secularism and national unity and demonstrations were held all over the country. Seeing the imminent danger with the *kar sevaks* assembling at Ayodhya, the Polit Bureau asked the State Committees to organise mass meetings and demonstrations between December 3 and 6 to demand Central intervention and to expose the BJP-VHP-RSS game. Many public meetings and demonstrations were held in different parts of the country.

The December 6 event at Ayodhya marked the most shameful episode where the communal forces were given a free run with the Centre mutely looking on. The Centre allowed the VHP to set up a makeshift temple at the site on December 7. A serious situation developed with widespread riots and communal violence spreading all over the country. The communal riots which engulfed the country after December 6, saw horrific violence in many cities of U.P., Gujarat, Rajasthan, M.P., Maharashtra, Karnataka and

other centres. A disturbing feature was the riots and communal frenzy in industrial centres. This showed the penetration of the communal ideology in the working class areas. In many places like Kanpur, Bhopal, Sahranpur and other centres the Party did its best to douse the communal flames and avert violence. Relief work was also undertaken at many centres. In West Bengal, the Left Front Government acted firmly to put down communal mischief in a few parts of Calcutta within a day and the Party succeeded in preventing trouble in other parts of the state.

The Central Committee held an urgent meeting in December to take stock of the situation. Prior to that the Polit Bureau took the initiative to call a convention on December 19 and got together all the secular opposition forces to unite with the Left on a joint platform. Out of this convention emerged the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan (C.N.U.) which conducted a mass campaign in the period January to April 1993. This included mass pledge taking on January 30 and a mass signature campaign, state level rallies and a national level rally on April 14. Lakhs of people participated in the human chain programmes held in West Bengal and Kerala.

There is no doubt that our Party in most states made serious efforts in the anti-communal campaign. West Bengal and Kerala conducted the most systematic campaign. In other states like Bihar, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Maharashtra, U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka also there were a wide range of activities. They extended from public meetings, conventions, seminars to human chains. Among the major highlights during the three-month anti-communal campaign were the January 26 human chain in West Bengal in which 2 crore participated; the January 20 massive rally at Patna; the Calcutta rally; the human chain programme in Kerala on March 30 and the April 14 rally at Delhi.

In most of the states, it was the CPI(M) which took the initiative to launch the united campaigns against communalism. Even among the mass signatures collected to present to the President, half were collected by the Party and mass organisations. However, the fact that only 75 lakh signatures were collected by the Party showed that even in the strong states of West Bengal and Kerala the door-to-door mass contact programme was not taken up in an adequate

manner. The bourgeois opposition parties like the Janata Dal (except in Bihar), the TDP and DMK did not take up this mass campaign seriously. Generally, their participation in the C N U campaigns were token with the leaders joining without their mass following. Despite this, at many places the united secular campaign drew in people from different walks of life and contributed in creating an atmosphere against the spread of the communal virus. A big section of the intelligentsia, including cultural groups and the platform of the literacy campaign, became active in the defence of secularism. Our Party comrades working in such groups took the lead. The Party Centre brought out a series of pamphlets to highlight the communal threat. Lakhs of copies of these pamphlets and other booklets brought out in the states were also sold in different languages. The Party's role in the anti-communal campaign brought about a change in the perception of the minorities regarding Communists.

When the Narasimha Rao Government announced the Ayodhya package in January 1993 as its solution for the dispute, the Polit Bureau came out sharply against it. The proposal comprised acquiring the land where the mosque had stood and its surroundings by the Centre; it referred the question whether there was a temple or a Hindu religious structure before the mosque was built to the Supreme Court for an opinion under Article 143 and finally the Centre announced the setting up of two trusts for building the temple and the mosque. The Party pointed out the futility of the Presidential reference under Article 143, the terms of which were weighted against the minorities; the promise to build a temple without specifying where was another ploy that Narasimha Rao began to try and appropriate the temple platform from the VHP. The Party Centre mobilised all the Left Parties and the Janata Dal to demand that the reference under Article 143 be scrapped and instead Article 138(2) be invoked to transfer all the cases pending before the Allahabad High Court for a full judicial verdict by the Supreme Court which would be binding on all sides.

All through 1994, the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee strongly condemned the Rao Government's efforts to mobilise the

Shankaracharyas' to form a trust to build the temple. The Supreme Court judgement refusing to hear the Presidential reference and declining that the dispute can be resolved through the judicial process spelled a victory for the line of our Party and all the secular forces. Despite the Home Minister's recent statement that the government has no option but to invoke Article 138(2), the government once again appears backing out.

Presidential Elections

One of the first issues following the 14th Congress, in which we had to correctly apply the political-tactical line was on the question of Presidential elections. Taking stock of the situation, the Polit Bureau felt that it was essential that the post of President and Vice-President be filled by persons who had reliable secular credentials; that the BJP with its increased strength as the major opposition party should not be allowed to take advantage of the political instability; that our tactics should ensure that it does not influence the choice of either President or Vice-President; and that we should strive to arrive at a common understanding with the Left and other secular opposition parties to achieve this. Given the correlation of forces it was not possible to ensure the election of a candidate sponsored by the Left and secular opposition parties; hence we had to see if the Congress(I) would put up suitable candidates at this juncture. The Party secured a common understanding on this question among the Left parties which then asked the Congress(I) to propose nominees for the two posts so that the concerned parties could decide on the matter.

When the Congress(I) refused to announce both the nominees together and proposed only Shankar Dayal Sharma as the Presidential nominee, we had to take a decision. The Janata Dal and the National Front decided not to support the Congress(I) nominee with V.P. Singh announcing that only a SC/ST candidate would be acceptable. For this they chose G.G. Swell for whom the BJP also declared support. The Party considered Sharma's candidature suitable from the secular viewpoint. In such a situation the Party declared support for Sharma's candidature and demarcated from the National Front decision. Subsequently, the

choice of K.R. Narayanan as the Vice-Presidential candidate made the choice for both the positions acceptable on the secular criteria.

The support to the Congress(I) nominee for President had raised questions and even opposition in certain Party units and circles. The Polit Bureau prepared a note on our tactics on the Presidential elections which was subsequently adopted by the Central Committee and reported to the entire party. Those who had reservations or apprehensions about supporting a Congress(I) candidate were unable to see the new situation where the BJP could have manoeuvred to influence the choice of the Vice-Presidential nominee by coming to an agreement with the Congress(I) just as in the case of the Deputy Speakership of the Lok Sabha. As the Central Committee document on the Presidential election stated 'The Polit Bureau felt that in the present unstable political situation it is essential to see that the persons who occupy these two posts are not such who would act inimical to secular and democratic values when a critical situation may arise. Such sudden twists and turns may occur in the future and it is necessary to see that unsuitable persons are not in these key positions which can prove advantageous for the imperialists or communal forces. The Polit Bureau also wanted to prevent the situation in which the BJP is able to arrive at an understanding with the Congress(I) on these two posts just as it was able to do in the Speaker and Deputy Speaker elections. If the BJP had succeeded in influencing the choice of the Vice-Presidentship in return for supporting the Congress(I) Presidential candidate they would have penetrated to the higher echelons of constitutional power."

Our stand was vindicated by the serious developments that took place within six months of the Presidential elections. The build up to the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the shameful deed on December 6 and the widespread communal violence never seen since partition in the following weeks all showed the gravity of the situation created by the communal forces which were able to effectively use the State Government machinery in Uttar Pradesh. The guard against the BJP penetrating high constitutional office like the President and Vice-President proved timely. The President, Dr. Sharma, issued a public statement expressing serious concern

and urging the Central Government to act in the grave situation created by the demolition of the mosque. These tactics in the Presidential elections were necessitated by the concrete situation where the BJP posed a serious threat to the secular basis of the republic.

Dismissal of BJP Governments

The struggle to check the BJP's advance and to isolate it politically was kept in mind all through by the Polit Bureau and Central Committee even while intensifying the struggle against the Congress(I) Government's policies. Immediately after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the Polit Bureau demanded that the BJP Governments in M.P., Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh quit office as the Chief Ministers of these governments had openly defended the attacks on the Constitution and law by the RSS combine at Ayodhya and used the official machinery to mobilise *kar sevaks* for the demolition. When the Central Government, in face of mounting pressure, dismissed these three governments, our Party supported this action even though Article 356 was invoked. The question arose as to why our Party which has always been opposed to Article 356 was now condoning its use?

The situation in the country after the Ayodhya event was an extraordinary one with the gravest threat posed to national unity and the secular principle in the Constitution. The BJP Governments were openly challenging the secular basis of the polity. In such a situation resort to Article 356 of the Constitution had to be seen in the context of the danger to the very basis of secularism and national unity. Our stand was subsequently vindicated by the judgement given by the Supreme Court which upheld the use of Article 356 against the BJP Governments while at the same time declaring as unconstitutional its use against the Bommai Government in Karnataka. The Court gave directions to check the misuse of Article 356 for political reasons by the ruling party at the Centre. Though the BJP tried to make a big issue of the dismissal of its governments in the November assembly elections, its subsequent defeat showed how the action was timely and necessary to prevent further communal polarisation and onslaughts on secularism.

In this connection there was another move by the BJP which we opposed. In the Parliament session after the demolition, the BJP brought a no confidence motion against the government with the main issue being the dismissal of the BJP Governments and the arrest of its leaders. Our Party and the Left not only refused to support this motion but opposed it. The Janata Dal and the National Front abstained. Since this motion was to justify their action in Ayodhya we had no hesitation in opposing it.

No Confidence Motion Against Rao Government

While we opposed the no confidence motion in the background of the Ayodhya events in March 1993, as soon as the communal frenzy subsided and the preparations for the countrywide struggle against the economic policies resumed, the Party took the initiative to move a no confidence motion in Parliament in the monsoon session in July. Here it was our efforts which brought about the widest unity of all the secular opposition for moving a no confidence motion which indicted the government for its economic policies, for failure to combat the communal forces and to bring to trial those responsible for the demolition of the mosque and the securities scandal. The balloting of the motion coming in the name of one of our MPs helped us to focus on these issues and demarcate from the BJP which got no opportunity to emerge as the leader of an all opposition move. The Narasimha Rao Government narrowly escaped defeat when it was able to break away seven MPs from the Ajit Singh group to vote for it. As the Central Committee reviewing our line on the no confidence motion noted:

"Looking back at the course of events, we were able to accomplish the following: (a) keeping the initiative on the motion in our hands and not allowing the BJP to dominate; (b) gathering forces in the non-BJP camp which were so far with Congress; (c) coming before the people as a party which fights on issues which are the real ones before the country.

The entire episode of the no confidence motion and the rallying of a substantial number of MPs from parties and groups hitherto not against the Rao Government shows the growing isolation of the Rao Government. The people's mood and discontent was a

key factor which shifted the positions of diverse groups and individuals towards voting for the no confidence.

As stated at the outset, the disastrous policies of the Rao Government are leading to growing discontent. We must also not underestimate the erosion of the image due to the corruption scandals. Our Party correctly gauged this mood while taking the lead for the no confidence motion.'

Assembly Elections in the North

The assembly elections to Uttar Pradesh, M.P., Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi assumed special importance as they were held after the communal polarisation and violence witnessed after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The four BJP-run Governments were dismissed and President's rule imposed. The results of these elections were expected to be crucial for the future of secularism as the BJP was aiming to capture power in these states and bid for power at the Centre. In all these states the BJP was a major force. The Bangalore Central Committee meeting held in August 1993 discussed our tactics in these elections. In line with the priority we had set to counter the communal danger and the menace posed by the aggressive communal offensive of the RSS-led combine, we felt it was essential to thwart the return to power of the BJP in states they had been ruling especially when they were openly justifying the subversion of the Constitution and the vandalism at Ayodhya. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the Central Committee directed the Polit Bureau to strive for the widest unity of all secular and Left parties particularly the unity of the Mulayam Singh-led Samajwadi Party and the Janata Dal to ensure the defeat of the BJP. Here the Congress(I) was not any major factor. In other states the main fight would be between the BJP and the Congress(I) with no credible third alternative in sight. Here the Central Committee decided that the Left should concentrate and fight only in those seats where we had an effective presence and in the rest call upon the people to defeat the BJP. We kept in mind that the priority of the secular-minded masses would be to ensure the defeat of the BJP.

The results of these elections with the BJP losing in Uttar Pradesh, M.P. and Himachal and not acquiring a majority in Rajasthan constituted a serious setback for the communal platform.

The line of ensuring the defeat of the BJP was in tune with the people's mood which was getting alienated by the periodic violence and the rioting. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the Left parties had wanted an understanding between the SP-BSP combine and the Janata Dal on the basis of a majority of seats to be left to the former with a categorical announcement of making Mulayam Singh as Chief Minister. While the Janata Dal responded positively to this proposal the latter refused this offer and therefore the wider unity which we wanted could not be forged. The Party, therefore, in pursuance of the line of unity, went in for a seat adjustment with the Janata Dal. If the wider unity had been effected, the BJP would have suffered a more decisive defeat. Nearly ninety seats were won by the BJP due to the division of the secular opposition vote. Unity of the secular opposition forces would have led to a more stable combination to form the government in Uttar Pradesh and avoided the situation where the SP-BSP Government had to depend on the Congress(I) for a majority in the assembly.

Reviewing our performances in these elections, the Central Committee noted in its review in December 1993: Our Party in line with the Central Committee's understanding contested only those seats in which we could effectively register our presence or where our Party base or movement had to be protected. We did not fight more seats which could lead to a division of votes in favour of the BJP in all the states. We contested 17 seats in U.P., 15 in M.P., 12 in Rajasthan, 6 in Himachal and 6 in Delhi. We retired two candidates during the campaign in U.P. The political message of the Party was taken to many new areas which met with a good response from the people. However, the sharp polarisation among the major bourgeoisie parties had its impact on the results. We were able to win only one seat in U.P., while we came second in three seats....Our votes went up by over 80,000 compared to the previous elections. In Rajasthan, despite a good campaign, we lost ground in some of our traditional seats and could win only one seat, Dhod, with a good margin.In Himachal, the Party was able to win one seat, the prestigious Shimla constituency. We have succeeded in entering the assembly after a long spell of over two decades. In M.P., we have entered the

assembly for the first time with the Party winning the Simla seat in Rewa district. In Delhi we could poll a substantial vote in only one of the seats that we contested. A detailed review of the elections held in the states and the pattern of our work will reveal a common feature. In many places we carry on struggles on various issues and conduct general campaigns. But we do not consolidate these activities in the form of developing mass organisations and building the Party. In the absence of this organisational network, at crucial moments we are not able to retain the support among the masses who are swayed by some current influence. Both in Rajasthan and U.P., in the areas where the Party has some mass influence and our local leaders have done a lot of work in championing the people's causes and gained high prestige, this is not backed up by the building of mass organisations and developing the Party. The reliance on individual leaders and their personal appeal and influence will not sustain in the face of the concerted offensive of other political forces in the absence of consolidation in the Party and mass organisations.

Subsequent Assembly Elections

In the next round of elections which began from November 1974 four state assembly elections were held. The Central Committee worked out the tactics for these elections in each state within the framework of defeating both the Congress (I) and the BJP. Based on this, the Party entered into an electoral understanding with the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, with the CPI in Karnataka despite our efforts to have an electoral understanding with the Janata Dal. It did not succeed as the JD was not prepared to accept an understanding understanding in terms of seats. The issue was resolved by the Party of joining hands with the BJP. The BJP's electoral strategy of forming a coalition to defeat the Congress (I) and the BJP is also the Party proved to be very correct. In the 1977 elections, the Party voted for a secular alternative and the BJP and the Party won 5 out of 16 seats contested in Karnataka and the Party won a small margin. In Karnataka the Party won 5 seats and the BJP won 11 seats there being no adjustment with the Janata Dal.

In the subsequent round of elections which began in March 1980, the Party entered into an electoral understanding with the BJP in

Bihar and with secular parties and groups in Maharashtra which were prepared to fight both the Congress and the BJP-Shiv Sena. In the case of Orissa the Central Committee discussed in October 1994 the report of the Orissa, State Committee which called for no electoral understanding with the Janata Dal given the record of the Biju Patnaik Government of openly supporting and implementing the new economic policies. Its anti-working class and anti-employee positions had eroded its mass base. The Central Committee endorsed the stand taken by the Orissa State Committee and asked it to unite with the CPI and independently intervene in the elections by contesting only those seats where the Left has an effective presence. The main direction of our campaign was to defeat the Congress(I). We also did not join any third front which would only have helped in dividing the votes against the Congress(I). The elections led to the defeat of the Janata Dal and the Congress(I) formed the government. Our assessment that the Janata Dal had lost popular support proved correct.

Bourgeois Opposition Parties

The 14th Congress had noted that the Janata Dal-National Front is not a stable entity and is riven with personal dissensions and lack of a common coherent policy. At that time the first JD split had led to the downfall of the V.P. Singh Government. Since then in the past three years, the fragmentation proceeded apace. The Ajit Singh group first split away from the JD and in two batches in 1993, barring a few exceptions, the entire group defected to the Congress(I). Subsequently, another split took place in the JD with George Fernandes, Nitish Kumar, Rabi Ray and others leaving to form the Samata Party. This process of fragmentation weakened the non-BJP secular opposition considerably. A new combination of the SP-BSP won the elections in U.P. decimating the JD. However, the results in A.P. and Karnataka has helped to some extent to reverse the decimation. At present, the JD is strong in Bihar, Orissa and Karnataka. The TDP is a big force in A.P. while the DMK has split in Tamil Nadu.

Our approach to these parties has been governed primarily by the line of fighting both the Congress(I) and the BJP. Overcoming

their earlier vacillations, the JD-NF constituents have now taken a more forthright stand against the BJP. This has facilitated electoral understandings and joint campaigns in some places. We did not cooperate with the Samata Party as its main role in Bihar and Orissa was to fight the JD and not Congress(I) or BJP.

Our primary effort should be to draw these anti-Congress(I) secular parties into joint campaigns and struggles affecting the people. This helps in approaching the masses under their influence and strengthens the anti-Congress(I)/anti-BJP forces.

The 14th Congress political review report had summed up our experience of working with the bourgeois opposition parties. It stated: 'We have to draw lessons from the experience of working with the bourgeois opposition parties. While working with the bourgeois opposition parties, we should never forget their class outlook.....But the significance of understanding with bourgeois opposition parties should not be underestimated. In united actions, masses behind these parties come in contact with our Party and the Left.....But on the basis of the experience of the past we have to overcome our weaknesses in working with these parties. We do not try to demarcate with them when demarcation becomes necessary. We tone down our differences in the name of unity. We also become victims to parliamentarianism under one pretext or the other. In our anxiety to win some seats in the regions where we are weak, we completely surrender our masses to these parties even at a time when elections enable us to propagate our views and policy issues can be posed very clearly.'

Keeping this review in mind, we have sought to develop our relations with parties like the JD and other secular opposition parties. On some policy questions, such as application of economic criteria within OBC reservation, we have firmly demarcated from the JD and other parties like the SP and BSP. We have also taken the initiative for Left intervention on struggles against economic policies, keeping in mind the hazy and inconsistent stand of most of these parties. One of the major reasons for our not joining hands with the JD in Orissa in the assembly elections was the open advocacy of the Centre's economic policies by the Biju Government.

At the same time, we have not hesitated to join hands with the bourgeois opposition parties in taking up all issues affecting the people and against the communal danger.

Defence of National Unity

Kashmir: The Kashmir problem dominated in the sphere of national unity. The Congress(I) Government after purely relying on administrative methods to put down extremist activities, suddenly began contemplating the holding of elections in Jammu and Kashmir as a way to resolve the problem. The Party advocated a political solution in which the assurance of the identity of the Kashmiri people by the provision of maximum autonomy could be the key. It is with this perspective that leaders of the CPI(M), CPI, JD and National Conference met the Prime Minister and urged a review of policy. But this was not done. Instead, under U.S pressure, elections were talked of and the Hurriyat leaders were allowed to proceed to the OIC conference in end 1994.

The constant advocacy by the CPI(M) of a political settlement and dialogue with the JKLF and others standing for the Kashmir identity and distance from the fundamentalist forces backed by Pakistan has got wider recognition in democratic and secular circles. It was under the initiative of H.K.S. Surjeet that a convention was jointly called by Farooq Abdullah and him in new Delhi on the Kashmir question in October 1994. This well-attended convention broadly endorsed the position of a need for a political settlement before holding elections and setting up a mechanism to build bridges with the people.

In Kashmir valley, the violent attacks of the fundamentalist Hizbul outfits continues. In this period seven of our comrades were abducted and killed in the valley. Despite our small strength, our comrades have kept alive the contacts with the people. In the Doda region of Jammu where the fundamentalists became active and helped foment communal trouble, a team of CPI(M) MPs visited the area alongwith our State leaders to study the situation.

In the North-East, the Polit Bureau condemned the attacks on Indian citizens in Shillong, Meghalaya by local chauvinist forces. The Party Centre sent a 4-member MPs team to Barpeta when

rioting took place between Bodos and migrant minority settlers in many villages. The situation in the North-East is serious in Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland. Not much attention has been paid by us to this region.

Against Growing Imperialist Pressures

The last three years have seen the USA and its allies stepping up their pressure on the Rao Government on a whole series of foreign policy and security issues. Utilising the increased leverage gained by liberalisation, imperialism is relentlessly working to erode India's capacity for independent foreign and security policies. The sanctions against ISRO, the threats under Super 301 clause, the ultimatums on the deployment of Prithvi rocket and development of Agni missiles, the pressure to conform to NPT-type non-proliferation regime—all were mounted during this period. In the defence sector, the Rao Government went ahead in Indo-U.S. military cooperation against vital national interests.

Our Party has been the only consistent and vocal opponent of this compromise with imperialist pressures.

All through, the Party opposed every step or measures taken by the Rao Government which was succumbing to U.S. pressure. The Party opposed the joint naval exercises and the signing of the Indo-U.S. pact for military cooperation. The youth-student *jatha* from Cochin to Goa in 1992 was held to mobilise people against the naval exercises with U.S. on the West coast. The Party held demonstrations in Calcutta and Madras against the military cooperation with the U.S.

The Party alongwith the Left exposed the secret talks in London with the U.S. Ambassador to work out an agenda for a regional nuclear non-proliferation treaty. According to a recent report, the U.S. administration has claimed that India has not deployed the Prithvi short-range rocket with the army keeping in mind the U.S. objections. The development of Agni missile has also been put on hold. The Rao Government's sending troops to Somalia and Rwanda has also been at the behest of USA.

The BJP is not opposed to the yoking of India's foreign policy and security interests with the USA. The other bourgeois opposition

parties are generally unconcerned about the imperialist pressures. In such a situation, our Party and the Left will have to carry on exposing the government's compromise with U.S. designs and mobilise patriotic opinion and raise anti-imperialist consciousness.

Attitude to Movements for Separate Identity

In this period movements for separate states/identity continued. Prominent among these were the demands of the tribal people—the Bodos in Assam and the Jharkhand region in Bihar. The 14th Congress had stated that regional autonomous councils should be set up in both these regions with adequate powers, provided if necessary by amending the relevant constitutional provisions.

Soon after the 14th Congress certain steps were taken by the Central Government to meet the demands of these two movements. In the case of the Bodos a proposal to provide them with regional autonomy was discussed with the State Government and the Bodo representatives. In Jharkhand a Committee on Jharkhand Matters (COJM) was set up by the Centre which submitted its report. The tribal committee set up by the Central Committee prepared two notes on the Bodo and Jharkhand questions for discussions by the Central Committee. In both cases the committee recommended the setting up of regional autonomous councils. To fulfill the aspirations of the tribal people of these areas, elected bodies should be set up instead of weightage being given to nominations. This apex body should cover the entire region with elected representatives from the tribal majority areas and also smaller tribal pockets. The Central Committee sub-committee argued for more powers than those given under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The broad lines of these two notes was accepted by the Central Committee.

The Bodo agreement which was reached soon after was welcomed by the Party, though the Congress(I) hustled the bill through the assembly without a proper discussion. It is unfortunate that on the question of demarcation of the boundaries of the autonomous council there has been no agreement and violent incidents have broken out engineered by the Bodo extremist forces. Even now the framework of the Bodo agreement should be pursued to see that the regional autonomous council is given proper opportunities to function and establish itself.

In the case of the Jharkhand issue, initially the Laloo Prasad Government was reluctant to concede substantive powers to the council. It had earlier set up a Jharkhand development authority which was primarily a nominated body with inadequate powers. Finally, on the eve of the assembly elections, the State Government presented a new Jharkhand autonomous council bill in the assembly which has been adopted. This provides for an elected body with more powers than the earlier set-up. This council has been accepted by the major groups in the Jharkhand movement. It will be set up only after the assembly elections and it is hoped that now the State Government will take serious steps to implement the new legislation.

The Party has also demanded that an autonomous council be established in the tribal contiguous areas in Bastar district of Chattisgarh area in Madhya Pradesh.

The above movements were primarily concerned with the tribal problem. But in this period the Uttarakhand movement in the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh also became a burning issue. Here the movement arose after the announcement of 27 per cent reservation in jobs and education by the Mulayam Singh Government. In the hill areas, the OBC population is less than 3 per cent. Already the region is backward without industrial or agricultural development. It was feared that people from outside the region would come and take up the reserved jobs further depriving the locals of employment opportunities. The Mulayam Singh Government instead of negotiating a settlement sought to put down the movement by repression while at the same time supporting the demand for a separate state. This led to a big mass movement for modifying the reservation policy and for a separate state.

In the initial phase, the U.P. State Committee saw the struggle only as an anti-reservation movement. This created difficulties for our comrades in the hill areas. After a meeting held in Dehradun of the leading comrades of the hill districts in August attended by Surjeet and the U.P. State Secretary, the Polit Bureau finalised the stand to be taken. The Polit Bureau intervened to state that since the hill areas are backward and since reservation in educational

institutions for students from these areas had been held valid by the Supreme Court, there are grounds for modifying the reservation policy to bring in the hill people within the backward category except for the affluent sections. The Polit Bureau also advocated the setting up of an autonomous regional council for the hill areas with adequate powers similar to the Bodo and Jharkhand agreements. This stand taken by the Party Centre and endorsed by the U.P. State Committee helped the Party units in the hill areas to participate in the mass movement against the repression and for solving the problem of reservation.

Approach to Caste Problem

At the last Party Congress we had spelt our stand on the Mandal Commission recommendations and its implementation. While supporting the 27 per cent reservation in jobs in central services for the backward classes, the Party also wanted the poorer sections from within these communities to benefit. That is why we advocated the Karpoori Thakur formula implemented in Bihar to be a basis for the economic criteria. The Congress(I) approved the proposal set out by the Rao Government which retained the 27 per cent reservation and introduced an economic criteria so that the poorer sections get preference. If the vacancies are not filled up within the criteria, then it will be open to other members within the same community. We also supported the provision of ten per cent reservation for the poor of other communities. The Supreme Court in its judgement of 1992 on the issue of the validity of reservation for OBCs took a stand which broadly reflects our stand. It confirmed the constitutional validity of OBC reservations, upheld 27 per cent reservation in central services but also directed that the affluent sections or "creamy layer" be excluded. For this it wanted a committee to be set up to lay down the criteria. Such a committee was set up by the Centre and it has given its recommendations which we have endorsed.

The Janata Dal, DMK and other bourgeois opposition parties are against the exclusion of the "creamy layer". The CPI has also opposed it. But the Polit Bureau and Central Committee have endorsed the package as set out by the Court as the best way to

achieve a consensus. It is only parties which thrive on caste polarisation which wish to harp on the issue of reservations without taking up the socio-economic problems affecting the oppressed sections.

The Central Committee in its meeting held in December 1993 analysed the meaning of the caste appeal. It pointed out its dual aspect: "One aspect of this phenomenon is the growing consciousness and urge of the dalit and backward classes to shake off social oppression and to assert their rights in a caste-ridden society. The slogan of social justice exercises a strong appeal and has been successful in mobilising large sections of dalits and downtrodden sections in the rural areas. Whether it is the question of upper caste oppression or the demand for reservation of jobs, these sections are coming forward to challenge the old order. This awakening has a democratic content reflecting the aspirations of the most oppressed sections of society.

"At the same time a purely caste appeal which seeks to perpetuate caste divisions for the narrow aim of consolidating vote banks and detaching these downtrodden sections from the common democratic movement is also at work. Many caste leaders seek to utilise the polarisation on caste lines for narrow electoral gains and are hostile to building up the common movement of the oppressed sections of all castes."

Subsequently, the experience of parties like the BSP and the role of bourgeois leaders resorting to caste appeal show that their attempts at caste polarisation affects the unity of the working people. Our Party has to demarcate and oppose such casteist politics while championing the unity of all sections of the oppressed people whichever caste or community they belong to. While taking the lead in opposing caste atrocities and social oppression, for the Communists the slogan of social justice cannot be narrowed to reservations and mobilising votes. It has to have the class content of land reforms, wages for agricultural workers and the fight against socio-economic oppression based on the power of landlordism.

Left Unity—CPI(M)-CPI Relations

The key factor for strengthening Left unity is closer cooperation, and joint activities between the CPI(M) and CPI. During the three-

year period since the 14th Congress, there has been progress in this respect despite problems. As noted earlier, the united Left intervention and activities increased considerably. In both the struggles against the economic policies and the fight against communalism there was greater Left unity and joint initiative. The four Left parties, CPI(M), CPI, RSP and Forward Bloc jointly conducted the 1992 campaign against the economic policies before the June general strike. In the anti-communal campaign and during the entire period when the Ayodhya dispute was in the forefront, the Left parties were in regular consultation to project a joint stand both within Parliament and outside. After the Ayodhya demolition, the Campaign for National Unity (CNU) was also primarily a Left initiative. This enhanced Left unity resulted in the big mass mobilisation and struggles in 1994 beginning with the two-month-long campaign in January-February and the Civil Disobedience Movement in August-September.

In the Bangalore Central Committee Meeting held in August 1993, the proposal to strengthen CPI(M)-CPI coordination by setting up state level coordination committees of the two parties were taken. Prior to this, the matter was discussed in the coordination committee of the two parties at the national level held in June.

Since 1981, there has been a coordination committee of the two parties at the all-India level which has been meeting whenever required to discuss major national-political issues and to initiate joint activities. The CPI, a decade ago, had proposed that state level committees also be constituted. We had not agreed at that time and stated that first the all-India coordination must be improved and strengthened and with this experience we can later think of state level committees. Now the Central Committee came to the conclusion that in the present political situation strengthening Left unity is of utmost priority. As there has been growing coordination and joint activities initiated at the national level, the stage was right for extending such coordination committees to the states. In the weaker states, CPI(M)-CPI coordination is all the more necessary if the Left movement is to advance. This does not mean that differences of political and organisational nature do not

exist between the two parties in various states. But the mechanism of the coordination committee can help in narrowing them. As for West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura where already Left Front or Left-led committees have existed for a long time, there was no need to set up separate committees of the two parties.

Subsequently, the General Secretaries of the two parties sent a joint letter to all the other State Committees to set up coordination committees. Such committees have been set up in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan and Orissa. Only in one state, Assam, it was decided that such a committee could not be set up for political reasons, since the two parties have no basic common approach to the political situation in the state.

The experience of the functioning of these committees for about a year is mixed and varied. In a few states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh there have been more or less regular meetings and exchange of opinions. In most other states, these meetings are convened when there is an all-India call for joint action or when questions of elections are to be discussed. In Madhya Pradesh, relations have soured because the CPI has decided not to have any dealings with our Party because one of its senior leaders Sudhir Mukherjee has left the CPI and joined us. Our Party must take the initiative in the states to engage the CPI in regular discussions whatever be the differences and problems.

While there has been greater identity of views within Left parties in this period, there have also been points of difference and conflict of views. Some of the differences with the CPI are outlined below:

Contrary to the opinions of the CPI(M) and the other Left Parties, the CPI refused to endorse the setting up of a multi-member Election Commission in which the CEC is not all powerful and the commission functions as a collegium. The CPI's differing stand helped to scuttle the Constitutional Amendment Bill in Parliament

The CPI supports the Janata Dal stand of no "creamy layer" or economic criteria being applied within reservation for other backward classes. In Kerala, they have agitated against the introduction of any economic criteria.

Another issue where there is a divergence of views is the question of merger of the two parties—a slogan periodically raised by the CPI leadership. Our Party has called for strengthening Left unity instead of calling for Communist unity by merger of the parties. The history of the split is rooted in ideological and programmatic differences. Some of these basic differences still remain. A principled approach to unity requires closer unity in action and strengthening Left unity. It is by this path that differences on ideological and programmatic issues can be resolved. Without resolving these differences through common activities and experience, merger of Communist Parties will be premature and unprincipled.

At the states level, we were able to work out common election tactics in the assembly elections to the major states held in 1993 to 1995. Only in one seat each in Rajasthan, Bihar, U.P. and Orissa were there conflicts. But on the political line to be pursued there are differences persisting in Assam. While in Tamil Nadu, there is a divergent assessment about the role of the DMK and MDMK and certain other political issues.

In the case of RSP, its leadership went along with the other Left parties in its stand about whom to support in the Presidential elections. At the last moment, however, the RSP decided to oppose the candidature of S. D. Sharma. The RSP in West Bengal has made unfounded attacks on the CPI(M) on some questions including the state's policy.

Overall, the three-year period since the 14th Congress has seen considerable progress in strengthening Left unity and CPI(M)-CPI relations. The four Left parties have met regularly at the national level to exchange opinions, formulate joint positions and to initiate joint campaigns and struggles. This process of improving Left coordination and strengthening unity must be carried forward while continuing to debate political and ideological differences.

Kerala

A new situation developed in Kerala with regard to the Muslim League. With the impact of the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the compromising role played by the Narasimha Rao

Government, the Muslim community was alienated from the Congress(I) all over the country including Kerala. The persistence of Narasimha Rao in trying to build the temple and going back on his assurance to take a firm secular position further antagonized the Muslim masses in Kerala. The Indian Union Muslim League which persisted in remaining in the Congress(I)-led coalition government could not escape the anger of the Muslim masses. The demand was for the IUML to quit the UDF. A section led by Sulaiman Sait who was the President of the all-India IUML revolted against the opportunism of the IUML in remaining with the UDF and a split occurred leading to the formation of another party the Indian National League (INL). At the same time the Islamic Sevak Sangh led by Madani which emerged as an extremist Muslim platform and had been banned along with the RSS resurfaced as the People's Democratic Party. This platform had a substantial appeal to Muslim youth.

The question arose in the Kerala Party of how to intervene in the situation. The Ottappalam and Guruvayur by-elections had shown the alienation of the Muslims from the UDF in a big way. How to intervene and rally the Muslim masses in such a situation became the urgent question. It is in this background that the article written by EMS in *Deshabhimani* on July 7, 1994 openly advocating understanding with the INL and even with Madani became a matter of controversy. There was also the unfortunate comparison of Gandhi and Sait as religious fundamentalists. The article came in for a lot of criticism from different quarters from within the Party and outside. The Polit Bureau had to react to this position taken in public and had to assert that this is not the Party line. The Polit Bureau sent a letter to Com. EMS and the Kerala State Committee and subsequently the General Secretary wrote an article in *People's Democracy* stating our objections to the various points in the article and reiterated the line adopted in the 12th Congress in Calcutta that we should have no truck with the caste and communal parties in Kerala.

The Kerala State Committee meeting in July 1994 discussed the issue while taking the Polit Bureau view on EMS's article into consideration. The Kerala State Committee by a majority was in

favour of adopting a favourable attitude towards the INL. It was in favour of going beyond the cooperation independently offered by the INL in supporting the LDF-sponsored independent candidate in the Guruvayur election. The majority of the members of the Kerala State Committee and a majority of the Polit Bureau and Central Committee members from Kerala were in favour of closer cooperation with the INL without including it in the Left Democratic Front.

The State Committee's discussions were taken up for consideration in the Central Committee meeting held in October 1994. The Polit Bureau document on the Kerala situation was discussed and unanimously adopted by the Central Committee wherein the Central Committee reiterated that there can be no political alliance or understanding with any communal party. The line advocated by the Kerala State Committee was rejected. It also opined that it would be premature to characterise the INL as a non-communal party given the background of its formation. It called upon the Party in Kerala to independently approach the Muslim masses and rally them in a big way to the LDF. The Central Committee's note for reporting on Kerala developments stated

In the Kerala State Committee discussion, a demand has been raised that we should review the political line and make necessary changes according to the changed situation. The policy of no truck with caste and communal forces was adopted at the 12th Congress because the Party realised that our alliance with Muslim League was helping the growth of the BJP and majority communalism at a time when all over the country the communal danger was increasing. Can it be said that the danger has receded or not grown since? Since the 14th Congress events in the country have further emphasised the danger from the communal forces. The growth of the BJP, the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the widespread communal riots and the poison of communalism spread to new sections of society. Any alignment with a minority communal party will compromise the Party's secular image and its consistent fight against communalism.

'The correct tactic to be adopted towards the split in the Muslim League is to step up the Party's intervention amongst the Muslim

masses in a big way. There is a three-way split in the mass base belonging to the Muslim League. They are divided between the IUML, INL and the PDP. This split has come about because of the acute discontent among the Muslim masses with the opportunistic and compromising role of the IUML which want to remain in the UDF to continue in power. The situation provides a good opportunity for the Party to directly appeal to the Muslim masses and rally them behind the Party and the secular forces and consolidate the LDF. To utilise the division for only short-term electoral tactics may only result in consolidating one faction of the League against the other. By associating the CPI(M) with any one of the groups we shall be providing legitimacy to that faction."

As for the tactics to be adopted in the assembly by-elections due in Tirurangadi the Central Committee decided that: 'a. the Party's tactical line of no alliance with communal forces is reiterated; b. continue the tactics adopted in the Guruvayur by-elections, c. no joint campaign with any section of former IUML; d. This is a CPI seat. They will select the candidate which will be supported by LDF."

The question of attitude to the INL and to parties representing minority interests and their characterisation became a matter of serious inner-party debate and struggle within the Kerala unit. The Kerala P.C. majority viewpoint was also divergent from the Polit Bureau and Central Committee stand. On behalf of the Polit Bureau, the General Secretary attended the Kerala State Committee meeting in October and explained the note adopted by the Central Committee for reporting within the Party in Kerala. While there was unanimity in accepting this document, it is clear that still there are differing interpretations on this question among the leadership in Kerala.

West Bengal

The Left Front Government presented an industrial policy statement in September 1994. This document spelt out the government's attitude to private sector investment including foreign capital investment in the state in the context of the new economic policies of the Centre. This statement which was placed without any discussion in the State Committee or Central

Committee and the way it was covered in the Press created confusion and apprehensions in Party circles. The Polit Bureau held discussions on the industrial policy statement and reported to the Central Committee meeting in October 1994 that the Polit Bureau would prepare a document in order to explain the role of the Left Front Government in the context of the new economic policies of the Centre. The Central Committee discussed this document in December 1994 and adopted it as a statement.

The Central Committee statement explains the background of the discrimination against West Bengal by the Centre because of the existence of the Left Front Government and the earlier policies which militated against the industrial development of the state such as freight equalisation and the partisan use of the licensing policy. As a result of this discrimination, West Bengal which was the premier industrial state at the time of independence fell back and was only producing 8 per cent of the total industrial output by 1985. The licensing policy which was meant to check monopolies and ensure planned development was used by the Congress(I) Central Government to deprive West Bengal of new industries by actively discouraging investments.

Now with liberalisation both the freight equalisation policy and the licensing system have been abolished. The significant progress in agricultural production and the rise in incomes of the rural population due to the effective land reform measures and the Panchayati Raj system have led to a big expansion of the rural market. On the other hand, the declining industrial scene with many of the old industries becoming redundant have led to industrial stagnation and large-scale elimination of jobs for the workers. It is essential for further economic progress that West Bengal undertakes rapid industrialisation. Such an industrialisation has to take place in the context of the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government which actively discourages further investment in the public sector and seeks the curtailment or the dismantling of the PSUs; the Centre does not inject fresh investment for infrastructure development but has opened the way for private sector and foreign participation in the infrastructure; the Centre does not allow the financial and credit institutions to encourage public investment in various sectors.

In such a situation to get new industries, sophisticated technology and for generating fresh employment, it has become necessary to adjust the industrial policy in the state to ensure greater participation of private capital. Doing so does not mean giving up or compromising on our basic strategic goals. The Party programme had envisaged our participation in state governments which cannot bring about major policy changes in the economic and industrial sphere as these powers vest with the Centre. At the same time the limited powers of the state government should be used for providing some relief to the people. We can use the state governments to project alternative policies and to provide relief to the people in areas where the state government has jurisdiction so that the mass movements can be strengthened and the Party's mass base increased. This will contribute to strengthening the Left and democratic forces in the country.

With the continuous spell in office of over 18 years the Left Front Government which has big achievements to its credit in the sphere of land reforms, decentralisation of powers, panchayat raj, agricultural productivity and protection of democratic rights and preservation of a normal atmosphere has to now go forward to sustain economic development to fulfill people's expectations. This can be done to an extent within the confines of the existing policies of the Centre while the strong base of the Left and democratic forces in West Bengal will be mobilised to strengthen the all-India struggle against the economic policies of the Centre.

It is in this perspective that the Left Front Government should implement its industrial policy to attract sufficient investments while at the same time firmly defending the legitimate rights of the workers and consulting the trade unions in all matters affecting workers interest.

The Central Committee document points out:

While implementing policies for industrial expansion and inviting private capital both Indian and foreign into West Bengal, care should be taken to see that our government and ministerial spokesmen do not subscribe to any policy statement which justify the liberalisation policies and the economic reforms set out by the government."

Similarly the big capitalists and the Congress(I) government are calling upon the workers to make sacrifices to make industry and their goods more competitive by adopting a work culture suitable for this. On the other hand, the corporate sector is making enormous profits and the top executives are earning huge salaries. We should be careful to see that the rights of collective bargaining of the workers is in no way curtailed by endorsing such calls.

The Central Committee statement concludes with the following observation:

'The Left Front Government's policies should be in defence of the public sector in core areas, retaining the state intervention in the infrastructure development and in social infrastructure like health and education while actively canvassing for fresh capital investment in the sectors such as electronics, petro-chemicals and other specialised areas which cannot be developed with government funds. In every forum where official policies are debated, the Left Front Government must clearly set out the alternative policies possible in the present situation and in the long term and this should be the basis for our Party's propaganda and mobilisation among the masses.

"The CPI(M) and the Left Front in West Bengal have the big responsibility of leading the all-India struggle against the economic policies of the Centre. The Left Front Government by its existence and performance can aid the struggle in a big way. The Left Front Government's role will immensely strengthen the all-India struggle not only against the economic policies but also in building the Left and democratic front which is essential to bring about a change in the correlation of forces. It is by keeping this basic perspective in mind that we should judge current policies, review them from time to time and make adjustments.'

This in brief is the content of the Central Committee statement on the role of the Left Front Government in the context of the new economic policies of the Centre. The Left Front Government has a major responsibility to show the differentiated approach to economic development within the constraints of the present system while at the same time the Party and the Left forces of West Bengal will play a foremost role in the nationwide resistance to liberalisation and privatisation.

Tripura

Immediately after the Party Congress the Polit Bureau and Central Committee had to devote time to the situation within the Party in Tripura. As per the decision of the Party Congress a three-member team of the Central Committee consisting of M. Basavapunnaiyah, R. Umanath and K.N. Ravindranath went to Tripura to discuss the problems arising out of the dissenting Party members led by Ajoy Biswas. The commission submitted a report and its recommendations were accepted by the Central Committee. The effort of the Party centre and the Central Committee was to unify the Party on a principled basis. Efforts to hold the employees conference on a united basis were attempted but it could not succeed. Subsequently Ajoy Biswas was expelled from the Party after a commission set up by the State Committee enquired into the charges against him. All through this period the Polit Bureau intervened to see that the unity of the Party was maintained keeping in mind the serious attack on the Party.

An important political challenge in the period since the 14th Congress was the Tripura assembly elections which were to be held in February 1993. These elections were postponed by the Election Commission to April after gross interference by the official machinery to influence the polls. The Party Centre had to devote considerable attention to the developing situation in Tripura taking up the attacks by the Congress(I)-TUIS Government with the Prime Minister, representations to the Election Commission and our vigorous protests in Parliament when the caretaker ministry was asked to continue and rally support of other parties to help in ensuring that the Samir Ranjan Barman ministry did not continue after the life of the assembly was over. The proclamation of President's rule was a major victory as it created the conditions for a free and fair poll. During the elections the Party Centre deployed 16 of our Party MPs in the state during the polling and the counting. The Polit Bureau also decided to help the Tripura State Committee financially in the elections. For the first round and after the postponement during the second round of campaign a total of Rs. 30 lakhs was raised with West Bengal providing the major share followed by Kerala.

Assam

For quite some time inner-Party differences on political-organisational questions had developed in the Assam state secretariat and State Committee with Central Committee members themselves holding different positions. The Polit Bureau asked the Central Committee members from Assam to submit their individual notes for discussion and resolution of the problems. On the basis of the discussion of these notes and the issues raised, the Polit Bureau prepared a draft resolution on the political-organisational situation in Assam. A meeting of the secretariat and State Committee was convened in September 1993 to discuss the resolution with Polit Bureau members attending. The secretariat agreed with the approach presented in the draft resolution of the Polit Bureau and after discussions incorporated the suggestions in the draft political report presented to the State Committee. The State Committee after discussions accepted the major formulations and expressed the view that the Party could be unified politically and organisationally by the direction given in the document. The differences in the Assam leadership pertained to a range of issues which include the attitude to the AGP, the moves for a joint opposition platform, the question of how to deal with ethnic identity and separatism and on the organisational front there were problems about collective functioning of the secretariat and the failure to build an effective Party Centre. The Polit Bureau intervened to pinpoint the issues on which political differences have emerged and also to rectify the wrong organisational trends. After the discussions in the State Committee there was a meeting of district committee members of eight districts in which the Polit Bureau resolution was explained.

The struggle to unify the state leadership politically and organisationally has to be carried forward. Some progress has been made but cannot be said that all the problems have been resolved.

Tamil Nadu

The Polit Bureau had to take up for consideration the concrete line to be pursued in Tamil Nadu by the Party in the wake of the

split in the DMK. The State Committee had held a series of discussions since the by-elections to the Palani Lok Sabha and the Ranipet Assembly seats where our Party extended its support to the DMK candidate. From these by-elections onwards our Party noted that the DMK leadership was taking a soft approach to the Congress(I) indicating that they were considering an alliance with the Congress(I) as a possible option in its struggle against the Jayalalitha Government and the AIADMK. The State Committee met in October 1993 to review the situation. Comrade Surjeet attended the meeting and assisted in formulating the Party stand in a complicated and fluid situation. The State Committee called upon the DMK to give up its vacillating attitude towards the Congress(I). It also called for projecting the Party's independent line and explained its activities.

Subsequently a major split took place in the DMK with the expulsion of Gopalaswamy and eight district secretaries. The formation of the MDMK saw a substantial section of the DMK cadres, particularly its youth following, joining the new party. The State Committee meeting in February 1994 decided to call for joint struggles by all the non-Congress(I) secular opposition parties against the impact of the economic policies of the Centre and the state government's anti-people policies. It was decided that we should appeal both the DMK and the MDMK for joint mass actions. This line was pursued in 1994 after having discussions with the CPI which wished to continue its understanding with the DMK. It joined the DMK led platform to agitate for the retention of the 69 per cent reservation. After some rounds of discussions, the CPI ultimately did not join the action proposed by our Party on issues concerning central and state government policies. Only the MDMK responded and a successful joint programme was held in the month of January by holding joint rallies. Our attitude to the MDMK was determined by its stand against the central and state government's policies and its willingness to join hands with the Left for joint campaigns. Our Party decided to continue to strive for unity of the non-Congress(I) non-AIADMK secular forces on a common platform for joint actions. To arrive at this above understanding, Polit Bureau members from the Centre attended a number of meetings of the secretariat and the State Committee.

Bihar

In consonance with the 14th Congress understanding of intensifying people's struggle while trying to forge the unity of Left, democratic, secular forces and in response to the call of the AIKS, the Bihar State Committee decided to launch a statewide struggle to occupy surplus land.

The struggle was launched unitedly alongwith the CPI and IPF in August 1992. However, after the first phase which ended in the same month, the CPI withdrew stating that the struggle was over. The IPF similarly stated that the stage of the struggle has now changed and gave the slogan of nationalisation of land. The CPI(M) carried forward the struggle independently.

Over these months, the struggle spread to over 20 districts with intensity in 12. Between 15 and 20 thousand acres are currently under possession and being cultivated. The struggle is on in a total area of over 30 thousand acres.

During this period, 36 of our comrades have been martyred, five in the first phase of the struggle itself between 5 and 15 August, 1992.

To streamline the Party organisation a state organisational plenum was held in Dhanbad in 1993.

Present Situation and Tasks

Main features of the present situation are:

1. Worsening economic condition for the mass of population because of the economic policies pursued by the central Government;
2. Fast growing political instability; in consonance with the Political Resolution made in the 14th Congress itself;
3. Communal danger that threatens national unity and weakens the secular basis of our society cannot be underestimated;
4. Threat to the unity of the country in Kashmir and the North-East and the failure of the Central Government to meet this challenge on the basis of protecting the identity of the people and tackling the problems facing this area;
5. Increase of U.S. imperialist pressure on the country both in the economic sphere as well as foreign policy perceptions;

6. Danger of perpetuating social divisions using caste by certain parties for the sake of immediate electoral gains;
7. Threat to democratic institutions by eroding their powers and reducing their status to sanction the misdeeds of the government;
8. Corruption on a huge scale involving ministers and bureaucrats at the Centre and the state level, threatening to erode the very fabric of our society.

These factors are resulting in the aggravation of a serious crisis of the entire system confirming the Party's basic analysis about an all embracing crisis due to the policies of the bourgeois-landlord regime.

The crisis in the political sphere is marked by the rapid decline in the influence of the major party of the bourgeois-landlord classes: The Congress(I) Party. Though factionalism has been there since long in the Congress(I), the present situation is markedly worse with serious consequences.

Today the Congress(I) is surviving at the Centre not on the basis of the support from the masses but by machinations of defections violating the code of anti-defection law. Both in the Centre and the states it is not concerned with the commitments made to the nation but is more concerned to maintain itself in power by hook or crook; without hesitating to come to understanding with the communal and casteist forces as it has done in Kerala.

The Central Committee has analysed that the Congress(I) has been constantly losing its popular support due to growing discontent of the masses with the policies of the ruling party both in the realm of economy as well as polity, its compromising role with communalism at the cost of the basic principle of secularism enshrined in the Constitution. This has become more clear during the period of the last three years when it was following the new economic policies under the dictates of the IMF/World Bank threatening India's economic sovereignty. The attitude which the Congress(I) party has taken towards the Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhoomi dispute has exposed its compromising role. Instead of meeting the threat posed by the communal forces and boldly defending the secular basis of our Constitution it has been constantly

compromising with them resulting in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. This policy has given big encouragement to the communal forces and has led to the alienation of the minorities. Corruption scandals have further eroded its mass base. This has deepened the crisis in the Congress(I) party itself. It has manifested in deep factionalism with different groups existing in different states. This is expressed also in the functioning of the Congress(I) party itself which has given up even the facade of democracy in its internal functioning as well as the functioning of the government. All powers have been concentrated in the Prime Minister who is also the Congress(I) President. In the states too the same pattern is being followed. This is resulting in the severing of contacts with the mass of the population. The special feature of the crisis can be seen in the Centre itself in dealing with the issues which Arjun Singh has raised. This exposes the opportunistic stand of the Central Government in tackling the serious problems facing the country. The results of the elections to the state assemblies where the Congress(I) has been routed in the two most industrialised states in western India has a potential of leading to a major crisis and political instability in the Centre and at the state levels. The Congress(I) party has faced many crises earlier but has been able to manage it as in 1967, 1969, 1977 and 1980. But this time the magnitude of the crisis appears to be more serious.

But it is unfortunate that because of the weakness of the Left democratic forces in the country as a whole, the discontent is sought to be utilised by the BJP/Shiv Sena/RSS and their allies. In the last Parliament elections the BJP emerged as the major opposition party in Parliament and at that time it had control over four states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. But after the demolition of the Babri Masjid it lost the states of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. But again in the recent elections they achieved massive victory in the state of Gujarat with around two-thirds majority and alongwith the Shiv Sena became the biggest combination in Maharashtra, capturing power there also. In fact now they control all the Western states with Rajasthan already in their hands. This development has very serious repercussions on the body politic of the country itself and

the BJP will seek to project itself as a real alternative to the Congress(I) in the coming elections. This is bound to create panic among the minority community and will help in the growth of fundamentalist forces among them too. Already the Shiv Sena has started raising the slogan of driving out the "Bangladeshis" and 'Pakistanis' which is directed against the people belonging to the minority community. The RSS has come out with a statement that this is a victory for the forces of Hindutva. We can ignore this threat only at a very heavy cost for the Left and democratic movement in the country.

On the one hand the ruling Congress(I) party, in spite of its growing isolation, is bound to pursue its World Bank/IMF dictated economic policies leading to the growth of unemployment, poverty and hunger and undermine our economic sovereignty. On the other the BJP and its allies disrupt national unity. It must be noted that the BJP from the beginning has been supporting the economic policies pursued by the Congress(I) government. The newly appointed Chief Minister of Gujarat in his interview has reconfirmed this.

The question arises before us as to how to meet these challenges. Taking the country as a whole the Left is weak though its prestige is very high because of the consistent policies which it has pursued in all spheres, whether it is the defence of economic sovereignty, national unity, unity of the country, struggle against imperialism or exposure of corruption scandals. That is why all the secular opposition forces declare that they would like to unite with the Left.

To intervene in such a situation, a big change in the correlation of class forces is required. This can be done only if the Left and democratic forces get strengthened and are able to present a real alternative to the bourgeois-landlord policies. Our Party has to continuously struggle for that. We have explained this in the 14th Party Congress in detail. There is no need to elaborate again. But now we are faced with a serious threat both from the Congress(I) party as well as from the BJP. And we cannot meet that threat without allies. We know the difficulties in securing allies. We have past experience of uniting with the Janata Dal and the National

Front. They disintegrated in a short period in the absence of coherent policies. In fact the different state governments led by these parties were working in different directions even in relation to basic policy questions. The Janata Dal government in Orissa was vehemently supporting the new economic policies of the Central Government and got isolated from the people in this process. The Bihar government neglected land reforms and only highlighted the question of reservations to the extent of perpetuating caste divisions. Its attitude towards the struggles of the working class, peasantry and employees was negative.

At present, all the different governments formed after the recent elections are not taking into consideration the verdict of the people and are continuing to follow the Congress(I) policies in terms of implementing the new economic policies and the so-called 'liberalisation'. But they are at least taking a secular stand against the BJP and even in the realm of economic policies there are differences amongst them. It will be wrong to say that these parties have exhausted their potential. In fact, in the present situation, along with the Left, they and the regional parties have to play an important role to meet the immediate challenges. In this context, our Party while working for unity of the Left democratic and secular forces to meet these challenges from the Congress(I) and the BJP has to emphasise on the coherent policy alternative for the solution to the problems faced by the nation. The Left has to do everything to see that the BJP is not allowed to emerge as the alternative to the Congress(I) at the Centre. We should warn against perpetuating caste divisions while taking effective steps to overcome the backwardness of OBCs.

In this connection it is not out of place to mention the direction given in the political report of the 14th Party Congress. "But on the basis of the experience of the past we have to overcome our weaknesses in working with these parties. We do not try to demarcate with them when demarcation becomes necessary. We tone down our differences in the name of unity. We also become victims to parliamentarianism under one pretext or the other. In our anxiety to win some seats in the regions where we are weak we completely surrender our masses to these parties even at a time

when elections enable us to propagate our views and policy issues can be posed very clearly. If we try to study the performance in the elections before 1977, when we were independently contesting we were able to expand our influence in different areas. Though it was very necessary to change the tactical line, in the period after the Emergency, against authoritarianism, it led to a situation where, bourgeois-landlord parties were able to dictate terms to us in many places instead of coming to a proper understanding. This tendency also leads us to allow the masses to fall prey to these parties, instead of rallying them behind our Party and the Left. Lack of sufficient demarcation on certain issues during united action affects our mass base. This shortcoming is to be overcome. Therefore, the Party has to be very careful while working along with these parties. While making certain very necessary compromises, we should never forget our class outlook and ideological moorings. In the background of the developments in the international Communist movement and the reverses and setbacks suffered, this aspect has to be given more importance. The Party, being the biggest force of the Left, has to take initiative in developing mass movements and leading political ideological battles to release the mass rallying behind the bourgeois-landlord classes from their ideological influence. We have to draw the masses following the other parties including the Congress(I) into the struggles led by us. In this context, the concrete application of Marxism-Leninism, to the concrete conditions prevailing in the country acquires great importance. Our Party's policies, tactics and programmes, based on concrete conditions, have stood the test of time. That is why, in spite of the severe reverses and setbacks in the international Communist movement our Party is able to stand united. This gives us confidence to march forward in the struggles to build Left and democratic unity which alone can provide real alternative to the bourgeois-landlord rule.'

But because of the rapidly changing situation we have again overlooked these shortcomings which created some discontent among certain units in the Party. This has to be overcome because until we are able to change the correlation of forces we will have to take some concrete steps to meet the concrete situation. But while doing so we have to ward off both dangers: on the one hand of

taking a sectarian approach towards these parties when cooperation with them is required in the name of their opportunist positions on different issues and on the other hand to trail behind these parties because of electoral opportunism. By such mistakes we are narrowing down our appeal. Our effort has to be to build Left unity not only to develop mass movements but also in order to fight electoral battles. When the political atmosphere gets surcharged we have to approach the wider masses with our alternative policies which alone are capable of presenting an alternative to the bourgeois-landlord classes. While fighting the elections alongwith the Left, we can come to an understanding with all secular opposition parties with the perspective of defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP. This is very necessary to expand our mass base.

Left Unity

In this respect, the Left has acquired a great importance in the present critical situation. After the victory in the recent elections the BJP is determined to project itself as an alternative to the Congress(I) and is making serious efforts to woo regional parties. There is no doubt that in building Left unity we have got various problems which have been dealt with in the earlier part of the report. These difficulties can be overcome through joint struggles. Therefore, the main emphasis has to be on unleashing mass movements of the working class, agricultural labour, peasants, employees, youth, students, women and other sections of the toiling people. It is through class battles that this unity can be further strengthened. The experience of the last three years goes to show that though the Left is not yet in a position to bring a change in the political situation at the all India level, through constant activities it is capable of influencing the political scene to an extent.

Role of The Party

Left unity can only be strengthened and mass struggles unleashed if the Party plays its due role. For this purpose it has to expand its influence by taking initiative on the various issues confronting the nation with particular emphasis on class issues

and equipping the cadre ideologically. Only by widening its base can it become an effective lever in further developing Left unity.

Therefore, while working for such an alternative as the immediate objective our main concentration should be to develop and strengthen the Left and democratic forces. Our central plank has to be to strengthen the Left and democratic forces by unleashing the mass movement against economic policy and in defence of the unity of the country, against the danger of imperialist penetration and against rampant corruption. The Party's aim has to be to realise a Left and democratic alternative based on alternative policies. While firmly opposing the majority community communalism of the BJP, we must strengthen our opposition to minority fundamentalism. Our principled stand has enhanced our prestige as a consistent secular force amongst the minorities. This should be used for directly approaching the minorities to help them realise that minority fundamentalism only strengthens majority communalism and both feed on each other.

While stressing the importance of immediate electoral alternative we have to constantly emphasise the basic class alternative, politics and organise struggles for achieving it. The Programme of Left and democratic front as advanced in the Political Resolution has to be popularised on a big scale.

Therefore, the period ahead should see intense political intervention by the Party to project and develop such an alternative. This will require flexible tactics. There is no short cut for any revolutionary movement particularly in a country which is still dominated by the bourgeois-feudal ideology. In such a situation the Party has to be very vigilant against both opportunism and sectarianism.

The increasing participation in mass struggles is the key factor. This calls for intensification of the political campaign to raise the consciousness of the people. In this context, we have to note that the election battles and the campaign conducted by us have increased the political awareness of the people in remote areas. Thus, the role of the Party is crucial. The Party has to strengthen ideologically, politically and organisationally. Only then can the responsibility to effectively intervene in the political

situation, to shape national developments and above all for becoming an effective organ for social transformation, be fulfilled.

PART II

ORGANISATION

The 14th Congress reviewed the implementation of the Salkia Organisational Plenum guidelines and concretised the organisational tasks. A review of the implementation of the tasks set out at the last Party Congress and present organisational situation is necessary to identify the future tasks.

The three years since the last Party Congress was a period of great offensive against the Party and its ideology. In the background of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and setbacks to Socialism in East European countries, the Party had to face a concerted anti-Communist propaganda that Marxism is obsolete and Socialism is a dead system. We have been able to emerge by and large unscathed from this offensive because of the success we attained in unifying the Party on the basis of the ideological resolution adopted at the last Congress and also in the background of the Party's intense ideological struggle to independently apply Marxism-Leninism to Indian conditions since its inception in 1964. This does not mean that there is no ideological confusion among the broad ranks of the Left sympathisers especially among the intellectuals and among the younger generation or there is no impact on the inflow into the Party and Left-led organisations.

The period witnessed more activities of the Party, more campaigns and struggles against the anti-people policies of the government, against communalism, against corruption, against imperialist pressures and so on. The entire Party and mass organisations in which the Party members are working have been very active during this period. There have been more instances of intervention by the Party in the national political situation than in the past. These do not mean that we have overcome all weaknesses or shortcomings and successfully carried out all the tasks set out at the last Party Congress. There are many

weaknesses and shortcomings that require immediate attention and redressal.

The period also saw the accentuation of the problems of the bourgeois-landlord system and growing political instability in the country. Due to the weaknesses of the Party and the Left and democratic forces in the country the discontent among the people is being utilised by communal parties like BJP and others for their expansion. We have to rally more and more people around the Left and democratic alternative projected by the Party. The present situation demands an all-round improvement in all the activities and immediate expansion of the Party and mass organisations.

Review of The Implementation of The Tasks set out at The 14th Congress

Let us examine how we have been able to implement these tasks set out at the 14th Congress. The tasks set out for the Party Centre were:

- (a) Augmenting the Polit Bureau/Central Committee cadres at the Centre; recruiting equipped cadres for discharging the daily work of the Party headquarters
- (b) Strengthening the collective functioning and individual responsibilities by organising work into departments and sub-committees of which priority should be given to: organisation, Party education, agit-prop and Party journals.
- (c) Ensuring that reports of mass organisations submitted by sub-committees are placed in the Central Committee for discussions regularly once a year.
- (d) Setting up a system of regular central party schools which will be a continuous process. Special attention to Hindi schools. Issuance of Party letters on a regular basis.
- (e) Improving the content of the central papers, expanding the editorial staff, setting up a central news service and expanding the agit-prop literature brought out from the centre.

Some of these tasks were taken up for implementation.

Polit Bureau

As for collective functioning, the Polit Bureau has been meeting on an average of once in two months. The available Polit Bureau

members at the Party Centre who number 7 (after the death of M. Basavapunnaiyah) have been continuing the practice of daily meetings, to take stock of the situation and react to developments. This has helped the Party to react properly to events, intervene and carry forward our tactical line. On occasions wherever major questions had to be decided concerning the political-tactical line, the Party Centre has consulted all the Polit Bureau members before taking a final decision even if the full Polit Bureau meetings were not held. Such occasions arose during the presidential elections, after the demolition of the Babri Masjid and during the no-confidence motion. However, the paucity of cadres at the Centre continues to hamper proper division of work into departments and sub-committees as envisaged in the organisational report to the 14th Congress. The multi-farious tasks of monitoring political developments, studying the vast amount of information available at the centre, functioning the sub-committees and guiding the mass organisations and assisting the states with their political-organisational problems—all this requires more leading cadres at the centre. We should take steps to strengthen the Party Centre.

Central Committee

The Central Committee has met 12 times since the 14th Congress which is an average of once in three months. The sub-committees set up by the Central Committee for the various mass fronts have functioned more regularly. In the case of the kisan-agricultural sub-committee there is a distinct improvement compared to the previous period; the youth-student sub-committee has also met on a regular basis. As for the trade union sub-committee though it has met regularly there is a need for making it more effective and for planning its work. The women's sub-committee needs to be activated further as it has not met regularly.

Review of the Mass Organisations

The 14th Congress had pointed out the importance of periodic reviews by the Central Committee of the work in the mass organisations. Reports of mass organisations submitted by the

sub-committees were to be discussed in the Central Committee once a year. Though this has not been possible a beginning was made with the two main class organisations—the trade union and kisan-agricultural front. A review of the kisan front and formulating immediate tasks was undertaken by the Central Committee after considering a report prepared by the agrarian sub-committee. This document was finalised after sending it to the State Committees for eliciting their opinions. A similar exercise was undertaken on the trade union front. However, the review document is not finalised, as after one round of discussions in the Central Committee it was sent to the State Committees for discussion and these opinions have not been taken up for consideration again by the Central Committee.

The Polit Bureau and Central Committee have not been able to undertake the review of the other mass organisations periodically. This must be taken up in the coming days on a systematic basis

Party Education

As for holding Central Party schools, the Party Centre conducted two-week-long schools in 1992 and 1993, the first in Hindi and the second in English. These two schools were meant for training teachers from the states who would be conducting classes. The schools were attended by 71 and 103 comrades respectively. Such schools for state level teachers and for leading mass front cadres must become an annual feature.

At the state level there has been more schooling. In 1992 state level schools were organised in Punjab, Andhra, Delhi, Orissa, Tripura, Rajasthan and Karnataka in which Polit Bureau members participated. Some Kisan Front and youth front schools were also organised in states. In 1993 state level schools were organised in Assam, UP and MP. Both in Kerala and West Bengal there has been more systematic schooling. In Kerala a system of permanent Party schooling has been initiated with printed syllabus and 516 teachers in nine batches have so far been trained.

Overall, however, the efforts do not adequately meet the needs of the situation. With the serious ideological challenges facing the Party, it is necessary to conduct Party education on a systematic

basis both at the centre and in the states through proper planning. To systematise the schooling and to cover the topics which are essential for Party education, it is necessary to set up a Party education sub-committee of the Central Committee.

Party Letter

The issuance of Central Party letters as suggested in the last Congress was begun but it could not be made a regular feature. Two such letters were issued—one on the Party's stand on the Presidential elections in June, 1992 and the other the West Bengal State Committee's review of the Panchayat elections in 1993. Since reporting to the lower units is not systematically done in many states, such letters which are to be circulated up to the branches must be brought out regularly in the future.

Central News Service

The Party Centre took up the task of setting up a central news service. The *India News Network (INN)* began functioning in November, 1992 with one journalist at the headquarters. The INN for the past two and a half years has been supplying the Party dailies/weeklies with Party news and statements, commentaries and mass organisational activities. The service can be expanded and improved if competent reporters are provided for in the states and the editorial staff augmented at the centre.

Central Papers

One of the decisions of the last Party Congress was to increase the number of pages of the central papers, *People's Democracy* and *Lok Lehar*. As per this decision the two papers have increased from 12 to 16 pages. This has enabled wider coverage of events and commentaries. But the quantum of staff required for *People's Democracy* has not been fulfilled which hampers the possibility of improving the editorial work.

The circulation of both *People's Democracy* and *Lok Lehar* has registered only a marginal increase and is by and large stagnant. The *People's Democracy* circulation was 13,666 at the time of the 14th Congress and now it is 14,196 in January 1995. The *Lok Lehar* circulation was 12,360 at the time of last Congress and now it is

13,179 in January 1995. The Central Committee had given a call for a month-long campaign to increase circulation in January 1993 which could not be undertaken with the abnormal situation prevailing in the country after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The call was given again in April 1994 with the target being an overall increase of 25 per cent on the circulation. Only West Bengal has seriously implemented the call and increased the circulation of both papers by over a thousand each. (Detailed chart is appended).

West Bengal continues to be the main subscriber of both papers accounting for half the circulation of *People's Democracy* and 40 per cent of the *Lok Lehar* copies. In the case of *People's Democracy*, Tripura has also increased its circulation substantially. No other state has taken the task of increasing *People's Democracy* circulation seriously.

As for *Lok Lehar*, the only Hindi state to maintain a stable and improved circulation is Madhya Pradesh. All the other Hindi states, have an unsatisfactory record. Particularly the two big states, Bihar and U.P., have a fluctuating circulation. Their sales went up in 1993 but has again declined, compared to the last Congress figures. Despite repeated discussion and decisions in the State Committees, the sale of the paper is not taken seriously by the leadership at all levels in the Hindi states.

The State Committees and district committees must appoint one of their members to supervise and monitor the circulation of the Party papers. This must be ensured.

As for *The Marxist*, we have failed to bring out any issue during the entire year of 1994. Whatever the problems this is an unjustifiable lapse. The publication has been resumed in 1995 and steps should be taken to ensure that *The Marxist* comes out regularly and is able to address to the ideological needs of our cadres.

Agit-prop: The number of publications brought out from the Party Centre shows some increase, particularly those pamphlets that were connected with our mass campaigns. The pamphlet against RSS-VHP-BJP combine written by Sitaram Yeohury in English, Hindi and Urdu was printed with over a lakh of copies. Similarly campaign pamphlets against the new economic policies and the GATT have also been brought out. But the bulk of the publications are Party documents like Central Committee reports. Two other

notable publications are Surjeet's *Outline History of The Communist Movement* and EMS's *A History of the Kerala Communist Party*. A list of the publications is appended. The requirements of bringing out a large amount of literature on various topics both ideological and agitational cannot be met by the present set up. We have to separate the publishing section. After the Congress, a separate publishing unit has to be set up which will be responsible for bringing out a wide range of literature which will fulfill the political-ideological needs and also be commercially viable.

It is heartening that during this period the daily newspapers brought out in the states have shown progress. *Deshabhamani*, Kerala began a fourth edition from Kannur; further, the Kasargode district committee is bringing out an evening daily in Kannada for the Kannada population in the district. *Ganashakti*, West Bengal has increased its circulation; *Theekathir* has started a second edition from Madras city; *Prajashakti* has also begun a second edition from Hyderabad. The daily in Tripura after vicious attacks during the semi-fascist regime is now going in for technical modernisation of the Press to improve the paper.

Ideological Struggle

The last Party Congress stressed the importance of the ideological struggle for the expansion of the Party and its influence. The report on organisation and tasks states: "In the present situation in the country, this ideological battle, education and propaganda acquires special importance. We will be able to fight the bankrupt policies of the Congress(I) and the communal platform of the BJP and defend the unity of the country, only if along with building up mass struggles, we simultaneously wage a sustained political-ideological struggle against ruling class ideologies. To the list enumerated above we have to add the pernicious theories of Hindu rashtra, pseudo-secularism, linguistic chauvinism, the new fashionable theories of abandoning self-reliance and integrating with the global capitalist economy; the new anti-Marxist and anti-Socialist propaganda generated by the setbacks to world Socialism. The battle to win the minds of the people who gather around us in mass struggles becomes of paramount importance. Neglect of this work will reduce our work to economism within our basic classes and the masses in general".

The ideological campaigns to educate our ranks and Party following in this period included observance of the October revolution anniversary every year; the hundredth birth anniversary celebration of Mao Zedong; the observance of the 30th anniversary of the formation of the CPI(M) in 1994 and the Engels death centenary observance. These occasions were used to hold meetings, seminars and bringing out special issues of Party journals. But the observance of these events has been uneven in the different states. We have to step up efforts to take up all social and political issues from our ideological standpoint.

An important event was the International Kerala, Studies Congress organised by the A.K.G. Centre for Study and Research at Thiruvananthapuram in August, 1994. More than 600 papers were presented on various aspects of Kerala studies. This Congress was attended by around 1,500 delegates including 23 foreign scholars. This Congress has been a landmark in the Party's initiative in Kerala in the academic field. This experience can be usefully absorbed and similar initiatives can be taken up in other states and at the all-India level.

The entire Party should realise that the future expansion of the Party depends on the success we attain in the ideological struggles. This requires raising the political-organisational consciousness of the Party members, producing more propaganda materials both in the Centre and state, improving our journals and dailies, starting new journal and dailies, organising more schools and conducting more political ideological propaganda etc.

Hindi States

The importance of work in the Hindi states was emphasised in the Salkia Plenum and the 14th Congress organisational review. The review in the last Congress had concluded that unless we build up sustained struggles for land and wages by mobilising the rural poor, it will not be possible to expand our Party's mass base. An important development in this respect is the land struggle initiated by the Party and kisan and agricultural labour organisations in Bihar. This struggle, if properly consolidated, will help in expansion of our mass base in the rural areas. Such a path has to be taken up in

the other big state Uttar Pradesh where there is no progress in our work in the rural areas. Recently, a plan has been chalked out to develop land struggles and wages movements in selected centres in five districts after adequate preparations. This proposal has been adopted in the state conference also. Unless this is taken up in right earnest, it will not be possible to achieve a breakthrough.

In Madhya Pradesh, there has been an accretion in the Party's strength. The Party membership has registered a steady growth. Our increased activities and growing prestige have helped in attracting leaders and followers from the socialist group and the CPI to join our Party.

The Central Committee review of the elections to the assemblies in North India in December 1993 had noted that even in areas where some mass influence exists due to the work of individual leaders and movements in the past, the absence of Party building and proper mass organisations functioning leads to no benefit to the Party. During the elections a concerted offensive by the bourgeois parties results in the masses being swayed by them.

Overall the state of the mass organisations in the Hindi states is poor. The State Committees do not pay attention to orienting the cadre to have a correct approach to mass organisations. Proper deployment of cadres and independent functioning of the class and mass organisations is absent. The state conference of the Bihar state kisan sabha has not been held for seven years. There is no state level functioning of the Kisan Sabha in Rajasthan.

The Party Centre called a meeting of the Secretaries of the State Committees in the Hindi-speaking states and took certain decisions in May 1992. We have not been able to follow up the implementation of the tasks. Apart from calling the secretaries of the Hindi State Committees, the Party Centre must take up in co-operation with the all-India mass organisation leadership the question of streamlining and improving the mass organisations work in the region.

Improving the collective functioning, raising the political organisational consciousness of the Party members, activating the Party members and units, taking up the day to day issues affecting the people, expanding the kisan and agricultural workers union, initiating more mass struggles, taking up issues of social reform

and ideological struggles are important tasks to be fulfilled for expanding the Party.

Other Tasks Taken Up

The Central Committee also set up a tribal committee consisting of Prakash Karat (*Convener*), Nripen Chakraborty, Achintya Bhattacharya, Biman Bose and G.S. Mazumdar for preparing a tribal policy document. The Committee in its first meeting took up the work of preparing two notes on the Jharkhand and Bodo questions which were placed in the Central Committee for discussion to concretise our stand on regional autonomy for these two regions. The Committee has not yet prepared the tribal policy documents, though some preliminary work in collecting material and information has been done.

As per the Organisational Report guideline, the Central Committee set up a North-Eastern committee consisting of Sailen Dasgupta (*Convener*), Achintya Bhattacharya, Noorul Huda and Ananda Pathak to develop the Party in this region. A meeting of this sub-committee was held in June 1992 where the problems of the Party in Sikkim was discussed and scope of work in other North-Eastern states. Unfortunately this committee has not functioned subsequently. Right now a Party State Committee exists in Manipur and some work is there in Sikkim. In all other states we have no organised work. This vital area should not be left unattended.

Cultural Front

The activities on the cultural front have progressed well in some of the states. There are street theatre groups, drama and song squads and cultural magazines in various states. The 14th Congress report had proposed to set up a cultural front fraction committee to exchange experiences and coordinate activities. Unfortunately, the committee could not be constituted though states were asked to nominate names to this committee. This must be set up as soon as possible.

Literacy and Science Campaigns

During this period there has been considerable work on the mass literacy and post-literacy campaigns in various states in which Party members and mass organisation activists have been involved.

Popular science campaign by people's science movements focussing on self-reliance has also been conducted on a countrywide basis. Party committees must encourage the literacy and science work in a planned manner.

Party Membership

Our Party membership has increased by over 50,000 in the three-year period. At the time of the 14th Congress the Party membership was 5,79,664 and this has gone up to 6,31,171 by the end of 1994. Though this increase is not at the same rate as in the past (if we compare the figures from Congress to Congress in the 80s) it is still heartening given the overall international atmosphere and the national situation. The Party membership has shown increase in states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura and Maharashtra while there is some decrease in Assam, Rajasthan, U.P. and Orissa. The lesser quantum of increase overall is primarily due to the fact that the Party membership has increased only marginally in Kerala. In the past it is West Bengal and Kerala which have constituted the largest proportion of increased membership.

Class Composition

It was noted in the organisational report of the 14th Congress that there is an improved class composition in our strong states. The current reports available indicate the same trend. In Kerala working class is 47.3 per cent (including employees), agricultural labour 26.05 per cent; and poor peasantry 10.13 per cent; in West Bengal, working class is 11.3, agricultural labour 15.4 and poor peasantry 26.9 per cent; in Tripura, working class is 13 per cent, agricultural labour 26 and poor peasant 32.2; in Andhra, working class is 13, agricultural labour 28.5 and poor peasants 24.4; in Tamil Nadu the three categories together constitute 80 per cent. The figures of the five strongest states indicate the overall class composition of the Party as they constitute over eighty per cent of the membership.

While this is a positive feature, an analysis of the delegates composition attending the state conferences and composition of State Committees and District Committees would show that cadres

from these classes do not find sufficient representation. Here comes the necessity of conscious planning for promotion of cadres from the basic classes in the Party committees. This requires special efforts to develop them politically and equip them for fulfilling Party responsibilities.

Social Composition

The special attention to be paid to ensure adequate recruitment from the socially oppressed sections and minorities has been stressed in the last three Congress guidelines. In the case of scheduled castes, as noted in the last Congress, their entry in the Party is quite satisfactory. In West Bengal it is 17.8 per cent of membership; in Kerala 14.7; in Tripura 15; Andhra Pradesh 16.6 and Tamil Nadu 25. However the lag in tribal and minorities membership continues. Only in West Bengal is the membership from the minorities substantial with 14.27 per cent of total membership belonging to the Muslim minority. In Kerala this figure is 9.1 while their proportion in the total population is 20 per cent.

In the case of women, the 14th Congress had sharply pinpointed the neglect in drawing women activists from the class and mass organisations into the Party. This is a weakness prevalent even in the stronger states. Some minimal progress has been achieved in certain states to increase women Party membership though it is still far short of the scope as lakhs of women participate in the movements and mass activities. In West Bengal the percentage of women in Party membership has risen from 4.9 in 1991 to 5.7 per cent in 1994; in Kerala during the same period it has shown a slight increase from 5.4 to 5.7 per cent; in the case of Tripura it is 7.2 to 9.9 per cent; in Tamil Nadu 4.5 to 5.7 per cent and in Andhra 2.5 to 5 per cent. The most systematic approach to drawing women and developing their potential is being undertaken by the Party in Tamil Nadu.

The increase of over five thousand women Party members in the three-year period since the last Congress is still too little to make any substantial impact within the Party in the outlook towards women. With the increasing political awareness amongst women and their direct participation in panchayats and local bodies with one-third reservation, the bourgeois parties are making a big bid to

mobilise women. Our Party as a socially advanced formation must be able to shed the attitude of conservatism towards women's equality and their social emancipation.

Activisation of Party Branches

The 14th Party Congress stressed the importance of activating Party branches. Some attempts have been made by certain State Committees to activate the functioning of the branches by organising annual review of the branch functioning at the time of renewals, training of branch secretaries, regular meeting of branch secretaries etc. The state review reports show that there is not sufficient improvement in the overall situation even though the fight against the new economic policies and the anti-communal struggles saw enhanced activity of the Party at all levels. No state has been able to send to the Party Centre a detailed report on branch functioning based on the questionnaire issued at the time of the 1994 renewal of Party membership.

The activation of the Party members, raising their level of political consciousness, activation of the mass and class organisations at the grass-root level, more participation of the common people in campaigns and struggles launched by the mass organisations and the Party, consolidation of the gains and expansion of the Party and mass organisation depend on the proper and regular functioning of the Party branches. All the higher committees of the Party should realise the importance of strengthening the branches for the Party's expansion. The decision of the 14th Party Congress should be implemented. The higher committees should plan periodic review of the activities of the branches.

Strengthen The Party Centre Work

The paucity of equipped cadre continues to affect the implementation of the multi-faceted tasks at the Centre. Experienced and equipped cadres are not joining the Party Centre from the strong states. The State Committees should help the centre in this respect in order to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to the centre. We are experiencing paucity of equipped cadres in mass organisations and in the states. Many comrades complain that the

Party is not making use of them or giving them enough work or reposing confidence in them. This contradictory situation reveals the deficiencies existing in our cadre policy.

Cadre Policy

The expansion of the Party and the mass organisations and their various activities require a continuous increase in the availability of efficient cadres. We shall have to recruit, train and depute cadres to different tasks at all levels. There is also mismanagement in the distribution of cadres and allocation of tasks among them. Some comrades insist on doing everything and intervene in all matters. This is not possible in the context of the expansion of the activities of the Party and ultimately it adversely affects the Party's efficiency. Some comrades are given so many tasks that they cannot do justice to all. The tasks should be distributed among the cadres to strengthen the collective functioning.

We should also ensure proper wages to the wholetime cadres. In this period Punjab and Tamil Nadu have sought to introduce minimum scale of wages for all wholetimers in the state. Andhra has had a uniform pattern for long.

Communist Norms

The Organisational Report of the 14th Congress stated:

'The Central Committee questionnaire had specifically asked the State Committees to assess the standards of Communist behaviour in leading cadres and the record of disciplinary action taken in this regard. All the State Committees have reported examples of serious lapses or aberrant behaviour by certain comrades and also instances of disciplinary action....There have been some cases of corruption which have resulted in expulsions. Though these are still on a small scale it sounds a warning.'

'Another deviation spreading in the Party is parliamentarism and the crass opportunism connected with it. It is common occurrence even in the weakest states for Party committees to make ex-aggerated claims about fighting elections, bickerings over candidates and choice of seats. The corrosion of Communist consciousness is seen also in states where we have our governments.

Hankering for posts in elected bodies such as municipalities, zilla parishads or the assembly leads to groupism. Individual ego and vested interest vitiate collective functioning. These become issues of inner-Party struggle".

Such tendencies have continued to manifest themselves in the Party. Crass parliamentarism manifested through hankering for elected positions and careerism inside the Party have become widespread both in the stronger states and in the weak states. This is also a source of groupism and factionalism in the Party. Kerala is one prime example.

The majority of the Party members have been recruited during the last decade. Though we have made some attempts to educate the Party members and to raise their political-organisational consciousness they are not sufficient to meet the situation. There is also need to re-educate the old Party members. The education of the new entrants to the Party and the re-education of the old comrades should be a continuous process. Political education is not confined to political classes alone. It includes self study, participation in discussions, attending general body meetings and public meetings, participation in campaigns, struggles, and political propaganda etc. The organisational review report of the state conferences reveal that a considerable percentage of the Party members are not attending Party branches regularly or getting involved in Party activities constantly and 50 per cent of the branches etc. are not functioning properly. The lower level of political-organisational consciousness of the Party members, the existence of a considerable number of inactive Party members, the defective functioning of a large number of Party branches etc. are restricting the Party's attempts at expansion. This state of affairs is also responsible for making the Party members vulnerable to bourgeois ideological influences. These are also reasons for bourgeois organisational practices like factionalism, individualism, careerism, corruption, parliamentary opportunism and wrong style of work creeping into the Party.

Democratic Centralism

The 14th Congress stressed the importance of inner-Party democracy within the framework of democratic centralism and

directed to correct trends of over centralisation, to eliminate bureaucratism and to heighten the political-organisational consciousness of Party members. While correcting these mistakes and taking steps for strengthening inner-Party democracy, a trend of ultra democracy, violating the principles of democratic centralism was seen among some Central Committee members in Kerala. They differed from the accepted political line of the Party in the State Committee. If any Central Committee member feels that the present political line of the Party should be changed he has every right to raise that issue in the Central Committee. He has no right to raise such issues in the State Committee and when the State Committee discusses such issues the Central Committee member is duty bound to defend the political line of the Party. If a higher committee member differs from the decision of the higher committee in the lower committees it is violative of the principles of democratic centralism and negates the concept of the Party as an embodiment of common will.

There should be no relaxation against federal tendencies developing in the Party. No major policy question which has a bearing on the national situation should be decided by any state unit without consultation or approval of the Polit Bureau or Central Committee. Such trends undermine the concept of a strong and unified centre and will lead to the erosion of democratic centralism.

Review of The Conferences

The conferences held at all levels were conducted with greater stress on inner-Party democracy. Elections to the committees followed the guidelines set out in the Organisational Report of the 14th Congress with the panel of names prepared by the outgoing Committee being circulated to the delegates at the time of elections. Where additional names were proposed, elections were conducted by secret ballot. However, in a few cases, the elections were marred by factional groupings and canvassing. In Kerala, the State Committee concluded that in three district conferences factional line up manifested. There are also complaints of elimination on factional lines at the lower-level conferences. Efforts to eliminate the minority have been reported from a few conferences in units

under the Calcutta District Committee and some other places. In Assam, the failure to finalise an Organisational Report by the secretariat and State Committee for the state conference reveals an unhealthy state of affairs. The adherence to democratic centralism requires the eschewing of all factional and group line ups while electing the new committees. Overall, the experience of the conferences and election of leading bodies has been positive, in strengthening inner-Party democracy.

In both West Bengal and Kerala, the conferences have thrown up certain issues which require clarification with regard to procedures to be adopted for the elections of committees and other matters. There is need to sum up the experience of these conferences and the procedural problems they raised and get the rules codified. The new Central Committee should undertake this task.

Factionalism

There are reports about factionalism from some states like Kerala. Such trends are there in some other places too. Factionalism denudes the Party of its essentially revolutionary character as the embodiment of common will, making the Party incapable to discharge its revolutionary task and converts the Party into any other bourgeois political party.

The Party should wage a principled fight against the evils of factionalism. This can be done only by adhering to the practice of democratic centralism and strengthening collective work. All decisions on policies and Party positions should be made on the basis of democratic discussion in the Party. Once a decision is taken, it should be implemented irrespective of whether the comrade agrees or disagrees with the proposal at the time of discussion. All proposals and decisions should be explained in detail. All sorts of discussion outside the Party unit should be discouraged and curbed. Resorting to bureaucratism or imposition of the decision of the majority faction in the name of centralism etc. will only worsen the situation and do harm to the Party. Educating the Party members, raising their political and organisational consciousness, their revolutionary courage, making them capable to stand on their own feet and to determine issues on their merits and strengthening of the collective functioning are the means to fight factionalism and bureaucratism in the Party.

There have been reports about deliberate leakage of inner-Party discussions to the bourgeois Press to garner benefits in factional fights. There have been several instances of deliberations of the higher committees being leaked to the bourgeois Press in Kerala and West Bengal. This reveals the magnitude of the dangerous trend creeping into the Party. The enemies of the Party have been making use of these leakages for strengthening their vicious attacks against the Party. The Party cannot tolerate such deliberate violation of Party secrecy and the whole Party should be vigilant against such wrongs. Severe action should be taken against those who indulge in such gross indiscipline.

Style of Functioning

The Party members and units should always keep intimate and live contact with the people, take up their problems, give class orientation to the issues, organise campaigns and struggles for the redressal of their grievances etc. Party members should behave well with the people and live as one among them. They teach the people and also learn from them. Communists should always try to strengthen collective functioning and should not show any sort of bossism towards the people.

Lack of proper political and organisational education and the alien ideological influences are responsible for the erosion of Communist standards. Some comrades and units are imitating the style of functioning of bourgeois parties and are affected by bourgeois vices.

Corruption has become a problem particularly in a state like West Bengal where we have been the ruling party for over 17 years. There can be no compromise with corrupt elements as they will corrode the revolutionary character of the Party. Party members and units should show extreme vigilance against this menace and weed out such elements.

We have to initiate a rectification campaign in the Party to eradicate the reformist style of functioning and all the accompanying bourgeois vices. All Party units should make a self-critical review of the present situation and should start rectifying the defects and shortcomings.

Mass Organisations

The period saw extensive campaigns and movements conducted by the mass organisations. The CITU which played a key role in the setting up of the sponsoring committee and along with other mass organisations was instrumental in the launching of the National Platform of Mass Organisations, has led many struggles of the working class. The kisan and agricultural labour organisations also took up the campaign against the GATT agreement and various state based movements, prominent among which was the sustained land struggle in some districts of Bihar. However, the overall position of the mass organisation membership shows that there are weaknesses in consolidating the influence gathered through these increased activities. While there is a considerable increase in the membership of the DYFI and AIDWA and a small increase in the membership of the agricultural workers union, the membership of the unions affiliated to the CITU and the SFI shows no increase. In fact there is some decline in the membership of the SFI. Overall the picture does not reflect the increased activities undertaken by all the mass organisations. In the case of the student front, there may be other special reasons including the adverse ideological impact on the student community.

An organisational convention was held to identify the problems in the students front and the reasons for the lack of expansion of the SFI. Special attention has to be given to the students front as the Party has to attract the younger generation through the students movement and also find new cadres.

There has been some improvement in Hindi-speaking states as far as the women's front is concerned with the AIDWA units developing new areas and increasing membership in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, M.P. and other states. But the unevenness in the growth of all mass organisations is continuing.

One of the basic principles of Party organisation is that all Party members should actively work in any one of the mass organisations and activate the mass organisations to take up the issues affecting various sections of the people. Due to the inactivity of a considerable number of Party members and units the mass organisations have become inactive in many places and have failed to take up different

issues. There are also weaknesses in consolidating the gains. In many places we conduct big struggles and subsequently, fail to follow up the contacts and to consolidate the gains. We also fail to activate the grass-root level units of the mass organisations. Many such units are inactive. The accountability of Party functionaries in the mass organisation from the branch level to the all-India level is absent. There has to be a continuous check to see if the Party members are active in mass organisations and through the activation of the mass organisations whether they have been able to approach new sections and address their problems.

The weakness in projecting the mass organisation as independent democratic organisations of the concerned sections of the people is still persisting and restricting its expansion. In many places the mass organisations are treated as adjuncts of the Party units and Party decisions are mechanically imposed on the mass organisations. In some places the democratic discussions and decisions about the policies and in the selection of leadership are stifled. The democratic functioning of the mass organisation which cannot be on the basis of democratic centralism (which is applicable only to Party members) is still an abstract principle which finds very little place in practice. The new Central Committee should discuss this aspect and formulate the modalities. In order to strengthen the democratic functioning of the mass organisations we should try to involve the maximum number of members in the evolution of policies, in its implementation, in campaigns, in struggles and in the selection of leadership.

Except for the CITU, there is no effective all-India centres of the mass organisations due to the shortage of full time leading functionaries and adequate cadres at the centre. Steps have to be taken to rectify this.

Parliamentary Work

There is some improvement in the performance of our Parliamentary group. We have been active in exposing the corruption scandals and the anti-people policies. We initiated the no confidence motion in 1993 and effectively took up the election issue in Tripura. However, more effective resistance could have

been put up against legislation pertaining to the economic policies if there had been greater alertness and coordination.

Some of our MPs are absent during the session time without any valid reasons. Many do not prepare thoroughly. Many are also comparatively inactive during question hour. Our exposure of the policies of the government or projection of our alternative has not been satisfactory on many occasions. To remedy the shortcomings, our MPs should spend more time in Delhi and devote more time to doing their homework. Our Parliamentary Party office is not equipped to discharge the work efficiently. We attempted to enlist specialists in various fields who are sympathisers of our Party in our parliamentary team's work. More efforts should be made in this direction. We have also to strengthen our Parliamentary Party office. The Parliamentary Party committee should be reconstituted and its work should be redefined. Four or five MPs should be allotted to coordinate the parliamentary work. Two or three Central Committee members should be given specific responsibility for this.

Teams of MPs were sent out more frequently to visit places where major incidents or riots took place. In 1993, MP's teams visited riot-hit areas. Teams also went to J & K and other places. Yet we cannot claim that we have been able to effectively combine our parliamentary work with the struggles outside.

International

Apart from the international seminar we hosted and Cuba solidarity campaign, our contacts and interactions with many parties have grown.

During this period we received a delegation from the CPC in February 1994 and from the Workers' Party of Korea in February 1993. Three CPI(M) delegations visited China. The first included Prakash Karat and Ramachandran Pillai in May 1992. The second, a cadre delegation led by Saroj Choudhury. The last, a Polit Bureau level delegation headed by Surjeet, in July 1994.

Surjeet visited the DPRK in March/April 1993, Vietnam in October/November 1994. He visited Cuba in December 1992 to receive the solidarity ship sent from India, in June/July 1993 to

attend the Sao Paulo' forum and in November 1994 to attend the world solidarity conference.

A two-member delegation comprising Jyoti Basu and Sitaram Yechury went to Cuba in 1993. Jyoti Basu and Anil Biswas visited the DPRK in 1994.

During this period many Party conferences were held. Surjeet attended the Portugal Party's Congress in December 1992 and CPN (UML) in February 1993. He went to Nepal subsequently to attend the funeral of Com. Madan Bhandari, in May 1993. Benoy Choudhury went for the mass condolence meeting later on.

Sitaram attended the Party Congress of the French Communist and Italian Refoundation Parties in January 1994. He attended the Japanese Party Congress in July 1994 and Russian Party's Congress in January 1995. He also participated in the seminar in Mexico City of Latin American Communist and Workers' Parties.

In December 1993, Sailen Dasgupta and Anil Biswas attended the seminar organised by the Workers Party of Bangladesh on the occasion of Mao Centenary.

During this period our comrades from U.K. were deputed to attend the annual festival of newspapers of the parties held in Europe. We attended the festivals in Portugal, Spain and France.

In view of such growing interactions there is a need to strengthen the international department. The new Central Committee should address itself to this task.

Updating Party Programme

The Central Committee set up a six-member commission for the work of preparing a draft of the updated programme as per the resolution adopted in the 14th Congress. The Commission consisted of M. Basavapunnaiiah (*Convenor*), E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Jyoti Basu, P. Ramachandran, R. Umanath and Anil Biswas. Unfortunately, Comrade Basavapunnaiiah died soon after before the Commission could begin its work. The Central Committee elected Harkishan Singh Surjeet in his place to Chair the Commission.

The Commission prepared an outline for the updating which was discussed in August 1993 by the Central Committee. After

this the Commission prepared a full draft of the programme which was taken up for discussion in the Central Committee in two rounds in April and July 1994. The Central Committee at this meeting decided that the discussions and work on the updated programme could not be continued in time for placing the draft for adoption at the 15th Congress in April 1995. As the programme is the basic document of the Party, detailed inner-Party discussions would be necessary. This could not be done in the period preceding the Congress because of the mass civil disobedience movement in August-September and followed by the two rounds of assembly elections stretching up to February-March 1995. Therefore, the Central Committee adopted a resolution which stated as follows:

'Important national political developments have taken place which require the immediate intervention of the Party. Therefore, the Central Committee has decided to postpone the discussions on the updating of the Party Programme. This has been necessitated due to the urgent task of intensifying the mass movement against the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and the forthcoming assembly elections in major states where the Party will be engaged in the task of fighting the Congress(I) and the BJP.

"Changes in the international and national situation need to be evaluated and the programme updated. However, since the basic postulates of the programme concerning the stage of the revolution, the character of the state, strategy and class alliance remains valid there is no difficulty in working out the tactical line of the Party.

"The 15th Congress will evolve a suitable mechanism to proceed with the updating of the programme."

The Central Committee recommends to the Congress that it entrust the new Central Committee with the task of working out a time-table and mechanism to proceed with the updating work.

Immediate Tasks

The review of the implementation of the tasks set out at the 14th Party Congress and the present organisational situation shows

that the Party organisation is not a satisfactory state. To expand the Party and make it a powerful all-India force with millions of working people rallying to the Left and democratic platform, it is necessary to build a mass revolutionary Party. This enjoins us to unleash more mass struggles, to conduct more ideological struggles and to give primacy to build and streamline Party organisation.

The immediate tasks can be summarised as:

- (i) Strengthen the Party Centre and centres at state and district levels, and intermediate levels.
- (ii) Strengthen collective functioning to ensure individual responsibility and periodic check ups.
- (iii) Activise Party members by raising their political organisational consciousness. Activise Party branches.
- (iv) Educate the whole Party membership, train branch secretaries and local cadres by organising schools at central, state and other levels.
- (v) Recruit and train cadres at different levels for full-time work. Make conscious efforts to recruit and promote cadres from the basic class in the Party committees.
- (vi) Strengthen inner-Party democracy within the framework of democratic centralism.
- (vii) Fight against wrong tendencies such as factionalism, federalism, careerism, bureaucratism and parliamentarianism.
- (viii) Adherence to Communist standards and norms. Launch a rectification campaign against all sorts of wrong organisational practices and bourgeois vices infiltrating into the Party.
- (ix) Strengthen ideological struggle against all forms of bourgeois and feudal ideologies. Strengthen Party journals and dailies, establish a publishing centre at the centre and strengthen the selling section.
- (x) Activise all mass organisations to launch more mass struggles by taking steps to activise the lower level units of all mass organisations, their centres at all-India, state and other levels, strengthening the independent and democratic functioning of these organisations.

THE TRADE UNION FRONT

The Struggles

The period under review was a period of intense struggle by the working class not only for protecting their day to day interests but also for intensifying the fight against the new economic policies of the government. Three nationwide general strikes were organised by the trade unions on 16th June 1992, 9th September 1993 and 29th September 1994. The sweep of these general strikes went on increasing every year clearly indicating the growing militancy among the working class. More than 15 million workers participated in the 1992 general strike while the number rose to above 20 million in the 1993, and in 1994 more than 25 million. The CITU and allied trade unions played a major role in these strike actions and in mobilising the other trade unions. The 1992 strike was organised by the Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions.

A massive rally of half a million workers was organised before Parliament on 25th November 1992. Having felt the need for mobilising broader sections of the people a broader platform was created with other mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, students, youth, cultural groups etc. to put up a common resistance against economic policies and against communal forces. The pre-planned communal riots by the RSS-VHP-BJP combine involved several industrial centres which adversely affected the united movement of the working class. However, deteriorating economic conditions due to government policies prevailed upon the working class to come forward for united nationwide actions.

At the initiative of the Sponsoring Committee, a National Convention of Mass Organisations was held on 15th April 1993 in New Delhi which was attended by over 7000 delegates of Trade Unions, the organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, students, youth etc. It was the first ever convention of all mass organisations in the country on common issues facing them. The convention decided to constitute a National Platform of Mass Organisations against economic policies of the Government of

India and against communalism. The convention called upon all mass organisations to launch a programme of massive courting arrest on 19th August 1993 and a Bharat bandh on 9th September 1993.

The Platform also gave a call for observation of a National Protest week against Dunkel proposals from 3rd to 9th December 1993 which was observed well all over India. In Delhi alone 5000 persons along with 32 members of Parliament courted arrest on 9th December 1993. To carry forward the struggle the National Platform gave a call for holding rallies, *jathas* all over the country culminating in rallies in all the state capitals and march to Parliament on 5th April 1994. Despite firing of over 700 rounds of teargas shells, lathi charge, use of water cannons and mounted police, the demonstration was successful. More than 2 lakh persons belonging to all mass organisations participated in the demonstration. This was made successful by the simultaneous movement launched by the Left parties and the active support rendered by the Party.

Second all-India Convention of National Platform of Mass Organisations was held in New Delhi in June 1994 which was attended by 7000 delegates from all mass organisations which gave the call for a General Strike and Hartal on 29th September 1994. The nationwide rail roko programme on 22nd August and torch light processions on 27th August rallied round large sections of workers and members of other mass organisations.

The participation of the State and Central Government employees and the employees of Banks and Insurance and the cooperation offered by the Public Sector Officers' Associations were important. But the failure to involve the railway workers, port and dock workers etc. in these mass action programmes was a serious weakness. Though the leadership of both these crucial sectors were participating in the national platform and the sponsoring committee, they failed to mobilise these sections in the strike.

Another notable struggle in this period was the all-India strike of public sector workers on 14th July 1994 against the policy of privatisation and disinvestment, delay in wage negotiations and

settlement of the DA question. About 18 lakh out of 23 lakh workers participated in this action. Many struggles were fought by uniting all the workers of the industry irrespective of their trade union affiliations and in many cases with the full support of the officers organisations, against closures and privatisation, and against curtailment of existing privileges, as in the case of IISCO, FACT and the banking and insurance sector etc. In many cases the government's proposals have been defeated at least temporarily together with their proposal for wage freeze.

After a general assessment of the experience, the following conclusions emerged:

1. The All-India General Strikes organised by the trade unions mainly against the economic policies of the government, gathering momentum year after year was a unique development in the recent history of the trade union movement of our country

2. It was necessary to take massive explanatory campaign among the workers to give them a comprehensive idea about the pernicious impact of these policies in order to prepare them for further stronger actions. What was done in this regard was insufficient.

3. In the participation of workers and other sections of the people in strike and other action programmes, it was found that the participation of workers from the key industries like railways, road transport, port and dock etc. was not sufficient.

4. The big industrialised states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and many major industrial cities of the North did not have sufficient impact of the strike. Even on the areas where the strikes were comparatively better, there were sections of workers who did not participate in the strike.

5. Though the movement was organised jointly by the trade unions and the mass organisations it was found that in many cases they could not mobilise their following in full strength in these actions.

6. The changes that are taking place in the modern industries need special attention. The composition of the workforce and its striking power is undergoing changes. Therefore, enlisting the support of high salaried technicians and specialists assumes importance.

7. The importance of strengthening the worker-peasants alliance is not sufficiently stressed by the trade union. The developing new joint movement should also be consciously used for overcoming this weakness.

8. Democratic functioning of trade unions is still very weak in many areas. It is found that the trade union leaders who do not keep constant contact with the workers are many. At least in some cases organised goondaism of various types are used to install certain leaders in the union and to suppress honest criticism against the corrupt.

Fight for Alternative Policies

On the economic front the Declaration adopted in the National Platform of Mass Organisations gives a 20-point programme which spells out an alternative approach to the so-called economic reforms. This programme became popular among the workers and other mass organisations. This also could give reply to the official propaganda that the present policy framework has no alternative.

Regarding sickness of several public sector undertakings we could submit alternate proposals for revival and mobilised workers in support of these proposals. In the Special Tripartite Committee as well as Industrial Tripartite Committees, we could jointly give proposals to the government and fight against government's proposals to close down the public sector undertakings.

In making these alternative proposals we received considerable help from the officers organisations and the technical experts in the field and in many cases managements too officially agreed to prepare joint alternate proposals to save the public sector unit from closure.

This approach enabled us to reach broader strata of workers and officers and enabled us to campaign effectively against economic policies of the Government of India. Moreover, it also enhanced the consciousness of the workers about the problems of the industry and various aspects of policies adopted by the capitalist class.

Many new sections have joined the mainstream like employees of airlines, various departments of Central Government, defence employees, officers of various sections including in some cases gazetted officers.

In this united movement working women participated in larger numbers than ever before and so did the workers of unorganised strata.

Due to the fast deteriorating economic conditions of the working class, urge for unity growing. Hence, during the last 3 years, on several occasions, united actions were launched with the INTUC and BMS. In some cases, despite official opposition by the INTUC and BMS, their ranks enthusiastically joined the strike calls given by us.

A welcome factor which needs special mention is that against the retrograde policies in the public sector power, telecom, railway, oil, financial sectors etc., a sizable number of experts scientists, economists, engineers etc. were mobilised to oppose these by presenting alternate policy papers challenging the government positions in many workshops and seminars besides well-prepared articles and booklets.

The decision to expand the national campaign committee to the sponsoring committee and the formation of the national platform of trade union and mass organisations to fight against the new economic policies were important steps which facilitated the joint action of trade unions with agricultural workers and the peasants organisations and other mass organisations. It gave a correct orientation for the movement to develop the resistance throughout the country.

CITU Report on Organisation

The Report on Organisation dealt at length with the organisational perspective of the CITU and noted serious weaknesses in that context. It analyses the shortcomings in the functioning of the CITU Centre, State and District Committees, industrywise federation and highlights the need for democratic functioning of trade unions. It points out defects in our policy towards development of cadres, TU education and research, work

among working women and unorganised strata of the working class. It reviews the shortcomings in our publications and journals. It further lays down certain tasks on the question of unification of TU movement and the concept of formation of Confederation of Indian TU Movement.

The document was circulated to all the trade unions and was translated in different languages for understanding of the workers. The State Committees and industrywise federations have been told to prepare a detailed report about their own shortcomings and take steps to overcome the shortcomings in their functioning.

A Special Commission went into the question of Organisation during the Eighth Conference of the CITU held in Patna in March 1994. The deliberations of the Commissions clearly indicated that the progress regarding implementation of the Report on Organisation has been extremely slow.

The main direction of the Report for overcoming the weakness of the trade union in the weaker areas, and some other points are reproduced below:

We have never taken up the question of social oppression on the lower and the poorer strata and launched struggles against the exploitation and depredations by the upper caste people. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and minorities are not enthusiastically participating in our trade union activities.

Special steps to be taken for the development of cadre particularly among the backward sections of the society and the minorities so that through them we can approach the most downtrodden sections among the working class in the Hindi-speaking regions.

Preparations of a plan for one or two years by fixing certain targets of membership, development of cadre, determining priorities of industries and centres, programme of movement by the state committees in cooperation with the CITU centre.

Periodic discussions in the General Council and Working Committee on the progress made by us in developing our mass work and organisation in the Hindi-speaking region.

TU Centre

A review of the job division made by the CITU Centre revealed that decisions are not timely implemented. Without ensuring regular check-up of the work done by each office bearer functioning from the Centre, it would not be possible to ensure full implementation. There is urgent need to introduce more team spirit in discharging the responsibilities. At times due to lack of proper co-ordination and information sharing, the matters are not properly attended to. Sum-total of individual work cannot effectively ensure collective functioning. There is urgent need to show more alertness by the Secretariat members functioning from the Centre in this regard. Unless the weaknesses existing in the central functioning are overcome, the capacity of the Secretariat to ensure compliance at the lower levels would be greatly affected. It is also noted that several jobs cannot be attended by the Centre due to non-availability of capable comrades to function from the Centre. Unless State Committees help the CITU Centre by sparing some leading comrades, it would be extremely difficult to expand the activities and implement the tasks before us more efficiently.

On Education

The CITU Centre has been sending teachers to take classes whenever there was a demand from the state committee or industry-wise federation. We have also extended assistance to fraternal organisations in conducting classes. However, in the absence of well-prepared syllabus the outcome of these classes has been below the mark. At the same time, it must be noted that one single syllabus will not serve the purpose. We have to differentiate between the task of educating ordinary workers, active workers, leaders and teachers. Even programme of industry-wise education will have different aspects of training. Moreover, there is urgent need of training specific comrades on specialist training programmes in view of emerging technology in the country. Without creation of a team at the Centre with specific responsibility the task cannot be fulfilled. We have to give special priority to this work keeping in mind the urgency of the situation.

It is a sad commentary on our work that we have not been able to consider the aspect of research work and development of information system in our activities. Without periodically preparing reserach papers on different aspects of TU activity and supply of necessary agitational and propaganda material to our activities, we will not be able to make qualitative improvement in our activities. Though we have to undertake these jobs in a phased manner, too much delay will cost us very much. We have to consider our concrete tasks in this area so that we can take steps to improve our work substantially. In a new situation when the bourgeoisie is adopting new methods of creating illusions among the workers to counteract their ideological offensive, we need such a centre. Resources and cadre problem are real bottlenecks in this regard, but if comrades cooperate, we may be able to take steps in this regard also.

On Women

It must be admitted that the TU movement in general has neglected the task of fighting against social oppression of women. In several cases, we find that even in Charter of Demands, the special problems faced by working women are rarely mentioned. We have not seriously taken up the cases of sexual harassment of women workers during our agitations. At times our leaders and activists become victims of male chauvinism while a tendency is developing to look at problems of women somewhat contemptuously. Trade Union movement must closely link itself with the women's liberation movement if larger involvement of women in the TU movement is to be achieved. We should also educate our workers to involve their womenfolk in the democratic women's movement.

Cadre Development

Regarding cadre development, efforts must be made at all levels to put comrades in proper position and give higher responsibility to comrades having merit. Regarding education, a Sub-Committee already formed for the purpose should be entrusted with the task of preparing syllabus along with lecture

notes within 3 months so that a countrywide educative programme can be chalked out on the basis of the syllabus by the end of October 1995. Advanced syllabus for specialised training can be suitably developed later. Our senior leadership must also develop their own knowledge and equip themselves with all information so that they can contribute effectively in evolving suitable policies for the organisation. Their capacity to lead in the present complex situation largely depends on how far they become competent to tackle the problems facing our movement. Unless every senior leader becomes a teacher in the trade unions as schools of Socialism, we cannot effectively lead our own masses, let alone the question of leading the general masses influenced by various ideologies.

This Report on Organisation is a serious document which deals in detail steps to be taken for improving the work in the trade unions. Though this has been accepted after elaborate discussion, its implementation from top to bottom is not yet taken up with the required seriousness.

The CITU Centre called a meeting of representatives of the Hindi-speaking region and took certain steps to strengthen the CITU activities in the region. This meeting proved to be useful and full implementation of the decisions of the meeting will be helpful to strengthen the CITU activities in this region.

Membership

The membership of the trade unions under our leadership has not shown suitable growth commensurate with the growing influence of these unions among the workers. The membership of the CITU during the last 3 years is as follows:

1991—20,29,639 1992—23,57,766 1993—8,89,003*
(figures incomplete)

These are the membership figures as per annual returns submitted to the Registrar of Trade Unions and does not include the membership of unions which have not submitted the annual returns. Moreover, the membership is only of those unions which have remitted affiliation fees to the CITU Centre.

The Eighth Conference of the CITU has decided to increase the membership of the CITU to 30 lakhs by the end of May 1995 and quotas have been given to different states accordingly.

Apart from the CITU our comrades are leading many trade unions which are having large membership like insurance, banking, railways, Central and State Govt. employees etc., the total strength of which is not properly assessed and will run into several millions.

Party Building

The building of the Party among the workers continues to suffer from sad neglect. The growing influence of the Party among the workers is not reflected in Party membership. Though the figures are not available, by and large the membership among the workers did not increase much during the last 3 years.

During the series of movements undertaken under our leadership, many new sections have come with us but we have not been able to effectively identify the most advanced sections among them and bring them closer to the Party and its organisation. The required effort in this regard has not been shown by the Party Committees at different levels, and the Party leaders who are working in the trade unions also did not take this job seriously. The Party leaders who are working in the trade unions are in constant contact with the workers. They must see that the militant workers are brought into the Party fold.

The neglect to bring in more and more workers into the Party after giving them the required training has its own reflection on the class composition of the Party. Special efforts to enhance the consciousness of the workers, and enlist them to the Party and develop them as Party leaders is a priority job. The state committees must take it seriously.

TU Sub-Committee and Fractions

The TU Sub-Committee of the Central Committee had 12 meetings and considered the policy issues to be taken up by the trade unions and reviewed many industry-wise fraction committee reports and gave necessary directions. The issues of

all-India strike actions and the of issues of broadening the united movement and the review of the strikes etc. has been taken up as and when issues arose. Most of the TU sub-committee meetings were held on the basis of prepared agenda notes. A few meetings were also held on an urgent basis. Two meetings were completely devoted to the discussion on updating of the document 'Task on the Trade Union Front' which has been finalised by the TU sub-committee and submitted before the Polit Bureau. Polit Bureau decided to discuss it in the Central Committee, which has been circulated for state committees after incorporating the suggestions made by the Central Committee. This could not be finalised because of the pressure of work of the Central Committee.

The TU sub-committee has been constituted mostly with the Central Committee members who are working in the trade unions based in Delhi. But after sometime comrades working in Delhi had to go back to the states which in a way partially affected the work of the TU sub-committee. However, it is felt that the TU sub-committee meetings should be more regular and a few more cadres should be inducted in the committee so that the efficiency of the TU sub-committee can be improved. There was criticism about the work of the TU sub-committee which needs correction.

A proper discussion about the functioning of the TU sub-committee is also needed. The all-India fraction reports should be regularly monitored by the TU sub-committee and brought before the Polit Bureau after proper evaluation so that the Polit Bureau can issue necessary directives to the Party committees. This itself is a big job which can be done effectively with proper secretarial assistance.

The Central Trade Union fraction met only 3 times since the last Party Congress and discussed the issues referred to it by the TU sub-committee. The participation of the members in some of the meetings was not up to the mark. The decision to hold the meeting once in six months could not be followed strictly. Though written reports are submitted in the meeting, the practice of giving copies of the report during the meetings itself leads to comrades not reading the reports which affect the level of discussion in the meeting. We should introduce a system of giving the reports in advance to the members so that the level of discussion can be improved. The composition and its

functioning also needs fresh discussion in the light of the experience.

The need for establishing correct relation between Party and mass organisations is extremely important. There was discussion in the TU sub-committee on this question when it was discussing the question of updating of this document on the Task on the TU Front. It is found that there is a tendency on the part of the trade union leaders to ignore the Party directives and on the part of some Party units to impose decisions from above without taking into account the democratic character of the mass organisation. Both the trends are not conducive to growth of the trade union movement and the Party.

The changes that have come up in the trade union front, consequent to the introduction of new technologies also took lot of time for the TU sub-committee for evolving a policy line. The changes that are taking place had its consequences in the composition of the workforce. All these issues have had to be taken up by the TU sub-committee. However, as stated above the strengthening of the TU sub-committee and ensuring its effective functioning is very important.

Conclusion

The struggles against the government's new economic policy should be further intensified. The struggle against increasing sickness, closures and unemployment should be launched mobilising all sections of the workers. Steps should be taken to bring the unorganised sector workers who are subjected to intensive exploitation, by giving it utmost priority. Developing the united movement of the trade unions has to be carried forward through organisational unity at industry, factory levels to the national level. The proposal for the formation of a confederation of trade unions should be vigorously pursued.

KISAN FRONT

The failure to organise and develop Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union constitute the greatest weakness of the entire democratic movement in the country. Without

organising and developing these two organisations, that comprise seventy per cent of the population, the Party will fail to become a decisive force in the political life of the country.

The 14th Congress stressed the importance of expanding the peasant movement in the country for building and strengthening the Party as a mass revolutionary party. The directions of the Congress can be summarised as follows:

- (a) Study the development of capitalism in agriculture.
- (b) Reformulate the slogans and demands on the basis of concrete conditions.
- (c) Proper emphasis on building peasant unity to isolate landlords by building the movement basing on the needs of the vast section of the peasantry and the centre of them are agricultural workers and poor peasants.
- (d) Launch land struggles.
- (e) Expand the Kisan movement.
- (f) Activise the lower units in the villages enabling them to take up the various issues affecting the peasantry.
- (g) Project the identity of the Kisan Sabha.

The three years after the Party Congress witnessed increased activities of the Kisan Sabha, in launching campaigns and struggles against the new economic policies of the Government against GATT agreement and against communalism, taking up various issues affecting the peasantry and the country etc. The Kisan Sabha conducted important studies regarding the changes happening in the agrarian scenario for further concretising the tasks. As per the decision of the last Party Congress the Central Committee undertook the review of the activities of the Kisan Front and formulated the major tasks.

Review of The Major Activities

- (a) Struggle against the new economic policies of the Government: The 27th conference of the All India Kisan Sabha held at Hissar at the end of September 1992 decided to continue the campaign and movement against the new economic policies of the Rao Government.

A large contingent of peasants and agricultural workers participated in the Delhi rally held on 25th November, 1992. This rally had created a very good impact in galvanising the movement against the new economic policies.

The Left-led Kisans and Agricultural Workers Organisations met on 25th December, 1992 and decided:

- (i) To participate actively in joint campaign for national unity.
- (ii) To accelerate the joint movement against new economic policies of the Government.
- (iii) To organise campaigns and struggles on the burning issues affecting the peasantry and agricultural workers.

The Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union actively participated in all campaigns and struggles against the new economic policies of the government organised by the platform of mass organisations.

The April 1993 meeting of the CKC decided to organise a protest week from May 24 to 31 for the rejection of Dunkel Draft, reversal of anti-people economic policies, radical change in the approach of new agricultural policy resolution, rejection of the Narasimham Committee Report on rural credit etc. The State committees observed this protest week in various forms.

The Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union actively participated in the 19th August 1993 jail bharo movement. The peasantry and the agricultural labourers all over India actively participated to make 9th September Bharat Bandh a great success.

On 20th October, 1993, when GATT's director general Peter Sutherland visited Delhi, a protest rally was organised at a short notice by the Platform of Mass Organisations and peasants and agricultural workers from Haryana and U.P. took part to make the protest rally a success. Agricultural workers and peasants in large numbers participated on April 5th March to Parliament programme.

Large number of agricultural workers and peasants participated during the civil disobedience movement during August 16 to September 9, 1994 and in the rail roko programme on 20th September.

(b) *Land Struggle*: Land movement has again picked up in Bihar, some places in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc. under the leadership of All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agricultural Workers' Union. In Bihar, the AIKS and AIAWU activists have occupied 36,000 acres of land and distributed among agricultural workers and poor peasants. Thirty-six comrades were murdered by police and landlord goondas in Bihar. A massive rally was held in Patna to project the land issue at state level. In Andhra Pradesh, AIKS and AIAWU have been building the movement to occupy Government land in some districts. The struggle has to be expanded to other areas where land issue is acute.

(c) *Support price demand against price crash of many cash crops*: The AIKS has organised movements during this period on the issue of price crash of many crops like cashew, coconut, rubber, ginger, pepper, tobacco, raw silk etc. in different states

(d) *For irrigation facilities and power facilities*: Floods and droughts affected many parts of the country. The All India Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union raised the question of relief and compensation for the people who suffered due to floods and droughts and also the question of expansion of irrigation facilities and power facilities. Conventions, dharnas, rasta rokos etc. were organised by many state committees.

(e) *Movements against increase in taxes, tariffs and freight charges*: During this period the Central Government and various State Governments have increased land tax, water tariffs, electricity charges, diesel charges etc. Many state units took up these issues and organised protest actions against these measures in different forms.

(f) *Problems of tribals*: Some of the state units have taken up the problems of the tribals during this period. Convention, public rallies, dharnas, pickettings were organised. Much more has to be done in taking up the issues affecting the tribals.

(g) *Campaign against communalism*: During this period Kisan Sabha has independently and unitedly with other mass organisations organised campaigns against the menace of communalism that endanger the unity of the peasantry. Kisan

Sabha has organised public rallies, seminars, *padayatras* and other activities as part of the programme against comunalism.

Hissar Conference of the AIKS and its Assessment of the Agrarian Scene

The All India Kisan Sabha reviewed the past experience, examined the development of capitalism in agriculture, and reformulated the future tasks. The 27th All India Conference of the Kisan Sabha held at Hissar from 27 to 30 September 1992 had made some serious attempts. It assessed the changes emerging in the agrarian scenario and came to the following conclusions:

(i) The country can be divided into three broad categories on the basis of land reforms measures as well as the nature and level of development of capitalism in agriculture. One category is states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura where due to the revolutionary strength of the peasant movements and the formation of Left-led Governments, land reforms have been by and large carried out within the constraints of the present Constitution. The second category comprises of the areas popularly known as green revolution belt—Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P., delta areas of Andhra Pradesh, parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. where capitalist development is taking place by making use of irrigation facilities, chemical fertilisers, high yielding variety seeds, modern agricultural implements etc. The third category comprises of those areas where the semi feudal relations still dominate. Bihar, Eastern, Central parts of U.P., Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu come under this category. The issues of the peasantry are different in different areas. The AIKS should consider this aspect while formulating tasks.

(ii) The poor peasants are finding it difficult to cultivate their land due to lack of adequate resources and the exploitation of the bourgeois-landlord dominated market. They are being lured by the comfortable rent they receive by leasing. This trend of "reverse tenancy" is an important feature of the agrarian economy mainly seen in the green revolution belt and irrigated areas. This

would ultimately lead to the deprivation of land to the poor peasants.

(iii) When issues like remunerative prices for agricultural produces, waiver of loan of the peasantry, reduction of subsidies to the fertilisers came up for discussion, a trend of identifying with the slogans raised by the landlord-led peasant organisations was seen among some comrades and some units. Simply repeating the slogans of landlord-led peasant organisations and trying to compete them in raising such slogans do not help in building the peasant unity. The peasant unity we build is based on the interests of the poor sections among the peasantry who constitute the overwhelming majority. While supporting the demands for remunerative prices per agricultural produces, waiver of loans of the peasantry, reduction of subsidies, etc., we should take up the land question with all earnestness, the issues of wages of agricultural workers, their house sites, rent reduction, payment of 75% of the produce to the share croppers, against evictions landlord goonda attacks, social oppression of harijans and tribals, strengthening of public distribution system, drinking water facilities, irrigation, power, new technology for small and medium holdings, marketing and processing facilities for the produces of the small and medium peasants, credit facilities, employment guarantee scheme, etc for building peasant unity for isolating the landlords. The issues like public health facilities, public education facilities, ending of corruption, democratic functioning of cooperatives and panchayat institutions are also important.

(iv) The landlord-led peasant organisations continue to sustain their following among the peasantry. In order to expose them we should project our alternative as the only viable alternative to bring about increase in productivity and production, while also solving problems of poverty and unemployment, with greater benefits going to the poor sections among the peasantry.

CC Document—"Review of The Work on Kisan Front and Future Tasks"

After reviewing the activities of the All India Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers' Union the Central Committee adopted a

document "Review of the Work on Kisan Front and Future Tasks at the meeting 16-18 April, 1993.

The Central Committee document explains that due to the implementation of land reform measures in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura and due to the capitalist development taking place in Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P. and certain irrigated areas in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. the peasant unity cannot be built by taking up the land questions alone. Along with land issue we should take up various issues affecting the peasantry. In states where the semi-feudal relations still exist i.e., Bihar, East and Central U.P., Orissa, M.P. parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc the land question remains an important issue.

In order to further develop peasant unity and expand the peasant movement on all India basis we should take up along with the land question all other issues affecting the peasantry such as irrigation and power facilities, credit facilities, storage facilities, marketing facilities, promotion of co-operative cultivation, strengthening of public distribution system, agro-based industries, dairy farming, fish farming, introduction of new technology, remunerative price for the agricultural produces, wages and better service condition for agricultural workers, public health facilities, public education facilities, etc. The issues to be taken up in a particular state or area depend on the concrete situation existing in the state or area. It also states that the intensity of the semi-feudal domination, the development of capitalism varies from place to place due to historical, physical and other factors, even among the areas under the three categories noted. It also says that the whole situation is changing. It directs us to concretise the demands of the peasantry for building broad peasant unity around agricultural labourers and poor peasants considering the different situation existing and also the changes happening.

It also enjoins us to launch mass struggles against new economic policies of the Government, overcome the weakness in organising tribals, taking up their issue of land, defending their interests, activate the work among women, fight against social

oppression and atrocities against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe and other backward classes, fight against casteist and communal forces, expose and isolate landlord-led peasant organisations, strengthen the united actions of Kisan Sabha and Agricultural Workers Union, strengthen countrywide movement and the democratic functioning of the organisations and activate the Party members in mass organisations. The Central Committee Document also points out that the organisational weaknesses persisting in the work of Agricultural Workers Union and Kisan Sabha and gave specific directions for rectifying those weaknesses. It declares that the weakness of the agricultural workers movement and the kisan sabha in spite of the favourable conditions constitutes one of the important weaknesses of the democratic movement in the country and this weakness has to be overcome and that alone can create a favourable situation for the growth of the Party in the weaker states.

The Central Committee decided to educate the entire Party on the basis of this new understanding and to re-formulate our tasks on all India level and states level. From the Centre we initiated discussions in Party state committees on the basis of this new understanding. We cannot claim that we have succeeded in completing this exercise in many of the states. This is yet to be completed.

Alternative Agricultural Policy Document

The All India Agricultural Workers Union and All India Kisan Sabha organised a seminar in September, 1993 to study the impact of the new agricultural policies and to evolve an alternative agricultural policy statement.

The AIKS and AIAWU involved experts from various fields and all our active cadres to formulate the alternative document at the seminar. After the seminar the All India Kisan Council and Agricultural Workers Union met and finalised the document. The alternative document contains a critique of the new draft agricultural policy resolution published by the Government and the alternative proposals. Both these organisations decided to educate the cadres and members and to give widest publicity to

the alternative policy document. It was also decided that the state committees of both these organisations should re-formulate the demands in states based on the alternative policies for building peasant unity around agricultural labourers and poor peasants, to isolate the landlord sections and to bring down their ideological influence among the peasantry.

The alternative agricultural policy document criticised the new agricultural policies of the government as they are based on the interest of the landlords and other richer sections who constitute a small minority among the people in the country side and ignore the interests of the overwhelming majority. The alternative agricultural policy document is based on the interests of the overwhelming majority among the people in the country side and demands for completion of land reform measures, distribution of land to agricultural labourers and poor peasants, expansion of irrigation facilities, supply of adequate power to agriculture, making more public investments in irrigation and power, making more public investments in science and technology, expanding infrastructural facilities, use of improved varieties of seeds, pesticides and modern technology etc., giving subsidies to protect the interests of the small and middle peasants, assuring remunerative prices, protecting the interest of the peasantry from natural calamities by providing a comprehensive crop insurance scheme, tackling the problems of agricultural workers by providing land to them, passing a central legislation providing minimum wages and social security measures for agricultural labourers, expanding public distribution system, giving priority to foodgrains self-sufficiency, prohibiting multinationals and big business entering into agro-based industries, generating more jobs in the agriculture sector, promoting agricultural research, expanding drinking water facilities, public health, public education etc., expanding rural employment generation scheme linked to the development programmes, democratisation of panchayat institutions and co-operatives and changing their functions to help the interests of the poor sections, solving the problems of the tribals, taking adequate measures for protecting the environment, re-vegetation of degraded areas, prevention of soil erosion etc.

The AIKS and the AIAWU decided to explain the alternative agricultural policy to the members of both these organisations and the peasantry. It was also decided that the state committees should discuss and decide the issues to be taken up on the basis of the alternative agricultural policy. The office bearers of All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agricultural Workers Union visited different state committees and explained the policy document. It cannot be said that the document was reported to the entire membership. The state committee should immediately prepare plans to report to the entire membership on policy document and to project this alternative agricultural policy before the peasantry and mobilise their support. The aim is to build a big movement to change the present policies of the government.

The new understanding contained in the Central Committee document "Review of the Work on Kisan Front and Future Tasks" helped in analysing the new situation emerging in the agrarian scenario, enlightened us how to demarcate from the landlord, rich peasants organisations, and educated us on the importance of building peasant unity around agricultural labourers and poor peasants. The alternative agricultural policy document served as an effective weapon in exposing the new agricultural policies of the Central Government that ignores the interests of the overwhelming majority among the peasantry.

There is growing awareness among the peasantry about the adverse impact of the new agricultural policies and the GATT agreement. If AIKS and AIAWU take these issues and organise campaigns and struggles the movements can be expanded into new sections and new areas.

As part of the new economic policies of the Central Government some of the States governments like Maharashtra, Gujarat etc. have started taking measures in abrogating land reform laws particularly with regard to the ceiling provisions. These state governments are giving large extent of land to monopolists and MNCs for raising different crops. We should oppose this and should mobilise peasantry and other democratic sections for the genuine implementation of the land reforms measures by plugging loopholes in the legislations.

There are possibilities in taking up the issue of distribution of waste land, forest land etc. in most of the states. We should launch campaigns and struggles for distribution of such lands and also for occupation.

While taking steps to expand land struggles the AIKS and AIAWU should also take up issues like the issue of *pattas* for the land occupied by the peasantry, the issue of house-sites, reduction of the rent of share cropping, protection of the rights of oral tenants, preparation of the record of rights of peasants etc.

The unity of different sections of the peasantry, the agricultural workers, poor peasants, middle peasants and the rich peasants we build, is around the poor sections among the peasantry, agricultural workers and poor peasants. One of the aims of this unity is to isolate the landlord sections and to meet their ideological influence. Conscious attempts should be made to build peasant unity on this basis.

Some committees do not study the current problems affecting the peasantry and take them up. The governments are spending huge amounts on various projects as rural development programmes etc. There is weakness in taking up these issues, championing the cause of the poor sections, fighting against corruption, nepotism, inefficiency etc. We took decision to take up the question of social oppression against Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes, atrocities against women and other problems affecting rural women etc. We should take up these issues with all seriousness.

ORGANISATION

Expansion of the Movement

Kisan Sabha is the largest mass organisation in the country. Kisan Sabha activities increased in most of the areas. The unevenness in the expansion of the movement and the weaknesses in consolidating the influence still persist.

Apart from West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the functioning of the state centres are not satisfactory. One of the major weaknesses of the state committees

is that they do not have enough cadres at the state centre doing Kisan Sabha work. The main office bearers of some of the state committees are not able to pay even minimum attention to the Kisan Sabha work because of other Party and mass organisation work. This state of affairs should be changed immediately. At least two or three cadres should be deputed to the work in the state centre. There is also weakness in bringing women into the movement, training them and promoting them to important organisational positions.

One of the important tasks to be fulfilled for expanding the movement is to activate the village units. For activating the village units we have to strengthen higher committees at all levels. The All India Centre should be further strengthened. We have to train enough cadres at all levels for doing mainly Kisan work. This is necessary for remedying our organisational weakness.

Projecting the Independent Nature of the Kisan Sabha

There is no perceptible improvement in this situation. There are reports that some of the Party units collect money from the public and then decide how much is to be apportioned between AIKS and AIAWU in lieu of their membership. Without changing the style of functioning particularly starting from the Centre we cannot effect any change in the present situation.

United Actions with Other Mass Organisations

Against the menace of the communal danger and the new economic policies of the present government along with other mass organisations the AIKS took part in many united actions. There is scope for united actions on many issues like expansion of public distribution system, expansion of public health, public education system, irrigation and power facilities, social oppression against Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and other backward classes, atrocities against women, democratisation of panchayat institutions and co-operatives, efficient implementation of the rural development programmes etc. The AIKS's efforts for united actions with other mass organisations should be increased.

Sub-Committee Functioning

There is substantial improvement in the functioning of the All India Agrarian Sub-Committee. The Agrarian sub-committee met 13 times during this period. In many of the states the state level sub-committees are not functioning.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION

Major Activities

The price rise coupled with a decreasing number of days of work have led to sharper struggles for wages and land, with the rural poor coming forward in large numbers on these demands.

Wage Struggles

Wage struggles have been conducted in most states, with some success. In Andhra Pradesh in 1992 kharif season, there was propaganda in 768 villages, strikes in 12 and wage-rises in 369. In 1993, the figures were propaganda in 1000 villages, with 372 strikes and wage rises in 862 villages. This reflects a growing consciousness among the agricultural workers in the state of their capacity to improve their lot through struggle.

Similar reports of struggles have come in from all states, though on a smaller scale. Tamil Nadu has had a series of such struggles, involving a number of attacks on our leaders. The demand for a minimum wage of Rs. 30 and Rs. 25 per day for men and women respectively, voiced by five organisations jointly, has as a result been successful in 60% of the villages in the state. Similarly in Tripura during 1993-94, intense wage struggles have led to minimum wages being enhanced from Rs. 17.80 to Rs. 23.65 per day. Similarly in the weaker states too the AIAWU propaganda had created a consciousness that wage rises are necessary. In Maharashtra, minimum wages are in four zones. They have risen from Rs. 12, 14, 16 and 20, 23, 26 and 29 respectively, though we are still continuing a struggle to ensure a minimum of Rs. 30 in the fourth zone. In U.P. too, the Mulayam Singh Government has raised minimum wages from Rs. 23 to Rs. 25, 33 and 25 per day on the Maharashtra zonal pattern. It is

evident that the intervention of AIAWU and its highlighting the wage issue has contributed to at least a better perception of that need all over the country.

In Kerala, where organisation is the strongest and has enrolled 2 out of every 3 agricultural labourers, the minimum wages are also the highest in the country, being Rs. 40.20 for men and Rs 30 for women, per day. To implement these struggles involving thousands of workers were undertaken in different districts. Apart from wages issues like pensions, the implementation of the workers welfare fund etc. have also been undertaken.

Land Struggles

Apart from wage struggles, which have forced minimum wages up in most states, land struggles have been found to enthuse activists as well as those not connected with the union is the issue of distribution not only of government and forest land, but also ceiling surplus land.

In the state of Bihar, this struggle showed a significant improvement in the involvement of the most exploited and oppressed section. Starting with joint and special conventions to identify land in July 1992, land occupation struggles were begun on 15,000 acres from 5 August, of which over 6000 acres were vested by AIAWU and AIKS, leading to the murder of a number of our leading comrades in Nalanda, Darbhanga, Madhubani and Samastipur districts. This was in sharp contrast to the wait-and-watch attitude of landlords in 1987-1989. But the repression did not arrest the movement. By 1995, 36,000 acres of land were involved, in 25 districts and 26 comrades were killed.

In Andhra, where the union is much stronger, in 1992-93 7347 acres of land were vested and 1424 *pattas* were accorded. By the end of 1993 already 27,000 acres were occupied.

Apart from these states, land struggles have also been undertaken in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Orissa, Rajasthan and U.P.

The union has also observed all-India action on comprehensive Central Legislation for Agricultural Labour, specific demand like the creation of prawn hatcheries out of rice land, wages of Beedi

tendu leaf and coconut pluckers as well as for improving PDS facilities, for house-sites, to deal with floods, drought, the massive earthquake damage in Maharashtra, and against atrocities on women, scheduled castes and tribes. In both Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, state level conference of women agricultural workers with AIDWA to encourage greater participation of women in union activities were organised, the latter being attended by a Central functionary.

The activities of the Agricultural Workers Union have certainly helped to increase the participation of this class in mass actions, especially in the Hindi region. This was evident in the nation-wide campaign organised at the end of July 1992, in the September 9, 1993 Bharat Bandh and April 1994 militant resistance to the GATT agreement at Delhi, as well as the Black Day of April 15, when the Marrakesh Agreement was signed, and the Civil Disobedience Movement of August 16 to September 9, 1994.

The All India Agricultural Workers' Union (AIAWU) has been demanding a comprehensive Central legislation since its inception. We organised a demonstration, a day-long Dharna at Delhi and submitted a memorandum to Labour Minister in December 20, 1994. In spite of the often repeated promises from the Central Government that a central legislation would be passed no action has been taken on this.

The Report on Organisation and Tasks of the 14th Congress of CPI(M) held at Madras on January 3-9, 1992, noted that "special attention must be paid to Party building in the basic classes, the working class, peasant and agricultural labour fronts" but noted at the same time that "the priority to be given to this vital front is missing in most of the weaker states", in the case of agricultural labour

The situation has improved marginally since then. The organisation had been reduced to functioning with only one Central Functionary, a Joint Secretary, after the death of the General Secretary, for over a year before 1992. However, in April 1992, the organisation successfully held its third All India Conference at Samastipur in Bihar, at which two more Joint Secretaries were inducted.

There was an initial spurt of growth of 12.53% in 1992-93 which in 1993-94 went down to 6.10% although the membership had increased from 17,59,566 in 1991-92 to 20,11,650 in 1992-93 and 21,42,541 in 1993-94. The old imbalances noted in earlier reports still persist. The Madras Party Congress document referred to above, noted that "at present 60% of the membership comes from Kerala". In 1991-92, the membership of Kerala was 56.2% of the total while in 1992-93 it was only 55.2% and in 1993-94 it was 55.1%. So, a marginally increased contribution from other states, notably from Tripura, Punjab and Maharashtra is noticeable. But the figures of the Hindi region, especially U.P. and Bihar, reflect a failure to adequately meet the challenge of developing such an organisation and changing the consciousness of Party Committees at different levels to give it the necessary support. Other states, like Madhya Pradesh are yet to form such an organisation.

In fact, the present situation is more or less what was noted in the Review of the Work on Kisan Front and Future Tasks of April 1993, which felt due emphasis was not given to developing this front, as a result of which there was not only "an alienation of our cadres from day-to-day contacts with agricultural labourers and their problems. There is also a failure to recruit Party members from this downtrodden and oppressed section as we can see from the fact that only 3% of the delegates to our Madras Congress were from this section."

The Review, moreover, underlined the analysis of the third All India Conference of the organisation which had noted the following six lessons learnt from reports of our all India activity

1. The most successful movements affecting agricultural labourers are those taken up jointly with other agricultural workers and rally the peasantry.

2. There is still hesitation in taking up independent activity under the banner of the union. However, where this has been done, as in the State level demonstration at Lucknow in U.P., or that at Bombay in Maharashtra, it has greatly increased the confidence of comrades in their capacity to make breakthrough.

3. However, in order to make this breakthrough, the specific problems of this section must be focussed on, like atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the struggle for house-sites, drinking water, lavatories and social disabilities of all kinds. So far, except in one or two states, we have failed to take up these issues as broad campaigns.

4. The struggle to implement government programmes too has been treated with more than its fair share of cynicism. Comrades must equip themselves with a thorough knowledge of procedures involved in various development schemes for the poorest sections at the village level, to ensure that the people are made aware of their rights and that the misuse of funds for the betterment of the weakest sections is reduced. Even if we fail to achieve our objective because of landlord pressure and bureaucratic corruption our taking up these issues will expose both of these among the rural masses and help to dispel any illusions they might have.

5. A study of state reports reveals that a large number of struggles are taken up formally and abandoned. Nothing could be more damaging than this as it breeds despair among the masses and cynicism. Every struggle must be conducted in relation to the full capacity of the people concerned to struggle. Proper team work and democratic functioning will help us to conduct struggles more in relation to the people's will than our own preconceptions.

6. While women constituted over 49 per cent of agricultural labourers and have participated actively in our struggles, we have not yet been able to ensure equal wages on a country-wide basis or to deal with their specific problems on a priority basis, and to draw them to organisation and to recruit cadres, from women and to train and to promote women to leading positions.

The new economic policy of the Central Government is causing widespread starvation among agricultural labourers on account of the galloping price rise, coupled with a decline in the number of days of employment available to them, both on because of stagnation as well as mechanisation in agriculture. As a result, agricultural workers are becoming increasingly active in

mass struggles in this period. This has been noted in the report that majority of those who participated in the militant action against the NEP at the call of National Platform of Mass Organisations were agricultural labourers on 5 April 1994

Some organisations like Kanshi Ram's B.S.P. are trying to divide the agricultural workers on caste line. None of these organisations takes up the issue of land, wages or service conditions. They only take up the issues of social oppression, reservation and speak power in government. Kanshi Ram tried to expand his influence in Kerala, West Bengal etc. where our movement is strong and failed.

The AIAWU had decided to take up the issues of social oppression, atrocities against women and other issues affecting SCs and STs etc. The AIAWU also took rich issues in certain areas. The AIAWU have to further expand our activities in taking such issues. We had witnessed a growing awareness among these downtrodden sections. Party should also give special attention in recruiting, training and promoting cadres from these sections

The issue of migrant labour also stresses the importance of building all India movement.

This situation is favourable for developing a mass consciousness and organised resistances to anti-people policies if the Party seriously takes up the injunction enshrined in the Central Committee Review that "We have to strengthen the organisation of the Agricultural Workers' Union and Kisan Sabha at all levels. The centres of both these organisations are weak compared to the tasks they have to discharge. More equipped cadres have to be drafted to the work of both the Centres. The work in the Central Offices of both these organisations has to be reorganised and strengthened. Except in the case of West Bengal we cannot say that the State Centres are working satisfactorily. Three or four comrades have to be deputed for state centre work. Their party work has to be assessed on the basis of how much time they devote to the Agricultural Workers Union or Kisan Sabha work. Most of the states are not sending regular reports to the centres. In many states AIAWU and the Kisan Sabhas do not have separate offices and there is no regular routine functioning. The states

should discuss these issues and remedial measures must be taken within six months. The strengthening of the district, tehsil or block committees and the village or panchayat units begin on the strengthening of the State Centres. Without activating the panchayat or village units we cannot make any advance at all. Party and the leadership of the Agricultural Workers' Union and Kisan Sabha should concentrate their efforts to find solutions to these organisational weaknesses."

This must be implemented at every level of the Party organisation, especially at those of the unit, local and district committees, if a qualitative change is to be achieved in the present state of affairs.

REPORT OF WORK ON THE WOMEN'S FRONT

The political tactical line worked out by the 14th Party Congress against the communal danger of the BJP combine on the one hand and the Congress(I) on the other and the call to oppose and defeat both these forces guided the work among women. The major campaigns in the last three years were around issues raised by the policies and practice of both these political parties. An opportunity to review the work of the mass organisation in the last three years arose during its national conference held six months ago. A positive assessment was made of the campaigns and struggles against communalism which were perhaps the most widespread and sustained. A highlight of the campaign in its earlier phase was the march by 10,000 women in Lucknow in November '92 organised jointly with other national women's organisations in which we had played a major role. Following the demolition of the masjid and the subsequent violence and communal polarisation, the campaign was at three levels—as part of the broad platform with secular political forces, with other women's organisations and also independently.

A special feature of the independent effort was to mobilise women of both communities in public actions of solidarity. This was combined with intensive door to door campaigns in

numerous localities. Such campaigns were held in every state, though we have to note that the extent of our campaign was limited by our organisational strength and spread. In many areas, particularly in North India women activists had to face outright hostility and aggression from communal forces during the course of the campaign, mostly from the RSS variety but also on a few occasions from minority community fundamentalists. During the riots there were several interventions by women activists saving those from other communities. A noteworthy feature of the campaign was the special effort made in many states to approach minority community women who have been outside the reach of the organised movement. In this respect we have undoubtedly made some headway. An organised effort is being made by the communal forces in both communities to organise women in separate organisations and mobilise them. The Hindutva forces have already set up a Hindu women's organisation with Sadhvi Ritambhara as the convener. It is necessary for us to sustain the anti-communal campaign among women.

An important issue which had to be decided was the approach to the slogan of uniform civil code which has been a demand of the women's movement from pre-independence days. In the context of the efforts of the communal forces to utilise this slogan to browbeat the minorities, we gave the slogan of equal rights, equal laws. Basically this means a two-pronged approach of pushing for reforms in the personal laws of communities in alliance with the reformist sections within those communities, as well as advocating a common law for women in specific areas where women of all communities are equally affected such as adoption, guardianship, registration of marriage etc. Many other women's organisations have also accepted this approach.

The other big campaign in this period was against the new economic policies of the Congress(I) Government. It was estimated that in the course of the campaign (till August '94) the women's organisation had printed over a million leaflets in different languages organised over twenty thousand street corner meetings independently and over 40,000 women had joined the

jail bhara movements as part of the preparations for the all India general strike, 10,000 women had come to the April 1994 Delhi march. These mobilisations of women became possible as a result of the combined efforts of mass organisations including the AIDWA units. This was also true in the September 1994 jail bhara campaign, in which over a lakh of women had courted arrest. The campaigns were organised along with the broad platform of mass organisations as well as independently. In reviewing the work on this issue it was found that women felt the major effect in the form of price rise, collapse of the PDS and deterioration in the availability of civic facilities. The biggest independent mobilisations of women were on these issues.

Another area where we could link women's response with NEP was on the widespread aversion and anger to the privatisation of the electronic media leading to increased commodification of women's bodies. Our campaigns were careful to demarcate from the opposition being voiced by the Hindutva platform also which however was on the basis of a backward stereotyped projection of the ideal *sati savitri* image of women.

However, while we have a positive assessment of our struggles against the new economic policies, our intervention on issues effecting women's work was extremely weak, since the large mass of women are in the unorganised sector, the work of the trade unions was not touched these sections. Our own work has been in the nature of general campaigns against the new economic policies and we have not been able to organise women on the specific issues concerning the impact on their work. Given the reality that more and more women are being forced into the ranks of the unorganised sector including as home based workers, there is an urgency to tackle this aspect of the struggle against the new economic policies. In the rural areas our independent campaigns have been negligible in the sense of being unable to take up any of the specific ways that rural women are being impacted. For instance there has been an increasing trend of male migration among the poorer sections and a subsequent increase in the number of families wherein women bear the responsibility of managing families. However because of our limited independent

reach in the rural areas we have been unable to mobilise these sections even where peasant organisations exist. Generally participation in the struggles against the new economic policies has been from our own ranks and we have been unable to involve the mass of women in protests in spite of their growing discontent.

One of the most successful interventions of the mass organisation has been its role in the panchayat elections in West Bengal, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and other states where such elections have held with $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ reservation for women. Many states, particularly West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have held training programmes in this connection. While the Party has dealt with the problems arising out of reservations to some extent, the experiences gained have to be fully studied so that we can more effectively respond to and utilise the full potentialities of reservation. The awakening among women and the new consciousness that is emerging can be developed for advancing the democratic movement and the mass organisations.

A big issue highlighted in last 2 years is the sexual dimension of the criminalisation of politics with bourgeois politicians using their power to sexually exploit women as in Jalgaon and Bihar. Vigorous campaigns were conducted in Maharashtra and Bihar on this issue.

An area of confrontation between the government and women's organisations has been the anti-woman population policy of the government. This is based on fertility control of women through the use of harmful long acting hormonal contraceptives. Because of the interventions of the women's movement a retrograde measure curtailing maternity benefits for working women for the third child had to be scrapped. An alternative policy document has been prepared jointly with other women's organisations.

This period has also been a period of growing violence against women within families as well as in the wider social arena. Dowry demands have spread to all communities and classes. Another disturbing trend is the increase in child rape. The widest initiative was taken on issues concerning violence against women from the unit to the state level and numerous campaigns have

been organised in many parts of the country. Important interventions have also been made for legal reform such as the struggle for a legislation against sex determination, for a better defined law against rape and so on. There are approximately 100 legal aid cells being run in different states.

A specific feature in this period has been the growing caste violence with its direct impact on women. We have found that in many cases even on child rape people have got divided on caste lines, supporting the rapist on the basis of caste. We have also seen instances of how the BSP has tried to terrorise dalit women into withdrawing cases of rape against them if they were committed by men of the same community. However although we have been able to organise campaigns in many areas against instances of caste violence, we have been unable to have any general campaigns on the specific problems of dalit women.

During this period, our units have along with fraternal organisations and in some places independently organised campaigns for solidarity with Cuba and South African struggles.

It is important to remember that in the weaker areas, along with general campaigns of all India nature, much more attention has to be given to the task of mobilising women on the basis of immediate, local issues, connected with women's problems, oppression, disabilities etc.

Joint Struggle

It is an indication of the increased recognition of work among women that our initiative in joint struggles has increased. As mentioned briefly earlier several joint actions were taken against communalism. It was also significant that most joint leaflets and campaigns on this issue specifically identified the BJP combine as the main danger although there were some sections which would have preferred to limit the campaign to generalisations about the need for secularism and the danger of communalism. At our initiative a joint delegation visited several areas in the country like Bhopal, Surat where violence against women in the riots was

savage. A joint report was prepared which was widely disseminated. This helped the campaign. Compared to the joint actions against communalism, those against the new economic policies have been much fewer except for joint actions against price rise. Recently a successful effort was made by seven women's organisations to draft an alternative paper to the government's paper for the women's international conference scheduled to be held in Beijing. Such efforts have undoubted propaganda value. Joint initiatives in the states has also registered an improvement. In these joint actions except for BJP and the mahila wing of the Congress(I) all other sections have been approached and have participated on an issue to issue basis. In Bengal the joint actions are mainly with Left women's organisations. In Kerala joint actions have seen with the constituents of the LDFs. However a good initiative has been taken in Kerala among Christian women in defence of their rights. In our ideological struggle against feminist trends we have to recognise the different streams of feminism and not just lump them all together. Another development has been the growth of groups committed to liberation theology which have taken very positive positions in support of reform in Christian laws, organising tribal and dalit sections. So far we have taken the position that any joint actions have to be decided from group to group on the basis of issues.

An area which is attracting many young women is that of women's studies. Most universities and a large number of women's colleges have women's studies centres. There is a small improvement in contacts with these sections though routinism in the work style prevents any sustained initiative by us. Recently a very good initiative was taken by the AKG centre in Kerala to provide a forum for women's studies researchers and scholars which attracted a wide participation indicating the importance of more such initiatives in this area.

Organisation

The organisation has been able to reach out to new sections, such as minority and dalit women, and to a much more limited

extent to a section of the middle class. The influence of the organisation has also increased. The membership has now touched 40,09,359 that is an increase of 46 per cent in the last three years. However given the level of activity this growth is unsatisfactory. Also the uneven development of the organisation remains with West Bengal accounting for 65% while all the Hindi-speaking states along with Punjab and Maharashtra account for 2.9%. Some states where the growth has been positive are Tripura, Punjab, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh. West Bengal continues to represent over two-thirds of the membership of the organisation. However the organisational position in Kerala, both in terms of membership and functioning needs improvement. Andhra Pradesh has registered steady growth both in terms of organisation and struggles, as has Delhi. In Tamil Nadu attention has been paid to organisational work although the expansion of the organisation can be improved. In Bihar there is a definite improvement in work although the membership is unstable. The organisational position in other states is stagnant though activity has increased. In Assam the organisational situation has deteriorated and we have been unable to help to improve the situation. In general it can be said that organisational consolidation is weak and sustained follow up is lacking. Most committees identify the big increase in activities and pressure of work as reasons for lack of consolidation. Another area which needs priority is development of activists and encouraging them to become full-time workers. There are many such young women who have developed but we are unable to give them the requisite training. In particular a policy of promoting cadre at all levels and inducting new activists at the state level has to be consciously developed.

There has been an improvement in the functioning of the Centre both in terms of regularity of meetings of the CEC as also the contact with the state committees. Efforts are made to hold consultations between office bearers although the other responsibilities of many of the office bearers makes it difficult for them. However the development of an all-India perspective even among leading state functionaries needs to be strengthened.

Particularly the bigger states of West Bengal and Kerala have a big role in solving this problem. It is essential to develop a stronger team at the Centre. There are many capable activists who can shoulder these responsibilities. However because of family responsibilities they are unable to leave their states. This is a continuing problem. The Centre is at present funding six wholtimeers in different states.

As far as publications are concerned the magazine from West Bengal *Ek Sathe* is the most regular with an established self-sufficiency. In Tamil Nadu the monthly bulletin is regular and stable. In Kerala the monthly had to suspend publication because of huge arrears. A big weakness has been the failure to regularise and expand the publication of the English quarterly from the Centre. The Hindi publication has had to be suspended and though there is a renewed demand it has not been possible to restart it because of lack of available cadre at the Centre. The Centre will have to build up a publications unit so as to meet the demand for more pamphlets, particularly in Hindi.

Relations of Mass Organisation with Party, Independent Functioning and Other Related Issues

A six-member women's sub-committee was formed by the Central Committee after the last Party Congress. It has not been able to function regularly. No formal fraction committee was formed. When some leading comrades from one or two states requested a forum where they could raise issues relating to the Party and the mass front a meeting of members of State Committees who are in the CEC was held. Three such meetings were held in this period, two of which were related to the national conference of the mass organisation. At the state level the record is mixed. Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have regular sub-committee meetings. Others meet from time to time. In North Indian states there is no fraction committee functioning or at least not on a regular basis. In some states there is neither a sub-committee nor a fraction committee.

There is not much change in the position with regard to recruitment of women into the Party in most of the states. The main reason continues to be negligence in identifying potential recruits at the branch level and lack of conscious efforts to enrol them. Since recruitment is done through the branches it depends to a great extent on the knowledge of that branch of the women activists in the area. An effective mechanism has to be evolved at branch and local committee levels to identify potential women Party members and to enrol them.

On the women's front we are far from implementing the Salkia Plenum understanding of independent functioning of mass organisations. At one level there is a total dependence by women activists of the mass organisation on the Party and lack of independent thinking and action. In discussions in state committees it is taken for granted that all are members of the Party and very often the discussion is conducted as though it is a Party forum. Years of functioning in a particular way has become routinised and there is not much conscious effort to break it. Even now in the strong states there is no separate office of the mahila organisation and the units are functioning as appendages of the Party. More serious steps to strengthen the independent functioning in terms of membership drives, campaigns, funds raising etc. are required to change the present pattern. The Party committees as well as the comrades working in the mass organisations have to address themselves to the solution of this problem. There is considerable reluctance to include women comrades in Party committees even when such comrades are available.

While the women's leadership at different levels has to take the main responsibility for independent functioning of the mass organisation, it is a reality that the guidelines given by the Party document referred to are not adhered to by the Party leadership at different levels in many of the states. There are two discernible trends, or to put it another way trends which are two sides of the same coin. One trend is to interfere in every matter in the name of Party and political control. Naturally this method of functioning directly strengthens and encourages the unhealthy dependence of the mass organisation on the Party and harms both. The other trend

is to see work among women as only supplementary to the normal regular work of the Party.

Policy Matters

(a) A document is required to formulate the Party's tasks on the women's front in line with our programmatic understanding, our current tactical line and on the basis of analysis of our experiences.

(b) The mass organisation and the Party units at all levels must take up social issues and conduct campaigns for social reforms. The fight against obscurantist beliefs and practices have to be carried on systematically.

(c) Adopting Women's Policy documents is of great importance for those states where the Party is in government. It has to be noted that Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and now Karnataka have amended several laws and have several projects.

(d) Effective steps should be taken to make use of the Parliament and legislative fora to take up and project women's problems and issues.

Current Tasks

The coming period will be one of increasing mass discontent and struggle. Current tasks of the Party on the women's front are related to many of the issues discussed above. At the level of general political intervention our campaigns both against communalism and the NEP will have to be more directly linked to the impact on the daily lives of women. This will also have to include new initiatives by us in organising women around work centred issues which are applicable both in the rural areas and in the urban unorganised sector. This requires a new direction to our work in the framework of being a multiclass organisation. This will also require a closer coordination between the peasant and agricultural workers organisations which is lacking at present. At the same time the tremendous discontent of women against price rise etc. has to be garnered and developed in numerous small and big struggles. A much bigger mass initiative and mass approach is essential in our work if we are to effectively intervene. This will also require a more conscious effort for independent functioning.

We have to ensure regular functioning of the women's sub-committee and fraction committees both at the central and state level. Where such committees do not exist they have to be set up. A better coordination to help recruitment of women members into the Party. More attention has to be paid to organisational functioning and consolidation.

A priority task is to develop and train more cadre. Identification of cadres, efforts to develop them and allotting responsibility in a proper manner are tasks of immediate importance. Conducting of schools for cadres at all levels—at the mass organisation level and at the Party level has to be systematised. Even in regular Party schools classes on the women's movement wherever possible will be helpful.

REPORT ON THE YOUTH FRONT

Since the last Party Congress the DYFI was able to establish sustained growth in terms of membership, mobilisation, campaigns, day to day functioning and immediate action. In 1991 its membership was 73,33,769, in 1992—79,48,303, in 1993—87,49,081 and in 1994 it could enroll 93,50,000 membership. In 1995 its target is 1 crore. During this period DYFI took active part in mobilising the younger generation against anti-people economic policies, communalism, unemployment and for solidarity actions both independently and in the joint platform of struggles. In the joint campaign and movements, participation of more and more young people added to the strength of the struggle led by the Party. The DYFI could undertake some independent campaign programmes on certain issues both at the central and state levels to supplement and complement the Party's initiatives as well as initiatives taken by TUs and other mass organisations.

The DYFI took significant decisions for expansion of its areas of influence, ensuring better committee functioning at all levels, giving a youth orientation to its campaign and other activities, special attention to the recruitment of SCs, STs, young women and minorities and more attention to social, cultural, sports, literacy

and constructive activities. Despite certain limitations, mainly due to lack of proper understanding regarding the utility of building a youth organisation, DYFI could make certain inroads during this period. The State Committees of the Party which realised the significance of organising the younger generation were successful in expanding their base into new areas.

1. Challenges before the Youth Organisation

During this period there was a sharp decline in social values and overall degeneration in almost every sphere of social, cultural and political life. This was aggravated with the introduction of scores of new policies coupled with imperialist onslaught through media, culture, drugs etc. The younger generation were the special target. Besides the communal hatred, casteist postures and separatist outlook, allurements for 'a different kind of world' aping the West were in operation to capture the young minds particularly, in the cities and urban areas. The frustration among the young people and their discontent against ruling class policies was sought to be diverted into these channels. The DYFI had to work in this situation with whatever resources it has in its command. Despite these onslaughts, the DYFI could not only retain its base but it made some advances as well. A well concerted effort by the Party along with its mass organisations and progressive forces around us is necessary to counter the present adverse situation. We have to pull all our resources together to offer some kind of positive alternatives in all spheres of life so that our progressive heritage can be imbibed by the younger generation. Together with this, the strengthening of the struggles of the youth for revolutionary changes can strengthen us in mobilising them firmly behind working class led class struggle.

2. Focus on Removing Unevenness

In the background of these challenges, in spite of the growth of the DYFI and increase in its activities, unevenness of its influence still persists. To remove this unevenness the DYFI centre took certain special organisational initiatives which have yielded some results. Immediately after the 14th Congress, a national level

workshop was held at Burnpur for training the leadership coming from Hindi-speaking states. This was followed by state level workshops in many states. Campaign material and circulars on special matters are being sent in Hindi from the Centre. Publication in Hindi on a limited scale has been started from the Centre. Special material assistance for the weaker states is going to be restructured. Atleast one centrally sponsored programme in a year targeted to help the weak state/region has been launched successfully. As a result, higher rate of growth in terms of membership in the states other than West Bengal and Kerala could be registered. States like Tamil Nadu and AP are fast coming up in terms of an all-round improved performance to match the achievements of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. Punjab has finally shown the signs of coming out of the situation that gripped it during the 80 s. Maharashtra made significant advances. Rajasthan has shown that regular proper attention to organisational work at least in some parts of the state can yield good result. Uttar Pradesh and H.P. have failed to rise to the occasion mainly due to the failure in timely deployment of proper comrades capable of discharging tasks on the youth front. Karnataka, M.P. and Haryana, despite immense possibilities could not do much due to their own specific reasons. A sustained effort is necessary to organise effective district level teams and coordination at state level for these states. Assam has its own ethnic, linguistic and communal problems hindering the development of a strong youth movement at the state level. But better understanding of the problems, increasing frequency of communication and greater mobility is necessary to make a breakthrough. In Bihar a better understanding of the necessity for organisation at all levels is required. A balanced approach is also necessary to consolidate the gains from the movement. In Delhi, Gujarat and Jammu, DYFI's activities have increased. During this period Sikkim and Dadra Nagar Haveli have joined the list of DYFI state committees. Manipur and Andaman and Nicobar have some movement but are too far, yet, to maintain regular contacts.

3. Some Problems in the Weaker States

In most of the weaker states Party sub-committees either do not exist or even if they exist, do not function properly. Except on

questions of mass organisation leadership and some major political issues, they do not guide or lead the mass organisation consistently. Regular sub-committee functioning at state and district level can help in training cadre, ensuring collective functioning and Party building. Moreover, it will also help to check the deviations or wrong trends among the mass organisation leaders. In the weaker states due to the limited number of available comrades for specific responsibility, on many occasions, seasonal deployment is being done on the youth front. On many occasions one comrade is given responsibility for several mass organisations. Efforts should be made to deploy cadres specifically for DYFI work. Comrades should also be equipped to discharge multifarious tasks.

4. Renewal, Retention and Cadre Development

The membership of a huge number are not renewal regularly. Several thousands of members are not retained. The question of political training their initiation to revolutionary ideologies, motivating them to become activists, and developing activists into responsible leaders of mass organisation must be given proper attention. Shortage of cadre can be overcome only if some good organisers are deployed to do this job. If an integrated approach for the student and youth movement is developed at all levels and Party sub-committees seriously undertake the issue of developing leading cadre this issue can be resolved. Any shortcoming in the development of the student movement will result in the shortage of cadre in the youth movement.

In some weak states, DYFI is still considered to be Party's volunteer group. Thus the building of an effective youth organisation capable of working among the mass of youth and attracting them towards the Party gradually through youth activities and mass movement in those states is being hampered. Even independent functioning of the mass organisation, multifarious activities among the youth, deployment of effective cadres to build new contacts among the youth people and building a militant youth movement around the workers and peasants movement are not being effectively done even in those pockets in the weaker states where the Party has some influence. It is only natural that there would be overlapping

between the youth and other mass organisations led by the Party both in terms of membership and issues to be taken up by young women, workers, peasants and agricultural labour. The questions of deployment of cadre and campaigns on specific issues must be properly attended to for otherwise they hinder the building of the youth organisation in the states.

5. DYFI Centre

The DYFI centre needs to be strengthened to discharge its growing responsibilities. While previously five comrades were working from the DYFI centre now there are only two. Though Kerala had sent one comrade, it failed to replace him when he returned to the state on health grounds. West Bengal is to send one and one more comrade is required from the Hindi states. Though office functioning at the centre has improved, there is still scope for further improvement. A team is necessary to facilitate regular publication work. The DYFI centre was able to publish two booklets and two folders in Hindi and one booklet and two folders in English during this period. Printed material on specific issues was also prepared and sent to state committees for publication in regional languages. This apart several posters, stickers and other materials were also brought out during this period. Background notes were also prepared on certain issues for specific campaigns. The DYFI centre with other secretariat members tried to attend almost all the major programmes, classes and committee meetings in the states. During this period classes or workshops were organised in all states but since long there has been no national level class for non-Hindi speaking cadres. There are good regular journals in Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu and not so regular publication by the Maharashtra, Punjab, Tripura, Assam, Bihar state committees. There is necessity to publish a quarterly Hindi bulletin from the centre to carry out ideological and political campaign.

6. DYFI's Work Among the Weaker Sections

since long DYFI has undertaken the decision to work among the scheduled caste, tribes, minorities and women. Special efforts and effective measures are required to attract, recruit, train and

develop them as leaders and build truly representative strong movement from among them. Though the work among these sections has increased, we have not yet been able to realise the immense possibilities of making them an important segment of our widening mass movement. There is not only unevenness in the growth of the mass movement, unevenness persists in the level of understanding that is required to organise them in the youth front. To overcome the situation it is necessary to have a uniform understanding in the Party at all levels. To achieve this, the Party has to take some initiative both at the centre and at the state level. Regular meetings with the subcommittee incharges at district level and state level, reporting and discussion about the mass front in the Party committees, finalising the document on the tasks on the youth front above all a willingness to learn from the experience of the successes elsewhere will help in achieving this. Kerala has its own success in organising young women in DYFI which has in turn inspired West Bengal Tamil Nadu and West Bengal have organised young womens convention at different levels to consolidate their achievements further. West Bengal and Bihar held tribal youth conventions to initiate special steps in organising them. Maharashtra also has some achievement in this area which needs to be followed elsewhere. Special effort is also necessary to organise the minority youth. As a result of our consistent struggle against communalism and particularly the post-December 6 campaigns among the minority community, there is greater attraction for secular and democratic appeals among them. The acceptance of the Left ideology has also increased particularly among the younger generation. A systematic approach with cautious steps through our mass organisation is necessary to consolidate the position. Literature in Urdu is necessary in this respect.

CAMPAIGN AND MOVEMENT

Against Economic Policy

Against economic and industrial policies, GATT and price rise, the DYFI was actively involved at four levels—as a significant segment of the movement launched by the Party, as a constituent of the Left movements led by Left parties and mass organisations

as an important key organiser in the joint student-youth movements and as initiator of independent youth programmes. This was true in case of the anti-communal campaign too. The DYFI has played a significant role as a constituent of the National Platform of Mass Organisations and has been an active participant at all levels in all the programmes launched by the Platform. The DYFI could mobilise youth volunteers in all the states in the *jathas* sponsored by the Left parties, in preparation for the civil disobedience movement and during the militant movement in August and September of 1994.

To protect independence and economic sovereignty and to carry forward the anti-imperialist spirit of the freedom movement, many innovative programmes were observed by the DYFI at different levels on different occasions. Besides observing important dates and incidents from the history of the freedom movement these programmes helped us to take our message to the young people specially in the hitherto untouched areas. The Bombay to Kandla patriotic youth march was one such important programme in 1993. From 27th September (Bhagat Singh's birthday) to 2nd October (Gandhi's birthday) this *jatha* against Cargil's salt project evoked considerable enthusiasm in Maharashtra and Gujarat. In 1992, a student-youth *jatha* from Cochin to Goa against Indo-U.S. joint naval exercise was also undertaken. Apart from political campaigns, these programmes helped DYFI grow in new areas. A joint convention on the Kashmir situation was organised at the initiative of DYFI at Jammu in May 1994.

Against Communalism

Since the last Congress, the DYFI has been constantly engaged in defending the unity of the people against the communal onslaught. During this period DYFI has emerged as one of the major campaigners against communalism. As a constituent of the Rashtriya Ekta Abhiyan, DYFI played an important role. Besides the anti-communal campaign, DYFI played an important role even in the weaker states during the communal riots. Wherever it had sizable influence it could mobilise its members in preventing communal riots, protecting the would-be-victims

and organise rescue and relief operations. Thousands of stickers, posters, leaflets were distributed. In March 1993 in Calcutta and in May 1993 in Bombay big conventions were organised against the Bombay riots in particular and communalism in general. The Bombay convention was very significant at that particular point of time since other youth organisations failed to muster the courage to participate in the convention. Comrade Rajeev in Kerala was murdered by the communal forces for the protection given to the minorities.

Anti-Unemployment Movement

During this period because of the large number of joint programmes on several issues, the question of unemployment could not be raised in a big way. However on 10th November 1994, an anti-unemployment rally was organised in Delhi mobilising mainly from surrounding states. As the immediate result of the new economic, industrial and trade policies, the employment opportunities have been curtailed drastically. The youth are forced to take jobs in the unorganised and informal sectors without job security and other facilities. A strong anti-unemployment movement coupled with protection for the workers in the unorganised and informal sectors is necessary. To take up this cause effective steps are necessary on the part of the trade union movement. Our mass organisations can jointly raise the issue to make an impact. The National Platform of Mass Organisations should also be used for this purpose. It is also necessary to undertake concrete studies both at the central and state level to gauge the impact of the new policies on the employment sector. More effective help is necessary from the Party to make unemployment an important issue in the joint movement.

Solidarity Campaign

Solidarity campaigns and mobilising young people in support of the struggles of workers, peasants, and employees was one of the major tasks of the DYFI in this period. The DYFI comrades have sacrificed their lives while taking active part in the land struggle in Bihar. Hundreds of the DYFI activists were implicated in false

cases in several states due to their solidarity with workers and peasants movement. During this period, DYFI took active part in the campaigns and movements launched by TUs and employees organisations against closure, retrenchment and privatisation of PSUs. Solidarity with students' struggles has become part of DYFI's regular activities.

The DYFI's role in organising solidarity and mobilising resources in support of Cuba's struggle to defend Socialism is commendable. The DYFI also played its role to reactivate the World Federation of Democratic Youth. The DYFI was the only organisation from India to send a representative to serve as a member in the U.N. sponsored Independent International Observers team to oversee the historic election in South Africa. This has added to its prestige in the international youth movement.

During this period DYFI played a significant role in resisting semi-fascist terror and for restoration of democracy in Tripura. Many young comrades sacrificed their lives in this struggle. In the rest of the country the DYFI successfully launched solidarity campaigns and mobilised public opinion and funds in support of the struggle in Tripura.

Immediate Action

As a youth organisation DYFI is gradually acquiring the capability of mobilising the youth in action against immediate problems. This was witnessed immediately after the news of the martyrdom of five comrades in Koothuparamba (Kerala). The response can be seen in the fact that in one day Rs. 20 lakhs were collected by the DYFI all over Kerala through box collections. In almost all areas where DYFI exists in the country some sort of protest actions were held immediately. This capability must be improved at all levels.

Multifarious Activities

During this period, DYFI was involved in organising multifarious activities including sports, cultural, literary and other constructive work. Spreading the message of literacy,

popularising blood donation, pledging eye donation, anti-drug campaign and rescue, relief and rehabilitation work in case of calamities are examples of such work. One DYFI comrade laid down his life in the struggle against the drug mafia. In order to extend such work, politics must be in command. Diverse activities are mainly utilised to make the initial contacts with the vast majority of youth remaining outside the reach of our political appeal. Through these activities the social consciousness of the youth are developed so that they can participate in the process of social change.

REPORT ON THE STUDENT FRONT

The 14th Congress had entrusted the student front with implementing the Party line on mass organisations, expanding and consolidating the student mass organisation and carrying out the main political calls. These were to launch a campaign against the communal offensive and struggle against the attacks on economic sovereignty. The student front sought to respond to these calls by being an integral and active component of the Campaign for National Unity (CNU), participating in all its programmes according to our capabilities and by undertaking independent programmes for communal harmony in different states. During the period many of our comrades have been murdered including CEC member Comrade K. V. Sudheesh in the struggle against communalism. And in the university centres, in most of the states, we had to mainly challenge and confront ABVP with NSUI gradually losing ground. We are advancing, albeit not to our satisfaction, only by the dint of an intensive day-to-day anti-communal struggle in the campuses.

Struggle in Defence of Sovereignty

We became an active participant in the National Platform of Mass Organisations in the countrywide struggle against the onslaught on economic sovereignty. Apart from the Delhi rallies, we actively participated in the countrywide struggle against the new economic policies. Independent calls were also given by us at the mass

organisational level to observe "Save Republic, Save Sovereignty Day' on 26th January, 15th August as National Unity Day, 23rd March (Bhagat Singh's martyrdom day) as the Save Unity Day, 27th February (Chandrasekhar Azad's birthday), 15th April as anti-GATT black day, 23rd January "Save India" (Netaji Subhas Bose's birthday) and many such occasions.

The SFI-DYFI organised a successful anti-Cargill *jatha* from 27th September (Bhagat Singh's birthday) to 2nd October (Gandhiji's birthday) in 1993. A similar programme was organised against Indo-U.S. military exercises.

Many anti-imperialist calls and programmes were also undertaken in this period. For example Moncada Day, i.e., 26th July was observed for collecting materials in aid of Cuban students. In the civil disobedience movement called by the Party against the threats to our sovereignty, tens of thousands of students participated all over the country.

Fighting the Assault on Education

An essential fallout of the new disastrous policies was an intensification of the assaults on education. In line with the understanding of the Party we took up the challenge and continued the battle against the new education policy offensive as an integral part of the battle for safeguarding the sovereignty of the country.

The main direction set by the new Education Policy of Rajiv Gandhi took a worse and dangerous turn. The government is now abansoning all its responsibilities towards education. The UGC itself is floating Capitation Fee (Payment Seats) based universities and the Punnaiah Committee report has been accepted by the UGC. The anti-democratic concept of a self-financing education system is being legalised. Thus, instead of achieving the target of Education For All, instead of overcoming the resource crunch, the government itself is denying the right of education even for the meritorious particularly from the socio-economically weaker sections. We have been fighting these dangerous policies. We were the only student organisation to be a Party to the Supreme Court case on Capitation Fee. The student movement in Andhra Pradesh against Capitation Fee led to the removal of the Chief Minister Janardan Reddy. It was

also an example of a successful united action at our initiative. The movement had a big impact in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. In Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat our struggles against fee hikes were successful. In West Bengal and Tripura massive mobilisations and campus campaigns were organised. The statewide movement, satyagraha and education bandhs' against the attempt to introduce self-financing colleges in Kerala was a big success. The government was forced to give up its move although we had to sacrifice five valuable comrades in course of the movement. The issue shot into the national agenda. We also observed the "Save Education Week" at the time the Supreme Court gave its judgment on the Capitation Fee issue. It may be mentioned in this context that the early and mid-eighties was a period when apart from our contribution in struggles for national unity in Assam and Punjab, we had also become an organisation capable of policy intervention on academic issues. Similarly during the first half of nineties, the student mass organisation has been able to resist the government onslaughts on education to a certain extent even in relatively less strong states. It is also a fact that the implementation of the anti-education offensives in the guise of New Education Policy was temporarily halted by the removal of the Rajiv Gandhi Government. But our weakness in picking up these burning issues in the areas of education remained in most of the Hindi and non-Hindi weak states excepting Himachal Pradesh and Bihar.

United Action

We have undertaken a series of and higher number of united actions at the student and student-youth level. For example, initiatives like the student-youth action against communalism and many others were in line with our mass organisational understanding of independent initiative and united action. These efforts are also in tune with the Party's call for broadening Left, democratic unity. The observation of International Unemployment Day' on November 10, 1994 was the last national-level joint programme. Despite certain difficulties in its implementation, the process of initiating united actions has been encouraging and must be further developed.

Unfavourable Time for Student Movement

The debacle of Socialism in the period under review had a demoralising effect on the sensitive student psyche. We could not always resist the erosion in the confidence of our ranks. Imperialism intensified its offensive. Non-aligned and Third World voices were suffocated, their economic sovereignty threatened by international finance capital and MNCs. The so-called structural adjustment policies marked by liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation were unleashed. The consequence was a grave attack on education, unemployment and livelihood which led to increasing careerism and self-centred attitudes amongst the students. On the one hand huge pay packages are being offered to a small section while on the other hand there are tremendous cuts in real wages and incomes and squeezing of all remaining opportunities in employment and education for the poor and middle class. An atmosphere of apoliticisation and deideologisation sought to overwhelm the student community. This was accompanied by a widespread offensive of decadent imperialist cultures. The decadent alien culture aggravated the ideological confusion among the student. And amidst these attacks from the international plane, the old problems of casteism and communalism had their ugly manifestation particularly in campuses in North India. All put together, this period was one of the most difficult ones faced by the organised student movement. It was an uphill task to combat all these challenges coming so close on the heels of each other. We could advance only by intensifying a political and ideological struggle against all these tendencies. But we feel there was scope for better performance and more effective political organisational leadership in this situation as well. For example, we could have sharpened the anti-imperialist offensive and for the democratic aspirations of the student community. Our contribution in the solidarity campaign for Cuba could also have been much more.

All-India Centre

Once the old set of leadership was relieved at the Trivandrum Conference, it was imperative under the circumstances to constitute a new centre. In the existing centre, two of the three central

functionaries were not full time functionaries from Delhi. Even after the conference, despite repeated requests, two comrades from Kerala and one more from West Bengal did not come as decided in the conference. The adverse impact of this was reflected in the weakness to follow up important issues, organisational decisions and the all India calls. For a period, communication with the states was weakened. The expectation of a political organisational centre was far from fulfilled. The biggest lacunae was in meeting the ideological offensive. Only four issues of *Students Struggle* was published in 1993 and two in 1994 against the set target of six issues per year. Some states are publishing their own journal (Assam, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa). Information documents for states were also inadequate. Requisite progress could not be made on pending issues like intervention on ITI students etc.

But in the same period, visits to the states by central functionaries increased. Instant reaction on issues like protest against Ms. Robin Raphel visiting India, blood donation camps for the victims of earthquake etc. could be organised.

There has been no central student Party school since 1986. State level schooling was also inadequate. Andhra Pradesh, Himachal, West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura, organise regular schools. But reports from other states are not coming regularly even if they hold it. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka also organised schools.

Although at the All-India Party Centre the sub-committee functioning and other guidances to student front is very regular, the Party building in the student front in the states is not up to the mark. The central student fraction meeting is regularly held alongwith the mass organisational central level meeting. But the same does not apply to states fractions. And worst is the condition in the Hindi states. With the exception of Himachal Pradesh and partly Maharashtra, the weak states are suffering a chronic stagnation and even downslides. This is reflected in their membership, mobilisation, agitation and movement. Committee functioning in these areas is not encouraging. Wholetimers are not paid regularly. Sufficient attention towards cadre policy and deployment of cadre is lacking.

A disconcerting feature is the overall decline in the membership of 1993. In this background we held the National Organisational Convention in July 1994. This was the first such effort at the mass organisational level. The assessment revealed that after 1988 the membership of Hindi belt had slid to six per cent of the total from 9.6% in 1978. The total membership of Hindi and non-Hindi weak states (15 states in all) reached the highest ever level in 1988. From 1988 while the overall membership grew by 4 lakh, the membership of Hindi and non-Hindi weak states came down by 30,000. This means though there was an all India or overall growth in membership, it is only due to the six strong states of West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Had Kerala or Tamil Nadu membership not fallen in 1993, the overall growth would have been ostensibly maintained and this widening gap between the six strong and remaining weak states would not perhaps have been identified. Since Kerala and Tamil Nadu have made up their deficit now, it will again push up the all India membership but the Hindi and non-Hindi weak states performance continues to remain stagnant or decline. Thus the unevenness in the organisation has resurfaced after a few years of improvement in between (mid-eighties). Instead of being overcome, the unevenness in the development of the organisation has widened.

It is in this background that the National Convention on Organisation was held in July 1994. It definitely led to some improvement. The central leadership was reorganised. Moreover a comrade from Kerala joined as a full time central functionary.

According to the understanding of the Party dealt in detail at the Salkia Plenum, the organisation will not grow in the Hindi belt in the absence of a strong centre. In order to build that strong centre, strong states must assist. But weaknesses remain with the strong states not releasing their best cadres for the mass organisational centres.

There has been some progress and development in the situation after the National Convention. It was reflected in the functioning of the secretariat at the centre. Mobility to the states and intervention in their movements have increased

significantly. It also includes organisational intervention and guidance.

Notwithstanding the above weaknesses, there have been achievements in the elections to the universities of Rajasthan, Orissa and Haryana in particular. The centre has resumed direct responsibility in a few important university centres of the Hindi belt. But a lot more needs to be done. Particularly Hindi information bulletins or documents must be brought out which is impossible without financial and manpower resources. The same is true regarding *Students Struggle*. In all these areas, the centre must be strengthened and for that purpose strong states need to undertake their share of responsibilities.

Other Organisations

For a temporary period, the AISA with its opportunistic casteist appeals and exploitation of even minority fundamentalism, managed to enter the vacuum in states like U.P. and Delhi. It gave them temporary electoral dividends. We have been able to recover those areas to a considerable extent this year. But initially AISA was able to mislead a section of even our traditional voters in the campuses. With the total political bankruptcy of NSUI, a section of students are also moving towards the ABVP which is reflected in the ABVP's improved performance in a few universities. The ABVP is mobilising in the state capitals in good numbers. In U.P., Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party led Samajwadi Chhatra Janata Dal has the upper hand at the moment. Their staunch anti-communal, anti-ABVP stand notwithstanding, their casteist appeals are uncontrolled. The AISF and other Left organisations have not been able to increase their strength. One section is trying to tie up with the AISA while its mass following has been cooperating with SFI in joint struggles.

Tasks

The progress and expansion of SFI cannot be sustained unless there is strengthening of Party building within the student ranks. This demands more attention from State Party Committees. Following steps are suggested to the Congress for due consideration and follow-up action.

1. Annual state Party schools for the student front.
2. Constitution of properly functioning sub-committees and fractions at all levels.
3. One meeting every year should be convened by the Party Centre inviting all Party-in-charges of student front. This should be done at least for the Hindi states. Proper attention to cadre policy and recruitment of wholetimers in Hindi belt should be made a priority.
4. Strong states should assist the All-India student centre.
5. Regular review of student front by the state committees should be undertaken.
6. In the present environment of casteist and communal offensive we must specifically address ourselves to the problem of SC/ST, backward and weaker sections. As opposed to the growing divisive trend, SFI's continuous battle to unite the students along democratic lines must be highlighted. Another caste explosion like the post-Mandal situation can come up. To prevent such an eventuality issues of SC/ST and backward students must be immediately taken up.

Given the present crisis facing society and the student movement, the National Organisational Convention of SFI made an attempt at serious introspection. An All-India University Convention was also planned but could not be held in time because of elections and Party conferences. It will be organised in July 1995. A conscious organised effort in this hour of severe ideological onslaughts can alone help us make a breakthrough.

Appendix I**PARTY MEMBERSHIP FOR THE
YEARS 1991 AND 1994**

Name of the State	1991	1994
Andhra Pradesh	26,707	30,791
Andaman & Nicobar	120	160
Assam	10,696	9,901
Bihar	15,500	16,338
Delhi	848	1 150
Goa	70	32
Gujarat	1,052	1,500
Haryana	1,304	1,340
Himachal	742	785
Jammu & Kashmir	291	212
Karnataka	3,804	5,180
Kerala	2,27,422	2,28,165
Madhya Pradesh	1,050	2,018
Maharashtra	5,880	6 984
Manipur	192	230
Orissa	4,382	3,056
Punjab	9,969	10,387
Rajasthan	3,626	3,044
Tamil Nadu	49,240	63,438
Tripura	19,189	26,105
Uttar Pradesh	7,750	7,000
West Bengal	1,89,732	2,13,195
Sikkim	17	74
Central Committee Staff	81	86
Total	5,79,664	6,31,171

Appendix II

CIRCULATION OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY AND LOK LEHAR

State	People s Democracy		Lok Lehar	
	Oct 91	Jan. 95	Oct 91	Jan. 95
Andhra Pradesh	700	492	3	3
Assam	837	700	26	20
Andaman & Nicobar	12	10	—	—
Bihar	484	397	2,223	1,742
Chandigarh	80	83	81	90
Goa	8	7	—	—
Gujarat	39	37	85	222
Himachal Pradesh	36	45	266	232
Haryana	39	30	658	526
Jammu & Kashmir	47	35	20	24
Kerala	666	629	3	1
Karnataka	454	471	4	14
Madhya Pradesh	198	156	1,207	1,341
Maharashtra	544	464	398	410
Manipur	7	2	—	1
Meghalaya	23	21	—	—
Orissa	227	252	60	57
Punjab	270	176	195	121
Pondichery	40	25	—	—
Rajasthan	70	41	807	672
Tamil Nadu	1,309	1,359	2	—
Tripura	279	641	5	9
Uttar Pradesh	297	232	2,180	1,842
West Bengal	6,577	7,455	3,530	5,266
Delhi	370	313	605	573
Foreign	53	73	2	3
Total	13,666	14,146	12,360	13,179

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Central Committee Report July 1994	
(English)	1500
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MEMBERSHIP OF CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

State	1989	1992	No of active Unions in 1992
Andaman & Nicobar	2,131	1,454	9
Andhra Pradesh	90,996 (4545)	1,25,642 (10333)	495
Assam	34,378 (9631)	32,207 (11688)	102
Bihar	75,997 (3684)	30,920 (3661)	55
Delhi	46,820 (1787)	43,716 (2026)	78
Goa	3,879 (147)	3,216 (90)	7
Gujarat	14,786 (528)	16,738 (256)	24
Haryana	17,572 (841)	16,825 (1048)	54
Himachal Pradesh	11,746	4,726 (15)	47
Karnataka	51,970 (13909)	63,170 (19241)	108
Kerala	5,39,821 (136909)	5,99,969 (137292)	775
Jammu & Kashmir	—	504 (2)	1
M P	23,305 (1204)	21,631 (1262)	73
Maharashtra	47,352 (1454)	37,705 (3212)	52
Orissa	48,066 (7436)	30,916 (5493)	50
Punjab	71,769 (4235)	64,915 (314)	106
Rajasthan	22,799 (376)	28,288 (895)	88
Tamil Nadu	1,68,695 (7272)	1,50,314 (9966)	384
Tripura	25,779 (3199)	22,041 (1173)	25
U.P.	29,361 (981)	32,576 (314)	174
West Bengal	10,59,020 (41566)	10,30,293 (111944)	1249
Total	23,86,242 (239704)	23,57,766 (320225)	3956

Note Figures given in brackets indicate female membership.

ALL-INDIA KISAN SABHA MEMBERSHIP

Sl. No	State	1990-91	1993-94
1.	Assam	1,06,654	1,44,538
2.	Andhra Pradesh	2,00,000	2,11,465
3	Bihar	3,00,000	2,00,000
4	Gujarat	13,500	13,000
5.	Haryana	11,200	14,500
6	Himachal	5,500	5,200
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	5,000	4,500
8	Karnataka	76,000	52,000
9	Kerala	9,87,878	10,05,760
10	Manipur	—	5,740
11.	Madhya Pradesh	28,500	19,000
12.	Maharashtra	50,000	69,800
13	Orissa	19,033	22,000
14	Punjab	60,000	80,000
15	Rajasthan	47,179	32,432
16.	Sikkim	—	500
17	Tripura	65,000	KS 1,01,000
		GMP 52,000	
18	Tamil Nadu	2,26,100	2,50,000
19	Uttar Pradesh	1,30,921	89,655
20	West Bengal	94,31,846	99,54,652
Total		1,17,63,811	1,23,27,742

**MEMBERSHIP OF ALL-INDIA AGRICULTURAL
WORKERS UNION**

State	1991	1994
Kerala	11,06,780	11,82,170
Andhra Pradesh	3,68,239	5,10,785
Tamil Nadu	1,20,185	1,35,318
Bihar	80,000	60,000
Uttar Pradesh	56,200	50,000
Punjab	63,518	60,268
Maharashtra	32,600	47,240
Tripura	24,000	65,100
Rajasthan	3,366	8,796
Haryana	5,000	5,900
Orissa	22,600	6,630
Karnataka	10,000	10,334
Total	18,90,488	21,42,541

MEMBERSHIP CHART OF WOMEN FRONT

Sl No.	State	1990	1994
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1,18,715	2,62,000
2.	Assam	45,173	30,154
3.	Bihar	20,000	25,650
4.	Delhi	12,915	24,234
5.	Gujarat	40,000	7,000
6.	Haryana	5,300	5,840
7.	Himachal Pradesh	1,200	2,500
8.	Karnataka	1,875	4,420
9.	Kerala	6,63,740	7,34,942
10.	Maharashtra	29,750	23,022
11.	Madhya Pradesh	—	3,000
12.	Orissa	7,103	7,576
13.	Rajasthan	5,705	7,213
14.	Punjab	9,666	19,535
15.	Tamil Nadu	1,02,026	1,63,694
16.	Tripura	75,391	1,71,559
17.	Uttar Pradesh	3,200	15,050
18.	West Bengal	20,13,475	25,83,500
Total		31,19,234	40,60,189

**MEMBERSHIP OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH
FEDERATION OF INDIA**

Sl. No	State	1990	1994
1.	Andhra Pradesh	3,62,580	4,63,397
2.	Assam	74,229	52,685
3.	Bihar	79,332	72,112
4.	Delhi	11,376	15,331
5.	Gujarat	5,231	6,000
6.	Haryana	19,273	10,700
7.	Himachal Pradesh	8,510	2,662
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	500	4,450
9.	Karnataka	16,879	26,194
10.	Kerala	29,48,187	29,35,808
11.	Madhya Pradesh	8,000	10,200
12.	Maharashtra	68,160	1,22,480
13.	Manipur	1,764	—
14.	Orissa	25,052	29,062
15.	Punjab	40,425	65,734
16.	Rajasthan	18,250	32,000
17.	Tamil Nadu	2,89,195	4,75,029
18.	Tripura	1,06,260	2,55,344
19.	Uttar Pradesh	44,505	25,200
20.	West Bengal	35,03,011	46,73,717
21.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	—	1,500
Total		76,30,740	92,79,605

**MEMBERSHIP CHART OF
STUDENTS' FEDERATION OF INDIA**

State	1990	1993
Andhra Pradesh	1,48,330	2,26,894
Karnataka	35,604	51,615
Kerala	5,97,956	5,93,395
Tamil Nadu	77,641	55,266
Tripura	33,824	56,807
TSU (Tripura)	2,000	9,000
West Bengal	7,84,712	9,24,406
Gujarat	14,000	14,305
Maharashtra	62,729	46,692
Punjab	8,500	10,664
Assam	58,147	38,322
Manipur	1,600	4,000
Orissa	15,350	12,759
Bihar	54,700	51,396
Delhi	950	1,500
Haryana	4,853	800
Himachal Pradesh	14,210	25,002
Madhya Pradesh	41,750	14,000
Rajasthan	27,184	5,255
Uttar Pradesh	6,885	7,601
Total	19,89,054	21,49,679

Constitutional Amendments Adopted by The 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held at Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995*

1. Amendments to Article IV:

Add the following to section 4

"In exceptional cases the Central Committee or the State Committee can admit such members to full membership of the Party. And whenever State Committee admits such members it should obtain previous sanction from the Central Committee."

2. Amendments to Article VII:

Add the following section 3 to Article VII:

"(3) There shall be right of appeal on decisions of droppage from Party membership".

3. Amendments to Article XVII:

Substitute section 2(c) as follows:

"Cases involving expulsion, suspension from full Party membership and decisions of droppage from Party membership against which an appeal has been made to the State Committee or to the State Control Commission and rejected".

4. Amendments to Article XVIII:

Add the following as section 3 and the present sections 3 and 4 may be renumbered as 4 and 5.

"(3) The decision of the Central Control Commission will be final and binding."

*Published in December 1995 in the compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M).

Refer Document under Item No. 104 of this Volume.

5. Amendments to Article XIX:

Section 7 may be substituted as follows:

"No disciplinary measure involving removal from the post held in the Party, suspension from full Party membership other than suspension pending enquiry, expulsion from the Party, shall come into effect without confirmation by the next higher committee. In case of expulsion, the penalised Party member shall be removed from all Party activities pending confirmation. The expelled member stands suspended from the Party till the expulsion is confirmed by the next higher committee. The higher committee will have to communicate its decision within 6 months."

6. Amendments to Article XIX:

Add the following sentence to section 10:

"This summary suspension and removal from all responsible positions in the Party cannot be extended for a period of more than three months."

Resolutions Adopted by The 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held at Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995*

RESOLUTIONS

(i) Resolution on Martyrs

The 15th Congress pays its revolutionary homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defence of the working class and democratic movement and for the cause of national unity in the past three years.

The Congress pays tribute to the 226 heroic martyrs of the Party and the democratic movement in Tripura who were killed in the semi-fascist terror under the Congress(I)-TUJS regime and in attacks by extremist groups.

The Congress pays respectful homage to the 8 comrades in Punjab who sacrificed their lives in the struggle against Khalistani terrorists and in defence of national unity. By their supreme sacrifice, they carried forward the highest traditions of the communist movement in the country.

The Congress pays respectful homage to the 291 martyrs belonging to the Party and the mass organisations in West Bengal, who sacrificed their lives in the class struggle and in defence of the cause of the Party and the democratic movement.

The Congress pays tribute to the memory of the 42 comrades in Kerala who were killed by Congress(I)-RSS and anti-social elements in the past 3 years. The Congress pays homage to the 5 young martyrs who were shot dead at Kuttuparamba by the Police.

*Published in December 1995 in the compilation of all documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M).

The Congress pays its homage to the memory of the 35 comrades in Bihar. They were killed by landlords' goondas and the police in different districts of Bihar in the course of the land struggle.

The Congress pays homage to the memory of the comrades in Andhra Pradesh who were killed since the last Party Congress at the hands of the Naxalities and landlords' goondas.

The Congress pays tributes to the 7 comrades of Jammu and Kashmir who were killed by the fundamentalist and extremist groups for their refusal to abandon the cause of the Party and national unity.

The 15th Congress dips the red flag in memory of these valiant martyrs. Their glorious example will forever inspire the Party. The Congress pledges to carry forward the high ideals they died for. The Congress conveys its heart-felt condolences and deep sympathy to the families of these martyred comrades.

CONDOLENCE

(ii) Comrade M. Basavapunnaiiah

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPI(M) pays respectful homage to the memory of comrade Makineni Basavapunnaiiah, one of the stalwarts and foremost theoreticians of the Indian communist movement. He died on April 12, 1992 at the age of 78. At the time of his death, Comrade MB as he was affectionately known, was the member of Polit Bureau of the Party. He was also editor of the CPI(M)'s central paper, *People's Democracy*.

Born on December 14, 1914, he belonged to the generation which became deeply influenced by the upsurge in the freedom movement in early 1930s. Disillusioned with the withdrawal of the movement by the then Congress leadership and increasingly convinced that the problems of the Indian people could be comprehensively resolved only under a socialist system, Comrade MB joined the fledgling Communist Party of India during 1934-35.

Dedicating himself totally to the cause that he embraced, MB first started out as a district level activist in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh and by 1943 was elected to the CPI State Committee and

its Secretariat in Andhra. He was among the outstanding leaders of the glorious Telengana people's struggle and along with stalwarts like Comrade P. Sundarayya, was deeply involved in the organisation, execution and conduct of the Telengana struggle. It was during this period that MB emerged as one of the top Indian communist leaders. He was elected to the Central Committee at the Second Congress of the CPI in 1948 and elected to the Polit Bureau in June 1950.

Steeled by the experiences of the Telengana struggle, his years of underground life and repression by the Congress Government, Comrade MB was one of the initiators of the inner-party discussions in the united CPI on the crucial issue of the strategy and tactics of the Indian revolution, a debate which finally culminated in the formation of the CPI(M) in 1964. He remained a member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau throughout and was a pillar of strength to the Party, giving it ideological guidance and formulating its tactics in the most complex of circumstances.

Comrade MB's sterling contribution to the Indian communist movement came in the form of steadfast adherence to the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism and its liberating influence. A relentless campaigner against all deviations in the Indian as well as international communist movement, he authored many of the crucial drafts that provided the ideological basis for the fight against revisionism in the earlier period and left-adventurism later.

During the intense ideological discussions within the Indian communist movement, Comrade MB was given the responsibility to discuss these issues with world communist leaders. He was in the four-member delegation that went to the Soviet Union in 1950-52 to hold discussions with the CPSU leadership. He also represented the Indian communists at the meeting of the world Communist Parties in Moscow in 1957.

In addition to his immense contributions to the communist movement, both in theory and practice, Comrade MB made a mark as a parliamentarian in course of his 14-year term in the Rajya Sabha. He was a prolific writer, gifted with a sharp pen and lucid style. Behind the steel exterior, Comrade MB was a warm

and affectionate person, whose accessibility, affection and concern towards comrades endeared him to all those who came in contact with him. His entire life was dedicated to the cause of socialism and the liberation of the Indian people, and he worked with tireless energy till the day of his death.

The exemplary life and contributions of Comrade MB will remain an everlasting source of inspiration to all those dedicated to people's democracy and socialism in India. The Congress pledges to carry forward his unfinished work. It conveys its heartfelt condolences to his wife Jagadamba and son, Jaswant Mohan.

(iii) Comrade Achintya Bhattacharya

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPI(M) mourns the passing away of Comrade Achintya Bhattacharya, veteran leader of the Party and member of the Central Committee right from 1964 till the time of his death on August 24, 1993 at the age of 79.

Achintya Bhattacharya was one of the pioneers and builders of the Communist Party in Assam. He became active in the freedom movement while still a student and was first arrested in 1935. He soon came in contact with the CPI and became a member in 1936. He worked within the fold of the Congress Socialist Party for some time.

He was one of the principal organisers of the tea plantation workers and after Independence became Cachar district secretary of the Communist Party. He was a prominent leader of the Surma valley peasant struggle. He was elected to the National Council of the CPI in 1958 and remained in leading positions till the time of the split. He was one of the original group of the leadership who took up the fight against revisionism that led to the formation of the CPI(M).

Comrade Bhattacharya was the first secretary of the Assam State Committee of the Party from 1964 to 1980 and played a major role in building the CPI(M) and the mass movement in the state. Well versed in Marxist theory, he also had a deep understanding of the ethnic question in Assam and the north-eastern region on which he wrote innumerable articles and books. He had

a life long association with the peasant movement and was the President of the Assam unit of the Kisan Sabha at the time of his death.

He was arrested and jailed a number of times in 1950, 1962 and 1965 and was underground during the Emergency. A dedicated Marxist-Leninist, he endeared himself to all comrades by his simple life. The Party will always remember his distinguished service and unflinching commitment to the cause of the working people. The Fifteenth Congress conveys its deep condolences to his wife and family.

(iv) Comrade Manoranjan Roy

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPI(M) records its deep grief at the passing away of Comrade Manoranjan Roy, veteran communist leader and outstanding trade unionist. He died on June 13, 1992 at the age of 83. Comrade Roy was a member of the Central Committee of the Party, member of the secretariat of the West Bengal State Committee and President of the West Bengal CITU.

Comrade Manoranjan Roy joined the freedom movement while a young student and came in contact with the Jugantar group of revolutionaries. He was imprisoned in 1930 for his revolutionary activities and while in jail became attracted to Marxism. On his release in 1938, he became a member of the CPI and thereafter for over five decades served the Party and the working class movement with devotion and distinction. He was one of the pioneers of the tea garden workers' movement in North Bengal, and over the years became a leading trade unionist, becoming the Vice-President of the CITU at its foundation conference in 1970. He served for a long period as CITU state Secretary of West Bengal and played a valuable role in developing the working class movement in the state.

Fighting against revisionism, Comrade Roy stood with those who formed the CPI(M). He was elected to the secretariat of the West Bengal State Committee in 1977 and to the Central Committee at the Tenth Congress of the CPI(M) in 1978. He served as an MLA in the state assembly and a member of the

Rajya Sabha during his political life. His life long service to the working class movement will always be remembered and cherished.

The Fifteenth Congress pays homage to the memory of this veteran leader of the Party and sends condolences to his family.

(v) Comrade Robin Sen

The Fifteenth Congress records its profound grief at the passing away of Comrade Robin Sen, a prominent leader of the CPI(M) and the working class movement of West Bengal, a member of the West Bengal secretariat and a member of the Central Control Commission of the Party. He died on January 28, 1995 at the age of 71.

Comrade Robin Sen was active in the freedom struggle and during the Second World War, joined the Royal Indian Air Force. His anti-imperialist activities in the armed forces led to his court martial. Subsequently he joined the Communist Party in 1953 and devoted himself to building trade unions in the industrial areas of West Bengal in the Asansol-Raniganj belt. He played a major role in building the Party in Bardhaman district and was the district secretary for 15 years.

Comrade Robin Sen was among those who resolutely fought against revisionism in the undivided party and was a member of the State Committee of the CPI(M) since 1964. He was a member of the Lok Sabha twice and all India Vice-President of the CITU. He was a respected leader known for his high communist standards and dedication. The Congress pays its respectful homage to his memory and conveys heartfelt condolences to his colleagues and comrades.

FRATERNAL PARTIES

(vi) Comrade Kim Il Sung

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPI(M) pays respectful homage to the memory of Comrade Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea who died on July 9, 1994.

Comrade Kim Il Sung, founder of the Socialist North Korea, was born on April 15, 1912. Since his early years, Kim Il Sung was involved in the anti-Japanese struggle of the Korean people. He played a key role in bringing together the various communist groups in Korea, a process which culminated in the formation of the Workers' Party of Korea.

He led an active underground movement in occupied Manchuria and was the chief architect of the Korean People's Army. In 1934 he joined the Chinese Communist Party but was forced into exile by the Japanese. Even in exile, he continued to organise the Koreans in their fight against the Japanese rulers.

After the liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation in 1945, the Korean people under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung were plunged into a bitter struggle against U.S. imperialism which militarily intervened and perpetuated the division of the Korean nation and people. The three year long struggle led to the defeat of the U.S. army and the establishment of the DPRK in 1948. Comrade Kim Il Sung devoted himself to the task of establishing a socialist society. While carrying forward this task, he consistently advocated the peaceful reunification of the Korean nation.

A staunch Marxist-Leninist and communist revolutionary, Comrade Kim Il Sung adapted the creative science of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the Korean situation. His creative application of Marxism and success in charting out the course of socialist construction in the DPRK was a significant contribution to the international communist movement. The Congress sends its heartfelt condolences to the Korean people, the Workers' Party of Korea and his family members.

The Fifteenth Congress also pays homage to the memories of:

Erich Honecker, outstanding communist leader and internationalist, builder of the German Democratic Republic, General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and head of state of the erstwhile East German Republic.

Joe Slovo, former chairman of the South African Communist Party and leading organiser and fighter against apartheid.

Chris Hani, general secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and prominent leader of the ANC who led the underground armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC).

Li Xiannian, veteran revolutionary leader, former president of the People's Republic of China; Chairman, Chinese People's Political Consultative Council.

Madan Bhandari, general secretary and **Jeevraj Ashrit**, Polit Bureau member of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist).

Kaysone Phomvihane, President of the Laos People's Democratic Republic and President of the Laos People's Revolutionary Party.

The Fifteenth Congress pays homage to **C. Rajeswara Rao**, a foremost leader of the Indian communist movement, a stalwart of the Telengana People's Struggle and former general secretary of the CPI.

It also records its grief at the passing away of Comrades N. K. Krishnan, N. E. Balaram, Rajasekhar Reddy, and Kalpana Joshi, prominent leaders of the CPI and the Left movement in the country.

(vii) **Leading Comrades**

The Fifteenth Congress of the CPI(M) puts on record its profound grief over the death of several members of different State Committees and leading functionaries of the Party. The comrades who died since the Fourteenth Congress include:

Comrade S. Y. Kolhatkar, former member of the Central Committee, veteran leader of the Party in Maharashtra and a prominent trade union leader.

Comrade Motilal Sharma, one of the founders of the communist movement in Madhya Pradesh, state president of the CITU, former state secretary of the CPI(M) and former member of the Central Committee.

Comrade Mahitosh Nandi, member of the West Bengal State Committee, veteran freedom fighter and leader of the kisan movement in the state.

Comrade K. P. Janaki Amma, veteran revolutionary and member of Tamil Nadu State Committee.

Comrade Kamal Sarkar, prominent organiser of the working class movement and member of the West Bengal State Committee.

Comrade Eluru Laxinarayana, a veteran leader of the communist movement in Andhra and member of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade Prabhakar Mankar, member of the Maharashtra State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade Parimal Bagchi, veteran leader of the kisan movement in West Bengal and member of the State Committee

Comrade Biren Datta, a founder member of the Communist Party in Tripura, state secretary of the CITU, former member of the State Committee, a minister in the first LF Government in 1978 and a three term member of parliament representing Tripura.

Comrade Thakorbbhai Shah, among the foremost leaders of the Left movement in Gujarat and state secretary of the CPI(M) till 1991.

Comrade Dalip Singh Johal, veteran leader of the communist movement in Punjab and member of the Punjab state secretariat

Comrade Ganesh Ghosh, veteran revolutionary and freedom fighter and former member of the West Bengal State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade Dalip Singh Tapiala, a prominent leader of the communist movement in Punjab and member of the Punjab state secretariat of the CPI(M).

Comrade Sohel Singh, editor of the Party weekly in Punjab, Lok Lahar, and member of the Punjab State Committee.

Comrade T. Venkatapathy, veteran communist leader of Andhra Pradesh, secretary of the Guntur district committee and secretariat member of the CPI(M) in Andhra Pradesh.

Comrade M. Suryavathi, a veteran leader of the communist movement in Andhra, a founder of the Mahila Sangham in the state and member of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee.

Comrade Bhag Singh Sajjan, member of the Punjab State Committee.

Comrade Govind Prasad, prominent kisan leader and secretary of the Nalanda district committee of the CPI(M) in Bihar who was killed in police firing.

Comrade Sukumar Sengupta, veteran revolutionary and freedom fighter, secretary of the Midnapore district committee and member of the West Bengal State Committee.

Comrade Hara Nath Chandra, member of the West Bengal State Committee.

Comrade Kshiti Burman, prominent trade union leader of West Bengal, secretary of the South 24 Parganas district committee of the CPI(M) and member of the West Bengal State Committee.

Comrade Kattayikonam V. Sreedhar, veteran freedom fighter, former secretary of the Trivandrum district committee and member of the Kerala State Committee.

Comrade Bijoy Modak, veteran freedom fighter and communist organiser, secretary of the Hooghly district committee and member of the West Bengal State Committee.

Comrade Niruben Patel, prominent leader of the communist movement and women's movement in Gujarat, state general secretary of AIDWA, chairman of the Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation and state secretariat member of the CPI(M) in Gujarat.

Comrade M. Jinadevan, member of the Kerala State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade R. Krishnan, member of the Kerala State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade Uddaraju Ramam, veteran communist and kisan leader and former member of the state secretariat of the CPI(M) in Andhra Pradesh.

Comrade Gopen Roy, veteran leader of the communist movement in Assam, member of the state secretariat of the CPI(M).

Comrade Surendra Bisoi, member of the Orissa State Committee of the CPI(M).

Comrade M. Ramakrishna Rao, member of Andhra Pradesh State Committee of the CPI(M).

(viii) Intensify the Struggle Against Economic Policies

For nearly four years now, the Narasimha Rao Government has been pursuing economic policies which are detrimental to the country's economic sovereignty and the interests of the people. The adoption of the IMF-World Bank structural adjustment policies and the GATT terms have seriously eroded the country's efforts at self-reliant development, leading to the curtailment of the public sector; the opening up of the economy to foreign capital in a big way and providing the Indian monopolists with a bonanza by deregulation and tax cuts. The landlords have also benefited from the new economic policies at the expense of the peasantry and agricultural labour.

The high rate of inflation which has resulted in implementing the policy has led to sharp price-rise and inflation remains at a double digit figures (well over 11 per cent this year). This has meant big increases in the price of food articles—which hits the poor most. The rise in prices of all essential commodities has become a source of constant suffering for the common people.

Just when the rural and urban poor need cheap food the curtailment of the public distribution system and the successive increases in the price of wheat, rice and sugar through the ration shops have led to hunger and destitution particularly in tribal areas.

The cuts in public investment and expenditure have led to serious attacks on the living standards of the people. Health, education, the public distribution system, and social welfare have all suffered grievously with these pro-market and anti-poor policies.

The concessions to big business and foreign capital and their encroachment into the small-scale sector has led to widespread closure of small units resulting in a big loss of jobs. Even small entrepreneurs are feeling its crunch. The privatisation drive is leading to the destruction of lakhs of jobs in the organised sector. The new economic policies are job-killing instead of generating employment.

The opening up of the agriculture sector to the MNC's and big business is leading to moves to formally dilute the land ceiling

legislation. Instead of implementing the ceiling measures, the trend is to scuttle them. Radical land reform is the only way that millions of landless can be drawn into the productive process and the fetters on the productive forces broken.

The handloom and powerloom workers have been severely affected by the rise in prices of yarn and other raw materials because of the liberalisation. Women workers who are in the unorganised sector have been affected badly by displacement of jobs. The livelihood of tens of thousands of fishermen and women have been threatened by the introduction of deep sea trawlers by the MNCs.

The economic policies are hence leading to an all round attack on the potential for a self-reliant, independent path of development. The CPI(M) calls for the defence of the public sector, raising resources by increasing taxes on the rich and curbing tax evasion; expanding state investment and expenditure in infrastructure and social welfare sectors; the formulation of a foreign investment policy in accordance with national priorities and essential high technology; the urgent implementation of land reforms and minimum wage guarantees for agricultural labour through a central legislation; expansion of public distribution system with supply of 14 essential commodities; more expenditure on public education and public health systems and decentralisation of powers to the states and to local bodies.

In the last four years, a countrywide movement has been built up against the economic policies with four notable general strikes and innumerable local struggles by working class in different sectors. The civil disobedience movement conducted by the Left Parties also provided a big fillip to the opposition to these policies. The Left Parties and the National Platform of Mass Organisations have made a big contribution to developing this popular resistance which has resulted in the growing isolation of the Congress(I). The defeat of the Congress(I) in the recent assembly elections is reflection of this discontent.

The Fifteenth Congress calls upon the entire Party to gear up to intensify the movement against the economic policies. From the grass-roots to the all India level, on every attack and adverse impact on the working people, the Party should take the lead in

mobilising people for struggles. In each sector of the economy and industry, united struggles should be taken up to fight back the policies. Special efforts must be made to draw in the mass of agricultural workers and peasantry into the common movement. The struggles for land and better wages for the agricultural workers is all the more crucial today as the rural poor are bearing the brunt of the new economic policies. The CPI(M) and the Left Parties must take steps to intensify the countrywide resistance movement and take the lead in uniting the Left forces in joint struggles. Our independent activity must be able to forge the broadest unity of patriotic democratic forces and rally their following behind the bourgeois parties in the struggle in defence of our economic and political sovereignty. The policies of the Rao Government, harmful to the people and the country, must be halted and reversed.

(ix) On 50th anniversary of Defeat of Fascism

May 9, 1995 will be the 50th anniversary of the defeat of fascism in Europe. Fascism was the ugliest and most brutal form of imperialism. Nazism, the German version of fascism, was the most sinister and most destructive. In its 12 years rule in Germany, from 1933 to 1945, it not only almost completely destroyed Europe but in the end also destroyed Germany itself. In its short span of life covering a little more than a decade, it took millions of human lives and destroyed properties worth trillions of dollars. It invented pseudo-scientific theories of racial superiority and in the most horrible fashion shaped up what Hitler termed as "final solution" of the Jewish problem in which more than five million Jews had perished. It had set up a chain of scores of concentration camps in Germany as well as in the rest of occupied Europe where millions of Jews, Communists, gypsies and other political prisoners were inhumanly exterminated.

Now-a-days, in different capitals of the imperialist world a carefully rehearsed propaganda campaign is going on that after 50 years, it is time to heal the wounds and forget all about the concentration camps and holocaust as perpetrated by Hitler. Since the world cannot forget fascism, constant attempts are being

made to make the world forget that, after all, fascism was the ugliest form of imperialism. It was German monopoly finance capital like Krupps, Thyssen, etc., and the most influential part of the Wermacht, aided and abetted by Anglo-French-U.S. imperialism, that brought Hitler to power.

Having occupied the whole of continental Europe on June 22, 1941 Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. It was the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, under the leadership of the Communist Party and Comrade Stalin, which organised the entire Soviet people who confronted the Hitlerite hordes. It is true that on May 9, 1945, the remnants of the German Wermacht surrendered to the military leaders of the Allied and Soviet Armies. It is truer still that the chapter of defeat of the German army started being written in January-February, 1943 in the ruined city of Stalingrad. Between 1943 and 1945, it was the relentless counter-offensive of the Soviet Red Army that smashed and crushed the Hitlerite hordes. The Anglo-American opening of the second front only supplemented this effort. The partisan war waged by the guerrilla forces in occupied Eastern Europe constitutes a heroic chapter of the anti-Fascist war. Similarly, the struggle waged in China, Vietnam and Korea helped the fight against Japanese fascism.

The victory over fascism had far reaching international reverberations. In Eastern Europe socialist states were born. The peoples of the colonial world were galvanised into action and the process of liberation of the enslaved nations was set in motion. Mass upsurges took place in country after country, including India. Reinforced by this spectacular victory, the Chinese people intensified their own revolution and by October 1949, captured power. A socialist camp was born and the colonial world ultimately became free. The victory over fascism thus changed the political contours of the whole world.

In spite of the destruction of Nazism in Europe, it will be a cardinal mistake to think that fascism, as the ugliest form of imperialism, will never reappear. Already, there are signs of resurgence of neo-fascist groups not only in Germany but also throughout Europe. One should not forget that it was the

economic crash of 1929 and the ensuing crisis of capitalism on a world scale that gave birth to Nazism enabling it to capture power. The ongoing crisis today in all the capitalist countries, the unemployment, joblessness, homelessness, are again making the people restive. This is the fertile ground on which fascism thrives. It will, therefore, be a grievous mistake not to go on reminding the people about the scourge of fascism and what crimes fascism committed against humanity.

The 15th Congress of the CPI(M) calls upon all the Party units and members to go amongst the people, educate them about the real source and face of fascism. To educate the people about fascism is one of the anti-imperialist tasks today.

(x) In Solidarity with Tripura Left Front Government

The 15th Congress of the CPI(M) greets the Left Front Government of Tripura which has been functioning for the past two years after winning a big majority in the April 1993 assembly elections. The Left Front Government is working under the most difficult circumstances due to the gross discrimination displayed by the central government towards it and the open encouragement given by the Congress(I)-TUJS to the extremist groups and efforts to disturb tribal-non-tribal unity.

The Left Front Government at the start of its tenure had given a call to the misguided tribal youth to give up arms and return to normal life. As a result, up to March 1995, 2,465 persons belonging to different extremist groups including the ATTF had surrendered. The Left Front Government has promised to rehabilitate them as per the agreement with the ATTF but despite repeated requests the central government has provided only Rs. 2.38 crore for their rehabilitation. This is in stark contrast to the approach the centre had taken when 447 TNV extremists had surrendered under a treaty with the centre. An amount of more than Rs. 33 crore was granted for their rehabilitation. Similarly, the centre has provided much more funds to the Assam Government for the rehabilitation of surrendered ULFA elements.

This discriminatory approach of the central government was seen earlier also when only a pittance was granted to the state

which was affected by devastating floods in 1993. Tripura is a landlocked state bounded by Bangladesh on three sides with poor communications to the rest of the country. The central government has given no funds for extending the railway line up to Agartala and the total length of railways in the entire state is less than 40 kms. Even in the current Union railway budget, the legitimate claim of the state has been ignored. The centre is deliberately ignoring the urgent needs of Tripura's economic development. It has done nothing for the utilisation of the big gas reserves tapped by the ONGC in the state.

While all political efforts are being made to persuade tribal extremist groups to give up violence, the Left Front Government is taking steps to deal with terroristic activities, kidnappings and extortions. This requires adequate para-military forces, especially since some of these groups operate by taking shelter from across the border. It is shocking that the centre, instead of augmenting the para-military forces existing during the Congress(I)-TUJS coalition, has systematically withdrawn the forces deployed in the past two years. The Assam Rifles who are effective in hilly terrain is no more available for the state government to deploy; the BSF battalions have been drastically reduced. The centre is also not sanctioning the raising of two more armed police battalions by the state nor has it given the funds for modernising the state police. This deliberate withdrawal must be seen in the context of Congress(I)-TUJS vocally raising the law and order question, criticising the state government for not providing security to the citizens and demanding that Tripura be declared a disturbed area. The central government's action is, hence, politically motivated.

The manner in which the present Governor was appointed, and his negative and partisan approach to the state government has encouraged the opposition to adopt disruptive tactics. The Party Congress demands his withdrawal from the post.

The Congress(I)-TUJS combine has embarked on the dangerous game of sponsoring and aiding some of the extremist groups who are attacking the CPI(M) cadres and workers. Scores of Party workers have been killed by these groups in the recent

period. Simultaneously, the Congress(I) is active in whipping up anti-tribal feelings and rousing Bengali chauvinism while the TUJS encourages tribal separatism. The CPI(M) and the Left Front has been playing a commendable role in mobilising the people of both communities to foil such nefarious designs and maintain unity.

The 15th Congress of the CPI(M) demands that the central government immediately release funds to the state government to meet the requirements for the rehabilitation of the surrendered tribal militants. It also demands that central government place sufficient para-military forces at the disposal of the state government for deployment to curb and check extremist activities. The Centre must sanction the funds for augmenting and modernising the state police. The 15th Congress strongly condemns the disruptive Congress(I)-TUJS efforts to heighten ethnic tensions and divide the people. The 15th Congress expresses its full solidarity with the Left Front Government of Tripura in its efforts to fulfil its promises to meet the aspirations of the common people and to preserve tribal and non-tribal unity.

(x1) Launch All-Sided Struggle Against Communalism

The Fifteenth Congress expresses its firm resolve to combat communalism and the mixing of religion and politics by the RSS-VHP-BJP-Shiv Sena combine. Ever since the communal forces began using the Ayodhya dispute to mobilise people for their political aims, the communal tensions and violence increased posing a threat to national unity. This culminated in the shameful episode of the Babri Masjid demolition and the consequent riots which engulfed many parts of the country.

Today, these forces are still active. The VHP with the full backing of the RSS, has launched an agitation for the demolition of the Gyan Vapi mosque in Varanasi and the mosque in Mathura. In both these cases, the same political tactic of misusing religion to fan communal feelings is being adopted. The Places of Worship Act enacted in Parliament prohibits the raising of disputes about religious places and protects the status quo, as on

15 August, 1947. The game of the majority communalists to evoke alleged historical wrongs as a justification for communalising Indian politics must be exposed and firmly rebuffed.

The RSS led combine wants the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. Hindutva is a platform which is inherently anti-secular and inimical to the minorities, and attacks the class unity essential for fighting class exploitation. The Hindu communalists want to destroy secularism, and in the process they are endangering the very unity of the country.

The recent elections have resulted in a Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra and a BJP Government in Gujarat. The coming to office of parties with an open communal platform in the two industrialised states of Western India provides these forces with an opportunity to renew the communal offensive.

The Congress strongly condemns the call of Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena chief, who has given an ultimatum to throw out "Bangladeshis" and "Pakistanis", which is directed at the muslim minorities and is a grave provocation. The Shiv Sena also has declared its resolve to introduce work permits for "outsiders" coming to Bombay. The entire country should rise to prevent this sort of mischief seeking to divide the Indian people on religious and linguistic lines. Free movement and right of residence in any part of the country is a fundamental right of all Indian citizens.

The Congress notes the dismal record of the Rao Government in defending secularism and upholding the rule of law. Its dubious role in the events leading to 6 December 1992 and its subsequent conduct show its compromising role in the face of the communal challenge. A party and government which sponsors a trust set up by Shankaracharyas for building the temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya cannot be considered a reliable defender of secularism. The Supreme Court has rightly rejected the reference by the government to go into the question of what existed at the site at Ayodhya more than four hundred and fifty years ago.

The Congress calls upon the central government to immediately invoke Article 138(2) of the Constitution and refer

all pending cases to the Supreme Court for a full judicial verdict. Even after the Supreme Court verdict that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution, the central government has not pushed through a legislation prohibiting the mixing of religion and politics in the electoral process.

The RSS-BJP combine is active in many spheres to inject the communal ideology and to divert the people's discontent into disruptive channels. The experience of BJP rule in the northern states showed how in education and culture, the communal ideology was systematically introduced. The Party Congress calls for a sustained campaign to concretely counter the all communal ideologies and present the secular and democratic alternative in all spheres, political, social, ideological and cultural. All democratic and secular forces must be rallied to undertake this task.

The Fifteenth Congress opposes all forms of communalism which are detrimental to a secular polity. Minority communalism and the growth of fundamentalism is inimical to the genuine interests of the minorities. The minority communalists seek to prevent the Muslim masses from joining the common movement in defence of secularism and democratic rights. It upholds obscurantist and outdated social values which denies equality to women and help the growth of majority communalism. The CPI(M) will oppose separatist trends among minorities, and work to develop the common movement to defend the legitimate rights of the minorities.

The BJP hopes to come to power in Delhi on a Hindutva platform utilising the discontent of the people against the Congress policies. The recent elections have shown that where there is an effective secular alternative and unity of Left and secular forces, the BJP can be isolated and defeated. The Congress calls upon all the patriotic and secular opposition forces to draw proper lessons from these results and present an effective alternative before the people so that the communal politics of the BJP is defeated and the compromising role of the Congress(I) thwarted.

The proud heritage of India as a country with a composite culture and of the common people of diverse religions and social

traditions living in harmony, should be preserved and maintained. The people of all communities must be mobilised by rousing their patriotic sentiments to defend the secular way of life. The Congress calls for a sustained and all sided struggle to foil the designs of the communalists and to defend secularism and national unity.

(xii) On 125th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth

The 15th Congress of the CPI(M) calls upon the entire Party to observe, in a befitting manner, the 125th anniversary of Lenin's Birthday during the year beginning with his birthday on 22nd April. Lenin's teachings are of historic significance and of relevance today.

Carrying forward the banner of Marxism he developed and enriched it in the context of new developments in a most creative and scientific manner. On the basis of his profound analysis of imperialism he elucidated the entire perspective of revolutionary struggle in the modern epoch. Lenin's theoretical works with their broad sweep covering every aspect of human activity and knowledge constitute a vast treasure house for all revolutionaries.

Lenin will always be remembered as the most outstanding revolutionary who led to success the great October Socialist Revolution which marked a new stage in world history signifying the advent of the proletariat as the leader of modern society and all mankind.

Lenin's invaluable contribution for the building of the socialist state and society led by the working class in the Soviet Union has great relevance for all Communists struggling for socialist transformation.

Lenin was the embodiment of the spirit of proletarian internationalism and his contribution to the development and advance of the international Communist movement is of epochal significance. It was under his leadership and guidance that the Communist International was founded leading, in the following years, to the establishment and strengthening of Communist Parties throughout the world.

Lenin, with his deep grasp of the revolutionary process based on scientific application of Marxism to the concrete conditions of revolutionary struggle, elaborated and greatly enriched the strategy and tactics of the Communist movement in the world and in many countries.

Lenin's profound analysis of the significance and content of the anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed nations and peoples of the world and the link between the anti-colonial and proletarian struggles provided the inspiration and guidance for the mighty advance and successes of the liberation struggles.

Lenin's path-breaking leadership and guidance to the task of building revolutionary working class parties, as an essential prerequisite for the advance and success in the revolutionary struggle and his elaboration of the basic organisational principle of the Communist Parties have historic significance and validity.

The 15th Congress exhorts upon the Party to observe the anniversary in an effective manner with the purpose of educating and re-educating the entire Party on the basic and essential teachings of Marxism-Leninism so that the CPI(M) gets ideologically, politically and organisationally more united, stronger and more steeled in mass struggles and is able to perform its historic role as the revolutionary vanguard of the toiling people of India.

(xiii) On Solidarity with Cuba

The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) reaffirms its firm resolve to strengthen solidarity with the courageous people of Cuba and their inspiring struggle to safeguard socialism under the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba led by Fidel Castro;

condemns unequivocally U.S. imperialism's continued defiance of world public opinion and its imposition of the criminal economic blockade of Cuba;

notes with satisfaction that despite U.S. pressures, many countries have established economic relations with Cuba;

salutes socialist Cuba for maintaining its social security network and unparalleled achievements in the fields of health,

education and basic human rights notwithstanding the severe economic hardships resulting from U.S. imperialist depredations;

resolves to further strengthen the solidarity movement in India and the Asia Pacific region with the valiant people of Cuba and to be in the forefront of collecting further material contribution;

calls upon the Party ranks and the Indian people to rise in defence of Cuba's struggle under the slogan 'Socialism or Death';

extends its unflinching solidarity to the brave people of Cuba who are carrying out one of the most inspiring fights against U.S. imperialism at a hands throw from its shores. The Congress sends its warmest greetings to the people of Cuba and its leader Comrade Fidel Castro.

At a time when the entire world is facing the brunt of heightened U.S. imperialist offensive, this tiny socialist country, the only one in the western hemisphere, stands like a rock of strength. It has refused to fall in line with the dictates of the USA, despite the wholly illegitimate and criminal blockade for the last three decades. As a result of this struggle, there is a growing realisation the world over that the U.S. blockade which is nothing short of an economic war violates the essence of freedom and national sovereignty.

The outright rejection by the U.S. to the repeated UN resolutions demanding the withdrawal of the blockade betrays its double standards with regard to the implementation of UN resolutions. It is significant that Israel was the only country which voted in favour of the U.S. blockade following the latest discussion. Leave alone lifting the blockade, the U.S. Senate wants to further tighten it. It is repulsive that a nation of over ten million people, including children, women, infirm and old, are made to suffer through the blockade.

The blockade is being perpetrated by the USA as the Cuban people chose "Socialism or Death". This choice is not accidental, as Socialism in Cuba has become synonymous with equality and freedom from all forms of exploitation and discrimination. Cuba's achievements in the sphere of health, education and social

security equals or surpasses the most advanced industrialised countries. It has no parallels in the developing world. The Congress notes with satisfaction that the people of Cuba stand firmly with the revolutionary leadership of Cuba, its leader Comrade Fidel Castro and their resolve to defend socialism at any cost. It looks forward to the positive result of the reforms being carried out in various spheres and sectors to strengthen socialism by eradicating shortcomings, mistakes and inadequacies, while at the same time concretely taking into account the changed international situation.

The 15th Congress recalls the significant achievements of the National Committee for solidarity with Cuba (NCSC) in building a broad-based the solidarity movement in India and resolves to help the NCSC further strengthen these activities in the coming days. The Party Congress calls upon all Party units, members and sympathisers as well as the Party members in different class and mass organisations to resolve firmly to take up this as a very important internationalist task of our Party. This is not just a help to Cuba and in defence of socialism, but a major contribution to our own self-education on the anti-imperialist tasks of our movement at this historical juncture.

The NCSC has decided to mobilize finances to ship another consignment of detergents, which would be of great utility to the Cuban comrades. The 15th Congress calls upon all progressive and peace loving people of India to contribute to this effort. The 15th Congress of CPI(M) calls upon the Government of India to firmly stand by Cuba a frontline state of the non-aligned movement at its moment of trial.

(xiv) Solidarity with Korean People's Struggle

The Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist):

reaffirms its solidarity with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its struggle for the peaceful reunification of the Korean people and nation whose division continues to be perpetuated by U.S. imperialism;

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condemns U.S. imperialism's latest manoeuvres utilising the so-called nuclear technology issue to mount pressures on the DPRK and generate tension in the region;

notes with satisfaction that the firm stand taken by DPRK has forced U.S. imperialism to come to a mutually negotiated agreement;

expresses concern at the recent U.S. attempts to subvert the negotiated settlement and escalate tensions once again;

resolves to further strengthen the solidarity with the Korean people under the leadership of the Workers Party of Korea in their struggles against U.S. imperialism and in defence of socialist DPRK.

Report of The Credentials Committee*

Placed Before and Adopted by The 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995

The report of the Credentials Committee of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) is being submitted herewith for adoption.

The Credentials Committee was informed by the CC Office that the total number of delegates and observers as decided by the CC were 660 and 60 respectively. Two members of the CC, Nripen Chakraborty and Dasharath Deb could not attend the Congress due to illness. Three delegates, two from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and one from Maharashtra, and three observers, one from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, one from Uttar Pradesh and one from the CC staff also were absent in the Congress. In all 655 Delegates and 57 observers attended the Congress and the Credentials Committee received the credential forms of all of them. Their state-wise distribution is given in Table-I.

Distribution of major characteristics of the delegates and observers as revealed in the credentials forms are presented in the tables enclosed, which forms a part of this report. For some of the tables, the data is presented according to broad regional groupings, viz., West Bengal (WB), Kerala (KER), Hindi-speaking states (HSS) comprising UP, Bihar, MP, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan, other southern states (OSS) comprising Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Andamans, other eastern states (OES) comprising Orissa, Assam, Sikkim, Tripura and Manipur, other northern states comprising Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Jammu-Kashmir, CC units, Britain, Canada, Central Committee members are treated as a separate category (CC).

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, April 23, 1995

Also published in December 1995 in the compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) Table No IX to Table No. XV are taken from the compilation of Documents of the 15th Congress published in December 1995

Amritendu Mukherjee of West Bengal (86 years and 6 months) is the oldest delegate followed by EMS Namboodiripad (86 years and 1 month). Oldest observer is P. Govinda Pillai of Kerala (69 years 1 month). Surya Pradhan of Sikkim (22 years 6 months) is the youngest delegate and Tek Bahadur Chhetri of Sikkim (23 years 2 months) is the youngest observer. Average age of delegates is 52 years 6 months.

Choudhuri Tejeswar Rao of Andhra Pradesh has the longest jail life (13 years 10 months 2 weeks) among the delegates. Ahilya Rangnekar (CC Member) has the longest jail life (10 years) among the female delegates. P. K. Chandranandan of Kerala has the longest underground life (13 years) among the delegates and Swarajyam of Andhra Pradesh has the longest underground life (7 years) among the female delegates.

Mahadev Saha of CC Unit enjoys the longest party life (since 1932) amongst the delegates.

EMS Namboodiripad and L. B. Gangadhar Rao have attended all the 15 Party Congresses.

Alongwith this report, the Credentials Committee would like to point out some of the weaknesses in filling up of the credentials forms by many comrades. Many comrades have not properly filled in the credentials forms in respect of state, delegate/observer, age, date of birth, monthly income, year of joining the Party, status, etc., main responsibilities, highest status, etc. Some of the comrades have made multiple entries in "Front currently working in" though the indication of main front only was asked for. To avoid such inconvenience, the leaders of the delegations from states and of CC units should take care to see that all the forms are duly filled in before submission of the same to the Credentials Committee.

We also wish to place before the Central Committee the following recommendations regarding the credentials form for their consideration:

(a) The head "Current Occupation" be renamed as "Professional Background" and the item "wholetimer" be deleted.

(b) The form be amended in such a manner that the particulars of comrades, who joined the CPI in 1964 and afterwards joined our Party can be properly taken into account.

(c) Part 2 of Party life, i.e., age groupings be deleted.

(d) An additional item of '9. Direct through Party' be included under the head 'Entry into Party Through'.

(e) Additional items of Central Control Commission and State Control Commission be included under 'Status in Party Organisation'.

(f) Item "7. Any Others (Specify)" be deleted from the head "State Elected Position Held Currently".

Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Comrades Muralidharan, K. Sankaran, Aniruddha Moitra and Malini Chatterjee for their untiring service in preparing this report.

Signed by:

CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR, V. V. DAKSHINA MURTY,
G. RAMAKRISHNAN (Convenor)

Members of the Credentials Committee

TABLE I
Distribution of Delegates for 15th Congress

	Gender		Count
	Female	Male	
Andhra Pradesh	2	30	32
Assam	1	15	16
Bihar	1	19	20
CC	4	54	58
CC Units	2	28	30
Delhi	1	4	5
Goa	0	1	1
Gujarat	0	3	3
Haryana	0	5	5
Himachal Pradesh	0	5	5
Jammu & Kashmir	0	5	5
Karnataka	1	7	8
Kerala	8	157	165
Madhya Pradesh	0	5	5
Maharashtra	1	9	10
Manipur	0	2	2
Orissa	0	7	7
Punjab	1	19	20
Rajasthan	0	7	7
Sikkim	0	1	1
Tamil Nadu	2	43	45
Tripura	1	22	23
Uttar Pradesh	0	12	12
West Bengal	14	156	170
Count	39	616	655

TABLE II
Distribution of Observers for 15th Congress

	Female	Male	Count
Andhra Pradesh	0	4	4
Assam	0	2	2
Bihar	1	3	4
CC Units	1	9	10
Delhi	0	2	2
Gujarat	0	2	2
Haryana	1	1	2
Himachal Pradesh	0	2	2
Jammu & Kashmir	0	1	1
Karnataka	0	2	2
Kerala	1	1	2
Madhya Pradesh	0	4	4
Maharashtra	0	4	4
Orissa	0	2	2
Punjab	0	3	3
Rajasthan	1	1	2
Sikkim	0	1	1
Tamil Nadu	1	1	2
Trnpura	0	2	2
Uttar Pradesh	0	2	2
West Bengal	0	2	2
Count	6	51	57

TABLE III
Age Distribution by Regional Groups

Age Group	Region							Count
	CC	HSS	KER	OES	ONS	OSS	WB	
30-40	1	15	30	5	21	23	11	106
40-50	7	26	58	25	24	35	52	227
50-60	10	23	40	15	23	14	57	182
60-70	16	10	28	7	13	15	35	124
70-80	19	2	7	2	3	5	13	51
Above 80	4	0	1	0	0	0	4	9
Below 30	0	1	3	2	3	2	0	11
Not reported	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Count	58	77	167	56	88	94	172	712

TABLE IV
Distribution of Education Status

Class X Matric	117
Graduate	231
Intermediate/Pre-Degree/Higher Secondary/ITI	129
No formal schooling	2
Post-Graduate	166
Up to Elementary Stage (Class VIII)	46
Up to Primary School (Class V)	20
Count	711

TABLE V
Marital Status

	Total Delegates
Married	639
Unmarried	71
Count	710

TABLE VI
Monthly Income

	Total Delegates
Income	
1,000-2,000	259
2,000-5,000	112
500-1,000	195
5000 and above	6.4
Less than 500	19
Not reported	63
Count	712

TABLE VII
Duration of Underground Experience

	Total Delegates
1. No Experience	396
2. Less than 2 months	31
3. 2-6 months	52
4. 6-12 months	32
5. 1-2 years	94
6. 2-5 years	65
7. 5-10 years	26
8. Above 10 years	5
Count	701

TABLE VIII
Duration of Jail Experience

	Total Delegates
1. No Experience	221
2. Less than 2 months	175
3. 2-6 months	93
4. 6-12 months	26
5. 1-2 years	73
6. 2-5 years	80
7. 5-10 years	32
8. Above 10 years	9
Count	709

TABLE IX
Class Origin by Regional Groups

Region Count	CC	HSS	KER	OES	ONS	OSS	WB	Total
Agricultural Labour	2	2	9	0	5	6	0	24
Bourgeois	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Middle Class	28	22	24	25	42	30	134	305
Middle Peasant	5	21	53	11	11	13	9	123
Petty Bourgeois (other than Salaried or Professional Strata	3	1	1	2	3	1	4	15
Poor Peasant	4	15	33	12	17	17	10	108
Rich Peasant	2	3	5	2	2	3	3	20
Working Class	6	10	40	2	6	13	6	83
Count	57	77	167	56	88	94	172	711

TABLE X
Distribution by Current Profession

Total Delegates

Current Profession	Total	
College Teacher	16	16
Engineer/Technician	4	4
Lawyer	11	11
Medical Practitioner	1	1
Middle Peasant	7	7
Office Employee	25	25
Others	17	17
Poor Peasant	4	4
School Teacher	17	17
Wholetimer	604	604
Worker	6	6
Count	712	712

TABLE XI
Distribution of Currently Working Front

Total Delegates

Current Profession	Total	
Agricultural Labour	42	42
Cultural	11	11
Kishan Sabha	93	93
Middle Class Employees	13	13
Others	33	33
Party Organisation	296	296
Student	10	10
Trade Union	143	143
Women's	37	37
Youth	27	27
Count	705	705

TABLE XII
Party Congress Attended

Of party congress attend	Region							Total
	CC	HSS	KER	OES	ONS	OSS	WB	
	1	0	3	1	3	0	3	11
1	0	25	42	10	26	39	15	157
2	0	11	26	11	22	10	35	115
3	1	13	22	9	15	14	23	97
4	1	13	16	8	11	10	36	95
5	8	8	19	6	5	6	18	70
6	6	3	10	5	2	4	13	43
7	4	1	7	3	1	3	11	30
8	9	2	11	1	0	2	12	37
9	2	1	4	1	1	1	2	12
10	10	0	1	1	0	1	0	13
11	1	0	2	0	0	2	2	7
12	5	0	2	0	2	2	1	12
13	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	4
14	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
15	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	58	77	167	56	88	94	172	712

TABLE XIII
Distribution by Party Organisational Status

Organisation	Total Delegates	
		Total
Branch		
Central Committee	56	56
District Committee	58	58
Local Committee	207	207
State Committee	4	4
Zonal/Area Committee	379	379
	5	5
Total	709	709

TABLE XIV
Period of Entry into Party

Region

During which period	CC	HSS	KER	OES	ONS	OSS	WB	Total
After 1977	0	25	14	4	20	22	11	96
After 1982	0	5	4	2	11	5	3	30
Before 1942	19	0	4	0	1	1	9	34
Before 1947	9	3	5	3	2	9	6	37
Before 1964	14	13	48	11	11	15	73	185
Before 1970	5	12	32	20	13	14	44	140
Before 1977	4	19	43	16	25	27	25	159
Not Reported	7	0	17	0	5	0	0	29
Total	58	77	167	56	88	93	171	710

TABLE XV
Number of Wholetimers

Total Delegates

Are you a wholetimer?	Total	
No	1	1
Yes	91	91
Total	620	620
Total	712	712

Greetings from Fraternal Parties Sent to the 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995*

(a) GREETINGS FROM CPI

Dear Comrades of the Presidium, dear delegates to the 15th Congress of the CPI(M), esteemed guests from fraternal Communist and Workers' Parties!

On behalf of the Communist Party of India and on my own behalf, I bring you warm comradely greetings. I wish this Congress great success. Our greetings is not something formal and routine, but a genuine expression of our sincere feelings

Comrades, the General Secretary of your Party Comrade H.S. Surjeet was present at the inauguration of the 15th Congress of the CPI in Hyderabad in April 1992. Such fraternal exchanges give us a better opportunity to understand each other and to strengthen our relationship. I hope this tradition will be maintained and continued in the context of the 16th Congress of the CPI to be held in New Delhi next October.

Comrades, the international situation today is indeed a challenging one. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, the imperialist circles and the ideologues of the bourgeoisie have unleashed a worldwide tirade against Marxism and socialism. They pronounced the death of socialism. They questioned the relevance of Marxism. They confidently declared that there was no future for the Communists.

But Comrades, the developments taking place in different parts of the world prove the invincibility of Marxist thought and its

*Published in the compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) in December 1995.

scientific principles. The new world order which is sought to be imposed by the onslaught of finance capital can never provide solutions to the basic problems of mankind. History cannot be turned back. Capitalism can never be an eternal system. It is a transitory phase in the social development of mankind. Socialism holds the key to the future.

We firmly believe in the final victory of socialism. It all depends upon our capacity to apply the teachings of Marxism-Leninism to the specific characteristics of every country including our own.

The national situation is also very critical. The country is at a crossroads. The new economic policies pursued by the Congress government at the centre in the name of development are sacrificing our economic sovereignty to the interests of the multinationals. They are having a disastrous impact on the common people in the form of rampant inflation, unemployment, job-insecurity and corruption. A change of government at the centre has become imperative.

The Congress party is in deep crisis. In this context, the Rightist and communal forces represented by the BJP are bidding for power at the centre.

At the same time, political awareness and social consciousness among the backward and oppressed sections of society have greatly sharpened.

The basic political situation and balance of political forces in the country is very volatile and fast changing. This demands the effective intervention of the Left, and particularly of the two Communist Parties, in the situation.

We can, of course, claim that our two parties, along with other Left allies, have been playing a not insignificant role in the struggle against communalism and the negative features of the new economic policies of the Congress government as well as in the struggle for democracy, social justice and human rights.

The nationwide civil disobedience movement conducted last year in defence of the country's economic sovereignty and self-reliance was a major struggle led by the Left Parties after independence. Prior to this, the joint mass rallies held by our two

parties in various states had a galvanising effect on the masses. The Communist Party of India considers unity of action between our two parties as extremely vital and important, and corresponding to the needs of the situation and the expectation of the masses. Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that our electoral performance in the eight states which have recently gone to the polls has been uneven and, on the whole, disappointing. The basic cause for this is the weakness of the Party organisation in the states concerned and their failure to forge electoral adjustments with other democratic and secular forces. This has facilitated the victory of the Rightist communal parties in Western India, which is a matter of deep concern.

Forging the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces is indispensable for building a credible national alternative. In the coming period, there should be more and more bilateral as well as multilateral talks among the Left Parties to iron out differences, remove misunderstanding, and enhance the level of united actions with a common democratic programme. The joint initiatives and efforts of the two Communist Parties have a decisive role to play in this development.

Comrades, we, the Communists in India, faithful to the imperishable ideological heritage of Marxism-Leninism, have a historic mission, just as Communists in other countries.

*A mission to put an end to economic exploitation, social oppression, and social and cultural backwardness;

*A mission to confront and overcome the forces of communalism, casteism and obscurantism, and to uphold secularism;

*A mission to strengthen the democratic development of our country in the interests of the masses;

*A mission to uphold democracy, human values, and social justice.

To accomplish this historic mission, let us march forward together, with a more meaningful cooperation between our two parties.

Long Live the fraternal relations and unity of action of the Communists in India!

(b) MESSAGE FROM CP NEPAL (UML)

Warm greetings from Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and all working people of Nepal. Tearing off intrigue of monopoly capitalists and imperialists, conducting ideological struggle against dogmatism and liquidationism with firm confidence in creatively utilising and developing Marxism, all labouring people of the world and their representatives, the Communists are again resurging. On such an auspicious occasion the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the beloved Party of the working people of India is organising its 15th National Congress to which I do want to express greetings for the successful completion, at the beginning.

We, the Communists of Nepal respect the Communist as well as democratic movement of India, drawing inspiration, and humbly learning from it. We have recognised your country, India, is an old country with enormous experience and yourselves as militant, matured and brilliant comrades. Hence, we have been learning from you since long, learning at the present and will be learning in future, too. In an 'International Conference' of Communists and workers in Calcutta in May 1993, the most popular personality of Nepalese history and people's leader of our Party, Comrade Madan Bhandari had announced that the flag of world's working people would be hoisted at the highest peak of Mt. Everest, challenging the imperialists. I would ask for your permission to state with pride that we have hoisted the red flag with hammer and sickle at the summit of the world in our beautiful country, Nepal.

Unfortunately, our beloved leader is no more with us to share the days of happiness and pride. Our beloved leader who was as dear as our own heart, was assassinated before two years in a mystery by the reactionaries. They had dreamt that the desire of imperialists would be fulfilled and the Communist movement in Nepal would face a setback. But the followers of Madan Bhandari and comrades have foiled their design. We have vowed to fight

back imperialists, the enemy of the people and their stooge, until the last drop of blood, preferring to bear death and never bow down. We have taken an oath not to let the red flag fall down as long as we are alive.

We have been established as the largest party in the parliament despite all kinds of fraudulence, intrigue and booth capturing in the last midterm poll held in November 1994. Amid several social and political contradictions, we have formed the government under the leadership of our Chairman, Comrades Manmohan Adhikari, as the largest Party, due to our work, skill and the efforts of patriots and true democrats of the country though we had not obtained a clear majority.

There is a constitutional monarchical multi-party parliamentary system in our country. There has not been complete transformation in social, economic and political fields. But the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) has become successful in reaching to the government of the nation through peaceful political competition, even being representative of all radical forces and the Communists.

This even has raised a curious question and started a debate amongst contemporary political analysts in defining the even in a Marxist approach. Now our simple conclusion states that the working class is in the government through the peaceful political competition for the first time in the history of our country. The government of working people has shown a different characteristic than the previous government. It bears the traits of anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism. But this is not still a socialist or socialist-oriented government. This is a democratic government opposed to feudalism and imperialism. We had adopted 'People's Multi-Party Democracy' as our programme at the Fifth National Congress two years before. It has, all this time, been guiding our current struggle. Although, People's Multi-Party Democracy has not yet been achieved in our country, we have involved ourselves in skilfully running the government, providing help to the people through progressive reforms, uplifting the standard of living, promoting nationalism, developing democratic rights of people.

After having formed the government, there has been a slight shift in the form and level of class struggle. At present class struggle •

in our country has taken the form of peaceful, legal and constitutional struggle. The government is committed to fulfill the people's demands in a gradual process. Therefore, the class struggle is expressed in terms of the above mentioned major tasks. Apart from that, our government has the support of a larger section of people. Because of this support, we were able to form the government despite being in a minority. There may be secret attempts to bring down our government. But none of the attempts of the opponents will succeed so long as the government works in favour of the people and nation and not committing crimes against the people. The inherent danger is within ourselves, which are inefficiency, ignorance, inexperience and weakness, rather than from outside.

Dear Comrades,

Now we are demanding assistance from the just-living democratic and socialist people and nations to preserve the government of patriots, democrats and working people in our small but beautiful country. We are searching for our friends all over the world. Today we are in need of different kinds of cooperation. Your cooperation will keep the red flag over the summit of Mt. Everest unfurled, which will keep on inspiring the spirit of the Nepalese as well as people of the working class of the world.

Comrades,

I want to greet on behalf of the Nepalese Communists, utilising this auspicious occasion, our old but youthful and spirited Comrade Surjeet and all comrades through yourselves. Real friends provide cooperation at the time of need and share happiness. Comrade Surjeet has always raised our confidence, inspired us and has become a friend to whom a Nepalese is never to be forgotten. I wish him healthier and longer life. We, the Nepalese Communists, will take your side to make a new world without imperialism and reiterate our words to keep hoisted the red flag in the country of Mt. Everest.

Long Live solidarity between the CPI(M) and CPN (UML)!

Long Live Marxism-Leninism!

Bamdev Gautam
Deputy General Secretary
CPN (UML)

(c) MESSAGE FROM RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation cordially greets delegates to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

India and Russia have always been connected by the ties of friendship and mutual solidarity. We are proud that the Communists have contributed so much to the relation between the peoples of both the great nations.

Our country is at a tragic crossroads now. The present-day ruling regime is trying to push the peoples of Russia back to barbaric primitive capitalism by means of fraud and violence.

Nevertheless, the resistance to the regime is becoming more and more active.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation considers its primary task now-a-days to attach to this resistance movement a concrete and clear character.

Overcoming the difficulties of prohibitions, dispersal and persecution, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has managed to withstand and to become an influential political force for the whole country.

The new Party programme has been adopted at the recently held Third Congress. In this programme, the Russian Communists have worked out their tasks for pulling the country from the crisis. They declared that the Party would continue its struggle for unity and for the restoration of a single union state. The Party is fighting for the prosperity and security, physical and moral health of the citizens and the nation and for the socialist way of the development of Russia.

We are convinced that the principal contest between capitalism and socialism historically is not over.

The Communists of Russia are grateful to your Party, to all honest people in India for the support rendered to us at the gravest times for Russia.

We wish you, dear Comrades, much success in your struggle for the interests of the Indian people!

Long Live to the International Solidarity of Communists!

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

**(d) FROM PROGRESSIVE PARTY OF WORKING
PEOPLE (AKEL)**

Dear Comrades,

We received your invitation to participate in the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). We thank you for the invitation and congratulate you on this important event in the life of your Party. We would very much like to be present, unfortunately, however, due to financial limitations, we cannot send a delegate to your Congress. *

We understand that your 15th Congress is going to discuss issues related to the life, problems and struggles of the people of India and suggest solutions and ways of promoting them. We suppose that the Congress is also going to focus its attention on international issues and problems. The current world situation and the situation in the world progressive movement are such that need to be examined and analysed. As far as we are concerned, we organised, together with the Communist Party of Greece, a meeting of the progressive parties of the Mediterranean, Middle East and Balkans, in Larnaca, last December. This meeting discussed the need for common action of the Left, progressive and patriotic forces to face the new world order. All the documents of the meeting will be published in English and we shall send them to you.

We consider that today, more than ever before, the unity and coordination of action of Communist, socialist, Left, democratic forces is necessary on national and international scale. First of all the exchange of information, experience and views among the broadest possible circle of progressive, democratic forces is both necessary and can prove very useful for all forces involved. Although we cannot be present at your Congress, we would request you to send us, if possible, the Congress documents, in order to be able to follow your analysis and positions on the situation in India as well as on various issues of common interest.

Regarding the Cyprus problem, we would like to inform you that it is at a critical stage. Unfortunately, the intransigence of Turkey and Mr. Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, who with the backing of USA and Britain, defy all U.N. resolutions on Cyprus, do not allow us to be optimists about the future. In our

struggle for a peaceful mutually acceptable solution, based on the U.N. resolutions and the High Level Agreement between the two communities, we depend on the international solidarity and pressure for the implementation of the relevant U.N. resolutions. India is a country which traditionally supports the cause of Cyprus and we would like to thank you for that. We are sure that this support will continue in the future as well.

Dear Comrades, once more, we wish you every success in the deliberations of your 15th Congress.

Comradely yours,
Donis Christofinis
Secretary for International Relations
Member of PB of the C.C. of Akel

(e) FROM COMMUNIST PARTY, USA

Dear Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet and delegates to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist):

It is with great pleasure that we greet you and the 15th Congress of the CPI(M). We congratulate you on your accomplishments on behalf of the people of India and for world peace and friendship in the struggles against imperialism.

We are delighted and heartened by the growing unity-in-action developing between your Party, the Communist Party of India and other Left forces. In this we see the promise of a bright future for all who labour by hand and brain, yes, the prospect of a socialist future.

In your developing unity we see the rise of a powerful bulwark against U.S. imperialism and other imperialisms to plunge the world into a new, disastrous war for markets and a wayout of the economic and financial abyss into which they are sinking.

Now, more than ever, is the cohesion and solidarity of the world Communist movement needed. That is why we would very much like to accept your invitation to send a delegation to the 15th Congress. We deeply regret that our financial circumstances at this time do not allow us to send a delegation.

We are very interested in the work of your Congress and express our desire to receive a copy of the proceedings.

We wish you good health and success for a productive Congress opening the road to historic headway for all India's Communists

With warmest greetings,

Gus Hall, Chairman
Communist Party, USA
on behalf of the National Board

(f) MESSAGE FROM CP SRI LANKA

The Communist Party of Sri Lanka conveys its greetings to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and wishes its proceedings all success.

My participation in this Congress is evidence of the importance that the CPSL attaches to its fraternal relations with the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Your Congress meets at a time of Communist rejuvenation which belies the negative forecasts of capitalist propagandists. The Communist movement in our sub-continent has also made remarkable progress in the last two years despite the adverse effects of the collapse of Socialist governments in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union itself.

We congratulate the CPI(M) on its significant gains in the sphere of Party building and expansion of its political influence in the country. Its electoral successes, together with those of other Left Parties, and in particular its signal contribution in securing and advancing the administrations in West Bengal and Tripura are achievements about which the CPI(M) could be justly proud of. The CPSL expresses its solidarity with the struggles of the CPI(M) and other Left forces against the anti-people economic policies of the Rao Government, against communalism and separatism, against corruption and criminalisation of policies and for building up a secular alternative based on a programme distinct from Congress.

We hail the efforts of the CPI(M) to strengthen Left unity and its stress on the rapid increase in Left intervention in respect of

economic policies. We also wish that the Left Parties and in particular the CPI(M) and the CPI will be drawn close together on the basis of common policies in the fight for the common goal.

In Sri Lanka, the CPSL has made a noteworthy contribution to the formation as well as to the electoral successes of the peoples alliance of which it is a constituent member. The defeat of the much hated united National Party Government which ruled the country with an iron fist and repressed the people for over seventeen years have opened a new perspective for the advance of the peoples movement.

The CPSL joined the government not to change the social system or the economic system but ensure that it carries out certain minimum democratic transformations necessary at this stage. We attach particular importance to the following:

—The replacement of the present autocratic presidential system of government by the adoption of a constitution under which the peoples sovereignty including executive power will be exercised through parliament.

—The constitutional guarantee of the fundamental rights and freedom of the people.

—ending the Civil War by finding a political solution to the nationalities problem;

—the defence and expansion of the social welfare system;

—pressing for the deepening of social justice.

For the achievement of these objectives, we work within and outside the government and are committed to defend it against imperialist, reactionary and communal forces.

Whilst expressing our sincere gratitude to you for making our participation in your Congress a memorable one, we wish your Party further and greater successes in the future.

Long Live Socialism!

Long Live Marxism!

Long Live the friendship, unity and cooperation between the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and the Communist Party of India (Marxist)!

Raja Collure
General Secretary
Communist Party of Sri Lanka

(g) MESSAGE FROM TUDEH PARTY OF IRAN

Allow me on behalf of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party to extend our wholehearted fraternal greetings to you, the participants of the CPI(M) 15th Congress, and all the progressive forces in your country struggling for social justice, peace and progress.

We are confident that your 15th Congress will be able to discuss and make important decisions to strengthen the struggle of your Party and its allies to promote the lofty ideals of the working people of your country, for equality and social justice. The Indian Communists in their long and glorious history of struggle have consistently shown that they are the true champions of the working people, and thus have enjoyed the overwhelming support and confidence of the working class throughout the country. This struggle is a shining example of how determined revolutionaries could overcome great odds and continue their commitment and struggle for a truly free and just society, for a socialist future.

Your 15th Congress is being held at a crucial and testing time for the progressive forces throughout the world. Following the collapse of the socialist states in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the world is witnessing a drive by world imperialism for total domination and an everincreasing aggression against all the peoples, countries and political forces who are chaining and resisting this drive. Despite the setbacks, the progressive forces have continued their struggle against world monopoly capitalism for a better future free from exploitation and injustices inherent in the capitalist system. The savage destruction of the socio-economic fabric of the countries of the Eastern Europe and the USSR and the inhumane conditions imposed upon millions of the working people in these countries show the true characteristics of capitalism and at the same time stiffens the determination of the progressive forces to struggle for an alternative path of development.

The evergrowing ethnic and religious conflicts throughout the world and particularly in our region from Iraq, Turkey to Afganistan, which is being fuelled by reactionary forces and imperialist countries, arms industries, also highlights more than

ever before the growing need for a united struggle of all the progressive forces who are opposed to the "world's new order" and want a future free from conflicts, wars, and injustices created by the world capitalist system. The everincreasing awareness and a number of initiatives and attempts to create a new anti-imperialist front and increase the cooperation of the progressive forces in our region and across other regions are clear indication of the determination of the progressive forces and particularly the workers and Communist Parties to resist the new expansionist policies persuaded by world imperialism.

The Tudeh Party of Iran and the Indian comrades have a long and rich history of close cooperation and solidarity. We are forever grateful for the militant solidarity shown by you in our hard and arduous struggle against the dictatorial regime which is ruling our country. We are confident that these close relations and cooperation will develop even further. Allow me to once again take this opportunity to wish all the participants of the 15th Congress and all the progressive forces in your country every success in their just struggle for equality, peace and social justice.

Victory to the 15th Congress of the CPI(M)!

Long Live the Fraternal relations between the CPI(M) and the Tudeh Party of Iran!

Long Live Proletarian Internationalism!

Mohammad Omidvar
*International Secretary of the
C.C. of the Tudeh Party of Iran*

(h) MESSAGE FROM CP CHILE

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Chile sends you revolutionary greetings; our party also represents the feelings of Allende's followers of Chile.

The CPC is completely committed to recover full democracy for the people of Chile and wishes great success of your Congress, whose aim is to defend the interest of all the revolutionaries of your country and of all the people of India

We regret that due to the economic difficulties, we are not able to attend your Congress. We hope you will understand it. Fraternally saluting you on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPC.

Gladys Marin
General Secretary, CP Chile

(i) MESSAGE FROM LAO PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

On the occasion of the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Central Committee of the LAO People's Revolutionary Party, on behalf of the party members and the LAO working class hereby convey their cordial greetings, heartiest congratulations and best wishes to all delegates attending the Congress and to the working class of India.

We are confident that the friendly relations between the LAO People's Revolutionary Party and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) will continue to develop and strengthen further.

We wish the Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) more greater successes.

*Central Committee of the
LAO People's Revolutionary Party*

(j) MESSAGE FROM CP BRAZIL

It is a great pleasure for us to be with you here today. This is the first time we send a delegation to the Congress of the CPI(M). Despite thousands of kilometres apart in geographical terms, our parties have a very similar trajectory within the Communist movement. Both of our parties had the courage to take up and sustain the Red Flag of Revolution, when opportunist concentrations on strategy and tactics threatened to lead the respective strata of our people to a dead end. Both of us try to combine a principled defence of Marxist theory with its creative and independent application to the concrete conditions of our countries. Both attempt to combine a very clear and pronounced Socialist identity

with an equally broad, flexible and active participation in the mainstream of national politics. Both of us uphold an intransigent defense of workers' and peasants' social demands, together with the struggle for democracy and national sovereignty.

Besides the similarities between our parties' concepts and activities, there are also important parallels in the objective conditions present in both of our countries. We are both big dependent capitalist nations, with large populations and diversified economic bases, that cannot easily fit into the international division of labour existent in the capitalist world economy. Because of this, the attempts to impose on us orthodox policies of economic and social adjustment have run against important obstacles and have not—up to now—been fully successful. The crisis of Mexico in Latin America shows just how much this new liberal offensive amounts to a new form of colonialism—sacrificing fundamental instruments of national sovereignty for an unconditional subordination to the "Impersonal" dictatorship of world markets. The struggle against this offensive is at the centre stage of the activities of the Brazilian Communists. We understand it is also at the centre stage of the activities of the Indian Communists. Our mutual success in this resistance will have an important positive impact on the present correlation of forces in Latin America and Asia, opening the way for democratic and popular movements to retake the offensive against reaction and imperialism in the world.

We hope our participation in the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) will help strengthen the struggles of our peoples as well as the unity and friendship between our parties. We wish you success in your works.

Long Live the friendship between the people of India and Brazil!

Long Live the unity of the CPI(M) and the Communist Party of Brazil!

Long Live Socialism!

(K) MESSAGE FROM WORKERS' PARTY OF KOREA

Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea offers warm congratulations to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party

of India (Marxist) and extends, through the Congress, the fraternal greetings to the Central Committee and entire members of your Party

The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) will encourage the Indian working class and your Party in their struggle to defend and realise the independent rights of the broad working masses of the people.

Since its foundation, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has travelled a long time the path of struggle against imperialism and for peace and socialism and made invariable efforts to strengthen the international unity and solidarity of the socialist forces.

We are convinced that the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) will make a great contribution to the organisational and ideological consolidation of your Party and to the struggle for peace and socialism.

Believing that the traditional friendship and bonds of unity between our two parties will constantly strengthen and develop, we take this opportunity to sincerely wish you great successes in the work of the Congress.

*Central Committee
Workers' Party of Korea
Pyongyang, April 3, 1995*

(1) MESSAGE FROM COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

On the occasion of the opening of the CPI(M) 15th Congress, we would like to express our warm congratulations to you, and through you, to extend our cordial greetings and good wishes to all the CPI(M) members and the people of India.

Over a long period of time, CPI(M) has been making positive efforts and has achieved gratifying results in promoting social progress and economic development in India, improving the living standard of her people, and safeguarding regional and world peace. We wish the CPI(M) more success in the future.

The peoples of China and India enjoy a traditional friendship. We are glad to see that the continuous development of the friendly

relations between our two parties has promoted the friendship between our two countries and two peoples. We firmly believe, with the joint efforts of our two parties, we will make new contributions in promoting the development of the good neighbourly relationship between China and India and the traditional friendship between our two peoples.

We wish the Congress a full success!

*Central Committee
Communist Party of China
April 3, 1995*

(m) MESSAGE FROM CP VIETNAM

On the occasion of the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam would like to convey to the Congress and all Party cadres and members our warmest greetings.

Your Congress is an important event in the political life of the Party which assumes great significance for the struggle of the working class and labouring people in India.

In spite of complicated developments in the domestic and international situation, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)—adherent to Marxism-Leninism, Communist ideals and internationalism of the working class—has carried out an untiring struggle for the noble ideals of our time with a firm belief in the victory of socialism. In the process of your struggle, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has expanded its sphere of influence, and become an important force in the political arena of India, its prestige higher and higher in various sections of Indian people as well as in the international Communist movement.

The Communists and people of Vietnam sincerely congratulate your Party on those achievements made over the last few decades, especially in the period since your 14th Congress up to now. We are happy at the relations of solidarity, friendship and fine

cooperation existing between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of Vietnam

We are convinced that the lines worked out by this Congress will usher in new directions for the development of your struggle meeting the needs of the working class labouring people in India, thus making active contributions to the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

May the solidarity friendship and cooperation between our two parties and two peoples of Vietnam and India be further consolidated and developed.

May the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) be crowned with fine success.

With communist greetings,

*The Central Committee
Communist Party of Vietnam*

(n) GREETINGS FROM CP PORTUGAL

We convey the warm and fraternal greetings of the Portuguese Communists and their esteem and solidarity for the courageous action of the CPI(M) on behalf of the Indian workers and peoples interests, against the anti-popular policy dictated by big transnational capital, in defence of sovereignty, integrity and national unity. We are well-aware of the decisive role played by the CPI(M), together with its allies, in the struggle of the masses, namely, in the gigantic strikes and popular actions which have been taking place in your country, and your action within the West Bengal Government and in other states of the Indian Union.

We wish you, dear Comrades, best success for your action on behalf of the cooperation of the popular and Left-wing forces, for a sovereign, united and progressive India which is tuned to the solution of the dramatic problems of the masses and to a foreign policy of peace, friendship and cooperation among peoples.

In Portugal, the Communists are engaged in tough social and political battles against the present government's anti-democratic

policies which aim at reconstructing monopoly capital, guided by the neo-liberal criteria of Maastricht and by the interests of the multinationals and imperialism.

The important popular struggles of the working class, of farmers, the youth, the intellectuals and other groups of the population which have taken place, seriously inveigled and shook the right-wing majority which holds power. With the parliamentary election in forthcoming October, there is a real possibility for the emergence of a democratic alternative, but this requires the need to strengthen the PCP which is the only large political force which carries with it a Left-wing project capable of meeting the yearning of the Portuguese people for justice and social progress.

Firmly asserting our party's independence and Communist identity and permanently looking after roots in the working class and in the people, it is with satisfaction that, in spite of difficulties, we verify that the PCP does not regress but on the contrary, it progresses. Denying the campaigns on the death of communism and on the irreversible decline of the PCP, our Party is reconfirmed as a force which is necessary to the workers and to their struggle for a better life.

The workers' and people's liberating cause, the struggle against the attempts to impose an imperialist 'new world order' makes imperative and urgent, along with the development of the struggle in each country, the strengthening of the workers of the peoples', the Communists' and all progressive forces' internationalist solidarity.

The defeat of socialism in the USSR and in Eastern Europe has created correlation of forces which is unfavourable to the struggle of the Communists and progressive forces, has caused disorientation, discouragement and has even led to phenomena of liquidation or social-democratising degeneration. But they have not changed the exploiting and oppressive nature of capitalism (on the contrary, they stimulated it), nor did they abolish the contradictions in which the system finds itself. The World Summit on Social Development is a recent testimony that capitalism is not only incapable of solving the problems affecting mankind but also they tend to get worse. India, which like other countries of the

so-called third world, is subject to the diktat of the IMF/World Bank and growingly open to the plunder of the multinationals, is a particularly evident example. But unemployment, poverty and social exclusion which are spreading throughout the European Union and in the so-called industrialised countries, have the same class origin. These are realities which objectively approximate the people's struggles and render the development of international solidarity ties particularly necessary.

Comrades,

In spite of the distance between our two countries and the very different conditions under which our two parties are struggling, ties of deep mutual friendship and solidarity were established between the PCP and the CPI(M). To that effect an important contribution as given by the exchange of top-level visits in the last few years, allowing for greater mutual knowledge and understanding. The PCP will continue to act so that this relationship becomes even closer in the future.

We wish the best success to the work of your 15th Congress

*The Central Committee of the
Portuguese Communist Party*

(o) GREETING FROM WORKERS' PARTY OF BANGLADESH

I and members of our delegation bring to you the fraternal and revolutionary greetings of the Central Committee and of all the members of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh. We express our heartfelt thanks to you for inviting us to attend the 15th Congress of your Party, which is not only important for the working class and the people of your country but for all of us, the members of the international working class movement and for all the people of the world struggling for peace, democracy and social justice

The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is being held in the backdrop of new world situation and particularly

of new situation in the world Communist movement. The last few years have seen a great setback in the world Communist movement. The collapse of socialist system in the former Soviet Union and in the East European countries and the years preceding those events created utter confusion among the ranks of the world Communist movement. Many of them, even many big parties, lost confidence in socialism itself and abandoned Marxism-Leninism. We have seen liquidation and liquidationist tendencies in many of these working class parties. Taking advantage of this situation the bourgeois propagandists intensified their attack on Marxism and wanted to bury the heroic struggles and achievements of the international working class under heaps of lies and falsification of history.

We are grateful to CPI(M) for it is one of the parties which steadfastly upheld the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism and boldly fought out the liquidationist, revisionist and opportunist trends in the international Communist movement. The May Seminar in 1993, organised by CPI(M) on the birth anniversary of Karl Marx brought together the International Communist and Workers' parties at that crucial time and reasserted the validity of Marxism-Leninism. This has helped in clearing many confusion and provided an opportunity for those present in that seminar to exchange their views and experiences and to reach a common understanding and ideological stand.

As for us, we have many common points of understanding with the CPI(M) on ideological issues and on issues pertaining to the present world situation. We maintain with full assertion that there is no alternative to socialism for human emancipation and it is the ideological weapon of Marxism-Leninism which can achieve that goal that the collapse of socialism in some parts of the world and in a particular period does not prove anything against the science of Marxism. We need not elaborate the great successes of socialism and its immense contribution to the human civilisation. Socialism collapsed in certain countries not because of any defect of Marxism but because the leadership in those countries since the time of Khrushchev practised revisionism and finally abandoned Marxism-Leninism.

Our Party maintains that in spite of the setbacks, which we believe to be temporary, we are still living in the historic era of

socialism and proletarian revolution. Therefore, the relevance of Marxism-Leninism remains as valid as before.

The setback of socialism has made world imperialist forces under the leadership of U.S. imperialism further aggressive. In the name of establishing a new world order, they are trying to establish unhindered control over the world, particularly the third world. In fact, they are increasing their pressure on the third world countries to succumb to their economic and political designs. We have seen this in the arrogant continuation of economic blockade against Cuba despite repeated vote in the U.N. general assembly against it, in the extension of economic sanctions against Iraq and Libya, blackmailing of DPRK on nuclear reactor issue, pressurising China on human rights issue. We in the sub-continent have experienced and are experiencing the onslaught of World Bank and IMF to advance the interest of the international finance capital to the detriment of our economy and economic sovereignty accelerating the pauperisation of our people further. These have brought forward the question of anti-imperialist struggle and the solidarity of the international working class on these questions to the forefront. The unity of the anti-imperialist forces is urgently needed more than any time before. We have observed with great admiration the steadfast struggle of the Indian working class under the leadership of CPI(M) against this onslaught. We hope that this Congress of CPI(M) will strive further to forge unity of the anti-imperialist forces of the world.

Comrades,

The rise of religious fundamentalist forces has become a great danger for the unity of working class people and the united struggle of the people against imperialism. The Left, democratic and progressive forces are its main target. We in the sub-continent are one of the great victims of the rise of the fundamentalist forces. These forces are responsible for disrupting the communal harmony, violence and division of the people on the basis of religion. It is urgently needed to unite the non-communal and secular forces not only in one country but in all the countries of the sub-continent and across countries and take concrete steps to combat communalism and uphold minority rights. We hope that CPI(M) with its great experience of fight against

communal forces, will come forward to unite the secular and democratic forces of the sub-continent against this common enemy.

Comrades,

The questions of environment, women's right and poverty alleviation have come to the forefront and are being debated in the international forums. We hope that this Congress would give positive direction to the united struggle on these questions unmasking the pretentious propagandist stance of the capitalist countries who are responsible for destruction of the environment, subjugation of women and for poverty of the world people.

Dear Delegates,

Our fraternal relations with the CPI(M) date back to long past. We inherit the common tradition of the Communist movement that emerged in the sub-continent during the British rule. We remember with gratitude the support and help rendered to us and to the people of Bangladesh by the CPI(M) during our war of independence in 1971. We also want to express our gratitude to all of you for your great support in our difficulties. We hope that our fraternal relations will develop further through the struggle against common difficulties that beset our sub-continent.

Lastly, I want to express my personal gratitude to you for the sympathy and support after the assassination attempt on me by the fundamentalist forces which greatly gave courage to me, my family and our party at that difficult time.

We hope this Congress of the CPI(M) would be successful and, as in the past, would contribute greatly to the world Communist movement and to the anti-imperialist secular democratic movement of the region.

I, on behalf of our delegation, once again thank you for giving us the opportunity to be here with you and for the warm hospitality extended to us.

Long Live Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism!
Workers of the all countries unite!

Rashed Khan Menon
General Secretary
Workers' Party of Bangladesh

(p) **MESSAGE FROM PAKISTAN**

Overwhelmed with revolutionary fervour and inspiration emanating from your irresistible resolve to uphold the banner of Marxism and Leninism in the rough weather of imperialist drumbeat that socialism has ceased to be a socio-economic force to reckon with following the collapse of the Soviet Union, we warmly felicitate you on the occasion of your Party Congress being held in Chandigarh to determine the future course of action so as to bring about a meaningful social change at broader spectrum. The holding of this Congress is yet another manifestation of the invincibility of Marxism that belies the insidious claim that capitalism is the only motivating force for all times to come.

The validity of capitalist cardinal doctrine of *laissez-faire* evaporated in the thin air long ago when it was replaced with cartels, and it now stands repudiated in the event of gunboat diplomacy and eventually politico-economic subjugation of the nations in the South. It has no remedy to overcome its own inherent crisis, turning itself into a monster of war, ethnic turmoil, arms race and destruction for commercial profit. All these conflicts could be only resolved through overthrowing a retarded and stagnant system of tyranny, and ultimate establishment of socialism. No jugglery, in whatever form, could make capitalism escape its doom.

Your Party Congress, we believe, would not only kindle the path of class struggle in the backdrop of neo-colonial cobwebs but also adopt a non-partisan attitude towards clearing the bushes the South Asian nations are trapped in, called regional conflicts created by imperialist forces and their lackeys. It would be a great contribution on the part of your Party if it exposes the intriguing ploys of local leadership for confrontation in the region with a view to prolonging the exploitative social system under the smokescreen of national interests.

We express our solidarity with your Party and once again extend our felicitations.

Imam Ali Nazish
Chairman
Communist Mazdoor
Kisan Party, Pakistan

(q) MESSAGE FROM CP SPAIN

We regret that we are not able to attend your Congress despite the fact that we would have liked to do so. We have been trying our best till the last moment to send at least one person as our representative, however, various kinds of work that we have to carry out presently in view of the coming municipal and district elections, impede us from travelling to India.

I promise that next time on the occasion of such an important event as your Congress, count with the presence of the Communist Party of Spain. The importance of India on its own, the role that it plays in this part of the world, as also the entity of the CPI(M) will help the Congress in identifying and selecting the important issues of your country and of the world.

Fraternally and cordially on behalf of the CPS,

Francisco Frutos
*Secretary of the Foreign
Relations, PCE*

(r) MESSAGE FROM POLISARIO FRONT

On the occasion of the holding of the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in Chandigarh on 3-8 April 1995, the National Secretariat of the Polisario Front is pleased to express to the Central Committee of the CPI(M) its best wishes for success of the works of this Congress of your Party.

We would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew to your Party, on behalf of the Polisario Front and the people of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), our warm thanks and deep gratitude for the constant support and the militant solidarity extended by the CPI(M) to the Sahrawi people in their just struggle for self-determination and national independence.

Accept, dear friends, the expression of our militant salutations.

*Commission for Foreign Affairs
of National Secretariat of
the Polisario Front*

(s) **GREETINGS FROM FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY**

I would like to greet your Congress and to wish you a great success in achieving your goals, in the name of our Party, the French Communist Party, in the name of its militants, of its national leadership and particularly of its national secretary, Robert Hue

On behalf of our Party and of the forces of change, Robert Hue is now waging the battle of the French presidential election.

This election is the most important and the most difficult for us because it is the least democratic. It means actually the election of one man who enjoys, in France, larger powers than those of the President of the United States in his own country

This battle we are waging with the aim of strengthening the progressive forces of the Left.

A new current of sympathy seems to be growing towards our propositions during these last three months.

In the frame of the globalisation of the capital and of its crisis, our people have to face the same aggression as you have to. The overwhelming domination of money, the deregulation, the attacks against the national sovereignty, the merchandising of social welfare, unemployment, more and more difficult life for the people

Furthermore, we have our specific political responsibility since France is part of the G-7 group, the seven wealthiest countries in the world. And we are firmly keeping in mind to always link the interests of the workers in our own country with the struggle for a democratic, just international order in which all the peoples would be able to take their destiny in their own hands. All-over the world, in different and often new ways, the people are nurturing their aspirations for a better life. And it is in this frame that we think that the partnership of the revolutionary forces can assume a decisive action, not only for preventing the catastrophe which is threatening all of us but also for opening the ways of a new world

It is our future and the one of our children which is at stake in this very time.

Dear Comrades, we thank you once more for your heartfelt and fraternal hospitality and for the occasion you are giving to us for a better knowledge of the struggle of your people.

To our common struggles for a world of justice, peace and freedom.

Danielle Bleitrach
Member, National Committee
French Communist Party

(t) GREETINGS FROM CP GREECE

The Central Committee of the CPG extends to the delegates, to the members and cadres of the CPI(M) the warm greetings of the Greek Communist.

It is with great satisfaction that we assist in the proceedings of your Congress, as our party is greatly interested as far as the activities of the Communist Parties and the regrouping of the Communist movement are concerned. Our presence in your country will also be an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the situation and the struggle of the working people and with the experience and general thought of your Party as well.

As you know, our party—as well as the other parties having had the opportunity to participate to the successful seminar organised by your Party two years ago—considers that the collapse of capitalism and its replacement by socialism is inevitable.

The increasing marginalisation of the developing countries under the crushing burden of over-exploitation, of the accumulated debt and of the revised GATT treaty, the danger of losing the basic prerequisites not only of development but of any human activity as well, the explosive dimensions of hunger, poverty and misery engulfing hundreds of millions of people, the huge ecological damage are the direct result of the imperialist new order. The dramatic change in the world correlation of forces, brought about with the overthrow of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the USSR, let loose the most reactionary forces, gave a new impetus to the aggressiveness and the competition of the great powers for influence not only in the developing countries but in the whole world.

The war in former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda and of the Kurdish people, millions of lost lives and refugees and emigrants

are the result of the prevalence of NATO law and of the 'right to intervention' at the expense of the principles of equality and mutual respect brought about by the anti-fascist victory in the international law and the UNO.

The revival of nationalism, fascism and xenophobia, the explosion of unemployment and unbridled attack against the historical achievements of the labour movement accompany the Maastricht treaty, compiled by the European Union, under the power of monopoly capital. Those attacks coincide with the complete domination of the multinational companies and of the "values" of the "private initiative", of 'competition and the right of the stronger' in the relations among peoples and the international developments.

These developments and also the possibilities of modern technology and human civilisation show the limits of the imperialist new order. They create new difficulties but also lead to an exacerbation of the class struggle. The resurgence and the regrouping of many Communist Parties, the first steps of cooperation and coordination, the defeat of the authentic representatives of capitalist restoration in the former socialist countries, a number of struggles and movements of the working class, the peasantry, the peace-loving and anti-war forces are some of the new optimistic signs.

The Greek Communists are intensifying their efforts for a broad gathering of the working people against monopoly capital and imperialism, against the Maastricht treaty, for the dissolution of NATO and the destruction of the nuclear weapons, for the defence of the Helsinki principles, for the development and equal cooperation of all peoples. They are fighting for the development of a mass movement against war and nationalism in our country and the other Balkan countries. Only this could stop the war in former Yugoslavia and bring about peace and cooperation in Balkan countries.

Today, the necessity of contributing to the recomposition of the Communist movement and to the common activities of the Communist Parties is, for all Marxist-Leninist forces throughout the world, absolutely pre-eminent. This is the basic pre-requisite for the development of the anti-imperialist movement, to repulse

the attack of the monopoly capital and for opening the way to socialism.

We are availing this opportunity to greet the representatives of the other Communist and Workers' parties, wishing every success to the proceedings of your Congress and to the struggle against new order, for development, peace and socialism.

*The Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Greece*

(u) MESSAGE FROM CUBA

Today, we have the great honour and the deep satisfaction to convey the warm and fraternal revolutionary greetings of the Central Committee of our Party to the delegates and guests attending the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Our two parties consistently uphold a common ideology: the doctrine of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Our two organisations agree on the political assessment of cardinal aspects of the present international situation and the great challenges we are facing.

No other platform is better than this one to reaffirm our gratitude to the Indian Communists, particularly to you, as well as to the other Left organisations and democratic forces.

From this rostrum, we would like to express to all Cuba's friends in this legendary and beautiful country our most heartfelt gratitude for the countless and encouraging expressions of solidarity shown by our Indian brothers in favour of Cuba's just cause.

It is still fresh in the memory of our grateful people the more than ten thousand tonnes of wheat sent by this country and known as 'the bread from India'.

Upon receiving a kilogram of this bread of wheat and love, all Cubans felt a deep joy—learning that their brothers from the other side of the world were sharing with them what they did not have in excess—and enshrined in their hearts this gesture of solidarity among the humble of this world.

These noble and unselfish gestures as well as those shown daily by a wide range of parties, organisations, social forces and friends

of Cuba in different countries of the world—as it was seen at the world Meeting of Solidarity with our homeland and at other international fora—are worthier because they take place in a world where capitalism and neo-liberalism are imposing the most ruthless selfishness, injustice, social inequalities, xenophobia and violence

In the face of the new millennium upon which we are about to enter, humankind cannot impassively witness a situation in which the rich get steadily richer and the poor get steadily poorer.

Thus the peoples of the Third World—which amount to four-fifths of humankind—are prevented from attaining social development. And, without social development, there can be no peace on the earth.

We are talking about an honourable and successful peace, not about the sepulchral peace of the graves of the 14 millions of children who die of preventable or curable diseases every year

We are witnesses and victims of the distressing drama brought about by the enormous growth of poverty, unemployment, hunger, illiteracy and the lack of health and social care.

Unequal exchange increases, foreign debt grows, the brain drain from the South to the North rises the struggle between developed and developing countries gets deeper.

The world demands urgent solutions which will change the unjust system of prevailing international economic relations characterised by instability, uncertainty and lack of fairness.

As our Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro pointed out in the World Summit on Social Development recently held in Copenhagen: "more than promises, resolutions and declarations are needed: we need the political will and we need justice, not only within individual countries but among all countries."

Cuba has gone through the terrible consequences of the disappearance of the USSR and the European socialist regimes with which it carried out 85 per cent of all its foreign trade.

For more than 30 years Cuba has suffered and is still suffering the effects of the criminal U.S. blockade that has been recently tightened.

But Cuba stands firm and determined in upholding the social achievements of our Revolution and in preserving its national independence and sovereignty.

No power on earth—no matter how mighty and merciless it may be—will be able to bend the staunch firmness of the Cuban people.

The solidarity of the peoples of the world encourages us in our determination. In the last three sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, the vast majority of its member nations condemned this cruel and inhuman blockade which tries to bring Cubans to their knees through hunger and disease while they resist U.S. hegemonistic plans.

We are living through difficult times, we are suffering hardships but not a single child will be abandoned to its own fate or will beg in the streets, not a single human being will lack health care, and not a single old person will be excluded from the social security system.

Not a single school, hospital or day-care centre has been closed. And the very little that we have is being distributed in a fair way, trying not to affect the low-income sectors of the population.

In the midst of this difficult situation, we maintain the high-levels achieved in health and education.

Suffice it to say that our infant mortality rate stands below 10 per 1000 live births, that there is one doctor per 214 inhabitants and one professor per every 13 students. All workers have finished the 8th grade, one in every eight is a middle-level technician and one in every 15 has a university diploma.

Our country has developed an impressive scientific potential, a new pharmaceutical and biotechnological industry which, together with the steady growth achieved in tourism in the last few years, are the important and dynamic pillars of our national economy which has stopped its steep decline begun in 1990 and this year it has seen the first symptoms of its recovery.

Of course, to survive and develop ourselves in this unipolar world, we have had to make unavoidable economic changes, without giving up our cardinal principles or our ideas of full social justice.

Indian brothers, you may rest assured that the Cuban people will never surrender. We will continue to defend our Revolution, our Homeland and the conquests of Socialism.

We shall not give up our endeavour to achieve the victory of the noble and just cause for which we are willing to struggle up to our last breath.

This year in which we commemorate the centennial of the resumption of our wars for attaining independence from the colonial yoke and the centennial of our National Hero Jose Marti's death in combat, we reaffirm our loyalty to his mandate and to that of all the heroes of our homeland who warned the imperial powers: 'whoever tries to conquer Cuba will gain nothing but the dust of her blood-soaked soil—if he does not perish in the struggle first!'

On this new occasion, we reiterate to you our political will to continue to develop and further strengthen the excellent relations existing between our two Parties.

We wish your Congress a lot of success in its working sessions and in the implementation of its agreements.

A thousand thanks for your encouraging gestures of solidarity towards our Homeland!

Homeland or Death!

We shall overcome!

(v) GREETINGS FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN

I bring you fraternal greetings from the Communist Party in Britain and all progressives of our country.

I speak to you as the proud inheritors of the party of Palme Dutt, Ben. Bradley, Harry Pollitt. Comrades, we are the inheritors of the great anti-colonial, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist struggles in Britain. Our party has never deserted its international duties not just duties but a labour of love. Our working class in Britain has more in common with the workers of all lands than we have with our own ruling class.

Comrades,

Our Parties' analysis of the world as it is, are virtually the same. We are both firm Marxists-Leninists, anti-imperialist. Today, the modern form of capitalism is portrayed by the transnationals.

Transnationals operate from their base in individual nation states. Nation states are far more powerful than some would want us to believe. They act on behalf of the transnational based in their state. Take Shell Oil who operate mainly from Britain. Shell made profits. Last year of 108 billion pounds sterling. Such wealth accumulating in fewer hands, such wealth amidst poverty, is not only obscene, it demands change. It makes capitalism obsolete to the future of the human race.

Only socialism can exercise control in the interest of the masses. The new scientific technology revolution that is overstripping the ability of capitalism to use it to the benefit of all society. That is why in Europe alone, nearly 30 millions are unemployed. That is why racism and Fascism is rising once more, a threat to all workers black and white. That is why millions in the third world, the developing world, go to bed hungry. That is why the ex-socialist countries have found capitalism no answer—quite the reverse. GATT is no answer. A European Union was described by Lenin as either impossible under capitalism or reactionary

The transnationals with German nation state, giving the lead, is moving towards a Fortress Europe within Maastricht. This is to combat NAFTA led by the USA imperialists with America-Japan dominating the pacific rim. These are the three major imperialist camps which can only lead to inter-imperialist rivalries, which, in turn, leads to a threat to world peace and suppression of developing countries.

There is an alternative. This alternative lies in each of our parties with its allies to develop "The Alternative Economic-Political Strategy" for their own country, as you are doing. International development of political ties with each other in order to develop the strength of this policy, taking from each other, our strength, solidarity is the world. Our love for our race—the human race—the classes of workers by hand and brain, peasants have a vision *splendid of the world socialism*—a vision of men and women—with no discrimination based on race, colour, creed or gender walking freely on this earth with no boundaries.

That is the hope we present as united Communist Parties to our peoples and the world.

May I finish with an event that took place in Britain recently I was proud to unveil a red plaque to the memory of Harry Pollitt our greatest general secretary—a true friend of India and all in struggle. On that day the labour Mayor of the town in North England flew the red flag over the town hall. I look forward to the red flag flying over many town halls throughout Britain and finally when it flies over the building built by the British Raj in Delh now the President of India's residence when it flies over there, India will be free, May British and Indian friendship of Communists and progressive live forever.

Thank you,

(w) MESSAGE FROM JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party extends its greetings to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Since its foundation, the CPI(M) has fought to defend the interests of the workers, peasants and various circles of working people of India. The Japanese Communist Party expects your Party to play a bigger role in the struggle to defend the life and rights of the Indian people and to defend the national unity and sovereignty.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States, the biggest imperialist country, is conducting hegemonist strategy all-over the world. But capitalist contradictions cannot but intensify even in the United States, as is shown in the unprecedented degradation of American society, deepening anxiety of the working people over their lives and future and the crisis of the international monetary system with the U.S. dollar as its key currency. It is, therefore, crystal clear that there is no basis for the argument of "hurrah capitalism",

Under the Japan-U.S. military alliance, Japan is now serving as the biggest U.S. military foothold in Asia, from which the U.S. forces are dispatched to various places in the world. The incumbent Murayama cabinet was formed after the Social Democratic Party

of Japan was absorbed into the reactionary politics of the Conservative Liberal Democratic Party. It is carrying out a series of anti-people policies, such as welfare-cut, increasing of mass taxation called consumption tax and destruction of agriculture. On the other hand, it adopts policies to strengthen the Japan-U.S. military alliance in response to the U.S. expectation and to increase military expenditure, and to implement a number of policies in the interests of big business. All the parties other than the JCP have now become the promoter of the reactionary policies. In such a situation, the Japanese Communist Party is playing the part of the only progressive party to defend the pressing interests of various circles of the people against the reactionary policies serving the United States and big business. The JCP has a membership of 360,000 two and a half million readers of the central organ paper *Akahata*, 26 members in both Houses of the national parliament and nearly 4,000 members in local assemblies. We are now striving hard to make advances in the simultaneous local elections, the first of the major nation-wide elections to be held this year.

The Japanese Communist Party is a party of sovereign independence with scientific socialism as the theoretical basis. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, a massive anti-Communist campaign has been conducted also in Japan, saying that socialism and communism are the things of the past. What happened in the Soviet Union is neither the failure of socialism nor its bankruptcy. Since the 1960s, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China made massive interferences in the Japanese Communist Party with the aim of overthrowing its leadership. Our party had to wage a life-and-death struggle against them. From this experience of the hegemonist intervention which was incompatible with socialism, we could not help taking the realistic view of the actual situation of the Soviet Union. Based on such an understanding, the JCP naturally welcomed the dissolution of the CPSU as the end of the "colossal evil of hegemonism". At the JCP 20th Congress last year, we made clear our own analysis that Soviet society degenerated into a society which had nothing in common with socialism in various aspects after the period led

by Lenin, when realisation of the socialist ideal was groped with people as its master.

It is true there is confusion in part among the progressive movements in the world after the demise of the Soviet Union, but we are witnessing many efforts for the independent development of the movements for social progress. The JCP has a strong desire to promote dialogue and solidarity with those forces.

The JCP wishes further advances in your Party's activity expecting a success of the 15th Congress.

*Central Committee
Japanese Communist Party*

Report of The Central Control Commission*

Placed Before and Adopted by The 15th Congress of The CPI(M)-Held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995

The Central Control Commission, set up by the 14th Party Congress, began functioning 3 months after its being constituted at the Congress. The overall experience of the CCC as constituted by the 14th Congress decision as a body directly elected by the Party Congress is that it has made Party members more aware of their rights under the Constitution. This is seen in the increased number of appeals to the Commission compared to the past. Up to December 1994, the CCC received 70 cases. Out of these, 12 were cases of expulsion from Party membership. Of these 12 appeals, in 4 cases, membership was restored by the decision of the CCC, 7 appeals were rejected, 1 is still pending disposal.

2. Analyzing the type of cases which have been received by the CCC, some general observations should be made. The other appeals and complaints received do not fall under the jurisdiction of the CCC under Article XVIII, sections 2(b) and (c).

3. The nature of the appeals and complaints received were of various kinds, such as, (a) complaints of non-renewal of Party membership without due justification; (b) complaints of Party members involved in corruption or other anti-social practices; (c) cases of moral turpitude; (d) other injustices done to Party members by Party committees and so on.

4. Such complaints and appeals could not be admitted by the CCC as they did not come under the purview of the Commission. Hence, these cases were referred to the respective State Committees. The fate of such complaints are not known to the CCC as the State

*Published in December 1995 in the compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M)

Committees do not report back to the Commission if any action is taken by them. It appears that, after the election of the CCC directly by the Party Congress, a wrong impression has been created amongst some of the Party members that the CCC has the authority to deal with all organisational problems. Steps should be taken to remove this wrong impression.

5. So far, the CCC, under the Constitution can only entertain cases of disciplinary action pertaining to expulsion or cases referred to it by the CC. Since a large number of cases pertain to complaints of arbitrary droppage from membership at the time of renewals and other cases of disciplinary action, the CC and the Party Congress should consider bringing them under the purview of the CCC.

6. In the recent period, after the process of Party conferences began, complaints have come to the CCC, particularly from West Bengal and one from Kerala regarding violation of norms in the election process of Committees at various levels. We have sent these complaints to the respective State Committees for necessary action, since these complaints do not come under the jurisdiction of the CCC.

7. The CCC had recommended to the CC amendments to the rules under the Constitution regarding the functioning of the CCC in the light of the new basis on which CCC was constituted at the 14th Party Congress by amending the Constitution. The CC has subsequently, amended the rules under the Constitution.

8. The CCC has been holding its meetings, on an average, once in every 3 months to take up the cases and dispose them. In this period, the CCC has submitted 3 work reports to the CC. Since the number of cases are increasing and much of the material is coming in various languages, there is a lot of secretarial work involved. The Party Centre should make adequate arrangements for dealing with the secretarial and paperwork of the Commission.

Work Report and Performance of CCC up to December, 1994

	No of cases	Pending	Disposed	Not under Jurisdiction of CCC
1 Assam	1	—	1	—
2 Andaman	1	—	1	—
3 Bihar	3	—	3	—
4. Delhi	1	—	1	—
5 Haryana	2	—	2	—
6 Kerala	7	1	4	2
7. Maharashtra	2	—	1	1
8 Madhya Pradesh	4	—	3	1
9 Orissa	1	—	—	1
10 Rajasthan	2	—	2	—
11 Tripura	1	—	—	1
12 Tamil Nadu	2	—	2	—
13 West Bengal	43	—	28	15
	70	1	48	21

Samar Mukherjee
Chairman
Central Control Commission

**Central Committee Elected by
The 15th Congress of The CPI(M)
Held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995***

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Harkishan Singh Surjeet | 27. P Ramachandra Rao |
| 2. EMS Namboodiripad | 28. TK Ramakrishnan |
| 3. Jyoti Busu | 29. Susheela Gopalan |
| 4. E Balanandan | 30. MM Lawrence |
| 5. Benoy Chaudhury | 31. KN Ravindranath |
| 6. VS Achuthanandan | 32. Prabhakar Sanzgiri |
| 7. A Nallasivan | 33. Ahilya Rangnehar |
| 8. LB Gangadhara Rao | 34. Mangat Ram Pasla |
| 9. Prakash Karat | 35. Balwant Singh |
| 10. Sitaram Yechury | 36. Harkanwal Singh |
| 11. S Ramachandran Pillai | 37. Hari Ram Chauhan |
| 12. Sunil Maitra | 38. R Umanath |
| 13. P Ramachandran | 39. N Sankariah |
| 14. Sailen Dasgupta | 40. PR Parameswaran |
| 15. EK Nayana | 41. Dasrath Deb |
| 16. M Hanumantha Rao | 42. Manik Sarkar |
| 17. Koratala Satyanarayan | 43. Ram Sumer Yadav |
| 18. N Prasada Rao | 44. Budhadeb Bhattacharya |
| 19. MV Narasimha Reddy | 45. Biman Basu |
| 20. Nandeswar Talukdar | 46. Mohd Amin |
| 21. Hemen Das | 47. Anil Biswas |
| 22. Noorul Huda | 48. Kanak Mukherjee |
| 23. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi | 49. Biplab Dasgupta |
| 24. Subodh Roy | 50. Anand Pathak |
| 25. Joginder Sharma | 51. MK Pandhe |
| 26. Mohd Yusuf | 52. Vimal Ranadive |

*Published in December 1995 in the compilation of all Documents of the 15th Congress of the CPI(M). Also Published in "PEPOLES DEMOCRACY" of April 19, 1995

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- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 53. Sukomal Sen | 62. Baidyanath Majumdar |
| 54. Hannan Mollah | 63. N Varadarajan |
| 55. MA Baby | 64. BV Raghavulu |
| 56. Hari Singh Kang | 65. Udhab Barman |
| 57. Niren Ghosh | 66. Janardan Pati |
| 58. Benoy Konar | 67. Mohd Salim |
| 59. Chittabrata Majumdar | 68. Brinda Karat |
| 60. Chadayan Govindan | 69. Sunit Chopra |
| 61. Paloli Mohd Kutty | 70. Shailendra Shaily |
| | 71. Inderjit Singh |

Newly Elected Central Control Commission

1. Samar Mukherjee (*Chairman*)
2. D Janakiraman
3. Sunil Basu Ray

New Polit Bureau Elected by the Central Committee at its Meeting on April 8, 1995

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Harkishan Singh Surjeet | 9. Sitaram Yechury |
| 2. EMS Namboodiripad | 10. S Ramachandran Pillai |
| 3. Jyoti Busu | 11. Sunil Maitra |
| 4. E Balanandan | 12. P Ramachandran |
| 5. Benoy Chaudhury | 13. Sailen Dasgupta |
| 6. VS Achuthanandan | 14. EK Nayanar |
| 7. LB Gangadhara Rao | 15. R Umanath |
| 8. Prakash Karat | |

Foreign Delegations to The 15th Congress of The CPI(M) Held in Chandigarh on April 3-8, 1995*

1. Socialist Party of Australia
Peter Symon
General Secretary
2. Workers Party of Bangladesh
Rasheed Khan Menon,
General Secretary
Haider Akbar Rano,
Member, Polit Bureau
Anisur Rahman Mallick,
Member, Central Committee
3. Communist Party of Brazil
Luis Fernandes,
Member, Central Committee
4. Communist Party of Britain
Michael Hicks,
General Secretary
5. Communist Party of Canada
Figueroa,
Spokesperson
6. Communist Party of China
Liu Fangren,
Alternative Member
Wang Xiaodong,
Deputy Director General, Guizhou
Provincial Committee
Wang Fengying,
Deputy Bureau Chief, ILD, CPC
Gao Baoyu,
Third Secretary, ILD, CPC
Tan Zhonghua,
1st Secretary, Chinese Embassy,
India
7. Communist Party of Cuba
Jorge Risquet,
Head of the Delegation Post
Bureau Member
Jose Luis Robania
Member of International
Department, CP Cuba
Francisco Zamora Santana
Aide to Mr. Risquet
Victor Ramirez Pena,
Counsellor, Cuban Embassy
India
8. Communist Party of France
Daniella Bleittrach,
Member, Central Committee
9. Communist Party of Greece
Naoum Kopsidis,
Member, Central Committee
Head, Press Bureau
10. Todeh Party of Iran
Mohammed
11. Communist Refoundation of Italy
Sergio Ricaldone,
Member, Pol. National
Committee
12. Japanese Communist Party
Shoji Nihara,
Chairman, International
Commission
Akira Sakaguchi,
Member, International
Commission

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- 13 Workers Party of Korea
Hyon Jun Guk
Director, International Department
Li Song,
Member, International
Department
Kim Sok Chol,
2nd Secretary, Embassy of
DPRK, India
- 14 Communist Party of Nepal
(UML)
Ramdev Gautam,
Deputy General Secretary,
Sahana Pradhan,
Member, Standing Committee,
Chief, International Department
Rajendra Shrestha,
Member, Central Committee,
International Committee
Hiranya Lal Shrestha,
Alternative Member, Central
Committee
15. Portugese Communist Party
Albano Nunes,
Head, International Department
- 16 Communist Party of Russian Fed
G. Zughyanov,
Chairman
Tarniev
Dorohen
17. Communist Party of Sri Lanka
Raja Collure,
General Secretary
- 18 Turkish Workers Party
Ali Mercan,
Member, Central Committee &
Chairperson,
International Bureau
Murat Metin
19. Communist Party of Vietnam
Dao Duy Tung,
Member, Polit Bureau and
Secretariat
Nguyen Hoanh Son,
Deputy Head of Department of
External Affairs
Nguyen Van Long,
Counsellor, Vietnamese Embassy,
India
Nguyen Giap Dan, P/S. of
Delegation,
Ambassador to India

Condolence On Comrade Imbichi Bawa*

"Take firm steps, be vigilant and march forward." These were the last words of Comrade Imbichi Bawa when death stopped his heartbeat. Comrade Imbichi Bawa, a veteran and member of the state committee of Kerala died at 10.45 p.m. on 11th April at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi, due to left ventricular failure. He returned to Delhi on the 9th morning after attending the Party Congress and was admitted to the hospital when he felt uneasiness and chest pain.

Comrade Imbichi Bawa was born on July 20, 1917 in a working class family at Ponnani in Malappuram district. He started his public life as a student activist and later joined the Indian National Congress and took active part in the freedom struggle. Comrade Imbichi Bawa subsequently joined the Congress Socialist Party and then became a member of the Communist Party of India in 1940. He was secretary of the district committee of Palakkad for a long period before 1964. When the Party was divided in 1964, he stood firm with the Communist Party of India (Marxist). He was one of the 32 members of the national council of the undivided communist party who walked out from the national council meeting in 1964. He was a minister in the LDF Government in 1967. He was also a member of the Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and a long time member in the Legislative Assembly in Kerala. He took part in many struggles of the toiling people and had undergone imprisonments many times during the freedom struggle and afterwards. He was an efficient organiser, orator, agitator and administrator.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 16, 1995

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Comrade Imbichi Bawa was an outstanding Communist who consistently stood for the cause of the toiling people and socialism. The Polit Bureau salutes the memory of Comrade Imbichi Bawa and conveys its heartfelt condolences to the members of his family.

Expulsion of Nripen Chakraborty*

**Statement Dated April 13, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

Nripen Chakraborty, one of the important leaders of the CPI(M), has been indulging in gross indiscipline in the recent period by repeatedly and publicly slandering the Party and the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura. This is most unfortunate as Nripen Chakraborty has been reared in the traditions of the Communist International as a disciplined soldier of the Party.

After the formation of the Left Front Government in Tripura in 1993, he has been raising various questions about the political line of the Party adopted since the Tenth Congress in 1978. He has, however, not been participating in Polit Bureau and Central Committee meetings where these could be collectively discussed and whereby he could also benefit from the discussion. As a result, he has been displaying extreme individualism which is against the basic principles of collective functioning in a Communist Party.

Since last year he has begun the practice of using the newspapers to malign the Party. He gave a slanderous interview to a Bengali newspaper in Calcutta while in hospital. The Central Committee then in session took serious note of this and asked the general secretary to warn him. He promised not to repeat it. However, again, on the eve of the Party Congress, he gave an interview slandering the Tripura and West Bengal units of the Party. These charges were so wild that even the enemies of the Party had not made such allegations. It was fully utilised by the Party's political opponents. The general secretary wrote to him on

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 16, 1995.

behalf of the Polit Bureau asking him to retract these charges. But he did not respond. The Central Committee which met in Chandigarh endorsed the Polit Bureau action. Given his long record of service and sacrifice to the Communist movement, the Central Committee decided to remove him only from all elected posts and give him another chance to rectify.

Unfortunately, instead of correcting himself, he has held a Press conference and launched a virulent and defamatory attack on the Party and its leaders. The Polit Bureau asked him once again to realise the gravity of his mistake and retrace his step. He is not prepared to do so.

No Party leader, however tall, can flout the common discipline of the Party so flagrantly. No Party member can be above the Party. The public stance of Nripen Chakraborty has put the Party in difficulty in Tripura where it is engaged in a political battle to foil the Congress(I)-TUJS campaign to destabilise the situation in the state. His slanders cannot be allowed to tarnish the image of the Party which has decided in the just concluded 15th Congress to conduct a vigorous struggle against the economic policies of the Central Government and the communal forces.

Therefore, the Polit Bureau is left with no other option but to expel him from the membership of the Party. It calls upon the entire Party to stand united in meeting the motivated offensive against the Party.

CPI(M) Supports Newspapers Strike*

**Statement Dated April 26, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) fully supports the decision of the newspapers to go on strike on April 27 against the repeated and steep increases in the price of newsprint produced in the country. The cost of indigenous newsprint has gone up by one and a half times in the past five years. The liberalisation of import of newsprint has also worked against the smaller newspapers as the price of imported paper is high. This has badly affected the newspaper industry, particularly the small and medium newspapers.

The right of information through the print media must not be jeopardised by the exorbitant price of newsprint curbing the publication of newspapers. The Polit Bureau demands that the Government of India immediately announce measures to supply indigenous newsprint at controlled prices to the small and medium newspapers.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 30, 1995.

On Charges Levelled by Nripen Chakraborty*

**Statement Dated April 21, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is unfortunate that when the entire Party has emerged as a unified political force after the 15th Congress of the CPI(M) at Chandigarh, Nripen Chakraborty, one of the senior leaders of the Party, decided to publicly vilify the Party at his Press conference on April 10. This was not the first time that he went to the Press publicly with his false charges and allegations. He had done so twice earlier in December 1994 and March 1995. On both these occasions the Central Committee, keeping in view his long service to the Party and his old age, tried to correct him. It was only when all such efforts failed that the Central Committee decided to drop him from all elected committees.

Nripen Chakraborty, after his expulsion, has sought to portray that he had political differences over a long period with the Party leadership, from the time of the 10th Congress of the Party in 1978. This is totally untrue. At no time did Nripen Chakraborty express any basic differences with the Party's national political line ever since he became a Central Committee member in 1978. It is only after his resignation from the Chairmanship of the state planning board in Tripura in October 1993 that he began to express his disagreement with certain current political positions of the Party. This is directly related to the fact that he has no position in the state government in Tripura.

Regarding the allegations he has levelled against the West Bengal Government and the Party it must be made clear that these charges which he made in August 1994 did not contain a word against Com. Jyoti Basu. It is only after disciplinary action was

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 30, 1995. Refer Document under Item No. 125 of this Volume.

taken against him by the Central Committee at Chandigarh that he has made the wild allegations directed personally against Com. Jyoti Basu. By targetting a respected leader like Jyoti Basu and the strongest unit of the Party, West Bengal, Nripen Chakraborty has now placed himself at the service of those who wish to weaken the Communist movement in Tripura and West Bengal.

It is tragic that Nripen Chakraborty by hurling such slanders and wild charges has landed himself in a position where he finds congenial the company of Communist-baiters like Mamata Banerjee. The absurdity of the charges he has levelled against both the West Bengal and Tripura Party units and the governments clearly indicates the loss of political balance and his growing inability to discriminate between right and wrong.

Polit Bureau Condemns Congress(I)-TUJS Threat*

Statement Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the decision of the Congress(I)-TUJS combine to resort to a 'rasta roko' from April 26 to block the Assam-Agartala highway. This highway is the lifeline for supplies to Tripura. The Congress(I)-TUJS is resorting to such a disruptive action demanding the imposition of Disturbed Area Act in the state. The Central Government must make it clear that no such interference in the state's affairs is being contemplated.

The Congress(I)-TUJS has also expressed concern about the food and drinking water shortage in the state. By blockading the road through which food supplies reach the state, the Congress(I)-TUJS will be directly responsible for aggravating the food situation in the state. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Congress(I) to withdraw the call for the blockade which will cause unnecessary suffering to the people.

CPI(M)'s Solidarity With Cuba*

Polit Bureau's Appeal to All Party Members and Party Units

Dear Comrades,

The 15th Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) reaffirmed its firm resolve to strengthen solidarity with the courageous people of Cuba and their inspiring struggle to safeguard socialism under the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba led by Fidel Castro. The Congress further resolved to strengthen the solidarity movement in India and the Asia Pacific region with the valiant people of Cuba and to be in the forefront of collecting further material contribution.

The entire Party had moved in a magnificent manner after the 14th Congress of the Party to collect substantial quantities of wheat, rice and medicines to be dispatched to Cuba as part of the solidarity campaign which was organised under the auspices of the National Committee of Solidarity with Cuba. Many Party units had collected money also. As a result of this massive effort more than 10,000 tonnes of wheat, and 300 tonnes of detergents, and substantial quantities of medicines were sent to Cuba in 1993 and 1994.

This contribution of the Indian people expressing the solid support to the fighting people of Cuba was very much appreciated and applauded by the entire Cuban people as was manifested at the meeting held in Havana to hand over the material, in which Fidel Castro and our general secretary Surjeet were present. The help rendered by the Indian people was referred to in very warm and appreciative terms by the fraternal delegate of the Central

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 30, 1995.

Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba who attended our Party Congress at Chandigarh.

It was not just the quantity of material aid but the superb spirit of solidarity and internationalism, which was acclaimed in progressive, anti-imperialist circles the world over.

The solidarity campaign has to be carried forward in a more vigorous manner in the context of the U.S. government's continuing blockade. The Party has decided that along with the political campaign of solidarity we have to continue to mobilise material assistance also in a practical manner. Immediately we have to respond to the Cuban people's need for assistance in the form of detergents. The National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba has already issued a call to collect Rs. 40 lakh. We have to be in the forefront of these efforts.

The Central Committee therefore calls upon all Party units, all Party members, all sympathisers and the people to launch an urgent campaign to collect funds in a substantial manner so that the materials could be purchased and dispatched to Cuba in the shortest period of time.

Since the collections have to be completed by the end of May 1995 we once again emphasise the urgency of the campaign.

CPI(M) On Speaker's Proposals*

Statement Dated May 4, 1995

Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The CPI(M) is for strengthening the parliamentary democratic system by carrying out urgently required electoral reforms. Instead of this agenda, it is puzzling why the Speaker of the Lok Sabha should moot proposals suggesting fundamental changes in the nature of the political system of the country. The Constitution provides for a parliamentary democratic system based on political parties. Under this system, either a single party or a coalition of parties which commands a simple majority can form a government

The proposals put forward for discussion seek to alter the present system by suggesting options such as a "coalition government with a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, or a national government of all parties and even a government consisting of persons from outside parliament for a limited period. All these proposals are subversive of the political parties system and ignores the reality of ideological, class and political differences amongst the political parties. The aim of these proposals is to provide for a "stability" of the ruling classes, It also seeks to institutionalise an arrangement by which the communal parties will also be part of the government even when they have no mandate from the people. It is not accidental that the BJP leadership has been talking of a Presidential form of government and advocating basic changes in the Constitution.

It would be better for the persons holding constitutional positions to strengthen the existing parliamentary democracy instead of initiating changes whose motives are not clear.

*Published in *PEOPLES DEMOCRACY*", New Delhi, May 14, 1995

Polit Bureau on Charar-e-Sharif Incident in Kashmir*

Statement Dated May 11, 1995 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses shock at the act of vandalism in setting fire to the Charar-e-Sharif shrine in Kashmir. For the past two months the shrine was occupied by armed extremists backed by Pakistan. The security forces were deployed in strength to prevent any mischief.

It is unfortunate that the Central Government and the Governor's administration could do nothing to prevent the destructive act with all the resources at their command. The arson which destroyed part of the town for the past two days inflicted a lot of suffering on the people. Yet the government failed to act decisively.

The CPI(M) fully sympathises with the people of Kashmir who, irrespective of religious affiliations, venerated the shrine. The situation requires careful handling so that the people's injured feelings are assuaged and the designs of the extremist elements foiled.

CPI(M) Greets CP Canada's Convention*

Message Sent to Toronto on May 10, 1995

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warmest fraternal greetings to the 31st Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada.

This convention is being held in the background of complex international as well as domestic situations. The CPI(M) has been following with great interest the work of the Canadian Communists who have emerged from a severe inner-party struggle to uphold Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. We are confident that the deliberations of this convention will further strengthen this resolve and consolidate the Communist Party of Canada further by strengthening its live links with the Canadian working people.

The initial setbacks and the sense of demoralisation that prevailed some years back following the dismantling of socialism in the Soviet Union and East Europe, is today giving way to a process of regrouping amongst the Communist forces. Though the imperialist ideological offensive continues unabated, the working people, the world over have been involved in growing struggles to defend their rights and livelihood.

We are aware that under these circumstances world imperialism led by the USA is trying to consolidate and expand its hegemonic designs both politically by hijacking the United Nations and military interventions, and economically through the IMF-World Bank and the GATT 1994 treaty. Specifically in the American continent, the establishment of the NAFTA and the

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 21, 1995
The 31st Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada was held on
May 19-22, 1995 at Toronto.

attempts to expand it into a trade organisation of the entire western hemisphere is imposing hitherto unknown burdens on the working people. Canada, suffering from severe U.S. dumping and privatisation, is seeing a growth of unemployment and further cuts in the social welfare programmes. We are confident that the deliberations of your convention will strengthen the militant struggles of the working people against this new onslaught of international capital.

The CPI(M), fully aware of the problems of inter-nationality and inter-ethnic unity in a vast country like India, appreciates the efforts being made by the Communist Party of Canada to evolve a partnership of the aboriginal people, the French and the English-speaking Canadians on the basis of equality and voluntary participation. We wish you all success in these efforts.

Comrades, due to complex developments in India and the preoccupations with the tasks that emerged from our just concluded 15th Congress, at which we had the pleasure of having the Communist Party of Canada's representative to share our experience, we are not in a position to send a delegate from India to participate in your convention. We sincerely regret this. However, the CPI(M) reaffirms its resolve to strengthen the solidarity between our parties and thus strengthen our mutual ideological commitment to Marxism-Leninism.

Once again please accept our fraternal Communist greetings for the success of your convention, our greetings to all the delegates participating and the entire membership of the Communist Party of Canada.

CPI(M) on Supreme Court Judgement*

**Statement Dated May 11, 1995 Issued By
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) considers the Supreme Court judgement on the four petitions filed by Hindu women who have been deserted by their husbands after religious conversion, as a judgement in the right direction. The court observed that "a second marriage of a Hindu husband after embracing Islam being violative of justice, equality and good conscience would be void on the ground of *natural justice*". Coming down severely on the gross abuse of religion "only for the purpose of bigamy" the apex court held that no religion permitted religious distortions. It further said that "religious practices violative of human rights and dignity and sacerdotal suffocation of essential civil and material freedom, are not *autonomy, but oppression*". The court directed the Union law ministry to state the steps taken so far regarding Article 44 of the Constitution which asks the government to endeavour to secure a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

However, as one of the judges observed, the uniform civil code can be concretised "only when the social climate is properly built up..." through a process of consensual discussions. In a secular polity, ideally the civil code should be common and uniform for all citizens irrespective of religion. There must be firm efforts to combat fundamentalists in all communities who wish to deprive women of equal status and rights in property. Only through the strengthening of secularism and its corresponding consciousness by which every minority community feels secure and has the fullest confidence that its rights are protected, can the grounds for such a common civil code be created. It is this basis that the secular forces will have to strengthen while opposing resolutely religious fundamentalists of all varieties.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 21, 1995.

Polit Bureau Communique*

Issued Following Its Two Days Meeting
Held in May 1995

The crisis in the Congress(I) was very deep and despite efforts by the leadership, nobody could now stop the May 19 convention by the dissidents which was certain to lead to a split in the ruling party, the CPI(M) general secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, told newsmen here today.

Addressing a Press conference following the two-day meeting of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau, Surjeet said the Congress(I) leadership had so far been hoping that the convention would not be held and the split would not take place, but with only a day left it was now clear that "there will be a split in the party and nobody can stop it".

In reply to a spate of questions, Surjeet said he did not think the Narasimha Rao Government would fall because of the split but it would definitely have major repercussions, particularly on the question of economic policy. He said the main reason for the rise in dissidence within the Congress(I) was because of the policies being pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government. After the string of electoral defeats, Congressmen were worried about their future prospects—their main question was with what appeal should they go to the people? How can secularism be defended? How can a self-reliant economy be maintained? How can the conditions of the poor be ameliorated? How can corruption be fought? These were the questions being asked by Congressmen but the leadership had no reply. So far, the leadership had been complacent that no split would take place but now they were getting into a panic, Surjeet said, reiterating that a split would

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 21, 1995.

ensure that the question of economic policies would come to the fore.

Asked whether the CPI(M) would be willing to support the Congress(I) under a new leader, Surjeet said, "We want the Congress(I) to go. That was our slogan at the Party Congress. I am not interested in seeing a new face. We are interested in a change of policies."

Asked what the CPI(M)'s attitude would be towards the breakaway group of the Congress(I) after the impending split, Surjeet said, "They (the dissidents) have raised issues that we have been focussing on. But I cannot say what will happen right now. I am not an astrologer. We will have to watch the situation—what policies they adopt, who are the personalities involved, what direction they take—only on that basis will we adopt an attitude. Nothing can be said as yet."

Regarding the economic policies, Surjeet reiterated the CPI(M)'s firm opposition to it and highlighted the Party's demand that the Patents Amendment Bill be withdrawn by the government, the ENRON deal be scrapped, the licences given to multinational deep sea fishing companies be cancelled, and a firm assurance be given by the government that the insurance sector will not be privatised. The Polit Bureau had decided to intensify the mass movement against the economic policies and consultations with other Left parties would take place within the next few days to chalk out detailed plans of the next stage of the struggle, Surjeet said.

On Kashmir, Surjeet emphasised that the situation there was quite different from Punjab where the people of the state, at no point of time, had wanted to secede from the country. The Kashmir situation was very fragile and the Charar-e-Sharif tragedy has only made it worse. Surjeet came out strongly against the government's efforts to hold elections in the state in the absence of any political initiative. "Holding elections at this stage is only playing into the hands of the Americans", he repeatedly said, adding that in case of a very low voter turnout the legitimacy of the polls would be questioned and the demand for a plebiscite would once again be raised with the full backing of the U.S.

He also reiterated the CPI(M)'s strong criticism of the proposals to change the existing parliamentary system in the name of providing "stability" and said that the whole game was aimed at safeguarding the interests of the ruling classes which were afraid of any change that threatened their vested interests. He said those who were talking of all political parties coming together to elect a Prime Minister or President were trying to subvert parliamentary democracy and appeared to think that no class interests existed in India. "This is unheard of—instead of changing their policies, they want to change the system so that their vested interests are protected."

Surjeet said the Centre's policies indicated that the "Government of India does not consider Tripura to be part of India". The tiny border state was reeling under the most severe drought and there was no food or water and an outbreak of diseases in epidemic proportions but the Centre remained totally oblivious to the state's pleas for assistance. The FCI had drastically cut down its food supplies to the region and railways too were not sanctioning enough wagons. He said the Centre was behaving in a blatantly partisan manner—in the case of the Orissa floods, central ministers were rushing to provide aid but there was not a word or a gesture towards the people of Tripura only because it was ruled by the Left Front, he said.

COMMUNIQUE

Kashmir

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expressed its strong condemnation of the burning down of the Charar-e-Sharif shrine. The Central Government and the state administration have abjectly failed in protecting the shrine, even though for the past six months the armed extremists had occupied the shrine. The security forces were deployed in strength in the area during the past two months but the government failed to take any measure to foil the plan of the Pakistan-backed extremists. The destruction of the shrine of the Sufi saint has naturally aroused indignation among the people in the valley. The P.B. demands that the

Governor be changed and an effective machinery put in place so that the political process is strengthened.

The Narasimha Rao Government has reiterated its resolve to hold elections by mid-July in the state even though all the major political forces in the valley and at the national level have clearly stated that popular participation would be absent, making the polls a mockery. The Prime Minister has announced in Parliament that the government is prepared to provide maximum autonomy within the framework of the Constitution. This is in the correct direction. However, this is coupled with the announcement of holding of elections soon. It would be a folly to persist in holding elections without meaningful political initiatives to provide the Kashmiri people maximum autonomy and protection of their identity. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates its opposition to holding elections without the necessary political groundwork. This will only help Pakistan and the imperialist circles which wish to detach Kashmir from India.

Economic Policies

The Narasimha Rao Government is trying to get the Patents Amendment Law passed in the Rajya Sabha despite the opposition's demand for withdrawing the amendments which will prove harmful to the country's indigenous scientific and technological base and the drugs industry. The Polit Bureau fully endorsed the move of the united opposition in the Rajya Sabha to prevent the passage of the bill and appealed to all sections of the people to demand of the government that it withdraw this pernicious legislation.

The explanation given by the Finance Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to the Congress(I) parliamentary party justifying the record of the government on the economic front is an exercise in deception. The funds generated by the sale of public sector unit shares have been used for meeting the budgetary deficit; the claims of inflation control are patently false and the government is deliberately opening up core areas to the multinational companies on terms and conditions which are extremely adverse for the country.

The Polit Bureau demanded that the Maharashtra Government which is undertaking a review of the Enron project, heed the widespread expert opinion on the subject and take a decision to cancel the agreement. Similar deals in the power sector which provide foreign companies with unjustifiably high rates of return and inflict a high power rate on the domestic consumers must be also cancelled. The Polit Bureau calls for a renewed debate on the opening up of the power and telecom sectors and demands that the Central Government review its existing policies. The Polit Bureau also warned the government not to allow foreign insurance companies to operate in India, and to give a categorical assurance that the insurance sector will not be privatised.

The Polit Bureau expressed full support for the demand of the struggling fishermen who are asking for the cancellation of the licences given to 200 companies to operate deep sea fishing trawlers which has threatened the livelihood of lakhs of fishermen and women. The Government of India must reverse the retrograde policy of allowing indiscriminate fishing in India's coastal waters which will also damage the ecological balance.

The P.B. stressed the importance of intensifying the movement against the Rao Government's economic policies. By drawing all sections of the people in the common struggle, the efforts of the BJP and Shiv Sena to divert the discontent on communal lines can be foiled. The Polit Bureau decided to hold consultations with the Left parties to intensify the struggle against the Centre's economic policies.

No Change in Parliamentary System

The Polit Bureau sharply criticised the proposals mooted by various leading personalities including the former President R. Venkataraman and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, which advocate in some form or the other a national government of all parties, a Presidential form of government, or a coalition of parties with differing ideological and class basis through Constitutional amendments which would make the formation of such governments obligatory. These proposals are inimical to the party-based parliamentary democracy provided for in the

Constitution. They reflect the anxiety over the loss of power by the Congress(I) in the forthcoming elections and also the ruling classes' concern for stability to pursue policies which are in their interests. The Polit Bureau reiterates that what is required are immediate steps to reform the electoral process so that the system of parliamentary democracy is strengthened and people's rights defended. What is required is not an alteration in the parliamentary system of government but a change in the basic policies pursued by the Centre.

Attack On States' Rights

The Polit Bureau opposed the setting up of six new departments by the Central Government which mostly deal with the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes in the states, including funds for local bodies. Further this step goes against the stated objective of the National Development Council to transfer centrally sponsored schemes to the states. These are areas which fall under the purview of the States and the Central Government should not encroach further on the states' rights.

Scrap TADA

The Polit Bureau demanded that the TADA law be scrapped. The widespread misuse of its draconian provisions provide no justification for its continuance. The West Bengal and Tripura Governments along with many other State Governments have requested the Centre to repeal the law.

Congress(I) Crisis

Differences within the Congress(I) have deepened. In the background of the defeats suffered by the Congress(I) in the assembly elections, the economic policies, attitude to communalism and corruption, all have become matters of debate within the party. The Congress(I) leadership has refused to take up for serious discussion the policy questions which are relevant to the decline of the party's mass influence and which are damaging the country's interests. The recent Congress(I) working committee has harped on discipline while avoiding debate on the

policies pursued by the Government. Such an approach is leading to a division of the Congress(I) party.

Tripura

The P.B. expressed deep concern at the serious drought situation in the state. The remote tribal areas have been badly affected by the shortage of drinking water and the outbreak of gastroenteritis. The Central Government has failed to provide adequate food stocks to the state government despite repeated requests in advance to meet stock requirements for the lean season. The Central Government must immediately respond to the request for central assistance to meet this natural calamity.

The Polit Bureau also criticised the Central Government for not providing adequate paramilitary forces to the state to meet the situation, to tackle the problem of the extremist groups operating from across the border. In the recent period the strength of the paramilitary forces have been reduced in the state. Neither has the Centre sanctioned the funds required for the modernisation of the state police or for raising new battalions. Such a partisan outlook by the Centre only hampers the principled policy of the state government to protect tribal, non-tribal unity and strengthen national unity in this sensitive border state.

Sri Lanka

The CPI(M) had appreciated the peace initiative of President Chandrika Kumaratunga which was in tune with the aspirations of the Sinhalese and Tamil people for ending the long standing conflict and for peace. This initiative led to the beginning of talks with the LTTE and measures to ease the difficulties of the civilian population of Jaffna. However, the unreasonable and disruptive approach of the LTTE has led to the breakdown of the negotiations and the resumption of hostilities. This is an extremely unfortunate development which has once again heightened the suffering of the Tamil people in the Northern and Eastern areas. The situation of civil war provoked by the LTTE helps the imperialists to directly intervene in the affairs of Sri Lanka.

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The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) stands for the rights of the Tamil people to be safeguarded through genuine autonomy within the framework of Sri Lankan unity. This can be achieved only through the political process of negotiations, efforts for which should not be abandoned.

On BSP's Cynical Opportunism*

**Statement Dated June 2, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

For some time now strains had developed between the Samajwadi Party and the BSP in the U.P. Government. The BJP has successfully utilised the crisis to break the Government by assuring its support to the BSP.

The SP-BSP alliance had come to power in the 1993 elections on a mandate to fight communalism. The BSP leadership will have to pay a heavy price for this act of cynical opportunism. The secular and democratic minded people of U.P., including the oppressed sections, who are conscious of the communal danger, cannot approve such an unprincipled alliance. The BJP is manoeuvring to regain power. The CPI(M) will expose the devious game of the BJP.

*Published in **PEOPLES DEMOCRACY**, New Delhi, June 11, 1995.

Rebuff This U.S. Threat*

**Statement Dated June 5, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The U.S. Government has issued a warning that if the Dabhol Power Project is cancelled, then all power projects with foreign investment will be in jeopardy. The statement by the U.S. Department of Energy is a brazen attempt to interfere and intimidate the review process being undertaken by the Maharashtra Government of the Enron Power Project at Dabhol.

The Central Government is in no position to rebuff such blatant threats as seen in the response of the Indian embassy in Washington which has assured that the Enron issue will be resolved satisfactorily.

The review committee with the BJP Deputy Chief Minister as its head has to go strictly by the interests of the people and the state and scrap the agreement with Enron. Anything short of this will be a betrayal of the country's interests.

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 11, 1995.

Polit Bureau Assails Bid To Scuttle Tripura Poll*

Statement Dated June 11, 1995 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its strong disapproval of the latest move by the Tripura Governor Romesh Bhandari to scuttle the elections to the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council scheduled to be held from July 8. The present term of the Autonomous District Council will end next month. It is essential that fresh elections are held so that the democratic process is not interfered with. The Tripura Left Front Government is committed to holding regular elections to all the elected bodies. It is in this light that elections were to be notified.

However, the Congress(I)-TUJS combine does not want to face elections. Due to their gross mistake and corruption, the Autonomous Council, which was set up by the earlier Left Front Government to serve the tribal people, was badly affected. Responding to their interests, the Governor has taken the mischievous step of suggesting the setting up of a fresh Commission to go in to the question of delimitation of constituencies. This would mean accepting the Congress-TUJS demand for postponement of election.

Romesh Bhandari has, once again, nakedly acted as a partisan advocate for the Congress-TUJS combine. His proposal has come along with the visit of Santosh Mohan Deb to Agartala to demand postponement of the election. The Tripura State Government has rightly rejected this the Governor's proposal.

The P.B. warns the Tripura Governor and the Central Government not to violate the constitutional and democratic norms by seeking to extend the life of the present Council beyond its term by postponing elections. The Governor has no right to go against the advice of the State Government.

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 18, 1995

Polit Bureau Welcomes Release of Aung San Suu Kyi*

Statement Dated July 11, 1995 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) welcomes the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi. Defying world public opinion, the ruling junta in Myanmar kept her under house arrest for the last six years. The Polit Bureau hopes that democracy will be fully restored in Myanmar and people will be given their due rights.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, July 16, 1995.

On Judiciary's Credibility*

**Statement Dated July 8, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses condemnation and exasperation at the manner in which the prime suspect in the Naina Sahni murder case, Sushil Sharma, former President of the Delhi Youth Congress, has been able to obtain anticipatory bail from the principal sessions court, Madras. Two days ago, Sudhakaran, MLA and President of the Congress(I) district committee in Kannur, Kerala, was able to obtain anticipatory bail from a Delhi court. Sudhakaran is an accused in a case relating to an attempt on the life of E.P. Jayarajan, CPI(M) MLA and Kannur district Secretary of the CPI(M). Jayarajan was shot at and injured in Andhra Pradesh while returning after attending the 15th CPI(M) Congress in Chandigarh. In both these cases, the provision for granting anticipatory bail has been misused, with the people losing faith in the credibility of the judiciary.

In the case of Sushil Kumar, the counsel in Madras who moved the bail application, stated that he had been instructed by a politician from Delhi. This is accompanied by reports of Sushil Sharma's close and dubious connections with certain Central ministers. This is indicative of the rot and criminalisation that has set in in the Congress party.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) urges upon the people to remain vigilant to ensure that the culprits are brought to book and do not go scot-free owing to their connections with the ruling party at the Centre.

LTTE Must Come To Negotiations To Solve Tamil Ethnic Problem in Sri Lanka*

**Statement Dated July 12, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is deeply concerned about the intensification of armed conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces. Press reports indicate that a number of civilian casualties among Jaffna Tamils have taken place and that this conflict has led to displacement of many Tamils from their homes. The Polit Bureau expresses its deep anguish at these sufferings and extends sympathy to the Tamils of Jaffna.

The Polit Bureau had earlier pointed out that the unreasonable and disruptive approach of the LTTE had led to the breakdown of the negotiations and resumption of hostilities which has heightened the sufferings of the Tamil people in the northern and eastern areas.

Even now it is not too late for the LTTE to come back to the negotiating talk, and the Sri Lankan Government to respond positively, so that the military conflict may be immediately stopped and the Tamil people's sufferings can be put an end to. The Polit Bureau reiterates its position that the Tamil ethnic problem cannot be resolved through armed conflict, but can be settled only through the political process of negotiations.

Central Committee Communiqué*

**Issued Following its Meeting on July 16-18, 1995
Held in New Delhi**

The first full-fledged three-day meeting (July 16-18) of the new Central Committee of the CPI(M) which concluded at New Delhi, July 18, reiterated the resolve taken at the Fifteenth Congress to defeat both the Congress(I) and the BJP in the coming General Elections and rally all Left, secular and democratic forces to achieve this objective.

Addressing a Press conference at the Party's headquarters on July 19 evening on the Central Committee meeting, the CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said while strengthening the Left through unleashing mass struggles and enhancing Left unity was important, the Left alone could not achieve the aim of defeating both the Congress(I) and BJP. For this, it was necessary to bring together a range of secular forces including those who are not in the National Front. He specifically mentioned Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party in this context and said, "if you want to defeat the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, you cannot leave out Mulayam".

In reply to questions on whether the secular opposition parties would be working out a 'common minimum programme' for the elections, Surjeet said it was too early to talk about such programmes. "Let things emerge first, let them come out with their own programme first, we are not in a hurry to reach a common programme", he said. In response to persistent questioning on this issue, he said the primary task before the CPI(M) in this regard was to bring together all the secular forces to a common understanding on the need to defeat the BJP and the Congress(I). "Many hurdles have to be overcome, many details

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have to be worked out, we have to argue with them, we have to convince them" to come together, Surjeet said, adding that a common minimum programme was not the issue but the rallying together of these forces. Asked if this was enough to form an electoral alternative, Surjeet pointed out that defeating these two enemies meant a defeat of the policies of mortgaging the country's economic sovereignty as well as a defence of secularism.

Asked whether the CPI(M) had decided to hold talks with the breakaway group of the Congress(I), Surjeet said, "Let them decide where they stand. We have only stated that the issues they have raised—about corruption, against communalism, against the economic policies—are positive. But first we are interested in bringing together the secular opposition forces".

Regarding the CPI(M)'s support for the V. Gopalsamy-led MDMK in Tamil Nadu, Surjeet said he had attended their state conference and because of the stand they had taken against both the Central and State Government's economic policies, in defence of secularism and against corruption, the CPI(M) had decided to work with them. At the same time, the CPI(M) has made it clear that it differs with their chauvinist understanding of the Sri Lankan ethnic problem and does not in any way support the MDMK stand. He pointed out that on the Sri Lankan issue, not just the MDMK but all the Dravidian parties were competing with each other to appear more stridently pro-Tamil. The MDMK, however, had given up its earlier Tamil separatist demand within India and reiterated its commitment to India's unity at the state conference, Surjeet said.

Apart from the question of elections and electoral alternatives, Surjeet also spoke at length on the Central Committee's decision to step up the battle against the economic policies in a big way. The Central Committee has lent full support to the call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations for a campaign from September to November and also called upon all Party units to observe August 8 against price-rise by calling for strengthening the public distribution system.

Surjeet lambasted the government and its supporters for persistently carrying out a mischievous propaganda claiming

that there was no difference between the economic policies of the Central Government and that of West Bengal. He pointed out that the West Bengal Government was not privatising public sector units, and not going in for ENRON-type of agreements in the power sector which completely bartered away the Indian people's interests. He said the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister constantly claimed that there was complete "consensus" among all political parties on the economic reforms forgetting that "they have still not been able to get the Patent Bill passed because of their lack of majority in the Rajya Sabha".

Asked whether the CPI(M) would coordinate with the BJP in its fight against the seven foreign funded power projects which have received counter-guarantees, Surjeet said there was no coordination with the BJP yet on this question but "if they support the stand we take, we have no objection". On the issue of the Patent Bill too, the BJP had taken a similar stand as the Left, he pointed out.

The Central Committee also sharply condemned the BJP's wholly unprincipled manoeuvre in installing the Mayawati Government in U.P. and condemned the VHP's efforts to once again whip up communal tension through ekatmata yagnas, and agitations in Varanasi and Mathura.

Regarding the question of a uniform civil code, Surjeet said while this was a desirable goal, "a climate must be created" to achieve this. He said there was a wrong impression, deliberately fostered by the BJP and other chauvinist forces, that Hindu laws were superior and ensured equality for women. He said even Atal Behari Vajpayee was forced to admit recently that Hindu women had the right to residence but no right to a share of property in many cases. He said the struggle to achieve equal status for women should be taken up by all communities and laws should be amended for this purpose. Through this struggle for equal laws, a climate can be eventually created for a uniform civil code.

Referring to the gruesome murder of Naina Sahni allegedly by her husband, a Youth Congress(I) leader, Surjeet said the manner in which the entire Congress(I) party and the Youth Congress(I) were trying to shield the culprit was utterly shameful

and showed the depths to which criminalisation had affected bourgeois political parties. He said for all its high moral posture, the BJP was no better and several of its legislators in U.P. were known to have criminal links.

Regarding the spate of elections in West Bengal, Surjeet said the Left Front had done phenomenally well in the three assembly by-elections but had faced some setbacks in the municipal elections. The Calcutta Municipal Corporation election results were also not up to the mark but the propaganda that the CPI(M) was crumbling in West Bengal was thoroughly misplaced. He said the Central Committee has asked West Bengal to prepare a full review of all the elections that have taken place. "We will try to overcome our shortcomings and solve the problems", Surjeet asserted.

The Central Committee's communique issued on this occasion follows:

Economic Situation

The Central Committee noted that the Narasimha Rao Government's stubborn insistence to pursue economic policies favouring foreign multinational companies and big business is aggravating the economic sufferings of the people. The starkest illustration of this inhuman policy is the fact that the government has 30 million tonnes of foodgrains stocked up while the prices of foodgrains steadily continue to increase. The Narasimha Rao Government has refused the demand for lower prices of foodgrains supplied through the public distribution system. On the contrary, in its drive to curtail food subsidy, the government has repeatedly hiked up the prices of supplies through the public distribution system to bring it on par with the market prices. The issue price of wheat has been increased by 72 per cent and of rice by 86 per cent since 1991.

Though the government claims to have slowed down the rate of inflation, there is no relief for the common people. Apart from the prices of foodgrains, prices of other food articles went up by 18.4 per cent in 1994-95. The prices of pulses have reached exorbitant levels. This is having disastrous effects on the poor

with cases of malnutrition deaths and other hunger related diseases spreading in the rural areas. The Central Committee demanded that the Rao Government immediately lower the prices of all foodgrains supplied through the public distribution system by 50 per cent; increase supplies from the Food Corporation of India, particularly to the north-eastern states and bring 14 essential commodities into the expanded network of the PDS.

Scrap Enron Project

The Central Committee strongly condemned the anti-national policy of the Central Government with regard to the telecom and power sectors. The unjustified favours shown to MNCs in the telecom and power sectors will cost the country dearly with huge resources flowing out of the country through the unconscionable agreements signed with foreign companies. The Enron project at Dabhol and the illegal agreement with the U.S. West in the telecom sector exemplify the government's surrender. With the submission of the review report by the cabinet sub-committee to the Maharashtra Government, the State Government should without delay cancel the agreement with Enron.

In three vital sectors the struggle against privatisation and entry of MNCs has come into focus—power, telecom and the financial sector. In the case of insurance sector the Rao Government has promised to open up this sector after the elections. The CPI(M) demands a review of the power and telecom policies which go against the interests of the country and indigenous technology. Alternative policies have been worked out which can meet the country's requirements for power and communications.

The Central Committee congratulated the telecom department employees who went on a four-day strike against the privatisation policy. It was an important struggle as the employees were fighting not for immediate demands but for a change in policy vital to the country's interests. The Central Committee condemned the betrayal by the leadership of the telecom unions which called off the strike without consulting the employees.

Nevertheless, the militant mood of the employees is an indicator of the popular feeling against the sell-out to foreign capital.

Defend Public Sector

The Central Committee condemned the Congress(I) Government going back on its commitment to assist the modernisation of the Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) plant. Despite the assurance that SAIL would be endorsed with the modernisation, the Rao Government is now refusing to provide the budgetary support of Rs. 1100 crore for that purpose. The Central Committee also sharply criticised the Congress(I) Government's refusal to take a clear decision to outlaw foreign and joint sector companies from deploying deep sea trawlers which affect the livelihood of lakhs of fisher families. The Central Committee also demanded that the Bailadilla mines not be handed over to the private sector and be retained with the National Mineral Development Corporation.

The Congress(I) Government and the media which support the economic policies, seek to confuse the people about the policies of the Left Front Government in West Bengal. They wish to portray that the Left Front Government is adopting the same policies as the Centre. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The West Bengal Government is opposed to the privatisation of public sector units. For instance, in the power sector, the West Bengal Government is against privatisation of the existing power plants in the state sector; it will not allow 100 per cent foreign owned power projects like Enron; since the Centre will not provide funds for power sector expansion in the public sector, it has decided to allow private sector participation in joint sector projects. Here too, the rates for power and the terms and conditions will be regulated and effective control will vest with the state. The CPI(M), therefore, calls for the review of all the seven foreign funded projects which have received counter-guarantees from the Central Government such as the Ib valley project in Orissa and Cogentrix project in Karnataka.

The Central Committee called for intensifying the struggle against the economic policies of the Congress(I) Government. In

this connection the Central Committee lent full support to the call given by the National Platform of Mass Organisations for a campaign from September to end-November to mobilise all sections of the people against the new economic policies.

Observe Day for PDS

The Central Committee called upon all Party units to observe August 8 against price-rise by calling for strengthening the public distribution system. The demand for expansion of the public distribution system, reduction of the prices of foodgrains and other items supplied through the system by 50 per cent and the release of foodstocks piled up by the FCI for the purpose must form the focus for the campaign. The Central Committee also asked all its Party units to take the lead in developing local struggles on issues affecting the people linked to the economic policies.

U.P.: BJP Manoeuvre

The Central Committee, reviewing the developments in Uttar Pradesh, sharply condemned the BJP's manoeuvre in installing the Mayawati Government in Uttar Pradesh. The hypocritical posture of concern for the dalits in U.P. is in stark contrast with the record of the BJP Government in Gujarat where atrocities on dalits have taken place in Kadi with the open abetment of a minister. Such an unprincipled and opportunist alliance between the BJP and the BSP cannot provide any governance which can bring relief to the oppressed sections or help the development of U.P. The Central Committee condemned the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's call for resumption of the agitation in Varanasi at the Gyan Vapi mosque under the pretext of conducting religious ceremonies. The Central Committee also warned against activities like the *ekatmata yagna* proposed by the VHP and allied outfits which can only increase communal tensions.

The judgement by a two-member bench of the Supreme Court upholding the disqualification of a Shiv Sena MLA in Maharashtra has underlined the need for bringing in legislation to prohibit the mixing of religion and politics. The judgement

argues, not very correctly, the limitations of existing laws to prevent appeals to religion. The Congress(I) Government has done nothing to push through the amendments to the Representation of People's Act which will help curb political activities using religion. The Central Committee demands the adoption of this Bill in the next session of parliament.

On Common Civil Code

The Central Committee endorsed the stand taken by the Polit Bureau on the issue of a uniform civil code. The recent Supreme Court judgement calling for steps to be taken towards a common civil code has also stated that a climate of acceptability amongst the minorities must be created for such a measure. Our Party welcomed the broad direction given in the judgement. At the same time, certain remarks in the judgement give an impression that the Hindu social laws have been reformed while in reality discrimination against Hindu women continue in the present set-up. Instead of imposing a common civil code by state decree, it is essential that the rights of women and their equal status is taken up for all communities and existing laws be amended or fresh legislation initiated providing equality for women in marriage, property and other social matters. This can help in paving the way towards evolving a common civil code. Within the minorities, the fundamentalist opposition to equal rights for women has to be countered. The BJP's motivated campaign for introducing a uniform civil code purely for rousing feelings against the minorities must be exposed. Further, the BJP has never initiated any serious move for reform of Hindu laws which are retrograde and discriminate against women.

Kashmir

The Central Committee demanded that the Congress(I) Government work out a comprehensive policy on the Kashmir question. Despite the five-point proposal advocated by the Left Parties the Government shows no urgency in tackling the situation. The current crisis of extremists holding six foreign tourists hostage shows the reality at the ground level.

The assurance of the Prime Minister that maximum autonomy short of *azadican* be provided was welcome but it should not remain on *paper*. Neither is the government initiating any political measure to assure the Kashmiri people of their identity and provide for maximum autonomy nor is the administration able to see that development funds allotted to the valley are spent for the purposes intended. Only if such political and administrative measures as can restore confidence among the people are implemented can the favourable situation for elections be created.

Multi-Member EC Welcome

The Central Committee expressed its deep appreciation of the Supreme Court judgement upholding the formation of a multi-member commission with equal powers to all commissioners. With this judgement the CEC, T.N. Seshan's illegal and arbitrary stand on arrogating all powers to himself will be checked. It is essential that the multi-member commission function on the guidelines now set by the court. The next step to ensure the independence of the commission is to legislate for the appointment of commissioners by a process of consultation by the executive with other authorities set out in the Dinesh Goswami Committee report on electoral reforms.

Root Out Criminalised Politics

The gruesome murder of Naina Sahni in New Delhi perpetrated by a prominent Youth Congress leader has shocked public opinion. It starkly illustrates the lumpen quality of many Congress(I) functionaries. The policies and practice of the ruling party provides a key stimulus to degeneration in public life. In Kerala, a Congress(I) MLA who is implicated in the attempt to murder the CPI(M) leader E.P. Jayarajan, is desperately seeking to avoid arrest. Other bourgeois parties also harbour such elements. The CPI(M) will relentlessly expose all such criminal and corrupt activities which vitiate public life.

West Bengal Polls

The Central Committee greeted the Left Front for winning the the three assembly by-elections with increased majorities.

This shows the strong support of the people. In the municipal elections, the Left Front won a majority of the local bodies, though there is some erosion of support. The state committee of the Party will review these elections along with the Calcutta Corporation results. The Central Committee has asked the state unit to analyse the performance and take the necessary steps to remedy the organisational weaknesses and other shortcomings.

Build Left, Democratic, Secular Unity

The Central Committee reviewed the political events with regard to the forthcoming parliament elections. The recent by-elections in a number of states have confirmed that the Congress(I) is losing ground and the people vote for a Left, secular opposition where they are able to provide the alternative. Out of the 28 seats for which elections were held, the Left and secular opposition parties won 13, the Congress(I) ten and the BJP three.

The Central Committee decided to work for the defeat of both the Congress(I) and the BJP in the coming elections. The Congress(I) Government must be removed for its anti-national economic policies, its compromise with communalism, its rank corruption and failure to defend national unity. The BJP which poses as an alternative to the Congress(I) will only help dividing the people by its communal platform and can offer no alternative as it is basically an advocate of privatisation and liberalisation. It is the Left Parties which are consistent defenders of the people's interests and which provide alternative policies to the Congress(I) Government. In the coming period the mass movements led by the Left must be intensified. The Left Parties will project their stand on all issues concerning economic policies, communalism, national unity, state sponsored corruption and defence of people's rights. The Central Committee accords key importance to the strengthening of the Party and the Left in the coming electoral battle.

In order to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and to ensure that an effective national electoral alternative emerges, the CPI(M) and the Left will strive for the widest understanding

with all the secular opposition parties. The Central Committee directs the Polit Bureau to take steps unitedly with the Left Parties to mobilise all secular opposition forces in the political arena. For this consultations will be held with the Janata Dal and the National Front. Parties like the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and similar forces in other states must also be rallied. Despite all its tall talk, the BJP is in no position to come anywhere near becoming an electoral alternative at the national level. It is, therefore, essential that along with the mass struggles and movements on a whole range of people's issues initiated by the Left, preparations be made for building up an electoral alliance which will encompass all the Left, democratic and secular forces. This will ensure that the people's aspirations for a change in government, for a change in policies are met and fulfilled.

Report on Political Developments Since 15th Party Congress*

**Adopted by The Central Committee of
The CPI(M) in its Meeting Held in New Delhi on
July 16-18, 1995**

Three months have passed since the 15th Congress of our Party wherein along with the evaluation of the Party line since the 14th Congress and the review made of it, we had made a full assessment of the international and national situation. Assessing the national situation we came to the conclusion that we are passing through a period of political instability as was seen in the 14th Party Congress itself and the country is today facing serious challenges like the threat to economic sovereignty due to the policy of liberalisation followed by the Narasimha Rao Government at the dictates of IMF/World Bank, threat to national unity arising out of the activities of the BJP and the other communal forces along with the compromising role of the ruling party, the continuing separatist movements like in Kashmir and the North East threaten the unity of the country itself and the rampant corruption combined with the criminalisation of politics.

There has been growing resistance to these policies by the Left democratic and patriotic minded people. It was also stated that due to these policies there is growing isolation of the Congress(I) Party from the masses, but in the absence of a coherent Left, democratic and secular alternative BJP is trying to utilise the discontent. Therefore, the task emerging out of this assessment was that to meet the concrete situation facing the country, the Party should strive to strengthen the Left forces by mobilising the people on these issues and to forge the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces to ward off the present danger in order to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP in the next elections.

*Published as a booklet in August 1995

For this the Party will have to take further initiative to develop resistance to the economic policies as well as against communalism and other dangers facing the country today. For this purpose we have to consistently develop mass movements drawing in the working class, peasantry and other sections of the toiling people with a view to strengthening the Left forces in the country and to be able to rally the other democratic and secular forces to achieve the objective.

Three months are not a sufficient period to make a full assessment of the developments. But even then, it can be stated that the major events that have occurred are broadly in conformity with the analysis made in the Party Congress. In this period, there were assembly by-elections in many states which showed that the Congress(I) continues to lose ground and the secular opposition bagged the largest number of seats; the increasing isolation of the Congress(I) has led to the split in the Party with a group headed by Tiwari and Arjun Singh; the growing resistance to economic liberalisation manifested in the widespread opposition to the Enron power project at Dabhol and the five-day strike by the telecom workers against privatisation. The crisis in the political sphere was also manifested in the failure of the ruling party to get important legislations passed in Parliament. Both the Patent Amendment Bill and the legislation to replace TADA were stalled in the Rajya Sabha due to stiff opposition. The situation in Kashmir got aggravated after the destruction of the Charar-e-Sharief shrine and the government finally forced to postpone elections. The BJP continued to manoeuvre to strengthen itself before the Parliament elections. The developments in U.P. resulted in the dismissal of Mulayam Singh Government and the installation of the BSP Government headed by Mayawati with the support of the BJP. The VHP has announced plans for stepping up its agitation on Kashi and Mathura to foment communal tensions. The Congress(I) manoeuvres against Left-led states continue as seen in the conspiracy to postpone the ADC elections in Tripura. The gory killing of a woman by the former President of the Delhi Youth Congress(I) exposes the moral degradation as well as criminalisation of politics encouraged by the ruling party.

By-Elections

In May, by-elections for 28 assembly seats spread over 13 states were held. These confirmed the trends already noted in the two rounds of assembly elections held in 10 states. The Congress(I) could win only 10 of the 28 seats. An analysis of the results show that the Congress(I) has not made any gains and has retained either its sitting seats or in the states where it is in power. The Congress(I) drew a blank in U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Karnataka. In Kerala, A.K. Anthony won his seat in a Muslim League stronghold, were also the UDF percentage of votes showed a erosion of 13 per cent the major gainer being the other communal parties. The BJP fared badly winning only 3 seats—two in Rajasthan and one in Uttar Pradesh. It could not win any of the four states either in M.P. or Himachal where it is traditionally strong. Even in U.P. the Samajwadi Party was able to win comfortably in three seats and the BJP could retain its sitting seat only by a narrow margin of 900 votes. The Janata Dal won three seats in Bihar and the single seat in Karnataka; the Left Front won all the three seats with bigger margins in West Bengal; the Telugu Desam won all the three seats in Andhra Pradesh including wresting one from the Congress(I); the Samajwadi Party won three in U.P. Taken together the non-Congress(I), non-BJP Left and secular opposition parties were able to win 13 seats. This is a significant pointer. In Punjab the by-election for one seat went to the Akali Dal(B) and one seat was won by an independent in Bihar.

These results as the earlier assembly elections, show that the Congress(I) is losing ground steadily among the people. Where the secular and Left Parties are an effective force they are making headway and the BJP is gaining where such a force is absent.

Economic Policies

In spite of the electoral defeats, the government is determined to pursue the same policy as earlier. In fact one Central Minister after another including the Prime Minister goes on to assure U.S imperialism that whatever changes take place in the country, there is no going back on the economic reforms.

The Narasimha Rao Government is brazenly defending the worst features of the economic policies which are causing serious damage to the country's interests and the people's livelihood. The determination with which the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues are defending the Enron project at Dabhol shows the close nexus between the Congress(I) ministers and multinational corporations. Despite the widespread criticism and well established facts about the favouritism shown and totally unjustified terms given to the Enron company, the review conducted by the new Shiv Sena-BJP Government has led to a frenzy of statements by Congress(I) ministers predicting. The movement to stop the Enron project has elicited wide support from different sections of the people including some who favour liberalisation. We have to see what the Shiv Sena-BJP Government decides on the matter.

Similarly in the telecom sector the new telecom policy and guidelines are scandalous in giving special favours to the multinationals while discriminating against public sector units of the country in bidding for new contracts. The significant strike by the telecom employees was against this privatisation and entry of multinationals and the Narasimha Rao Government has refused to revise the terms and conditions in the new policy. The four-day telecom strike was a landmark as the employees were fighting not for immediate demands but for a change in policy for the whole sector which is vital to the country's interests. Though the strike struggle could not be carried on due to the reformist sections in the leadership, the militant mood of the employees is an indicator of the popular feelings against the MNCs.

In three vital sectors the struggle against privatisation and entry of MNCs has come into focus—power, telecom and the financial sector. The Narasimha Rao Government is committed to opening up the financial sector to foreign institutions including insurance. But it has informed them that it can be done only after the next elections. In both power and telecom we have demanded a review of the existing policy and must step up the struggle for an alternative policy in these sectors which can meet the country's requirements for power and communications.

The adverse impact of the pro-multinational pro-big business policies is becoming evident in all other spheres too. The recent struggle of lakhs of workers in the fishing industry against the use of deep sea trawlers by foreign and joint stock companies has highlighted the loss of livelihood for lakhs of fisher families which are engaged in traditional fishing or small mechanised operations. The Government of India has been forced to accede to review by a reconstituted committee but the struggle of the fishing workers has to be fully supported and special efforts must be made by the Party in states with coastlines to take up this issue and go amongst the fisher people to organise them in the struggle.

In the case of IISCO, despite the assurance that SAIL would be entrusted with the modernisation of the plant, the Rao Government is now going back by refusing to provide budgetary support of Rs. 1,100 crores for the purpose. It was the determined struggle of the workers and the trade union movement which had stopped the proposal to hand over the plant to the private sector.

The employment situation has also worsened. Over 37 million are registered in the employment exchanges. In the rural areas, employment for the rural poor especially women has shrunk. The privatisation drive is throwing those in jobs into the ranks of the unemployed. According to the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the total indebtedness of the country increased by Rs. 214 crores per day during 1993-94.

The ceaseless price-rise of all essential commodities is the main source of suffering for the common people. Prices of food articles are the worst affected. Pulses which provide the main protein content for the ordinary people have gone out of their reach. Apart from the prices of foodgrains, prices of other food articles went up by 18.4% in 1994-95. With 30 million tonnes of foodgrain stock in the FCI godown, the Narasimha Rao Government still callously refuses to provide for cheap food through widespread public distribution system. The Rao Government has refused to lower the prices of foodgrains supplied through the PDS by 25 per cent as demanded by the civil supplies ministers of the states. This in itself shows the anti-people nature of the government's food policy which has allowed

the price of rice and wheat supplied through the PDS to reach the level of the market price at the dictates of the IMF and the World Bank. The struggle for defending the public distribution system as a vehicle for providing cheap food for the urban and rural poor, the reduction of foodgrain prices by 50 per cent and the expansion of the PDS to supply 14 essential commodities must be the centerpiece of our struggle against price-rise and inflation.

Patent Act Amendment: An important success in the struggle against the Congress(I) Government's surrender to imperialist pressure is the blocking of the Patent Amendment Bill in the Rajya Sabha. The determined resistance put up by the combine opposition prevented the government from pushing through this bill which has already been adopted in the Lok Sabha. Despite the best efforts of the government, the opposition would not yield on the basic questions of protecting the Patent Act of 1970. At the end of the budget session the government has proposed the setting up of a select committee for examining the bill. In the meantime, more campaigns are essential to mobilise public opinion against the surrender on the patents which is part of the terms agreed to in the GATT treaty and for joining the World Trade Organisation.

The Left Parties played an important role inside Parliament as seen in the resistance to the Patent Bill as well as to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. But it must be recognised that the withdrawal of the telecom strike which was centered around policy issues of privatisation and not on the immediate demands of the workers was a setback to the movement in the background of the working class actions during the last three years where the four general strikes including the massive demonstrations and struggles were organised to oppose these policies. And that too when the telecom workers were determined to go ahead with the strike defying all threats of disciplinary action. The reformist leadership which betrayed the workers must be exposed.

As far as developing resistance to various aspects of policy is concerned, we have to continue the struggle both from the Platform of Mass Organisations as well as independently by the Left Parties. All Party units must take the lead in building local struggles which are linked to the economic policies.

Impact on Foreign Policy

As noted in the Party Congress it has to be properly understood that these economic policies have their impact on the foreign policy too. This is seen in the growing Indo-U.S. military cooperation. The Indo-U.S. military cooperation pact which was signed in January this year, envisages stepped up cooperation in three spheres: joint exercises and training, cooperation in technological and production and ministry to ministry level exchanges and policy discussions. Our Party has strongly opposed this agreement in the 15th Congress resolution. The new aspect of political level discussions was to be implemented with the Indian defence secretary's visit to the USA which was announced for the third week of June. Talks were to be held with the U.S. defence department senior officials. Prior to this joint naval exercises were held off, the coast of Cochin codenamed Operation Malabar II in which aircraft carriers from the U.S. and India participated. Another exercise of the two armies was conducted at Dehradun with special commando units of the two sides participating. Interestingly, the information about these exercises were provided by the U.S. Ambassador in India and not the Indian Government.

On the eve of the visit of the Indian defence secretary the visit to America was suddenly called off. The Indian Government has still not given any clear reasons for this. But prior to the proposed visit the U.S. Government held its joint consultative meeting with the Pakistan defence officials in the first week of June. After that the U.S. under-secretary for defence announced that there will be no arms technology transfers to India yet and reiterated that U.S. would not develop its defence relations with India to the detriment of its defence relations with Pakistan. The Rao Government could not have sent the Indian delegation for talks with this stance of the U.S. Government. This episode shows how the USA is trying to co-opt India into its overall strategy of maintaining strategic defence relations with both Pakistan and India as part of its overall global military plan. The close defence ties with the U.S. which the Rao Government has agreed to cannot serve India's national interests given the U.S. perception.

The United States, along with its NATO allies, has been able to successfully get the NPT renewed for an indefinite time through the international conference convened for the purpose. The Indian Government correctly decided not to have anything to do with the conference but with the passing of the renewal of the NPT. The U.S. pressure will mount on India to accept full scope safeguards for India's nuclear installations under the auspices of the IAEA. We have to be vigilant to also see that India is not roped into accepting a fissile material non-proliferation treaty which will also be discriminatory.

The subservient attitude to the USA is also reflecting in the increasingly active role of the American ambassador in the internal affairs of the country. The visit of Frank Wisner to Kashmir and his discussions with political leaders and officials and his public airing of views; his remarks on economic policies and statements such as legislators are not meant to fix rates of electricity are some of the instances. The U.S. administration also arrogantly warned India about adverse consequences if the Enron project is cancelled.

Kashmir

The burning down of the Charar-e-Sharief Shrine in Kashmir has had a serious impact on the Kashmir situation. The bungling and mishandling of the situation at the shrine since the time the extremists had occupied it, has sharply illustrated the total failure of the Narasimha Rao Government's policy on Kashmir. Kashmir affairs are supposed to be directly held by the Prime Minister. For three months the extremists had occupied this shrine and the army was sent in to lay a siege. Despite the presence of a large number of security forces the town was set ablaze and finally the shrine destroyed. The shrine of Noorudin Wali, a respected Sufi Saint, symbolised the Kashmiri culture of communal harmony and tolerance as he was revered by both Muslims and Hindus. The destruction of the shrine has caused widespread indignation and sorrow among the people in the valley who came out in large numbers in protest against the government. The security forces could not nab the extremists who left the shrine before their eyes nor could they protect the shrine itself.

In this period fundamentalist forces have been active in trying to foil any revival of the political process in the state. Supporters of the CPI(M) were specially targeted in the Anantnag district and at least three persons were killed including a leading CPI(M) cadre for refusing to succumb to the extremist threats.

The Narasimha Rao Government which had seriously contemplated holding elections by mid-July before the President's rule ended in the state, was forced to rethink after the deterioration of the situation consequent to the destruction of the shrine. The CPI(M) had consistently maintained that for elections to be held sufficient groundwork is necessary so that the Kashmiri people are assured of their identity and initiative taken by the Centre for providing maximum autonomy within the framework of the Indian Union. In the wake of the Charar-e-Sharief incident a meeting of the Left Parties was held in which the Central Government has been asked to take certain immediate steps for preparing the ground for elections. These steps are: (1) effective and speedy steps must be taken to rebuild the shrine at Charar-e-Sharief and all the houses destroyed by fire in the town, (2) the present Governor has to be replaced and the set-up revamped. The Governor must have a political vision. To motivate the administration and to provide access to the people, an advisory committee with people of political background should be constituted, (3) the vital question of providing maximum autonomy within the Indian Union must be taken up. The agreement of 1975 between Sheikh Abdullah and Smt. Indira Gandhi provides the basis for this. The Centre must announce its initiative in this regard, (4) serious efforts must be made to open a dialogue with sections which stand for the protection of Kashmiri identity. All-round efforts must be made to isolate and combat the forces which are directly backed and sustained by Pakistan, (5) there has to be a massive campaign in Kashmir and the rest of the country to explain how the extremist activities have disrupted the economic and social life in the valley and to rally the people for the defence of secularism and national unity.

It is essential that people of the country are told of the actual situation in Kashmir and the necessity to redress the grievances of

the people there so that the Pakistan-backed extremist forces are isolated and the secular and democratic traditions are revived in the state.

Since one year the situation had become favourable with the people of Kashmir getting fed up with the activities of the extremists and were in search of peace. The government lost lot of time. No negotiations were conducted with the released leaders who stand for the identity of the Kashmiri people. In fact the government has fallen into the American trap of talking about elections minus satisfying the basic aspirations of the people. The American imperialists have started talking about the Shimla Agreement but also goes on repeating that the will of the people of Kashmir will have to be taken into consideration. If the government had gone ahead with the election in the absence of any political package it would not have been possible to involve the people in the election process. This would have enabled Pakistan to internationalise the issue and further complicate the matters. Now the government has started talking about autonomy and talks without preconditions. All the democratic forces have to be mobilised to force the government to pursue this path. Only then is there a possibility to restore peace in Kashmir. In no case should the government rely on American imperialism which has its own ulterior motives.

Other Political Developments

In order to make a proper assessment of the situation it is necessary to take note of certain developments that have a bearing on the political situation and rally all the different secular opposition forces. We have stated earlier that in the absence of a coherent approach by the Left, democratic and secular forces, the BJP is trying its best to resort to certain manoeuvres where it is able to make use of the discontent and project itself as the real alternative to the Congress(I).

BJP Manoeuvres

In its Goa national council meeting it tried to project itself as a party which is coming to power in the next general elections. They got this encouragement particularly after the Maharashtra

and Gujarat assembly elections. They have concentrated now in Uttar Pradesh by conspiring to install a BJP supported BSP Government. The break up of the SP-BSP alliance in U.P. have given some encouragement to their hopes but it is not an easy task. Conflicts and contradictions are going to develop between the BSP-BJP because both represent interests of sections sharply in conflict with each other. As the month's developments go to show this government is not going to last for long. The only benefit which can accrue to the BSP can be of being a caretaker government and one is not sure along with which force the BSP will ultimately go. The BSP is also keeping contact with the Congress(I) party which helped in the formation of its government by its manoeuvres through the Governor.

The BJP keeping an eye on the elections is adopting an oppositional stance to the Narasimha Rao Government's policies. It has stepped up its "nationalistic" opposition to the multinational corporations while refusing to oppose the basic policy of liberalisation and privatisation. That BJP will stick to the Hindutva platform was made clear by Advani at the Goa session. Whether it be the scare of Bangladeshi foreigners in Bombay whipped up by the Shiv Sena which the BJP supports, or the stand of opposing any autonomy for Kashmir as appeasement of Muslims to the use of Rithambara of the VHP for intimidating minorities or using issues like cow slaughter, the BJP can be expected to intensify its communal postures in the run-up to the elections. The VHP is gearing itself for stepping up the agitation on Varanasi and Mathura religious places. It announced an *ekatmata yatra* in October.

The BJP is also factionally divided in various states particularly in Madhya Pradesh but as elections come they are likely to patch up as was done in Gujarat. It must also be understood that BJP is being backed by a section of the monopoly houses as well as foreign powers which would not like the development of any alternative in which the Left will play a role.

Developments in U.P.

The crisis in the SP-BSP alliance was developing for sometime. The fall of the Mulayam Singh Government became inevitable

after the panchayat elections with the withdrawal of support of the BSP and the latter staking claim to form a government with the support of the BJP. The BJP's manoeuvres succeeded because of the cynical opportunism displayed by BSP leader Kanshi Ram. The installation of Mayawati as Chief Minister and running the government at the mercy of the BJP will lead to a heavy price being paid by the BSP as the BJP will use them as a 'dalit' card and discard them. While it was clear that Mulayam Singh had lost the majority after the break with the BSP, the Governor by not calling an assembly session to test the claims and counter-claims acted as per the instructions of the Congress(I) leadership. He violated the norm that in such cases the assembly should be the final arbiter and not the Governor. This was in contrast to the recent action of the Governor of Manipur where the Congress(I) Chief Minister was allowed to continue for horsetrading after his ministry lost the majority in the assembly. Narasimha Rao decided to allow Mayawati to remain in office for his own narrow interests within the Congress(I). Firstly to outmanoeuvre the Tiwari faction in Uttar Pradesh which has been leading the agitation to topple the Mulayam Government and secondly to show that the Congress(I) is pro-dalit.

Our Party came out opposing the formation of the BSP Government backed by the BJP. Any government which will help the BJP in Uttar Pradesh should be opposed. Unfortunately, both the state units of the Janata Dal and the CPI took a narrow opportunist stand of supporting Mayawati because of their opposition to Mulayam Singh. The decision to abstain by both these parties after pressure from their national leadership showed their inability to see the threat the BJP posed by this manoeuvre. Our Party decided not to support either the Governor's manoeuvres or the Speaker's moves in retaliation. As for Mulayam Singh and the Samajwadi Party the CPI(M) has pointed out that they took a wrong position in 1993 assembly elections by refusing to ally with the Janata Dal and the Left thereby the wider secular unity which could have decisively defeated the BJP, was prevented. The BJP would have lost another 90 seats if there had been wider unity.

The crisis inside the SP-BSP developed because of the absence of coherent socio-economic policies and both were depending on caste appeal. Whereas Kanshi Ram was making best efforts to consolidate the scheduled castes behind him and also to rally sections of minorities and others, Mulayam Singh did not hesitate to follow the Central Government. In fact he was ahead of them in privatising the public sector to help the industrialists. He did not hesitate to unleash repression on the Uttarakhand movement and indulge in widespread malpractices in the panchayat elections. His proclivity to encourage criminals in politics also tarnished his image and alienated the secular democratic people. But because of the negative aspects of his policies there was no widespread sympathy for Mulayam Singh and his party with the fall of his government. In the present situation prevailing in U.P., where the BJP poses a serious threat, the role of the SP should not be ignored. Mulayam Singh's party is a force capable of rallying the minorities and a substantial section of the OBCs. It is necessary that Mulayam Singh reconsider his past policies and adopt a stance which will facilitate the forging of a wider unity to defeat the BJP in the biggest state in the country.

Congress(I) Split

The inner-struggle within the Congress(I) which was noted in our Party Congress resolution culminated in the May 19 convention held at Delhi by the dissidents. The convention saw good participation by the rank and file party members from certain states. Among MPs, there were around 15 from the party. The convention was significant for the frontal attack on Narasimha Rao's leadership, particularly, his hobnobbing with the BJP. The rebel group has a base in U.P., M.P. and Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and pockets elsewhere. The announcement of Tiwari as President was made after big pressure from the participants who would not countenance any compromise. It is to be seen if this discontent among the ordinary Congress(I) workers will be channelised by the new grouping. So far there has not been much progress made after the May convention. In Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister has sided with Rao and at the rebel convention at Jabalpur only one

minister and eight MLAs attended. Unless the leadership of the rebel group goes amongst the people to mobilise them in a big way with alternative policies on economy and secularism, it will not be possible for them to effectively challenge the official leadership.

Tripura Developments

The Congress(I)-TUJS became desperate to avoid elections to the Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) whose term is to end by mid-July. The Left Front Government has proposed that elections be held in the beginning of July and the Governor had accepted that the notification would be issued for elections on 12th June. However, the TUJS which is the main party among the tribals under the Congress(I)-TUJS combination split because of inner bickerings in May. The president of the TUJS was expelled from the party and he has formed a new party. He also happened to be the chief executive member of the TTAADC. The Congress(I)-TUJS removed him through a no confidence motion and manoeuvred to appoint a new chief executive member with the approval of Governor Romesh Bhandari.

Unable to face the elections and facing certain rout the Congress(I) resorted to all sorts of tactics including going to court to postpone the elections. In this Romesh Bhandari assisted them. Utilising the stay given by the High Court on holding elections in four constituencies the Governor wrote to the Chief Minister that a commission be appointed to go into all complaints on delimitation. He also decided not to issue the notification on 12 June. The High Court subsequently asked the Governor to consider new petitions on delimitations within two weeks. The postponement of the elections scheduled to be held on 8-10 July led to a strong movement to foil the Congress(I)-TUJS conspiracy. With Romesh Bhandari leaving the post of Governor in Tripura, the new Governor was to take a decision. On request of the State Government, the new Governor has issued notification for holding elections on July 20 and 26. The entire episode shows the extent to which the Congress(I) will go to avoid elections because of its anti-tribal stance in Tripura.

The Left Front Government is continuing its endeavours to ensure economic development in the state. A delegation of Left Parties went to Delhi to meet the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and others to urge for central cooperation and financial assistance to extend the railways and utilise the gas reserves for industrial development.

Call for Altering Political System

The prospects of the Congress(I) losing parliamentary elections and a non-Congress(I) coalition government coming in its place has seriously alarmed the ruling classes and foreign big business investments. Echoing this fear of "political instability" several prominent persons have proposed to alter the parliamentary democratic system and modify the Constitution. Former President R. Venkataraman has revived his call for an all-party national government with enhanced powers for the President. The BJP has been for a Presidential system for long and hence is in favour of reforming the Constitution. The latest to join is the Speaker of the Lok Sabha who put forth proposals which would mean altering the party based parliamentary democratic system substantially. Among his proposals are two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha would be compulsory for forming a single party or coalition government; otherwise, failing which a government with ministers who are not Parliament members can be appointed; further removal of a Prime Minister through a no-confidence motion would be made more difficult. All such proposals betray nervousness at the idea of Congress(I) losing dominance at the Centre and efforts to make a stable arrangement for the smooth continuance of the class rule of the big bourgeoisie and landlords.

Our Party has come out categorically against the proposals made by the Speaker and the former President. It is not the parliamentary system which has to be altered. Instead basic electoral reforms have to be implemented to make the parliamentary system more reflective of the people's interests. The political instability which has affected the present system stems from the policies of the bourgeois-landlord classes and not

due to the parliamentary democratic system. But instead of strengthening the federal structure of our Constitution, the ruling party has started manoeuvring to weaken the democratic struggle in order to perpetuate its rule in the wake of political instability.

Supreme Court Judgement on Common Civil Code

The Supreme Court judgement concerning the practice of certain men converting to Islam in order to divorce their wives came out with a judgement invalidating this practice and also making general comments about the necessity to go towards a uniform civil code as provided for in the directive principles of the Constitution. The court asked the Government of India to report on the progress towards achieving a common civil code. The court also stated that steps should be taken to create a climate of acceptability amongst the minorities for such a measure. Our Party has welcomed the broad direction given in the judgement. However, certain remarks in the judgement give the impression that the Hindu social laws have been revamped while in reality discrimination against Hindu women continue under the present laws. The effort at citing reform in the Hindu code for the minorities to follow will not help in generating support for reform in the minorities. It is essential that the rights of women and equal status is taken up for all communities and laws be amended towards providing equality for women in property and other social matters. This can help in paving the way towards finally evolving a uniform civil code. Within the minorities, the fundamentalist opposition to equal rights for women must be countered. The BJP's motivated campaign for introducing a uniform civil code purely for rousing feelings against the minorities must be exposed. Further, the BJP has never initiated any serious move for reform of those Hindu laws which are retrograde and discriminate against women.

TADA Replacement

Due to the widespread opposition to the use of TADA and its draconian provisions innumerable cases which have nothing to do with terrorism and minorities being made a special target during

communal riots for the application of TADA, the Congress(I) Government found it difficult to renew the Act. Within the Congress(I) party itself opposition mounted. The proposed criminal law amendment bill to replace TADA has itself become controversial. While removing certain obnoxious features in the old TADA the present bill contains many clauses which are detrimental to civil liberties and democratic rights and are bound to be misused. They pertain to the definition of terrorism and disruptive activities, the scope for arbitrary use of detention powers and the presumption of guilt on the accused person by association with a suspected terrorist. Given these features our Party along with other Left and secular opposition parties have opposed the bill and demanded substantial amendments. At one stage the government came to an understanding with the BJP to pass the bill but there was a revolt inside the Congress(I) on this issue particularly, by the members of the minority community and the government was forced to have a discussion with the Left and secular parties. Our Party took a firm position not to support any general law of the nature of TADA or a diluted version of it. We were agreeable only to assign special powers in the legislation for a specified period and areas which are meant to combat terrorist activities connected with secessionism such as in Kashmir and earlier in Punjab. Ultimately this legislation could not be adopted. Now efforts are going on to pass the legislation. Our Party should maintain the stand which we have taken in the last session.

Congress(I) Degeneration

The policies and practices of the ruling party provide a key stimulus to degeneration in public life. The gruesome murder of Naina Sahni in New Delhi perpetrated by a prominent Youth Congress(I) leader has shocked public opinion. It starkly illustrates the lumpen quality of many Congress(I) functionaries. Other bourgeois parties also harbour such elements. In Kerala, the attempted murder of E.P. Jayarajan, CPI(M) leader and MLA has been traced to a Congress(I) leader who was in connivance with M. V. Raghavan, Minister in the UDF Government. The Congress(I) MLA tried to evade arrest for a number of days

before surrendering to the Court. The open loot of public funds encouraged by the Congress(I) Government has contributed to an open nexus between unscrupulous politicians, criminals and moneyed wheeler-dealers. The privatisation deals such as the Bailadilla mines being handed over to a private sector company typifies the plunder of public assets and pay-offs to ruling partymen and corrupt bureaucrats. Our Party must relentlessly expose all corrupt deals and link them to the fight against privatisation.

Unity of Left and Secular Forces

As noted in the Party Congress political resolution, the present situation is marked by its complexity. In the background of the Congress(I) steadily losing mass support and the BJP trying to utilise the popular discontent, we have to work out proper tactics for the forthcoming parliament elections in order to defeat both the Congress(I) and the BJP.

In preparing for the electoral battle, we must project the Left stand on all issues concerning economic policies, communalism, national unity, corruption and defence of the people's rights. The strengthening of the Party and the Left must be accorded due importance.

However, we are not in a position yet to project the Left and democratic alternative which alone can be the real alternative. It is essential, however, that an effective electoral alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP be presented. It is keeping this in mind that the Party Congress political resolution concluded that "The CPI(M) and Left must strive for an understanding with the secular opposition forces to present an effective electoral alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The Left alone cannot, in the present situation, defeat both these forces. The secular opposition parties have, though constrained by the absence of a coherent programme, an important role to play in projecting the immediate electoral alternative". On the basis of the JD-NF formulating a clear-cut common programme, our Party can extend cooperation to them to project an effective third force in the electoral arena.

Preparations for Parliament Elections

The Congress(I) is gearing up to face the elections and is making various policy statements and electoral manoeuvres. The BJP also is stepping up its efforts to win allies and emerge as the focus of anti-Congress(I) feeling. It is in such a situation that the Party and the Left forces must intervene to influence the political scene. Elections are going to be held not only for Parliament but for state assemblies such as West Bengal and Kerala where the Left is a strong force. We have to gear up the entire Party for the electoral struggle. The whole Party must be activated on the basis of the political direction given by the Party Congress. The Party and the Left should strive to develop mass movements on the vital issues affecting the country and the people. Resistance to the economic policies, defence of the people's livelihood, fight against price-rise and unemployment, the campaign to defend secularism and national unity, equal rights for women, the exposure of corruption and punishment of the guilty,—all these must constitute the basis for our mass campaigns and struggles. At the same time we must project our policies in a concrete manner to convince the people that an alternative way is possible.

In order to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and to ensure that an effective national electoral alternative emerges, the CPI(M) and the Left should strive for the widest understanding with all the secular opposition parties. Unitedly with the Left Parties we should take steps to mobilise all secular opposition forces in the political arena. For this consultations must be held with the Janata Dal and the National Front. Parties like the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and similar forces in other states must also be rallied. Despite all its tall talk, the BJP is in no position to come anywhere near becoming an electoral alternative at the national level. It is, therefore, essential that along with the mass struggles and movements on a whole range of people's issues initiated by the Left, preparations be made for building up an electoral alliance which will encompass all the Left, democratic and secular forces. This will ensure that the people's aspirations for a change in government, for a change in policies are met and fulfilled.

CPI(M) Hails Victory in Tripura ADC*

**Statement Dated July 31, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau congratulates the Tripura unit of the CPI(M) and the Left Front for their magnificent victory in the Tripura Tribal Area Autonomous District Council (TTADC) elections. The Left Front has won an unprecedented 23 out of the 24 seats which went to the polls, with the CPI(M) alone winning 18 seats. This shows the strong support among the tribal people for the CPI(M) and the Left and the confidence among both the tribal and non-tribal people in the Party's capacity to utilise the Autonomous District Council for the welfare of the people. This victory has been achieved despite all the obstacles placed in holding the elections by the Congress-TUJS as they were desperate in the face of their isolation from the people. The people have also unitedly foiled the extremist attacks to disrupt the elections.

In the past five years the TUJS-led council, by its misgovernance and corruption, had seriously damaged the work of the autonomous council. The CPI(M) and the Left Front now have the big task of restoring proper functioning of the council and ensuring that the autonomous structure becomes an effective instrument for protecting the rights of the adivasi people in particular and the welfare of the common people in general.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 6, 1995.

On Enron Deal Cancellation*

**Statement Dated August 3, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The CPI(M) welcomes the decision of the Maharashtra Government to cancel the agreement with Enron for the Dabhol power project. This decision accords with the widespread public opinion against the project as it is against the fundamental interests of the state and the people. The project would have led to a constant drain on the state's exchequer with a heavy price being paid by the common people in terms of increased power tariffs.

The Enron-type agreement is the outcome of the Centre's power policy which encourages giving unjustified terms to foreign companies including the uncalled for counter-guarantee by the Central Government. The CPI(M) demands an immediate review of all the seven other fast-track power projects funded by foreign companies for which the Centre has given counter-guarantees.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 13, 1995.

CPI(M) Welcomes Sri Lanka Proposal for Restoring Peace*

**Statement Dated August 4, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) welcomes the initiative of the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, for restoring peace. The peace package proposals made by her can be a basis for discussions for a peaceful settlement of the issues. The establishment of peace in Sri Lanka is of utmost importance to control the escalating crisis and the sufferings of the Tamil and Sinhalese people.

The Polit Bureau expresses hope that the LTTE and other political parties would make use of the present proposals for a peaceful settlement.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 13, 1995.

CPI(M) Demands : Call NIC Meeting on Mathura*

**Statement Dated August 13, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses serious concern at the situation developing in Mathura due to the belligerent stand taken by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The VHP has threatened to go ahead with its programme of holding a yagna at the Idgah complex despite the UP Government's prohibiting this act. The pressure mounted on the Mayawati Government which is totally dependent on the BJP to resile from its earlier stand can lead to a dangerous situation in the city between August 16 to 18. The transfer of the District Magistrate of Mathura on the eve of the VHP programme after its criticism of his firm handling of the situation is an ominous development.

The BJP which earlier claimed that the Mathura issue is not on its agenda, has now come out supporting the claim of the VHP that it should be handed over the Idgah complex. This stance of the BJP shows its coordination with the RSS and VHP in building up a communal confrontation for electoral purposes.

The Central Government cannot afford to take any risk with the country's unity and communal harmony especially after the dastardly deed at Ayodhya perpetrated by the same forces. The Centre should take all steps necessary to see that law and order is maintained at Mathura. The CPI(M) calls upon the Prime Minister to urgently convene a full meeting of the National Integration Council so that a collective stand is taken to combat such disruptive activities.

On Induction of Western Armed Personnel*

**Statement Dated August 31, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep concern at reports that personnel of the British Army Special Air Services, the U.S. Army Delta Forces and the German Border Police GSG-9 have been deployed in the Kashmir valley in connection with the kidnapped hostages. The induction of western specialised armed services personnel for operational purposes in the valley, if true, is highly disturbing. There are reports of the Indian army authorities in the valley being unhappy at this development. It will be a serious matter if the morale of the Indian security force is undermined by such unprecedented action. It is incumbent upon the Central Government to clarify the position and allay the fears in this regard.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 10, 1995.

CPI(M)'s Concern Over Flood Devastation*

**Statement Dated September 6, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses grave concern over the devastation caused by the recent floods in various parts of the country. It conveys its condolences to the families of those killed.

The death toll in the floods in the current monsoon that has affected Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and various other parts of the country continues to rise alarmingly. The floods have caused heavy damage to standing crops and have led to collapse of houses, bridges etc. There is every danger of the spread of epidemics like cholera and other diseases.

Immediate relief measures have to be undertaken by both the Central and State Governments to render help to the affected people. Relief materials have to be rushed to these places. The Centre has to provide all necessary assistance to the concerned State Governments to meet the situation.

It is on account of the bankrupt water management policy of the Centre that we see the recurring spectacle of flood and drought situation occurring simultaneously in the country. A permanent solution to this recurrent problem of both floods and drought has to be worked out by the Central Government.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to National Conference of Communist Party of Brazil*

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) we have great pleasure in sending warm greetings to you on the occasion of the 8th National Conference of the Communist Party of Brazil.

Our two Parties have in the face of the adverse international situation prevailing in the recent period reaffirmed our commitment to Marxism and the struggle for socialism. This marks an important bond in the ongoing struggle to defend socialism and its creative application in the concrete conditions of our societies. Both our Parties and other revolutionary contingents have to stand together to face the international offensive of imperialism which is seeking to subjugate and impose its global hegemony in the situation consequent to the dismantling of the Soviet Union. India, like Brazil, being a relatively more developed capitalist country in the Third World, is bearing the brunt of this offensive of the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment policies.

The resistance to these policies in India is registering progress. The Left forces are unitedly mobilising the working people against the dismantling of the public sector and privatisation. We are confident that the Brazilian Communists will also head the struggle to defend national sovereignty and the interests of the working people against this neo-liberal offensive.

In this connection, it is significant that your conference has been convened to adopt a new Socialist Programme for Brazil.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 10, 1995.

584 *Documents of The Communist Movement in India*

We wish your deliberations on finalising this important document all success.

India in Asia and Brazil in Latin America have an important role in building up the worldwide resistance against imperialism and its onslaughts on economic and political independence of the developing countries. We look forward to the development of closer ties and coordination between our two Parties and the working class movements of both countries.

Once again we convey revolutionary greetings from Indian Communists to your national conference.

Central Committee
Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Bring Chandraswami to Book*

**Statement Dated September 14, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau expresses grave concern at the shocking revelations made by the alleged criminal Omprakash Srivastava about the links between the prime suspect in the Bombay blasts case and underworld mafia don, Dawood Ibrahim, and Chandraswami. Chandraswami has been accused of many shady dealings in the past. It seems that his connections with many Central Ministers has prevented the investigating agencies from initiating any proceedings against him.

The Polit Bureau demands that proper investigations be conducted against Chandraswami and he must be brought to book.

Polit Bureau Communiqué*

Issued Following its Meeting Held in
New Delhi on September 28-29, 1995

The efforts to build a third alternative of Left, democratic and secular forces to defeat both the Congress(I) and the BJP in the coming general elections are now moving in a positive direction and a real alternative is sure to emerge, the CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet has asserted.

Addressing a Press conference at New Delhi, September 30, 1995 following the two-day meeting (September 28-29) of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau, Surjeet said, the moves towards building a third alternative had received some setback with the split in the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh. However, a number of positive developments were now taking place, the most significant of which was Mulayam Singh Yadav's willingness to join hands with the secular opposition forces. Surjeet said, "Mulayam Singh is the biggest secular force in Uttar Pradesh. . . the Congress(I) does not exist in the state. You cannot fight the BJP in U.P. without Mulayam Singh. And he is ready to fight against the BJP and Congress(I), and go along with the Left and secular forces."

Elsewhere in the country too, non-BJP and non-Congress(I) forces were surfacing and were keen to become part of the emerging third alternative. In this context, Surjeet mentioned the desire expressed by S. Bangarappa to join hands with the Janata Dal in Karnataka. Ramakrishna Hegde too, despite his talk of a coalition government with the Congress(I), was very much part of the Janata Dal and would remain so, Surjeet said.

Surjeet underlined the major role the Left would have to play in bringing about a third alternative. The impressive victory of

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 8, 1995.

the CPI(M) and LDF in the just concluded panchayat and municipal elections in Kerala, coming soon after the victory in the Tripura ADC elections, had shown the abiding strength of the Left and secular forces and enhanced the overall prestige of the Left in the country. "After this prestige gained by the Left, we will be in a position to bring about the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces. We are confident that a real alternative is sure to emerge", Surjeet said.

Recent developments in the country have also served to expose the bloated rhetoric of the BJP and its tall claims of being a "principled" party which would provide a stable alternative to the Congress(I), Surjeet said. The spectacle unfolding in Gujarat with BJP leaders squabbling with each other for ministerial and official positions showed that the BJP was no different from the Congress(I) in its greed for power and pelf. Earlier, its opportunistic support to Mayawati in Uttar Pradesh had shown that the BJP was a party without principles. Similarly, the BJP-Shiv Sena Government's decision to renegotiate with Enron after cancelling the deal with much fanfare exposed the BJP's double-speak and reconfirmed that "the BJP cannot get rid of their pro-American stance", Surjeet said.

If the BJP's image had suffered major dents in recent weeks, the Congress(I)'s reputation of promoting corruption and shielding criminals had been further enhanced with the Chandraswami affair. The Rao Government's unwillingness to take action against Chandraswami despite the former Internal Security Minister, Rajesh Pilot's orders to the CBI to arrest him, showed the depth to which the ruling party had fallen. Demanding immediate arrest of Chandraswami and a full investigation into his links, Surjeet warned that if the government failed to do so, the Chandraswami case would become a major issue in the coming elections and haunt the ruling party in the same manner as Bofors had done in 1989.

The Congress(I) was clearly nervous about facing the electorate and though it had earlier given in writing that it wanted early elections, it was now the only major party which wanted to further postpone the next general elections, Surjeet

said. Pointing out that all other parties had demanded that elections be held between February 20 and March 10, 1996, he said, "We hope the Election Commission will not be pressurised into postponing the elections".

Regarding the efforts made by the Government of India to stop the sale of Salman Rushdie's latest book, 'The Moor's Last Sigh' in India, Surjeet said the move appeared to be aimed at placating communal forces. He said Rushdie's book, a work of fiction, was critical of the fundamentalist forces and made oblique references to the Shiv Sena and Bal Thackeray. The attitude the government was adopting towards the book can prove disastrous at a time when there is very need to fight communal and fundamentalist forces, he said.

The Polit Bureau Communique issued on the occasion is being reproduced below:

Kerala Local Bodies Election

The Polit Bureau warmly congratulated the people of Kerala, the Left Democratic Front and the Kerala state unit of the Party for the creditable victory registered in the municipal and the panchayat elections. The overall success of the LDF at different levels is a popular indictment of the Antony government and the UDF. The alliance with the communal parties like the Muslim League, the opportunistic efforts to exploit caste sentiments by opposing the creamy layer concept in reservations and the shielding of corruption and misrule are all responsible for the defeat of the Congress(I)-led UDF.

Kerala has reaffirmed that the people want a strong Left, democratic and secular alternative to the Congress(I) and the communal forces.

Following the big victory of the CPI(M) and the Left Front in the Tripura Tribal Autonomous District Council elections, these results are a heartening vindication for Left and democratic oriented politics.

Congress(I) Exposed

The Polit Bureau reviewed the developments in the country since the last Central Committee meeting in Delhi and noted that

the Congress(I)'s position is getting further eroded. It is now banking on negative factors surfacing in the opposition to shore up its position. But the economic policies it has pursued and its involvement in the most shocking cases of corruption is leading to its further isolation from the people. In the recent period, the Chandraswami affair, the hawala scandal and the Bailadila swindle have highlighted the degeneration which has set in the ruling party.

Soon after the Congress(I) Government's hypocritical declaration of fighting criminalisation of politics in Parliament during the discussion on the Vohra Committee report, the Rao Government is seen to be brazenly shielding the dubious Chandraswami. Though Rajesh Pilot ordered the CBI to arrest him after his links with criminals were exposed, the reaction of the Prime Minister was to shift Pilot out of the Home Ministry. The CBI, after questioning Chandraswami, has put out the ridiculous explanation that it is yet to be ascertained whether Chandraswami knew that Babloo Srivastava was wanted by the police when he sheltered him. Many top Congress(I) leaders from the Prime Minister downwards are known to have links with Chandraswami. The Polit Bureau demands the immediate arrest of Chandraswami along with a full investigation into his sources of wealth and his links with the underworld. His political accomplices in various shady deals must also be brought to book. The Polit Bureau calls upon all its Party units to demand that the Chandraswami affair not be hushed up and this glaring example of criminalisation of politics be exposed and the guilty punished.

The Polit Bureau appreciated the Supreme Court's directive which has led to the pursuance of the hawala scandal case. The CBI, after a long delay, has now begun specific investigations on those who have received the illegal amounts of money. The Polit Bureau demands that all those involved in the scandal be prosecuted irrespective of their political affiliations.

Floods

The Polit Bureau expressed its deep concern for the suffering caused to the people due to serious floods in many parts of the

country. Floods in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Assam have destroyed property and crops worth crores of rupees affecting badly the lives of the people. West Bengal also is facing severe floods in six districts where 35 people have lost their lives. These regular occurrences of floods underline the failure of the government to seriously take up flood control measures and planned water management.

World Sikh Conference

The Polit Bureau expressed its serious concern about the situation prevailing in Punjab with the assassination of Chief Minister Beant Singh. The World Sikh Conference, which was held recently at Amritsar, became a platform for glorification of the extremists and the separatist ideology. There was not a word of condemnation of the havoc caused to Punjab by the extremists backed by external forces. The tribute paid to Bhindranwale and the killers of Indira Gandhi and Gen. Vaidya and the separatist content of some of the discussions show that a section of the Akalis are still associating with the extremists and flirting with the dangerous politics of separatism. The CPI(M) warns the Akalis that this will be disastrous for the people of Punjab and for themselves.

The Left Parties have to unitedly go to the people to mobilise them against the revival of extremist activities and to rouse the people to defend peace and foil plans to disrupt communal amity.

Kashmir

The prolonged abduction of foreign hostages and the lack of any coherent intervention by the Central Government are all leading to a difficult situation which is having its impact in the whole country. Though the people are getting fed up with the extremist activities and the violence, the Centre has failed to come out with any meaningful initiative which can provide for maximum autonomy. In the absence of such an initiative mere reliance on administrative steps and the security forces will only aggravate the situation further.

Indo-U.S. Military Ties

The Polit Bureau condemned the Narasimha Rao Government for jeopardising national security and succumbing to U.S. pressures. The waiving of the Presler Law by the American Senate to resume arms supplies to Pakistan had the full backing of the Clinton administration. This has come at a time when India sent its defence secretary for ministerial level, defence cooperation talks with the USA. This was an outcome of the Indo-U.S. military cooperation agreement signed in January this year. The USA continues to pressurise India on its missile programme and to accept its nuclear non-proliferation regime. There is no reason whatsoever to have strategic military cooperation with the USA. The Polit Bureau, therefore, demands cancellation of the military cooperation agreement with America.

Fight Price Rise

There is relentless increase in the prices of all essential commodities for the people. The prices of foodgrains have reached such heights that it makes life difficult of the common people. Such a sharp increase in prices is taking place at a time when the Congress(I) Government goes on claiming that the rate of inflation is coming down. The Rao Government is callously refusing to use the big stock of foodgrains for curbing price rise. It has not taken any step to reduce the prices in the public distribution system, nor is it initiating any food-for-work programme. The Polit Bureau reiterates the demand of the Party that the prices of foodgrains supplied through the PDS be reduced by fifty per cent. The Polit Bureau calls upon all Party units to continuously take up the issue of price rise and conduct struggles to ensure the expansion of the public distribution system.

All the measures announced by the government amounting to Rs. 5,000 crore for various schemes are mere sops extended to the people which will not ameliorate their conditions given the basic policies which are harmful.

The 8th Plan draft mid-term appraisal document prepared by the Planning Commission is a sharp indictment of the liberalisation policies adopted since 1991. The mid-term appraisal

questions the government's claims of controlling the fiscal deficit and the generation of employment. The internal debt position has become alarming. The whole net borrowing for the year 1995-96 will go towards payment of interest on the total external and internal debt.

The government has shamelessly defended the swindle involved in the handling over of the Bailadila mines to a private company. It is going ahead with another round of disinvestment of public sector unit shares despite the bitter experience of the previous sales. The Polit Bureau reiterated its determination to continue to fight the privatisation drive of the Congress(I) Government. It congratulated the coal workers, bank employees and insurance employees for their strike struggles in defence of their rights and for protection of the financial sector from privatisation.

Enron: BJP's Doublespeak

The BJP's doublespeak has been exposed by the Enron episode. After taking the correct step to cancel the agreement with Enron on the Dabhol power project, within a month, the Maharashtra Government has now announced that it will re-negotiate the deal with Enron. The ploy of cancelling the agreement and then once again re-negotiating with the same multinational company without going in for open competitive bidding for the project has debunked the BJP's claim of bringing the MNC to book. It has proved what is well-known about the BJP, that it is not opposed to liberalisation and privatisation but only strikes poses to hoodwink the people. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the Dabhol power project, if it is to be revived, has to be done by calling for tenders afresh.

Foil Communal Designs

The Polit Bureau calls upon the people to be vigilant in view of the *Ekatmata yatras* launched by the VHP during the first week of October. These *yatras* are being utilised for propagating the communal platform by raking the Hindutva demand of Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura and openly calling for a "pro-Hindu"

government at the Centre. This programme is part of the efforts, like the 1989 *rath yatra*, to communalise the atmosphere for the BJP's electoral purposes. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Left Parties to effectively counter this propaganda and to mobilise the people on the real problems affecting their lives.

Gujarat BJP Crisis

The sordid spectacle in Gujarat of rival factions of the BJP wrangling over the ministerial and official positions has led to a split in the BJP. The BJP had exposed itself earlier in Uttar Pradesh by engineering the defection of the BSP and supporting the Mayawati Government with which it had no ideological affinity whatsoever. For the BJP which went on boasting that it is the only principled and value based party, the Gujarat episode has shown that it is no different in character from the Congress(I). The unprincipled power mongering going on in the BJP in its strongest unit in Gujarat, has shown to the people that the BJP cannot pose to be a coherent alternative to the Congress(I) at the national level.

For Effective Alternative

The Polit Bureau reviewed the efforts made to implement the Central Committee's call to build the widest unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces in the forthcoming elections. While progress has been registered in this direction, the developments in Andhra Pradesh due to the split in the Telugu Desam was unfortunate. The CPI(M) extended support to the Chandrababu Naidu Government after all efforts for unity failed. The Party calls upon the Telugu Desam and the National Front to ensure that the Congress(I) is not able to cash in on this division.

It is welcome that Mulayam Singh Yadav has taken a positive attitude for the forging of a wider unity with the Left and secular forces. In the current situation, the people cannot repose confidence in either the Congress(I) or the BJP. The Polit Bureau is confident that in the coming days the secular opposition parties along with the Left Parties will be able to effectively forge a third alternative capable of defeating both the Congress(I) and the BJP.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to China*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) conveys its warm fraternal greetings to the Chinese people and the Communist Party of China on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the Chinese Revolution.

The Chinese Revolution, under the leadership of the CPC, ranks as one of the most significant events of the 20th century. Following the great October Revolution of 1917 and the defeat of fascism in 1945, the Chinese Revolution, liberating one-fifth of humanity from the clutches of imperialism, ushered in a revolutionary change in the correlation of political forces on the international level. It inspired the liberation struggles throughout the former colonial world and the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples.

Through these years, the Chinese people, under the CPC's leadership, have been through and have overcome many ups and downs in the process of building Socialism. The process of reforms adopted since 1978 have led to a rapid all round development and currently they are engaged in the task of establishing a 'socialist market economy.' The Chinese economy is making rapid strides and the new problems and difficulties arising in the process are being tackled.

On this occasion of the 46th anniversary, the CPI(M) once again conveys its revolutionary greetings to the Chinese people and the CPC in their efforts to strengthen socialism in the People's Republic of China.

*Published in PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, October 8, 1995.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau on BJP's Split in Gujarat*

Statement Dated September 28, 1995 Issued to Press

The split in the BJP in Gujarat just six months after the formation of its Government has exploded whatever credibility it had as a party which claims to be a principled one. Just a few months earlier this "principled" party had instigated the BSP, in Uttar Pradesh, to defect and opportunistically supported the formation of a minority Government there. Now within the BJP in Gujarat, the struggle which erupted over sharing of ministerships and other posts has led to the division of the party.

The debacle of the BJP in Gujarat, its strongest bastion, is a self-exposure of its boast of being the only credible and cohesive all-India alternative to the Congress party. Instead it has shown itself to be no different from the Congress on the matter of values.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 8, 1995

Polit Bureau on Coal Mine Disaster*

Statement Dated September 29, 1995 Issued to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses deep grief at the death of a large number of miners in the four Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) owned underground collieries near Dhanbad in Bihar. This disaster is a direct result of the callous attitude of the BCCL management towards mine safety. It failed to give any warning to the miners working underground even as the water level was rising and took no steps to evacuate the workers in time. The tragedy underlines the criminal negligence of the management as well as the office of the Director General of Mines Safety towards the safety of a crucial section of the country's productive workforce working in hazardous conditions.

The CPI(M) demands the Central Government to take stringent action against those responsible for the disaster and initiate urgent measures to alleviate the abysmal safety conditions in the country's mining sector.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, October 8, 1995.

On VHP's Inflammatory Actions*

**Statement Dated October 9, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Ekatmata yatras organised by the VHP, now in progress in different parts of the country, are being used to spew blatant communal propaganda and to resort to minority baiting. The speeches made in a Delhi public meeting yesterday are an indication of this poisonous propaganda which is being used by the RSS led combine to help the BJP electorally. The State Governments concerned must take necessary steps to curb such communal speeches as provided for in the laws of the land. Special vigilance must be mounted to ensure that communal tensions and riots do not break out.

The yatras are being organised with the call to install a pro-Hindu government at the Centre so that temples can be built at the disputed sites at Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura. The Polit Bureau condemns the Chief Minister of Delhi for attending the 'Hindu conference' where such calls were given, challenging the Supreme Court decision and the law on religious places of worship.

It is also surprising that one of the yatras from Kathmandu has been inaugurated by the King of Nepal. That the head of state of a neighbouring country associates with a programme which has the political aim of setting up a "pro-Hindu" government in a secular state is highly objectionable. It is reported that the King has been invited to participate in the concluding function at Nagpur on October 20. The Government of India must convey its displeasure at the King's association with the yatra and ask him not to attend the Nagpur function.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 15, 1995.

Central Committee Communique*

Issued Following Its Meeting Held on
October 18-20, 1995

The CPI(M) Central Committee's decision to launch mass movements on a number of urgent demands of the people from the beginning of December, coupled with the progress made in the efforts to rally all Left, secular and democratic forces in the country, would pave the way for an effective third alternative to counter both the BJP and the Congress(I), the CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, has confidently asserted.

Addressing a Press conference following the three-day Central Committee meeting, on October 18-20, 1995, Surjeet said "the Left, secular and democratic alternative is bound to become the biggest force in the coming months". Surjeet cited a number of indications that showed that despite the setback in Andhra Pradesh, good progress was being made in building a third alternative. The foremost among them was the Samajwadi Party leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav's decision to forge ties with the Left and secular forces to fight the Congress(I) and BJP, Surjeet said, pointing out that: "In Uttar Pradesh Mulayam Singh counts if you want to defeat the BJP."

The sordid developments in Gujarat followed by the break-down of the opportunist BSP-BJP alliance in U.P., had thoroughly exposed the BJP and its tall claims of being a party with a difference which alone could provide a principled alternative to the Congress(I), Surjeet said. But the severe setback to the BJP would not help the Congress(I) which was increasingly alienated from the people on account of its disastrous economic policies and unbridled corruption, the most telling evidence of which was

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 29, 1995.

the Chandraswami affair. "No matter how much they try, nobody can cover up Chandraswami anymore", Surjeet said. He said the fact that in Karnataka, S. Bangarappa was seeking to join hands with Deve Gowda indicated the low credibility of the Congress(I) as a winning force.

Answering a spate of questions on possible alliances between the non-BJP and non-Congress(I) forces, Surjeet reiterated the CPI(M)'s firm opposition to the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and its determination to fight against the party in the state. However, in reply to a question on the CPI(M)'s stance in case the AIADMK were to join the National Front, he said while the CPI(M) would continue to oppose the AIADMK, if the N.F. were to still go ahead with an alliance "we will not break (with the N.F.) on this point". He referred to a similar position taken by the Party vis-a-vis the AGP in 1989 and said: "While maintaining our independent attitude, at the same time in our efforts to unite Left, democratic and secular forces we will try and accommodate each other."

Regarding the AGP, he said the Central Committee approved the decision of the Assam unit to go in for seat adjustments with the AGP. The AGP had changed its stand towards the minorities and we would ensure that they did not tie up with the BJP, he said.

In reply to a question on whether the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) would be welcome to join the third alternative, Surjeet said: "Let us see what lessons they have learnt. The BSP has been going from the BJP to the Congress(I). Let us wait for some time before making any comment." As for the break away Congress group headed by N. D. Tiwari, Surjeet said: "They have not approached us."

Demanding immediate dissolution of the U.P. assembly, he said the state governor, Motilal Vora's argument that he was going by the Supreme Court verdict in the Bommai case in keeping the assembly in suspended animation was not tenable because in the case of U.P., all major parties had officially demanded the dissolution of the assembly and no one had staked claim to form a government. He said the decision appears to have been taken in order to wait for the Prime Minister's return to the country, adding that Congress(I) leaders were indulging in manoeuvres to

form a government. The BJP too, after initially demanding dissolution, was exploring ways to form a government. Asserting that "no manoeuvres, no horse-trading should be allowed", he said any move to instal a government at this stage would have very bad repercussions on the body politic of the country.

Surjeet reiterated the CPI(M)'s long standing demand for a political package in Kashmir which would ensure "maximum autonomy" for the state within the Indian Union and assure protection of the Kashmiri identity. The erosion of Article 370 since 1953 should be undone and a resolution in the Indian parliament assuring full protection of Kashmiri identity would go a long way in drawing in the support of the people of the state. In the absence of a meaningful political package, no party will agree to elections, he said. If elections were held with only three to four per cent turnout of the electorate, it would only help the secessionist forces in Kashmir and their backers abroad, he said.

The Central Committee elected a seven-member secretariat consisting of Harkishan Singh Surjeet, S. Ramachandran Pillai, Prakash Karat, Sukomal Sen, Hannan Mollah, M. A. Baby and Hari Singh Kang. In reply to a question on the need to set up a Central Secretariat, Surjeet said: "There is so much work—the Polit Bureau gets thousands of letters that have to be replied, there are states that have to be visited." Asserting that the CPI(M)'s structure should not be confused with the CPI's three-tier system, he said: "The Central Secretariat is only to assist the Polit Bureau on a day to day basis in discharging routine work—correspondence, visiting the smaller states—so that the Polit Bureau is free to carry out its task of political guidance from the centre."

The Central Committee's Communique issued on this occasion, follows.

Jammu and Kashmir

The Central Committee discussed the situation in the state with particular reference to the Central Government's move to hold elections. For quite some time, the CPI(M) has been calling for a political package to be announced by the Centre which can help

create conditions for holding elections. Even now, if the Centre comes forward with an assurance of providing maximum autonomy to the people which can ensure the protection of their identity, it will be possible for political parties to go to the people. It is only by such an initiative that elections can be meaningful and help the revival of the political process.

Compromising India's Security

The Central Committee expressed serious concern at the hostile moves made by the United States of America which harm Indian interests. Waiving of the Pressler Law by the American senate to supply arms to Pakistan had the full backing of the Clinton administration. Pakistan is not only engaged in assisting subversive terrorist activities in Kashmir and Punjab but is now concentrating on propping up the Taliban forces in Afghanistan. There are reports of Pakistani armed personnel participating in the Taliban offensive against Kabul.

The Narasimha Rao Government continues to ignore the danger to India's security interests. The External Affairs Minister has assured that Indo-U.S. relations will not be harmed by the U.S. action. The Rao Government persists in implementing the Indo-U.S. military cooperation agreement. This is being done at a time when western powers headed by the USA are putting pressure on India to join the nuclear non-proliferation regime and curtail the development and deployment of short-range and medium-range missiles. The Narasimha Rao Government is compromising India's vital interests.

The Central Committee therefore reiterated its demand that the Indo-U.S. military cooperation pact be annulled and the Indian Government make a categorical statement that it will go ahead with its indigenous missile programme.

Economic Conditions

The Central Committee noted the government's total failure to curb inflation which has led to relentless price rise of all essentials for the people. The prices of pulses, onions, potatoes and other items of daily use have reached such heights that it

makes life difficult for the common people. The Congress(I) Government is refusing to use the big stock of foodgrains to curb price rise. Bound as it is to the IMF/World Bank conditionalities, it is weakening the public distribution system further when it is necessary to strengthen it. The continuing depreciation of the value of the rupee vis-a-vis the dollar will lead to a big increase in the cost of imports with its resultant impact on the price situation.

The CPI(M) has put forward three demands to meet the grave price situation. Firstly, it wants a 50 per cent reduction in the price of foodgrains supplied through the PDS. Secondly, 14 essential commodities must be supplied through the fair price shops. Thirdly, food for work programmes must be initiated for the rural poor.

In this connection, the Central Committee noted that the various schemes being announced by the government with an eye on the elections are not going to alleviate poverty but will be mere sops offered to the people.

The Central Committee condemned the Central Government for going ahead with another round of disinvestment of public sector unit shares in some of the most profitable concerns. It called for cancellation of the Bailadila mine transfer to a private company. It congratulated the coal workers, bank and insurance employees for their strike struggles in defence of their rights and for protection of the financial sector from privatisation. The Central Committee extended full support to the struggle of the medical students in Kerala against privatisation of medical colleges.

Criminalisation and Corruption

The Central Committee strongly condemned the refusal of the Rao Government to take decisive action against Chandraswami. Despite mounting evidence of his illegal activities, the CBI has not arrested him despite investigations going on for over a month. Some of the explanations given by the CBI for not arresting Chandraswami border on the ridiculous. It is well known that Chandraswami is closely connected with the Prime Minister and

other top Congress(I) leaders. The failure to take firm action against this dubious godman exposes the government's connivance and encouragement to the criminalisation of politics and society.

The Central Committee demanded that the CBI take effective steps to charge-sheet those accused in the *hawala* scandal. Prosecution of all those involved in the illegal money transactions will have a salutary effect on cleansing corruption in high places. Both the Chandraswami affair and the *hawala* scandal reveal the criminal-politician nexus and they should not be hushed up. The CPI(M) will take both these issues to the people to mobilise them to demand the full uncovering of those involved in these two affairs.

BJP's Fiasco

The BJP leadership's compromise with the rebel leader Vaghela in Gujarat showed that the only principle they adhere to is to cling to the government at any cost. However, despite this last minute turn-about, the internal crisis of the party in Gujarat has not ended. The prolonged wranglings and unscrupulous quarrels for power have effectively exposed the lack of any principles or values in the party. This is a big blow to the BJP's posture of being the only alternative to the Congress(I) at the national level.

Even before the Gujarat events, the BJP had forged an opportunistic alliance with the BSP in Uttar Pradesh. Its hypocritical talk of concern for the dalits being the basis for the installation of the Mayawati as Chief Minister has been fully exposed by the withdrawal of support to the same Chief Minister within four and a half months. The unprincipled and cynical politics pursued by the BJP leadership in Uttar Pradesh has eroded its image further.

The Central Committee condemned the poisonous communal propaganda purveyed during the *ekatmata yatra* in different parts of the country. In this connection the CPI(M) strongly criticised the king of Nepal for participating in the inaugural function of the *yatra* from Kathmandu. Since the *yatra* had the slogan of installing a pro-Hindu government at the Centre, the

association of the head of State of Nepal with such a political platform is interference in the internal affairs of India.

Dissolve U.P. Assembly

The Central Committee demanded immediate dissolution of the legislative assembly in the state. The decision of the governor to place the assembly in suspended animation is designed to help the Congress(I) to indulge in unscrupulous manoeuvres. With none of the major parties in a position to form a government, only the people can decide who should form the next government. The reference to the Supreme Court decision for not dissolving the assembly is not relevant as all the major parties have demanded dissolution of the House and fresh elections. It is necessary that elections to the state assembly be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha elections.

Kerala

The Central Committee congratulated the people of Kerala for rendering a decisive verdict in favour of the LDF and CPI(M) in the recently held elections to the panchayats and the municipalities. The result is a strong indictment of the UDF Government's misrule, corruption and the communal alliance. The A. K. Antony Government sought to utilise the creamy layer issue to isolate the CPI(M), but the Party's principled stand on the issue has met with a positive response from the people. The Left victory in the local elections in Kerala and the earlier Tribal Autonomous District Council elections in Tripura show the continuing popular support for the policies and positions of the Left.

The Central Committee resolved to strengthen the unity of Left forces which is essential to go forward in the struggle against the economic policies and against communalism. Left unity is also important to mobilise all the secular and democratic forces in the forthcoming elections to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Forging an Effective Alternative

The Central Committee reviewed the progress made in uniting all the Left, democratic and secular forces for the forthcoming elections. It welcomed the stand taken by Mulayam Singh Yadav

who has expressed his readiness to join hands with the Left parties and other secular forces to fight both the Congress(I) and the BJP. The setback in Andhra due to the split in the TDP has to be overcome to ensure that the Congress(I) does not take advantage of any division in the state. The Central Committee approved the approach of the Assam state unit of the Party for going in for seat adjustment with the AGP while maintaining its independent position on various issues concerning the minorities. The Central Committee reiterated its opposition to the Jayalalitha Government in Tamil Nadu. It called for fighting the AIADMK in the forthcoming elections. The Central Committee stressed the importance of the secular opposition parties, evolving a coherent programme distinct from the Congress(I)'s economic policies and for strengthening national unity.

Both the Congress(I) and the BJP have lost credibility among the people. The Central Committee is confident that the secular opposition forces along with the Left will be able to present an effective alternative to both the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Launch Mass Movements

The Central Committee decided to call upon its state units to take up the following immediate demands of the people:

1. Strengthen public distribution system to supply 14 essential commodities; reduce the price of foodgrains supplied through the fair price shops by 50 per cent.
2. Release food stock for food for work programmes in the rural areas.
3. Stop disinvestment and closure of public sector units.
4. Distribute surplus land above the ceiling and cultivable waste lands to the landless. Adopt central legislation for agricultural workers; launch struggles for better wages for agricultural workers.
5. Stop privatisation and commercialisation of education.
6. Allocate more resources to the public health system.
7. Equal wages for women and legislation for protection of home based workers.
8. Provide full relief and rehabilitation for flood affected states.

9. Arrest Chandraswami and prosecute him. Book all offenders in the *hawala* case.

The Central Committee has called upon all its Party units to mobilise the people for mass struggles on these demands from the beginning of December. All efforts must be made to involve the Left parties in these movements.

Central Secretariat

The Central Committee elected a seven-member secretariat to assist the Polit Bureau in discharging the work of the Party Centre. The Secretariat consist of Harkishan Singh Surjeet, S. Ramachandram Pillai, Prakash Karat, Sukomal Sen, Hannan Mollah, M.A. Baby and Hari Singh Kang.

Report On Political Developments*

Adopted by The Central Committee of The CPI(M)
in its Meeting Held on October 18-20, 1995

INTERNATIONAL

Nearly six months have elapsed since the Party Congress, where we made a detailed assessment of the international situation. In the last Central Committee meeting held in July, we had not dwelt upon the international developments as the main trends noted in the Party Congress continued. Since then certain developments have taken place which should be noted.

Inter-Imperialist Contradictions

During the period since the Party Congress, on various trade and economic issues inter-imperialist contradictions have grown. The G7 countries held their summit meeting at Halifax, Canada in end June. This meeting revealed that mutual differences and conflicts on economic and financial matters continue, though an effort was made to play down these differences. The meeting was preceded by the threatened trade war between the USA and Japan on the question of automobile exports. The U.S. had invoked the Super 301 clause sanctions and given an ultimatum to Japan. At the last moment an agreement was reached in Geneva averting a trade war. Japan had to give concessions to the USA to avoid an open trade war. The USA which had a trade deficit of 65.6 billion dollars with Japan (60 per cent of the deficit is in automobiles) last year is determined to see that its automobiles are exported to Japan in order to reduce the deficit. The unilateral invoking of the Super 301 clause by the USA was resented even by the European countries especially when the World Trade Organisation was set up to deal with such disputes.

*Published as a Booklet in November 1995

The G7 summit, after the turbulence caused to the world economy by the Mexican crisis, decided to set up a special emergency fund under the IMF auspices to meet financial crises such as the Mexican one. The G7 has decided to allot \$ 50 billion for this plan under the IMF. They also talked of setting up a new supervisory and fund raising mechanism to meet such situations though it could not spell out the details of such a scheme. Neither is it clear how the \$ 50 billion will be raised.

The French decision to conduct nuclear tests also cast a shadow on the summit as Japan and Canada were very unhappy with the decision. Later the French went ahead with the nuclear tests at Tahiti leading to vocal protests specially by Australia and New Zealand and caused disquiet in the western alliance.

The turmoil in the financial markets continue with the currency fluctuations. Recently, the dollar appreciated against the yen and the duetsche mark but this appreciation of the dollar was achieved through a planned intervention by the central banks of the USA, Japan and Germany. Japan also wanted this appreciation of the dollar against the yen as its currency is highly over-valued and Japan is finding it difficult to reflate its economy after a prolonged downturn. It hopes the lesser value of the yen will make its exports cheaper and more competitive. But the dollar continues to fluctuate in the market. In Europe, the move for a single European currency is facing rough weather with the tough conditions set by Germany not being acceptable to others.

The overall rate of growth of the advanced capitalist countries led by the USA is still sluggish and erratic. Japan has not made any recovery and Germany is still struggling to stabilise its rate of growth. Even the U.S. recovery is tardy and erratic. The G7 countries are still worried about the high unemployment rates and have decided to call a conference in 1996 to specially deal with the problem.

Agreement in Bosnia

The other major event has been the U.S. intervention in the civil war in the former Yugoslav territories. On Bosnia, finally the USA could carry its British and French allies in NATO and begin heavy

bombing of the Bosnian Serb positions. This has led to the open American support to the Bosnian Muslims and the Croatian side. Under the U.S. brokered agreement reached in Geneva, 49 per cent of the territory will be with the Serbs and the rest with the Bosnian and Croatian sides.

However, to maintain the cease-fire and implement the complicated plan will not be easy. The western powers have intervened in the civil war in such a manner as to further exacerbate the ethnic and nationality conflicts there. The bombing of the Serb positions and the use of Cruise missiles angered Russia which has accused the USA and the Western powers of genocide against the Serbs. The intension of the Clinton administration to deploy 20,000 U.S. troops in-Bosnia and to replace the U.N. peacekeeping force with a NATO force is an ominous development. The U.S. wants to use Bosnia as a beachhead for its penetration of the Balkans region.

Cuba

The increase in the strength of the right through the Republican majority in the U.S. congress is leading to fresh attacks on Cuba. Recently the U.S. congress has passed a bill called the Helms Burton Bill which makes the blockade more stringent and gives sanction for action against third countries or persons who have trade and other dealings with Cuba. This bill has been passed despite the opposition of the White House. The Cuban Government is resolutely facing the situation with the support of the people. It has recently announced more measures for inviting foreign capital and to provide a fillip to economic development. The positive aspect is that many of the European countries are continuing their trade links with Cuba despite American displeasure.

U.S.-China relations have also witnessed a period of serious strains. The invitation to the Taiwanese President for a private visit to America led to strong protests by China and the recalling of its Ambassador. The U.S. violated the agreement arrived at with China that there will be no recognition accorded to the two China policy. The harping on Tibet and interference in the internal affairs

of China is another irritant. The Dalai Lama's visit to America recently and Clinton meeting him unofficially has also led to protests from China.

The strain between the USA and Russia have not been only on the Bosnian issue. The efforts of the Western NATO alliance to expand eastwards and to draw in all the East European countries is meeting with increasing opposition from Russia. Recently, Yeltsin publicly condemned the NATO's eastward expansion and accused it of trying to isolate Russia and revive the cold war.

Within Russia, President Yeltsin, is getting more and more isolated and public opinion is turning against his regime. The efforts to set up a pro-capitalist bloc and unite all the anti-Left forces have not met with much success. The western powers are also increasingly coming to recognise that banking on Yeltsin alone will not be good tactics especially since the way he tackled the Chechenya crisis. The Communist Party is doing well in the local Duma elections and is leading in the opinion polls for the Presidential elections.

Israel-PLO Agreement

The Israel-PLO agreement on the second phase of the pact signed in 1993 shows the problems faced by the Palestinian people in the struggle for statehood. After a delay of one year, the second phase has now been agreed upon after protracted negotiations. Under this plan, PLO self-rule will be extended from the Gaza strip and Jericho down to 30 per cent of the West Bank. In the rest, Israeli control will continue. Wherever illegal Jewish settlements exist, Israel will have jurisdiction. Though the agreement provides for the redeployment of the Israeli armed forces by withdrawing from the towns to be handed over to the Palestinian council, overall security remains in Israel's hands. Elections are to be held for constituting the Palestinian council after the Israeli army vacates the areas allotted for self-rule.

However, the major problem of three million Palestinians living outside occupied territories is not touched. Israel has made it clear that it cannot accept a separate Palestinian state in the West Bank nor will it give up Jerusalem. The Palestinian Left groups have condemned the agreement.

In Libya, Gadaffi who is totally opposed to the 1993 agreement asked the 30,000 Palestinians living in Libya to quit and go back to the Palestinian state set up by Arafat. They were not allowed to enter Gaza through Egypt by the Israeli authorities. Gadaffi declared that he wanted to expose the hollowness of the PLO's agreement.

U.S. Manoeuvres in Middle East

U.S. administration wants to rope in Syria to come to terms with Israel just as Egypt and Jordan have done under U.S. auspices. So far Syria has refused to accept the terms and conditions for the Golan heights settlement.

The U.S. continues its manoeuvres to reinforce its Hegemony and to dominate the oil rich region. Iraq under Saddam Hussein which defied the USA is still being punished with the embargo and refused to lift the U.N. sanctions. Children are the worst sufferers of this inhuman policy. On some pretext or the other the U.N. is being successfully pressurised by the USA to delay lifting of sanctions. Simultaneously the USA is targeting Iran to isolate it but has not succeeded yet in rallying its allies to impose sanctions.

Beijing Women's Conference

The international women's conference convened by the United Nations was held in Beijing in September. Alongwith the official conference there was a big non-official gathering in which over 20,000 women from all over the world participated. At this NGO gathering and at the official conference a systematic effort was made to sidetrack the main issues concerning the problems of women and to make anti-China propaganda. The entire western dominated international media focussed on the so-called abuses of human rights in China and the low status of women there. Hillary Clinton heading the official U.S. delegation also joined the anti China chorus. Despite this western hostility, the conference was able to hold its deliberations and produce a concrete platform of action. At the non-official gathering of NGOs many participants from the third world countries were able to focus attention on the deteriorating conditions of women due to the structural adjustment

programmes imposed by the IMF/World Bank and the western countries. The serious effects of poverty on women's status and the struggle for equality were taken up. The AIDWA delegation which attended the non-official conference made its contribution to focus on these issues.

Neighbouring Countries

Important developments have taken place in the countries neighbouring India. We must take note of some of them:

Afghanistan: The situation is worsening with the open support given by Pakistan to the offensive by Taliban forces. They have captured Herat and are now trying to capture Kabul. President Rabbani has accused Pakistan with interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and sending its intelligence and security agents to back the Taliban. Pakistan is using the big stock of weapons supplied by America to fight the Najib Government and the Soviet forces to prop up the Taliban. Ex-servicemen and other armed forces from Pakistan have been deployed to back the Taliban. The U.N. has failed to make any progress for a negotiated settlement. There is every danger of Afghanistan getting disintegrated under the warring factions.

Pakistan: In Pakistan, the internal situation is very disturbing and a situation of instability prevails. The violence and clashes between the MQM and the government in Karachi continue. All efforts at negotiations seem to bear no fruit with the Pakistan Government sidetracking the issue and blaming the immigrants. The MQM has denied any support by India. The Punjab Chief Minister was removed with a split in the Muslim League (Junejo) and the installation of a splinter faction. The Government continues to divert the attention of the people by focussing attention on Kashmir issue. It is trying its best to internationalise the issue and has gone to the extent of stating that the abduction of the foreign hostages in Kashmir was masterminded by India.

Pakistan has been a traditional ally of the USA since the days of the cold war. Its importance lies in the fact that it was a base of operations directed against the erstwhile Soviet Union. Now after the dismantling of the Soviet Union though Pakistan does not have

the same importance in the U.S. strategic plans, U.S. imperialism still wants to use Pakistan to pressurise India to penetrate Central Asia and to counter Iran and other inimical forces. The Pakistan intervention in Afghanistan must also be viewed in the context of the U.S. plans.

Sri Lanka: Despite the positive effort made initially by Chandrika Kumaratunga for peace talks and certain measures taken to relieve the sufferings of the people of the Jaffna population, due to the intransigent attitude of the LTTE, the negotiations broke down and hostilities were resumed. The Sri Lankan armed forces have for the first time made some head way by inflicting heavy casualties on the LTTE armed forces. At the same time Kumaratunga has unfolded her proposals for a settlement of the Tamil question. The proposals for setting up a more federal system of government through the formation of regional councils and devolution of powers from the Central Government to these councils are a significant and positive feature.

Kumaratunga has taken a bold stand in departing from the unitary structure existing in Sri Lanka. But all will depend on how the LTTE will respond, though other Tamil groups have taken a positive stand. Due to the military success so far the Sinhalese chauvinists have not been able to mount a big opposition to the peace plan. However, there are many obstacles to the final success of the settlement. The plan when concretised must take into account the ethnic factor in the Tamil demand for autonomy. Aggravation of the conflict helps imperialism to intervene in Sri Lanka. Our Party has welcomed the Kumaratunga proposals and called upon the LTTE to return to the path of negotiations so that there can be genuine autonomy for the Tamil speaking areas within a united Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh: The movement led by the opposition parties against the Khaleda Government continues with its demand that the election should be held under the supervision of a caretaker coalition government. Due to the mass discontent against the Khaleda Government's policies, the recent protest demonstrations and strikes have received popular support.

Nepal: The government headed by the CPN(UML) has been dislodged in Nepal due to the verdict of the Supreme Court annulling the decision of the King to dissolve the parliament, calling for fresh elections and allowing the Manmohan Adhikari Government to continue as a caretaker government. The crisis erupted because the Nepali Congress had withdrawn support to the CPN (UML) government since the CPN(UML) had taken some measures to benefit the poorer sections and was effectively exposing the corruption of the Nepali Congress Government. The Nepali Congress opportunistically joined hands with the royalist Rashtriya Prajatantra Party to pull down the government. Now after the Supreme Court verdict, the Nepali Congress, Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and Sadbhavana Party have formed a coalition under Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The Communist Party is mobilising the people against this new opportunist combination.

NATIONAL

Economic Situation

The major aspect of the economic situation is the relentless increase in the prices of all essential commodities for the people. The prices of pulses, onions, potatoes and all other items of daily use have reached such heights that it makes life difficult for the common people. Such a sharp increase in the prices of food items is taking place at a time when the Congress(I) Government goes on claiming that the rate of inflation is going down. The conditions of handloom weavers, artisans and small peasants have further deteriorated in this period.

The recent depreciation of the value of the rupee vis-a-vis the dollar will lead to a big increase in the cost of imports. With imports rising much more than exports, this depreciation of the rupee will lead to inflation and further erosion in the living standards of the people.

The Rao Government is callously refusing to use the big stock of foodgrains for curbing price rise. It has not taken any step to reduce the prices in the public distribution system nor is it prepared to initiate any food for work programme.

The 8th plan draft mid-term appraisal document prepared by the Planning Commission is a sharp indictment of the liberalisation policies adopted since 1991. The mid-term appraisal questions the Government's claims of control of the fiscal deficit and generation of employment. It has warned that inflation will erode whatever gains made due to the reforms. The internal debt position has become alarming. Recently, the World Bank indicated that India will be forced to spend each rupee realised in tax collection to serve internal debt. The interest payment on the total external and internal debt in 1995-96 is estimated to be Rs. 52,000 crores. The whole net borrowings for the year will go to paying this interest.

The Government has been shamelessly pursuing its privatisation drive and the dismantling of the public sector. It has announced another round of disinvestment of shares of five big PSUs which are profitable concerns.

The movement against the indiscriminate entry of multinational corporations and the harmful power policy of the Government got a boost with the cancellation of the Enron power project by the Maharashtra Government. However, the BJP's doublespeak has been exposed by the Enron episode. After taking the correct step to cancel the agreement with Enron on the Dabhol power project, within a month, the Maharashtra Government has now announced that it will renegotiate the deal with Enron. The ploy of cancelling the agreement and then once again renegotiating with the same multinational company without going in for open competitive bidding for the project has debunked the BJP's claim of bringing the MNC to book. It has proved what is well-known about the BJP, that, it is not opposed to liberalisation and privatisation but only strikes poses to hoodwink the people. For the past two years it was the Left parties, the trade unions and other mass organisations which have consistently campaigned and mobilised the people against the 100 per cent foreign owned plants like Enron being sanctioned with counter-guarantees by the Central Government. After the Enron project the focus has been on the Bailadila mine. The Bailadila mine handover to a private company became a major focus during the last parliament session and it has led to widespread opposition to this loot of public funds by selling the most profitable iron ore mine for a song.

With the elections drawing nearer, the Rao Government is trying to manoeuvre by giving some concessions and relief to different sections of the people. The announcement of interim relief, DA and increase in the ceiling of bonus are addressed to the Government employees and public sector workers. Further announcement of schemes worth Rs. 5000 crores have also been made such as old age pension, maternity benefits for women, mid-day meals for school children etc. to woo the people.

Floods

People have in this period suffered because of the floods due to heavy rains in many parts of the country. Many villages were marooned and crops worth crores of rupees were destroyed by the severe floods which affected states like Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Assam. West Bengal has been badly affected with severe floods in ten districts. More than 140 persons have lost their lives. 70 lakhs people have been affected by this calamity. The Central Government has to provide adequate funds for the relief and rehabilitation work.

Mass Struggles

This period also saw various struggles against the economic policies. There was a coal strike called by the CITU against the agreement signed by the other trade unions. This has been followed by the call for a united one week strike by the central coal unions. The bank unions also went on a one-day strike and have called for a two-day strike in the last week of September. The call of the National Platform of Mass organisations to hold district level demonstrations have been widely observed on 15th September. The Left Front in West Bengal has also chalked out a sustained mass movement against the economic policies with a charter of demands. Various struggles have taken place in the states. In Andhra struggles for wages of agricultural labour have taken place in 1500 villages; in Madhya Pradesh three jathas were conducted across the state culminating in a state level rally; in Kerala, students are valiantly struggling against the privatisation of medical colleges. In Punjab, the kisan movement has been mobilising the peasants

to demand flood relief measures. In Orissa there has been a joint movement against the dissolution of the panchayat bodies by the Congress Government in which over a lakh of people courted arrest. The Party and the various mass organisations must carry on the movements on the urgent problems of the people. The other major developments in this period show that the Congress(I) Government is unable to tackle the serious problems facing the country like Kashmir, the criminalisation of politics and degeneration in public life.

Kashmir

The situation in the valley continues to thwart the government's intentions to hold elections without a political package including autonomy. The abduction of five foreign tourists and the barbaric murder of one of them has shocked world public opinion. Using this situation the government gave in to western pressure for stationing its elite security personnel in the valley which was resented by the Indian armed forces. As noted in the last Central Committee meeting report there is a shift in the attitude of the people who are fed up of the anti-social activities of some of the militants and there is a great desire for peace. The prime minister had also come out with a declaration regarding the provision of autonomy but nothing more has materialised since then. Even the promise made to provide relief and rehabilitation in Charar-e-Shareif town has not been implemented. There has been no reconstruction of the houses destroyed in the arson. We have been reiterating our demand that for the situation conducive for elections to be held a political package including provision of maximum autonomy be announced.

Punjab

The gruesome assassination of the Chief Minister, Beant Singh, by a bomb explosion has highlighted the continuing threat posed by the extremists who operate from across the border. The Rao Government had become complacent about the Punjab situation and has been propagating that complete peace has been restored there. The killing of the Chief Minister within the premises of the highly protected area of the secretariat has created apprehensions

among the people. The impact on the Akalis would be adverse in the sense that those who would have tried to demarcate from the extremists would now hesitate and falter.

The world Sikh conference held in Amritsar by the SGPC became a platform for glorification of the extremists and the separatist ideology. There was not a word of condemnation of the damage caused to Punjab by the Khalistani groups backed by external forces. Tributes were paid to Bhindranwale and the killers of Indira Gandhi and Gen. Vaidya and there were discussions highlighting a separate Sikh identity including talk of Sikh economics.

It will be necessary for the CPI(M) and the CPI to go to the people to heighten their awareness of the dangers posed by the situation and to rally them against the nefarious activities of the extremists. A joint convention for this purpose was held recently at Jalandhar.

Criminalisation of Politics

The last parliament session saw the release of the Vohra Committee report due to the persistent demand of the opposition. The Naina Sahni murder committed by a prominent youth congress leader focussed attention on the protection and encouragement to criminal elements by the ruling party. The Vohra Committee report though a departmental one and having its limitations spelt out the nexus between politicians, the underworld and corrupt bureaucrats. Soon after the Government's promise to take steps to curb such a nexus the Chandraswami affair surfaced. The evidence given by a wanted criminal that Chandraswami had links with Dawood Ibrahim based in Dubai was highly damaging for the ruling party. Chandraswami is well-known for his links with the Prime Minister and many other Congress and bourgeois party politicians. Rajesh Pilot issued instructions to the CBI for the arrest of Chandraswami. But so far despite the CBI questioning him he has not been arrested. He is being protected as he has close connections with the Congress(I) leaders including the Prime Minister. Chandraswami has been involved in many other criminal activities including the St. Kits forgery. The shifting out of Rajesh Pilot in the cabinet expansion and reshuffle has further compromised the Prime

Minister's image in this respect. It is important to highlight the Chandraswami case and demand a full investigation into all his activities and his being brought to book as this will be an effective issue in the struggle against criminalisation of politics.

Expose Corruption

Our Party has been demanding since last year full investigations into the Hawala scandal and prosecution of those guilty of illegal money transactions. The seizure of the diaries of the Jain brothers showed that many top politicians of different bourgeois parties were involved in the Hawala transactions. The government and the CBI were not willing to investigate the matter and had required the Supreme Court's directive for the case to be pursued. Several ministers and political leaders are being questioned by the CBI. A proper investigation will show that many top Congress leaders and politicians of the BJP and other parties have been receiving money through illegal channels.

The Chandraswami affair and the Hawala scandal must be effectively utilised by the Party to unmask the high level corruption in the ruling circles. It must become an effective weapon to expose the Rao Government and the Congress Party in the forthcoming elections.

Growing Indo-U.S. Defence Collaboration

We had noted in the Party Congress the signing of the Indo-U.S. defence collaboration pact and its harmful implications for India's sovereignty and foreign policy. Subsequently, at the civilian level the policy coordination committee was to be set up during the visit of the Indian defence secretary in June to America. This visit was abruptly postponed after the U.S. defence department made an announcement that no arms technology transfer will take place to India to offset the balance with Pakistan. Now the Indian defence secretary Nambiar has visited the USA and held the first coordination committee meeting with the U.S. defence department officials. This has been accompanied by more joint exercises both at the armed forces level and with paratroopers. The growing military ties at different levels with the USA will compromise our security interests.

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U.S. Arms to Pakistan

This is especially significant in the light of the U.S. senate's decision to waive the Pressler Amendment and supply 370 million dollars worth of arms to Pakistan. Though the U.S. will not provide F 16 fighters, under pressure of the Clinton administration, the congress has sanctioned this arms deal which includes Orion Reconnaissance planes and Harpoon missiles for Pakistan. At the same time, the USA is putting pressure on India not to deploy the Prithvi missiles or develop the Agni programme. In such a situation, the defence collaboration with the USA is totally uncalled for and against the country's interests. The Rao Government has been trapped by the U.S. plan to yoke India and Pakistan together under its military hegemony in the subcontinent. The arms race between the two countries will only serve U.S. interests. Our Party has demanded the cancellation of the Indo-U.S. military cooperation pact. The Party must conduct a big campaign against the pro-imperialist policies of the Rao Government and rouse all the patriotic sections to demand a review of these policies.

Judicial Intervention

The period saw the Supreme Court taking certain major decisions which are important for parliamentary democracy. The Supreme Court verdict upholding the multi-member election commission and ruling that the CEC has no overriding powers has been a vindication of our Party's stand on the question. The efforts of T.N. Seshan to act unconstitutionally and arrogate all sorts of powers to himself has been effectively checked by this important judgement. The Supreme Court has also been active in defending the rights of citizens against police excesses and reining in the executive wherever it seeks to avoid implementation of judicial decisions. The sentencing of the IAS officer of Karnataka for contempt of court is one such instance.

This judicial activism of the courts is an indication of the erosion of the credibility of the Government and the bureaucracy and increasingly the citizens are resorting to the courts for the protection of their rights. It shows the atrophy of the institutions under the constitution and increasing reliance on the judiciary to solve all types of problems.

Position of Political Parties

Congress(I)

The internal wranglings and problems in the Congress(I) have grown in the recent period. The visit by Sonia Gandhi to Amethi and her implied criticism of the Government's handlings of the Rajiv assassination has intensified the inner manoeuvres. The cabinet expansion undertaken by Narasimha Rao was meant to meet the internal dissensions and also the Sonia factor. However, despite 14 new ministers being taken in, discontent is growing among congressmen from states like Tamilnadu, Andhra and Karnataka. None of the senior cabinet ministers have been asked to step down and take up organisational jobs—efforts towards this have failed to bear fruit. Factional squabbles within the Party have been heightened in states like Maharashtra and MP. The crisis of the TDP in Andhra Pradesh and the BJP in Gujarat has raised hopes among Congressmen of checking the decline of the party. Narasimha Rao is manouevring to make himself indispensable and to cut down potential challengers like Pawar.

BJP

The BJP has been conducting a systematic propaganda that it is going to come to power in the centre in the next elections. It has tried to project itself as the only credible alternative to the Congress at the national level. It set up the Mayawati Government with the aim of disrupting the SP-BSP combination and to win over the scheduled castes by projecting a pro-dalit image. UP with 85 Lok Sabha seats is crucial for the BJP game plan. But as visualised by us the conflicts between the BJP and BSP have developed due to their irreconcilable ideological positions and support bases. On the Mathura issue though the VHP tried to create a confrontation the BSP would not take a compromising position and the RSS and BJP had to rein in the VHP's confrontationist posture. On the Periyar mela also opposed by the BJP, finally the Hindutva combine backed down and the mela was held in Lucknow itself. Kanshi Ram is now making it clear that he will not accept the diktats of the BJP and in the forthcoming elections he is keeping his options open.

The BJP had planned to win some new allies among the regional parties to bolster up its position. It knew very well that all talks of

winning a majority on its own is unrealistic. It wanted to rope in, apart from the BSP, AGP in Assam, Jayalalitha in Tamilnadu, the Samata in Bihar and similar forces. So far the BJP had not been successful in the plan. We have also adopted tactics suitable to thwart this plan of the BJP.

The BJP wants to use its Hindutva platform for the coming elections. The VHP has been asked to go ahead with the Kashi and Mathura issues and it has launched the ekatmata yatras all over the country from the end of September. The plan is to draw in lakhs of volunteers to propagate slogans against cow slaughter, building of the temple at Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura and installation of a pro-Hindu Government at the Centre. We should not underestimate the creation of communal atmosphere through such yatras. The RSS network was fully mobilised behind this affair. The so-called milk drinking by idols in temples showed how the VHP-RSS network operated to exploit the religious susceptibilities of the people. We should launch a counter campaign to expose the designs of the Hindutva forces and put forward positively our slogans which can rally the people on their problems

Gujarat Fiasco of BJP

All the well laid plans of the BJP suffered a big blow with the revolt within the BJP legislature party in Gujarat which nearly toppled its government. 53 out of 121 MLAs under the leadership of Shanker Singh Vaghela formed a separate group and met the Governor to express their lack of confidence in Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel. The rebel MLAs wanted Vaghela as the new Chief Minister. The rebel MLAs resisted all the blandishments of the BJP leadership. The BJP central leadership expelled Vaghela and declared that there would be no compromise. The BJP's pose as a disciplined and principled party suffered a beating when the rebel MLAs were physically assaulted; their homes attacked and when they enbloc were flown to Khajuraho. As October 7, the date set by the Governor for the test of confidence in the assembly approached, the BJP leadership finally capitulated. Vaghela was reinstated and Keshubhai Patel was asked to step down. The selection of the new leader and the consequences will continue to plague the BJP.

The naked fight for power and posts, the caste groupings and the involvement of big business house like the Ambanis in the internal affairs of the party have exploded the myth about the BJP. It has seriously damaged the claims that the BJP is the only coherent national alternative to the Congress. The BJP's internal difficulties are already there in Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. In Uttar Pradesh also the differences over the support to the Mayawati Government is coming to a head. We must effectively use the Gujarat episode to expose the BJP's character and to erode its credibility.

Elections

The Congress(I) wants to hold elections later than all the other national political parties. It has asked the Election Commission not to hold elections in end February or beginning of March but later in April. The Rao Government wants to present a budget before the elections. The budget would be designed to give concessions to the people and with populist measures the Congress(I) hopes to woo the people. Our Party alongwith the rest of the opposition should demand that the Election Commission not allow such misuse of the budget and hold elections by end February beginning of March which is the most suitable time.

Forging of Third Alternative

The efforts to forge the unity of the Left and secular opposition parties to present an effective third force against the Congress(I) and the BJP were continued in this period as per the direction given by the Central Committee. In Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh's Party is a major force and he has now expressed his willingness to co-operate with the Left and other secular parties. If this works out, it will be a big step to fight the BJP in UP. The AGP in Assam is not going to ally with the BJP and is prepared to cooperate with the National Front and the Left. We are pressing that it must clearly demarcate on the issue of minorities. The CPI and others are already working with them. We have decided to go for united actions with the AGP on specific issues and not join the united front. At the time of elections, adjustments with them can

be made if they do not take any anti-minority position. In Karnataka, Bangarappa has announced his willingness to join the NF and this can strengthen the alliance to defeat the Congress and the BJP.

Andhra Developments

The split in the Telugu Desam was a setback at a time when efforts were being made together all the secular forces to fight the Congress(I) and the BJP. The crisis had erupted in the TDP because of the conflict between NTR and his wife on the one hand and the other members of the family who are in the TDP leadership. The discontent amongst the MLAs stemmed from the autocratic style of NTR and the lack of any inner-party norms for functioning. The two son-in-laws Chandrababu Naidu and Venkateswara Rao joined hands to rally the overwhelming majority of the MLAs who were fed up with the situation. The reaction of NTR in the face of this revolt was to demand to the governor the dissolution of the assembly. This helped Chandrababu Naidu in rallying most of the MLAs. Important district leaders also joined the Naidu camp.

Chandrababu Naidu was able to prove his majority with ease in the assembly. However, NTR was not reconciled to the loss of power. After the failure of the patch up efforts of the Janata Dal leaders, he is taking a position of total opposition to the present government. NTR still has substantial mass appeal, mainly among the rural poor. The split in the Telugu Desam has helped the Congress(I) which has a substantial base even though it did poorly in the assembly elections.

When the TDP split was underway, our state unit correctly opposed N.T. Rama Rao's recommendation for dissolution of the assembly. Subsequently, they wanted to come out immediately in support of Naidu. The Party Centre approached the issue from the framework of the overall political line and emphasised that the unity of the TDP is essential to fight the Congress in Andhra Pradesh. It also pointed out that in taking any stand we have to involve the Janata Dal and discuss with them to come to a common understanding so that the struggle to rally all the secular forces in the country is strengthened. Later events show that we were able

to have a common approach with the Janata Dal. The State Committee after discussions with the Polit Bureau appreciated this stand. It came out in support of Chandrababu Naidu only after the adamant stand of NTR foiled efforts for unity.

In the Janata Dal too there are some differences such as the stand taken by Hegde in Karnataka and on some other questions such as the stand to be taken in U.P. However, there are hopeful indications that these differences will be overcome. In Tamilnadu, the situation is still fluid. The type of combination of bourgeois parties depends on the attitude of the Congress central leadership. At present it seems there will be four combinations. The entry of film star Rajanikant into politics will also affect the voting pattern. The recent visit of the Prime Minister to Madurai was meant to gear up the Congress Party. The image of Jayalalitha suffered another blow with the lavish expenditure on her foster son's wedding. The Congress will increasingly manoeuvre because of the dissensions and differences in the secular bourgeois opposition camp.

While working for the widest unity of the Left and secular opposition forces to face the forthcoming elections, we should also be conscious that the governments run by the Janata Dal-National Front are pursuing policies which are inimical to the working people and no different from the Rao Government's policies. Already we have noted in the last Central Committee meeting the privatisation drive adopted by the TDP Government in Andhra; the Janata Dal Government also approved the Cogentrix deal which is harmful like the Enron project. Now the Deve Gowda Government has effected amendments to the land ceiling laws which completely dilute the ceiling provisions and will demolish any prospects for land reform implementation. On all such occasions our Party must firmly oppose such measures and mobilise the people. We must lead the struggles of those sections who are affected by such policy measures.

In spite of all these problems, the struggle for a third alternative must be pursued. It is the only course open to save the country from the Congress(I) and the BJP and to prevent a shift to the right.

Left Parties: Success in Local Elections

Our Party and the Left have registered significant success in local elections both in Tripura and Kerala. In the case of Tripura, the Autonomous District Council elections were held in end of July. Out of 28 seats, polls were held for 24. The Left Front won 23 out of the 24 and the TUJS could win only one. The Left Front has polled 58 per cent of the vote. These elections were held in the background of desperate efforts by the Congress(I)-TUJS to postpone the polls with the help of the former Governor. The extremist groups also intensified their attacks to try and disrupt the holding of elections. The spectacular victory of the Party and the Left Front is a tribute to our Party's deep roots among the tribal people and our principled fight to defend the rights of the tribal people while preserving tribal non-tribal unity.

Kerala

In Kerala, national attention was focussed on the election to the panchayats and the municipalities. The UDF had expected to do well after taking a stand against the Supreme Court on the creamy layer issue and getting a resolution adopted in the state assembly to nullify it. Our Party had taken a principled approach of defending the creamy layer concept while at the same time ensuring the reservations for OBCs are not diluted. The Party and the LDF mounted a strong campaign to expose the UDF Government's misrule, corruption of its ministers and the communal gang up. The results have been strong vindication of the party's policies. Out of the 54 municipalities, the LDF won in 31; the LDF won in all the three corporations; the LDF won 100 out of the 152 block samitis and 560 of the 990 gram panchayats. In the Zilla Panchayats (district councils) out of the 14 districts, the LDF won 10. This victory at all levels is a strong rebuff to the UDF and the A.K. Antony Government.

The Left's victory in these two states show the continuing popular support for the policies and positions of the Left. This should be utilised properly to strengthen Left unity and to rally all the Left and democratic forces.

Problems of Left Unity

Our Party Congress has emphasised that to build third alternative strengthening left unity is essential. We have been working in this direction organising mass struggles against economic policies and against communalism. At the call of the National Platform of Mass organisations on 15th September joint mobilisation took place in various parts of the country. The CPI held its Congress recently in Delhi. The political line adopted at the Congress has substantial common ground for united activities to develop between the two parties. But some differences are also there. The conception of Left unity in the political resolution includes those parties and groups like the CPI(M) and the SUCI. These parties consider the CPI(M) as an enemy to be fought politically. Further, as the speeches made in the Congress by their leaders go to show, their line of no truck with bourgeois opposition parties goes against the efforts to rally these forces to ensure the defeat of the Congress and the BJP. This will only disrupt Left unity and not strengthen it. Further, the CPI has advocated the formulation of a common minimum programme with the secular bourgeois parties instead of projecting a left and democratic programme. Such a minimum programme should not be conceived of in a hurry. To gather all the secular forces for wider unity, it would be better to support the efforts of the progressive intellectuals who have formulated a minimum programme. This proposal must be published and all parties can react to it. This will pave the way for a common appeal to the electorate.

In spite of these difficulties we have to carry forward the united activities of left parties and for that build mass actions against the economic policies and against communal, separatist forces and against corruption. It is through mass actions and the joint cooperation of these parties that unity of the Left can be strengthened. In our approach to the CPI, we, must bear in mind the widespread urge for unity among the wellwishers of the Left. We should take initiative to discuss the various problems including election tactics in various states. Strengthening of the Left alone can help rallying of other secular parties for the third alternative.

Solidarity With Cuba

In this period, our Party has launched a big solidarity movement with Cuba where trade unions, kisan sabha and other mass organisations are involved. We succeeded in collecting about four million rupees and sending 300 tonnes of detergents to Cuba. Our West Bengal committee hosted the conference of the Asia-Pacific region in solidarity with Cuba from September 22 to 24. 163 delegates from 12 countries representing 102 organisations attended the conference. The conference adopted a Declaration in solidarity with Cuba and a call was given to observe November 27 as Asia Pacific Solidarity Day against the blockade of Cuba. This conference will be a landmark in our solidarity movement with Cuba.

Conclusion .

With the general elections fast approaching our main efforts should be concentrated on ensuring the success of our political line in rallying all the secular opposition forces to combine with the Left to defeat Congress and BJP. Along with the parliament elections, assembly elections will be held in West Bengal and Kerala, our two strong bases. The success in these two states has a direct bearing on the advance of the Left movement. Other important state elections are there in Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and Assam.

We should in the coming months make vigorous efforts to take up people's problems and launch mass movements. The independent activities of the Party and the united struggles of the mass organisations must be stepped up.

The Party should launch campaigns and movements taking up the following immediate demands:

1. Strengthen public distribution system to supply 14 essential commodities;
Reduce the prices of food grains supplied through the fair price shops by 50 per cent.
2. Release food stocks for food for work programmes in the rural areas.
3. Stop disinvestment and closure of public sector units.

4. Distribute surplus land above the ceiling and cultivable waste lands to the landless. Adopt central legislation for agricultural workers; launch struggles for better wages for agricultural workers.
5. Stop privatisation and commercialisation of education.
6. Allocate more resources to the public health system.
7. Equal wages for women and legislation for protection of home based workers.
8. Provide full relief and rehabilitation for flood affected states.
9. Arrest Chandraswami and prosecute him. Book all offenders in the Hawala case.

All Party units should mobilise the people for mass struggles on these demands from the beginning of December. All efforts must be made to involve the Left parties in these movements.

The fight against price rise, unemployment, onslaughts on rights of working class, demands of the peasantry and agricultural workers, rights of women, students struggle for education—all must be taken up at different levels. Alongside we have to be vigilant to combat any move to instigate communal tensions by the BJP-VHP-RSS combine. We must take the corruption scandals in a big way to the people to expose the Rao Government and the Congress(I). We must strengthen ties with the Left parties and carry forward the task of building the widest unity to counter and defeat the Congress and the BJP.

Surjeet Greets AKEL 18th Congress*

The following measure of solidarity and greetings was sent to the 18th Congress of the AKEL by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of the CPI(M), and read out on his behalf:

Your Congress is taking place at a very complex moment of human history. The dismantling of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has temporarily shifted the balance of international forces in favour of imperialism. The imperialist vision of a "new world order" is unfolding itself in newer forms of oppression over the third world, particularly in the economic sphere.

Progressive and peace-loving people all over the world, having come to the realisation that the so-called end of the cold war did not make the world any better place to live in, are re-forging the struggles against all forms of exploitation. The working class parties, the world over, meeting the offensive of an imperialist inspired ideological attack have begun to regroup themselves in leading the struggles of the working people.

In this crucial moment, we are sure that the deliberations of your Congress will contribute to further strengthening the international bonds of solidarity between the progressive and working people across the globe.

Comrades,

Your Congress is also being held at a time when the Cyprus problem has remained unsolved for the last twenty-one years.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, December 3, 1995 'AKEL' is 'Progressive Party of Working People', Cyprus.

The partition of the island nation due to Turkish occupation continues.

We are confident that the deliberations of your Congress will define the tasks before the AKEL in leading the Cypriot patriots for a just solution to the Cyprus problem. We are also confident that these deliberations will further strengthen the links with the working people of Cyprus.

We, in the CPI(M), are in the midst of a bitter struggle in the very complex domestic situation. At one level, defending the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism, we are adapting it to the concrete Indian conditions to advance the peoples' struggles. At another level, we are seeking to unite the largest sections of the working people in the growing struggles against the neo-liberal economic policies that are imposing greater burdens on Indian people. At yet another level, we are working for the broadest unity of patriotic Indians in defence of the country's unity and integrity challenged by both imperialist inspired secessionist forces and internal forces of right reaction. It is on the basis of these struggles that the CPI(M) is seeking to strengthen its links with the toiling people of India. It is on the basis of such struggles that the CPI(M)-led Left Front has continued to win successive elections in the state of West Bengal to control the State Government for the last eighteen years. Last year, in another state of India, Tripura, the people had overwhelmingly voted for the CPI(M) to form the government. We can assure you, comrades, that we, in the CPI(M), to the best of our capacities, will make our modest contribution to the international solidarity in these complex circumstances confronting all of us.

Comrades,

On this historic occasion, on behalf of over seven hundred thousand members of the Party and over forty million members of mass organisations led by the CPI(M), I once again convey greetings to all the delegates assembled here and through them to all members to the AKEL. We are convinced that the bonds of solidarity between the AKEL and the CPI(M) will continue to strengthen further.

Long Live the solidarity and friendship between the people of Cyprus and India!

On Supreme Court Judgement on Manohar Joshi*

Statement Dated December 12, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The judgement of the three-member Supreme Court bench setting aside the Bombay High Court verdict against the Maharashtra Chief Minister, Manohar Joshi, raises many questions. The judgement has exonerated Manohar Joshi of corrupt electoral practices as per the Representation of Peoples Act. This despite the fact that Joshi had declared in an election speech that "The first Hindu state will be established in Maharashtra". This according to the Court "is not an appeal for votes on the ground of his religion but the expression, at best, of such a hope". The constitution bench of the Supreme Court had ruled in 1994 in the case of article 356 that secularism is a basic feature of the constitution and any appeal to set up a theocratic state is an anti-secular activity and therefore unconstitutional. Surely, the claim to form a "Hindu state" in Maharashtra falls under this category.

The Supreme Court bench has also opined that appeals based on Hindutva and Hinduism do not constitute an appeal to religion or against any other religious group. The whole approach is a narrow one which does not consider the specific context in which the Hindutva platform is used to incite feelings against the minorities and to advocate a Hindu state. It is this approach which has led to the quashing of the Bombay High Court's adverse verdict on the speeches of Ritambhara.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) considers the Supreme Court judgement, in its totality, an ambiguous one on the question of the use of religion for electoral purposes, even though the bench has decried the misuse of religion during elections. It will provide

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encouragement for the use of religion for political ends. It, therefore, becomes necessary, to review the provisions of the RP Act in this connection to ensure that no legal ambiguity exists in defining and prohibiting the use of religion for electoral purposes.

Motivated Move to Malign CPI(M)*

**Statement Dated December 19, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

It is unfortunate that certain Bengali newspapers who specialise in CPI(M)-baiting have put out a completely distorted version of Benoy Chaudhury's speech at Burdwans and subsequently reported in the national newspapers also. The sharp attack on the Central Government's corruption by Benoy Chaudhury in the context of the spate of corruption scandals has been made out to be an attack on the Left Front Government of West Bengal.

To attribute such remarks to Benoy Chaudhury, a member of Polit Bureau and a senior minister in the State Government, is patently ridiculous. This is nothing, but a motivated effort to malign the CPI(M) in West Bengal. As the elections draw near, more such disinformation efforts can be expected in the coming days.

*Published in "PEOPLE DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 24, 1995

CPI(M) Greets Communist Party of Russian Federation*

**Message Dated December 19, 1995 Sent by
Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary
of CPI(M) to Gennady Zhuganov, President of
The Communist Party of Russian Federation**

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I convey our heartiest congratulations at the big victory scored by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the recent elections to the Russian Duma.

This victory clearly demonstrates the strong links forged by your Party with the people of Russia. The process of restoration of capitalism has imposed immense hardships on the Russian people and your victory signifies that the problems of Socialism can never be solved by capitalist prescriptions.

Please accept our congratulations once more. Wishing you greater successes in the future.

CPI(M) Condoles Haryana Victims*

**Statement Dated December 24, 1995 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expressed its deep shock and grief over the terrible tragedy at Dabwali town in Haryana. Hundreds of people, mostly children, have died in the gruesome accident at a school function.

The whole country shares their sorrow. Every effort should be made to save the lives of the large number of those injured who are undergoing treatment in the hospitals. The Polit Bureau conveys its deep sympathy and heartfelt condolence to all the families who have been stricken by this tragedy.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 31, 1995.

Centre Must Intervene in Kaveri Dispute*

**Statement Dated December 28, 1995
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses grave concern at the continued dispute over the sharing of the Kaveri waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The situation has a lot of potential to turn volatile given the past track record of emotions that can be raised on this issue. The Polit Bureau therefore calls upon the Government of India to immediately intervene and press for discussions between the two State Governments and arrive at a negotiated settlement. The Polit Bureau urges both the governments and the people of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to exercise maximum restraint and work towards a negotiated solution.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 7, 1996.

CPI(M) Urges Restraint on Kaveri Issue*

**Statement Dated January 2, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

On the question of sharing of the Kaveri river waters, at the direction of the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister, after consultations with the concerned Chief Ministers, has announced certain proposals. These include the release of 6 TMCft of water by Karnataka, a three member expert committee to assess the crop and water situation in the Kaveri basin. These, however, cannot be construed as a final solution. For this purpose, the Prime Minister has announced the convening of a meeting of the Water Resources Council, comprising all the concerned Chief Ministers.

It is unfortunate that the Congress(I) and BJP are exploiting people's emotions in these two states, seeking to derive some political mileage by pitting one state against the other.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) appeals to all political parties to refrain from such rousing of emotions and passions on this sensitive issue till the final solution to the sharing of the waters is arrived at through a consensus.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the people of both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to exercise restraint.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 7, 1996
Refer earlier statement of CPI(M) on Kaveri Issue under Item No.163 of this volume.

CPI(M) Demands: Cancel Enron Deal*

**Statement Dated January 9, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Shiv Sena-BJP Government of Maharashtra has betrayed the interests of the country and the people of the state by unilaterally announcing the revival of the Enron power project. What is sought to be projected as a successful effort in cutting down costs in the renegotiated project is actually nothing but a surrender to the multinational corporation.

First of all, the Shiv Sena-BJP Government has approved not only Phase I of the project but also Phase II which is the bigger project. The Sharad Pawar Government had only finalised Phase I. In effect, the Maharashtra Government has handed out another mega project to the Enron without competitive bidding.

The claims of reducing costs are deceptive. The fuel used in both phases will be imported naphtha and liquid natural gas. This will be a continuous drain on foreign exchange. It is calculated that on this combined project a total outflow on account of fuel alone will be of the order of Rs. 50,000 crore over the next 15 years. More serious, the minimal reduction in costs of Rs.1,000 crore has been done at the expense of offering Enron big concessions.

There will be 90 per cent offtake by the State Electricity Board (obligatory utilisation of power generated) for not only the first stage but also for the second stage as well. This will mean that the Maharashtra State Electricity Board will have to bear the cost of taking the Enron power, which will be more expensive, at the cost of cutting down its own generation.

The cabinet decision to fix the tariff rate at Rs.1.86 per unit is also dubious. The actual rate will be to the order of Rs. 2.35 per

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 14, 1996.

unit and this is being achieved by agreeing to buy more power from Enron.

The whole procedure of re-negotiation has itself been highly objectionable with no fresh bidding and secretive talks being held with Enron.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) finds the terms approved by the Maharashtra Government completely unacceptable. The BJP which has been hypocritically talking of “swadeshi” has exposed itself thoroughly by this drama of cancellation and then capitulation to the U.S. multi-national. The CPI(M) calls upon all patriotic sections of the people to demand that the Enron be not entrusted with the Dabhol project and fresh tenders be called for on a competitive basis. All political forces and mass organisations interested in the defence of economic sovereignty must continue the struggle to cancel this harmful agreement.

CPI(M): Prosecute Hawala Culprits*

**Statement Dated January 17, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau While in Session in Madras**

After a long delay the CBI has filed chargesheets against ten top political personalities in the hawala case. This too has taken place after the continuous directive and monitoring from the Supreme Court which is bearing a public interest litigation case in the matter. If it had not been for the Court's intervention, the Government would not have taken any action. The CPI(M) has been from the outset demanding a full probe and prosecution of the guilty.

The filing of the chargesheet against BJP President, L.K. Advani, on the basis of *prima facie* evidence, exposes the fact that the BJP leadership is also entangled in shady deals. It explodes their sanctimonious talks of being "a party with a difference".

The three union ministers against whom permission is sought for prosecution must immediately resign. The CBI must further investigate all the persons still suspected of involvement in the hawala transactions and no one should be spared from the law taking its course.

The entire episode reveals the culpability of the Prime Minister and the Central Government. Their efforts have been directed at hushing up cases of high-level corruption. No action has been taken in the Chandraswami affair so far. The Rao Government did its best to cover up the securities scam and the recent telecom scandal. Hence, the Prime Minister is presiding over a set up riddled with corruption and he cannot escape the responsibility for the present sordid state of affairs.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 21, 1996.

CPI(M) Condemns Maharashtra Government Move*

**Statement Dated January 24, 1996 Issued
by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the decision of the Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra to wind up the Sri Krishna Commission investigating into the communal riots after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The riots which occurred in Bombay then were of a horrific nature. The commission had already done substantial work in collecting evidences and making enquiries. The Shiv Sena-BJP, which played a key role in instigating the riots and launching the anti Muslim pogroms, are now worried about the truth coming out. The decision to wind up the commission is a crude and brazen effort to hush up the role of the guilty persons. The State Government has taken this openly anti-democratic step which will further heighten the insecurity among the minorities especially as this follows the earlier decision to wind up the State Minorities Commission.

The Polit Bureau demands that the State Government immediately rescind its decision and the commission should be allowed to complete its work and submit its report.

Central Committee Communiqué*

**Issued Following Its Session in Madras on
January 18-20, 1996 After Discussing
The Present National Political Situation**

Resist Imperialist Pressures

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) strongly opposed the pressures being mounted by the USA on matters concerning India's security. The United States is continuously pressurising India to accept the nuclear non-proliferation regime which is discriminatory. The proposal for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) will also be discriminatory to the non-nuclear states unless the nuclear powers agree to time-bound programme for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. Given the economic policies of the Rao Government which are making India more and more dependent on imperialist finances, the security interests of India are not firmly defended by the Congress(I) Government. The U.S. is still trying to coerce India not to deploy the Prithvi missiles or continue with testing of the Agni missile programme. The Rao Government also does not raise the question of the U.S. military base in Diego Garcia which stocks nuclear weapons and which directly impinges on India's security. The Central Committee calls upon the Rao Government not to succumb to the pressures exercised by the USA and the western powers. The CPI(M) demands the immediate annulment of the Indo-U.S. military pact. The people of India will not tolerate any infringement of the country's sovereign decision-making powers in this matter.

Purulia Arms-Drop

The serious lapse in security witnessed by the air-dropping of sophisticated arms in Purulia by a foreign plane shows the dangers inherent in the present set-up. That a plane could land in a number

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 28, 1996.

of Indian Airports and drop arms at a pre-planned site and then return from India without detection, highlights the bungling by the authorities. Despite the strenuous efforts of the Anand Marg to deflect attention from its activities, the CBI probe must continue vigorously to track down all the culprits responsible for this serious incident. Alongwith this, the recovery of a large amount of RDX explosives in Punjab and the suspicious activities of a French vessel off the coast of Cochin show a disturbing pattern of illegal arms flow and subversive activities sponsored from abroad.

Deteriorating Economic Situation

The Central Committee noted that the economy has run into serious trouble with the depreciating value of the rupee, the rising revenue and fiscal deficits, the burgeoning external debt, severe price-rise and increasing unemployment.

The external debt according to the latest figures of the finance ministry has reached 99.04 billion dollars by the end of 1995 which keeps India as the third largest debtor country in the world. The rupee value has depreciated and is still over Rs.35 per dollar. While the Government boasts of controlling inflation, the consumer price index tell a different story. The rupee is today worth only 68 paise relative to its value in 1990-91 for urban industrial workers and only 64 paise for agricultural workers as per the official indexes which in themselves do not depict the true situation.

The net per capita availability of foodgrains has actually declined since the new economic policies. A major reason for this is the collapse of the public distribution system while 30 million tonnes of foodgrains have accumulated in the godowns. Unemployment, both rural and urban, blights the future of millions of young people. In contrast, to the plight of the ordinary people the profits of big business houses are soaring. Companies like ITC, Reliance and Hindustan Lever had gross profits which had increased from 200 to 300 per cent in 1994. The fiasco of disinvestment of PSU shares has become evident to all. The sale of these shares is a loot of public assets as they are being sold at scandalously low prices. The Central Committee reiterated its demand that the tendering of basic telecom services be stopped forthwith.

The Central Committee noted that various strikes and mass actions have taken place against these economic policies. The Central Committee congratulated the working class of Bombay for conducting a one day strike against the pension scheme, the jute workers of West Bengal for their successful strike struggle for better wages and the fishermen all over the country for their January 18 strike against the entry of foreign companies in fishing. The Central Committee also supported the call of the CITU and other unions for a countrywide united strike action against the pension scheme announced by the Government is a fraud on the workers.

Political Situation

The Central Committee reviewed the political situation with regard to the forthcoming elections. As far as the Congress(I) is concerned, the centre's harmful policies and its compromise with communal forces have shrunk its mass base and it is in a precarious position. The hawala scandal, pursued by the Supreme Court, and the filing of the chargesheets by the CBI against three Union Ministers has exposed the rot in the Rao Government. The liberalisation policy with its incentives for public loot and corruption, the callousness to the people's living conditions, the failure to deal with the problems of national unity like Kashmir and the nexus with criminalised corrupt elements of society has put the Congress(I) in the dock as far as the people are concerned.

The BJP, which was claiming to be the national alternative to the Congress(I), also stands thoroughly exposed. Its communal appeal based on Hindutva and its alliance with the rabid Shiv Sena is well known. Now its President, L.K. Advani is in the company of the Congress(I) leaders in the hawala case. Its Chief Minister in Delhi is listed as one of the recipients of the illegal money. The BJP's pretensions to be a "principled" party was exploded with the Waghela affair in Gujarat. Its open advocacy of big business and liberalisation has been confirmed by its volte face on the Enron affair. It has, alongwith the Shiv Sena, struck a deal with the U.S. multinational giving it not just one project (Phase I) but an even bigger combined project with Phase II. The sell out on Enron shows the hypocrisy of the BJP's swadeshi slogan. The RSS outfits like

the VHP have begun their poisonous communal campaign to help the BJP with communal polarisation.

Defeat Congress(I) & BJP

The Central Committee reiterated its resolve to ensure the defeat of both the Congress(I) and the BJP in the forthcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. The CPI(M) is striving to forge a third alternative which will comprise the Left, democratic and secular opposition forces in the country. This is the common urge of the people. Forging of the third alternative is a process which has to overcome certain difficulties. These are being resolved and progress has been made in rallying all the forces to fight the Congress(I) and the BJP.

In Uttar Pradesh, the fight in defence of secularism has been strengthened by the decision of the Janata Dal and Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party to go together in the elections. In Assam, the CPI(M) and CPI will be having an understanding with the AGP to defeat the Congress. In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress can be defeated if the Telugu Desam stands together in the elections. In Tamil Nadu, the CPI(M) will work to defeat the AIADMK Government and the Congress(I) by having an understanding with the MDMK and other secular and democratic forces.

Strengthen Left Unity

In the forthcoming electoral battle it is important that the Left unitedly intervene. The Left parties have been consistent fighters against the new economic policies and the communal forces. The CPI(M) Central Committee stressed the need for unity of the Left parties with regard to the coming elections both for an effective campaign and for adjustment of seats.

The Central Committee called upon all party units and workers to gear up fully for the coming elections. These elections will have a crucial bearing on the future course the country will take and for the further advance of the Left, democratic and secular forces. All party units must make the requisite organisational preparations for participating in the elections so that the Congress (I) and the BJP are defeated and the third force, comprising the democratic and secular forces allied with the Left, are able to become the effective alternative.

CPI(M) Congratulates Fishermen for Strike*

**Statement Dated January 19, 1996 Issued by
The Central Committee While in Session in
Madras**

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) congratulates the lakhs of fishermen who observed a countrywide strike on January 18, against the entry of multinational and foreign vessels for fishing in Indian waters. Under the liberalisation policy, foreign companies are being allowed to tap the marine resources. This is leading to diminishing catches and destruction of the marine resources in the coastal waters of our country and loss of foreign exchange. It is threatening the livelihood of millions of people of the fishing community.

The Central Committee demands that the Central Government reverse this policy and stop the issuance of licences for foreign vessels.

On Jammu & Kashmir And Tripura Situations*

Statement Dated January 18, 1996 Issued by
The Central Committee of The CPI(M) While
in Session in Madras on January 18-20, 1996

(i) On Kashmir Situation

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) expresses its deep concern at the situation in Jammu & Kashmir. The CPI(M) has been constantly stressing the need for a political package to facilitate holding of elections. The people are faced with growing hardships. They are fed up with the depredations of the extremist forces and at the same time they are unable to get their grievances redressed by the administration.

The abortive effort by the Central Government to hold elections in December 1995, underlines the necessity for a common agreement by all the national and secular parties to formulate a political package. The basis for such a package should be the provision of maximum autonomy while assuring the Kashmiri people of their identity within the framework of the Indian Union.

It seems the Central Government is once again considering the holding of elections in March. It is necessary that the widest political forces be mobilised to make the political process meaningful. The Central Committee, therefore, calls upon the Prime Minister to convene an all-parties meeting to discuss the matter. Through such consultations the political package should be finalised which also can prepare the ground for holding of elections.

(ii) Tripura: Send Adequate Paramilitary Forces

The Central Committee discussed the situation in Tripura with regard to the intensification of the attacks launched by the extremist groups. These armed extremist groups are sheltering across the border and have been perpetrating violent attacks against the

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 28, 1996

non-tribal people in order to provoke ethnic tensions and clashes. The CPI(M) and the Left Front Government have been in the forefront to fight back all provocations and to maintain tribal-non-tribal unity. This is in contrast to the picture of ethnic conflicts and separatism rampant in the north-eastern region.

The Left Front Government has been requesting the Centre to deploy adequate paramilitary forces to check the activities of the armed extremist groups and for effective patrolling of the border. Unfortunately, the Central Government has refused to respond to the State Government's requests. In fact, the total strength of the paramilitary forces deployed in the state at present is half that of the earlier strength in 1993 when the Left Front assumed office. This stand of the Centre is discriminatory. By its non-cooperation with the State Government the Congress (I) Government at the Centre is endangering the unity among the different communities which is harmful for national unity and the north-east region as a whole.

The Central Committee demands of the Central Government that it immediately accede to the request of the State Government and deploy additional paramilitary forces like the CRPF and the Assam Rifles in the State.

Report On Political Developments*

Adopted by The Central Committee of The CPI(M)
in Its Session in Madras on January 18-20, 1996

INTERNATIONAL

Since the October 1995 Central Committee meeting, many developments have taken place in the world, of which the most significant must be noted and analysed:

French Working Class Strike

An important event has been the three-week-long strike by the French working class which virtually paralysed the 4th largest economy in the world. The workers were protesting against the 20 billion franc cut in the prevalent social welfare schemes such as pension, education and health announced by the government. As world capitalism is unable to recover from its recession at rates desired by them such attacks on the rights of the working class which were extracted after generations of struggles are being mounted. Such attacks are taking place at a time when high unemployment rates prevail in all European countries. There is a 12 percent rate of unemployment in France while it averages 10 percent in Europe. In a situation where capitalist countries no longer find themselves under compulsion to meet the socialist challenge, following the collapse of the USSR, the first casualty has been the entire edifice of social security erected after the second world war under the concept of "welfare economics". But as anticipated by us, the working class in various countries are rising in protest against these measures and the struggles to defend the existing rights from the capitalist attacks which are mounted with a vengeance, are growing.

*Published as a booklet in February 1996.

The entire conflict over the U.S. budget that virtually led to the paralysis of the U.S. Federal Government on two occasions during this period is also a reflection of this. Tens of thousands of federal employees had to be laid off due to the deadlock. The Republican controlled Congress and the Democrat President are both agreed on cuts in social expenditure but the differences have basically been on the content and the size of the cuts. Clinton is opposing cuts in the medical welfare system keeping in view the impending presidential elections later this year.

Elections in Russia and Poland

The success of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the parliament elections is of great significance in the background of the growing resistance to the naked drive for imposing capitalism in the former socialist countries. It is also noteworthy in the background of the vicious offensive against Socialism after the dismantling of the Soviet Union. The Communist Party has emerged as the single largest party and nearly doubled its vote from the last parliament elections. With its allies, it has come close to getting a majority in the complicated system of elections in Russia. The forces advocating imposition of capitalism and western-sponsored reforms have suffered serious reverses. The parliament has very limited powers and the next stage of the struggle will now focus on the presidential elections to be held in June.

Earlier in Poland, the presidential elections in Poland saw the defeat of Lech Walesa and the victory of the former Communist candidate on a social democratic platform. This confirms the general trend in the region of people rejecting the policies of returning to unbridled capitalism which within a span of just three years has pushed millions of people in the East European countries into poverty. The defeat of Lech Walesa has dramatically illustrated the change in the popular mood in East Europe.

Both these developments tend to strengthen the popular resistance against the return of unbridled capitalism in these countries and to that extent it has a positive impact on world developments.

Castro's Visit to China & Vietnam

The first ever visit to China by Fidel Castro is significant as it is an important step in the strengthening of relations between the two socialist countries. Along with the visit to Vietnam which shares close bonds with Cuba, the high-level exchanges should help increase cooperation between the socialist countries.

International opinion is further crystallising against the U.S. embargo on Cuba. In the last General Assembly session of the United Nations, 117 countries voted for the resolution calling for end to the embargo on Cuba (4th consecutive year — increasing majority). The United States is more and more isolated on this issue before world public opinion.

Agreement on Bosnia

As noted in the last CC meeting, the framework of an agreement had been worked out under U.S. auspices. This agreement was finally signed in the USA by the Presidents of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia. The plan envisages a Croat-Muslim Federation covering 51 percent of the territory in Bosnia and a Serb Republic having 49 percent. Bosnia will have a Central Government with Sarajevo as the capital in a type of confederation.

This agreement and the end of hostilities, if it holds, will help end the sufferings of the people of all communities. This could be a positive development. However, the U.S. is trying to establish its hegemony in the Balkans through the U.S. led NATO force being entrusted with the task of enforcing the agreement. The U.S. is sending twenty thousand troops to Bosnia. This is an ominous development.

Assassination of Israeli Prime Minister

The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, by a Zionist extremist reflects the depth of hostility amongst the reactionary Jewish forces to the peace agreement. On the other side, the fundamentalist group Hamas is seeking to grow by exploiting the sentiments of the Palestinians on the unsatisfactory terms of the agreement. All the western powers seem united to carry forward the agreement despite this assassination since this is the best deal they have got in the region.

Turkey

The parliament elections held in Turkey have resulted in the emergence of the Islamic Welfare Party as the single largest party getting 158 out of 550 seats. This has resulted in the Welfare Party entitled to stake its claim to form the government. The emergence of the Islamic Welfare Party is a disturbing phenomenon in a country like Turkey which underwent the first secular revolution under Kamel Aturtuk. It indicates how the Islamic fundamentalist forces are growing in the region.

NAM

The 11th Non-Aligned summit was held at Cartagena in Colombia in October 1995. An effort was made in this conference to assert the continuing relevance of NAM. Most of the issues confronting the third world countries and the issues of increasing North-South divide came up for discussion in the summit. Questions of disarmament, democratisation of the U.N., reducing the debt burden, unrestricted flow of technology and trade without protectionism—all these found mention in the final declaration. However, the NAM is still to reorient itself to provide a counter-vailing force to the imperialist efforts for a new world order. The vacillations were also evident in the fact that there was no reference to the need for dismantling the foreign military bases and the serious consideration to the proposal to give Japan an observer status in the NAM. The objective conditions with the growing exploitation of the third world countries and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor nations should create the basis for revitalising the forum of NAM.

Neighbours

Sri Lanka : The capture of Jaffna by the army is a big defeat for the LTTE. The LTTE is now concentrating its activities in the eastern province in the main land. The Sri Lankan Government has offered resumption of talks on condition that LTTE ends hostilities and creates a token surrender of arms and accepts a timeframe for negotiated settlement. The LTTE has rejected this offer and has stated that talks cannot be resumed as long as the Sri Lankan troops “occupy” Jaffna.

The sufferings of the civilian population who have been forced to leave Jaffna need to be redressed immediately with adequate relief and rehabilitation measures. Our Party has called for the immediate resumption of talks by both sides, ending hostilities with the political package announced by the Chandrika Government as the basis for a negotiated settlement so that the Tamil people get genuine autonomy and protection of their identity within the framework of united Sri Lanka.

In this context, the imperialist attempts to intervene must be guarded against as well as the attempts to internationalise the issue which can only help facilitate imperialist machinations in the region.

Pakistan: In Pakistan, the internecine conflict in Karachi continues, the talks between the government and the MQM having failed to yield results. The Mohajirs even after nearly five decades after the formation of Pakistan find themselves alienated and being treated as a refugee community. Both the major ruling class parties, Bhutto's PPP and Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League are competing amongst themselves on an anti-India platform. This is harmful as it only facilitates the American designs in South Asia.

Afghanistan: The Bhutto Government's open backing to the Taliban have led to both the Rabbani and the Iranian Government condemning it for its interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The Pakistan efforts to intervene in Afghanistan through the Taliban forces has the tacit support of the U.S. The Clinton administration is interested in penetrating Central Asia and a Pakistan-Afghanistan axis will be useful for this purpose. That is why Robin Raphael on a recent visit to South Asia went to Kabul first to talk to the Rabbani Government to make it accept a new arrangement and the formation of a new government representing the forces opposed to the present regime.

Nepal: In Nepal the coalition government of the Nepali Congress and the pro-King Rashtriya Prajatantra Party after assuming office in the light of the Supreme Court verdict is trying to undo some of the progressive policies put in place by the Communist government. There are strains developing within the coalition because of differences in both the parties and between

them. The CPN(UML) is going amongst the people and succeeding in rallying them around its platform.

Bhutan: The Bhutanese Government's discriminatory policy towards its citizens of Nepali origin had led to thousands of them being evicted from Bhutan. They are now residing in refugee camps in Nepal and in the bordering areas of West Bengal. So far their efforts to return to Bhutan have not succeeded. The CPI(M) has supported their just demand to return to Bhutan and to live with rights equal to other citizens. The Indian Government must take up the matter with the Bhutanese Government to facilitate the settlement of the affected people.

Bangladesh: The political crisis in Bangladesh has deepened during this period. The entire opposition has been demanding the resignation of the Khalida Zia Government and the conduct of elections under a neutral caretaker government. With Khalida Zia's Bangladesh National Party intent to continue as a caretaker government during the course of the elections, and the opposition declaring that it will boycott the elections if its demand is not met the uncertainty continues. In this mass struggle for democracy, there is a danger that these developments will erode the people's confidence in bourgeois democracy and can be exploited by the anti-democratic forces. The U.S. ambassador in Bangladesh has been acting as a mediator in talks between the ruling party and the opposition.

Myanmar: In Myanmar, the military regime had to release Aung Syu Kyi after a number of years of house arrest. But despite her release, the regime is manoeuvring to avoid taking steps to restore the parliamentary democratic set-up. Despite all its delaying tactics, the people are increasingly expressing themselves in favour of restoration of democracy.

Growing U.S. Pressures

This period has also seen growing pressures being mounted by USA on India. The Brown amendment sanctioning the sale of sophisticated arms to Pakistan came at a time when the Government of India was upgrading its levels of military cooperation with USA. The CPI(M) had asked for the immediate annulment of these steps

as the U.S. imperialist game in the region became obvious once more in fomenting Indo-Pak hostilities.

Newer pressures are being brought on India concerning the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). India has so far resisted the pressures on the question of signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). The CTBT envisages that all the signatory countries will not engage in any further testing of nuclear weapons. This is once again a discriminatory treaty which is to the advantage of the big nuclear powers who have achieved much higher technological levels in perfecting weapons of mass destruction. The only solution that can make this planet a safer place is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Any meaningful proposal for a greater security in the world will have to be based in this direction. All the partial approaches are merely instruments serving to strengthen the already advantageous position of the imperialist powers, particularly U.S. imperialism.

In this context, the demand of the peace-loving people in the world for the elimination of foreign military bases must be renewed with vigour. Now, with even the fig-leaf of the excuse of the cold war not being there, the USA has no business having its military bases in various territories of the world. One that concerns India's security interests directly is the U.S. military base in Diego Garcia which also stocks nuclear weapons. We must demand the immediate dismantling of this base which is of paramount importance in strengthening the security in the region.

NATIONAL SITUATION

The three-month period since the October Central Committee meeting has seen a deterioration in the economic situation and various pre-election manoeuvres by the political parties. Other notable events were the unprecedented parliament session which was rocked by the telecom scandal, the abortive effort by the Central Government to hold the Kashmir elections and the threat to national security as seen by the Purulia arms drop. There is also a growing trend of crimes against women and abuse of children which is symptomatic of the decay of social order. The period also saw important struggles by the working class and other sections in defence of their rights.

Economic Difficulties Increasing

The economy has run into serious trouble, a fact which cannot be ignored by even the fervent advocates of liberalisation. The depreciating value of the rupee, the depletion in the foreign exchange reserves, the rising revenue and fiscal deficits, slackening industrial growth due to the tight money policy to curtail inflation, and the slump in the stock market are all signs of the economic difficulties looming ahead. The external debt has nearly reached the \$ 100 billion mark and the internal debt position is alarming.

The Congress(I) Government's economic policies are ruinous for the country. It has intensified the process of enormously enriching the already affluent while further pauperising the poor. The latest report of the finance ministry on external debt has stated that at the end of 1995 India's total external debt stood at \$ 99.04 billion; an increase of \$ 6.34 billion over the previous year ending March 1994. In rupee terms with the current depreciation of the rupee, this is well over Rs. 3,40,000 crores. The bulk of the increase in debt has been due to the changes in the exchange rate. It is estimated that the depreciation of the rupee will raise external debt by Rs. 1,500 crores in 1995-96. This is the logical result of opening up the economy and the financial sector on the terms dictated by the imperialist institutions.

The RBI's efforts to check the slide in the value of the rupee by selling dollars in the market has led to the depletion of foreign exchange reserves. From \$ 20 billion, the reserve has come down in a space of three months to \$17 billion. Despite the RBI's efforts, the value of the rupee continues to depreciate and it is over Rs. 35 to the dollar. This will have its adverse impact on the import bill. Already the trade deficit is widening. The import-export gap was \$ 3.3 billion for the period April-November 1995, double that of the corresponding period in 1994. At this rate, it is estimated that the deficit will be \$ 5 billion by the end of the financial year against the government's estimate of a \$ 4 billion deficit.

The Rao Government is boasting about its success in controlling inflation. It is claimed that the rate of inflation has come down to below 6 percent based on the wholesale price index. However, the consumer price index tells a different story. The index for industrial

workers and agricultural labour shows no signs of decline. In fact, agricultural workers index is rising at the rate of 13 to 14 percent over the previous year. The rupee is today worth only 68 paise relative to its value in 1990-91 for urban industrial workers and only 64 paise for agricultural workers as per the official indexes which in themselves do not depict the true situation.

The price rise of essential commodities, especially of foodstuff constitute the most serious attack on the people. With no increase and even decline in real wages, the price rise is pauperising the poor further. This is the fact which cannot be hidden by statistics. According to one estimate, the number of rural people below the poverty line has increased from 36.5 in 1990-91 to 48 percent in 1994-95, a telling commentary on the impact of the new economic policy.

It is in such a situation that the godowns of the government are overflowing with foodgrains. The 30 million tonnes of stocks of foodgrains have accumulated because there is no purchasing power for the rural poor and therefore, declining offtake by the public distribution system. The high price in the PDS and the curtailment of the PDS has led to the poor, who need the foodgrains most, not receiving these stocks. The government is instead trying to export foodgrains by even selling them at cheaper prices. This highlights our demand that the issue prices of foodgrains in the PDS be reduced by half. The net per capita availability of foodgrains has actually declined since the new economic policies. From a per capita availability of 476.4 gms in 1990, it has come down to 461.7 gms in 1995-96. This is the greatest indictment of the Rao Government, overflowing foodgrains in the godowns while the rural poor do not have enough to eat.

Unemployment, both rural and urban, blights the future of millions of young people. The slashing of public investment has led to growing joblessness as the private sector is in no position to absorb the new entrants. The private sector growth is also at the expense of permanent employment, fostering the informal sector, home-based workers and contract workers who are subjected to the worst forms of exploitation. Women workers have become a major victim of this trend.

The plight of the rural poor, plagued by lack of employment opportunities, cheap food and victims of price rise shows no promise of alleviation as the Rao Government is virtually abandoning land reforms implementation except as a formal exercise on paper. In the recent conference of state land and revenue ministers, it was reported that in the years 1993, 1994 and 1995, the combined distribution figures of ceiling surplus land from all states was less than 75,000 acres. This is a dismal figure considering that it is out of a total of 22.22 lakh acres of land which has been declared surplus to be distributed.

In contrast to the plight of the ordinary people, the profits of the big business houses are soaring. Companies like ITC, Reliance and Hindustan Lever have had gross profits which increased by 200 to 300 per cent in 1994. Large-scale tax evasion and fraudulent "switching" of shares are indulged in with impunity by companies like Reliance as they know the government will condone all these illegal actions.

The fiasco of the disinvestment of PSU shares has become evident to all except the Rao Government. In the current budget, it was proposed to raise Rs.7,000 crores by the sale of PSU shares. Of the estimated Rs.2,000 crores expected to be realised in the first state, the government could only get a paltry Rs.168.72 crores even though shares of profitable units like ONGC, SAIL and MTNL were put on the market. The loot of public assets by selling them at scandalously low prices has to be halted forthwith. There has to be also a comprehensive enquiry as to those who are guilty for selling these assets cheaply.

The recent struggle in parliament on the demand for a parliamentary enquiry into the tender process for the basic telecom services has served to highlight the racketeering in the name of privatisation. Our Party firmly opposed the basic telecom policy of privatisation and throwing open the telecom sector to foreign capital indiscriminately. The large-scale corruption and irregularities in the present tendering process has confirmed our fears. The minister for communications has been favouring a particular company and the way the capping process was decided has led to the government losing Rs. 20,000 crores.

workers and agricultural labour shows no signs of decline. In fact, agricultural workers index is rising at the rate of 13 to 14 percent over the previous year. The rupee is today worth only 68 paise relative to its value in 1990-91 for urban industrial workers and only 64 paise for agricultural workers as per the official indexes which in themselves do not depict the true situation.

The price rise of essential commodities, especially of foodstuff constitute the most serious attack on the people. With no increase and even decline in real wages, the price rise is pauperising the poor further. This is the fact which cannot be hidden by statistics. According to one estimate, the number of rural people below the poverty line has increased from 36.5 in 1990-91 to 48 percent in 1994-95, a telling commentary on the impact of the new economic policy.

It is in such a situation that the godowns of the government are overflowing with foodgrains. The 30 million tonnes of stocks of foodgrains have accumulated because there is no purchasing power for the rural poor and therefore, declining offtake by the public distribution system. The high price in the PDS and the curtailment of the PDS has led to the poor, who need the foodgrains most, not receiving these stocks. The government is instead trying to export foodgrains by even selling them at cheaper prices. This highlights our demand that the issue prices of foodgrains in the PDS be reduced by half. The net per capita availability of foodgrains has actually declined since the new economic policies. From a per capita availability of 476.4 gms in 1990, it has come down to 461.7 gms in 1995-96. This is the greatest indictment of the Rao Government, overflowing foodgrains in the godowns while the rural poor do not have enough to eat.

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Sordid Record of Corruption

Large-scale corruption, open invitation to loot public funds and assets, cronyism, total lack of accountability and virtual immunity from prosecution for those guilty were the sordid record of the Rao Government. Such institutionalised corruption at high-levels is an outcome of the liberalisation policy and the open encouragement given to enrich private pockets at the expense of public funds. In all those third world countries where such privatisation drives have been undertaken under the structural adjustment programme such corrupt means to transform public assets into private wealth has been seen. At the time of the last Central Committee meeting in October 1995, the Chandraswami affair had come into prominence. As expected, the Rao Government did not arrest him despite the direction of the former Home Minister Rajesh Pilot. The CBI has not even filed a case in the courts against Chandraswami for his harbouring a known criminal hit-man.

Hawala Case

After continuous prodding and monitoring by the Supreme Court, the CBI filed charge-sheets against 10 top political leaders including three union ministers for receiving illegal payment from the Jain brothers in the Hawala affair. Earlier, eight bureaucrats mainly connected with the power and energy sector were charge-sheeted. The fact that three union ministers V.C. Shukla, Balaram Jhakar and Madhavrao Scindia have been proceeded against by the CBI shows how pervasive corruption is at the cabinet level. The BJP has also been put in the dock with the charge-sheet against its President L. K. Advani.

There are 115 names of leaders of various political parties and bureaucrats listed in the Jain diary. Our Party has been consistently demanding from the beginning of 1994 that action should be taken against all those involved in the Hawala deal. The CBI under pressure of the Prime Minister and the Congress leadership has been trying to hush up the whole affair. There can be no cover up and the CBI must investigate all the persons suspected in the case. The Prime Minister himself figures in the interrogation of S. K. Jain, the prime accused who has stated that Rs. 3 crore was paid to

intermediaries like Chandraswami to be given to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister cannot escape responsibility for this shocking case of corruption. A big campaign has to be launched to expose the Congress (I) and the BJP for their corrupt dealings and to demand the punishment of all, without exception who are guilty in this sordid affair. The Hawala case also has serious security implications as money was found to be funneled to the Kashmiri extremist groups by the same Jain brothers.

The entire period of the Narasimha Rao Government's tenure has set a record for brazen and rampant corruption. The bank/securities scandal, the sugar scam, the Chandraswami affair, the corruption charges against Santosh Mohan Deb and the petroleum and gas deals of Satish Sharma and the latest Hawala affair all together constitute a damning charge-sheet against the Congress(I) Government. This racketeering and connivance with corrupt and criminal elements must be fully exposed before the people. They must be subjected to popular indictment for fostering corruption and polluting public life.

Growing Mass Resistance

The pension scheme announced through an ordinance met with strong opposition from the CITU. The main features of the scheme are detrimental to the workers and employees who will be deprived of the PF facilities on which they used to rely during difficulties. Further, the net gain for the workers is illusory under the new scheme. The resistance put up by the CITU is finding a big response from the workers irrespective of union affiliations, even though INTUC, AITUC and HMS have supported the introduction of the scheme. The big one day strike in Bombay involving 10 lakh workers and employees against the pension scheme on 11 December shows the intensity of anger among the workers. With the ordinance being re-promulgated, the protest actions are bound to intensify.

The working class has been in the forefront of various struggles to fight back the offensive and to defend their rights. The coal strike on 18th December saw 5 out of the 7 lakh workers striking work in the call jointly given by the CITU and HMS and supported by the AITUC. The strike of the jute mill workers in West Bengal

has successfully demonstrated the unity of workers of 58 jute mills and the employers had to concede some of the major demands. The insurance employees are on struggle and have conducted a two-day strike in December for their demands regarding wage revision. There has been a one-day industrial strike in Delhi jointly by the trade unions.

A notable mass action was the 29th November all India student strike which was observed in 125 universities and over 2,900 colleges apart from thousands of higher secondary schools. The main focus was against the growing trend of privatisation. In Kerala, there has been a very big movement against commercialisation of education and the students have courageously fought against the Periyaram medical college being run as a private concern despite severe police repression.

The Congress party is desperately seeking to woo the electorate by the announcement of various government concessions. But these are not yielding the desired results. Already the pension ordinance has run into widespread resistance by the workers. The government's efforts to provide salaries to imams in mosques is also running into difficulties with most of the state governments refusing to take the responsibility for providing the funds to the wakf boards for this purpose. In contrast to the great care being taken in the past to check the fiscal deficit, the Rao Government is now spending money recklessly on populist gimmicks which will not increase productive potential or real earnings of the rural poor but will be frittered away as election doles to bolster the Congress's hopes.

Cutbacks Affect Health & Public Services

The nexus of the government-IMF-World Bank policies is having a disastrous effect on the lives of the people. The adverse consequences of retreating from the commitment to provide cheap food has already been noted. The other vital issue for the people is the health situation. Malaria, tuberculosis, water-borne diseases like cholera and gastroenterites are growing in alarming proportions. In 1994 alone, there have been over two million reported cases of malaria of which 50 per cent was of the malignant variety. Assam, Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra

and Gujarat have all seen the spread of the disease. The cutbacks in public health expenditure both at the Centre and State levels is a direct cause for the outbreak of mass diseases. The Union Government's expenditure on national disease prevention programmes as a proportion of the health expenditure came down from 27 per cent in 1965-66 to less than 5 per cent in 1993-94. All public services are deteriorating due to the government's cutback in expenditure — railways, the postal system and the public educational system are all declining in quality and efficiency due to the squeeze in government funding. All these are contributing to the deterioration in the living standards of the people.

Kashmir

During the last Central Committee meeting, we had discussed the situation in Kashmir with regard to elections. It was decided that we should demand that the Central Government come forward with an announcement on maintaining Article 370, assuring a review of the erosion of powers under this article, commitment for maximum autonomy and economic package. This can provide the basis for holding of elections with the participation of all secular opposition parties including the Left. After some discussions, the government came out with a draft announcement which broadly met the demands made by the CPI(M) and CPI in their joint statements. The Prime Minister instead of having a proper and detailed discussion met Farooq Abdullah for a short time before going abroad. The way the Prime Minister hastily tried to clinch the discussions before leaving the country led to a good opportunity to reach an agreement go waste.

Once the National Conference also decided not to participate in the polls, no meaningful purpose can be served in trying to hold election with only the Congress participating. Our demand now is that the government should consult all the parties and come out with a statement which can be endorsed by them which can be basis for preparing for elections.

Our Party has been repeatedly warning about the U.S. designs on Kashmir. Recently, the Home Minister, S. B. Chavan, made a categorical statement in parliament that the United States has evil

designs in Kashmir and is working against the interests of India. On Kashmir, the US is keen to have an independent state and is keeping in direct contact with the Kashmiri separatist groups. It is these efforts which led to Chavan sharply criticising the US role in Kashmir. This statement was condemned by a U.S. State Department spokesman as "complete nonsense". This contemptuous and arrogant remark has been strongly condemned by all patriotic sections.

Purulia Arms Drop Incident

The arms drop in Purulia by a foreign plane with mercenary crew has highlighted the serious threat to the security of the country. The case with which the exercise was carried out shows the laxity in the air defence and surveillance system. One of the key conspirators was allowed to escape from airport itself after the plane was brought down. Further, despite advance intelligence warning about the air-drop a fortnight before the event, the Centre sent the information to the West Bengal Government by ordinary postal channels which reached after the incident. The CBI is enquiring into the incident with the full cooperation of the State Government agencies. The arms drop of sophisticated weapons in West Bengal points to the other disturbing possibility of a conspiracy directed against the Left Front Government with the aim of destabilising the situation on the eve of the elections. It is significant that the Ananda Marg which has headquarters in the vicinity of arms drop has launched a virulent campaign to deflect attention from its activities and is trying to malign the CPI(M) through an orchestrated campaign in the media. Investigations conducted by the CBI so far indicate involvement of the Ananda Margis. It is essential that the actual conspiracy is uncovered and the real recipients of the arms drop be identified and apprehended.

The air-dropping of arms is not the only conduit of arms and explosives entering the country. Recently, a big haul of RDX explosives was made in Punjab. More disturbingly, arms have been discovered in a district in Kerala, the motive for the arms dump is not yet known. The nexus between criminals and extremist political forces importing arms from abroad poses a new type of threat to the democratic set-up.

Tripura

In the recent period, there has been an increase in the number of attacks by the extremist groups operating in the tribal compact areas. There is a systematic plan to launch attacks against the non-tribal people to provoke ethnic polarisation and communal clashes. Prior to the civic polls, some such incidents took place, which were utilised by the Congress(I)-TUJS to aggravate the situation. The CPI(M) and the Left Front is in the forefront to fightback these provocations and to maintain tribal-non-tribal unity. However, the Central Government is adopting a discriminatory and non-cooperative approach by refusing to augment the paramilitary forces in the state. In fact, the total number of paramilitary forces has been halved compared to 1993 when the Left Front Government came to office. Repeated requests from the State Government for additional forces has met with no response. Tripura is one state in the north-east where due to the presence of the Left Front there has been amity among the different communities despite grave provocations. The Congress (I) Government at the Centre is endangering this unity by its refusal to cooperate with the State Government and this is harmful for national unity in the north-east region as a whole.

Results of Civic Polls

In the last three months period, there have been elections to municipal bodies in Tripura, Gujarat and Karnataka. In Tripura, the Left Front has won decisively in 11 out of the 12 municipalities while it suffered reverses in the Agartala Municipal Council. In Gujarat, the BJP has lost some ground; it has not been able to win the majority of the seats in the various municipal bodies, with independence bagging the largest number. In Karnataka, the Janata Dal has done well by emerging as the largest force in the civic bodies with the Congress coming well behind in a second position and the BJP being only third. These results indicate that the Left and secular opposition parties can earn the people's confidence if they are able to present a coherent alternative.

In Uttar Pradesh, the civic poll results showed that the BJP is still a strong force in the urban areas. It was able to win 8 out of the 11 mayoral posts in the 11 city corporations. In the semi-urban

and rural segments in the nagarpalika and nagarpanchayat elections its strength is relatively less. The Congress suffered complete rout. The results underline the necessity for a wider unity of all the secular opposition forces.

Cauvery Waters Dispute

The problem of sharing of Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has been periodically cropping up. This year with the scanty rainfall, the problem again arose of the quantum of distribution of the river waters between the two states. Karnataka pleading that there is not sufficient waters for its own farmers and expressing its inability to release the waters and Tamil Nadu protesting that the crops in the Cauvery basin would be destroyed if waters are not released.

The Cauvery Waters Tribunal gave an interim order directing Karnataka to release 11 TMC. The Karnataka Government refused to do this. The matter was taken to the Supreme Court by the Tamil Nadu Government and it decided to ask the Prime Minister to immediately intervene, hold negotiations with the two Chief Ministers and arrive at a decision. After such negotiations were conducted with the two Chief Ministers, the Prime Minister decided that Karnataka should immediately release 6 TMC of water to Tamil Nadu and an expert 3-member committee would assess the ground situation in both states and submit its report to the Prime Minister by January 10 for further decision. The Centre is committed to calling a meeting of the Water Resources Council in early February to discuss a lasting solution to the problem. Sharing of Cauvery waters is a long-standing problem affecting the farmers of both states. It also involves Kerala and Pondicherry. The Central Government has been tardy in initiating steps to find a permanent solution. Our Party appealed to the political forces in both the states not to arouse passions on this sensitive issue and for a amicable solution through negotiations. Our Party is against tactics of the bourgeois parties like Congress and the BJP which seek to arouse chauvinism on such matters. It is to be hoped that the convening of the central water council will help in arriving at a permanent solution to the problem. The Central Government is

responsible for letting river waters disputes between states to simmer and not take steps to tackle and solve them.

Caste Riots in Tamil Nadu

The recent period has seen the spread of violence in some of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu due to caste conflict. Riots have broken out between the scheduled castes and some of the OBCs. The socially dominant communities in these areas are unable to accept the assertion of the scheduled castes for equal rights and in certain cases, their improved economic conditions. There are vested interests trying to foment and widen the conflict for their narrow political purposes. Such conflicts are used for diverting attention from the common struggles required to fight the economic and other government policies.

Supreme Court Judgement

The set of judgements by a three-member bench quashing the disqualification of Maharashtra Chief Minister Manohar Joshi and some others is a retrograde judicial verdict. It reverses the path of firm defence of secularism set out in earlier judgements, particularly the historic judgement of the Constitution bench in 1994. By allowing the use of Hindutva, Hinduism and even calls for a Hindu state during elections, the judgement provides encouragement for the BJP and other communal forces to aggressively utilise the religious appeal in elections.

It is necessary to get the judgement reviewed by a larger bench. We must also press for tightening up the provisions of the R.P. Act for better legal enforcibility against use of religion in elections.

BJP's Reactionary Politics

The period has been marked by the fruitless efforts of the BJP to evolve an effective electoral plank to project itself as the national alternative to the Congress. After the serious dent to its image in the Gujarat episode, the BJP has been mouthing the slogan that it is a party with a difference without much conviction. The continuing tussle for power within the Gujarat BJP, even after its Mumbai national session, is a serious embarrassment to the BJP's claim to be a disciplined and principled party. At its national session, the BJP decided that it would take up the issue of Kashmir

and its opposition to autonomy, as a major plank along with other anti-minority issues like Bangladeshi infiltration, cow slaughter and uniform civil code. The BJP's tactics is not to directly raise the temple issue in a big way but leave it to the VHP-RSS and other outfits to carry on inflammatory propaganda about the religious places at Varanasi and Mathura.

The BJP stands fully exposed after the Maharashtra Government's decision to unilaterally revive the Dabhol project deal with the Enron. After the drama of cancellation of the agreement, the BJP has now ganged up with the Shiv Sena to give Enron not only Phase-I of the project but also the bigger Phase-II project. The basic terms of the deal continues to be against the country's interests with the large outflow of foreign exchange and adverse terms for buying expensive power from the multinational corporation. The BJP has assured the big business and MNCs that it is committed to liberalisation in spite of the talk of "swadeshi". Its pro-imperialist stand is evident by the fact that the BJP is not prepared to call for the breaking of all the military pact with the U.S. even though it goes on calling for increased defence expenditure to face the threat of resumed U.S. arms supply to Pakistan.

The VHP has come out with a 40 point "Hindu Agenda" for the elections. This constitutes the Hindu communal platform which is actually the stand of the BJP and the RSS. Its essence is to arouse hatred against the minorities and for installing a theocratic State in India.

The Shiv Sena, the ally of the BJP continues with its rabid anti-Muslim propaganda and its latest stand of declaring support for the LTTE in Sri Lanka is equally ominous. Bal Thackeray has posed the conflict in Sri Lanka as between Tamil Hindus and Buddhists. Such a characterisation is dangerous in a state like Maharashtra where there is a sizable neo-Buddhist minority.

In contrast to the BJP's anti-minority motivation in advocating a uniform civil code, the democratic women's movement has posed the issue correctly. It has pointed out that all the personal laws governing various religious communities whether it be Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or tribal are discriminatory to women in

different aspects. What is required are equal rights and equal laws for women of all communities — economic, social, political and legal. Major reforms are required in the existing personal laws of all communities. The struggle should be waged for equal laws for all women in different areas including those governed by personal laws. Such an approach requires a campaign and struggle to rouse the democratic and secular people of all communities so that equality of law and not just uniformity by imposing the laws of one community over the other, is stressed.

State of The Congress Party

The Congress has begun serious preparations for the elections. However, the internal problems and organisational decay of the Party has become glaringly evident. In the five years under the presidentship of Narasimha Rao, the Congress has continued on the path of converting itself into a party of self seeking leaders whose only concern is to how to maintain themselves in power. Devoid of any democratic functioning, in view of the elections, inflated committees and office bearers have been appointed which does nothing but paper over the sharp cracks and conflicts. In order to strengthen its position in the states it is trying to woo the Congress dissidents back like in Haryana and win over defectors from other parties as in Assam. Yet the overall picture is of an effort to place by factional infighting. In Bihar, the rival groups are bitterly fighting it out in the open, the U.P. civic polls showed that the Congress is in shambles in its important state. In Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal and many other places, the faction fighting continues unabated.

The ruling party is trying to recover some of the lost ground by the Rao Government announcing a series of populist schemes and sops to the electorate. Alongwith this the electronic media is also being used in a big way to propagate the Congress Government's "achievements". All this will prove of no avail as the crisis of the Congress is a crisis generated by its government's policies which is leading to its mass influence being constantly eroded.

Meet the Four Challenges

As the crucial Lok Sabha elections, to be held in April, draw near, it is clear that the country is faced with four major problems.

They are: (1) the disastrous impact of the imperialist-dictated economic policies endangering economic sovereignty and ruining the lives of the people; (2) the communal danger and its divisive impact on national unity; (3) the separatist movements which enable imperialist penetration; (4) corrosive corruption and criminalisation of politics.

The policies of the Narasimha Rao Government and the communal politics of the BJP both representing different facets of the ruling classes are mainly responsible for the aggravation of these problems. How the four challenges are met politically will determine the future course of direction for the country. The elections to the various state assemblies in the last one and a half years have indicated that the people realise the bankruptcy of the Congress(I) policies. They have also displayed their willingness to support a secular alternative to the Congress(I) by not falling prey to the communal appeal of the BJP. This was the lesson of the elections in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar. It was only where the secular alternative was not present as in Maharashtra and Gujarat that the anti-Congress discontent was cornered by the communal forces. In line with the Party Congress direction, our efforts have been geared towards the forging of an effective third alternative which can electorally contest and defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Forging Third Alternative

On the basis of the assessment made by the Central Committee in July 1995, we sought to broaden the unity of the secular opposition forces making the National Front-Left parties combination as the core. Our efforts were directed towards drawing in the Samajwadi Party into this wider unity as it has a key role to play in defeating the BJP, in the largest state, Uttar Pradesh. These efforts have yielded results with the first official meeting of the Janata Dal leadership with Mulayam Singh on November 27. We also have worked out an agreement with the AGP in Assam for an electoral adjustment so that an effective fight can be put against the Congress(I) and the BJP in the state.

However, there are also certain difficulties in going ahead with the process of projecting the third alternative. The main problem

in presenting a coherent alternative lies within the Janata Dal. On the question of the Samajwadi Party and Uttar Pradesh a section of the JD leadership has been trying to ally with the BSP even after its opportunistic role in joining hands with the BJP. Such an approach will only create more problems in cementing the alliance with Mulayam Singh. Without consolidating the alliance of the SP with the Janata Dal and the Left, it will not be correct to try and involve other forces who are not reliable. Defeating the BJP would require the sorting out of all these problems and to start an effective joint campaign which can galvanise the anti-BJP forces. The recent PAC meeting of the Janata Dal has reiterated its decision to go ahead with Mulayam Singh.

In Andhra Pradesh the split in the Telugu Desam was a setback as the division in the TDP base will help the Congress in the coming elections. We had worked out a common position with the Janata Dal that both the groups of the TDP should remain in the National Front-fold and play their due role in defeating the Congress. However, recently the dominant opinion in the Janata Dal is inclined to ally with the NTR faction. They have decided to participate in the February 2 rally called by NTR at Vijayawada. This will only widen the conflict as the target of the rally will be the Chandrababu Naidu Government. Our Party has told the Janata Dal to reconsider its stand and adhere to the principled position of striving for the unity of the TDP. In Tamil Nadu, the possibility is of four combinations entering the electoral battle, AIADMK, Congress(I), the DMK Front and the CPI(M)-MDMK alliance. Here also the Janata Dal-National Front have been unable to work out a clear-cut position having earlier banked upon allying with the AIADMK. In Maharashtra, unity has been forged between the three left parties—CPI(M), CPI and PWP and efforts must be made to unite with the Janata Dal and the Republican groups, now united under one banner. In Bihar, Orissa and Karnataka, the Left should arrive at understanding with Janata Dal, which is the major force in these states. In Punjab, the Akali Dal(B) is going for an understanding with the BJP. It is not sufficiently demarcating from the extremists. In such a situation, the CPI(M) and the CPI should unitedly intervene in the elections.

Once all the secular opposition forces are together, we should see that a joint appeal is issued to the electorate to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Importance of Left Intervention

An important task has devolved on the Left to play a key role in forging the wider unity of the secular opposition forces. The Left parties though not a very strong force all-over the country has still a high degree of credibility and prestige. The joint campaigns and the united movements initiated by the Left parties in the last five years against the economic policies and communalism have enabled the Left to discharge this role in the third force. It is the united intervention of the Left, primarily the CPI(M) and the CPI, which can make the third alternative an effective coherent force. It is necessary, therefore, for the CPI(M) and CPI to come to a complete understanding on the seats that they will contest and to pool their efforts to enhance the Left representation in the new parliament.

The Party is right now engaged in conducting the mass campaign and movements called for by the October CC meeting on the urgent demand of the people. After this CC, the Party will have to seriously prepare for the elections both politically and organisationally. The Party's independent platform based on the Left and democratic programme set out in the Party Congress resolution and the Left's united intervention in forging wider unity should help us to go forward in rallying the people to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and to establish the primacy of the third alternative which can chart a new course for the country. A course which strengthens democracy, defends secularism and adopts policies which will ensure the steady self-reliant economic growth free from imperialist dictates.

Prosecute Foreign Companies Involved in Bribery*

**Statement Dated January 27, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is clear from the investigations made by the CBI into the recipients of the illegal payments in the hawala case that certain foreign companies have supplied funds through hawala transactions for the purpose of bribing public servants including Cabinet Ministers. The chargesheets against Arif Mohd Khan and Kalpanath Rai, both of whom served as ministers for energy, state that the alleged bribes paid to them have originated from foreign companies. In the case of Arif Mohd Khan, the French Company Alstom Export is said to be the source of the 5.3 million dollars funds (equivalent to Rs.10.95 crore) which was routed through the Jain brothers for payment of bribes. This was for getting the Kawas gas project of the NTPC. Similarly, the chargesheet records the involvement of another multinational ABB of Sweden in the Kalpanath Rai case. The chargesheets point to bribes having been paid for the Uri and Dulhasti power projects too by foreign companies. The role of Quattrochi involved in the Bofors gun deal kickbacks must also be probed in view of the statement made by the accused S.K. Jain.

While public and media attention has focussed on the corrupt practices of political leaders holding high office, it is equally important to recognise that those paying bribes are guilty of corrupt practices under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Both the payers and recipients of bribes are to be punished. Under the liberalisation policies, the doors have been thrown open for multinational companies to suborn and bribe public servants with impunity. This constitutes a serious threat to the democratic system and erosion

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of the Indian state machinery. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) therefore, demands that the concerned foreign companies and their senior representatives who were involved in bribery be also prosecuted and penal action initiated against the contracts acquired illegally by them in the country.

CPI(M): Prime Minister Must Resign*

**Statement Dated January 31, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Supreme Court has, once again, directed the CBI to investigate all accusations against any person “irrespective of position and status”. The court has also expressed its dissatisfaction with the tardy progress in the investigations done so far. The tenor of the court’s directive makes it clear that the CBI has no option but to pursue the charges against all those named who are reasonably suspected to be involved in the hawala case. This includes the Prime Minister whose name has prominently figured in the interrogation record of the accused S.K. Jain.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates that the chargesheets filed so far concern only a few of those accused of receiving illegal payments. The CBI has to, without any delay, proceed to charge-sheet all those accused of taking similar payments. The Prime Minister is directly in charge of the CBI in the Cabinet. The Supreme Court’s repeated directives show that the CBI has not been proceeding decisively in the case. It is imperative, therefore, that the Prime Minister resign to facilitate a speedy and impartial investigation and prosecution of all those guilty.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all Party units to observe **February 7, 1996** as a **PROTEST DAY** against the hawala affair and to demand the prosecution of all the guilty persons involved.

*Published in “PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY”, New Delhi, February 4., 1996.

On Disastrous Effects of New Economic Policies*

Statement Dated February 8, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The dramatic fall of the rupee starkly illustrates the direction in which the country is being led by the new economic policies. This portends an economic disaster of the Mexico variety.

This fall results in making our debt obligations more burdensome and onerous. Already 40 per cent of our GDP in rupee terms is accounted for by foreign debt. The repayment burden had reached the proportion of 36 per cent of the GNP going in for servicing these debts. Such a dramatic fall in the value of the rupee will mean that both these burdens will mount, imposing greater hardships on an already overburdened people. Further, this will make imports more expensive leading to a vicious inflationary spiral. On both these counts the conditions of the common people are bound to further deteriorate.

It is, indeed, strange that nationalised banks like the State Bank of India and the Canara Bank have been taking the lead in this speculative activity of buying dollars on behalf of some corporate agents. As the value of the rupee slides further, this very speculative motivation is bound to be further strengthened leading to a further fall in the rupee's value.

The situation calls for an immediate effective intervention by the Government of India. The value of the rupee will have to be defended, unless the Rao Government wishes to plunge the economy into an irreversible crisis of the Mexican variety. This development has clearly exposed that the free play of market forces in managing our currency is not in the interest of our country and there is a need to return to an effective interventionist managed

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 11, 1996

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currency. This situation appears all the more ludicrous in the background of the claims made by the Finance Minister of the unprecedented accumulation of foreign exchange reserves.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the Government of India to immediately intervene to shore up the Indian rupee in the interests of protecting India's economic sovereignty.

CPI(M): Scrap Indo-U.S. Military Pact*

**Statement Dated February 3, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

It has been reported that a third round of Indo-U.S. naval exercises will be held in March in the seas off the coast of Kerala. According to information available, this joint naval exercise will be on a larger scale and duration than the one conducted in May 1995. Some of the U.S. naval vessels like the nuclear submarine, to be deployed for the exercise, may carry nuclear weapons.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) reiterates its strong opposition to the holding of Indo-U.S. joint military exercises. In the recent period, the United States administration has been exerting all efforts to stop the Indian Government from deploying the Prithvi missiles by the Indian armed forces and to stall further testing of the Agni missile. There is also comprehensive pressure to deflect India from its independent policy on nuclear technology. All this, coupled with the adoption of the Brown amendment to resume arms supplies to Pakistan, constitute an inimical factor to India's security interests.

In such a situation, the pursuance of Indo-U.S. military collaboration cannot be justified in any manner by the Narasimha Rao Government. In fact, what is required is the scrapping of the Indo-U.S. military cooperation pact signed in January 1995. The Rao Government is jeopardising India's vital security interests by continuing with the totally uncalled for collaboration with the Pentagon and the U.S. armed forces. The Polit Bureau calls for immediate cancellation of the joint naval exercises in March. It also calls upon the Narasimha Rao Government to provide an explanation for the continuing military cooperation with the USA. All patriotic sections concerned with India's sovereignty and defence of its security interests must raise their voice against the course adopted by the Central Government.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 11, 1996

CPI(M): Oppose Government Move on Jammu & Kashmir*

**Statement Dated February 19, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau of The
CPI(M) to Press**

It seems from newspaper reports that the Central Government is still toying with the idea of holding elections in Jammu & Kashmir even after the refusal of some of the major political parties to participate. No doubt there is a change in the mood of the masses fed up with extremist activities, and this is to be made use of by providing them with a political package which can inspire confidence in them, and for a solution within the framework of Indian unity. But any effort to organise elections with the participation of only the Congress party, and that too a part of it, will be counter-productive. Neither will it inspire confidence in the minds of the people about the success of the political process nor will it provide credibility to the election itself. It will undoubtedly be made use of by the rulers of Pakistan, backed by U.S. imperialism, who have so far failed to internationalise the issue.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) earnestly appeals to all political parties in the country to raise their voice against such a move and stand united to thwart the game of imperialism and to restore the democratic process in the state.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 18, 1996.

CPI(M)-CPI Statement on Third Alternative*

The following statement was issued after the leaders of CPI(M) and CPI met at the CPI(M) headquarters at New Delhi, February 20, 1996 evening:

The leaders of the CPI and CPI(M) met today and exchanged views on the current political situation. The two parties reiterated their commitment to forge a wider alliance of the Left and secular opposition forces. Efforts towards this should be stepped up and there should be no further delay. Such a third alternative is required by the people, especially in view of the rapid discrediting of the Congress(I) and the BJP.

The two parties, in order to strengthen Left intervention in the coming elections, decided to finalise their electoral understanding on seats by the end of the month.

The meeting welcomed the talks which have been held between the president of the Janata Dal and the president of the Samajwadi Party in Lucknow yesterday which should help pave the way for an understanding. In view of this, the two parties decided to initiate talks with the Samajwadi Party for an electoral understanding in U.P.

It was decided to hold a meeting of the Left Parties soon to advance the ongoing process of strengthening Left unity.

The meeting was attended by A.B. Bardhan, Chaturanan Mishra and D. Raja (CPI) and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Ramachandran Pillai, Sitaram Yechury, P. Ramachandran and Prakash Karat from the CPI(M).

CPI(M) Condemns U.S. Threat to Cuba*

**Statement Dated February 28, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the latest U.S. provocation against Cuba and the imposition of tougher sanctions on this pretext.

For some months now, the Cuban airspace has been repeatedly intruded by terrorist groups of Cuban origin based in Florida, USA. These actions were being taken with the complete support and approval of the U.S. Government.

On February 24 this year, two planes made an attempt to reach Havana in pursuance of their subversive activities. Despite continuous warnings by the Cuban authorities that they should leave their territory, these planes refused. The Cuban authorities therefore took action to defend their airspace.

American imperialism, utilising this incident, has once again browbeaten the UN Security Council into adopting a resolution against Cuba despite the fact that Cuba is legitimately and legally defending its sovereignty.

This action has to be seen as yet another provocation against Cuba being initiated by U.S. imperialism. While condemning this, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau calls upon all anti-imperialist forces to express solidarity with Cuba's efforts to defend its sovereignty.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 3, 1996

Polit Bureau Communiqué*

Issued Following Its Meeting Held in New Delhi
on March 3-4, 1996

ALONGWITH the ongoing efforts to build a national alternative capable of defeating both the Congress(I) and BJP, the CPI(M) has decided to hold a series of big rallies throughout the country from this month itself as part of its electoral mobilisation, the Party general secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said, addressing a press conference following the two-day Polit Bureau meeting in Delhi which ended on March 4, 1996.

Demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister for presiding over a corrupt regime, Surjeet spoke, at length, on the hawala scandal which had irreparably tarnished both the Congress(I) and the BJP and said the people were now clearly looking for a third alternative. In this context, he referred to the big response evoked by the Samajwadi Party rally at Red Fort on Saturday and said it was a clear indication that ordinary people were eagerly awaiting the formation of a third front. He said the biggest hurdle towards the building of this alternative had been crossed with the Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party coming to an agreement over Uttar Pradesh, politically the most crucial state in the country. In reply to questions, Surjeet stated he was in touch with various leaders and was confident that the remaining differences would soon be sorted out and the third front would emerge as a formidable force in the coming elections.

Regarding other issues discussed by the Polit Bureau, Surjeet pointed out that it was in the realm of foreign policy that the impact of the new liberalisation policies was most direct. The latest instance was the Government's silence on the latest U.S. threats against

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 10, 1996.

Cuba, and its attitude towards the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)—both glaring examples of the erosion of India's earlier independent and anti-imperialist stance.

Surjeet also laid particular stress on the demand for more paramilitary forces to be sent to Tripura where extremist outfits had once again unleashed a terror campaign. He strongly criticised the Centre for its partisan approach to Tripura, instead of supporting the Left Front Government's efforts to maintain the unity of tribal and non-tribal people, and safeguard national unity in this sensitive border state.

In reply to a question on the criteria of selection of CPI(M) candidates for the general elections, Surjeet observed that certain guidelines had been discussed. For quite some time, the Central Committee had been of the view that there should not be permanent MPs. The idea that 'once an MP, always an MP' was not correct. Parliamentary work was only one of the many facets of party work; and mass work and organisational work could not also be neglected. At the same time, a number of factors had to be taken into account in selecting candidates, of which the effectiveness of a member in Parliament was a very important one.

While it was necessary to get new faces, Surjeet added, to replace candidates was also not easy, especially since the Party was required to fill a large number of elected posts at different levels. For instance, in West Bengal, besides running the Government, the party controlled 17 zilla parishads and a large number of block samities, for all of which suitable candidates were required. It was therefore difficult to replace sitting candidates.

In Kerala, the State Committee had decided that by and large, candidates with more than two terms in Parliament would not be repeated.

Prime Minister Should Resign

The hawala scandal has so far claimed seven Union Ministers of the Rao Government. Never before have so many Central Ministers been indicted for corruption. This alone warranted the resignation of the Prime Minister for presiding over such a corrupt regime. More important, the name of the Prime Minister himself figures in the case. The fact that for four years, the CBI under the Prime

Minister's charge refused to act is the most serious indictment against Shri Narasimha Rao. The defection of the JMM MPs by bribery is another serious charge which has to be investigated. In the light of the latest directive of the Supreme Court asking the CBI not to report to or receive instructions from the administrative authority incharge of the CBI, the Prime Minister should resign by the principle of accountability and conforming to elementary standards in public life.

The hawala case has not only exposed the Congress(I) leadership as the fountainhead of corruption but has also devastated the BJP's image. The indictments of its president, L.K. Advani, its Chief Minister in Delhi, Madanlal Khurana, and other leaders have resoundingly forfeited the BJP's claim to be a party which can provide an alternative to the Congress. Equally serious are the BJP's links with under world. The arrest under TADA of its Gonda MP, Brijbhusan Sharan Singh, for sheltering Dawood Ibrahim's men has dramatically illustrated this.

The Shiv Sena-BJP Government's decision to wind up the Srikrishna Commission's enquiry into the Mumbai riots is a brazen step intended to cover up their complicity in the anti-minority violence. This is another instance of the BJP's willingness to trample upon the rights of the minorities.

Forge Third Alternative

The discrediting of both the Congress(I) and the BJP has created a situation favourable for the Left, democratic and secular forces to rally the people. The Polit Bureau underlined the urgency of sorting out the problems in constituting the third force. The Polit Bureau requested the Janata Dal president to immediately take the initiative to cement the alliance with the Samajwadi Party. The rally organised by the Samajwadi Party in Delhi shows that such an alliance will meet with good response from the people.

Vote on Account : A Propaganda Exercise

The Polit Bureau noted that the vote on account exercise presented by the Finance Minister in parliament is nothing but a propaganda exercise for the ruling party for the elections. The manipulation of statistics to present a rosy picture of the economy cannot cover up the sufferings of the people with ever-increasing

price rise, growing unemployment and the rapacious transfer of wealth to the rich at the expense of the poor. The failure to reduce the fiscal deficit and inability to increase Government revenues has led to growing indebtedness, and the interest burden of the Government for the year 1996-97 is going to be Rs.60,000 crore.

Foreign Policy: Succumbing to U.S. Pressures

The Narasimha Rao Government has eroded the independent foreign policy of the country. Its recent silence on the U.S. manoeuvres to condemn Cuba for defending its airspace and sovereignty shows the extent to which it defers to the USA's intimidating tactics. Similarly, the Rao Government is backtracking on India's principled support to the Saharwian people's struggle for self-determination. The Government has withheld approval for the appointment of the new ambassador of the Saharwī Arab Democratic Republic for the past one year. The policy of non-alignment and support to the national liberation struggles is now diluted under the pressure of U.S imperialism.

Purulia Arms Drop: Book The Guilty

The Polit Bureau noted that the CBI investigations have revealed that the Purulia arms dropping was organised by the Anand Marg. All the evidence points to a large-scale conspiracy by a network with international ramifications. It is essential that the CBI uncover the full scope of this subversion. Strict action will have to be taken against the Anand Margis involved in this serious step against the country's security. Those guilty of the security lapse must also be brought to book.

No Discrimination Against Tripura

The Polit Bureau heard a report about the situation in Tripura in the light of the stepped up extremist activities. The Polit Bureau expressed concern at the attitude of the Central Government which has not been assisting the State Government by additional deployment of adequate paramilitary forces and not providing the small sum of Rs. 3.55 crore requested by the State Government for the modernisation of the police force. It is imperative that the Central Government not act in a partisan manner to ensure that the unity of the tribal and non-tribal people to which the Left Front is committed is preserved and defended.

Election Preparations

The Polit Bureau heard reports from the West Bengal and Kerala state units about the political situation in these two states with regard to the assembly elections and the preparations for the election struggle. In West Bengal, the Party and the Left Front have geared up its mass mobilisation campaigns to meet the negative tactics of the Congress(I). The Left Front is fully confident of foiling the disinformation campaign of the Congress(I) and winning the mandate of the people once again. In Kerala, the UDF misrule and corruption have been effectively exposed by the Left Democratic Front. The LDF is poised to elicit a positive response from the people.

The Polit Bureau decided to continue holding a series of rallies, both independently and jointly with its allies, in the different states as part of its electoral mobilisation.

A meeting of the Left parties will be held soon to discuss ways for effective joint Left intervention in the elections.

Party's Election Manifesto

The Polit Bureau discussed the election manifesto of the party for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. The manifesto contains a strong critique of the Narasimha Rao Government's economic and other policies; it exposes the BJP's communal platform and its hypocritical claims to be a party different from the Congress, and sets out the necessity for a third alternative before the people. The manifesto will be finalised and released shortly.

Central Committee Greet Communist Party of U.S.A.*

On the occasion of the 26th convention of the Communist Party of USA the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its fraternal greetings.

This convention is being held in the background of a very complicated international situation. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the reverses and setback to socialism in the countries of East Europe, U.S. imperialism is hastening its efforts for global hegemony. The imperialist vision of a 'new world order' is being unfolded politically, militarily and economically. For the people of the developing world therefore, this means increased exploitation at the hands of the domestic ruling classes and by imperialism. In such a situation, therefore, the immediate task before the progressive and communist movement in the world is to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world.

In this context, it is very necessary to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation among the Communists and progressives the world over. As anticipated, the communist movement is regrouping and re-emerging as the most consistent fighter against exploitation.

The CPI(M) is confident that the Communist Party of USA with its glorious traditions of anti-imperialist struggles will continue to strengthen its contribution towards this struggle.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) once again conveys its revolutionary greetings to the 26th convention of the Communist Party of USA.

March 2, 1996

Central Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist)

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CPI(M)'s Election Manifesto-1996 For Eleventh Lok Sabha Elections*

Brothers and Sisters,

Once again all of us are in the midst of a very significant electoral battle.

These elections come at a time when our country and people face the deepest multi-dimensional crisis afflicting India since independence.

The gains made by the freedom struggle, the sacrifices of countless martyrs and the vision of an independent India wedded to the principles of democracy, secularism, self-reliance, social justice and federalism is today coming under severe strain.

The policies pursued by the Congress(I) Government under the IMF/World Bank dictates have led the country on a path that severely mortgage our economic sovereignty. During the last five years, the entire self-reliant basis of independent India is being systematically dismantled. The country is neck deep in foreign debt. The plight of the working people has worsened with relentless price rise, growing unemployment; poverty is increasing, the disparities between the rich and the poor further widened alarmingly. And in the process, the ruling politician-businessmen-bureaucrat nexus has been looting the country through unprecedented institutionalised corruption.

During the same period the unity and integrity of India has been continuously assaulted by the communal forces. The brazen destruction of the Babri Masjid represented the gravest attack on India's secular fabric. The communal holocaust that followed claimed thousands of lives sowing the seeds of insecurity deeper

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amongst the minority community. India's intricate social fabric—multi-religious, multi-linguistic, diverse cultural traditions and customs—woven together in the long years of common struggles and co-existence is being perilously threatened. The Congress(I) Government during the last five years instead of meeting this challenge squarely has adopted a policy of compromise towards these communal forces bolstering their activities.

The unity and integrity of our country is further threatened by the continued separatist activities both in Kashmir and in the North-East.

The threats to national security were demonstrated in the manner in which our country's borders were infringed and sophisticated weapons dropped on Indian territory in Purulia to fuel anti-national activities.

The federal democratic polity is coming under severe strain. The institutions of parliamentary democracy and Centre-State relations far from being strengthened have been further undermined. The economic policies have widened regional disparities. The youth of the country is being bombarded by degenerate culture through 'open-sky' media onslaught.

These years have also seen growing atrocities on Dalits. The consciousness of the oppressed castes against the injustice mounted on them over the years has grown. The struggle for social justice strengthened. At the same time, divisive caste appeals spread animosity and widen social divisions. The rights of the tribals continue to be encroached while their living conditions deteriorate.

These five years have seen a stark degeneration of moral values. There has been an alarming rise in the criminalisation of social life. Increasing cases of dacoity, unheard of atrocities against women and the girl child have characterised this period.

The unprecedented criminalisation of politics and institutionalised corruption is threatening the very basis of parliamentary democracy. The ruling Congress(I) is leading this degeneration ably assisted by the BJP.

Thus, in every sphere of our existence, the last five years have seen the country reach a sorry pass. The irony of the situation is that despite Indians matching the world's best of creative endeavours, despite some outstanding scientific advances, this

period has seen the miseries of the people mounting. This has not only been a period of missed opportunities to ameliorate the lot of the people, it has been a period when the livelihood and security of vast millions has sharply deteriorated. What is at stake today is the very existence of a modern India centered around a vision that emerged in the long arduous struggle for our independence. The choice that the people will exercise in the coming elections will determine the direction in which India will develop. The urgent need is to stop this rot. The alternative is to degenerate into a fratricidal internecine strife while the economic independence of our country itself is under threat. The urgent need is to uphold all those values that cement the unity and integrity of our country and put the country back on the rails of a vibrant self-reliant proud independent India.

It is with this sense of urgency that the CPI(M) appeals to our fellow-Indians to come forward to save India today to change India for the better tomorrow. Defeat those forces which have brought India to such a sorry pass, elect those whose patriotic credentials, whose commitment to secularism are above suspect. It is only the united Left democratic secular forces that can today meet the challenges of our times and carry India forward with its head held high to the twentyfirst century.

Congress(I) Rule

The last five years of the Congress(I) rule has been a period of chronic instability for the people of our country.

The economic policies of unbridled liberalisation has led to large-scale privatisation. Multinational corporations have gained entry into the core sectors of telecommunications, power, coal, steel, oil, etc. The public sector is being sold off. The financial sectors — banks, insurance, etc. is sought to be privatised. At the same time, the country's total debt has crossed Rs.6 lakh crore. The interest payment on this in the current year is over Rs.60,000 crores equivalent to our entire fiscal deficit in the current year. The net result has been the mortgaging of the economy and undermining its self-reliant basis.

These policies have meant a bonanza for the big business and misery for the mass of the people. Companies like ITC, Reliance,

Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra have seen an increase in their profits by over 300 per cent. At the opposite-end every aspect of a common man's existence has worsened.

The conditions in rural India, which houses two-thirds of our population has distinctly worsened. The real wages of agricultural workers have fallen. Their cost of living index has risen the sharpest. There are widespread reports of starvation deaths. The refusal to implement land reforms has kept the vast mass of peasantry in conditions of abject poverty. The growth of foodgrain production is just about keeping pace with the population growth. Coupled with the scuttling of the public distribution system, this implies a grave threat to food security for the most needy. The refusal to evolve a national water policy results in crores of rupees worth of property and precious lives being lost due to annual floods and drought. On top of this come the burdens of the new economic policy.

Price Rise: On the economic front, the Congress(I) had promised in 1991 election manifesto that within the first 100 days the prices of essential commodities will be rolled back to levels of July 1990. Daily experience has shown all of us that the results have been to the contrary. Rice costs double of what it cost in 1991; the prices of pulses (dal) have risen nearly twice and in some cases three times; edible oil has become more expensive. So has wheat, sugar, tea and even salt. During these five years, the Central Government resorted to unprecedented administrative price hikes. In fact, every single item that constitutes the daily consumption basket of millions of Indians is today much more expensive, nearly double of what it was five years ago.

Unemployment: The Congress(I) had promised that it will create 10 million new jobs per year. Instead, what is the situation today? In January 1995, 36,737,000 people were registered at the employment exchanges, an increase of 444,000 from January 1994. Over four lakh industrial units that employed lakhs of people are today either closed or sick. In fact, instead of increasing, employment even those who were employed earlier are on the streets. Additionally, the privatisation of the public sector is reducing the employment potential. The government's plans would

result in some 646,000 people who were employed in the public sector being eventually retrenched. According to the government itself 14 lakh public sector employees had already had to face the axe. Many schemes have been announced by the government with much fanfare. But they have miserably failed to provide any relief to the people. Of the allocation made only 14.3 per cent reaches the needy.

Education: The Congress(I) had promised expanding investment in primary and secondary education. Instead, in real terms, there has been a contraction of Central Government's expenditure. Privatisation and commercialisation of education have been highlights making both the access to and cost of education beyond the reach of the common man.

Health: The Congress(I) had promised an increase in allocation for public health to achieve Health for All by 2000. Instead there has been an actual decline in the per capita health expenditure from Rs.120 to Rs.116, on the public health system from Rs.103 to Rs.94 and on disease control programmes from Rs.103 to Rs.89 (between 89-90 and 92-93). The withdrawal of the government from its obligations in this sector resulted in skyrocketing of cost of health facilities with privatisation which is keeping the health requirements of the people beyond their reach. At the same time, the prices of medicines have shot up drastically, keeping them beyond the reach of those who need them most. This has resulted in a massive outbreak of diseases and the death of lakhs of people due to completely preventable and curable diseases like malaria and TB.

Poverty: It had promised the reduction of poverty. According to the Planning Commission's own figures, the number of people below the poverty line increased from 35.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 39.6 per cent in 1994-95.

Food Security: It had promised expansion of the public distribution system and its greater reach to feed the needy. Instead, what we see during these five years has been a sharp decline in the quantity bought by the people through the public distribution system.

This has been primarily due to the fact that the prices of rice have been doubled and that of wheat increased by 75 per cent in the ration shops during this period. The threat to food security is bound to aggravate in the coming years with the shift from foodgrain production to commercial crops as a result of the new agricultural policies.

Foreign Debt: It had promised to prevent India falling into a debt trap. During these years, India's foreign debt has risen to over Rs. 600,000 crore. In 1993-94, the indebtedness of the country increased by Rs. 244 crore every day or over 10 crore every hour. India today is the third largest debtor in the world.

It had promised to curb conspicuous consumption and tackle the menace of black money. On the contrary, these five years have seen the illegal and immoral enrichment of the ruling politician-businessman-bureaucrat nexus and maximum growth in corruption and black money.

Threats to Secularism: It is in this sphere that the Congress(I)'s betrayal to both India as a nation and people has been exposed.

It has promised that it will protect the Babri Masjid and firmly implement the status quo of all existing places of worship as of 15th August, 1947.

The despicable destruction of the Babri Masjid by the BJP/RSS/VHP combine and the continuously compromising positions taken by the Congress(I) leadership has contributed to worsening of the communal situation in our country. The Congress(I) had promised in its manifesto last time that all parties must "respect the order and verdict of the court".

Yet it allowed the demolition to take place. Subsequently, instead of clubbing all pending cases and bringing them before the Supreme Court for speedy disposal as suggested by the CPI(M), it deliberately stalled the issue even after the demolition and adopted the wrong method of a presidential reference on whether the mosque was built on any Hindu religious structure. The Supreme Court refused to rightly entertain such a reference. The net result is that till date there has been no solution. Thus, its abject

compromise with the communal forces led to the worsening of the situation where casualties in the communal riots during the last five years and the loss of property has been the highest in recent memory.

Kashmir: It had promised that a political solution to the problem. Despite the change in mood of the people in the valley who are getting increasingly alienated with the extremists, the last five years have seen the total absence of a political initiative to solve the problem.

Women: It had promised a better deal for women of India. Instead, what we have seen during the last five years has been a sharp rise in all forms of atrocities perpetuated against women. The brunt of the negative impact of the economic policies is being borne by working women.

Electoral Reforms: It had promised electoral reforms to curb both the excessive use of money and muscle power. It has singularly failed to bring forward any proposal during these last five years.

Foreign Policy: It had promised the strengthening of the non-aligned foreign policy of our country. The last five years have seen unashamed succumbing to pressures of U.S. imperialism in matters of defence including the beginning of hitherto unknown military pacts with the U.S.A. Its vacillation in the foreign policy have seen Indian troops acting under U.N./U.S. commands in various parts of the world violating the accepted Indian principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. In fact, at a time when the U.S imperialism is attempting to impose its New World Order, India's traditional anti-imperialist voice in international fora was missing. As one of the leaders of the NAM, India during these five years, miserably failed to discharge its anti-imperialist duties.

In short, on each and every promise that the Congress(I) had made to the people five years ago, the results have been quite opposite. As a consequence, the living conditions of the people have worsened, the country's unity and security further threatened and economic sovereignty and self-reliance further jeopardised.

Corruption—Order of the Day

These five years have seen totally unprecedented levels of institutionalised corruption. The hallmark of the Narasimha Rao regime has been the exponential growth of both the number of scams and the amount looted through them. No area was left untouched, no stone unturned to loot public assets by the criminal ruling party politician-businessman-bureaucrat nexus.

The Rao Government began its tenure by stalling the Bofors investigation that is not complete till date. Then came the bank scam, the disinvestment of public sector scam, the sugar scam, Bailadila mine deal, Enron deal, Railway-ABB deal, telecom scam and finally the hawala scam. For the first time since independence, as many as 15 ministers of the Rao cabinet were forced to resign under a cloud. There are many other scams as well—St. Kitts, Goldstar, etc. Chandraswami continues to be a free man due to political patronage. The very fact that the Rao Government that assumed office as a minority government turned itself into a majority by organising defections using its money power speaks volumes. Moral and material corruption has become the order of the day.

The Congress(I) party is now a political party with no internal democracy and plagued by internecine quarrels; it has turned itself into an organisation whose leadership is abandoning all commitment to the national cause.

Defeat Congress(I) —Defeat Hawala Government

The only answer to redeem the situation is to prevent the return of the Congress(I) to the helm of affairs. Defeat of the Congress (I) signifies the safeguarding of the vision of modern independent India that we shaped during the freedom struggle.

THE COMMUNAL DANGER

Never since the partition of the country, have the communal forces mounted such an offensive as has been witnessed during the last five years. Violating all assurances to the National Integration Council, Supreme Court and to the people, the BJP went ahead and organised the dastardly demolition of the Babri Masjid. This was followed by a period of worst social instability

with large-scale spread of communal riots, wanton killings and destruction of property. The BJP brazenly defended this action. In order to consolidate the communal forces, it struck an alliance with the rabid communal and chauvanist Shiv Sena in Maharashtra.

During these five years, the BJP sought to project itself as a responsible opposition claiming to be a party with a difference. On each of the planks, it has been exposed before the people. With great fanfare, it announced adherence to its policy of "Swadeshi" and even promised the electorate before the assembly elections in Maharashtra that it would cancel the dubious deal with Enron and, in fact, expel the MNC from the country. But as things have turned out, it has not only renegotiated with Enron but has, in fact, facilitated greater penetration of the multinational corporation in our power sector. On every other matter of importance, policy prescription, it has gone along with the Congress(I) in introducing this policy of unbridled liberalisation that is undermining the economic sovereignty of our country. Its State Governments pursue the same policies leading to the worsening of people's living conditions.

It had projected itself as a party with a different culture distinct from the self-seeking politicians and opportunistic elements that have gathered in the Congress(I). However, the whole exercise in Gujarat and the internal bickering in the Party in other states where it is in power have shown that its leadership is also replete with people of the same culture as that of the Congress(I) whose self-seeking opportunism precedes the interests of the country.

Similarly, with its highest leadership involved in the hawala scandal, it has shown itself as a party that is no different from the Congress(I) as far as looting the country is concerned.

With this track record, the communal forces in the recent period once again seek to mount an offensive spreading deeper the poison of hatred against the minorities in order to garner more votes. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has issued a blueprint for Hindu Rashtra while whipping up the campaign for the destruction of the mosques in Kashi and Mathura. The other outfits of the RSS are also active in organising various activities towards this end. Its State Government in Maharashtra has abolished the Minorities

Commission. It also wound up the Srikrishna Commission enquiring into the Bombay riots, brazenly patronising criminal communal elements.

Defeat BJP —Defeat Communal Forces

In the background of these developments and considering the fact that the BJP had emerged in the last elections as the major opposition in parliament and in power in four state legislatures, it still represents the most consolidated danger to the very unity and integrity of our country. It is out to destroy the very social fabric that composes India. It is, therefore, necessary that this communal challenge be squarely met with and that these forces be defeated in the coming elections.

Role of the CPI(M)

The consistent, principled and firm role of the CPI(M) and the Left in maintaining the unity of our country against all divisive and communal onslaughts is there before the people.

The CPI(M) has been in the forefront in the struggle against communalism. West Bengal and Kerala are like oasis of harmony in the otherwise desert of communal strife. The CPI(M) has been the staunchest defender of national unity. In Punjab alone, more than 200 CPI(M) members, the best of patriots in contemporary India, were martyred in the struggle against terrorism. In Kashmir and elsewhere, the CPI(M) has been in the forefront championing the unity of India in countering the separatist forces. It has earnestly defended the concept of social justice and the rights of the backward castes, Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes. During the last five years, the CPI(M) and the Left have been in the forefront in opposing the new economic policies that are bartering away the sovereignty of our country.

The CPI(M) initiated the strengthening of Left unity in the present situation. The Left alone, with its consistency and firmness, can meet the challenges before the people. During these years, this unity in people's struggles, whether on the question of the opposition to the GATT 1994, privatisation of public sector or the question of attacks on the rights of the working people, it is the Left-led mass organisations that have led the united resistance including four all India industrial strikes and big mass actions.

Role of CPI(M)-Led Left Front Governments

In stark contrast to the record of the Congress(I) and the BJP Governments has been that of the Left Front Government in West Bengal which for 19 long years has been in power with its mandate being renewed in every subsequent election. It has provided the most stable government independent India has ever seen and during this period, working people of West Bengal have achieved unprecedented gains. It has been the outpost of communal harmony and staunchest protector of the rights of the minorities. Its record in the implementation of land reforms, protection of the rights of the working people, decentralisation of power to the panchayats, consolidation of the panchayati raj structure and taking democracy to the grassroots have all been achievements unparalleled elsewhere during the last five years.

Tripura, under the Left Front rule, has emerged distinct from the rest of the North-East because of the role of the CPI(M) in maintaining the unity of the tribal and non-tribal people in Tripura, protecting the interests of the tribal community and safeguarding their rights.

If Kerala today has some of the best social development indicators in India like literacy, health, etc., it is because of the foundations laid by the Communist-led governments in the past. Of particular significance are the land reforms initiated and implemented by the Left. Whenever the CPI(M)-led governments were voted to office, they have left their mark through their policies and practice.

Elect CPI(M) Candidates

Above all, in the existing morass of corruption, criminalisation and moral degeneration, it is the CPI(M) and the Left that have emerged most credible. It is with the above record that the CPI(M) is appealing to the Indian people to rise to the occasion in these grave circumstances to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP.

Vote Left, Secular, Democratic Forces

The discontent amongst the people against Congress(I) policies is growing rapidly. On the other hand, this growing discontent is being sought to be exploited by the communal forces for their political gains.

The people of our country, however, have voted, as in the last round of assembly elections, against the Congress(I) and BJP wherever the Left, democratic and secular forces presented an alternative.

In this background, it becomes imperative for every patriot to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and in their place elect Left, secular, democratic candidates to the 11th Lok Sabha so that India can be saved today in order to change it for the better tomorrow.

ELECTION PROGRAMME

Taking into account the multi-dimensional crisis that is afflicting the country and the people, the CPI(M) places before the electorate the following programme of demands as a part of its election platform. The electoral platform must be a part of the wider political struggle to achieve these demands which will strengthen democracy, secularism, national unity, strive for economic and social justice for the toiling people and to eradicate the curse of corruption.

Economy

1. Safeguard the country's economic sovereignty and strengthen its self-reliance; reverse the policies of unbridled liberalisation which undermine our sovereignty.
2. Stop privatisation of public sector; revise telecom, power policies, stop privatisation of financial sector; streamline public sector enterprises, provide them autonomy from bureaucratic controls and ensure workers' participation in management.
3. Curb price rise and ensure food security by expanding the public distribution system bringing into its ambit 14 essential commodities and reduce prices by 50 per cent; reduce issue price of foodgrains.
4. Reverse the present industrial policy; new policy to strengthen indigenous industry and domestic capacities; end to preferential treatment to foreign investors, entry of foreign capital to be decided on national priorities and technology needs.
5. No amendment of the Indian Patent Act of 1970 which will erode India's sovereign right to develop domestic R&D.

Rights of the Working People

6. Ensuring need-based minimum wages for workers, protective legislation for unorganised workers; protection of labour from severe exploitation; protection of employment and emoluments and inflation-linked increase in wages; report of the Fifth Pay Commission for Government employees to be expedited and implemented.
7. Recognition of Trade Unions through secret ballot.
8. Granting of pension to working people as a third benefit, one-rank-one-pension for ex-servicemen; upgrading pensions of all categories of pensioners in consonance with the cost of living; protection of the rights of handicapped employees.
9. Handloom Weavers: Yarn to be provided at control rate for weavers and provide adequate infrastructure for the marketing of their goods.

Improving Living Conditions

10. Guarantee right to work as a fundamental right, release accumulated food stocks to start food-for-work programmes to generate employment.
11. Increase allocation for basic health and sanitation. Stop privatisation of health facilities; ensure provision of drinking water to all villages and for the control of preventable diseases.
12. Increase allocation on education and mass literacy. Stop privatisation and commercialisation of education, the allocation must be at least 10 per cent of the national budget and 30 per cent of the state budgets; free and compulsory education must be guaranteed by law for all children up to the age of 14 years; syllabus and curriculum to strengthen scientific temper, secularism, national unity and integrity.
13. Housing to be accorded the status of basic right; housing schemes for urban and rural poor to be implemented as an urgent priority.
14. A proper water resource policy to prevent the annual scourge of floods and droughts; immediate and adequate relief for those affected by these.

Agrarian Sector

15. Implementation of land reforms by plugging loopholes in the law and distribution of land; reversal of laws brought in due to the new economic policies diluting the land reform provisions; creation of authentic land reform records; security of tenure for tenants; provision of homestead land for rural poor.
16. Greater plan allocation for spread of irrigation; proper schemes for crop insurance.
17. Central legislation protecting the rights of agricultural workers, their wages, living conditions and social benefits.
18. Proper facilities for assistance to producers of traditional crops and protection of markets and sources of raw material.
19. Expansion of credit facilities for the poor peasantry and agricultural labour.
20. Fishermen: No licences for deep sea fishing to foreign companies and joint ventures. Protect rights of fishing people.

Social Justice

21. Prevention of atrocities against scheduled castes; end to discrimination and strict implementation of laws guaranteeing equality.
22. Prevention of atrocities against tribals; protection of land, culture and language of tribal people; granting of autonomy for compact contiguous tribal majority areas within the framework of the existing states.
23. Implementation of reservations for scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and backward classes. Within reservation for OBC's implement creamy layer principle so that needy sections are benefited most. If vacancies exist after application of creamy layer criteria then they should be filled up by candidates from within the same communities. Reservation to be extended to Christians from converted scheduled castes.

Women

24. Protection of the rights of women, stringent measures against atrocities and crimes against women,

- implementation of legal and democratic rights guaranteed in the Constitution; increasing opportunities for employment and ensuring no discrimination in the pay, recruitment and promotion; equal rights in property and land for women; issuing of joint *pattas* for ownership.
25. Equal legal rights for women of all communities; joint matrimonial property rights; registration of marriage to be made compulsory.
 26. One-third of the seats in legislatures and parliament be reserved for women.
 27. Children: Suitable legislation to prevent sexual abuse of children; abolition of child labour; adequate child-care facilities at work place.

Strengthen Secularism

28. Immediate legislation separating religion from politics.
29. Transfer of all cases connected with the Ayodhya dispute to the Supreme Court under Article 138(2) for a speedy verdict which will be binding on all sides.
30. Strict implementation of the status quo of religious places as of 15th August, 1947.
31. Protection of just rights of the minorities; implement the provisions of the Constitution to prevent discrimination, strengthening security of the life and property of the minorities; backwards amongst the minorities be given OBC reservations; protection of Urdu language.

Strengthen Parliamentary Democracy

32. Immediately set in motion the process of bringing forward a legislation for comprehensive electoral reforms to ensure the elimination of money and muscle power from elections on the basis of the Dinesh Goswami Committee's report; amend Sec.77 of the Representation of People's Act to plug loopholes in enforcing ceiling on election expenditure of candidates.
33. To check corruption, the immediate setting up of Lok Pal bringing in its purview the Prime Minister to be appointed by an authority constituting representatives of the executive, legislature and judiciary; streamline functioning

of investigation agencies, protect them from political interference; ensure speedy disposal and appropriate action.

34. Strict action against all manifestations of criminalisation of politics.
35. Proportional representation in the electoral system.
36. Reforms in judicial system to provide easy and speedy relief to the common people.

Federalism and Decentralisation

37. Restructuring Centre-State relations with more powers to the states; legislative measures to ensure balanced economic development to overcome regional imbalances.
38. Devolution of finances to the states ending overcentralisation of resources at the Centre.
39. Protection of the Rajya Sabha as the "Council of States" to defend the federal structure of our Constitution; its members must belong to the states they are elected from.
40. Decentralisation of democracy to the grassroots; proper devolution of power to the panchayats; strengthen panchayat raj institutions; financial assistance to panchayats to flow through State Governments.

Defend National Unity

41. Immediate announcement of political solution for the Kashmir problem which must include defence of Article 370 and a review of the erosion which has taken place since 1953 by the elected state assembly; granting maximum autonomy within the framework of the Indian Constitution; compensation and adequate measures for those displaced from the state and a comprehensive economic package for development, generating employment opportunities.

Foreign Policy

42. Defence of the non-aligned foreign policy; world peace and spirit of national independence; firm resistance against U.S. imperialist attempts to impose its New World Order; strengthen international anti-imperialist solidarity;

strengthen South-South cooperation; rebuff imperialist efforts to subvert our independent development and resistance to its attempts to impose its NPT and CTBT cancellation of the military cooperation pact with USA

Culture and Media

43. State support for expansion of cultural facilities, encouragement of activities aimed to take democratic culture to the mass of the people.
44. - Implement autonomy for the official electronic media updating the Prasar Bharati Act provisions; legislation to prevent growth of monopolies in print and electronic media which is inherently undemocratic; no foreign ownership of print media; ensure states have say in media policy and control on Doordarshan and AIR.

Science

45. Science and technology policy which encourages creative work, scientific temper and strengthens the self-reliant basis of India's development.

Environment

46. An environment policy which is integrated with the needs of rapid and sustainable economic development; stringent action against contractors illegally cutting down forests, strict pollution control against industries using hazardous technology which affect health of workers, the neighbourhood; provision of adequate rehabilitation package for persons displaced by development projects, particularly for *adivasis* who are most affected.

It is on the basis of such a programme that the CPI(M) appeals to the Indian people to defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP and vote for the Left, democratic and secular candidates in the coming elections.

The dangers being faced by the country today demand of every patriotic citizen a response that they owe both to the motherland and to themselves. The CPI(M) with its decades-long record of consistent and selfless commitment to defend our country's unity and integrity and to advance people's welfare has, during these

last five years, been in the forefront of people's struggles facing all the grave challenges. Its increased representation in the parliament, strengthening of the Left in parliament and the combination of the Left, democratic and secular forces alone can today further the struggle to face the challenge of safeguarding our country and championing the people's interests.

The Indian people have, at all crucial moments, shown a high degree of patriotism and strong sense of secular unity in rejecting those who betray the country's interests and the people's unity. The betrayers must be rejected in totality. This opportunity must be fully utilised and the CPI(M) calls upon the electorate to come forward in unprecedented numbers to ensure the defence of a democratic, secular, federal, modern India in order to take it on a path of prosperity, unity and integrity.

CBI Shielding Rao*

Statement Dated March 26, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The CBI's attempt to minimise the role of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in the St. Kitts forgery case is nothing but a blatant attempt to cover up his serious misdemeanour. The CBI has deposed before the Supreme Court that the role of Mr Rao, the then Minister for External Affairs, was "limited only to the extent of his asking the Consul General for consular attestation of the said documents" The CBI cannot deny that these were forged documents to falsely implicate the son of Shri V.P. Singh by a criminal conspiracy One of the main conspirators in this was none other than Chandraswami The CBI investigation has shown that, during this period, Mr. Narasimha Rao was in close contact with Chandraswami in New York who was staying at Khashogi's apartment. It is amazing that contrary to the CBI's own investigation report which shows Mr Rao's full complicity in the fabrication of the documents, the CBI has sought to let him off the hook.

It will be in the interests of justice that all the investigation material with the CBI is submitted to the Supreme Court for its scrutiny and considered judgement on how to proceed with the case.

This becomes all the more necessary in the light of the two-member Bench of the Supreme Court expressing its dissatisfaction at the way the case against Chandraswami was being investigated The court has indicated that, as in the hawala case, it may have to monitor the investigation directly. Both these cases are a strong and damning indictment of the Prime Minister. He has spared no

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 31, 1996 'CBI means 'Central Bureau of Investigation' of the Union Government of India

effort to protect the notorious godman who has indulged in all sorts of criminal activities. At no time has a Prime Minister been so lowered in the eyes of the people of the country. The only course open to Mr. Rao now is to resign from the Prime Ministership. His refusal to do so will be judged severely by the people in the forthcoming elections.

CPI(M) Demands Probe into Delhi Explosion*

**Statement Dated April 21, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The CPI(M) expresses its deep shock at the explosion at a hotel in New Delhi which has led to the total destruction of the building. The blast has already claimed the lives of 15 persons, including foreign tourists, and many more are feared dead and badly injured. The explosion which took place in the heart of the capital indicates that explosives were utilised in a premeditated plan to strike terror.

The Polit Bureau urges upon the Central Government and the investigating agencies to take prompt steps to uncover the conspiracy and to track down the culprits. Such an incident occurring on the eve of the elections is ominous.

The Polit Bureau conveys its heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed in the blast. It calls for effective medical treatment for all the injured persons.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 28, 1996

CPI(M) Cassettes Banned in Kerala: High-Handed Order Must be Withdrawn*

**Statement Dated April 23, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

In an arbitrary and unfounded action the district collectors of Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts in Kerala have prohibited the showing of a video cassette prepared by the CPI(M) entitled *Vicharana*. The district authorities have declared that the visual scenes of the Babri Masjid and the Bombay riots in the cassette will promote enmity between classes during elections and demanded the expunging of the relevant portions. They have also threatened prosecution if the cassette is shown as it is.

The CPI(M) video cassette used in the Kerala campaign depicts the Babri Masjid and the Bombay riots in the context of the menace of communalism in the country and the necessity to fight it. To portray the film which is against communalism as one promoting communalism is a total distortion of the cassette's and our Party's stand. The CPI(M) strongly objects to the high-handed bureaucratic action taken by the district authorities concerned. It demands the immediate cancellation of the order prohibiting the screening of the video cassette. The CPI(M) has taken up the matter with the Election Commission requesting it to intervene to see that election propaganda which sets out the basic position of the Party against communalism is in no way curbed.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 28, 1996.

CPI(M) Demands Repoll in 18 Silchar Booths*

**Statement Dated April 27, 1996 Issued
by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The CPI(M) has approached the Election Commission demanding repoll in 18 polling booths in the Silchar Assembly segment of the Silchar parliamentary constituency. Large-scale booth-capturing by Congress(I) workers and anti-social elements took place in this assembly segment after 12 noon. Vehicles without permits were moving for these rigging activities. In Silchar parliamentary constituency, the CPI(M) candidate Noorul Huda is contesting against the Congress(I) candidate and Union Minister, Santosh Mohan Dev.

The CPI(M) has demanded repolling in all the affected booths and apprehension of the culprits responsible.

Earlier, the Polit Bureau on April 26, urged the Election Commission to put an end to the electoral malpractices being indulged in by the Congress (I) candidate and Union Minister, Santosh Mohan Dev, in Silchar parliamentary constituency in Assam. The CPI(M) candidate contesting in Silchar, Noorul Huda has made a series of complaints to the Commission about the efforts of Santosh Mohan Dev to vitiate the poll. There were apprehensions of large-scale intimidation and booth-capturing. Instances of money and clothes being distributed have been cited. In one example cited, envelopes containing Rs. 200 in the name of the District Sports Association were being distributed to unemployed youth.

The record of Santosh Mohan Dev in utilising all methods to illegally influence the polls is well-known both in his earlier stint in Tripura and in Silchar. The covert use of money power and the

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 5, 1996.

CPI(M) Demands Repoll in 18 Silchar Booths 711

overt intimidatory acts indulged in by the Union Minister must be checked in order to ensure a free and fair poll in Silchar.

The Election Commission ordered repolling in same booths, according to latest reports.

Polit Bureau Congratulates People of Kerala*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) has congratulated the people of Kerala for giving a decisive victory to the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the assembly elections held in the state.

In a reaction to the results, the Polit Bureau said, "The people of Kerala have voted for the alternative policies proposed by the LDF. The disastrous policies of the UDF in the last five years have ruined both agriculture and industry in the state. As a result of its policies, Kerala is facing an acute power crisis, its public distribution system is in shambles, the powers of the panchayat raj institutions eroded and there is rampant corruption in administration."

The Polit Bureau added, "In keeping with the election promises, the LDF will pursue policies to revive agriculture and industry, solve the power crisis, give more powers to local body institutions and cooperatives to ensure rise in production and productivity and provide an honest and pro-people administration in Kerala."

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 12, 1996.

Polit Bureau Demands Countermanding of Purnea Elections*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has demanded the countermanding of the election in Purnea Lok Sabha Constituency of Bihar. Since the beginning of the polling on May 7, reports have reached of large-scale booth-capturing and rigging by Shri Rajesh Ranjan Yadav, alias Pappu Yadav, a person with a known criminal record. By 12 noon, over 200 booths were completely captured by the armed gangsters of Rajesh Ranjan and the ordinary voters were being terrorised and forced to return from the polling booths. The collusion with the local authorities is also obvious.

It may be recalled that in the 1991 general elections as well, the election was countermanded due to similar incidents. By-elections were finally held in 1995 along with the state assembly polls.

Given this widespread reports of large-scale disruption of the polling process, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau has urged the Election Commission to immediately announce the countermanding of the elections in Purnea Lok Sabha Constituency. Fresh elections may be held with proper security arrangements to ensure free and fair polls.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 12, 1996.

On Decision of The President of India*

**Statement Dated May 15, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

It is unfortunate that the President has invited the BJP leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to form the government, ignoring the claim of Mr. Deve Gowda. It is surprising that the leader of a party who could muster a strength of less than 200 members of the new Lok Sabha has been called to form the government. The leader of the secular, democratic and Left parties combination who has also got the support of the Congress(I) has mustered the support of over 318 members. The decision of the President will only provide the BJP an opportunity to indulge in unprincipled policies of defections and horse-trading. The CPI(M) calls upon all the democratic and secular forces to stand unitedly to defeat the BJP.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 19, 1996.

CPI(M)'s Central Committee on Joining The Government

**Statement Dated May 14, 1996 Issued by
The Central Committee Following its Urgent
Meeting Held in New Delhi on May 13-14, 1996**

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) approved of the efforts of the Polit Bureau to prevent the BJP from coming to power and to instal a non-BJP government.

The Central Committee wants the formation of a non-Congress(I) secular government. The CPI(M) will make all efforts to create such a government by rallying all the secular and democratic forces. In doing so, the CPI(M) will extend all support to such a government from outside.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) met again today (May 14) to consider the appeal of the Left, democratic and secular allies for reconsidering its earlier decision.

Appreciating the spirit of the appeal, the Central Committee gave it serious consideration. The Central Committee while maintaining its earlier decision, assured all the parties concerned and the people that the CPI(M) will make its full contribution to all efforts to keep the BJP out of power.

Polit Bureau on Post-Election Situation*

**Released as Polit Bureau Circular No. 6/96
Dated June 9, 1996 to State Committees of CPI(M)
for Reporting to Lower Units of The Party**

A meeting of the Polit Bureau and Central Committee of the CPI(M) was held between 11th and 14th May 1996 immediately after the election results of the 11th Lok Sabha were announced. The meeting had to take stock of the post-election situation. In a situation where no party had a majority, the Party had to decide how to intervene so that a government of the third alternative is formed. The detailed review of the election results will be conducted by the Central Committee in its meeting.

Keeping in view the general elections, the Political Resolution of the 15th Congress(I) of the Party had directed that "The CPI(M) and the Left must try for an understanding with the secular opposition forces to present an effective electoral alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The Left alone cannot, in the present situation, defeat both these forces. The secular opposition parties have, though constrained by the absence of a coherent programme, an important role in projecting the immediate electoral alternative". It is on the basis of this understanding that the Central Committee of the Party worked out the line of mobilising all the Left, democratic and opposition secular forces for forging a wider unity to present an effective third alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP.

The Party worked out its concrete electoral tactics based on the above understanding. In the months preceding the elections, the situation was such that the Janata Dal-National Front was in disarray. Despite this, in the Assembly elections, the Congress(I) was defeated and the possibility of the third force comprising the NF-Left and other allies emerged. However, these efforts received a set-back with the split in the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh.

We had to work out tactics to forge a wider unity of the democratic and secular forces in these conditions. After prolonged efforts, the Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party came to an understanding in Uttar Pradesh. This was an important step in view of the vital role of the state in the fight against the BJP. We were also successful in forging an understanding with the AGP in Assam. We also worked out correct tactics in relations to the complex situation arising in Andhra Pradesh due to the split in the TDP by allying with the Chandrababu Naidu wing and appealing for unity against the Congress(I).

Our tactics helped in overcoming some of these problems which arose in the process of forging wider unity. Though not fully, we were successful in drawing together a number of forces and to mount a strong electoral campaign exposing the economic policies of the Congress(I) and its misrule and the communal threat posed by the BJP.

The election results have vindicated our line of struggle against the Congress(I) policies and working for the ouster of the Narasimha Rao Government. The Congress(I) has suffered its worst ever defeat in Parliamentary history with its strength in the Lok Sabha reduced to 136. The defeat of the Congress(I) represents a rejection of the policies pursued by the Congress(I) Government, particularly its economic policies, its compromise with the communal forces and high level corruption.

Such a comprehensive defeat of the Congress(I) should have paved the way for the advance of the Left, democratic and secular forces. However, the reactionary BJP with its communal platform gained the most. It emerged as the largest single party with 160 seats and along with its allies has a strength of 194.

The emergence of the BJP as the largest single party, allowing it to stake its claim to form the government, created a new situation. The threat of the communal forces coming to power at the Centre became real given the fact that the BJP is based on the RSS, its control of the Central Government would have meant the penetration of the organised communal forces into the various instruments of state power. It would have created a dangerous situation for the country and the Left and democratic movement.

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee considered the task of keeping the BJP out of power as the immediate priority task. How to ensure the formation of a non-BJP, non-Congress(I) Government in such a situation, keeping the electoral verdict in view, was the main question before us.

The combination representing the third force which comprised the Left Parties, the Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party could not win as many seats as we expected. Its total strength came to 113. The TDP which was allied with the Left in Andhra Pradesh won 16 seats and the AGP in Assam won 5 seats. It was this third block which had to be the core for a wider formation which could stake its claim to form the Government.

We had to ward off the threat of the BJP coming to power and help the formation of a non-Congress(I) Government. For this the Polit Bureau and Central Committee decided that in the present situation it was necessary to rally all the other non-BJP, non-Congress(I) forces and groups which were not allied with our combination before the elections. In order to create a viable combination which could stake claim to form the Government, it was necessary to draw in some important groups such as the DMK and the TMC in Tamil Nadu with which we had no cooperation during the elections. In Tamil Nadu, we had to demarcate from the DMK because of its soft attitude to the Congress(I). However, during the elections they had to fight the Congress(I) when Narasimha Rao decided to ally with Jayalalitha. There were others like the Congress(T) and smaller groups which had fought the Congress(I) and had not allied with the BJP during the elections. Our Party actively worked for the formation of a wider combination including all these groups.

However, the election results had created a complex situation where no non-BJP Government could be formed without the support of the Congress(I) which had 136 members. Our Party decided that there should be no coalition Government with the Congress(I) which would go against the decisive verdict of the people against the Rao Government.

It was in the context of the formation of a wider combination to form the Government that the question of our participation and leadership in such a Government arose. The parties in the alliance,

after the refusal of V.P. Singh to head the Government, were of the opinion that the most acceptable choice would be Comrade Jyoti Basu to lead the Government.

After discussions in the Polit Bureau and Central Committee it was decided that we should not participate in the Government. The Party has all along taken a consistent stand that it would join a Government only if it were in a position to shape policies of the Government and implement it. The Party has only 33 members in the Lok Sabha. The strength of the Party inside the Parliament and outside in the present situation was not such that we would be able to shape policies or have the strength outside to translate policy into action. We had to keep the basic position of the Party and the existing correlation of forces in mind in deciding the matter. The Central Committee felt that supporting the government from outside would place us in a better position to influence policies while at the same time maintaining our freedom for independent positions and activities.

Earlier in 1989 too, our Party had supported the V.P. Singh Government from outside and played our role in maintaining the government. Our support from outside now also would help maintain the new government and foil the BJP's plans.

Further, in the wider combination formed for the purpose of forming the government the dominant section would belong to the bourgeois parties. We must understand that till the Party and the Left become a strong independent force, while cooperating with the secular opposition forces we must also be aware of the limitation of these formations. The Party Congress resolution while stressing the necessity of allying with the secular bourgeois parties had also stated that "But in doing so it should be clear that their opposition to the economic policies is not on the same plan as ours.... Therefore while uniting with them and appealing to their mass base, to enable the rallying of wider forces we have to demarcate ourselves from them on basic policies whenever it is necessary". The composition of the present combination would place severe restrictions on our Party's capacity to implement alternative policies especially when it would be a minority government dependent on the support of the Congress(I) from outside.

Taking the country as a whole, the Party and the Left has limited strength and mass base which is confined to a few states. To be able to project the government's policies and to translate them will require the Party's active intervention and mass base. In large parts of the country even the minimal infrastructure to reach out to the people to explain our role and participation in the Government would not be possible.

If we are not able in such a combination whose main common point is to keep the BJP out, to be able to put in place certain alternative policies particularly in the economic sphere, it could have an adverse effect on the working people whose support we depend on. Given the economic crisis and the burdens being imposed by the process of liberalisation, the living conditions of the working people are badly affected. If our position gets compromised by being in government and we are unable to counteract the policies in favour of the big bourgeoisie and international finance capital, then our capacity to fight the BJP which would be active among the people, would get compromised. It is the Party and the Left which outside Parliament has played a consistent role in combating the communal forces. This capacity, if it gets weakened, would only help the BJP in the coming days to emerge as the champion of the popular discontent.

Given the impact of liberalisation and the degeneration which has set into the state apparatus, corruption has become institutionalised. Our capacity to check corruption being in government will also be very limited. This will damage our prestige.

These are some of the major considerations behind the CC's decision not to participate in the Government. As there was a difference of views on this issue, the matter was decided by a majority decision. At the same time the CC decided that every effort should be made to foil the BJP's attempt to be in government. We should play an active role in mobilising all the forces for the formation of a wider combination which would be in a position to form the government by eliciting the support of the Congress(I) from outside.

Developments Subsequent to Central Committee Meeting

It was at this juncture that the President decided to call upon A.B. Vajpayee to form the government going by the criteria of calling the largest single party and ignoring the claim of the secular combination which had the support of more than 300 members with the Congress(I) from outside.

In order to foil the BJP's bid to remain in Government, we worked actively, along with our allies, to form the wider combination now known as the United Front. It is this combination which elected Deve Gowda as its leader. After the failure of the BJP to win the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha and being exposed as thoroughly isolated in the national political scene, the President had to call Deve Gowda to form the government.

Our Party has played an active and consistent role in the formation of the United Front, to cement the alliance and for the formulation of a common programme for the government. A Steering Committee was formed with representatives of all the 14 parties and groups. After discussions, a common minimum programme has been formulated as the framework for the United Front Government's functioning. The U.F. Government's common minimum programme has a number of positive points while on some basic questions of economic policy it does not reflect our views. This United Front is unlike the normal united fronts in which parties come together for joint struggles and movements based on a common set of demands or a programme. The present United Front has emerged out of the efforts of the Left, secular and democratic parties represented in Parliament to keep the BJP out of office. It is in the interest of the Left and democratic movement that such a government stay in office, implement policies which help strengthen secularism, restructure Centre-State relations and go towards a federal system and provide immediate relief to the people. This will meet the expectations of the people who voted out the Congress(I) and who do not want the communal forces to capture power.

Our Party by supporting such a government from outside, will play a constructive role in strengthening the government while at the same time the Party will maintain its independent position to support or demarcate on specific issues and policies. The Party will defend

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the interests of different sections of the people whenever necessary. The Party and the mass organisations must raise the urgent demands of the people and highlight the issues to be taken up by the government. They must unite the broadest sections of the people around these demands and activise mass movements.

On The Bomb Blast in The Lajpatnagar Market in New Delhi on May 21, 1996*

**Statement Dated May 21, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its shock and outrage at the bomb blast in the Lajpatnagar Market in New Delhi yesterday. The barbarous attack has left a number of people killed and many injured. Those who have perpetrated such mindless violence should be clear that such terroristic methods can never succeed in accomplishing their aims. The Central authorities should immediately take suitable measures to uncover the network infiltrating sophisticated arms and explosives into the country and track down those guilty for the bomb blast.

The families of those killed and maimed in the attack have suffered an irreparable loss. The Polit Bureau conveys its grief and heartfelt condolences to all the families which have suffered in the explosion.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 26, 1996.

Enron Exposes BJP's Double Facedness*

Statement Dated May 28, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

Facing certain defeat in the vote of confidence being discussed before the Lok Sabha, the Vajpayee Government which has no authority to take any decision yesterday held a hurried cabinet meeting to approve the Central Government's counter-guarantee to the Enron power project, violating all rules. Such a step was all the more shameless as the cabinet meeting was held during the lunch break while the debate on the confidence motion was going on and it was clear that the BJP Government would be voted out.

The secrecy and the urgency with which this decision was taken defying all norms and decency shows the tentacles of the U.S. multinational. No other exposure is necessary for the double facedness of the BJP when it talks about *swadeshi*. This blatantly illegal and unethical step has exposed the BJP and its short-lived ministry acting at the dictates of the American multinational.

The counter-guarantee extended to the Enron power project by this illegitimate action cannot be honoured by the new government.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 2, 1996.

On Mischievous Press Reports Attacking CPI(M)*

**Statement Dated May 27, 1996 Issued by
The General Secretary of The CPI(M) to Press**

Today's newspapers, particularly *The Hindustan Times* and *The Pioneer* carry mischievous news items attacking the CPI(M) for its so-called attempt to dictate terms to the United Front. It is well-known that the CPI(M) has played an important role in the formation of the United Front so that the BJP Government which has been installed, despite it not being capable of mustering majority, is brought down and the United Front Government is installed in office. The contribution of the CPI(M) in this effort is appreciated by all the components of the United Front. It seems that those who are interested in either maintaining the BJP in power or in weakening the Left are spreading various rumours and false stories about the so-called intervention of the CPI(M).

The CPI(M) treats all components of the United Front as equals.

No debate has as yet taken place about the composition of the ministry and therefore, the question of the CPI(M) dictating anything in this respect to anybody does not arise. This issue will be taken up only after the BJP Government is voted out and the President invites the United Front to form a government.

The CPI(M) wants to make it clear that in spite of these disruptive and motivated efforts by the vested interests, we will continue to make our humble contribution to the installation of the United Front Government and defeat those forces which threaten national unity and are knocking at the secular basis of the Indian Republic. All those who have been named in these news stories are important personalities who have been making their contribution towards the strengthening of the United Front.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 2, 1996

CPI(M) Greets 15th Congress of The Communist Party of Greece*

On May 22, 1996, CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, sent the following message of greetings to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Greece:

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I extend warm fraternal greetings to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Greece and to all Greek Communists. We had very much wished to be present with you on this occasion to reaffirm the internationalist bonds of solidarity. However, the compelling domestic circumstances, following the general elections in India, prevented us from utilising this opportunity. We hope you will appreciate the circumstances in which we are in the country.

Comrades, your Congress is meeting in the background of a complex international situation. Notwithstanding the renewed imperialist economic and political offensive following the setbacks to the forces of world socialism, the recent period has seen a resurgence of the struggles of the working people in the regrouping of the Communists in many countries. Of course, the developments, particularly in former socialist countries, the defeat of the reactionary forces and the victory of former Communists, reaffirms the fact that the struggle of the working people for an exploitation-free society is once again gathering momentum under changed circumstances.

We are confident that the deliberations of your Congress will strengthen the bonds of the Greek Communists with their working people. We are also confident that these deliberations

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 2, 1996

will strengthen the bonds of international solidarity which more than ever before in recent past needs to be consolidated to advance the struggle of the people of the world for peace, democracy and Socialism.

Once again the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) conveys its warm greetings.

Earlier, on May 20, 1996, Surjeet had sent a separate message to the International Relations Section of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Greece.

Dear Comrade Maria Zacharioudakis,

We are indeed very sorry that the political situation in India does not permit us to send our representative to your 15th Congress. Comrade Sitaram Yechury, member of our Polit Bureau had been deputed to attend your Congress and all formalities including procurement of air-tickets had been completed.

Unfortunately, despite our earnest desire to participate in the Congress of the Communist Party of Greece, the fluid political situation in our country imposes restrictions on us. You are aware that in the just concluded elections to the Indian Parliament no party or combination has been able to secure a majority, with the right-wing BJP coming out as the single-largest party. As this party will fail to win the vote of confidence, the other front of secular and democratic parties, in the formation of which the CPI(M) has played a crucial role, will be called to form a government.

Owing to the above circumstances, we once again deeply regret the inability to send a representative to your Congress. Nevertheless, we shall be sending a message of greetings to the Congress, shortly.

Welcome Response*

**Statement Dated June 5, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) welcomes the Indian Government's response to the offer of unconditional talks by the Pakistan Premier, Ms. Benazir Bhutto.

The CPI(M) hopes that the Indian Government will seize this opportunity to resume bilateral talks and in right earnest try to improve neighbourly relations with Pakistan.

CPI(M) on Recent Developments*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi on May 31, 1996. It issued the following statement on June 1, 1996:

The Polit Bureau reviewed the political developments which have taken place after the Central Committee meeting of the Party held on May 13-14.

The Polit Bureau expressed its deep satisfaction at the successful struggle to defeat the BJP which abjectly failed in its bid to win the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha. The 13-day Vajpayee Government was exposed for what it was an aberration which did not reflect the verdict of the elections. The Lok Sabha proceedings illustrated the lack of a popular mandate for the BJP which polled less than a quarter of the votes. The debate on the confidence motion showed widespread awareness of the danger that a communal government would have posed to the country's unity. The Polit Bureau congratulated all the secular forces which stood united in exposing the double-faced character of the BJP which sought to don a mask of reasonableness while adhering to the communal platform specified in its election manifesto.

Having been foiled in their game-plan to capture power, the BJP is now threatening to rouse divisive passion. The CPI(M) calls upon all the democratic and secular forces to be vigilant against such moves by the BJP and its allied outfits.

Simultaneously, with the struggle to dislodge the illegitimate BJP Government, the efforts of the democratic and secular forces should be intensified to provide an alternative

government also progressed. The CPI(M), in line with the Central Committee's direction to make every effort to form a non-Congress(I) secular government, has contributed to the formation of the United Front. This new combination represents the popular forces which have won the people's confidence in different parts of the country.

The swearing-in of the Deve Gowda Government will mark a new chapter in the Indian political scene. There is a greater recognition of the necessity of a coalition government which is based on genuine federalism. The parties which are running State Governments recognise that strong states are required for a strong Centre. The people expect the Deve Gowda Government to firmly defend secular values underlying our polity and society, provide immediate relief to the people and advance the goals of social justice and rearrange Centre-State relations for a more federal system. The Common Minimum Programme for the United Front Government being formulated should help the Deve Gowda Government in moving towards meeting the aspirations of the people.

The Deve Gowda Government is assuming office in a complicated situation. Its performance will be important for strengthening the foundations of secularism and democracy in the country. The BJP and the communal forces which have threatened to undermine these principles, can be checkmated and isolated if the people are mobilised constantly by the united efforts of the Left, democratic and secular forces. Secular public opinion expects the Congress(I) to act in such a manner as to facilitate the smooth functioning of the Deve Gowda ministry.

The CPI(M), while taking active part in the functioning of the United Front, will carry on multifarious activities among the people so that the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces is strengthened and the basic interests of all sections of the working people defended.

On Urea Scam*

**Statement Dated June 9, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The CBI is investigating the Rs. 133-crore urea import scandal which involves payment of kickbacks to influential persons. It is reported that the investigations have shown the involvement of the sons of former Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, and former Union Minister, Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav.

The people of the country expect the new Central Government and the CBI to pursue all cases of high-level corruption with vigour and promptness. The urea import case involves the swindling of public funds. There should be no let-up in the investigation to track down all those guilty and prosecuting them whoever they may be.

CPI(M) Protests Attack on People's Life*

**Statement Dated June 18, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly protests against the attacks mounted on the people and working class by the so-called austerity measures announced by the finance ministry. An increase in administered prices of economic services like postal, electricity, water and public transport, etc., is proposed. Even while the Pay Commission is going into the demands of the Central Government employees for wage revision, the Finance Minister has announced a wage freeze from 1997-98 onwards.

Even while the Common Minimum Programme assures the working class job security, the first action of the Finance Minister is to axe the existing jobs.

Instead of tapping the big monopolists and landlords for resource mobilisation, the Finance Minister has declared war on the hard-earned earnings of the public and the working class.

The motive force for this aggressive action of the Finance Minister is obvious, when one notes that these measures have been announced, closely following the Finance Minister's pre-budget discussion with the representatives of big business, without even hearing the representatives of the trade unions.

The Polit Bureau wishes to remind Mr. Chidambaram that he is the minister of a coalition and that he has gone beyond the commitments made in the Common Minimum Programme.

The working class and the public will resist this cruel assault on their livelihood and jobs. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) wants to make it clear that it cannot be a party to this, and will not tolerate this offensive, and demands of the Finance Minister to withdraw the proposed anti-people measure.

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After the statement was issued and other Left parties, central trade unions and employees' organisations also protested the government's declaration about expenditure cuts, Union Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, made it clear that the government proposals would not entail any retrenchment in government departments or public sector undertakings, nor was there any move to freeze the wages of government employees.

Rush Help To Kashmir Flood Victims*

**Statement Dated June 25, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep concern at the serious damage caused by floods in Kashmir. Many areas have been inundated due to heavy rains and communications have been disrupted. A lot of property has been destroyed and normal life disrupted.

The Central Government should immediately send a high-level team to assess the damage and steps must be taken for providing necessary financial assistance for rehabilitation work and for restoring normalcy.

*Published in **PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY**, New Delhi, June 30, 1996.

CPI(M) Opposes Administered Price-Hikes*

**Statement Dated July 3, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The big increase in the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas will add a heavy burden on the people. The cost of petrol going up by 25 per cent and diesel by 30 per cent will fuel the rate of inflation, the consequences of which will be passed on to the people.

While it is true that the Narasimha Rao Government had callously allowed the oil pool deficit to go up constantly for over two years, the Deve Gowda Government has chosen to bridge this by putting the burden on the common people. This approach of the government towards mobilising resources for bridging deficits and reducing government expenditure shows no change from the former Narasimha Rao Government. There are no steps being taken to raise resources from the affluent sections and big business while the method of administered price-hikes and squeezing the wage-earners adopted by successive Congress(I) Governments is taken to be the norm.

The Deve Gowda Government has to show its capacity and willingness to tax the rich and ensure compliance from those who can afford to pay. For instance, hundreds of crores of rupees in taxes are being evaded by certain big companies exploiting existing provisions so that they pay nil taxes. The coming Union Budget has to display an alternate approach to resource mobilisation.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the government review the hike in the prices of petroleum products, particularly diesel, and ensure that alternate measures of resource mobilisation are worked out.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 7, 1996

CPI(M) Greet Eighth Congress of CPVN*

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) sent the following message of greetings to the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPVN), held in the last week of June, 1996. CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, who attended the Congress as a fraternal delegate, read out the message at the Congress.

Dear Comrades,

I convey the warm greetings from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

The Communist Party of Vietnam has written a glorious chapter in the struggle for national liberation as well as socialist revolution. It has been a source of inspiration for the people all over the world, particularly Asia, in their struggle against imperialism and for social revolution, starting from the struggle against French imperialism, then against Japanese fascism. When the Vietnamese people were able to defeat them, U.S. imperialism intervened with all its might. In this fight, the people of Vietnam, under the leadership of the Communist Party and the great Ho-Chi-Minh, wrote a glorious history in defence of the Republic of Vietnam, liberating the south and unifying the country.

This Congress is being held at a time when, because of set-backs to socialism, the correlation of forces in the world has changed in favour of imperialism, though it is a temporary phase. But the Communist Party of Vietnam is busy in building socialism in Vietnam through reforms.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, July 7, 1996

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The CPI(M) has been closely following the process of reforms initiated by the Communist Party of Vietnam and the success attained by it in strengthening the Vietnamese economy. The CPI(M) hopes that the deliberations at this Congress will lead to consolidation of the gains and strengthening of socialism in Vietnam.

The successes of the Vietnamese people are due to the fact that the Party made serious efforts to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions prevailing in Vietnam which is popularly known as the Ho-Chi-Minh thought.

For the people of India, Vietnam continues to be a symbol of inspiration and admiration. It is with great pride and emotion that the Indian people cherish the bonds of solidarity that have developed through these struggles of the Vietnamese people. We are confident that in the days to come, the relations between the peoples of our two countries and between our two parties will continue to strengthen.

Once again, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warm fraternal greetings to the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam and wishes the Congress full success.

CPI(M) Disapproves Counter-Guarantee to The Enron Project*

**Statement Dated July 10, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its disapproval of the decision taken by the Deve Gowda Government in extending counter-guarantee to the Enron project at Dabhol. The arguments against the Enron project are still valid and the new government should have re-examined the question of providing counter-guarantee to such a controversial project instead of following the dubious example of the short-lived BJP Government which hastily provided the counter-guarantee on the eve of its downfall.

It is surprising that such a decision has been taken by the Union cabinet despite the unanimous recommendation of the Parliamentary standing committee on energy that such counter-guarantees should not be given by the Centre. Most of the constituents of the United Front were represented on this committee and are party to this recommendation. Provision of counter-guarantee to foreign power companies is totally uncalled for when sufficient facilities are being provided for private investment in the power sector. It is essential that the Central Government heed the considered opinion of the standing committee on energy and consult with experts on the power sector to formulate an alternative power policy. The direction of the power policy of the United Front Government has to be different from that of the previous Rao Government.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 14, 1996.

Bring Ranabir Sena Criminals to Book*

**Statement Dated July 13, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau expresses its shock and indignation at the massacre of 20 persons, mostly women and children, in a village in Bhojpur district of Bihar. This barbarous deed has been perpetrated by the Ranabir Sena, a landlord outfit of armed goons. The killings are part of the offensive launched by the landlord gang against the rural poor who are standing up for their rights.

The police and administration have completely failed in curbing the Ranabir Sena which is a banned organisation. The Bihar Government should take immediate steps to rectify this failure and to change its approach to the movements of the landless and rural poor. All those guilty of this crime should be immediately tracked down and apprehended. The Polit Bureau conveys its condolences to all the families who have lost their relatives in the attack.

Polit Bureau on Railway Budget 1996-1997*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement on July 16, 1996:

The Railway Budget for 1996-97 presented in Parliament has been formulated keeping in mind the constraints of the neglect and withdrawal of budgetary support for the railways by the previous government. Under the circumstances, the budget has sought to seriously address the problem of developing the railways without passing off all the burdens onto the common people. In the light of the steep increase in the diesel price announced recently, the budget proposes to hike the upper class passenger fares while rightly sparing the ordinary second class passengers. The fact that season ticket commuters have been spared any increase is particularly welcome.

The increase of 10 per cent in freight fares of all commodities is directly related to the administered price hike in petroleum products and it will add to the inflationary pressures. However, the exemption provided to essential commodities like foodgrains under the PDS, vegetables, kerosene oil, etc., will provide some relief. The budget proposals show a serious effort has been made to provide for the development and expansion of the railways in the north-east, a region which is grossly underdeveloped in rail communications. It is to be hoped that sufficient funds would be allocated for executing the new projects announced in this region including the extension of the railway line up to Agartala in Tripura.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 21, 1996.

The results of the short-sighted policy of liberalisation and privatisation in the railways have been evident for some time. Deterioration in maintenance, lack of augmentation of rolling stock, declining safety standards and lack of infrastructure development have all taken their toll on this vital sector. The fact that there is only an eight per cent increase in the annual plan outlay for the year 1996-97 is due to the policy so far of cutting down budgetary support for the railways. The Railway Minister has made a strong case for reversing this trend. It is to be hoped that the Central Government will ensure that the railways, which are the most extensive and widely used public transportation, will receive importance and priority in national development.

Polit Bureau Statement on General Budget 1996-97*

Statement Dated July 22, 1996 Issued to Press

The 1996-97 budget presented by the Finance Minister has recognised some of the major concerns of the United Front's Common Minimum Programme. This is a positive feature. These relate to the decline in the pace of investment in agriculture, the need for providing some relief to the common people from inflation, and the need for developing the infrastructure of the economy. While this recognition is welcome, the effort which the budget makes towards addressing these issues is on a much more restricted scale than should have been the case. Given the fact that net revenue receipts even at existing rates of taxation are estimated to increase by about 17 per cent over the revised estimates of 1995-96, the fact that plan expenditure has increased by only about 12 per cent is rather disappointing. With such an order of increase in revenue receipts if the government had gone in for additional resource mobilisation on a significant scale, a major boost would have been given to the plan effort. Instead, the order of increase in plan expenditure is lower than that of total revenue receipts. True the Finance Minister has recognised the need for stepping up the plan outlays on rural development and social services. But even here the total increase in the central plan outlay in both these sectors together is less than ten per cent over the revised estimates of last year in nominal terms. The opportunity for putting the country on an alternative development path should have been fully utilised.

At the same time some of the reductions in customs duties represent the trend towards import liberalisation started under the

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, July 28, 1996.

previous government. This on the one hand poses a threat to domestic producers, as in the textile sector, and on the other hand they would inflate MNC profits based on domestic assembly of CKD units, as in consumer electronics.

While a number of specific measures have been announced on the promotion of infrastructure investment of irrigation, etc., the contribution of the budget itself towards these measures is not very significant. Likewise, some of the initiatives regarding the provision of medical insurance and the pension scheme under the LIC, while welcome, do not really represent any significant budgetary effort. The Finance Minister has not matched his concerns with an appropriate step-up in budgetary contributions towards the provision of social security and infrastructure investment.

The Polit Bureau, however, welcomes some of the measures announced by the Finance Minister directed at providing relief to the working people, particularly the salaried sections, like concessions in personal income tax. The CPI(M) hopes that the stringent measures announced by the Finance Minister towards defaulters and tax evaders will be implemented in right earnest. It is also a positive feature that many of the corporate houses that have gone scot-free without paying any tax over the past few years are now being asked to contribute to the government's revenue. The CPI(M) had all along been emphasising that it is these sections who should be tapped for revenue augmentation.

Central Committee Communiqué*

Released in the Press Conference in New Delhi on
 July 30, 1996 addressed by Harkishan Singh Surjeet,
 General Secretary of the CPI(M),
 Following Central Committee Meeting
 Held in New Delhi on July 27-29, 1996

The CPI(M) which played a key role in bringing together all Left secular and democratic forces and preventing the BJP from remaining in power, would like to strengthen the United Front Government and ensure that it lasts its full term, at the same time demarcating from and opposing all measures taken by the government which the Party disagrees with, the Party's general secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet said at New Delhi, July 30, 1996.

Addressing a Press conference after the conclusion of the three-day Central Committee meeting, held at Party headquarters at New Delhi, July 27 to 29, 1996, Surjeet stated that the CPI(M) had had two objectives in the last general elections: to defeat the Congress(I) as well as the BJP. While the Congress(I) faced its worst-ever defeat, the BJP managed to strengthen itself. Pointing out that "if the BJP had remained in power, it would have been the worst thing to happen to the country, Surjeet said it was of great significance that all secular forces united together to prevent this from happening.

Regarding the United Front Government led by Deve Gowda, Surjeet pointed out that it would be the CPI(M)'s endeavour to strengthen and prevent it from getting destabilised. He said the current session of Parliament had given some indication of its performance and while certain features of the rail budget and the general budget were positive, it carried the same framework as that of the previous Congress(I) Government. The CPI(M) would continue to maintain its independent positions and oppose

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 4, 1996

measures that went against the interests of the working people, the Central Committee has said.

At the same time, Surjeet emphasised, "We will not deviate from the position that this government has been formed by the unity of Left, secular and democratic forces and it should last." In reply to questions on differences within the United Front over issues like the appointment of Romesh Bhandari as Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Surjeet said such matters would have to be sorted out at the level of the steering committee of the United Front. We are trying to make the steering committee effective as far as major directional issues are concerned, he said.

Regarding the coming assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, he said, "As far as we are concerned, we will go together as part of the United Front to fight these elections. "The CPI(M) had been trying to bring all secular forces including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) together to fight the BJP but it did not work. While, he added, we tried to unite all secular forces, other forces were also active which are not keen on such a unity. On the CPI(M)'s stand on the BSP, Surjeet maintained, "We will welcome the BSP but if they take a stand that disrupts the existing unity (of the United Front), we cannot accept such a position."

Asked to comment on the Samajwadi Party's declaration that Mulayam Singh Yadav would be the next Chief Minister of U.P. if the United Front won the assembly polls, Surjeet said, "That is the SP's decision. What can I say about it." On being pressed further, Surjeet said, "Every Party has the right to declare its candidate and the SP is the biggest party in the state. We are not a big force in U.P."

An important area in which the CPI(M) view had gained ground was in the context of Kashmir. Pointing out that the CPI(M) had consistently opposed U.S. imperialism and its games in Kashmir, Surjeet said the only way to thwart the U.S. game was to guarantee maximum autonomy to the Kashmiri people within the framework of Indian unity. He said the United Front Government had assured the Kashmiri people that their identity would be protected and the forthcoming elections were to be fought in the backdrop of this assurance. Surjeet added: "We want

the widest mobilisation of the people and the widest participation of political forces in this election. Even extremist groups which are willing to work within the framework of Indian unity must participate." He said the successful holding of elections in Kashmir would be a fitting answer to the propaganda by foreign forces and will eventually enable us to improve relations with Pakistan. Once Pakistan realises that they cannot make mischief in Kashmir, other bilateral disputes can be resolved, he said. Asked how far the CPI(M) was ready to go on the question of granting autonomy to the state, Surjeet replied: "We are prepared to discuss any point with the elected government to meet the aspirations of the Kashmiri people within the framework of Indian Unity."

The Central Committee's communique issued on this occasion is given below:

The Central Committee appreciated the work of the Party leadership in the formation of the United Front which led to the installation of the Deve Gowda Government after the united struggle to dislodge the illegitimate 13-day-old BJP Government.

Election Review

The Central Committee discussed and adopted a report reviewing the recent general elections. The Review noted that the elections have resulted in: (a) the worst-ever defeat of the Congress since 1952. This defeat is the result of the adverse impact of its economic policies on the people; its compromising attitude to the communal forces and its nurturing of large-scale corruption, (b) the results have led to the emergence of the BJP as the single largest party in parliament, though well short of a majority. This is a development fraught with serious consequences for the secular basis of the polity and the unity of the country, (c) the verdict of the people also resulted in a significant number of representatives of the Left, democratic and secular parties being elected to the Lok Sabha.

It is these non-Congress(I) secular forces which have now come together as the United Front and formed the Deve Gowda Government.

The CPI(M) and the Left parties have fared well in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. In West Bengal, the Left Front has been elected to office for an unprecedented fifth term. This is a historic achievement which is testimony to the performance and policies of the Left Front Government which has won the enduring support of the people. In Kerala, the Left Democratic Front has won the elections defeating the UDF which has been rejected by the people for its record of misrule, corruption and deterioration in the living standards of the people. In Tripura, the CPI(M) has won both the parliamentary seats with big margins despite attempts to disrupt popular unity. This shows the big popular support for the Left Front in the state. Despite these successes, the overall tally of the Left did not go up as was expected. The Central Committee noted with concern the erosion in support of the Janata Dal-Left alliance in Bihar where it lost 15 seats. It pointed to the need to draw proper lessons from this setback.

The Central Committee reviewing the performance of the Party overall, underlined the importance of consolidating the Party's influence developed through various struggles to give it proper organisational shape. Proper attention has to be paid to the political-ideological work to raise the consciousness of the people who have been attracted to the Party and the Left platform.

Thwart BJP's Plans

The Central Committee reviewed the current political developments in the country since its last meeting in the second week of May.

The BJP tried its best to remain in the government by hoping to lure defectors. The concerted efforts of the secular and democratic forces foiled its plans and it had to beat a hasty retreat in the face of the wide ranging unity displayed by all the secular forces during the confidence motion in parliament. The BJP will try to retrieve ground with the help of the RSS and its allied outfits by raising issues which arouse communal feelings against the minorities and to mobilise new sections to the Hindutva cause. Aware of its weak position in the southern states, it is actively seeking to find new allies in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The manner in which the Vajpayee Government clandestinely gave approval to the counter-guarantee for the Enron project during the confidence motion exposed its pseudo-swadeshi posture. The anti-people policies of the BJP Governments in Rajasthan and Gujarat and the Shiv Sena-BJP Government in Maharashtra are a telling exposure of its pro-big business policies and a socially reactionary outlook. It is necessary for the Left, democratic and secular forces to be constantly vigilant to checkmate the moves made by the BJP-RSS-VHP combine.

U.P. Elections

An important stage in the struggle against the communal forces will be the forthcoming assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. The election results in U.P. will have major repercussions for national politics. It is the division in the secular vote which benefited the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. The BSP did not respond to the call for joining a wider unity against the BJP and has chosen to have an alliance with the Congress(I). The Central Committee discussed the election tactics to be pursued in Uttar Pradesh. It is necessary for all the United Front constituents in Uttar Pradesh like the Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal, the Left parties and the Congress(T) to launch a united campaign to mobilise all secular sections to defeat the BJP and to minimise any disruption in the unity of the secular forces.

Jammu & Kashmir Elections

The holding of the elections for Jammu and Kashmir assembly in September will be the next step towards restoring the democratic process in the state after the Lok Sabha elections there. The Deve Gowda Government took the initiative to see that there was a consensus among all parties for the holding of early elections to the assembly. It is necessary that the conditions be created for the widest participation of all political forces including the National Conference and those groups which have been fighting for the identity of the Kashmiri people in these elections. Our Party, keeping this in mind, has stressed that nothing should be done to narrow the scope of participation for

partisan political reasons. The Central Government should declare in parliament its commitment to provide maximum autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir on the basis of the assurance given in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). The successful holding of the elections will be a rebuff to those extremist forces backed by Pakistan which are trying to step up their disruptive activities as seen by the killing of six tourists recently and the stepped-up attack on political activists.

North-East

The Central Committee welcomed the initiative taken by the Assam Government and the United Front to hold talks with the various groups like the ULFA and BDSF in Assam, NSCN in Nagaland and the PLA in Manipur to address their grievances. The Party appeals to these groups to respond positively to the offer of negotiations without pre-conditions so that the long-standing problems plaguing the north-eastern region can be settled in a democratic manner.

Economic Policies

The Central Committee noted that the railway budget has, despite the hike in the price of diesel, made a serious effort not to burden the people with passenger fare hikes. The budget also contains proposals for the much needed railway expansion in the north-eastern region. However, the policy of withdrawing budgetary support and privatisation implemented by the previous Congress(I) Government will pose serious problems for the development of the railways.

The Union budget presented in parliament has shown concern for some of the issues contained in the Common Minimum Programme while the overall framework of the budget is for the continuation of the liberalisation policies. While there are some positive steps such as increasing the outlay for irrigation, increasing subsidy for fertilisers and plugging the loopholes by which big companies pay zero tax, the efforts at resource mobilisation have been disappointing. The plan outlay could have been more given the increase in the revenue receipts. The outlays

for the rural development and the social sector do not match the claims made and are less than the revised estimates of the previous year. The reduction in customs duties continues the trend of import liberalisation and will affect sections of domestic industry.

The economic policies of the United Front Government should be such as to come out of the framework of the IMF-World Bank dictated policies. So far the policy measures announced by the finance ministry and the industries ministry with regard to industrial and fiscal policies show that the thrust to carry forward the old policies continue. More discussion and review of existing policies are required if the positive measures suggested in the Common Minimum Programme are to be implemented.

Approach to the U.F. Government

The CPI(M) had decided to support the United Front Government from outside and to strengthen the Left, democratic and secular forces in order to meet the challenges posed by the communal forces. The Central Committee reiterated the correctness of this position and resolved to actively work for the implementation of measures to strengthen secularism, federalism and the democratic institutions. The Central Committee wanted the speedy on introduction of legislations such as the Lok Pal Bill, one-third reservation for women in legislatures, electoral reforms and restructuring of Centre-State relations. The commitment to adopt a central legislation for agricultural workers and provide for recognition of trade unions by secret ballot must be fulfilled. The United Front Government has the unique opportunity to provide the states with their due rights and to strengthen federalism. The Party will support all measures to implement the positive aspects of the Common Minimum Programme while at the same time maintain its independent positions and to demarcate from and mobilise the people to oppose all such measures which adversely affect the interests of the working people.

The Central Committee underlined the importance of coordination between the Left parties to meet the present complicated situation. The Party and the Left must accord priority

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to the task of combating the communal forces. Simultaneously, the Party and the Left must continue the fight against the IMF-World Bank dictated policies and must be active in intervening in all issues which affect the people's interests and livelihood. The Party must retain its independent identity and project its policies in a big way among the people in the coming days. The review of the elections have shown the immediate tasks necessary to streamline the Party politically and organisationally so that the Party's intervening capacity grows and its mass base expanded.

Report on Political Developments Since the May, 1996 Central Committee Meeting*

**Adopted by The Central Committee of the CPI(M)
In Its Meeting Held in New Delhi on July 27-29, 1996**

The outcome of the 11th Lok Sabha elections produced a complicated situation in the country. On the one hand the Congress(I) suffered a decisive defeat with the worst performance in its parliamentary history. On the other hand, the elections resulted in the emergence of the BJP as the largest single party in the Lok Sabha for the first time. The BJP along with its allies, staked its claim to form the Central Government. This was a development fraught with dangerous consequences for the secular basis of the polity and the unity of the country. It was in such a situation that the Central Committee meeting on May 13-14, 1996 decided that the immediate task of the Party was to foil the bid of the BJP to form the government at the Centre. The BJP's success in this move would have meant that for the first time a party with an avowedly communal platform would control the levers of the state and the government at the Centre. The BJP being an instrument of the RSS, this would have opened the way for the penetration and communalisation of the instruments of state power. It would constitute a serious setback for the secular basis of the Indian state, national unity and for the future advance of the Left and democratic forces.

Given the nature of the verdict in which none of the three formations were able by themselves to acquire a majority in the Lok Sabha, the formation of a non-BJP secular government was possible only if the Congress(I) extended support to the government. The Central Committee was of the opinion that in

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order to prevent the BJP forming the government, a broad-based non-Congress(I) secular government should be installed which the Congress(I) could support from outside. The Party expressed itself against any coalition government with the Congress(I) as it would be counter to the anti-Congress(I) verdict given by the people.

The Central Committee therefore resolved to make all efforts to rally all the non-Congress secular parties in order to forge a broad-based combination which could stake its claim to form the government. In contributing to such efforts, the Central Committee decided that the Party would actively participate and support the formation of such a government from the outside. The Party would work to strengthen such a secular combination without joining the government. While supporting such a government, the Party would project and defend its position on policy matters.

Immediately after the Central Committee meeting the Party leadership actively worked for the formation of such a broad-based non-Congress(I) secular formation. Based on the understanding arrived at in the Central Committee, efforts were made to draw in all those secular parties and formations which had not been allied to the Janata Dal-Left-SP combination before the polls, but which had fought both the Congress(I) and the BJP in the elections. When the BJP was making all efforts to woo the regional parties it was primarily our efforts which helped to rally them. The DMK, the Tamil Manila Congress, the TDP and the AGP came together and decided to join the wider formation. It is this alliance which was named the United Front and which elected Deve Gowda, the Karnataka Chief Minister as the leader of the alliance.

However, instead of calling Deve Gowda to form the government, on May 15 itself, the President invited the leader of the BJP, Vajpayee, to form the government on the grounds that he was the leader of the largest single party in the Lok Sabha. By such a decision the President overlooked the legitimate claim of the United Front which had not only the support of the 13 parties representing 179 MPs, but had also got the support of the Congress(I) which had at that time a strength of 136. The ill-considered decision of the President led to the formation of the 13-day aberration of the BJP Government headed by Vajpayee.

which manifestly did not have the confidence of the majority in the Lok Sabha.

The BJP had mustered a strength of 194 in the House with its allies the Shiv Sena, the Samata Party, HVP and the Akali Dal. It was banking on the hope that having formed the government it could lure some of the secular regional parties and organise large-scale defections to prop up its government. Despite maintaining a posture that it would not resort to any unprincipled game of defection, the BJP was frantically trying to muster support by a l means.

The Party alongwith its allies had to act immediately to foil this game plan to consolidate the BJP Government in office. The struggle to dislodge the illegitimate BJP Government was dependent on the success in forging a wider unity of all secular parties to provide an alternative government. In line with the Central Committee's direction to make every effort to form a non-Congress(I) secular government, the Party leadership played an important role in gathering all the parties in the formation of the United Front. Such a formation based on the non-Congress(I) secular parties represented in parliament was necessary to fulfill the Constitutional requirement to muster the strength to stake the claim to form the government. This combination of the non-Congress(I) secular parties alongwith the Left parties in parliament, is more representative in character of the people's mandate than the BJP-led alliance.

BJP Isolated in Parliament

The debate in Parliament on the confidence vote sought by the BJP Government exposed its isolation from all the secular forces, and its opportunism in forming a government without having any basis for a majority. Except for the BJP and its allies, the speakers of every party effectively debunked the BJP's claims and exposed its anti-secular character based on Hindutva. The BJP in an acknowledgment of its total isolation retreated from facing the vote and Vajpayee submitted his resignation.

This paved the way for the formation of the Deve Gowda Government. The United Front constituents set up a Steering Committee to help the effective functioning of the new formation

The Steering Committee, after the swearing in of Deve Gowda, also discussed and adopted a Common Minimum Programme which could be the framework for the government's policies.

Common Minimum Programme

Given the diverse nature of the formation, the common commitment being opposition to the BJP, the Common Minimum Programme represents what is common in the understanding of all these constituents, while at the same time there are compromises and divergent views on other subjects. The CMP has a positive content on subjects such as secularism, Centre-State relations, defence of secularism, commitment to social equity and democratisation of the polity including electoral reforms. These aspects of the CMP provide a political platform for the secular and democratic forces to combat the BJP and demarcate from the previous Congress(I) Government's approach.

However, on certain basic questions of economic policy, the CMP does not represent the views of the Left. In key areas of the economy, the thrust is towards carrying forward the liberalisation policies of the Rao Government and the IMF-World Bank framework. Such areas are in foreign investment, privatisation of infrastructure, opening up of insurance sector, tax reforms, import liberalisation and concessions to the landlords and rich peasants. But there are some provisions such as increased allocations for the social sector like education and health, strengthening of the PDS and poverty-alleviation and employment-generation schemes which are on correct lines.

Nature of United Front

The present United Front is unlike the normal united fronts in which parties come together for joint struggles and movements based on a common set of demands or a programme. The present United Front combination has emerged out of the efforts of the Left and secular parties represented in Parliament to keep the BJP out of office. The bulk of the parties in the UF Government are those which wish to continue with the economic policies of the Congress(I). However, it is in the interests of the Left and

democratic movement that such a government continue in office, implement policies which help strengthen secularism, restructure Centre-State relations, to strengthen federalism and provide even limited relief to the people. This will help meet the expectations of the people who voted out the Congress(I) and who did not want the communal forces to capture power.

It is within this framework that our Party must define its attitude to the United Front Government. In the past six weeks of the U.F. Government, while extending overall support and pushing for implementation of those measures in the CMP which help mobilisation of the people to strengthen the Left democratic and secular forces, we have also maintained our independent position to support or demarcate on specific issues and policies.

. During this period, the Party has taken the initiative for discussions in the Steering Committee on political issues such as how to adopt a common approach on the forthcoming Kashmir and U.P. elections. The U.F. Government has taken steps to accord the states more powers as seen in the decision of the Chief Ministers' Conference on the implementation of the minimum needs programme where it was decided that funds for central sponsored schemes for providing basic minimum services will henceforth be disbursed through the State Government. The U.F. decided to hold the Jammu and Kashmir elections soon after the extension of President's Rule and maintain its commitment to provide maximum autonomy to the State.

Record of Economic Policy Decisions

While cooperating and extending support to such issues, the Party has come out criticising or opposing certain other measures of the Deve Gowda Government. These include: the Finance Minister's austerity measures, the price-rise in petroleum products, the clearance of the Enron project, the updated economic survey statement, and so on. All of these relate to economic policy measures. It is obvious that many in the Government like Chidambaram wish to pursue the policies of the previous Narasimha Rao Government. The Industries Minister's pronouncement about allowing foreign investment in the small-

scale sector, expanding the list of industries where 51 per cent automatic entry of foreign equity will be allowed, increasing the ceiling on automatic clearance of foreign equity from 51 per cent to 74 per cent, opening further the existing industries reserved for the public sector and further delicensing of industries, all indicate the direction of industrial policy. The government has also liberalised terms for foreign investment by raising the limit of clearance by the FIPB of foreign investment proposals from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600 crore and restructuring the board by including private sector representatives in it. Proposals for disinvestment of PSU shares through the Disinvestment Commission have been finalised.

Hike in Petroleum Products

The steep increase in the prices of petroleum products like petrol, diesel and cooking gas has met with widespread adverse reaction among the people. The strong opposition of the Left to these proposals and the opposition expressed by the leaders of the United Front constituents like Karunanidhi and Chandrababu Naidu forced the United Front to reconsider the decision. The Steering Committee met and discussed the matter. As a result the government reduced the diesel price increase from 30 to 15 per cent. The overall burden is still very heavy and the increase in petrol and cooking gas was retained. In many states the Party and mass organisations conducted protest actions demanding withdrawal of the hikes.

Railway Budget

After the steep hike in the prices of diesel, the task of the Railway Minister became more difficult. However, despite the constraint of the withdrawal of budgetary support by the previous Congress(I), the Railway budget made a serious effort to avoid burdening the common people with passenger fare hikes. The fares for upper class were raised and season ticket commuters were spared any hike. The budget is also positive in its commitment for railway expansion in new areas in the north eastern region. The long-standing demand of Tripura for extension of the railway line to

Agartala has been acknowledged. However, the legacy of the overall approach of the withdrawal of the government's budgetary support and privatisation, makes the development of railways still problematic.

Union Budget

The Union Budget presented in Parliament has tried to address some of the concerns based on the Common Minimum Programme while seeking to maintain the general direction of the liberalisation policies. There are some positive features such as devolution of finances to the states to meet the minimum needs schemes, some limited measures of relief to the people and steps to check the decline in public investment in agriculture. But the efforts at resource mobilisation have been timid and halting. Except for the measure to plug the loophole for big companies paying zero tax, no significant proposal to raise more money by direct taxes on the affluent are there. Given the fact that net revenue receipts even at existing rates of taxation are estimated to increase by about 17 per cent over the revised estimates of 1995-96, plan expenditure has been increased only by about 12 per cent, which is disappointing. There is no increase in the outlays on rural development and social sectors. The reduction in customs duties continues the trend of import liberalisation started under the previous government and will affect sections of domestic industry.

Foreign Policy

The stand taken by the Deve Gowda Government on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) negotiations is in conformity with the security interests of the country. The CTBT text in its present form does not set any timeframe for disarmament by the nuclear weapon states. India cannot in such a situation be a signatory to the treaty. The CPI(M) is against a nuclear arms race in South Asia. However, India has to keep all its options open while being committed to universal disarmament and the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In the foreign policy sphere, based on the outlook set out in the Common Minimum Programme, the government should

take necessary initiatives to revive and strengthen the non-aligned forums, South-South cooperation and further improve relations with China.

Independent Mobilisation by Party

Our overall approach to the government policies during this period is summed up by how we have reacted on the above issues. While supporting the government from outside and playing a constructive role, the Party will defend the interests of the people whenever necessary. The Party and the mass organisations must take up those measures in the CMP which directly relate to the vital demands of the different sections of the working people such as implementation of the central legislation for agricultural workers, strengthening of PDS, trade union rights and so on. The Party and the mass organisations must raise the urgent demands of the people and highlight the issues to be taken up by the government in different sectors. We must unite the broadest sections of the people around these demands and organise them for movements. In the sphere of economic policy, the Party and mass organisations must initiate broad united movements and struggles against the policy itself. Steps should be taken to reactivate the Sponsoring Committee and the Platform of Mass Organisations. The Party must popularise the alternate policy of resource mobilisation. Only then can people understand our position and demarcate it from the BJP and Congress(I) opposition to the U.F. Government's policies. This approach must be integrated with our struggle against price rise and such issues.

At the political level, we should push for important measures such as the Lok Pal Bill, one-third reservation for women, central legislation for agricultural workers, electoral reforms, restructuring of Centre-State relations and legislation to strengthen secularism such as the invoking of Article 138(2).

The CPI(M) parliamentary group has an important role in projecting the Party's understanding and intervening in the various issues which will come up in the present complicated situation. The Polit Bureau should ensure that there is effective coordination so that the parliamentary group is equipped for this work.

Jammu & Kashmir Elections

In this period some important political questions came up which required our Party's intervention. In Jammu and Kashmir the Lok Sabha elections were held which showed that people are interested in any step which can restore peace, which ensured a degree of participation by the people defying the threat of the extremists. They came forward to vote without coercion. This situation must be consolidated and taken forward. Surjeet visited Kashmir and held discussions with all the secular parties including the National Conference and the Congress(I) leaders. The U.F. Steering Committee also discussed the matter and came to the conclusion that elections should be held soon after the extension of President's Rule which was to end on July 17. An all parties meeting was held called by the government, where a unanimous decision was taken that elections should be held by end September, and early October.

While the grounds for preparing for the elections have been laid some problems have cropped up regarding the political approach. There is no realisation among some sections that in the assembly elections the main dividing line is between those secular forces which wish to keep Kashmir within the Indian Union by providing maximum autonomy, and the extremist fundamentalist forces which are backed by Pakistan which want to disrupt any restoration of democratic process. There is also the BJP which wants to scrap Article 370. The efforts to ensure a wider participation in the assembly elections require the participation of the National Conference which had kept out of the Lok Sabha polls. Our Party, keeping this in mind, has publicly stressed that nothing should be done to narrow the scope of participation for partisan political reasons. The U.F. Government should declare in parliament its commitment to provide maximum autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of the assurance given in the Common Minimum Programme. With the announcement of the schedule for the elections the struggle to ensure a peaceful poll in which the widest possible participation is ensured will be a major task for the U.F. Government. There will be efforts by the extremists, as seen by the killing of six tourists recently and stepped-up attacks on political activists, to disrupt polls. Our Party in Jammu and Kashmir will contribute its utmost to strengthening the democratic process in the state.

Uttar Pradesh Elections

The other major battle ahead is the forthcoming assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh which have to be completed by October 17 when President's Rule will end. In the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP was able to win 52 seats out of the total of 85. The BJP is the single largest political party in the state with a consolidated base averaging 33 to 34 per cent of the vote. The voting pattern shows that if the SP and its allies and the BSP vote is put together, then the BJP would have lost 35 out of the 52 seats it won. Our Party was for an electoral arrangement wherein the BSP, which polled 20 per cent of the vote, could have an understanding with the SP-JD-Left combination. But Kanshi Ram and Mayawati have adopted a negative and unreasonable stand of have nothing to do with Mulayam Singh and the SP, and want an alliance bypassing them. At the same time the BSP negotiated with the Congress(I) and has come to an understanding with it. This division of the secular vote is a matter of serious concern. Now it is necessary for the U.F. Constituents in Uttar Pradesh like the SP-JD-Left and Congress(T) to come together and launch a campaign to mobilise all secular sections to give an effective fight to the BJP and minimise the disruption in the unity of the secular forces. The Janata Dal leadership should realise that a united campaign along with Mulayam Singh is the only way the secular sections including the minorities can be rallied to fight the elections.

Janata Dal Developments

Some of the problems which have cropped up within the Janata Dal, which is the biggest constituent in the United Front Government, should be noted as they concern the cohesion of the United Front coalition. The events in Karnataka about Hegde depicted a picture of disunity. In Orissa, a small section of the Janata Dal is advocating alliance with the BJP and some leaders have joined the BJP. The Laloo Prasad Government is bogged down by the series of scams which are being exposed in Bihar.

The appointment of Romesh Bhandari as the Governor of U.P. came as a surprise and caused dismay in the political circles given the dubious background of Bhandari with his links with

Chandraswami and Khashoggi, and his controversial tenure as Governor of Tripura where he acted in a partisan manner. The appointment of such a person to the key post of Governor before the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh cannot be justified in any way. While the support of the Congress(I) is necessary for the Deve Gowda Government to remain in office, we must be vigilant to see that no unprincipled compromises take place which harm the image of the United Front Government.

Within all these limitations we have to try and see that the U F Government functions cohesively and is able to translate into action what is decided commonly in the Steering Committee.

Tussle within Congress(I)

The defeat in the elections has intensified the inner-party struggle within the Congress(I) with efforts to dislodge Narasimha Rao from the leadership. The dissidents were unable to force Narasimha Rao to abide by the one post principle and he got elected as the leader of the parliamentary party while retaining the presidentship. Rao was able to fend off all the attacks and keep the majority in the parliamentary party and working committee. However, with the number of cases being filed against him and the law closing in on him, Rao finds himself in a tight corner. In the JMM bribery case, the CBI was hauled up for not filing a proper FIR in which Rao was not named as an accused and fresh FIR had to be prepared naming him. In the Rs. 133-crore urea scandal which is a shocking case of swindling of public funds by a coterie of businessmen and corrupt politicians, a relative of the former Prime Minister has been arrested and his son is under investigation. In the case against Chandraswami, for which he has been arrested and jailed, the complainant Lakhubhai's testimony in court has implicated Rao and the Magistrate has summoned him as an accused in the case of cheating. Despite all these cases, Rao shamelessly continues to remain both the President and the leader of the Congress(I) parliamentary party. Dissidence has grown after the latest summons issued to Rao. At present the tactics of the Congress(I) under Rao seems to be extract concessions from the Deve Gowda Government for continuation of the economic policies and in the matter of high-level appointments.

In the states where the constituents of the United Front are running state governments and the Congress(I) is in the opposition, such Congress(I) units are more vocal against the U.F Government as in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal and Kerala.

West Bengal: Congress(I)'s Disruptive Tactics

In West Bengal, the two factions of the state Congress(I) led by Somen Mitra and Mamata Banerjee respectively have been competing with each other to mount attacks on the Left Front Government. Utilising some clashes which took place after the elections, the Congress(I) has been accusing the CPI(M) of killing its supporters and called for an agitation. In actual fact 26 CPI(M) and Left Front supporters have been killed in the post-election attacks by Congressmen and in the clashes some Congress(I) people have also died. The parallel calls for agitation by Mamata Banerjee of rail roko and rasta roko did not evoke any widespread response and it culminated in the official Congress(I) call for a bandh on July 5. The Party and the Left Front had to chalk out a campaign to mobilise the people against this disruptive tactics of the Congress(I) and a widespread programme of meetings, rallies and pamphleting was undertaken to expose the Congress(I) call for the bandh.

Tripura

In this period a tense situation developed in Tripura in view of the call by the extremist All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) for a 10-day bandh from July 1 to drive out all those people who settled down in the state after 1951. Threats of killing and violence in the form of posters and handbills were issued by this group and in the background of the continuing violent activities of the extremist groups there was a sense of insecurity among the non-tribal people. The Left Front Government took necessary steps administratively to meet the threat and requisitioned forces from the Centre with the cooperation of the U F Government for deployment in all the sensitive areas. The Party also undertook an intensive political campaign against the bandh call and the extremist threats, and at the same time countered the conspiracy of the Bengali chauvinist groups to disturb peace and communal amity. Due to the firm

measures taken by the Left Front Government and the political campaign, the ten-day bandh has passed off by and large peacefully except for one or two incidents. The depredations of the extremist groups in the form of kidnappings and extortions continue to disrupt normal life in remote areas and affect developmental work. It is essential that the Centre continues to extend cooperation to the state by deploying adequate paramilitary forces to contain the activities of the groups which are sheltering groups across the border.

Role of Left-led Governments

The fifth Left Front Government in West Bengal and the new LDF Government in Kerala have both assumed office at a juncture when there is a complicated national political situation. The existence of the U.F. Government at the Centre opens up the possibilities for greater cooperation with the Centre and the resolution of some of the long-standing problems faced by the states in the matter of allocation of resources and ending of discrimination. Utilising this favourable opportunity and despite the constraints, the three Left-led state governments should chalk out plans for the economic development of the states, strengthening of the local bodies and panchayats, efficient implementation of welfare schemes and improvement in the social sector like education and health. The progress in the government's functioning in all these spheres will make a positive contribution to the strengthening of the Left and democratic forces in the country.

BJP Tactics

Though the BJP has failed in its quest to remain in power at the Centre, its strength and capacity to mobilise popular discontent on any issue should not be underestimated. The BJP is seeking to project itself as a party in waiting to form the government, utilising its short-lived stint in office. It hopes to cash in on Vajpayee having become Prime Minister to give it respectability particularly amongst the middle class. The BJP will be making every effort to win the U.P. elections and form a government there. Aware of the fact that, without making headway in the southern states, it cannot get a

majority in Parliament in the next elections, it is actively seeking to find new allies. It is wooing the new political formation led by Hegde, forging links with the Laxmi Parvati group in Andhra Pradesh and making overtures to Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu. The recent elections have shown that the BJP has gained from such alliances with local parties and groups. The RSS will be activating its various fronts particularly the VHP to raise issues which can arouse communal feelings against the minorities and mobilise new sections to the Hindutva cause. But the BJP is not free from inner contradictions. The inner-party situation in Gujarat has got aggravated with the ouster of the State President who is allied to Vagela and the struggle will get intensified in the coming days. In Maharashtra there are strains between the BJP and the Shiv Sena, there are problems of factionalism persisting in states like M.P. and Bihar. The hollowness of the swadeshi platform of the BJP was exposed by the decision to extend the Centre's counter-guarantee to the Enron project, taken in secrecy on the eve of the ouster of the Vajpayee Government. Such pandering to the U.S. multinational company is accompanied by a record of socially reactionary policies pursued by the BJP-run state governments. In a short period, there have been four cases of sexual assault and atrocities on women by BJP persons in Rajasthan whom the Shekawat Government is protecting.

Tasks in The Political Situation

The change in the political situation which has come about after the Lok Sabha elections must be properly estimated. The Party and the Left must accord priority to the task of combating the communal forces. This requires working out proper tactics to rally all secular forces to isolate the BJP politically and to concretely counter the slogans and propaganda of the Hindutva forces which has an appeal among the majority community. The reactionary class character of the BJP and its social philosophy, and its pernicious effects on national unity, the minorities and the socially oppressed like the dalits must be effectively exposed in a proper way. It requires working out an organisational plan to counter the growth of the BJP-RSS outfits wherever we have influence and organisation.

Simultaneously, we must continue the fight against the IMF-World Bank dictated economic policies and be active in intervening in all issues which affect the people's interests and livelihood. We must take the initiative in championing the demands of various sections of the people to mobilise them for struggles, reach out to the masses following other parties for joint struggles and build up the widest unity for reversal of harmful economic policies. It is in this way that the discontent being continuously generated due to the bourgeois-landlord policies can be channelised on right lines and the intervention of the BJP to cash in on popular discontent be countered. We must mobilise different sections of the people to push for the implementation of those measures in the CMP which advance their interests. It is necessary to combine our support to the U.F. Government with the independent mass mobilisation and struggles while being vigilant to see that the BJP does not succeed in gaining from the weaknesses and contradictions in the broad-based secular coalition.

The CPI has joined the government and has two ministers. While our Party has correctly decided to support the government from outside, it is essential that the coordination between the CPI(M) and the CPI and the Left parties is maintained and strengthened. The strength of the Left can be advanced only through the mass activities and united struggles which the Left can initiate. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the independent identity of the Party and the Left is maintained in the coming days. We must stress on projecting the Left and democratic alternative and its platform of demands formulated in the 15th Congress of the Party. The review of the elections which has been conducted will show the immediate steps which are necessary to streamline the Party politically and organisationally to project the independent positions of the Party. These tasks must be undertaken so that the Party's intervening capacity grows contributing to the strengthening of the Left. This is the way to strengthen the widest secular unity and for the advance of the Left and democratic forces.

Review Report on 1996 General Elections*

**Adopted by The Central Committee of
The CPI(M) in Its Meeting Held in New Delhi
on July 27-29, 1996**

The elections to the 11th Lok Sabha have resulted, as widely expected, in no single party or formation winning a majority. The election results are notable for the decisive defeat suffered by the ruling Congress which got the lowest percentage of votes and seats since the first general elections in 1952. It has also led, disturbingly, to the emergence of the BJP as the single-largest party, though well short of a majority. The non-Congress(I), non-BJP secular parties constitute a significant bloc in the Lok Sabha. In the present correlation of forces within parliament, the regional parties have acquired a prominent role given the fact that no national party is in a position to dominate or muster a majority.

The election results reveal that the decline in the Congress(I)'s mass base which began from the 1989 Lok Sabha elections continues. The 1989 and 1991 elections saw the end of the single party dominance of the Congress(I). The current Lok Sabha elections have led to a sharp decrease of 6.7 per cent in its vote and its seats coming down to 142, the lowest ever in the history of the party. This erosion of support is a direct result of the impact of the reactionary economic policies initiated by the Rao Government, its compromising approach to the communal forces and the high-level corruption which it spawned. The infighting and revolts within the Congress(I) contributed to the debacle.

Such a comprehensive defeat of the Congress(I) should have paved the way for the advance of the Left, democratic and secular forces. However, it is the reactionary BJP with its communal platform which gained the most from the Congress(I)'s decline.

*Published as a booklet in August 1996

Though it could not substantially increase its voting percentage (it has registered only a marginal increase of 0.7% from 20.1% to 20.8%), it has won 160 seats and emerged for the first time as the single-largest party in the Lok Sabha. This allowed it to stake its claim to form the government. Alongwith its allies the Shiv Sena, Samata Party and the Haryana Vikas Party and its post-poll ally the Akalis, the formation led by the BJP has a strength of 194. Caste identity and mobilisation on sub-caste basis has led to casteism playing a widespread role in electoral mobilisation.

The combination representing the third force which comprised the Janata Dal, the Left Parties and the Samajwadi Party did not fare as well as we expected. It got 113 seats. Alongwith the regional parties which were allied to the Left, like the AGP and the TDP, the total comes to 134. The main setback was in Bihar where the JD, Left combination lost nearly half the seats held previously.

The success of the DMK and the TMC which defeated the Congress(I) and its ally the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu gave it a bloc of 37 seats. These two parties alongwith the TDP and the AGP represent a substantial force which came to play an important role in the post-election scenario.

The elections were held at a crucial time for the country. As the Central Committee's report on political developments adopted in January 1996 at Madras had stated.

'As the crucial Lok Sabha elections, to be held in April, draw near, it is clear that the country is faced with four major problems. They are: (1) the disastrous impact of the imperialist dictated economic policies endangering economic sovereignty and ruining the lives of the people; (2) the communal danger and its divisive impact on national unity; (3) the separatist movements which enable imperialist penetration; (4) corrosive corruption and criminalisation of politics.

"The policies of Narasimha Rao Government and the communal politics of the BJP both representing different facets of the ruling classes are mainly responsible for the aggravation of these problems. How the four challenges are met politically will determine the future course of direction for the country. . . In line with the Party Congress direction, our efforts have been geared

towards the forging of an effective third alternative which can electorally contest and defeat the Congress(I) and the BJP".

It is in the light of this understanding that we should review the results of the elections and our Party's role and intervention in the electoral struggle.

Congress(I) Defeat

The defeat of the Congress(I) represents the continuation and intensification of the trend witnessed during the assembly elections in some of the major states held in the intervening period. The successive defeats of the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Maharashtra and Gujarat were a precursor to the defeat in the general elections. The defeat in the Lok Sabha elections represents a rejection of the policies pursued by the Congress(I) government particularly due to the adverse impact of its economic policies on the people, its compromise with the communal forces and high-level corruption. The Congress(I) party not only lost the majority it had acquired by defections after the 1991 Lok Sabha elections but its vote has got eroded in most of the states. Only in Orissa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and to a smaller extent in West Bengal, did it gain in terms of percentage of votes. Its performance has been disastrous in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. In the state assembly elections held along with the parliament elections it lost power in Assam, Haryana and Kerala where it had state governments.

The election results show that the party continues to be spurned by the minorities by and large, except in some areas where the BJP threat exists and it is the only other choice. Even here when it came to the question of voting for the Congress(I) as the lesser evil, the turnout was low among the minorities. The squeezing of the poor due to the policies of liberalisation has led to large-scale desertion of the rural and urban poor from the Congress(I). In states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab, the BSP has severely eroded the traditional Scheduled Caste base of the Congress(I). The loss of the largest number of seats from Tamil Nadu is, of course, due to the wave against Jayalalitha, with whom the party had allied.

Though the Congress(I) suffered a severe defeat in the elections, it will be wrong to write it off as a political force. It is still the biggest national political party with nearly 30 per cent vote with an all-India spread. Further, it has come second in 247 seats.

BJP Performance

The BJP has gained over 40 seats from its 1991 tally to emerge as the largest-single party. However, this has been achieved not due to any substantial increase in its voting percentage which has gone up only by less than one per cent according to preliminary estimates. The main gain of the BJP has been either due to the division in the Congress(I) as in Madhya Pradesh where it increased its seats by 15; or due to the strength accruing by alliances like in Bihar with the Samata Party and the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. These three states together gave the BJP an increase of 41 seats.

But the growth of the BJP's influence both in terms of its spread to new areas and its consolidation in its strong bases must not be underestimated. The BJP has consolidated its position in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi which are its traditional areas. It has made new gains in Assam and Orissa where its voting percentage has gone up substantially (16.5 per cent and 13.3 per cent respectively). It has also slightly improved its percentage in Gujarat though it lost seats there. In Haryana and Tripura, it has improved its votes tally. In the North, it is only in Punjab and Himachal that it has not been able to improve on its 1991 performance. However, it is in the South that it has failed to do well. In Karnataka where it has its strongest base in the South, its growth was contained and its vote percentage reduced by 2 per cent. Similarly in Andhra Pradesh also, it decreased. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, it registered a small increase.

Taken overall, it is a fact that the BJP is the only national party which has made steady advance since the 1989 elections. In that sense the outcome of the 1996 elections must be seen as a continuation of this trend. Its support has grown in its major states at the expense of the Congress(I) where a combination of anti-Congress(I) popular discontent, penetration of the communal ideology and skilful organisational work backed by the RSS, have

together contributed to the BJP's growth. To project its Hindutva platform, the BJP campaigned on issues like Article 370 on Kashmir, uniform civil code and infiltration from Bangladesh. At the same time, it took up the economic issues and corruption which alienated the people from the Congress(I) to cash in on the mass discontent even though its basic economic policy is no different.

It is not sufficient to see the BJP's growing influence purely in terms of the instant impact of the communal appeal on the electorate. Underlying the penetration of the communal ideology is the vast organisational work which is being undertaken by the various outfits of the RSS. The Saraswati Sishu Vidyalayas (kindergartens) and other educational institutions run by the RSS are an expanding network in many states; behind its success in South Bihar which has a big adivasi population there is the work of an organisation like the Vanavasi Kalyan Parishad, an RSS outfit which has been working primarily to counter the influence of the Christian missionaries. It is through this organisation that the RSS has made inroads among the adivasis in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and now in Orissa. It is significant that the BJP is penetrating most in Orissa in the backward tribal areas using both the feudal/royal
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feudals and the work of the RSS. The RSS is also assisting the BJP to organise people on caste and sub-caste lines. Holding of caste conferences, organisations of different sub-castes, taking up their specific problems, ensuring that tickets are distributed to the prominent people in these communities, are all planned by the RSS in order to widen the social base of the BJP. These type of activities are very evident in states like Uttar Pradesh where the BJP gets substantial votes from certain castes belonging to the OBCs and the Scheduled Castes. Everywhere, the BJP as a classic reactionary party seeks to divert the discontent generated by the bourgeois-landlord system into divisive channels of communal and caste consciousness.

Apart from conducting the anti-communal political campaign and ideological struggle, it is necessary to understand how the RSS-BJP combination works and concretely analyse which sections it is penetrating. This work must be undertaken by the Party Committee if their influence is to be countered and our work in these areas developed.

The Third Alternative

The third force consisted of the combination of the Janata Dal, the Left Parties and the Samajwadi Party. This combination was forged after a protracted struggle and a long delay. The main reason being the difficulties in bringing together the Janata Dal and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh. Their alliance was eventually forged only at the end of March, practically on the eve of the elections. This led to a delay in projecting this combination and also in preparing and issuing a joint appeal. The Janata Dal has its strength confined only to three states: Bihar, Karnataka and Orissa. Its maximum number of MPs were from Bihar in 1991. This time, the Janata Dal strength went down from 32 to 22 in Bihar and the JD and allies could get only 26 seats out of the total of 54. In Orissa, it lost further ground and won only 4 out of the 20 seats. It is only in Karnataka that the Janata Dal could improve its position significantly. The Left Parties could only maintain their position though there was a marginal decrease in the total strength from 56 to 54. Thus, the third force could only acquire the third position after the BJP and the Congress(I).

The other parties with which the CPI(M) and Left allied did well in the elections. In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP (Naidu group) won 16 seats and polled 34.2 per cent of the votes thereby establishing itself as the main TDP party; the Laxmi Parvathi group was routed and failed to win a single seat. The Congress(I) could win 22 out of the 42 seats despite a decrease in its vote per cent of 4.7 per cent only because of the TDP and Left votes split by the Laxmi Parvathi group. In Assam, the AGP and its ally CPI(M) won 6 out of the 14 seats while the Congress(I) could win only 5. In Tamil Nadu, the gamble by Narasimha Rao in aligning with the AIADMK against the wishes of the state leadership led to the combination of the DMK and TMC emerging. This alliance became the focus for the anti-Jayalalitha discontent and it was able to sweep the elections. The DMK-TMC-CPI alliance won all the 39 seats in the state.

In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP won 52 out of 85 seats getting around 34% of the vote. The non-BJP secular vote was sharply divided between the SP and the BSP. If the votes of the SP-JD-Left and the

BSP are combined, then the BJP would have lost 35 out of the 52 seats it won. An important feature of the Uttar Pradesh elections is the increase in the BSP vote which polled 20.6 per cent of the total vote.

Minorities Trend

The minorities have generally voted against the Congress(I) wherever there was a viable secular alternative against the BJP. It is only in those areas where the fight was between the BJP and the Congress(I) that the minorities chose the latter. However, in these places also, there was manifest reluctance to vote for the Congress(I) among the general Muslim voters with a large section preferring to stay away from voting. Another feature noticed was the low turnout of the Muslim members in states where they had no confidence that there was an effective electoral force to defeat the BJP. In Bombay-Bhiwandi in Maharashtra and in many places in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh the low turnout of the Muslims can be ascribed to their inability to see a strong third alternative to bank upon. The split of the secular forces between the SP and the BSP was one such reason. The inability of the Party to attract Muslim votes in a substantial number in many places where we contested is a matter of concern. The consciousness of the minority community is focused mainly on their security and the Party's links with the Muslim masses are still very weak. The growth of fundamentalist forces within the community, as a reaction to majority communalism, and due to patronage from abroad, also acts as a barrier. We continue to neglect the special steps necessary to be taken to forge the Party and mass organisations' links with the Muslim masses. This shortcoming has to be removed.

Our Tactical Line on the Elections

The political resolution of the 15th Congress had directed that "The CPI(M) and the Left must try for an understanding with the secular opposition parties to present an effective alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The Left alone cannot, in the present situation, defeat both these forces. The secular opposition parties

have though constrained by the absence of a coherent programme, an important role in projecting the immediate electoral alternative." It is on the basis of this understanding that the Central Committee of the Party worked out the line of mobilising all the Left, democratic and secular opposition forces for forging a wider unity to present a third alternative to the Congress(I) and the BJP. The Central Committee worked out its concrete electoral tactics after assessing the situation prevailing after the assembly elections in some of the major states. Though the Janata Dal-National Front was in disarray, the growing discontent of the people against the Congress(I) resulted in the victory of the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh and the Janata Dal in Karnataka and Bihar assembly elections. This opened the possibility for a third force comprising the National Front, Left and their allies. Given the situation, our Party decided that the efforts to forge the third alternative should go beyond the framework of the old National Front-JD, Left combination. There were other major parties like the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, the AGP in Assam and some other regional forces which should be brought together to forge the widest unity based on the understanding formulated in the July Central Committee meeting of 1995, our Party leadership continuously worked for the alliance between the Janata Dal, the Samjwadi Party and the Left Parties in Uttar Pradesh in view of the vital importance of the state in the fight against the BJP. Our Party leadership intervened to see that the Janata Dal finally adopted a position to facilitate such a wider unity. However, the efforts for such a wider unity were protracted and came at such a late stage that the projection of a third alternative could not be achieved in the manner we wished.

While we were making these efforts the split in the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh was a setback. It resulted in divergent views between the Left on the one hand and the JD with the later deciding to go alongwith the Laxmi Parvathi group. Our Party adopted essentially correct tactics in relation to the complex situation that arose in Andhra Pradesh. We continued to appeal for unity to fight the Congress(I) while deciding to ally with the majority group of the TDP led by Chandrababu Naidu. The election results have vindicated our assessment.

In Assam, after discussions in the Central Committee and the state committee, we decided to have an electoral understanding with the AGP for the first time, taking into account the fact that the AGP had changed some of its old positions against the minorities and keeping in mind the necessity to prevent an alliance between the AGP and the BJP. Our success in working out correct tactics in Assam resulted in the AGP being brought within the framework for wider secular unity and in enabling the defeat of the Congress(I) in the state. In Bihar, Karnataka and Orissa, despite various problems, we finally arrived at an understanding about seats with the Janata Dal even though Biju Patnaik in Orissa and Laloo Prasad in Bihar were adopting a negative approach to the question of allotting us a reasonable number of seats. In Maharashtra, the CPI, CPI(M) and P.W.P. which had formed a Left alliance was able to have a wider understanding with the Janata Dal, R.P.I., Kamgar Aghadi and the Samajwadi Party. In Punjab, the CPI(M) and the CPI decided to fight the elections jointly as they were against any alliance with the Akalis.

These steps represent a degree of success in drawing together a number of secular bourgeois parties and allies so that the third alternative could be widened and strengthened. However, such a combination was forged on the eve of the elections. A joint appeal was formulated only after the elections were announced and hence it could not be projected effectively as a cohesive alternative. Given the past experience of the people with such alliances at the national level, requisite confidence could not be created that it would be a stable entity. Even the alliance between the JD and the SP led to a revolt in the shrunken Uttar Pradesh Janata Dal with a number of its activists leaving the party. In such a situation, despite the success of the combination in states like Karnataka, Assam and partially in Andhra Pradesh and the Left success in its three states, the overall performance could not reach the level of being able to outpace the BJP and the Congress(I).

In Tamil Nadu, our Party could not go with the DMK after it became clear that it was keeping its options open for an understanding with the Congress(I) and playing down its opposition

to the Congress(I) Government's policies. We allied with the MDMK and the Janata Dal. The DMK, on the eve of the elections, made a public offer to the Congress(I) expressing its willingness to have an understanding if it breaks with the AIADMK. The overwhelming majority of the state unit of the Congress(I) was also prepared for this. However, Narasimha Rao decided at the last moment to go along with Jayalalitha and her party thereby sparking off a major revolt which led to the formation of the Tamil Maanila Congress. The unparalleled record of corruption and misrule of Jayalalitha led to a massive upsurge to which all opposition parties had contributed. But the combination of the DMK-TMC which was also supported by Rajnikant became the focus for the massive anti-Jayalalitha mass sentiment. This resulted in a big sweep for the DMK-TMC alliance. Our combination and other parties got completely squeezed out.

Reviewing the Party's line in Tamil Nadu, we cannot attribute any mistake in our decision not to go with the DMK, given the fact that till the last moment, the DMK was prepared to have an understanding with the Congress(I). With such an approach of the DMK, our Party could not have compromised its position by committing to any alliance with it.

Our Party's Performance

The CPI(M) and the Left-led alliance won the elections in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. In the assembly elections in West Bengal and Kerala, the Left Front and the LDF were victorious. But overall, the Party could not increase its strength in the Lok Sabha.

The CPI(M) contested 76 seats including independents supported by the Party. We have won 33 seats (including 1 Independent). According to preliminary estimates, the Party has polled 6.2 per cent of the total valid votes which is the same as in the 1991 elections. The Party's gains were in Tripura where we won both the seats with big margins; in Kerala, where we held 4 seats previously, we were able to win 6 this time including one Independent supported by us; in West Bengal, we have won 23 which is less by 4 from the previous tally of 27. We have retained

the sitting Barpeta seat in Assam. We have won a new seat Khammam in Andhra Pradesh but lost the sitting Miralguda seat. We have lost sitting seats in Nawadah (Bihar); Bhubaneshwar (Orissa) and Wardha (Maharashtra).

West Bengal

In West Bengal, the assembly elections were held along with the Lok Sabha polls. The Left Front has been voted back to office with a two-thirds majority for an unprecedented 5th successive term. The CPI(M) has won 150 seats in the assembly while the Left Front has won 245. The Congress(I) improved its strength to 82 compared to 43 in 1991. The Left Front polled 49.3 per cent of the vote this time which is 0.5 per cent more than in the 1991 elections. The Congress(I) vote went up by 3.2 per cent while the BJP vote declined by 4.9 per cent. In the Lok Sabha polls, the Left Front vote was marginally less than its assembly percentage while the Congress(I) vote is marginally more than its assembly percentage. The BJP vote has substantially declined by 4.9 per cent. The bulk of this vote has gone to the Congress(I) which has tilted the balance in favour of the Congress(I) in many marginal seats.

The fact that the Left Front won a two-thirds majority and improved its percentage over 1991 after being in government for nearly 20 years is a significant and noteworthy achievement. Despite the negative factors which accumulated after years of office in a system which is controlled by the ruling class at the Centre and despite the hostility of the media and the reactionary circles, it is no small achievement to retain the people's confidence. The Party and the Left alliance led by it has come out successful in the electoral struggle and enhanced its prestige all over the country. The West Bengal State Committee organised an intensive political campaign in a planned manner from October 1995 itself ranging from group meetings to district rallies. Twelve pamphlets were published with an average sale of 3 lakh copies each. The *Ganashakti* also played an important role in the campaign.

At the same time, we should note the weakness and shortcomings. The review of the State Committee pinpoints some of these factors such as instances of corruption, difficulties in the health, education and rural electrification departments, flouting

of guidelines on the functioning of local bodies and so on. The alienation of the urban middle class due to some of the above factors and the discontent among the educated unemployed youth have eroded the Party's support in the urban areas. While the bulk of the working class and the Muslim minorities have voted with the Left, some degree of erosion is visible in certain areas. In some of the industrial areas of Calcutta, Hooghly, Howrah and 24 Parganas, the review notes the reduction in support among the workers. We must investigate why there was some erosion of support among the Muslim masses in some places particularly in the urban areas. Problems of the Muslim minorities regarding employment and education may have been utilised by the Congress(I) to make inroads in certain pockets of Muslim minorities.

Kerala

The victory of the LDF in the Kerala assembly and parliament elections is a significant contribution to the Left's electoral performance. In the assembly, the CPI(M) has won 44 seats and the LDF has got an absolute majority winning 80 seats. In the Lok Sabha from a tally of 4 for the LDF in 1991, this time the LDF won 10 seats with the CPI(M) winning 6. In terms of percentage of votes the total percentage of votes polled came down this time in Kerala by 2.4 per cent. This led to the LDF percentage coming down by 1.1 per cent while the UDF percentage came down by 4.4 per cent. The difference between the LDF and the UDF vote is only 1,68,690 (i.e. 1.15 per cent). In the Lok Sabha elections, the UDF got 0.75 per cent votes more than the LDF. The LDF won because of the popular discontent against the UDF rule which resulted in deterioration in the people's living standards due to price rise and unemployment, state taxes in the industrial and agricultural fronts, privatisation of education, corruption and growing atrocities on women. There was also disunity among the opponents of the LDF. The three way division in the League vote, the opposition of the Nair Service Society and a section of the SNDP and Dheevara Sabha contributed to the erosion of the UDF strength. In pursuing our tactical line, the Party had no truck with the communal parties. However, in a few places known INL persons were put up as independents whom we supported. This

was not in conformity with the approach to the INL decided for the elections.

It must also be examined whether the independent projection of the Party's political line and policies have been sufficiently undertaken. This is connected to the fact that for a considerable period of time the expansion of the mass base of the Party has been marking time. The electoral division of seats in the LDF has remained stationery over the decades whereby our Party cannot contest or win a majority of the seats.

The election review of the Kerala state committee notes that we have not been able to make any substantial headway in winning the masses following the UDF or increasing our votes among the new sections. The review states: "Compared to 1991, in 1996, the LDF got only 34,172 votes more this time when the increase of 4,17,246 in polled votes is considered. This shows that our mass base has not been broadened in spite of the favourable situation. What the voting figures have shown is that the innumerable agitations we have conducted during the last five years and the large number of magnificent struggles conducted by various class and mass organisations with many a sacrifice did not succeed in making substantial change in the correlation of forces". The review further points out the organisational weaknesses of the Party which can be a major factor in our inability to translate the favourable political situation into our increased electoral influence. The unhealthy inner-Party organisational situation marked by groupism for some time in Kerala has weakened the organisation and its live links with the masses. An intensive political-ideological campaign and steps to remove the ills plaguing the organisation have to be taken up if we have to consolidate and advance further the Party and the Left forces in the state. Special attention has to be paid for planning political-ideological campaigns among the minorities by the Party.

Tripura

In Tripura, our Party has won both the seats polling more than 50 per cent of the vote. In West Tripura, we polled 50.4 per cent and in East Tripura 54%. These results reflect our success in consolidating the political influence gained in the recent period

after the assembly elections of 1993. The elections were conducted in a period when there is a serious threat to the ethnic unity of the tribal and non-tribal people. Our Party and the Left had to launch a big political campaign against the tribal extremists and Bengali chauvinists to defend communal amity. The break-up of the Congress(I)-TUJS alliance contributed further to our success. The loss of support among middle classes in the sub-divisional centres which was seen also during the municipal elections has been noted by the state committee. The extremist attacks have contributed to a sense of insecurity among the Bengali middle-classes which has been cashed in by the Congress(I) with its anti-tribal stance. Our government's performance has to be reviewed to see how the causes for their alienation can be removed. The BJP's vote has gone up and it was able to get 6.5 per cent of the vote. Tackling the BJP by effective political campaign must be paid attention to. The Party will have to continue to pay close attention to the problems of achieving ethnic unity and to politically mobilise the people to be vigilant against all provocations.

Apart from these three strong states, the electoral performance of the Party in the rest of the country is generally unsatisfactory. There are some exceptions like our performance in Khammam in Andhra Pradesh. However, in most places, we have not been able to break new ground or gain sufficient electoral support. The main feature is of stagnation in our electoral base or in some places even decline.

Hindi Region

The electoral position of the Party in the Hindi-speaking states should be of particular concern. In Bihar, in the two seats that we contested this time, just as in 1991, the votes polled have come down substantially. The gains made by the BJP-Samata alliance overall represents a reactionary shift. The discontent engineered by the Laloo Prasad Government's misrule and the casteist approach are the main causes for the negative reaction. The Left as a whole has got eroded in Bihar and the sharp polarisation is effecting the strong basis of the Left Parties too. The CPI which is the biggest Left Party in Bihar has lost four out of the 8 seats it had and the CPI(M) has lost its only sitting seat.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Left as a whole has been marginalised. The CPI which has been the stronger party has been in progressive decline and for the first time it got a lesser voting percentage than the CPI(M) with the two parties together polling only 1 per cent of the total vote contesting four seats. The CPI(M), in its two seats, could improve its overall vote compared to 1991, polling nearly 3 lakh votes. In Varanasi, we got 1.5 lakh votes and in Kanpur 1.46 lakh votes. But, in both these seats which are predominantly urban, the BJP hold has further strengthened.

In Rajasthan, we contested only one seat, Sikar, where we got 56,000 votes. We could not contest the other seat, Bikaner as our candidate decided to withdraw on the last date of withdrawal without consulting the Party. In this seat, last time we had polled over 80,000 votes. In Madhya Pradesh, the Party contested Rewa seat. Here again, the acute caste division and polarisation led to our candidate polling only 12,000 votes. In Haryana, we contested a parliament seat for the first time in Hissar and our candidate who could not get the symbol due to a technical flaw polled a respectable 56,000 votes. In Himachal Pradesh too, we contested the Lok Sabha seat for the first time (Simla, Scheduled Caste, seat) and polled 19,600 votes. In Delhi also, we contested for the first time a Lok Sabha seat, Karol Bagh, and polled over 11,000 votes.

Other States

In Andhra Pradesh, the Party contested three seats polling nearly 9 lakh votes. In Khammam, we polled 3.74 lakh votes and won the seat. We got 3.12 lakh votes in Miryalagudam and lost by 43 thousand votes. In Nellore, we polled 2.01 lakh votes. In Punjab, the Party contested 3 seats in which we polled 2,36,993 votes. The highest vote was in Sangrur where we got 1.56 lakh votes. In the Union Territory of Chandigarh, we contested for the first time and polled only 6,030 votes. In Maharashtra, we contested 3 seats. We lost the sitting Wardha seat and came third this time. In Dahanu, in the adivasi belt, we polled 1,36,000 votes, an increase of 26,000 over 1991 but we had expected to do much better on the basis of the votes the SP and JD had polled in the Bhiwandi segment where there is a large minority population. In Ichalakaranji, we polled 80,000 votes. In Bhubaneswar, our sitting seat, we polled 2.19 lakh

votes and lost the seat to the Congress(I). In Karnataka, we contested the Bidar seat with an understanding with the Janata Dal. We polled 72 thousand votes. Our performance was limited by the fact that the Party has no organisation in most of the assembly segments.

Problem of Casteism

In the Hindi-speaking region, the twin processes of communal polarisation and caste-based mobilisation have badly affected the Left forces. The secular bourgeois Parties which are in the fray and which are the main forces to challenge the BJP rely primarily on caste-based mobilisation to counter the BJP. The mobilisation of the backward castes and dalits on the slogan of social justice and lower caste assertion does represent a democratic aspect in that the socially oppressed classes are asserting their rights and want a fair share in political decision-making. However, devoid of a socio-economic programme of fighting the roots of social and caste oppression, caste-based politics only helps to perpetuate caste divisions and consciousness. With this becoming a widespread phenomenon, the reactionary parties like the BJP are also resorting to counter-caste mobilisation and appealing to the sectarian feelings of upper castes and sub-castes and communities. Both the Janata Dal in Bihar and the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh represent this phenomenon and the negative features of this politics is having its impact on the Left too. A closer look at the political and organisational problems within the CPI(M) would reveal the growth of caste consciousness within the Party ranks at different levels and erosion of the class bases of the Left. The Janata Dal, in Bihar, has made inroads into the Left's rural base while the BSP and the other parties have affected the Left's following in U.P. on caste lines. We have so far not made serious efforts to counter the growing divisions on caste lines of the people.

While the caste polarisation and political mobilisation on caste and sub-caste lines is becoming an acute problem in the Hindi-speaking states, such a trend is not confined here alone. Growing caste identity/consciousness and their electoral appeal on caste lines is growing in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and so on in the non-Hindi regions too. While we continue to ally with the non-Congress(I) secular bourgeois parties,

the Party will have to seriously address the problem of casteism and its political and electoral implications. Here the Party's independent political-ideological stand on the caste question must be spelt out and widely propagated. The concrete situation in each state must be studied and proper tactics and slogans worked out so that the potential of the awakening of the communities subject to caste oppression is carried forward on democratic lines while the narrow, sectarian and opportunist electoral manifestations which lead to dividing the working people and disrupting class unity is properly countered. While seriously taking up the struggle for land and wages for the oppressed sections we must simultaneously fight against caste oppression. There has to be anti-caste propaganda as part of general political propaganda. Mass organisations must also take up the social problem of casteism and its evil manifestations. All this requires sustained political and ideological education of our Party ranks and mass campaigns where our stand on reservation, caste oppression, social evils arising out of caste system, are all tackled within the framework of the class approach and the Marxist standpoint on the relation between class and caste.

The failure to make any significant electoral advance in the country as a whole over a long period, the inability to utilise the favourable situation of mass discontent against the bourgeois landlord policies of the Congress(I) and the success of the BJP in such a situation does raise some basic questions. Some of these issues have been raised in the discussions in some of the state committees while reviewing the elections.

Critical Examination Required

Since 1991, we had conducted at the all-India level and in the states, a number of struggles and campaigns against the economic policies of the Rao Government and played a leading role in the broad-based resistance which has developed through formations like the National Platform of Mass Organisations. Similarly, our Party has been consistent in organising anti-communal campaigns and rallying the wider sections in defence of secularism. We have also been in the forefront in exposing the corruption scandals. Despite all these activities by the Party and the mass organisations

we are not able to go beyond existing areas and increase our electoral strength. This requires deeper consideration.

In those weaker states, where the Party has some presence and pockets of influence, our political-tactical line enjoins us to forge alliances with the secular bourgeois parties which are opposed to the Congress(I) and the BJP. Over a considerable period of time, we have adopted concrete tactics which have resulted in alliances and joint election campaigns with the bourgeois parties which are stronger than us. The experience of how our Party has utilised these joint platforms and united fronts must be examined. In successive Party Congresses, we have stressed the importance of developing the independent activities of the Party in the political-ideological and organisational spheres. We have set out the importance of increasing Left intervention and Left unity in the context of forging the wider alliance and for paving the way for the advance of the Left and democratic forces. However, both in mass movements and in elections such joint platforms and fronts have not led to the commensurate growth of the independent strength of the Party and its mass organisations. It is a common experience in many of the weaker states that our independent strength has stagnated or declined compared to the advance made by other bourgeois-landlord parties.

Lag in Independent Party Positions

In projecting the independent political line of the Party among the people, in taking ideological and class positions distinct from the bourgeois parties, the Party is lagging behind. When such wider alliances and joint fronts with other political parties are forged and this independent political-ideological stand is absent or lagging, the Party's growth gets limited. It is difficult for the people to see the distinct identity of the Party.

Secondly, the call for independent activities of the Party is often ritualistically observed in a formal manner without sufficient initiative taken at the grassroots level to take up the class and mass issues and launch struggles and movements. The capacity to take up independently issues by the Party and to wage militant struggles has been giving way to general campaigns and reliance on electoral

tactics not very dissimilar to bourgeois parties. In such a situation, the methods utilised by the bourgeois allies such as caste mobilisation, populist slogans devoid of a class content and tendency to tail behind the slogans of the dominant bourgeois partners is becoming increasingly manifest.

In such a situation, neither the Party's independent strength nor its electoral influence grows and the tendency to tail behind the bourgeois parties ends up in strengthening them and not the Party and the Left forces. How seriously the Party takes the task of projecting the independent political line of the Party, building up the all-sided independent activities, political, ideological, and organisational and guarding against the tendency to tail behind the bourgeois parties must be seriously looked into. This will entail further self-critical examination of our political-tactical line since the 10th Congress particularly our experience in allying with the bourgeois parties both electorally and in general political terms.

At the organisational level, it must be examined why despite the considerable range of mass activities and movements conducted by the Party and the mass organisations, they have not found reflection in terms of the expansion of the mass strength of the Party. There has been some increase in the total votes polled by the Party in the 1996 parliament elections as compared to 1991. This increase is not substantial considering the overall increase of the electorate and the gains made by the reactionary party like the BJP. The state of the Party organisation at different levels is marked by various defects and weaknesses. These have been spelt out in the political-organisational report and the report on organisation in the 14th Congress and the political-organisational report of the 15th Congress. One of the defects which has been highlighted in the 15th Congress organisational review is the growing trend towards parliamentarism and its attendant opportunist and careerist manifestations.

Trend of Parliamentarism

The 15th Party Congress had warned about the growing parliamentary opportunism and bourgeois vices which have crept into the Party. The recent election experience on the organisational

front has confirmed this analysis. In West Bengal, the review notes that factionalism in several constituencies caused great harm. One of the reasons attributed for factionalism and anti-Party activities in the elections is the discontent about not being nominated as Party candidates. The state committee has called for strict action against such persons or Party units. The West Bengal State Committee review notes 'A dangerous trend was the anger that was created in those who were not provided the nomination they somehow expected. They kept on pressurising the Party on this account. Some went ahead to provide 'statements' to the bourgeois Press that were full of distortions. We stress that the fact that supplementation of existing candidates with new incumbents did not have any negative impact on the electorate.' In Kerala too, the manifestation of parliamentarism has been seen in various forms which was taken note of at the Party Congress and subsequently. The Kerala review report states: "One tendency perceivable in the Party while deciding the candidates was the incidence of the growing parliamentary illusion. At certain places, various types of bad tendencies to become the candidate came to the fore. The feeling that all these are permissible has grown. In certain constituencies, the tendency to question the Party decision has appeared. These are to be viewed seriously." In Andhra Pradesh, in the Miryalagudam constituency in Nalgonda district, factionalism reached a climax on the question of choice of candidate during the earlier assembly elections and now during the Lok Sabha elections. The outcome of this revolt has been disciplinary action taken against a number of district committee members and the exit of the Party's veteran leader B.N. Reddy who has now been expelled.

While thousands of our Party members and activists worked tirelessly and sincerely, during the election campaign, it is also a fact that in many states and constituencies we could not mobilise the entire membership of the Party to be active in the election campaign. From the review submitted by the state committees, it is clear that in many places only 50 per cent of the Party membership became actively involved in a sustained fashion in the election work. If the Party members themselves cannot be

activated in a major political campaign like during the elections, it shows an extremely low level of consciousness and a very bad state of the Party organisation. In some states like Bihar and U.P., there is reluctance on the part of leading cadres to go and work during the elections in the constituencies where the Party is contesting. This localism is dictated by concern for remaining in their own areas with an eye to nurturing their own electoral constituencies or maintaining links with the allied party which is contesting. Another weakness noted is that in constituencies like Bhubaneswar, Nawadah, Wardha or Varanasi, despite contesting elections a number of times and having won the seats also, the Party organisation has not developed. No attention has been paid to developing the mass organisations and building the Party. Hence, we are totally dependent on the bourgeois party allies to gather the votes for us. If they fail to do so, we are in a helpless plight. In most of these constituencies, we were unable to man fifty per cent of the polling booths with our volunteers.

Parliamentarism does not mean just some individuals hankering for elected posts. It also means neglecting the work of building the Party and the mass movements and perpetuating the illusion that electoral activity is the sole political activity by which the Party can grow. It is necessary to combine parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work so that the mass movements are strengthened on which basis the Party can be expanded.

Rectification Campaign

The problems of factionalism, group rivalries, individualism and careerism all testify to the growing corrosion of political consciousness and Communist norms. The Party Congress direction for initiating a rectification campaign must be taken up immediately now that the elections are over. The next meeting of the Central Committee must discuss this matter in depth and decide how this campaign can be conducted inside the Party. This underlines the importance of the 15th Congress call for a rectification campaign within the Party to remove the wrong trends and defects in the organisation.

Polit Bureau/Central Committee Guidelines for Elections

The Central Committee, in its meeting in Madras in January 1996, had discussed and formulated certain guidelines for the selection of candidates. These were to be discussed in the state committees and given concrete shape. Based on this, efforts were made to limit the number of terms of the MPs and MLAs. In Kerala, the state secretariat/state committee discussed and decided that out of the 29 MLAs who had served more than 2 terms, 12 would be given exemption to contest again. Similarly, 3 comrades were recommended to re-contest the Lok Sabha elections. These proposals were forwarded to the P.B. for approval and it was implemented accordingly. Out of the 86 candidates who contested the assembly and Lok Sabha elections, only 17 had more than 2 to 3 terms. In the case of West Bengal, out of the 208 candidates for the assembly 57 sitting MLAs were changed and 17 candidates who lost were changed making a total of 74. There were 16 candidates who had served 4 terms and 8 candidates who had served more than 4 terms. In the Lok Sabha, out of the 31 candidates put up by the Party 9 were new candidates. Five sitting MPs did not contest again and 5 candidates were those who had served more than 4 terms. The West Bengal secretariat was of the opinion that many of those who had served more than 2-3 terms could not be dispensed with given the toughness of the contest and the short time given to make preparations to change candidates. In Andhra Pradesh, the sitting MP who served three terms was changed and a new candidate put up. In Orissa, for the Bhubaneswar seat given the difficult situation and the insistence of the Janata Dal to change our candidate, we decided to put up our sitting MP.

The P.B. had suggested that more women candidates should be put up this time. However, only 5 women candidates could be put out of the total of 76. Despite the request of the P.B., the Kerala committee could not put up even one woman candidate in our list. It is only West Bengal which made an effort in this regard and put up 3 women candidates. As for the rest, there was one from Andhra Pradesh and one from U.P. The struggle against the male-dominated outlook must continue. Given the fact that one-third reservation for women is going to be implemented soon for the legislatures

and parliament, the Party should seriously address itself to recruiting women in the Party from the mass organisations giving them sufficient scope for education and training so that there can be many women candidates of the Party in the coming days.

Election Commission Curbs

The Election Commission's directives on curbing of election propaganda and expenditure have affected our Party's campaign work according to the reports of many states. While a close check on election expenditure was helpful in curbing the misuse of illegal money and extravagant expenditure, unreasonable curbs on wall writings, propaganda by meetings and mikes and use of posters etc. works to the disadvantage of parties which rely more on political propaganda than on money power to reach the people with their message. Given the experience of these elections, we must mount a public campaign on how money power can be curbed in elections without limiting the use of genuine propaganda material and methods to reach the political message to the people.

Party Centre's Work

The election manifesto of the Party was finalised by the P.B. and released as soon as the elections were announced. The Party Centre published 16,000 copies in English and 40,000 copies in Hindi. The state committees printed the manifesto in various languages.

To assist the political campaign the agit-prop sub-committee decided to bring out a series of pamphlets on various topics to popularise the Party's policy positions. A total of 12 pamphlets covering economic policy, problems of the working class, peasantry, student and youth, women, imperialist pressures and corruption were brought out in English and Hindi from the Centre. Some of these pamphlets were brought out in the various languages by the state committees but some of the states could not utilise them in their own languages in time. A video cassette and some audio cassette of songs were also brought out.

Post-Election Situation

The pre-election situation and the post-election national scene have underlined the important role the Party and the Left have to

play in fighting the communal danger, forging the widest secular unity and defending the economic interests of the people and the country. The complicated political situation which emerged after the elections saw the serious bid by the BJP to install and function a government at the Centre. The success in uniting all the non-Congress(I) secular forces, in which our Party played key role led to the fall of the BJP Government and the formation of the Deve Gowda Government. The thwarting of the immediate threat of the BJP capturing power should however not lull us into complacency.

The BJP has emerged as a major force at the national level. Unlike other bourgeois parties it pursues an avowedly reactionary and communal programme. In the coming days, the Party will have to vigorously combat the spread of the communal ideology exposing its right-wing class character, the reactionary social philosophy of Hindutva and the serious implication of its being in power at the Centre. It also requires consistent efforts to widen the anti-communal mobilisation.

Utilising the presence of the U.F. Government at the Centre, all positive measures to strengthen federalism, secularism, democratic reforms and providing relief to the people must be pursued. At the same time, the Party has to preserve its independent identity, demarcate our position on policies which adversely affect the people, mobilise and launch struggles and movements to defend the interests of the working people.

The advance of the Left and democratic forces can be ensured only if we carry out the major tasks of combating the communal danger and resisting and reversing the imperialist-sponsored economic policies. Success in this direction can be ensured only if the Left is strengthened and united.

Following from the election experience, the Party has to address itself to the following tasks immediately:

1. Build up independent movements and struggles of the Party based on the charter of demands of the Left and Democratic Programme set out in the 15th Congress Political Resolution. At the same time, strengthen the united struggles of the different sections of the working people on their economic demands and against harmful economic policies.

2. Strengthen and widen the anti-communal mobilisation and step up the struggle against the communal divisive ideology.

3. Initiate immediate steps to draw in the new contacts and activists thrown up during the election campaign into the mass organisations and the Party. Remove the defects seen in the Party organisation during the elections and strengthen the live links with the people. Take steps to develop the Party organisation in the areas where the Party's election campaign has made an impact and developed new contacts.

4. All state committees should initiate measures to streamline the Party organisation on the basis of the direction given in the last state conference reports and the organisational task set out in the Party Congress. Building the Party organisation has to be accorded priority.

5. The Central Committee should, in the next meeting, chalk out steps for the rectification campaign called for in the 15th Congress to remove the defects and weaknesses which have crept into the Party organisation.

6. Urgent steps to raise the political-ideological level of the Party membership by systematic schooling taking into account the concrete level of consciousness of the Party members. Regular reporting and discussions at appropriate levels on Party policies and decisions must be arranged.

**9th, 10th & 11th Lok Sabha Elections
(Partywise percentage of votes polled)**

Party	1989	1991	1996	Seats won in 1996
Congress(I)	39.5	36.5	29.8	142
BJP	11.5	20.1	20.8	160
JD	17.7	11.8	8.1	45
CPI(M)	6.6	6.2	6.2	32
CPI	2.6	2.5	2.0	12
Forward Bloc	0.4	0.4	0.4	3
RSP	0.7	0.6	0.7	5
SP	—	—	3.3	17
TDP	3.3	3.0	3.1	16
DMK	2.5	2.1	2.3	17
TMC	—	—	2.5	20
AGP	—	0.5	0.9	
Congress(T)	—	—	1.41	4
Samata	—	—	2.0	8
HVP	—	0.1	0.3	3
Shiv Sena	—	0.8	1.6	15
BSP	2.0	1.6	4.0	11
TDP(LP)	—	—	1.0	—
AIADMK	1.5	1.6	0.7	—
JMM	—	—	1.41	1
SAD(Akali)	0.03	—	0.8	8

Note: 1996 voting percentages are only preliminary estimates.

Congress(I) (Preliminary Estimates)
(Comparative vote percentages in 1991 and 1996)

Name of State	1991	1996	Increase or Decrease
Andhra Pradesh	45.6 25(42)	40.9 22(41)	-4.7
Assam	28.5 8(14)	33.6 5(14)	+5.1
Bihar	24.2 1(51)	13.7 2(51)	-10.5
Delhi	39.6 2(7)	39.9 2(7)	+0.3
Gujarat	29.0 5(16)	40.4 10(26)	+11.2
Haryana	37.2 9(10)	23.4 2(10)	-13.8
Himachal Pradesh	46.2 2(2)	54.7 4(4)	+8.5
Karnataka	42.1 23(28)	31.0 15(27)	-11.1
Kerala	38.8 13(16)	38.7 7(17)	-0.1
Maharashtra	45.3 77(40)	32.2 8(40)	-13.1
	48.4 38(48)	35.4 15(48)	-13.0
Orissa	44.1 13(21)	46.0 16(21)	-1.9
Punjab	49.3 12(13)	36.2 2(13)	-13.1
Rajasthan	44.0 13(25)	41.2 12(25)	-2.8
Tamil Nadu	42.6 28(28)	19.2 0(29)	-23.4
Tripura	82.8 2(2)	34.6 0(2)	-48.2
Uttar Pradesh	18.3 5(82)	8.1 5(79)	-10.2
West Bengal	36.2 5(41)	40.9 9(42)	+4.7

Note: Seats won and total seats contested (in bracket) is given in second row.

BJP (Preliminary Estimates)
(Comparative vote percentages in 1991 and 1996)

Name of State	1991	1996	Increase or Decrease
Andhra Pradesh	9.6 2(41)	5.2 0(37)	-4.4 .
Assam	9.6 2(8)	16.3 2(13)	-6.7
Bihar	16.0 5(53)	21.6 18(31)	+5.6
Delhi	40.2 5(7)	53.1 5(7)	+12.9
Gujarat	50.4 20(26)	50.7 16(26)	+0.3
Haryana	10.2 0(10)	21.5 4(6)	+11.5
Himachal Pradesh	42.8 2(4)	39.9 0(4)	-2.9
Karnataka	28.8 4(28)	25.0 6(27)	-3.8
Kerala	4.6 0(19)	5.7 0(18)	+1.1
Madhya Pradesh	41.9 12(40)	42.8 27(39)	+0.9
Maharashtra	20.2 6(32)	22.3 18	+2.1
Orissa	9.5 0(21)	13.3 0(20)	+3.8
Punjab	(1992)16.5 0(9)	6.6 0(6)	-9.9
Rajasthan	40.9 12(25)	43.1 12(25)	+2.2
Tamil Nadu	1.7 0(15)	3.0 0(37)	+1.3
Tripura	1.5 0(1)	6.6 0(2)	+5.1
Uttar Pradesh	32.8 51(84)	33.5 52(83)	+0.7
West Bengal	11.7 0(42)	6.9 0(42)	-4.8

Note: Seats won and total seats contested (in bracket) is given in second row

Entry of Foreign Print Media Opposed*

**Statement Dated August 4, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the unilateral decision of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, to open the doors to foreign print media into the country. It is a matter of shock and grave concern that the 1993 proposal for a tie-up between the Business Standard and the Financial Times (London) which the Narasimha Rao Government dared not clear in the face of countrywide democratic opposition, has now been cleared by the FIPB under the United Front Government.

Already there is widespread popular resentment to the ugly assault on our national values and culture, through the open skies. In this background, the entry of foreign print media will lead to unprecedented degeneration of Indian culture, loss of our national identity, ultimate imperialist domination and control of our media, which, in turn, will pose a serious direct threat to our national unity and sovereignty. It is for this very reason that late Prime Minister Nehru remained firm and adamant against entry of foreign media.

The Polit Bureau demands that clearance given to Business Standard-Financial Times tie-up be cancelled. It calls upon all patriotic people in the country to raise their voice in protest.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 11, 1996.

CPI(M) Opposes PSU's Disinvestment*

**Statement Dated August 9, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The CPI(M) expresses its disapproval and opposition to the Government's decision to proceed with the disinvestment of shares of the public sector units. First of all, the Union Budget has proposed to raise Rs. 5,000 crore through the disinvestment of PSU shares. In order to achieve this the first two rounds of disinvestment beginning from September have been planned. It has been announced that disinvestment of shares will take place in one PSU at a time. Among the PSUs so listed are the most profitable concerns such as ONGC, VSNL, Indian Oil and so on.

This process of disinvestment cannot be accepted as they follow the same path taken by the previous Government. First of all, the first two tranches of disinvestment will be done without the participation of the Disinvestment Commission which is being set up. This is contrary to what is stated in Common Minimum Programme. Secondly, the shares offered for sale are of the most profitable PSUs. The CMP has committed the Government to strengthen the PSUs which are profitable and are performing well. Is the sale of the shares of these PSUs like the VSNL and the Indian Oil Corporation designed to strengthen the profitable PSUs? It is also reported that the cabinet has taken a decision to disinvest shares of PSUs in the non-core and non-strategic sectors up to 74 per cent of their equity holdings. Divesting 74 per cent of the shares would mean privatisation of these units. There is no explanation from either the industries ministry or the finance ministry of what is the definition of the non-core, non-strategic areas.

*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, August 18, 1996
'PSU' means 'Public Sector Undertaking'.

The terms and reference for the Disinvestment Commission make it clear that all that the Government proposes to do is to raise money through the sale of profitable PSU shares and use it to meet the budgetary deficit. This is the meaning of the talk of putting such money into health and education sectors. Even if disinvestment of shares is done, one would expect such money to be ploughed back into the public sector units concerned for their strengthening and upgradation.

The budget proposals have not yet been passed by parliament, yet disinvestment of specific PSUs have already been chalked out. The Polit Bureau, therefore, wants the Government to stick to the commitment of strengthening the PSUs made in the CMP. Any step outside this framework requires discussions.

The United Front Government is expected to strengthen the self-reliant basis of the economy, step up public investment in infrastructure, agriculture and increase state expenditure in the social sectors. All this requires not the dismantling of the public sector but strengthening it by revamping and streamlining it. The direction of public sector disinvestment will not serve these aims.

All Telecom Deals Must Be Reviewed*

**Demand made by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M)
In Its Statement Dated August 22, 1996 Issued to Press**

It is nearly a week since the CBI raids unearthed the huge amount of illegal money and other assets kept by the former Union Minister, Sukh Ram. It is surprising that up to now the authorities have not been able to trace the whereabouts of Sukh Ram abroad who is also a sitting member of parliament.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the concerned authorities take immediate steps to apprehend the former minister and bring him back to India forthwith to face the charges against him.

It is shameful that the Congress(I) leadership continues to maintain that the guilt of Sukh Ram has to be established even while being forced to suspend him from the party. The CBI should not confine itself to investigating the single case of corruption involving the contract awarded to the ARM Ltd. It should conduct a broad-based investigation into the whole gamut of contracts awarded during Sukh Ram's tenure.

Given the enormity and the wide ramifications of the shocking corruption in the telecom ministry under Sukh Ram, the Polit Bureau demands that the Deve Gowda Government should take immediate steps to review the whole range of tendering and awarding of contracts and licences in the basic telecom services and the cellular phone services. Nothing but a full-fledged investigation and open enquiry will satisfy the people.

Government Spokesmen Creating Confusion in J & K*

**Statement Dated August 27, 1996 Issued by
Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary
of CPI(M), to Press**

At a time when the whole world is looking towards the outcome of the elections in Jammu & Kashmir, where the people, fed up with the activities of the extremists and separatists, are going to express their desire for peace by reiterating their determination to protect their identity within the framework of Indian unity, confusion is being created by some of the statements by the government's spokesmen. Unfortunately, some statements have come from the Home Minister himself.

In his interview to the BBC, he is supposed to have stated that surveys indicated that the Hindu-majority Jammu and the Buddhist-dominated Laddakh did not wish to be part of the present state of Jammu and Kashmir and that religious separatism was strong only in the Kashmir valley. He is also supposed to have said that the government is already considering a Union Territory status for Laddakh. With regard to the future status of Jammu, he has said that nothing has been finalised and that the nature of autonomy for the valley is also being discussed. He has further said that the success of the proposal would, however, depend entirely on the polls being conducted in a free and fair manner.

These comments go fundamentally against the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front. The CMP assures maximum autonomy to the people of Kashmir and envisages a proper status for the people of both Laddakh and Jammu. But in no case has it agreed to the division of the state into three units. Such a proposal will have serious implications nationally and internationally and is disruptive of national unity to which the United Front is wedded.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 1, 1996.

This has sent wrong signals to the people of Jammu and Kashmir where crucial elections are being held to vindicate India's stand and to thwart the game of foreign powers which want to destabilise our country. Blaming the people of Kashmir for calling victims to religious separatism shows complete ignorance about the culture and the aspirations of the Kashmir people

The Prime Minister reiterated on the floor of parliament about the commitment of the United Front to grant maximum autonomy alongwith economic package, the development of Kashmins economic and social life which have been ruined during the last few years.

Restraint has to be exercised while advancing new proposals with regard to Jammu & Kashmir which already has been complicated by the manoeuvres of foreign powers, particularly by the proxy war being fought by the Pakistani rulers. The problem should not be seen from a partisan angle as it concerns no particular party. It is a national question. Its solution lies in winning over the people of Kashmir, who unfortunately got alienated for some time. The elections in Jammu & Kashmir provide the best opportunity for them. All efforts have to be made to mobilise the people. It is these elections alone which will consolidate the desire of the people for peace.

On Demand for Gorkhaland State*

Statement Dated September 9, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

Consequent to the announcement about the proposed formation of a separate state of Uttarakhand by the Prime Minister on Independence Day, the demand for a separate state comprising the Darjeeling hill areas has been raised again. Hopes are being aroused that such a state can solve the problems being faced by the Nepali-speaking people of the hill area.

The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was set up after a prolonged agitation for the redressal of the grievances of the six lakhs of people who live there. The Left Front Government has been sincerely cooperating to ensure that the autonomous council functions satisfactorily. There are a greater number of Nepali-speaking people living outside the hill areas in the state. The provision of a Hill Council within West Bengal enabled both the Nepali-speaking people of the hills and the plains to take advantage of employment and other opportunities all over the state.

It is true that many areas and regions in the country suffer from economic backwardness and the overall uneven development has contributed to feelings of neglect. In recent times, the question of ethnic identity has also come to the fore. All these issues require to be tackled so that the genuine problems of the ethnic and linguistic minorities are resolved in a framework wherein the unity of the people belonging to different communities and the working people is preserved.

The CPI(M) does not consider the formation of a separate state as the solution of the basic problems such as poverty and

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 15, 1996

uneven development. We are of the view that autonomy within the state where similar conditions prevail, is a better solution. At the same time, the Party understands the special problems faced by the hill people in the Darjeeling area and shares their aspirations for all-round progress. Therefore, in view of the special situation in the hill areas where 95 per cent speak the Nepali language, the autonomous council was formed. No solution can be found by recourse to coercive agitation. It is necessary for discussions to be held in a peaceful atmosphere so that a democratic solution can be found. The Polit Bureau is confident that the Left Front Government will look after the interests of the Nepali-speaking people in West Bengal as well as the other linguistic and religious minorities in the state.

Condolence on Comrade Mansur Habibullah*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is deeply grieved at the passing away of Comrade Mansur Habibullah. Comrade Habibullah, from his student days, was active in the anti-imperialist movement. He was amongst the first batch of Communist activists to emerge from Burdwan district.

After joining the party in 1935, Comrade Habibullah played a notable role in the early period of the Communist movement in Bengal. He was one of the builders of the Kisan movement. Defying repression, he was injured in the police firing in Rajshahi jail in 1946. After the formation of the Left Front Government, Comrade Habibullah served as the Speaker of the legislative assembly and later as the law minister.

Devoted to the cause of Marxism-Leninism, Comrade Habibullah was an erudite person who, despite failing health, read and wrote regularly. At the Fifteenth Congress of the Party in April 1995, Comrade Habibullah was amongst the ten veteran comrades who were felicitated for their contribution to the revolutionary movement.

The Party and the working class movement has lost a tested leader. The Polit Bureau pays homage to his memory and conveys its heartfelt condolences to his family members.

The CPI(M) general secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, has sent the following message of condolence:

I am saddened by the news of the death of Mansur Habibullah. He was a comrade who had served the Party with devotion for six

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decades. He was one of the pioneers who did invaluable work in the formation of the Students' Federation and Kisan Sabha in Bengal. A staunch revolutionary, loyal to the Communist Party in all its twists and turns, his life will always be an example to others in the movement. I salute his memory and convey my heartfelt condolences to his family.

Homage to Comrade Sunil Maitra*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) announces with deep grief the sudden death of Comrade Sunil Maitra, member of the Polit Bureau and editor of *People's Democracy* on the morning of September 18, 1996 due to a massive heart attack in Calcutta.

Sunil Maitra, who was born in 1927, joined the freedom struggle as a very young student. He joined the All India Students' Federation in 1940 and took an active part in the Quit India movement for which he was imprisoned for over a year. He became active in the trade union movement in 1946 as an employee of an insurance company. He joined the undivided Communist Party in 1952.

All through his active political life spanning over five decades, Sunil Maitra was closely associated with the working class movement. His political and organisational abilities propelled him to become one of the builders of the trade union movement among the insurance employees. He was one of the founders of the All India Insurance Employees Association. At the time of the split in the united party, he took a firm position in defence of Marxism-Leninism. Recognising his qualities, he was elected to the Calcutta district committee of the CPI(M) in 1967 and served as a member of the secretariat of the district committee for a long time.

Comrade Sunil Maitra was elected to the Central Committee of the Party at the 12th Party Congress in 1985. Subsequently, he was elected to the Secretariat of the Central Committee

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 22, 1996

at the 13th Congress in 1988 and to the Polit Bureau in the 14th Congress in 1992. Comrade Sunil Maitra took over the editorship of *People's Democracy* in 1992 and he continued to serve in the Party centre in this capacity till his death. He was also a member of the Editorial Board of the Party's theoretical journal, *The Marxist*. Comrade Sunil Maitra, apart from writing regularly in the Party newspapers and journals, was the author of several Party publications.

Comrade Sunil Maitra's life was marked by a ceaseless effort to deepen and enrich his Marxist-Leninist understanding. He constantly strove to creatively apply Marxism to new developments and issues. He was a leader who contributed to strengthening the collective style of functioning. He was a comrade who endeared himself to all by his frank and affectionate behaviour.

He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1980. His services in parliament will be recalled for the important contribution he made as the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

His untimely death is a big loss for the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee. His devoted service to the cause of the working class and the Communist movement will forever be cherished.

The Polit Bureau pays its respectful homage to the memory of Comrade Sunil Maitra. It sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife Comrade Nilima Maitra, who is an active leader of the Party, and his sons Gautam, Bhaskar, Kunal and Kushal.

Polit Bureau on Kashmir Poll Victory*

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) congratulates the people of Jammu & Kashmir for the successful conduct of the elections to the state legislature. The large participation in the polls reflect the aspirations of the people for restoration of peace and normalcy in the state. The big victory registered by the National Conference is also a confirmation of the popular sentiments.

With the successful completion of the Assembly Elections, the United Front Government in consultation with the new state government must take steps to provide maximum autonomy so that the success registered through the elections can be consolidated. The new state government will have to take immediate steps with the assistance of the Centre to create suitable conditions for the return and rehabilitation of migrants who were forced to leave the valley combined with economic measures to provide relief to the people. These steps will effectively foil the designs of the Pakistani regime to destabilise the situation in the state.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 6, 1996

On Dastardly Killing in Kashmir*

**Statement Dated September 26, 1996 Issued by
Harkishan Singh Surjeet, General Secretary of CPI(M)**

On behalf of the CPI(M), I strongly condemn the dastardly killing of Mr. Mohd Akbar Bhat, father-in-law of the Jammu & Kashmir CPI(M) state secretary, Mohd Yusuf Tarigami by some extremists at Kulgam.

This heinous act has been committed to retaliate against the successful poll campaign conducted in Kulgam constituency where Comrade Tarigami was the candidate. There was 60 per cent polling in this constituency despite various threats to the Party activists and the common people. After the polling day extremist elements have been intimidation the voters, beating up people and issuing threats for participating in the poll. The relatives and family members of Yusuf Tarigami are being constantly threatened. The Party has repeatedly asked the authorities to ensure the safety and security of those threatened and to take firm steps to curb the activities of the miscreants. So far effective steps have not been taken. The CPI(M) demands immediate and adequate measures to curb the activities of the extremists in the Kulgam area and the arrest of those persons responsible for the murder of Mr. Bhat.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 6, 1996.

Attack on CPI(M) Office in Gwalior*

**Statement Dated September 28, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the attack on the CPI(M) district committee office in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh in the early hours of 27th September. An RSS gang of men armed with guns and iron rods ransacked the office, set it on fire and burnt all the furniture and records. A car outside the office was also gutted. This brazen attack has taken place after the inflammatory call given by the RSS leadership to retaliate against the CPI(M) for a regrettable incident in Kerala.

The RSS chief Shri Rajinder Singh has issued a public statement warning the CPI(M) of serious consequences and the RSS paper *Panchajanya* has openly given a call for violent retaliation. The attack on the Gwalior office of the Party is a direct result of such provocative calls. Faced with increasing political isolation and discrediting of the image of the Hindutva forces and their debacle in Gujarat, the RSS is trying to resort to violent intimidation against its opponents. The CPI(M) warns the RSS leadership to desist from such undemocratic and violent tactics. It calls upon all democratic minded sections and political parties to oppose such acts of violence.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the Madhya Pradesh Government and the police authorities to taken immediate and firm action to apprehend the culprits responsible for the arson.

Meanwhile, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau member, P. Ramachandran, who is in charge of Madhya Pradesh, is leaving for Gwalior tomorrow to assess the situation.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 13, 1996.

Homage to Comrade Godavari Parulekar*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep grief at the passing away of Comrade Godavari Parulekar, veteran leader of the Party, prominent freedom fighter and a builder of the adivasi and kisan movement in the country. Comrade Godavari was aged 89 years and had been ill for the past few years.

Graduating from the Ferguson College in Pune, she studied law and became the first woman law graduate in Maharashtra. She joined the freedom struggle and was sent to prison for participating in the satyagraha movement. After taking up social service under the auspices of the Servants of India Society, she soon joined the working class movement. Active in the trade union movement during the second world war period, she was again detained by the British. In 1942 she began working in the rural areas. It was her pioneering work and inspiring leadership which led to the Warli adivasi revolt against feudal oppression. The Warli adivasi movement constituted an important chapter in the anti-feudal upsurge in the period before independence.

Comrade Godavari, from the forties, played a key role in the development of the kisan movement. She was the Vice President of the All India Kisan Sabha for several years and also the President of the Maharashtra Kisan Sabha. She became President of the All India Kisan Sabha in 1986.

At the time of the split in the Party in 1964 she took a firm position in defence of Marxism-Leninism and played an important role in the formation of the CPI(M). She was elected a member of

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the Central Committee of the Party when the CPI(M) was formed in 1964 at the Seventh Congress. She retired due to ill health in 1992 at the 14th Party Congress. She served as a member of the Secretariat of the Maharashtra State Committee of the Party for nearly three decades.

Comrade Godavari Parulekar was an exemplary Communist. Her total identification with the oppressed peasantry and the adivasi people made her a legend in her lifetime. As a social reformer, patriot and revolutionary she made her own distinctive contributions in public life spanning over six decades. Godavari spent altogether eight years in jail. She was married to Comrade Shamrao Parulekar who was her Party comrade and companion for three decades.

The Polit Bureau pays its respectful homage to the memory of Comrade Godavari Parulekar. The entire Party and the Communist movement will for ever cherish her memory and be inspired by her dedicated life.

On Shocking Act Of Vandalism*

**Statement Dated October 11, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the shocking act of vandalism perpetrated by the Bajrang Dal, an outfit of the RSS in destroying the paintings of M.F. Hussain at an art gallery in Ahmedabad. This outrageous act of burning a number of paintings and other works of art of M.F. Hussain is a result of the campaign launched by the RSS/VHP combine against Hussain for his paintings which have been branded as anti-Hindu.

The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic-minded people to protest against this barbarous act and the fascist mentality it displays. The Gujarat administration should immediately apprehend all those responsible for this crime and see that stringent punishment is meted out to them.

The efforts of the Hindu communalist forces to intimidate artists and suppress creative cultural activity must be firmly resisted. The RSS and its outfits must realise that such tactics will only lead to its further isolation and ignominy.

Polit Bureau Communique*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi on October 13-14, 1996. It issued the following statement on October 15, 1996:

AFGHANISTAN

The capture of Kabul by the Taliban military forces has aggravated and created a serious situation in the region and the situation within Afghanistan. The barbarous killing of former President, Najibullah, the fundamentalist injunctions to close down girl schools and stop women from working and the summary executions of political opponents have all created revulsion against the regime in Kabul. The Taliban are a force which has been reared and backed by the Pakistani rulers and the ISI. The USA has been extending covert assistance to this manoeuvre of Pakistan in order to extend its sphere of influence of Afghanistan.

The unstable situation and the intensification of hostilities have led to increased suffering for the civilian population. The leaders of the Russian Federation and Central Asian republics have correctly urged the U.N. to adopt urgent measures to stop hostilities. The Indian government's reaction has not been commensurate to the gravity of the situation. It is unfortunate that the external affairs ministry did not come out with an immediate condemnation of the killing of Najibullah and the terror unleashed in Kabul. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the Indian government to closely monitor the situation in Afghanistan and take prompt steps

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, October 20, 1996

to see that the U.N. and the international community intervenes to stop the fighting and to check the Taliban's suppression of elementary human rights.

Uttar Pradesh Elections

The Polit Bureau expressed its satisfaction at the success of the secular forces in defeating the BJP in the assembly elections. The main aim of the United Front and the secular forces was to ensure the defeat of the BJP and check the communal forces. The BJP has won 174 seats which is less than its tally in the 1993 assembly elections, when the SP-BSP alliance was in existence. In the May Lok Sabha polls, it had won an outright majority in 236 assembly segments. It has lost 60 assembly segments since then. The fact that the BJP has failed to win a majority and lost ground in terms of popular support is due to the effective campaign launched by the six-party alliance of the United Front. This alliance has won 134 seats. The efforts to form a secular government in Uttar Pradesh rest on the basis of the common will to isolate the BJP. That is why the United Front had requested that all secular parties should write to the Governor that they will not extend support to the BJP in its effort to form a government. The BSP has refused to send such a letter and has instead been directing its attacks on the United Front rather than the BJP. Only a common commitment to stop the BJP as suggested by the United Front can lead to any talks for the formation of a non-BJP government. The opportunistic and cynical political stance of the BSP leadership does not help this process.

Jammu & Kashmir

The Polit Bureau congratulated the people of Jammu & Kashmir for their big participation in the polling. The decisive victory registered by the National Conference is an indication of the people's yearning for peace and restoration of normalcy. The government headed by Farooq Abdullah has to fulfil these expectations. In order to do so, the Central Government, in consultation with the state government, must work out the proposals for the provision of maximum autonomy to the state within a set time. It is also important to take steps to bring back

and rehabilitate the migrants who have left the valley. Steps to revive the economy and generating employment must be taken up for implementation.

The United Front Government can take credit for the successful holding of the elections. Now the process of restoration of peace and normalcy must be carried forward so that the extremist forces backed by Pakistan can be further isolated.

United Front Government's Economic Policies

The Polit Bureau discussed some of the important policy measures being taken by the Deve Gowda Government in the economic sphere. The Rs. 5000-crore disinvestment of PSU shares now being put into action with the first two rounds of disinvestment; the new proposals to liberalise foreign direct investment by expansion of the list of industries for automatic entry of foreign capital and the stand to be taken by the government of India in the WTO negotiations were considered. The Polit Bureau expressed its disagreement with these measures. It wanted a full discussion in the United Front and other appropriate forums on the whole gamut of economic policies. The Polit Bureau stressed the necessity to make a break from the IMF-World Bank policies pursued by the previous Congress(I) Government.

The Polit Bureau noted that not much progress has been made in the scheme for providing foodgrains through the public distribution system at 50 per cent lesser prices for people below the poverty line. The expansion and strengthening of the PDS is of utmost importance as continuous price rise is affecting the people's living standards badly.

On Gorkhaland Issue

The Polit Bureau reiterated its stand that the problems of ethnic minorities and regional backwardness arising out of uneven capitalist development cannot be solved by the formation of separate states or the slogan of smaller states. The CPI(M) is also opposed to the break up of states set up on the linguistic principle. In the case of Gorkhaland, the Polit Bureau reiterates its opinion that the issue must be discussed and settled in a peaceful and democratic manner.

Struggle Against Corruption

The Polit Bureau noted that the host of corruption scandals which were the hallmark of the previous Narasimha Rao Government have now led to a series of cases being registered in the courts. Apart from the hawala scandal, the fraudulent urea import case, old St. Kitts forgery case, the Lakhubhai Pathak cheating case, the Satish Sharma petrol pump and gas agency allocation; the Sheila Kaul house allotment case are all now before the courts. Most of the accused are those who were ministers including the Prime Minister in the previous Congress(I) Government. In Bihar, the multi-crore animal husbandry fodder scam is being investigated by the CBI and progress has been registered and the case is now before the Patna High Court.

In this period, there have been disturbing efforts made to hinder the progress in investigations or to stall the cases which have already come up in the courts. The frantic efforts being made on behalf of former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao is a glaring instance.

The CPI(M) wants no interference whatsoever in the investigations by the CBI and other investigating agencies. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) warns against any effort to hinder the course of justice and bringing those guilty of corruption to book.

25th October: Observe Anti-Corruption Day

In this connection the Polit Bureau decided to mobilise people to demand that the corruption cases be speedily investigated, the guilty brought to book and all efforts to subvert the law be exposed. To mobilise public opinion in this struggle against high level corruption which affects the lives of common people and the interests of the country by the loot of public funds and the diversion of public resources to private pockets, the Polit Bureau calls for the observance of an anti-corruption day on October 25. On this day all Party units should organise demonstrations, public meetings and other activities to highlight the struggle against corruption and to demand that Narasimha Rao and all other political leaders guilty of corruption be brought to trial speedily.

On Andhra Floods*

**Statement Dated October 22, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses deep anguish at the large-scale loss of life and destruction of property that the recent floods have caused in Andhra Pradesh.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the Government of India to render generous help and assistance to the relief operations being conducted by the State Government.

A team of CPI(M) MPs headed by Polit Bureau member, Ramachandran Pillai, is visiting the flood-affected areas.

Concede Demand on Bonus*

**Statement Dated October 23, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) supports the just demand of the postal and telecommunication employees, who have gone on a nationwide strike from today. When the ceiling on bonus to port and dock workers and railways have already been removed, the Polit Bureau considers that there is no justification in retaining the ceiling on postal and telecommunication employees. The income tax department employees also are going to join the strike on the same demand.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon the United Front Government to concede the demand straightaway and help restore normalcy in these vital sectors.

Central Committee Communique*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi from October 29 to 31, 1996. The meeting reviewed the international and national developments during the past three months and issued the following statement on November 1, 1996:

Jammu and Kashmir

The Central Committee expressed satisfaction at the successful holding of the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir and the substantial participation of the people in the electoral process. The Central Committee appreciated the role of the Party leadership whose political intervention enabled the National Conference to join the electoral process and ensured the wider participation. With the installation of the Farooq Abdullah Government, it is now necessary that the Central Government take the initiative to see that maximum autonomy is granted to the state as promised in the Common Minimum Programme. The State Government should, with the assistance of the Centre, take immediate steps for the return of the migrants to the Valley and for their rehabilitation. The State Government should now undertake speedy and effective measures for reviving the economic activities which have been disrupted for a long time and for generating employment opportunities in the state.

Uttar Pradesh

The Central Committee noted the success in Uttar Pradesh in defeating the BJP's bid to win a majority in the assembly. The BJP

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has in fact suffered a setback as it had won an outright majority of the assembly segments in the Lok Sabha polls. The BJP has lost ground both in terms of votes and seats. This has been possible due to the effective campaign launched by the United Front constituents.

The Central Committee criticised the stand of the Congress(I) party which has insisted on its one-point programme of making Mayawati the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Such a pre-condition has blocked the efforts for the formation of a secular government. The BSP leadership has been taking an unscrupulous and opportunist position regarding the BJP as seen by its negotiations with the latter and its blackmailing attitude to the United Front.

The Central Committee condemned the assault on media-persons by the BSP leader Kanshi Ram and his associates. Such brazen attacks cannot be in any manner condoned. The case registered must be pursued by the police without hindrance.

Demand for Separate States

The Central Committee voiced its concern at the manner in which the announcement of a separate state of Uttarakhand was made by the Prime Minister on independence day. There was no consultation on this issue within the United Front and this demand had not been included in the Common Minimum Programme. This announcement has opened the floodgates for similar demands for separate states in other parts of the country. Already the demands for Jharkhand, Gorkhaland, Chattisgarh and Vidharba have been intensified. The demand for smaller states based on administrative convenience has been voiced by the BJP for a long time. This stand of the Hindutva advocates is designed to break up the linguistic states so that the strong identity of linguistic nationalities is blunted and a strong authoritarian Centre can rule over weaker small states. It is unfortunate that this demand has now been supported by some secular leaders.

Given the uneven nature of capitalist development in the country, there are many regions which are backward in different states. There are also substantial adivasi and other ethnic

minorities who have been neglected, discriminated against, or have suffered due to lack of development. It is to meet this problem that the CPI(M) has been advocating regional autonomy for such regions within the states concerned. Provision of meaningful autonomy can to some extent alleviate the problems. The basic problems of economic backwardness, unemployment, poverty and social oppression cannot be solved by the formation of separate states.

Gorkhaland Issue

It is in this light that the CPI(M) has not favoured the formation of a separate state in the Darjeeling hill areas where six lakh Nepali-speaking people live. The demand for Gorkhaland stems from the aspirations of the Nepali-speaking people for economic development, recognition of their linguistic identity and equal opportunities. The Left Front Government is committed to fulfil these aspirations and has an established record of non-discrimination between linguistic, religious or ethnic groups.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M), therefore, does not accept the solution of a separate state of Gorkhaland. It appeals to all sections of the people of the hill areas not to resort to any form of agitation which disrupts normal life or generates violence. The Left Front Government is willing to discuss all matters in a democratic manner and arrive at a peaceful solution. .

U.F. Government's Economic Policies

The Central Committee reviewed the economic policies being pursued by the Deve Gowda Government in the past five months. In the recent period, the government has taken major initiatives for further disinvestment of public sector unit shares and liberalisation of foreign direct investment. The CPI(M) has expressed its opposition to both these moves.

In the case of the disinvestment of PSU shares, the shares of most profitable concerns are being disinvested in the first two rounds. The Disinvestment Commission set-up will process the third round of disinvestment. The CPI(M) wishes to point out to the government the experience of the disinvestment of shares

in the last financial year when a proposed Rs. 7000 crore disinvestment yielded a paltry Rs. 167 crore. The U.F. Government should not sell away the public assets cheaply to private parties and bear the ignominy of such a scandal.

In the case of foreign investment, the Industry Minister is going further ahead than the Narasimha Rao regime in liberalising the regulation of FDI investment. The recent minerals policy is blatantly in favour of foreign multinationals. In the case of the WTO negotiations, the U.F. Government is proposing to do away with quantitative restrictions on imports in the next five years. Such a move will affect indigenous industry and employment and worsen the balance of payments position.

The Central Committee noted that those provisions within the framework of the Common Minimum Programme such as the strengthening of the public distribution system, increasing allocations in the social sector in areas such as health and education, are not being taken up seriously for implementation. Legislation in favour of the working people such as the central legislation for agricultural workers, provision of secret ballot for trade union recognition have yet to be initiated and adopted.

The United Front should realise that carrying forward the IMF-World Bank framework of policies will only engender popular discontent as these policies are against the people's interests. The Narasimha Rao Government got isolated from the people and was decisively rejected precisely due to such policies.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) decided to mobilise the people for mass actions and struggles to oppose policies which are detrimental to the people's interests. The Party will continue to press for the implementation of the provisions in the CMP which are in the interests of the common people.

Corruption

The former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and a growing band of his ministerial colleagues are now facing trial on various charges of corruption which are truly shocking in their magnitude and variety. Charges of swindling of public funds, acceptance of bribes for favours done, bribery of opposition MPs, cheating and

criminal conspiracy are some of the charges contained in the charge-sheets filed by the CBI. In the scale of venality and criminality no other regime in independent India has matched this sordid record. It is essential for the future of democracy that all those accused at the highest level are brought to book and tried without any hindrance or interference.

The Congress(I) leaders who stand in the dock are today trying to accuse the judiciary of transgressing its constitutional boundaries. The question here is of ensuring that the law is applied to all, however high they may be. The Central Committee of the CPI(M) emphatically demands that there should be no interference or pressure exercised on the ongoing investigations in such corruption cases. The act of the Law Minister earlier of asking the CBI not to oppose the bail application of Narasimha Rao and the effort to dilute the CBI report submitted to the Patna High Court in the animal husbandry scandal cannot be allowed to be repeated. The Central Committee calls upon its Party units to constantly expose corruption in high places and mobilise the people to demand that the culprits be brought to justice.

Reservation for Women

The Central Committee demanded that the bill for reservation of women in the Lok Sabha, introduced in the last session of the Lok Sabha, be taken up for immediate adoption in the forthcoming winter session of Parliament. Since all the national political parties have committed to one-third reservation for women in the legislatures, there is no need for further discussions.

Foreign Policy

The Central Committee appreciated the stand taken by the Central Government on the CTBT issue; it conforms to India's vital interests and security concerns. However, the overall record of the government's foreign policy positions in this period has been a mixed one with some major departures from the non-aligned policy the U.F. Government is expected to implement as formulated in the Common Minimum Programme. The major lapse has been on the Afghanistan developments. The government

failed to come out sharply against the barbarous killing of former President, Najibullah, by the Taliban. In contrast to the position taken by countries like Russia, the Central Asian Republics and Iran, the Indian Government kept stating that it was watching the situation. It was much later that a more categorical position was taken. Such a stance is surprising when Afghanistan is of such vital concern to India and the South Asian region.

On the brazen aerial attacks launched by the U.S. on Baghdad and Iraq, the Indian Government was not forthcoming in forthright condemnation of such brazen aggression and violation of international law. The U.F. Government has also been resiling from the stand of recognition to the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic. It has not upgraded the status of the charge d'affaires to Ambassadorial rank nor signed the resolution in the U.N. for the implementation of U.N. resolutions on Western Sahara. Even on the question of relations with Cuba, there are indications that the Government of India is not adopting a helpful position on the question of credit and other trade matters.

The Central Committee called upon the U.F. Government to steer a firm course on foreign policy, adhering to independent, non-aligned principles and resist western pressures.

Rectification Campaign

The Central Committee discussed measures to streamline the Party organisation and for toning up the standards of the leadership at various levels. For this the Central Committee decided to launch a rectification campaign for a six-month period, the details of which will be worked out by the Polit Bureau.

Editor of People's Democracy

The Central Committee appointed Sitaram Yechury, member of the Polit Bureau, as the new editor of *People's Democracy*.

Call for Mass Movements

The Central Committee called upon the Party and the Left forces to launch mass campaigns and struggles on urgent issues of the people such as (1) demand for strengthening the public

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distribution system as a measure against continuous price-rise of essential commodities; (2) adoption of a central legislation for agricultural labour; implementation of land reforms; (3) opening of closed industrial units and against privatisation of the public sector; (4) fight against the growing atrocities and oppression of women; and (5) fight against corruption at all levels and punishing those guilty.

The Central Committee issued separate statements on the Central Government employees' strike on bonus and the Andhra Pradesh flood situation.

Report on Political Developments*

Adopted by The Central Committee of
The CPI(M) in Its Meeting Held in New Delhi
on October 29-31, 1996

INTERNATIONAL

Due to compelling national developments, we have not been able to discuss the international developments since the Central Committee meeting in Madras in January. Many important developments have taken place during this period, which in many ways confirm the direction of the analysis made by the 15th Party Congress.

World Capitalist Economy

Despite all optimistic projections for speedy economic development in 1996, the actual performance of both the advanced capitalist countries as well as that of the capitalist world have not been up to the mark. The IMF, in its semi-annual review of the world economic outlook in April, has scaled down the anticipated growth rate for the world from 4.1 per cent to 3.8 per cent. Similarly, the OECD, in its semi-annual economic outlook, reduced the growth rate for 24 developed capitalist countries from 2.6 to 2.1 for 1996.

Both the G7 and the OECD had concentrated on improving the employment situation in 1996. Despite this, unemployment continued to be a major problem in the developed capitalist world confirming the analysis that present-day capitalist economic development is best characterised as “jobless growth”. In September, the unemployment rate in the United States rose again and stood at 5.2 per cent of the work force. The year began for Germany with the unemployment figure crossing the psychological barrier of 4 million and stood at 10.8 per cent which has shown a

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marginal decline of 10.1 per cent by September. In France, the unemployment stood at 12.6 per cent in August 1996 compared to 11.6 per cent in August 1995.

In response to this, in most of the advanced capitalist countries, the main attack has been on the social security system and cuts in social expenditure affecting the living conditions of the working people. In the USA, the budget for this year saw a cut in health-care for the elderly by 124 billion U.S. dollars and for the poor it was reduced by 59 billion dollars. The conflict between the Republican-dominated Congress and the Democratic President Bill Clinton on the question of the debt ceiling which is placed at 4,900 billion U.S. dollars is leading to further cuts in social expenditure. The U.S. debt has already crossed this ceiling and cuts in social expenditure are resorted to, in order to maintain the debt levels. But for the concentration of public opinion on the forthcoming presidential election on November 5, this would have been a major issue since it leads to default in repayment of debt and of interests.

Similarly, Germany had introduced an across the board austerity measures. The public outcry against this was witnessed in the May Day rallies and subsequent protest actions by the working class. On 20 and 21st of May, over a lakh workers took to the streets in 60 cities across Germany. Few weeks ago, massive strikes in major industries took place in protest against proposals to reduce paid sick leave. In France, the working class rose in protest against cut in the budget deficit by 2 per cent which directly slashed social security expenditure. On May 29, there was a countrywide public sector strike and the protest action continues.

In the Third World countries, the people's protest against the IMF-World Bank prescriptions and neo-liberal economic policies are also being manifested in a number of strike actions. In Brazil, for the first time after five years, a nation-wide general strike was held against growing unemployment while simultaneously a movement called the Militant Landless Workers Movement conducted land seizures of large estates. Many protesters died in the clashes with the landlord armies and the police.

Elections

The discontent against the growing economic hardships of the people has also manifested in elections in some of the advanced capitalist countries. In Italy, the Centre-Left Olive Tree alliance defeated the right-wing Freedom Alliance. These elections came after months of political instability and surcharged political atmosphere rocked by corruption scandals. It is heartening to note that the Communist Refoundation Party of Italy increased its popular vote from 6 to 8.6 per cent and has 35 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In the senate it has 10 seats. Though supporting the Centre-Left alliance, the Communist Refoundation did not join the government and chose to support it from outside, while demarcating on policies and issues adversely affecting the people and the country.

In Greece, the Social Democratic Party, Pasok won a clear majority in the recently held elections. Even here the Communists improved their position by increasing their popular support from 4.6 per cent in 1993 to 5.6 per cent. Likewise, the Left coalition also increased its popular support from 2.9 per cent to 5.1 per cent.

However, in Japan, the Liberal Democratic Party which was voted out of power after 38 years of uninterrupted rule, emerged as the single-largest party in the recent elections. Though short of an absolute majority, the LDP will form the government with the support from allies. This was the first election held after the introduction of the single seat plus proportional representation system. The heartening feature in this election was the performance of the Japanese Communist Party. In a 54.6 per cent voter turnout the JCP polled above 7 million votes, about 5 per cent. The JCP has won 26 seats and having crossed the mark of 20 it now has the right to submit bills for legislative action. It has already announced to bring bills to rid the Japanese political system of large-scale corruption, to ban political donations by corporate companies, ban on bureaucrats being posted in private companies after retirement, etc.

Nicaragua

Large-scale mismanagement and deliberate attempt to distort the popular verdict marked the recent general elections in

Nicaragua. Even ten days after polling, the Electoral Council could not announce its official verdict as to who won the presidential election. Sandinista leader and former President Daniel Ortega has called upon the people to reject the poll process pointing out gross violations. The Sandinista Liberation Front (FSNL) has announced its refusal to accept a manipulated result that would foist a U.S.-inspired and IMF-dictated right-wing government once again in Nicaragua. The coming days will see an intense political battle between the FSNL and the right-wing U.S.-backed forces.

West Asia

Following the assassination of former Israeli Prime Minister Ritzak Rabin in the elections held recently, the right-wing won with Benjamin Netanyahu as the new Prime Minister. The new government has been reneging on the earlier agreements between Israel and the PLO. The main controversy now centres around the Israeli withdrawal from West Bank's city of Hebron. The earlier talks had concluded that such a withdrawal would be done but the new government is disclaiming any responsibility for the agreements entered into by the previous regime. On the contrary, they have started settling new Jewish population in these areas. The talks are currently going on under U.S. auspices. The USA is also caught in a bind due to the forthcoming presidential elections. On the one hand, it does not wish to anger the very powerful Jewish lobby in the United States and on the other, a settlement before the elections will be favourable for Bill Clinton. However, at the moment, no solution appears to be in sight.

An important development has been the open support given by the French President Jacques Chirac. As the first head of state of a leading Western nation speaking to the Palestinian Parliament, Mr. Chirac openly called for the implementation of the earlier agreement. This is a powerful voice for a European role in the settlement of the Central Asian crisis and displays the potential for conflicting approaches between Europe and USA. Earlier in January, elections were held for the first time in the Israeli occupied territories of West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Yasser Arafat led Al Fateh romped home by winning 53 out of

88 seats in a turnout of nearly 75 per cent. In another development, the summit meeting of the Arab League was held for the first time after the 1990 Gulf crisis. Israel had all along refused to vacate occupied Arab lands, obstructing a settlement. The summit unanimously called for the complete Israeli withdrawal from all Arab lands including Golan heights in Syria. Clearly, in spite of such solidarity, there is once again an effort to deny the Palestinians their right to a homeland despite the diluted peace agreement made earlier.

Indonesia

Large-scale anti-government militant actions took place in Indonesia on July 27 and 28. This marks a significant advance in the democratic movement against the Suharto dictatorship, after many years of suppression and intimidation. The Suharto regime is attempting to portray this as an infighting between rival opposition leaders. Megawati Suharnoputri leads this protest against the regime as well as against the Suharto puppet Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) leader Suryadi. Megawati was ousted as Chairman of PDI for her increasingly anti-Suharto and pro-democracy positions. Suharto had blamed the Peoples' Democratic Party (PRD) for the militant actions. However, the regime's own National Rights Commission released its final report laying the blame on the government's armed police intervention. The charges against the PRD by Suharto as being Communist are not evoking the anti-Communist frenzy on which this regime has capitalised in the past. Other anti-dictatorship forces are also raising their voice of protest. Elections are in the offing in Indonesia and this ground-swell of democratic movement may well pick up. In the meanwhile, the Nobel peace prize being awarded to the East Timor Archbishop has highlighted Indonesia's occupation of the island since 1975. All these together constitute a shift in Indonesia's political situation in favour of the democratic movement.

Attempts of U.S. Hegemony

During this period, the United States of America tried to enforce its will on the world. Most blatant attempt was the

renewed attack on Iraq using the pretext of Iraq's operations within its country against the Kurds. Despite the Iraqi troops withdrawal from the Kurdish populated areas, the USA chose to launch missile attacks on Iraq only to demonstrate its hegemonic intentions. Elsewhere, on the question of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty negotiations and on the World Trade Organisation establishment, the United States is attempting to enforce its point of view.

The most blatant of these efforts was, of course, in relation to Cuba. The USA insists on implementing what is known as the Helms-Burton law by which the United States can suspend economic activities with countries that trade with Cuba. But the inter-imperialist contradictions are favourable once again in this sphere with the European Union and Canada taking a very strong opposition to this law. Earlier, Mexico too officially protested with the U.S. Government on this law and continues to have relations with Cuba. The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom had also publicly declared Britain's non-compliance with U.S. insistence and many European countries and Canada are having growing economic interaction now with Cuba. In the meanwhile, the Organisation of American States at a summit in June rejected the Helms-Burton law by a 23 to 1 (USA) vote.

U.S. Elections

The run off to the presidential elections in the USA to be held on November 5 has shown both the Republicans and the Democrats to be united on many of the perceptions concerning USA's role in the world as well as the domestic economic policies. That the USA will continue to play its hegemonic role in international affairs and domestically they would continue to reduce welfare and social expenditure affecting the livelihood of the working people seem to be points on which there appears to be a consensus. Outwardly, the debate has been centered around political morality and questions of ethics raised by the Republicans while the Democrats seek to take credit for an economic situation which they say could have been worse but for their economic policies. However, public opinion polls put Clinton ahead.

NEIGHBOURS

Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan dramatically worsened with the Pakistan-backed Taliban capturing Kabul. The dastardly manner in which they executed former President Najibullah has exposed the religious fundamentalist reactionary character of the Taliban movement. Having captured Kabul, they swiftly brought in retrograde medieval laws banning women from working and banning girl students in schools apart from a very ancient dress code for women. Even women doctors and nurses in hospitals who have been allotted work are to treat only women patients and not interact with male counterparts. The untold atrocities being committed on the civilian population continue to mount.

The ethnic clashes in Afghanistan have intensified following the capture of Kabul by the Taliban. The Taliban which is overwhelmingly consisting of the Pathans are backed openly by Pakistan. The Uzbeks who control the North-West are led by Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum and the Tajiks are led by Ahmed Shah Masood in the North-East. Dostum and the ousted regime of Rabanni have joined forces against the Taliban. Further, the threats of religious fundamentalism are mounting and very correctly the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union have in a joint declaration with Russia expressed serious concern and decided to co-ordinate activities against this menace.

Pakistan

The situation in Pakistan has become very complex and unstable. The murder of Murtaza Bhutto, the political dissident brother of Premier Benazir Bhutto created lot of tension in the Sindh Province apart from leading to a chain of political developments. The President Farooq Leghari and the Premier are at loggerheads. The President has directly invoked his authority on the question of appointing judges to the Supreme Court and has written to both the houses of parliament endorsing the proposal of the opposition leader Nawaz Sharief to set up an independent judicial commission to enquire into "accountability"— a move directed against political corruption. With the army backing, the

President and with the recent presidential proclamation keeping the army directly under his command, the political situation has worsened and is fraught with dangerous consequences.

Bangladesh

The elections in Bangladesh in June led to the Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina emerging as the single-largest party but just short of a majority. It won 146 seats in a house of 300. Following a period of intense political turmoil these elections finally resulted in a 74 per cent turnout in the presence of international observers. But the political situation continues to be complex with Sheikh Hasina forming the government with the support of the Jatiya Dal of the former Gen. Ershad which has won 32 seats. What compromises this may imply is to be seen. One thing is clear that the formation of the Hasina Government provides a check on the growth of fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh.

In the meanwhile, the goodwill visit by the Indian foreign minister to Dacca in September, led to improvement in the relations and the beginning of finding solutions to some of the bilateral problems. This will further help in improving of relations between Bangladesh and India.

Myanmar

The struggle for democracy in Myanmar received a major attack in June when the military regime imposed a new anti-opposition law with sweeping powers on what it considers to be anti-government activities. The National League for Democracy and its leader Suu Kyi has pledged to carry forward the struggle for the establishment of democratic set-up in Myanmar. This struggle must be supported by all peace-loving people the world over.

Bhutan

The 15th Congress of our Party had supported the struggle for democracy in Bhutan. During these months, the struggle has intensified with the refugees placed in camps in Nepal marching to enter Bhutan. As they have to cross Indian territory, the issue has acquired significance for Indo-Bhutanese relations.

The West Bengal Left Front Government has repeatedly asked the Government of India to take up this matter with Bhutan to ensure a solution to the forcible eviction of Bhutanese of Nepali origin from Bhutan.

Nepal

A complicated situation arose in Nepal over the treaty with India on the question of river water sharing. The agreement on the Mahakali project that was initiated under the government of the United Communist Party of Manmohan Adhikari and approved later on by the subsequent government ran into rough weather with new opposition to it. But subsequently, this was overcome and the treaty was endorsed by the parliament. This could well lead to fresh problems between the two countries which can only benefit the imperialist powers which thrive on these differences.

Sri Lanka

The victory of Chandrika Kumaratunga and her People's Alliance government had promised the return of peace and stability in the island country. Today two years later, the government continues to wage a war; it does not want against the LTTE and its political package of devolution of powers yet remains to be implemented. The prolongation of the war has heaped hitherto unknown sufferings on the Tamils in Jaffna. This has also resulted in a stream of refugees pouring into Tamil Nadu. The CPI(M) expresses its deep anguish at these sufferings. It appreciates the Indian Government's response to Sri Lanka's request for rice to meet the needs of the Jaffna population. The CPI(M) has all along held that a proper devolution of powers within the framework of United Sri Lanka is the only manner in which the ethnic conflict should be resolved.

China

The forthcoming visit of the Chinese President Comrade Jiang Zemin should be a watershed in improving the relations between the two countries. The process of improvement of relations, it is hoped, will be consolidated with this visit.

In the meanwhile, the Chinese economy during the first nine months of 1996 grew at an annual rate of 9.6 per cent thus achieving the attempt by the Chinese authorities to reduce the growth to under 10 per cent in order to overcome the problems of what they call the “over-heating” of the economy. This has reduced inflation to 6.6 per cent which for the first time fell to a single digit figure. The average income for an urban Chinese increased by 3.4 per cent. The rural incomes is estimated to have grown on an average of 10 per cent. At the same time, a massive drive against corruption and other tendencies alien to Socialism have been launched. The process of economic reform in China, it is only hoped, will move in the direction of strengthening Socialism.

Russia

Following the victory of Yeltsin in the second round of elections which are clouded by allegations and charges of large-scale rigging, the instability in the country continues. Initially, having appointed, Alexander Lebed who had contested elections against Yeltsin as Secretary of Internal Security, Yeltsin has now dismissed him on the grounds that he is emerging as a rival centre of authority. This has created political uncertainty. Lebed, with the strong backing of the armed forces, has declared to fully engage himself in politics opposing Yeltsin and his policies. Further, Lebed’s dismissal may also lead to a deterioration in the situation in Chechenya where now nearly 80,000 people have reported to have been killed in the conflict. In the meanwhile, the living conditions of the vast mass of working people continues to deteriorate sharply. Non-payment of wages and arrears increase every month worsening the people’s agony and this has resulted in a number of widespread strike actions.

NATIONAL SITUATION

The last Central Committee meeting while endorsing the approach in contributing to the formation of the United Front Government and participation in the Steering Committee pointed

out two aspects. One was in relation to the Common Minimum Programme and the other on the nature of the United Front. It noted:

“The present United Front is unlike the normal united fronts in which parties come together for joint struggles and movements based on a common set of demands or a programme. The present United Front combination has emerged out of the efforts of the Left and secular parties represented in parliament to keep the BJP out of office. The bulk of the parties in the U.F. Government are those which wish to continue with the economic policies of the Congress. However, it is in the interests of the Left and democratic movement that such a government continue in office, implement policies which help strengthen secularism, restructure Centre-State relations to strengthen federalism and provide even limited relief to the people. This will help meet the expectations of the people who voted out the Congress(I) and who did not want the communal forces to capture power.

“It is in this framework that our Party must define its attitude to the United Front Government. In the past six weeks of the U.F. Government, while extending overall support and pushing for implementation of those measures in the CMP which help mobilisation of the people to strengthen the Left, democratic and secular forces, we have also to maintain our independent position to support or demarcate on specific issues and policies.”

Immediately after the Central Committee meeting, the Party concentrated upon two important political issues, one in relation to holding of elections in Jammu & Kashmir and its importance to defeat the game of imperialism and Pakistani rulers to destabilise our country. The second was the U.P. elections which had to be held before the 17th of October, when President's rule was to expire, which would have a big bearing on the political situation in the country.

Jammu & Kashmir

Though there was general agreement on holding the elections in Kashmir, the approach of various political parties differed. It is not necessary to go into the situation prevailing there which has been earlier dealt with by the Central Committee. We had noted

that there is a change in the situation in Jammu & Kashmir. The people are fed up with the activities of the extremists and they want peace. It does not however mean that they have been fully drawn into the national mainstream. But the conditions have been created where the extremists can be put on the defensive and through the process of elections situation can be improved. In this respect, it was necessary that all forces having influence in Kashmir should be mobilised to participate in the elections. It is well-known that in the parliament elections, the National Conference, the biggest organisation in Jammu and Kashmir which has a tradition of struggle against princely states had boycotted the Lok Sabha elections on the plea that the government was not coming forward with an assurance of maximum autonomy which can protect the identity of the Kashmiri people. Our Party has taken a stand from the beginning that without maximum autonomy, the problem of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be solved and it pointed out the specific conditions in which Kashmir had acceded to India. There were opinions in the Janata Dal and certain other parties that even if the percentage of voting is not high and if like the Lok Sabha elections, elections can be held it is sufficient to restore normalcy in Kashmir. They were missing the point that without maximum mobilisation of the people where at least 50 per cent of voters turn up, it will be difficult to convince world public opinion that people of Kashmir stand by the decision of accession to India.

It is in this context that we had got included in the Common Minimum Programme a para about providing maximum autonomy to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This statement was welcomed by the National Conference. Inside the National Conference also a trend existed which was not for participation. Among other parties also, there was a trend as happened during the parliament elections to capture power irrespective of whether people responded in a big way or not. Our Party took a principled position that merely holding the elections would not serve the purpose, it is the maximum mobilisation of the people which will enable us to defeat the game of the Pakistani rulers. Even after the Common Minimum Programme had made it clear, there were

pressures on the Prime Minister not to categorically come forward with a statement on the question of maximum autonomy. It was after our intervention that the Prime Minister included the issue of maximum autonomy in the statement. Already, as mentioned above, there was a struggle inside the National Conference and this declaration enabled the dominant section to prevail to take the final decision to participate in the elections.

Some of the United Front partners from a different angle proposed that instead of the United Front all parties should be allowed to contest the elections independently. We agreed because this would enable the maximum mobilisation of the people in the valley. We even supported efforts to encourage those extremist groups to participate which had given up arms. We were firm that the participation of the National Conference is crucial. Whatever its shortcomings, it was still the traditional organisation of the Kashmiri people and had a wider mass support. It was decided by the parties of the United Front and the Congress(I) to contest the elections. The participation of all helped in mobilising the people on a broader scale. There were proposals by the western countries of sending observers which was rightly rejected but all the foreign print and electronic media were welcomed to witness the elections. This helped to fight back the offensive of the imperialist countries against India and provided an effective response to the Pakistani rulers who always tried to internationalise the issue.

Our Party decided to put up only one candidate because our limited base was confined to areas where the extremist activities were intense. Moreover, we did not have the strength and influence. We were opposed by the Janata Dal candidate as well as the Ikwana counter-insurgency group. The Congress(I) candidate withdrew when the National Conference extended support to us. We have won the seat with a big margin.

Generally, the contest was between the three parties, the National Conference, Congress(I) and the Janata Dal, excepting the Jammu region where the BJP has a strong presence. Some independents also contested the elections and some of them fared well. Ultimately, the National Conference secured 42 out of the 47 seats in the valley, the hot-bed of extremist activity and was

able to make gains in Jammu. In Ladakh also, it secured three seats out of the four. Whereas we were expecting a majority for the National Conference, it secured a two-thirds majority, which is necessary for it to make any amendment to the Constitution in Jammu and Kashmir. Voting percentage came to about 54 per cent, except in Srinagar where the extremists are having good hold. The efforts of Pakistan to sabotage the elections did not succeed. It was a big blow to Pakistan and imperialism. One should not conclude that with these elections peace has finally been restored in Kashmir. Because of the crisis in Pakistan, the ruling circles there will continue to support the extremists to instigate trouble. The first battle has been won and properly handling the situation can help to win the war.

To consolidate the gains of this victory, it is necessary that we press upon the Government of India to work out the details to provide maximum autonomy within the framework of Indian unity as promised in the Common Minimum Programme. It should also take necessary steps to fulfil the pledge given in the programme about relief measures, rehabilitation of migrants who left the valley, encouragement to handicrafts, public distribution system, eradicating corruption, etc., which had become very rampant during President's rule with relief money passing into the hands of extremists. This is an important issue that has to be tackled to create confidence among the people. But despite the problems and difficulties, this is a big achievement for our country and our Party can be proud of its contribution.

Uttar Pradesh Elections

The U.P. elections were also of great importance having a bearing on the political situation in the country. The main challenge was from the BJP. It is well-known that during the BJP Government days, the Babri Masjid was pulled down defying the courts and all norms of democratic convention by the BJP and its outfits with the direct connivance of the state government. It had alienated the minorities from the Congress(I) party and it led to innumerable riots in various places taking the toll of hundreds of people. Now, also the VHP is campaigning on the issue of the

temples of Mathura and Varanasi which also are situated in Uttar Pradesh. The BJP coming to power would contribute a lot in communalising the atmosphere of the country and disrupting the democratic movement.

Keeping this in view, the Party concentrated in working out the tactics in Uttar Pradesh where the BJP can be defeated and a government of secular parties can be formed. The major force to fight against the BJP was that of the Samajwadi Party. If the United Front partners had put their efforts together, they had sufficient strength to defeat the BJP. But unfortunately, for a long time, personal interests dominated rather than national interests. The discussion on seat adjustments went on till the day of withdrawal of nominations with different constituents bargaining for more and more seats even without having any base as was revealed by the results. In this respect, the Samajwadi Party was accommodative and they ultimately conceded some of their strong seats to the other partners. This itself had an impact. But it did not succeed in creating enthusiasm and mobilising fully the mass following of these parties. Another positive development was that of the formation of the BKKP and its joining the United Front. The Prime Minister's tour of Western U.P. and announcement of various measures benefiting the peasants did have an impact but this was not possible to be translated to political victory. However, this created an atmosphere in favour of the United Front. The third combination which came into existence was that of BSP-Congress(I). Congress(I) party in Uttar Pradesh was seriously trying to win over the BSP so that it could have an alliance with it later for the Madhya Pradesh and Punjab elections. They were satisfied with 125 seats as against the 300 contested by the BSP giving the commitment to make Mayawati the Chief Minister.

In the election propoganda, whereas the United Front concentrated its fire on the BJP and tried to unify all the secular forces the main plank of the BSP has been denunciation of Mulayam Singh Yadav. Congress(I) leaders also acquiesced to it on various occasions. Thus, the main force in fighting against communalism remained the United Front.

The BJP has suffered a defeat as it was able to win only 174 seats instead of the absolute majority it was sure of. In the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP had won in 236 assembly segments. The BJP did not do as well as in 1993 too when it had got 177 seats.

As a result, the total picture emerged that the BJP got 174 and two went to its ally the Samata Party. The Samajwadi Party got 110, the BKKP 8, the Janata Dal 7, Congress(T) 4, CPI(M) 4, and CPI 1. The BSP got 67 and the Congress(I) 33 seats. Our Party for the first time was able to win four seats. Had the Janata Dal and Congress(T) not insisted on contesting more seats the United Front could have secured more seats.

The results posed the question of how to avoid the threat of the BJP forming a government. The United Front declared that both the United Front and the Congress(I)-BSP should give a written undertaking to the Governor that in no case will they support the BJP. The BSP however was keeping its options open. Even discussions with the Congress(I) could not persuade the BSP to give such an undertaking to the Governor. The Congress(I) had only assured them, their single point programme, that Mayawati will be made the Chief Minister, as was promised before the elections. Even on the basis of this assurance, when they tried to persuade Kanshi Ram, the BSP President said that whereas he considers the BJP to be communal, he also considers the United Front to be a feudal force which is worse than the communal forces. In the face of such an opportunist stand of the BSP, it was not possible to cross the hurdle. Under normal circumstances, the United Front with 134 seats should have been given the option to select the candidate for Chief Ministership. But the Congress(I) and the BSP were not prepared for this.

In the meantime, the BJP, as the single-largest party, laid its claim to form the government. Since the other two combinations had informed the Governor that they are not supporting the BJP, there was no possibility for the BJP to form a stable government. Moreover, after the election results were out, there was just a couple of days left for President's rule to expire in the state. It was not possible to clinch the issue in such a short time. The fresh

imposition of President's rule and keeping the assembly in suspended animation provides the political parties more time to come to an understanding to form a government.

Now efforts are on to form a BSP-BJP Government headed by Mayawati.

Uttarakhand

On the eve of the U.P. assembly elections, the United Front Government came out with an announcement for forming a separate Uttarakhand state. When the Common Minimum Programme was drafted, the inclusion of this issue was opposed by us and it was not included. But under pressure from certain constituents, the Prime Minister unilaterally declared the formation of Uttarakhand presuming that this will help them win the elections in the Uttarakhand area. But the results go to show that in 17 out of 19 seats the BJP has won, with one each going to the Congress(T) and Samajwadi Party. This announcement has created a lot of problems for the country as a whole, particularly in West Bengal. Now, with the acceptance of the demand for the formation of Uttarakhand, the Prime Minister also announced that after the elections, legislation will be passed and elected members of the region will constitute the new assembly of Uttarakhand. This has serious repercussions in various parts of the country. Demands have started for the formation of Jharkhand, Bodoland, Chattisgarh, Vidharba, Gorkhaland and there are even talks of a separate Telangana.

In fact, this will be a weapon in the hands of the ruling class to divert the attention of the people from the real issues, economic and political, which they are facing today. We have always advocated that for the minority nationalities and ethnic groups and backward areas real autonomy can be provided by which people will be able to fulfil their aspirations. That was never considered seriously. Even the states are deprived of their powers. The CPI is fully supporting this demand with the hope that perhaps on the basis of this demand they will be able to strengthen the Party and the Left in the concerned region. If we analyse the struggle for the formation of linguistic states, which was a genuine

democratic demand, the experience is relevant. The movement was headed by the Communist Party whether it was in Kerala, Andhra, Maharashtra. The issue alone did not help in further advancing our movement. But the slogan of Uttarakhand is not associated with a linguistic aspiration. Thus, we cannot take opportunist positions on such issues. Those who feel that through such movements they can advance, are mistaken. The advance of the working class party comes through a bitter struggle based on the class realities and by mobilising the classes.

The demand for smaller states has been constantly raised by the BJP and earlier the Jan Sangh. They want formation of a number of small states based on administrative convenience. This is the Hindutva goal to break up the existing linguistic states as a strong linguistic identity is seen as an obstacle to the advance of the Hindutva ideology. Unfortunately, V. P. Singh and some other secular leaders are also advocating the formation of smaller states. The demand for a second States Re-Organisation Commission is being voiced. The CPI(M) cannot agree with this position.

Demand for Gorkhaland State

The Uttarakhand announcement has created a serious problem for the Party in West Bengal. For the first time in our Party's history, a unit that too where the Party is very strong has decided to revolt, openly advocating the formation of Gorkhaland as a separate state, at a time when the state secretariat and the State Committee was prepared to discuss the issue with them and find an amicable solution. They have not only defied but criticised the Party leadership in a language which is not commensurate with Communist organisational norms. In West Bengal, there are 13 lakh Nepali-speaking people according to the last census. In the Darjeeling Hill Council area the population is around 6 lakhs. They are demanding inclusion of adjoining areas where the Nepali-speaking people are in a minority and here they will come in conflict with the Bengali population. As a result, the rechauvinism is the danger of growing among the Bengali population. This will have very harmful repercussions on the

advance of the Left and democratic movement in the state. We are proud of the fact that it is in West Bengal that no discrimination of people belonging to any religion or nationality has been there. Even in Calcutta, half the population comes from outside Bengal. This problem should be taken seriously and a way has to be found by which we are able to meet this danger. Raising of Uttarakhand slogan will have its repercussions in other states too. But unfortunately, the CPI is taking an opportunist position. By taking this position they are not going to benefit except harming the Left movement as is being done in the case of West Bengal. We have come out with our consistent stand that separate states cannot solve the problem of any region or sub-nationality. We have stood by our position that regional autonomy with planned development within the state will help to meet the situation.

North-East

The situation in Manipur has taken a serious turn. The long-standing neglect of the problems of the people and the depredations of the armed militants have led to the growing ineffectivity of the State Government and its administration and the parallel activities of the extremist groups. Excesses by the armed forces have caused public resentment and snowballed into mass protests. This discontent is now being diverted to separatist channels. A bandh call given by the United National Liberation Front against the state's merger with India in 1949 met with a big response and so also the rally called by the All Manipur Students' Union on the same issue. These are danger signals indicating the growing popular alienation. In Manipur and in Nagaland, taxes are being collected by the extremist organisations with impunity from government employees and all sections of society. The hardships of the people with the enormous cost of essential commodities and the lack of basic infrastructure facilities is fuelling discontent and helping the separatist forces. It is not possible to go on dealing with these problems using the security forces. It will be necessary for a proper assessment of the problems in the entire North-East region and some immediate policy plan to be formulated for the entire region.

Economic Policy

In the last C.C. report, it was noted that the Deve Gowda Government is taking certain policy measures which would mean carrying forward the IMF-dictated Rao-Manmohan Singh framework of policies. In many of these issues, the CPI(M) has had to come out in opposition. The proposals for Rs. 5,000-crore disinvestment of public sector shares is going ahead. The Disinvestment Commission suggested in the Common Minimum Programme to which we expressed our reservation has been set up. However, the first two rounds of disinvestment are being done without referring them to the Commission. The most profitable PSUs are being taken up for disinvestment in the first two rounds like the VSNL and the ONGC. This is obviously being done to meet the mounting fiscal deficit against which the IMF has publicly warned India. It is in response to this IMF pressure that the privatisation programme in the public sector is going ahead.

The other policy issue on which the CPI(M) had to publicly join issue was on the changes announced regarding the Foreign Direct Investment. The last Central Committee had already noted that the government was preparing to expand the list for 51 per cent automatic approval of foreign companies as well as to permit them to hold greater equity in some cases going up to 74 per cent. These proposals have been placed before the Cabinet for approval. In the meantime, the Ministry of Mines has announced that licences for prospecting of minerals will be given to foreign and private companies for areas up to 5,000 sq.kms. as against the earlier ceiling of 25 sq.kms. The Industries Ministry has boasted that it has cleared foreign direct investment proposals worth Rs. 9,000 crore in a one-month period between July and August. Many of these proposals are in the consumer and non-essential sector such as the Coca-Cola investment of Rs. 2,950 crores through a 100 per cent subsidiary.

Liberalisation of imports continues with the negative list of imports being reduced with as many as 54 items being allowed. Forty of these can now be imported without any licence. A number of these are consumer durables particularly of the electronic variety. This will severely affect the domestic industry which has just about begun to develop in these areas.

The overall economic situation is unsatisfactory. There is a slow down in industrial production with the rate of growth substantially less than the previous year. The export growth figures continue to show decline. There is an accumulation of inventory and stocks in many industries. This leads to fears of a recession looming ahead. The rosy picture presented by the Finance Minister during the budget has been belied. The growth of the GDP which was claimed to be 7% last year has now been scaled down to 6.6% by the Central Statistical Organisation; agricultural production has also been scaled down by 5 million tonnes. The reduction in public expenditure has a direct bearing on the present slow down. It is doubtful whether the new monetary policy with liberalised credit will help to revive industrial production and the depressed capital markets.

Certain other negative features have also surfaced during this period. Utilising the issue of federalism, the Andhra Pradesh Government has suggested that states be permitted to directly procure funds from the World Bank or Asian Development Bank (ADB) and accept structural adjustment programmes. Likewise, the Prime Minister had also announced that power projects, big and small, can now be cleared directly by the State Government without any Central clearance. Though these two measures are yet to be implemented, they nevertheless represent disturbing tendencies of bypassing the Central Government on the one hand, and the abdication of the Centre of its responsibility to develop infrastructure on the other. This can only have very regressive impact on the Indian economy as a whole.

The burdens on the common people continue to mount specially sky-rocketing prices. This is mainly due to the relentless inflation that was touching new heights around the festival season. In this context, again, resorting to increasing administered prices of coal will have another round of cascading effect on price levels. In this background, it should be noted that those measures outlined in the Common Minimum Programme that provide relief to the common man are yet to see the light of the day. Particular mention must be made of the proposal to provide foodgrain and other essential commodities to those below

the poverty line at one-half of the issue price and the revamping of the public distribution system to make it more effective and thus also provide a check against an open market price rise. Public pressure must be mounted on the U.F. Government to implement this immediately.

Implementation of Common Minimum Programme

The process of implementing the Common Minimum Programme has been piece-meal and tardy. Of the positive features, one must note the reconvening of the Inter-State Council after a gap of over six years and the Chief Ministers conference on the basic needs of the people.

While the government has been moving speedily in giving concessions to the foreign capitalists and big bourgeoisie, it has not moved in the matter of fulfilling its commitment to the people and the working class as set out in the Common Minimum Programme.

In areas such as health, education, sanitation and drinking water the proposals laid down in the CMP have not yet been initiated. Contrary to the promise of recognition of union by secret ballot in the CMP the government is trying to backtrack on this. Pressure must be put on these scores as well to ensure that some relief to the common man is provided. Sanitation and drinking water in particular assume importance with the outbreak of many epidemics that have claimed hundreds of lives across the country. Powerful mass movements and struggles must be initiated to compel the government to carry out its commitments relating to the improvement of the living standards of the people.

Corruption Scandals

Since 1994 various scandals involving the Narasimha Rao Government have been exposed. Bank securities scandal, sugar scandal, telecom scandal, hawala scandal and so on. There is a direct link between economic liberalisation and privatisation and the escalating scale of high-level corruption. In all the major scandals money has been provided by big business for bribery in order to bypass all norms. The Congress(I)-Government tried to cover up these scandals and protect the culprits. But, subsequently,

in 1996, many more scandals came to light. The St. Kitts files which were gathering dust were opened, the Lakhubhai Pathak creating case, the urea scandal, the telecom deals of Sukh Ram, the housing scandal and the allotment of gas and petrol agencies. Even the former Prime Minister and his relatives have been charge-sheeted in a few cases for their direct involvement. The animal husbandry scandal in Bihar has also come to light involving many top politicians of the state.

This has created a situation where the initiative has passed into the hands of the courts. The Constitution has defined the rights of various institutions in the parliamentary democratic system. Faced with numerous corruption cases, some Congress(I) leaders in particular have argued that the courts are unnecessarily usurping the powers of the other institutions. They do not recognise the fact that this has happened in the background of the executive having not only failed but has been trying to cover up the investigations since the Bofors case. This is the cause of the rot in the system. It is in this background that the judiciary has taken the initiative in ensuring that the investigations progress into various scandals and it is being welcomed by the people in general. Unless the executive discharges its responsibilities and ensures accountability, problems will arise by leaving all matters to the judiciary. It must be borne in mind that the present legal system is not able to cope with the enormous number of cases and dispense justice in time. Further, there are instances of the corrosive effects of corruption affecting sections of the judiciary also.

The pressures to stop or hinder the top politicians being brought to book is also very much evident. In the case of Narasimha Rao, the U.F. Government responded by the Law Minister asking the CBI not to oppose the bail petition of Rao. Similarly in the fodder scandal case, a blatant attempt was made to substitute the reports of the CBI investigating officer to the Patna High Court.

A vigorous campaign is required by the Party and the other democratic forces against the efforts at cover up. Those involved in corruption cases have to be thoroughly exposed and punished. This has to be one of the important tasks in defence of democracy. The P.B. gave a call to observe 25 October as *Anti-Corruption Day* to mobilise people for this.

Foreign Policy Stand

The last Central Committee meeting had welcomed the stand of the Indian Government on the CTBT issue. However, in this period there have been departures from the Common Minimum Programme in the formulations on foreign policy. It was stated in the Common Minimum Programme: "There is a large measure of consensus on foreign policy which is based on our traditional values and on the experience gained during the freedom struggle and in the post-independence era. Non-alignment is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. The United Front Government will closely adhere to the consensus..... The United Front Government will work to strengthen the Non-Aligned Movement. It will also actively participate in the deliberations of UNCTAD so that the organisation and the member countries are able to articulate the view of the developing countries."

The biggest drift on the Afghanistan developments is of key importance to India. Immediately after the capture of Kabul by the Taliban militia backed by Pakistan and America and the barbarous killing of former President Najibullah and his brother, there was a sharp reaction from Russia. Iran also condemned the incidents as did the Security Council. Immediately, a conference of the five Central Asian republics was convened in which a warning was given to the Taliban and cautioning against outside interference. But India kept quiet merely stating that it is watching the situation. It was only after the resistance against Taliban became strong that they came out with a statement. That too was a mild reaction. It is only after the Foreign Minister of Iran visited India that a statement expressing sympathy with the Afghan people and denouncing the Taliban came. This has harmed the prestige of India in the eyes of the developing countries as well as some advanced countries.

Similarly, with regard to SADR, India's stand has been consistent from the beginning in support of their just struggle. But since many months the proposal to upgrade the status of the SADR mission from a charge d'affaires to Ambassadorial one has not been approved on the plea that this might antagonise Morocco. Earlier government too had taken a similar stand

because Morocco at that time was heading the Organisation of Islamic Countries. It failed to note that Morocco stood by Pakistan when the question of Kashmir came up in the OIC. A resolution on implementing the U.N. resolutions on Western Sahara moved by around 50 members of the U.N. has not been signed by India till date. Perhaps it was waiting for the vote on the Security Council seat to be over. But the results showed that India has been terribly isolated. This is because of its not firmly standing by the side of the liberation struggles and the Third World countries. India has to draw a lesson from this experience and stop vacillating and taking opportunistic positions.

Even, on the question of relations with Cuba, with which it has had good relations in the past, the government has not adopted a correct approach. This despite the fact that Cuba has stood firmly with India in the international forums. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba faced tremendous difficulties. And it was in this situation that the Indian people extended big support by collecting foodgrains and sending a ship load of foodgrains, medicines and detergents to Cuba. In this, the Government of India extended help by way of relief in taxes and transportation facilities. Ten thousand tonnes of rice was sent to Cuba. Though technically it was a commercial deal but everybody knows that it was assistance. That is why till now the government had not asked for the money. But, now, when Cuba is in dire need of help various economic ministries are leaking the news that they have to pay lot of money without repaying which it cannot undertake any deals. They have offered to supply special medicines which are not available in India as well as nickel in lieu of the supply of foodgrains. This also has not been seriously undertaken so far. We should impress upon the Government of India to adhere to what we have stated in the CMP on foreign policy.

Iraq

The USA launched another act of aggression with the missile attack on Iraq under the plea that while dealing with the internal problem Iraq had sent armed forces. No condemnation came from India. It is also known that America is starving the children of Iraq

by continuously imposing blockade in spite of Iraq meeting the conditions. In this respect also, India is not clear. In today's world situation, it is all the more necessary that India remains the rallying point as it had been in the beginning in supporting the national liberation struggles, peace, opposing imperialist manoeuvres and strengthening relations with the developing countries while improve its relations with the advanced countries.

Congress(I)

There have been major developments within the Congress(I) party in this period. With the continuous exposure of various corruption scandals involving the former Prime Minister and Congress President Narasimha Rao, his position became more and more untenable. Even Congressmen felt he had become a liability with no appeal left to the people. The struggle had begun after the defeat suffered in the elections. But it was the indictment in the corruption case like the Lakubhai Pathak cheating case and the JMM case which exposed him thoroughly. This led to a division with some of the members of the Working Committee demanding his resignation. Finally, it was the Supreme Court's decision upholding his prosecution which forced Rao to resign from the Presidentship. He, however, retains the leadership of the parliamentary party.

The choice of a new President fell on Sitaram Kesri. He was not known to be hostile to Rao but after his election he is seeking to consolidate his power within the organisation. In the present situation, he can become the rallying point for all those Congressmen who are opposed to Rao and this may lead to a growing gulf between them.

In the U.P. post-election situation, Kesri has continued to advocate Mayawati as a candidate for the Chief Ministership, the commitment made by the former President. There is pressure from Narasimha Rao and his faction that the United Front must be pressurised to concede their demand, otherwise support to the United Front Government should be withdrawn. But this is not something easy to accomplish. Though Deve Gowda has been taking a compromising position and yielding to many pressures from the Congress(I), there is a limit to the extent that he can go.

The Congress(I) is itself not in a strong position with its internal quarrels and the reverses it continues to suffer as seen in the recent bye-elections. The policies which led to the debacle of the Congress(I) both in terms of economic policies and secularism have not been changed and the struggle remains within the confines of who will control the organisation. There is a proposal for the unity of the various Congress(I) groups which have left the party. Despite this sentiment, it is not easy to accomplish the return of all the Congressmen outside the fold. Those who have a mass base like Moopanar will only respond when they feel they have a proper role in the new set-up. The main thing is that given the bankruptcy of the policies pursued in the past and the depths of corruption involving many leaders it will be very difficult to revive the Congress(I) within the old framework.

BJP

The BJP has faced more setbacks and some of its pretensions have been exposed in the recent period. The impression that though its platform is communal with the central slogan of Hindutva, it is a principled party devoted to the service of the people is now shattered. It is ridden with factions everywhere. The fight for power and caste considerations are very much affecting the BJP. Efforts were made to form the government at the Centre where the long-standing slogans of the BJP were given up and compromised. Immediately after they were voted out, they again started raising these slogans. Their cooperation with Shiv Sena also has developed cracks. In Gujarat, their government has fallen and a ministry headed by BJP rebel Vaghela has taken office with Congress(I) support. Even in Delhi there is a quarrel between the factions headed by former Chief Minister Khurana and the present incumbent Sahib Singh Verma. In Uttar Pradesh too when they tried to compromising with Mayawati, Kalyan Singh threatened to go the Vaghela way. But they are still keeping their options open. Demoralisation is setting in because after Gujarat going from their hands and erosion is taking place in their support and the leadership is also getting divided.

This is the time to expose their right-reactionary character thoroughly. The BJP will constantly seek to divert the discontent engendered by the impact of economic policies into communal channels utilising its substantial mass base. A campaign must be launched in defence of the unity of the country and secularism and to expose the opportunist and increasingly corrupt character of the Party.

But while doing so the tendencies among the minorities and growth of fundamentalist forces among them, as pointed out in the Party Congress resolution, also must be taken note of. Both tendencies have to be fought because they supplement and complement each other.

Janata Dal

Janata Dal is facing a serious situation because the U.P. results have exposed its claims. They are no more a force in U.P. In Bihar too they have lost four seats out of 10 sitting seats for which by-elections were held. With the Bihar Chief Minister and President of the Janata Dal being named in the fodder scam, its prestige has gone down. In other states also they are facing problems. In Orissa, the elections reveal that they are in serious crisis. And this is happening at a time when the United Front Government headed by a Janata Dal leader, Deve Gowda, is in office at the Centre. They must seriously think and try to understand that merely by using the state machinery one cannot maintain one's strength and base. They have to frame proper policies and on that basis approach the masses so that the discontent which is growing against the Congress(I) is not allowed to be utilised by the BJP but by the United Front. They also should consult the other constituents of the United Front, as equal partners.

Functioning of The United Front

We had set up the Steering Committee with the purpose of deciding all important political policy matters with a view to developing coherence and so that the various constituents of the United Front are able to feel that they are part of the Front. We had given concrete suggestions about the functioning of the United Front three months back. Though initially a good beginning was

made, but now it is being completely ignored. One issue which came in the way is the Almatti Dam issue.

Almatti Dam

There is a dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka over the Almatti dam issue. Both the states agree with the Bachawat award which made allocation of water between the states of Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Both the states agree to adhere by the Bachwat award. But the problem arose when the Karnataka Government started raising the height of the dam, to which the Andhra Pradesh Government objected fearing that it will receive lesser amount of water. Water problem has become acute and important. A rational solution satisfactory to all sides has to be found. The Steering Committee discussed the matter and appointed a committee of four Chief Ministers headed by Jyoti Basu and the committee sent experts to Karnataka and Andhra. At that time some agitation was going on in Karnataka and the team was asked to come after the assembly is over. Because of this the Steering Committee remained paralysed for two months. The last Steering Committee meeting again discussed and asked Jyoti Basu to pursue the matter and submit a report to the United Front Steering Committee so that a satisfactory solution can be found.

No regular office for the United Front, as we had suggested, has been opened. A regular office with a proper secretariat has to be there to monitor the work and the decisions taken by the Steering Committee. Now even the constituents of the United Front come to know of decisions only later. Certain decisions put us in a difficult position. Even, in relation to policies, we must emphasise those aspects which are commonly agreed and which can have a big impact among the people. At the same time, we must differ and oppose those policy measures which adversely affect the people and the country.

Reservation for Women

During the end of the last session of the Lok Sabha, a bill was introduced by the government for the reservation of one-third of

the seats in the House for women. This Constitutional amendment bill was moved as it is a commitment given by all the national political parties in their election manifestos and was part of the CMP. However, the bill could not be passed in the Lok Sabha as there was resistance to the move from within all the bourgeois parties. Though our MPs demanded adoption of the bill without a debate, two days of discussion took place and various efforts were made to sabotage the bill or delay it. The question of OBC reservation within the women's reservation was raised and so also the question of reservation in the Rajya Sabha. A number of MPs belonging to the Janata Dal, Congress(I), BJP and other U.F. partners were absent and there would have been not sufficient quorum for adopting a Constitutional amendment. Finally, the bill has been referred to a Joint Select Committee. There is every possibility of efforts to sabotage the bill to see that it is not taken up and adopted in the Winter Session of Parliament. The Left parties must take the lead to see that the bill is adopted and support the demand of the women's organisations that no changes be made in the present bill.

Parliament Session

Our Parliamentary group has to be conscious of the fact that we cannot work as of there is a normal five-year term. We should take up those aspects of the Common Minimum Programme and press for their implementation which can enhance the prestige of the United Front. The Lok Pal Bill, central legislation for agricultural labour, reservation for women, electoral reforms, more powers to the states to tackle the problem of poverty and unemployment are issues that have to be taken up immediately. At the same time, we must categorically assert our views and oppose all such measures which undermine economic sovereignty, self-reliance and which affect the interests of the working people.

Position of Left

As far as the Left is concerned, the recent bye-elections show that it has consolidated its influence and made some gains as seen in the recent bye-elections. In Kerala, the Left has succeeded in

winning both the seats in the assembly bye-elections with higher margins. In Tripura, in spite of the difficult situation, the Party has won both the seats. In the working of the Left parties together more coherence is required as the CPI's opportunist positions on some issues when they rally behind bourgeois parties create problems. The Left parties have decided to formulate their positions on the economic policies being pursued by the United Front Government so that a campaign can be launched against the negative aspects and to press for the implementation of those aspects of the CMP which concern the interests of the working people.

Tasks Before the Party

There is no doubt that the important task of fighting communalism remains and will continue to remain one of the main tasks till we are able to bring some change in the correlation of forces and in this respect isolation of the BJP and forging cooperation with other secular forces will remain on the agenda. Secondly, the old economic policies being pursued are throwing more burdens on the people and providing more facilities to the foreign monopoly houses to make inroads in all spheres of our economic life. Unless we put a stiff resistance against them, we will be only tailing behind the bourgeois parties. It is necessary to build up the broadest resistance to economic policies so that the communal forces are not able to utilise the discontent created for reactionary purposes. We will be able to make use of this situation by strengthening the Left and democratic forces. The last Central Committee had warned of the nature of the United Front. Both unity and struggle has to be pursued within the United Front. But that we can successfully do provided we are seen as not only defenders of national unity and secularism but true to the cause of the working class and the toiling millions in defence of their economic and social and political rights. In this respect no opportunity should be left to be made use of by us to bring in other parties into the struggle.

The initiative should come from the Left in leading the struggles of various sections of the toiling masses. In the Common

Minimum Programme, mention is there of land reforms. But other constituents of the Front are not serious about this. We should urgently take up this question and organise struggles. On economic policies, we have openly come out against several decisions of the government. In the telecom and postal and other Central Government employees strike, we have openly come out in support. It is necessary for us to popularise on the one hand the programmes of the Left Front Governments which demarcate from the other governments led by the United Front constituents. At the same time, we have to strengthen Left unity, assure effective functioning of the Left coordination committee as well as extend full support to the Platform of Mass Organisations and the trade union coordination committee in their campaigns and struggles.

For this, the independent political activities of the Party and its launching mass struggles are of vital importance. On all important political questions, the Party must project its political views independently and on issues affecting the people conduct struggles. In the coming days, the Party must launch mass campaigns and struggles on the following issues of the people: (1) Demand for strengthening the public distribution system as a measure against continuous price-rise of essential commodities; (2) adoption of Central legislation for agricultural labour; (3) implementation of land reforms by plugging loopholes; (4) opening of closed industrial units and against privatisation of the public sector; (5) recognition of trade unions through secret ballot; (6) fight against the growing atrocities and oppression of women; and (7) fight against corruption at all levels and punishing those guilty.

While making all efforts for building united movements along with the Left, our Party should take initiative in independently mobilising the people on the urgent issues of the toiling people to effectively intervene in the political situation prevailing today.

On Rectification Campaign*

Adopted by The Central Committee of The CPI(M) In Its Meeting Held in New Delhi on October 29-31, 1996

I

The 15th Congress of the Party while assessing the state of the organisation had noted that in the recent period the Party had to face the situation arising out of the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the reverses suffered by the socialist system. In the face of this severe offensive against Marxism and Socialism, the Party ranks had been able to a considerable extent successfully face these attacks on the basis of the ideological positions adopted at the 14th Congress and by firmly adhering to the Party's stand of independently applying Marxism-Leninism to Indian conditions. The growing political intervention of the Party and Left forces in national politics has created conditions for the advance of the Party. However, at the same time, the Party Congress had noted various political-ideological and organisational shortcomings and the failure to tackle them promptly and with sufficient seriousness.

The 15th Congress gave a call for a rectification campaign to overcome the shortcomings and defects affecting the Party at different levels. This task has assumed urgency given the accumulation of problems and some alien trends getting entrenched within the Party over a period of time. Any further delay in tackling these problems will hamper the advance of the Party and erode its revolutionary character.

The Central Committee after discussing the scope of the rectification campaign has underlined its importance as part of

*Circulated to State Committees of The CPI(M) by The Central Committee for circulation up to the level to be decided by The State Committees.

our ongoing efforts to strengthen and rejuvenate the revolutionary character of the Party. This is the spirit in which the campaign has to be undertaken—to pinpoint the weaknesses and deviations and to rectify them for the wider aim of moulding the Party as an effective instrument of the working class and for strengthening the unity of the Party. Care should be taken to see that this is the direction of the campaign and it should not be used for mud-slinging or for settling scores within the Party.

Both the 14th Congress Report on Organisation and the 15th Congress Organisational Review have pinpointed the various evils which have crept into the style of functioning within the Party and the wrong trends among certain sections of the cadres. Based on the reports adopted in these two Congresses which have identified various maladies afflicting the Party, we are highlighting some of the immediate issues to be taken up for rectification.

In India where the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie sections are a predominant part of society and the Party works in a bourgeois and semi-feudal environment, the alien class values and habits constantly penetrate the Party. Combating these corrosive influences within the Party is a continuous process.

The necessity and scope for a rectification campaign can be properly understood only in the light of the experiences gathered in the recent period which have been elaborated in the last two Congresses.

(i) The period since 1989 saw major setbacks to the international Communist movement and the socialist system. This led to serious questioning of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and a renewed offensive of bourgeois ideology. In such a situation some adverse effects on our Party ranks and morale was inescapable.

(ii) Domestically, the current thrust of a stepped up liberalisation of the economy has its direct effects on society. The global offensive of capitalism and the favourable conditions for capitalist growth have led to the spread of new bourgeois values. The stimulus of free market policies has led to increasing consumerism and bourgeois egoistic values being disseminated by the mass media.

(iii) In the background of the setbacks to Socialism there has been a spurt in the growth of reactionary, sectarian, chauvinist and fundamentalist forces. India too has seen the rise of the reactionary communal forces. There is also the growing fragmentation based on caste identities. Such an atmosphere is inimical to progressive and scientific ideas.

(iv) The protracted nature of the struggle for change in the correlation of class forces and the difficulties encountered in this basic task along with the slow and uneven growth of the Communist movement at the all-India level creates the conditions for an attitude of adjusting within the existing bourgeois order and succumbing to its values. A large number of entrants into the Party have been reared in the daily activities of the Party and mass organisations without acquiring the basic understanding of the Party and its programmatic objectives. This leads to all sorts of petty-bourgeois trends emerging within the Party.

(v) For the past two decades, since 1977, the situation necessitated a tactical line of alliances with bourgeois parties particularly electoral alliances. This has led to the possibilities for the penetration of the bourgeois style of functioning into our Party. Our cadres can get influenced by the type of money power and other bourgeois practices followed by these parties. This can act as a corroding influence on our cadres.

(vi) As the Organisational Reports of the two Party Congresses reveal, the bulk of the Party members have joined the Party in the last one decade and are therefore relatively new members. In addition the older members need to be constantly re-educated. The weakness in our capacity to provide ideological-political training results in a low level of political consciousness. There is also the inactivity of a large number of Party branches and defective functioning in the mass organisations.

These above circumstances provide the grounds for penetration of alien class values within the Party. The 14th Congress had on the basis of the replies to the questionnaire provided by the State Committees highlighted some of the problems as follows:

- (a) the reformist trend of parliamentarism and electoral opportunism;

- (b) erosion or lack of Communist consciousness which leads to Party cadres succumbing to social pressures and indulging in non-Communist behaviour such as obscurantism or caste practices.
- (c) instances of corruption generated by the corrosive influence of bourgeois society.

To elaborate further, the 14th Congress Organisation Report pointed out:

"All the State Committees have reported examples of serious lapses or aberrant behaviour by certain comrades and also instances of disciplinary action. Firstly, the corrosion of Communist standards comes from the corrupting influences in bourgeois society. There have been some cases of corruption which have resulted in expulsions. Though these are still on a small scale it sounds a warning. Careerist trends have developed among some cadres and functionaries in the Party organisation and trade unions. Secondly, there are cases of succumbing to social pressures to indulge in non-Communist behaviour or in obscurantist or caste practices. The last named is more widespread in the Hindi-speaking areas. The Party has not been taking seriously enough the task of remoulding the outlook of cadres and members in combating the social practices alien to Communists. When such lapses occur in the ranks of the leadership, the prestige and credibility of the Party gets affected. In the prevailing atmosphere of rank corruption, moral decay and come back of backward looking ideologies, the Party Committees must consciously struggle against such trends and check them in time.

"Another deviation spreading in the Party is parliamentarism and the crass opportunism connected with it. It is a common occurrence even in the weakest states or Party Committees to make exaggerated claims about fighting elections, bickerings over candidates and choice of seats. The corrosion of Communist consciousness is seen also in states where we have our governments. Hankering for posts in elected bodies such as Municipalities, Zilla Parishads or the assembly leads to groupism. Individual ego and vested interest vitiate collective functioning."

Combating these wrong trends and vices in the Party must be taken up in the concrete situation in which our Party organisation is placed. The 15th Congress of the Party explained these circumstances as follows:

"The majority of the Party members have been recruited during the last decade. Though we have made some attempts to educate the Party members and to raise their political organisational consciousness they are not sufficient to meet the situation. There is also need to re-educate the old Party members. The education of the new entrants to the Party and the re-education of the old comrades should be a continuous process. Political education is not confined to political classes alone. It includes self-study, participation in discussions, attending general body meetings and public meetings, participation in campaigns, struggles, and political propaganda etc. The organisational review report of the state conferences reveal that a considerable percentage of the Party members are not attending Party branches regularly or getting involved in Party activities constantly and 50 percentage of the branches etc. are not functioning properly. The lower level of political organisational consciousness of the Party members, the existence of a considerable number of inactive Party members, the defective functioning of a large number of Party branches etc. are restricting the Party's attempts at expansion. This state of affairs is also responsible for making the Party members vulnerable to bourgeois ideological influences. These are also reasons for bourgeois organisational practices like factionalism, individualism, careerism, corruption, parliamentary opportunism and wrong style of work creeping into the Party."

When a large section of the Party members are inactive and their political-ideological level not developed, it enables wrong trends in the leadership to develop and persist. A conscious and active Party membership would help in checking these tendencies.

II

To eliminate the wrong trends and to rectify the erroneous style of functioning requires a three-pronged approach of political,

ideological and organisational rectification. This rectification campaign should focus on:

Combating Parliamentarism

Eliminating the disease of parliamentarism and electoral opportunism is a central task. Much of the factional infighting stems from the hankering for elected positions like MLAs, local bodies chairman and panchayat positions. The recent election review conducted by the two highest state committees of West Bengal and Kerala have both pointed to this harmful trend manifesting itself in the Party.

The bane of parliamentarism should not be seen merely as a deviation among individual leaders and cadres for holding elected positions and power. It is a totally reformist outlook that confines the Party's activities to electoral work and the illusion that the Party's advance can be ensured solely through fighting elections. Neglecting the work of organising the mass movements, launching struggles and building the Party is a result of this parliamentary outlook.

Developing class and mass struggles and through them the building of the mass organisations is the key to the expanding of the Party's influence and for building a revolutionary mass Party. Primacy should be given to building Party organisation, combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work to strengthen the mass movement and the Party's influence.

It must be concretely discussed in the State Committees why the work of the Party and mass organisations has not expanded or influence grown in constituencies/areas where the Party has been fighting elections over a long period and where our candidates have been elected also. The reformist style of work of our committees/cadres in this regard must be pinpointed and corrected.

Effectively using elected representatives like MLAs/MPs for work outside the legislatures in agitation/propaganda and support to the mass movements must be ensured. Very often our elected representatives are not being properly utilised for this work. At the same time the trend has developed in some places of MLAs and other elected functionaries refusing to work within the Party

norms and individually functioning according to their electoral perceptions. In many of the weaker states, Party MLAs resist the amount of levy fixed and try to get it reduced. In some cases there have been outright refusal to pay the levy fixed by the State Committee. This cannot be tolerated. As per the Party Constitution all salaries and allowances of legislators are to be considered Party money and the levy must be fixed in such a manner as to ensure that this norm is implemented organisationally.

The Central Committee before the Lok Sabha Elections had discussed the question of limitation of terms for elected functionaries. It had suggested two terms generally as the norm for MPs/MLAs etc. The impact of parliamentarism leads to some leading cadres wishing to remain elected representatives in public bodies for ever. Vested interest develops in this process. The work of building the Party and mass organisations is sacrificed due to this electoral preoccupations. Two or three-term limitation must be taken up for implementation at different levels from the panchayat to parliament in future.

Restoring and Strengthening Democratic Centralism

There has been a disturbing growth of unhealthy trends such as factionalism, careerism, individualism and general absence of collective functioning at various levels. Apart from the problems created by hankering for elected legislative positions, there is also the factionalism and groupism associated with the efforts to capture key positions in Party committees. This is seen as a source for exercising power. The growth of careerism reflects this trend. It is to be asserted firmly and the Party members made conscious that canvassing for an individual or group is not allowed in the Party and is against the Party Constitution.

The erosion of the norms of collective functioning and of keeping the Party's interests as supreme above that of individual interests is seen by the growing incidents of leakage of inner-Party discussion in leading committees to the bourgeois Press. There is a liberal attitude towards such leakages made for factional purposes. The 15th Congress had called for strict action against those who indulge in such anti-Party activities.

The rectification required to check the problems of factionalism and individualism must start from the top and the leading committees. The hesitation to take action against leaders who are responsible for such alien tendencies must be given up.

Maintaining Communist Norms

Cases of corruption among Party functionaries at any level, even though they are few, must be taken seriously. If there are any allegations they should be properly investigated without delay, in an impartial manner and action taken wherever the charges are found valid. This is especially necessary in states where we run governments and also where there are a substantial number of functionaries/Party cadres holding official/administrative positions.

A political ideological campaign within the Party is essential to make the Party cadres conscious that the maintenance of minimum norms requires the highest standards of integrity and probity while dealing with public funds and not indulging in any malpractices.

In the case of Party functionaries and those in the leadership of mass organisations there should be check up of use of Party and mass organisation funds. This requires proper maintenance of accounts and the supervision by the finance sub-committees as prescribed in the rules under the Constitution. The Communist tradition of viewing Party money as sacrosanct and to be used sparingly is getting eroded and there are a number of cases of leading cadres themselves spending Party money in a manner which encourages wasteful expenditure. The Party leadership should set an example by adopting a simple life style and in the careful use of Party money and resources.

The Communist Party has a good tradition of collecting money for the Party from the working people. It is the duty of all Party members to collect money from the people for the Party. However, in the recent years a trend has emerged in some places to collect larger amounts from select individuals instead of relying on mass collections. The correct approach of mass collections with small amounts collected from a large number of people must be stressed. Here the recent experience of Kerala must be cited where at the call of the state committee for a one day's mass collection for setting up the new edition at Kottayam of the daily *Deshabhimani*

the entire Party went amongst the people and collected the impressive sum of Rs. 70 lakhs.

In recent years, there has also been a tendency for lavish expenditure at the time of Party conferences and mass organisation conferences in certain states and all India conferences. Having huge feasts with more and more dishes and extravagant display is considered a matter of prestige for the organisation. The holding of conferences and other activities should show the difference between the Communists and other parties.

As our Party's influence has grown in certain states and at the all India level we must stress the need to adopt Communist norms of behaviour. This is all the more necessary in a situation where with the era of liberalisation, there is heightened activity by the big capitalists and private sector companies for policies favourable for them and to lobby for their special interests. Earlier there was a covert link with the bureaucracy and the politicians; now with liberalisation this has become respectable and open. Bourgeois politicians and bureaucrats act as lobbyists and agents for big business and their vested interests. It is important that our Party leaders and elected representatives have guidelines for themselves in this matter. Attached to this report are a set of guidelines to be observed.

Adherence to Progressive Values

The Communists had played a pioneering role as the foremost fighters against all forms of social oppression and evils. Caste practices like untouchability and exclusion from social activities were fought by the Communists in the earlier days. Fight against obscurantist practices which trampled upon the dignity of scheduled castes or women were also opposed firmly.

Now with the growth of communal and caste ideologies it is all the more necessary that the Communists be in the forefront in the fight against social evils and customs. Here a major struggle is required against the casteism and there should be systematic anti-caste propaganda among the people. For this there should be conscious efforts to educate the Party members against caste feelings. Very often we go by the preconceived notion that by

becoming members of the Communist Party there is automatic growth of class consciousness while in reality a number of Party members are imbued with caste feelings. It is not enough to make general statements against caste practices. In the Party Committees up to the local committee any leading cadre found guilty of practising caste discrimination or exclusion must be proceeded against. For instance, it cannot be in any way accepted that in a Party leader's house lower caste people are not allowed to eat or socially mix. Party members particularly in the Hindi-speaking states must be educated and motivated to oppose various forms of caste discrimination and oppression such as not allowing a scheduled caste person to sit on the same *charpoy*, drawing water from wells, prohibition of use of streets within the village or town for the scheduled castes etc. All these have to be taken up and fought by the Party and the mass movements with the Party members taking the lead. Absence of such initiative makes our anti-caste posture simply homilies as done by other bourgeois parties.

The 14th Congress had already pointed out how some Party members succumb to social and religious practices alien to Communist standards within the family and the community on questions such as dowry taking, inter-caste marriages, child marriage, equal status to girl child etc. The tendency is to go along with family or community pressures rather than have a firm and principled stand behaving a Communist.

The failure to draw in women belonging to the families of the Party members into political activities and raising their political consciousness was noted in the 1967 Tasks on Party Organisation. Subsequent experience shows it is necessary to educate male Party members themselves about the attitude to women as male chauvinist attitudes prevail amongst them. Some cases of wife-beating and refusal to provide equal status to women within the family and outside are instances of this outlook. Changing the outlook of male Party members in this respect must be taken up in the same way as caste, religious prejudices and other feudal customs are to be combated.

The Party has been repeatedly emphasising the necessity of drawing women into the Party and for creating conditions for their entry in mass organisations and Party committees. Equal status for women in society and political work must be actively championed by Communists.

The leadership has to set the example in observing Communist standards. There has to be a sustained campaign by the Party and the Democratic movement against all forms of caste and religious chauvinism, superstitious practices and religious fundamentalism. While developing the class struggle in the concrete conditions where semi-feudal ideologies hold sway, it is necessary to nurture such a democratic and socially progressive atmosphere to aid the advance of the oppressed sections who are the worst victims of this order.

Party Education

An important part of the political-ideological remoulding of our cadres is through Party education. Party education is required for re-educating the leaders/cadres and for training the new entrants. This is part of the ideological work necessary to raise the political consciousness of the Party members at all levels. The 14th Congress had highlighted the need for ideological struggle which has been reiterated in the 15th Congress.

"In the present situation in the country, this ideological battle, education and propaganda acquires special importance. We will be able to fight the bankrupt policies of the Congress(I) and the communal platform of the BJP and defend the unity of the country, only if along with building up mass struggles, we simultaneously wage a sustained political-ideological struggle against ruling class ideologies. To the list enumerated above we have to add the pernicious theories of Hindu Rashtra, pseudo-secularism, linguistic chauvinism, the new fashionable theories of abandoning self-reliance and integrating with the global capitalist economy; the new anti-Marxist and anti-socialist propaganda generated by the setbacks to world Socialism. The battle to win the minds of the people who gather around us in mass struggles becomes of paramount importance. Neglect of this work will reduce our work

to economism within our basic classes and the masses in general." (14th Congress, Report on Organisation)

While we are yet to undertake updating of the Party programme, it must be emphasised that the basic content of the programme with regard to the class analysis, stage of the revolution and the goal of people's democratic revolution continues to be the bedrock of our strategy. This should not be in any way be lost sight of while conducting Party education. An important aspect of Party education and the political work should be to inculcate the basic understanding of the Party and its programmatic objectives and linking this up with the immediate issues/tactics being taken up by the Party. Failure to establish this leads to a low level of political understanding and the tendency to be swept away by the slogan of bourgeois parties.

In the present situation, it is important to unify the Party politically and ideologically. At the present juncture, as far as the political line is concerned, the independent role of the Party in the political and ideological sphere, the systematic carrying on of Communist propaganda and the development of mass movements to activate the Party must be stressed. This is particularly important in a situation where we have expanded united activities with bourgeois parties. Ideologically, the cause identified for the setbacks to Socialism in the ideological resolution of the 14th Congress of the Party and the creative application of Marxism-Leninism in the concrete conditions of Indian society must be the basis for educating the Party.

It is necessary to conduct Party schools on a systematic and regular basis. While having such schooling proper attention should be paid to the content of the school and the method of education. It is not enough to have lectures by Party leading cadres on various subjects. A method has to be devised whereby the participants in schools study relevant material on the subject and then spend more time in mutual discussions to clarify their understanding and the teachers help in the process by initiating the class and summing up the discussions. The experience of conducting schools so far show that while some schools are being held at the Central, State and district level, Party education is not reaching the ordinary Party

members. Steps have to be taken so that classes are organised for the entire Party membership.

III

Immediate Organisational Measures Linked to Rectification

It will not be within the purview of this campaign to deal with all the organisational problems at different levels within the Party. It is of course true that there are many long-standing organisational problems which have accumulated in different states. These must be discussed, sorted out and solutions found by respective Party committees as part of their regular organisational work. However, it will be necessary to take up some of the acute problems which are relevant to the rectification campaign immediately. There is a direct link between the failure to adhere to some of the basic organisational norms and the growing problems of factionalism, individualism and other violations of democratic centralism. For instance it will be difficult to upgrade the level of political consciousness of the Party members unless the minimum standards for recruitment of membership are observed. Adherence to the norms of recruitment of membership and their annual scrutiny is also to be stressed as instances of enrolling members and inflating their numbers for factional purposes have come to light. Keeping the immediate requirements of the rectification campaign in mind we suggest certain immediate and essential tasks to be taken up at the organisational level if the rectification campaign is to be successful:

(i) The norms for recruitment of Party members as laid down in the Constitution must be strictly followed while due attention should be paid for expanding Party membership. Based on the experience in the recent period, the two Party Congress reports have noted the erosion in the standards of Party membership and the low level of political-organisational consciousness. Firstly, the process of recruitment of Party members through the process of mass organisation activities—formation of auxiliary groups—recruitment as candidate members—after one year's training and education making them fit for full Party membership—must be implemented.

(ii) In the case of renewals, Party members activities in the light of the minimum duties set out under the Party Constitution (article XI) must be scrutinised and made the basis for renewals.

(iii) Without activating the branches, the primary unit of the Party, the improvement and rectification sought cannot be achieved. Only when Party members are active politically and organisationally can the principles of democratic centralism come into play. The guidelines given in the 14th Congress for an annual report on Party branch activities and check up of the same by the state committees must be implemented. We must insist that all Party members work in some mass organisation or the other.

(iv) The CPI(M) is a Party of the working class. The revolutionary character of the Party can be strengthened only if the class composition is improved. Expanding recruitment from the working class and other basic classes and promoting and equipping cadres from them ideologically is one of the basic tasks to be continuously taken up and implemented.

(v) One of the immediate tasks is to combat bureaucratic tendencies among leading cadres which has been nailed down in the 14th Congress report. This is a trend alien to democratic centralism and inner-Party democracy. Intolerance leads to criticism and differing views being suppressed. Criticism and self-criticism is to be practised in Party committees to check bureaucratic behaviour and at the same time ensure check-up and improvement of individual work and responsibilities.

(vi) Factional activities in any form including canvassing for individuals or groups in Party Committees or in conferences are against basic norms of democratic centralism and must be prohibited. Party members must be made conscious that this is against the norms of democratic centralism. Factional considerations often leads to liberalism in dealing with wrong trends among comrades.

(vii) The 14th Congress review of organisation had called for change in the approach to wholetimers who are in some cases treated as paid employees and not as political organisational leaders. While developing their political organisational abilities it is also essential to see that wholetimers are paid wages which are

necessary for a minimum level of livelihood for their families. Not doing so creates conditions for unhealthy trends and blocking the possibility of cadres from the basic classes becoming whole timers.

(viii) An important area where rectification is required is the approach and style of functioning of Party members in mass organisations. Democratic functioning and maintaining the independent character of the mass organisation has to be fostered. The direction given in the Central Committee resolution on Mass Organisations (1980) must be implemented.

IV

Nine Points For Rectification

To sum up, the following concrete steps have to be taken during the rectification campaign:

(i) Countering parliamentarism and electoral opportunism. Educate the cadres at all levels on the correct approach of a Marxist-Leninist Party of combining parliamentary and extra parliamentary activities with the aim of strengthening mass movement and the class struggle. End the neglect of Party building by exclusive reliance and emphasis only on electoral activities enforce the principle of limitation of terms for elected functionaries at different levels confining it to two-three terms. Exemption will be given in only special cases with the approval of the state committee in the case of legislative assemblies and the Central Committee in the case of parliament. District committees similarly will have power to exemption for lower level elected positions.

(ii) Strictly implement the guidelines set out for elected representative/leading Party functionaries which is spelt out in the annexure.

(iii) Educate the Party members to conform to Communist norms and eschew all social, caste and religious practices which are alien to it. Take firm positions to oppose and mobilise people against untouchability, caste discrimination and other social evils such as dowry, oppression of women and against discriminatory practices.

(iv) Take disciplinary action against proved cases of corruption among Party cadres. Educate the Party cadres about proper utilisation of Party funds and mass organisation money; there should be proper maintenance of account and auditing of the same. All money collected for the Party should be accounted for.

(v) There should be regular criticism and self-criticism in the Party Committees about bureaucratic behaviour of leading cadres and also any careerist tendencies developing. An atmosphere of having free and frank discussions must be created. Eschew all forms of factional activities. Take action in case of persistent violation in this regard.

(vi) Tighten up recruitment of Party members, ensure proper scrutiny at renewals to check up if Party members are fulfilling minimum tasks, activise branches. Ensure participation of members in Party activities.

(vii) Insist on Party members working in a mass organisation as a basic duty. Educate Party members on democratic functioning of mass organisations.

(viii) Organise systematic Party education to cover all Party members. Organise syllabus and method of classes keeping in mind level of consciousness and to facilitate more discussions by participants.

(ix) For the political-ideological work of the Party, the Party papers are a crucial weapon. We must ensure that all Party members must read and subscribe to the Party papers. In the case of daily newspapers those with sufficient income will have to subscribe to the paper as one of the minimum duties.

V

Procedure for Rectification Campaign

The rectification campaign to implement the above tasks must be conducted in a fixed time-frame. The Central Committee document provides the framework and guidelines for the campaign and the following must be done:

(i) The Central Committee resolution on rectification must be reported at all levels in the Party through meetings of the

committees and general body meetings. The state committee must undertake the work of translating and circulating the document up to the level which it will decide.

(ii) In the next two months, December 1996 and January 1997, Polit Bureau will sit with State Secretariats which will prepare a document to implement the Central Committee resolution on rectification. The State Committees will then meet to discuss the rectification campaign. One part of the meeting will be devoted to the reporting of the document and in the second part the state committee will discuss and adopt the document prepared by the secretariat concretising the tasks for the campaign based on the specific conditions and experience of the state.

(iii) The state committee decisions for the campaign will then be reported along with the Central Committee document by the state secretariat members in the district committees. The district committees will have a reporting meeting session and a session devoted to discussion and implementing the tasks prepared by the District Secretariat with the help of the P.C. Secretariat. The district committee then will take the campaign to the lower levels and the whole process must be taken down to the branch level.

(iv) This whole process must be undertaken in a time frame of six months so that the whole campaign can be conducted and completed by the end of June, 1997.

This rectification campaign now being initiated is only the beginning. The process of rectification and combating of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences is a continuous and ongoing process.

Guidelines For Conduct of Leading Party Functionaries and For Elected Representatives (MPs/MLAs/Local Bodies Chairman etc.)

1. Our Party functionaries both in legislatures and outside (including trade unions and mass organisations) should not accept any hospitality provided by companies and private lobbies. This will include dinners/lunches, expensive gifts, hotel stay, or discounts in prices for buying costly gifts.

2. Party functionaries who receive official gifts from fraternal parties/organisations which are of a costly nature should deposit such items with the Party. Procedure should be devised as to what is to be done with these gifts.
3. Leading Party functionaries/elected representatives should adopt a simple life style. They should not host lavish weddings for their family members/relatives and refrain from taking dowry. They should not organise religious ceremonies or personally conduct religious rituals.
4. Payment of levy fixed by the Party on salaries and allowances of elected representatives must be paid promptly and regularly. Party's leading cadres must set an example in this regard.
5. In dealing with Party money, mass organisation funds or public funds, leading functionaries must maintain proper accounts and account for all receipts and payments. Official cars and other facilities should not be misused for family members and friends.

On Tragic Air Accident*

Statement Dated November 13, 1996

Issued by The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep sorrow and grief at the loss of lives in the collision between two aircraft of the Saudi and Kazakh airlines near Delhi, on November 12. It is indeed tragic that such an accident should have occurred claiming more than 350 lives of which the overwhelming majority are Indians. The Polit Bureau conveys its deep sympathy to all those who lost their family members in this terrible accident.

The United Front Government has ordered a judicial enquiry into the accident. It is hoped that this enquiry will be expeditiously carried out and the cause of the accident identified so that any such recurrence in Indian airspace can be averted.

CPI(M) Urges Adequate Relief in Andhra Pradesh*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its deep anguish and grief at the colossal loss of life, destruction of property and standing crops in Andhra Pradesh. The damage wreaked by this cyclone comes closely on the heels of the earlier one which had also caused large-scale destruction and loss of life. It is truly a calamity of national proportions.

Responding to this colossal damage, the Steering Committee of the United Front at its meeting on November 8, had asked its constituent parties to contribute to the Prime Minister's Andhra Cyclone Relief Fund. The CPI(M) had already announced an initial contribution of Rs. 1 lakh at the meeting.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) calls upon all the political parties, trade unions, mass organisations and the people in general to come forward and contribute generously to this fund so that adequate relief can be provided to the people of Andhra Pradesh.

CPI(M) Opposes Privatisation of Water Supply*

**Statement Dated November 19, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its opposition to the proposal mooted by the Minister of State for Urban Affairs and Employment Shri Venkateswarlu for privatisation of water supply in the cities.

The minister has announced that he would convene a meeting of state government ministers in January to discuss the proposal of privatisation of water supply as it is a state subject.

The CPI(M) strongly objects to this major policy statement made by the minister. It must be noted that the United Front has in its Common Minimum Programme stated that "Although drinking water, primary health care and housing are subjects which fall under the purview of the state governments, the Central Government also bears a responsibility to ensure that these basic human needs of every citizen are satisfied". In total contradiction to this, the minister impressed by the privatisation of water supply in Britain wants to abandon the elementary responsibility of the State to provide safe drinking water to the citizens in the urban areas.

The Polit Bureau calls upon the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to ensure that such policy initiatives contrary to the U.F. programme are avoided in future.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 24, 1996.

CPI(M) Condoles Train Blast Victims*

**Statement Dated December 3, 1996
Issued by The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau strongly condemns the dastardly act of exploding a bomb in a coach of the Jammu bound Jhelum Express, leading to the death of 12 and injuring 34 passengers. The CPI(M) demands of the government the speedy arrest of the culprits involved and to take strong action against them. The CPI(M) also demands that effective preventive measures be undertaken on the railways, to prevent the recurrence of such murderous acts. The CPI(M) extends its deep condolences to the relatives of those who died, and wishes speedy recovery of those who have been injured in the blast.

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 8, 1996.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to Communist Refoundation Party, Italy*

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I convey our fraternal Communist greetings to the Third National Congress of the Communist Refoundation Party of Italy.

Your Congress is being held at a very crucial moment in the world as modern civilization prepares to enter the next millennium.

We note that the Third Congress of your Party will discuss issues of great importance to the rest of the international Communist movement at the present juncture, and the orientation of the Communist Refoundation Party towards advancing the Italian people's struggle for Socialism.

This Congress is also being held at a very crucial juncture in Italian politics. We have noted with great satisfaction that in the last elections the right-wing forces were defeated, and it gives us great gratification to note the role played by the Communist Refoundation Party particularly in forging the electoral agreement between different forces and parties ranged against the right-wing forces. At a time when the ideologies of imperialism are busy churning out illusory theories on the death of communism, it is heartening to note that the popular support of your Party has grown significantly from 5.9 per cent to 8.6 per cent.

Apart from this success, the presence of your Party in the governments in six regions and hundreds of municipalities only confirms the significance of the Communist Party in Italy. In fact

*Published in PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY, New Delhi, December 8, 1996.

these recent successes have resoundingly vindicated the decisions of your Second Congress which set out with determination to demonstrate the continued relevance in Italy of a Communist Party after the unfortunate dissolution of the historic Communist Party of Italy (P.C.I.). These are a source of inspiration to Communists all over the world.

Dear Comrades, the similarities between the political conditions of our countries are indeed striking. In India, following the last elections we have been able to keep the right-wing forces out of government on the basis of an agreement between the Left, democratic and secular forces. The CPI(M) had played an important role in forging such an alliance which we felt necessary to safeguard and strengthen the democratic and secular foundations of modern India. It is on the basis of these foundations that the struggle of the Indian people for an exploitation-free society can advance. On the other hand, despite our important role in the present situation, the CPI(M) while being a determining force supporting the government, is not part of the government. The CPI(M) is engaged in building popular movements that will be able to meet the expectations of the people aroused by the electoral victory of democratic and secular forces and to influence the direction of governmental policy in a positive manner.

Given the commonality of our positions, we are confident that the fraternal relations between our Parties and movements will continue to strengthen in the days to come. Dear Comrades, we are confident that the deliberations of your Third National Congress will further strengthen the bonds between your Party and the Italian people particularly at a time when the working class in Italy is engaged in active and militant actions against the growing attacks on their rights and livelihood by a neo-liberal offensive. Please accept my warm fraternal greetings once again.

We wish your Congress all success.

With fraternal Communist greetings,

Harkishan Singh Surjeet
(*General Secretary*)
December 3, 1996

CPI(M)'s Greetings to 15th Congress of CP of Portugal*

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I convey our warm fraternal Communist greetings to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Portugal.

Both our Parties share a very strong bond of commonality and internationalism particularly in the struggle against the renewed imperialist offensive that followed the dismantling of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. We are confident that our presence at your Congress will further strengthen these bonds.

Comrades, your Congress is being held at a very critical juncture of world developments. We note that the 15th Congress of your Party will discuss issues of great importance concerning the international Communist movement at the present juncture, and the orientation of the Portuguese Communist Party towards advancing the Portuguese people's struggle for Socialism.

Dear Comrades, the CPI(M) closely follows the continued and increased activities of the PCP and the strengthening of its links with the Portuguese people. During the recent period, we note with a sense of gratification that the PCP, true to revolutionary tenets, has carried out intense activity marked by both militancy and effectiveness. Your activities, mass struggles, the electoral battles and particularly the struggle against the ideological offensive of the exploiting classes are valuable contributions to Communists all over the world. The influence that is wielded by the PCP in local governments and municipalities continue to provide a source of strength to Communists elsewhere in the world. We are confident that the deliberations of this Congress

will further strengthen the bonds between the PCP and the Portuguese people.

Despite all its tall claims and the self-proclamations of the immortality of capitalism, capitalism as a system continues to prove its incapability of solving the most important issues before humanity. The past few years have seen the sharpening of contradictions and the widening of the hiatus between the rich and the poor. While strengthening the popular mass movements against capitalism's global offensive and exposing its newer methods of exploitation, the ideological struggle needs to be strengthened. This has been a common endeavour of Communists the world over. The PCP which has made significant contributions in the past, we are sure, will continue to do so at the present juncture as well.

Comrades, we, in our country, are engaged in a very complex struggle. On the one hand, we are endeavouring to preserve the democratic, secular foundations of modern India which are coming under severe attack by the right-reactionary forces, and on the other, we are doubling our forces to sharpen people's struggles in defence of their rights and for improving their livelihood. A new political situation has arisen in the country where the Left alongwith other democratic and secular forces have formed a coalition government with the express purpose of protecting India's modern identity and interests of its people. The CPI(M) has had a very important role in forging such an alternative and today supports this government from the outside but not joining the government. We are, therefore, currently engaged in making this coalition government a success, at the same time building social and political popular movements to influence governmental policies in a progressive direction.

Dear Comrades, the CPI(M) holds in great esteem the positions and the activities of the Portuguese Communist Party. We are confident that the deliberations of your 15th Congress will go a long way in further strengthening the Portuguese Communist Party in discharging its international and domestic responsibilities. May I once again convey our warm fraternal greetings to the Congress and all the delegates assembled here.

We wish your Congress all success.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet
(*General Secretary*)
December 3, 1996

CPI(M) Opposes Insurance Bill*

**Statement Dated December 8, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) extends its full support to the one-day strike called by the employees of the insurance sector on December 9. All the unions of the LIC and GIC have jointly called for this strike against the proposed introduction of a draft Bill for the setting up of an Insurance Regulatory Authority. This piece of legislation is a prelude to the opening up of the insurance sector to private companies. The Insurance Regulatory Authority to be set up will be entrusted with the task of working out the modalities for the entry of private companies including foreign companies into the insurance sector.

The CPI(M) expresses its strong opposition to this move to open up the insurance sector. The LIC and the GIC have rendered valuable service in mobilising a large amount of funds for public investment and developmental schemes. Private companies would not play this role. At a time when there is need for increased public investment it will be a retrograde step to open up the insurance sector whereby foreign companies with domestic partners will divert funds for their corporate interests.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) therefore requests the United Front Government not to proceed with the Bill.

On Grenade Attack on CPI(M) Meeting at Kulgam in Kashmir*

**Statement Dated December 5, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the grenade attack on the Party's public meeting at Kulgam in Kashmir. Seven people have been killed and many injured in this cowardly attack by extremists who were targeting the CPI(M) leader Mohd. Yusuf Tarigami.

The Polit Bureau expressed its concern at the ease with which a single assailant could launch such an attack when security arrangements should have been in place as the meeting was planned in advance. The Polit Bureau wants the state government to institute a probe to find out the actual culprits and the circumstances of this act of terrorism.

The Polit Bureau conveys its heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed and extends its sympathy to those who have been injured. Comrade Mohd. Salim, member of the Central Committee of the Party and Member of Parliament, has left for Srinagar today to assess the situation and visit the injured persons.

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, December 15, 1996.

CPI(M) Demands Passage of Bill for Reservation for Women*

**Statement Dated December 11, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau to Press**

It is extremely unfortunate that the legislation on reservation for women is being sought to be delayed once again in parliament. It is reported that the government is considering postponing the Bill being adopted in the Lok Sabha and instead referring it to the Cabinet for further discussions.

Any move to avoid adopting the Bill in the current session is not acceptable. The Joint Select Committee has already recommended the Constitution Amendment Bill after full discussions. The plea for OBC reservation for women cannot be made an issue to scuttle the Bill.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) demands that the government immediately initiate steps for the adoption of the Bill in both Houses of parliament in the winter session itself. Not doing so would be a betrayal of the commitment made by all the major political parties and the United Front in its Common Minimum Programme.

Message Received by CPI(M) from Workers' Party of Bangladesh*

The following message was sent by Rashid Khan Menon, General Secretary, Workers' Party of Bangladesh to CPI(M) General Secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet:

The people of Bangladesh acknowledges with deep gratitude the decisive and leading role of the CPI(M), Comrade Jyoti Basu and the Left Front Government of West Bengal in finding a solution to the problem of sharing of the waters of the Ganga and the signing of the accord on this to the satisfaction of both Bangladesh and India.

The Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh extends its heartfelt thanks to you and the CPI(M) and through you to the United Front Government and Prime Minister Deve Gowda and Foreign Minister I. K. Gujral for this great achievement.

The Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Bangladesh thinks that with the signing of this accord the bonds of friendship between our two people will be further strengthened and will usher in a new era of cooperation on the basis of equality and justness. This will also strengthen the hands of the democratic and secular forces of both the countries and help advancing the cause of democracy and emancipation of the toiling masses.

December 13, 1996

On Shocking Atrocities at Khowai in Tripura*

**Statement Dated December 14, 1996 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of The CPI(M) to Press**

The Polit Bureau expresses its shock and indignation at the atrocity committed by extremists at Kalyanpur Bazar Colony in Khowai sub-division in Tripura. On December 13, a gang of extremists have attacked the village and shot dead 25 persons with sophisticated weapons after setting their houses on fire. Twenty-four others have been badly injured.

This gruesome incident comes in the wake of a concerted bid by two extremist groups, the NLFT and ATTF, to step up attacks on innocent non-tribal people. Their diabolical aim is to foment tribal/non-tribal tensions and disrupt ethnic harmony. .

The Tripura State Government has been urging the Centre to augment the paramilitary forces in the state. The BSF is to patrol a long border and more battalions as per the sanctioned strength are required. The Assam Rifles should be deployed in the state as they have the experience of the terrain. Only a few days ago, a team of MPs met the Home Minister to request increased deployment of paramilitary forces.

The Left Front Government is doing everything to maintain communal amity and to foil the extremists' designs. But this requires immediate assistance and cooperation from the Centre. The CPI(M) calls upon the people of Tripura to preserve tribal/non-tribal unity and foil the heinous conspiracy of the extremist forces, out to disrupt peace and communal harmony.

CPI(M)'s Greetings to 29th Congress of CP of France*

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I extend our warm fraternal greetings to the 29th Congress of the Communist Party of France.

Your Congress is being held at a very crucial moment in the world as modern civilization prepares to enter the next millennium.

We note that the 29th Congress of your Party will discuss issues of great importance to the rest of the international Communist movement at the present juncture and the orientation of the Communist Party of France towards advancing the French people's struggle for Socialism.

We have been following with interest and a sense of gratification that the French working class has recently been involved in militant and popular strike actions against the neo-liberal ruling class offensive for privatisation and drastic cuts in the social welfare expenditures. We are confident that such protest actions will galvanise the French people to defend the gains that have been made by generations of French Communists.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of Socialism in East European countries, world capitalism is emboldened to mount fresh attacks on the working people even in the advanced capitalist countries. Capitalism no longer perceives the need to combat the growth of socialist ideas through increased state intervention and social welfare. But the working class and people can never allow the reversal of the gains that

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 22, 1996.

they have already achieved through struggles. We are confident that such resistance will not only continue but will intensify and strengthen the bonds between the Communist Party of France and the people of France

Comrades, we in our country are engaged in a very complex struggle. On the one hand we are endeavouring to preserve the democratic, secular foundations of modern India which are coming under severe attack by the right-reactionary forces, and on the other we are doubling our forces to sharpen people's struggles in defence of their rights and for improving their livelihood. A new political situation has arisen in the country where the Left alongwith other democratic and secular forces have formed a coalition government with the express purpose of protecting India's modern identity and interests of its people. The CPI(M) has had a very important role in forging such an alternative and today supports this government from outside but not joined the government. We are, therefore, currently engaged to make this coalition government a success while at the same time in building social and political popular movements to influence a progressive direction to governmental policies.

Dear Comrades, we are confident that the deliberations of the 29th Congress of your Party will strengthen the bonds between the French people and the French Communists further. May I once again convey our warm fraternal Communist greetings to the Congress and to all the delegates assembled here.

We wish your Congress all success.

Yours comradely

Harkishan Singh Surjeet
General Secretary

December 3, 1996

CPI(M)'s Greetings to Socialist Cuba*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its warm revolutionary greetings to the Socialist Republic of Cuba and the people of Cuba on the 38th anniversary of the victorious Cuban revolution.

This year, the people of Cuba will be celebrating the anniversary in the background of significant advances they have made, both internationally and domestically. For decades the Cuban people resolutely withstood the relentless imperialist pressures and the criminal economic blockade imposed by the USA. They, thus, exhibited to the world that no amount of blandishment can make Cuba deviate from the path of Socialism that its people had achieved and built. As is known, following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and East European socialist states, Cuba found itself in a very difficult economic situation. It is at this stage that U.S. imperialism mounted its criminal offensive to destroy Socialism in Cuba. The Cuban people, however, demonstrating unprecedented resolve and commitment to Socialism, have today succeeded in virtually isolating U.S. imperialism within the world community, with the U.N. General Assembly voting for the withdrawal of U.S. sanctions with only one vote against it (apart from the U.S. itself). Already countries of the European Union and Canada have begun trade links with Cuba, ignoring the threats of the USA.

The last year saw further growth of international solidarity with socialist Cuba. The activities of the solidarity movement all across the world have given Cuba immense moral and material support.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 29, 1996.

On the domestic front too, after nearly five years of hitherto unknown economic hardships, the Cuban economy appears to turn the corner with a record sugar harvest this year. The economic hardships on the people are relatively easing.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is confident that the Cuban people, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba and Fidel Castro, will overcome the pressures of the predatory imperialist power and keep the red flag flying high. The slogan that moved the people of this tiny island to wage such a stupendous struggle—"Socialism or death"—has been a source of inspiration to the progressive people all over the world. The CPI(M), as a part of its internationalist duty, had the privilege of hosting the Asia Pacific regional meeting of solidarity with Cuba this year.

Cuba's struggle today has become the symbol of humanity's struggle for dignity, liberty and freedom and the sovereign right to every nation and its people to choose and steer their own destiny.

The CPI(M) reiterates its unflinching solidarity and victory with the people of Cuba and its struggle.

On Gouri Amma Episode*

**Statement Dated January 2, 1994 Issued by
The Kerala State Committee of CPI(M)**

The state committee examined the unanimous decisions of the Alappuzha district committee that met on December 26, 1993. The state committee unanimously resolved to approve them. The decisions are given below.

Comrade Gouri Amma's explanation does not contain an iota of self-criticism. She reiterates and is firm on her right to violate the discipline, the line, the decisions and policies of the party. While it is a fact that the "Self-Reliance Development Committee" did exist, she has no qualms in declaring publicly that there was no such committee. With the help of the bourgeois media, Naxalites, Dalit Panthers, and a section of the SNDP leaders, she is constantly attacking the party and trying to split the party, in order to save the Congress from its political bankruptcy. Attempts are made to split the trade unions. Parallel committees are being organised. Counter allegations depicting the Party leaders to be corrupt are made. The committee rejects this malicious explanation.

"No one should be allowed to attack the party and still continue in the party. It is against the interest of the working class. Therefore, this district committee meeting decides to expel Comrade Gouri Amma from the Party. It appeals to the state committee to approve this decision at the earliest.

This is a continuation of the state committee decisions to remove her from the secretariat in the first instance, and then later, from the state committee. The state committee had directed her to function with the district committee when she was removed from the secretariat of the state committee. She was not a member of

*Published in 'PEOPLES DEMOCRACY', New Delhi, January 9, 1994

the district committee at that time. Naturally, when she was removed from the state committee also, she was directed to become a formal member of the district committee of Alappuzha where she was residing. With that she became a member of the district committee. In this situation the district committee has the right to take all disciplinary actions, including expulsion, with respect to her. But the expulsion will come into effect only after it receives the confirmation of the state committee. It is this approval that the state committee has given now.

How such a situation arose is an issue that should be examined by party members and sympathisers. The opinion of the state committee regarding it is given below.

Gouri Amma has been a member of every Ministry formed under the leadership of the party. But for a short interval, she has continuously been an MLA also. It was in recognition of these that she was taken into the secretariat in 1988.

But, there were certain weak spots in her personality.

Firstly, her standard on ideological, political and policy issues was low.

Secondly, she has not assimilated the Marxist-Leninist organisational principle of boldly stating one's own opinion regarding political and organisational issues in one's own unit and before the higher committees and after, that, implementing the majority decision taken by one's own unit or the higher units.

Thirdly, when her hopes to become the Chief Minister did not materialise after the 1987 election, a tendency developed in her not to obey the decisions of the central and state leadership.

The interview with Kerala Sabdom (issue dated December 26, 1993) is a proof of it. This was what she said, "Was it not said that I would be made the Chief Minister in 1987? I was not made. Did I oppose the decision?" Even though she did not publicly oppose the decision, from that date onwards she began to express her opposition to the central and state leadership of the party in various ways. The situation worsened when some of the actions that she took as the Industries Minister gave rise to serious allegations. It is this tendency that has today reached the stage of publicly challenging the party with the help of bourgeois media and anti-

communists. In many places in Alappuzha, she is organising parallel organisations in the name of 'Samithy for Protection of Democracy' and making public speeches.

As a natural evolution of it, she has not only challenged the Alappuzha district committee but also publicly demanded the committee to be disbanded. Further, she is conducting propaganda that the party leadership is corrupt. But she has failed to raise concrete corruption charges against even a single party leader before the state committee.

Now she is trying to organise a new party in collaboration with ex-Naxalite leaders Venu and Ajitha and SNDP leaders M.K. Raghavan, K.K. Rahulan and others. She lent support to the attempt to give form to a new anti-Marxist united front under the leadership of ex-Naxalites and SNDP leaders in the place of United Democratic Front that is rapidly collapsing.

It is an indication of the depth of her degeneration that newspapers like *Manorama* and *Mathrubhoomi* and the leaders of the bourgeois politics who were slandering her in the worst manner while she was the leader and Minister of the United Communist Party and later of CPI(M), have come forward to praise her as a "heroic lady". After trying to be a Communist for most part of her life, she has finally joined with the worst anti-Communists.

According to the constitution of the CPI(M), "disciplinary action shall normally be taken where other methods including methods of persuasion have failed to correct the comrade concerned." Accordingly the state committee has been trying to correct the mistakes evident in her personality. It was only when the initial warning, then censure etc. failed that she was removed from the secretariat and later from the state committee.

Even at that time, the committee expected that she would correct her mistakes as a formal member of the Alappuzha district committee by participating in the criticism and self-criticism during discussions of that committee. But the manner in which she behaved, has shattered all these hopes. Its details are clear from the decisions of the district committee. That is the reason that the

state committee has decided to give approval to the decision of the district committee.

As is made clear in the constitution of the party, 'expulsion from the party is the severest of all disciplinary measures and this shall be applied with utmost caution, deliberation and judgement.' That is the reason why after months long discussions minor disciplinary actions like warning were given. When she refused to rectify her mistakes again and again and when she failed to do so, did the party finally decide to expel her.

Even earlier, when M. V. Raghavan and company and others challenged the party, they were expelled from the party only after giving the opportunity to correct their mistakes. In all these periods not only the party members but also the masses stood firm behind the party. Likewise, we are sure that not only the entire party but also the masses will oppose and defeat the present attempt of the enemies of the party to form an anti-Marxist front around Gouri Amma.

Jyoti Basu's Rebuttal to News of BBC World Service*

Statement Dated May 23, 1994 Issued to World Press

My attention has been drawn to a news item broadcast by the BBC World Service and published in **The Times of India** on 22nd May 1994 that "North Korea has requested emergency rice supplies from India. This request has been made through Jyoti Basu, West Bengal Chief Minister, when visiting North Korea recently."

This news item is absolutely baseless. I visited the DPRK from 7th to 14th May this year. I had talks with several leaders of the DPRK including the Prime Minister. But no one made such request to me. On the contrary, I was impressed by their economic development, construction work and their confidence to meet any situation. The news item is obviously intended to show the DPRK in a poor light.

I strongly protest the news item broadcast by BBC and which has been quoted in **The Times of India** which has no foundation whatsoever.

*Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 29, 1994

Left Parties' Organise Civil Disobedience Movement*

**Statement Dated July 29, 1994 Issued by
The Left Parties Following a meeting in
New Delhi on the Same Date**

A meeting of the Left Parties was held today to review the preparations for the Civil Disobedience Movement to be launched from August 15 to September 9, 1994 against the economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government. The meeting discussed in detail the campaign being conducted for the enrolment of volunteers in different parts of the country. The reports indicated that the target of one million volunteers who would be enrolled to go to jail will be far exceeded in view of the good response.

The meeting decided that leaders of the Left Parties will also court arrest at different centres, and on September 9 at Delhi the national leaders of the parties will lead the final batch of volunteers to court arrest.

The Left Parties called upon all their units, cadres and supporters to step up the final preparations and joint campaign for the movement.

The meeting was attended by Chitta Basu and D.D. Shastri (Forward Bloc), A.B. Bardhan, D. Raja and Atul Kumar Anjan (CPI), Abani Roy (RSP), and Prakash Karat, S. Ramachandran Pillai and Sitaram Yechury CPI(M).

Jyoti Basu On Voter's Identity Card Issue: Letter Written To P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India*

Below is reproduced the text of the letter which the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, wrote to the Prime Minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao, regarding the voters identity cards issue and the imbroglgio it created:

Kindly recall the discussions I had at my meeting with you today (September 14) regarding the excessive assumption of authority and arbitrary and impractical decisions taken by the Election Commission from time to time in the recent past.

You are aware of the impractical nature and arbitrariness of the decisions of the Election Commission in the matter of issue of identity cards to the voters. The Commission, on its own, decided on a time-frame and wanted the State Governments to complete the work of issue of identity cards. Several meetings have been held between the Central and State Governments without any decision on the pattern of financing and the deficiencies in the procedures indicated. The Commission had also linked up the completion of the work on identity cards to the process of holding of elections.

Whimsical Move

In this connection, I would draw your attention to the provisions of sections 14 and 15 of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 which provide for the procedures for notification for general elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies. The Act specifies that "a general election shall be held for the purpose of constituting a new House of the People (of the state assembly or

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 25, 1994..

parliament, as the case may be) on the expiration of the duration of the existing House after its dissolution." The provision for issue of identity cards is specified u/s 61 of the Act and Rule 28 of the Electoral Registration Rolls which provide for a special procedure for preventing impersonation of electors. Thus linking of the issue of identity card provided for u/s 6 of the Act to mandatory requirements u/s 14 and 16 of the Act is totally arbitrary and whimsical. The Commission, in my view, does not have this power.

You are aware that the State Government had moved the High Court of Calcutta in the matter of arbitrary direction of the Commission on the issue of identity cards and it is now pending before the Supreme Court of India. We have all accepted the identity card system in principle and what we have been saying is that necessary resources should be found and the scheme implemented in a phased manner. It should be kept in view that once the scheme is introduced throughout the country, we have to have almost a permanent machinery for issue of identity cards, replacement etc., on a continuing basis with every revision of rolls. I learn that a proposal to amend section 61 of the R.P. Act, 1951 and Rule 28 of the Electoral Registration Rolls is presently under consideration. It is my considered view that these amendments should be brought about immediately to bring about a semblance of order as also establish the authority of the Parliament. It is unfortunate that the earlier attempt to bring about amendments to the Constitution and the Act in this regard did not materialise. It is time that an urgent decision is taken in the matter.

Devoid of Authority

The Commission has also been issuing various directions taking recourse to what it calls the "inherent and plenary" powers under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. The general understanding of the provisions of Article 324 is that the Commission shall function within the framework of the extant laws governing elections. The plea taken by the Commission in all cases appears to be that various recommendations of electoral reforms had been sent to the government of India and no decisions have been taken for long and hence the Commission is free to assume inherent

powers under Article 324 to introduce such reforms as proposed by the Commission. In our view, the Commission does not have the authority and the Parliament will have to legislate on each such item of electoral reform.

I would like to refer to some instances of such arbitrary assumption of power by the Commission. The Commission has said that when an election programme is announced or contemplated by the Commission, the code of conduct should come into effect and that no development programme should be sanctioned or announced. The code of conduct for the parties in power is very clear and the observance of the same is very necessary. At the same time, it should apply only from the date of notification of the election. Last year, in the case of some by-elections in West Bengal, the Commission issued a Press release indicating the proposed programme of election and directed that the code of conduct would come into operation immediately thereupon. The Commission itself, for reasons best known to it, made a change of programmes and the elections were held much later. The Commission again now seeks to completely paralyse the normal processes of the government by such whimsical directives.

The Commission has also recently written to all the states, especially those where elections are imminent, regarding transfer, etc. of officers. A new phenomenon has emerged in that the Commission seeks to have the personal assessment of the CEOs about the impartiality etc., of the officers at different levels. The Commission also seeks to make its own assessment on the basis of such information as may be available to it. Such a decision is totally derogatory and dictatorial. There are instances where, if any official is found to be acting in a partisan manner in any election, necessary action can be taken. But a general assessment like this, as proposed by the Commission, is derogatory both to the political system in the country and to the official machinery.

Unacceptable Directives

The Commission has also issued instructions to the effect that no offices at any level dealing with electoral roll revision and issue of identity cards should be transferred. Roll revision takes place

every year and it extends to well over six months. We cannot stop the entire administrative process with reference to each item of work decided upon by the Election Commission. The state Governments are well aware of the responsibilities and we cannot accept such unilateral and whimsical directions of the Commission.

It is unfortunate that the Commission is trying to become a dictatorial super-government over the heads of the State and Central Governments as also the Parliament. I believe that all of us are earnestly interested in the maintenance and upholding of electoral norms and standards, and the Parliament should evolve further necessary steps in the matter to bring about appropriate electoral reforms.

I would accordingly request you to kindly consider necessary amendments to the R.P. Act and the Electoral Registration Rules. It is also necessary to consider seriously whether at all Article 324 of the Constitution gives any "plenary and inherent powers" to the Commission, even to the extent of assuming legislative and executive authority, on electoral reforms in the absence of any such directives by the Parliament. Meanwhile, we may take note of the deliberations of the Advocate Generals of different states calling upon all the states to be impleaded as parties in the various writ petitions before the Supreme Court wherein the question of interpretation of the scope and ambit of the Commission's power is under scrutiny. We strongly feel that the government of India should also take active interest in these cases in order to ensure an early decision.

Report of the Meeting of CPI(M) Delegation with Comrade Dobrynin, Secretary of CPSU Central Committee*

I

Others present on their side were Comrades Yurolov and Gulaiev. Meeting started at 4 p.m. and lasted up to 6-45 p.m. on December 16, 1987 in the Central Committee office. Another 15 minutes were taken to finalise the communique.

After exchanging greetings and settling down Comrade Dobrynin said:

I welcome you to the Central Committee Office for a discussion at the invitation of the CC of CPSU. I am sure we will have *free and frank discussion* and this will prove useful for both of us. I got your note yesterday night, have glanced through it but was not able to study. If you had given it earlier I would have properly studied it. I would like you to place your point of view frankly so that we are able to discuss the issues.

E. M. S.

I congratulate you on the successful conclusion of the Summit which is of great significance.

Dobrynin

I will brief you about it later.

E. M. S.

In my speech in the informal meeting I had stated that the struggle for peace is very important but it is not correct to

*This meeting took place in Moscow in Central Committee Office of CPSU when CPI(M) Delegation was invited to attend the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution on 15-18 December, 1987. These Documents were circulated by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) on 26 12 1987. Also refer Document under Appendix (vii) of Volume No. 24 of this Series.

subordinate the struggle for defence of interests of the masses and struggle for democracy to the struggle for peace. We find that in the Third chapter of the report the way formulations are made they convey the impression that you are not sticking to the analysis given in the Report of 27th Congress and questions are posed in a way as if all the contradictions will get resolved as a result of peace.

Dobrynin

I do not see any specific contradiction with what was in the Party Congress Report. If something is not there in this report, whatever is there in the Party Congress Report stays. This report deals mainly with some aspects of Party history, perestroika and the question of peace. It does not deal with all aspects. Basic document is our report to Party Congress. The present report was not lengthy as that report. As I have said 70th anniversary report dealt with some of our activities and was mostly devoted to the threat of war. In this report he did not deal with the analysis of capitalism, its crisis. He deals with different subjects at different occasions. You should not look for contradictions. There is no room for that. The Party Congress Report is the basic document of our Party.

Secondly, in his 70th anniversary report, he was dealing with a situation mainly in relation to struggle for peace, to diminish the threat of nuclear war. This is what we are doing.

Thirdly, he has posed several questions, questions which are not yet decided but are very important. He did not give a final answer or conclusion. Only life will tell us. Has he given the answer? It is a dialogue. We intend to continue dialogue and draw wider sections into discussion on these questions.

Fourthly, we give much importance to our relations with India. Last year Gorbachev's visit and this year Rhizkav's visit is a proof of this. India plays an important role in the world struggle for peace. This cause is important for the Communists of India. As far as the domestic situation is concerned you have to decide. You are living there. You should set yourself to this task. We have made it clear repeatedly.

Agreement with America

The agreement signed is very important one. Though it may have covered 5 per cent of all the nuclear weapons we have, their importance should not be underestimated. It deals with the destruction of small and medium sized weapons. It makes a first breakthrough. The ABM was agreed in 1972 but U.S. put some breaks. Now we are agreed to destroy two categories of nuclear weapons—small and medium. Gorbachev's January 15 proposals to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2000 was visualised to be accomplished in three stages. First stage was to be completed by year 1988-90. This has been already achieved with this agreement. First stage was destruction of small and medium range weapons. Cut of 50 per cent in strategic weapons has been agreed to. We expect to get the agreement on this by the middle of next year.

This shows that all our new theories, proposals to eliminate nuclear weapons by the year 2000 are working. In this, many forces have played their role. The peace movement in the world which has been fighting for reduction of nuclear weapons has played its role. The U.S. imperialists will try to bloc the way but sufficient pressure is being built up by non-aligned movement. Six nations initiative, even NATO allies are divided. When we arrived we were told that agreement arrived at will not be ratified by most Congressmen. But we found only twenty hardliners were there. Even one of them an important personality Mr. Dun had come out that he is going to fight for ratification.

Does it mean that U.S. has changed their attitude towards us? No! There is no change. They hate Socialism. They hold the same position as earlier. But in relation to the threat of nuclear war breakthrough is there in the decision of eliminating small and medium range missiles and to move towards disarmament.

Various Other Problems

Reagan was not ready to discuss many problems especially intervention in the sovereignty of other countries. We will continue to press them. Such as Nicaragua, Cuba, so-called regional conflicts. Bilateral relations were discussed. There is

some improvement. There is agreement on Aeroflot, exchange of media, movie actors, writers. We discussed the problems, how to improve relations between our countries. Overall it is a good visit, but only the beginning. This is what I would like you to understand. The U.S. situation is complicated by elections. More than 10 states in the South have supported Bush. Hart is the choice of democrats. But no single leader has emerged from the democrats.

Nicaragua

They raised the question of our supply of weapons to Nicaragua. We proposed to stop the supply of weapons except the light weaponry and asked them to stop the supply of weapons to different groups in Latin America. But they did not agree. We had consulted the Nicaraguan Government before making proposals.

Afghanistan

Reagan does not like settlement. We told him that we are prepared to withdraw our armies within 12 months, even earlier but you should take a pledge not to supply arms to insurgents. He did not agree. He does not know even the details of the talks in Geneva and the position of Pak. Government.

Good development is taking place in Afghanistan. Policy of national reconciliation is working. They are moving towards a coalition Government.

E. M. S.

We are concerned with three questions. How can imperialism do without industrial military complex, subordinating the struggle in the capitalist and developing countries to the struggle for peace and the question that the contradictions will be resolved by peaceful way?

Dobrynin

As I told you in the last section Comrade Gorbachev has dealt with the "October revolution and today's world". All questions posed in this part of the report are related to the question of world

peace. We do not feel that either military industrial complex can be put an end to or Neo-colonialism can be stopped. But they can be curbed and can be put in check. The questions are posed here to give examples to the people that present policies can culminate in an explosion.

In relation to war and peace we are still faced with many questions in our country. People ask that we are destroying three missiles against one American. Krushchev and Brezhnev could not agree. This is the new way of thinking. We are applying not arithmetic but algebra. Question is being asked whether our safety will not get effected. We discussed this question with our generals.

Medium range missiles do not affect U.S. They affect Europe and affect us. They were never a threat to U.S. but a real threat to Europe, both West and East. Their elimination removes that threat. Strategic missiles do effect them. Their range is 7000 miles. They have agreed to reduce them by 50 per cent. This agreement will be signed next year.

This year U.S. military budget shows 30 billion dollars less. Why? People know when you are destroying small and medium missiles what is the basis for huge military budget. Your natural enemy has been Soviet Union. When you are coming to an agreement on elimination of nuclear weapons and reduction of armaments why spend so huge amounts on military budget.

Similarly about military industrial complex people ask that Japan and West Germany have been able to develop science and technology by incurring 80% civil expenditure and 20% military. How is this affecting the economy of USA? If Euro-dollar is withdrawn there will be immediate crisis. What happened to stock exchange? Military industrial complex will exist but present tendency will influence disarmament and peace. The Third World countries will be forced to resist pressure. They are struggling for equal rights. Take the debt problem. Brazil has said we cannot pay. Creditors are forced to make adjustments. They have made adjustments in relation to Poland, lowering the rate of interests, rescheduling the debts, otherwise the banks get bankrupt.

There was a good discussion in the informal meeting. We are studying all the materials. All speeches whether delivered or undelivered were published in Pravda. They number 156.

E. M. S.

There are two elements in our understanding of state monopoly capitalism: (1) Increasing hold of armament industrialists on the state machinery in capitalist countries; (2) increasing neo-colonial attacks on Third World countries. The document gives the impression of erosion of these ideas. It appears as if because of nuclear danger we have to relegate these problems to the background. We do not think that peace will solve everything. We have to fight against the ruling classes in our country.

Dobrynin

The struggle for peace also helps in resolving other contradictions. This does not mean that struggle against imperialism and struggle against capitalism should not be continued or strengthened.

H. S. Surjeet

We have not been able to get answers to the question raised in our note. Dealing with the new concept of foreign policy the report "proceeds from the idea that for all the profound contradictions of the contemporary world, for all the radical differences among the countries that comprise it, *it is inter-related, inter-dependent and integral*". If this understanding is made applicable to the foreign policy and the struggle for peace there can be no objection to it. But the way questions are posed in the Third chapter of the report this understanding is made applicable to inter-imperialist contradictions as well as contradictions between imperialism and newly liberated countries. When you talk that imperialism can do without military industrial complex and give the example of Japan and West Germany, you fail to take note of the fact that these developments were visualised by Stalin in 1952 when he stated that Japan and Germany are going to emerge which will increase the inter-imperialist rivalry again. They grew

and developed under U.S. military umbrella and analogy does not apply in their case. Similarly when you talk about the situation of formation of anti-fascist front after the attack on Soviet Union as an example of using all forces against the present-day danger, you forget that what struggle was conducted since the beginning of thirties and imperialist power had refused to join hands with the Soviet Union and on the other hand encouraged Hitler to attack on Soviet Union. It was only when most of European countries were occupied by Hitler and public opinion asserted in a big way they agreed to join hands. How could "inter-related integral world" affect the class struggle in capitalist countries, or the struggle of developing countries with imperialism? There is also no mention to the hot-spots in the world: Nicaragua, West Asia, Gulf war, South Africa, Namibia and other places.

This report gives a different understanding that is given by the report of 27th Congress with which we are in full agreement. You say that he has only posed the question but not answered them. But the way questions are posed, he has indicated the direction of answers.

Dobrynin

We are not diplomats here, we are discussing as Communists. I told you I have not studied the note properly. There is no use on fighting on words and formulations. You tell me what is in your mind. I will give a direct answer.

H.S. Surjeet

We felt inspired by the documents of the 27th Congress. If you compare the assessment of world situation given in the 27th Congress report with the present report, it gives a different understanding. Because of our earlier experience we are very much afraid. We feel that formulations made in the Third chapter of the 70th anniversary report gives an understanding that with the resolution of the problem of nuclear war and restoration of peace, all the contradictions whether inter-imperialist, capital and labour and between imperialism and developing countries will get resolved peacefully. Only thing required is world peace.

Soviet Union and other socialist countries would make rapid advance in building advanced socialist society with the help of science and technology—perestroika. It will automatically help in the aggravating of capitalist crisis. The superiority of the socialist system itself will help in bringing social transformation in other countries.

In the 27th Congress report a detailed assessment is given about all the contradictions of the capitalist system. It is also noted how imperialism is intervening in developing countries for global domination. The understanding in the present report negates that understanding.

Similarly, in the first part of this report you have mentioned about the contribution of 20th Party Congress. We do appreciate that 20th Party Congress made a big contribution in making proper assessment of the world situation, the new epoch and the changed co-relation of forces, when the socialist system is becoming a decisive factor in shaping the things. It also correctly exposed the cult of personality which is alien to Marxism-Leninism. But you have not taken note of other aspects of the report as to how it affected the Communist movement in developing countries. Take our own example. Immediately following the 20th Congress Rubenstein wrote two articles in *New Times* that India is building Socialism. This article raised a debate inside our Party. When Brezhnev went to India in 1981 he made a statement that Indira Gandhi is building Socialism. Such statements compromise our position. That is why we want to be careful about each formulation.

Dobrynin

I understand your doubts. I want to make it clear that 27th Congress report is our basic document. It is our Bible. You base on that. Our fuller assessment is given in that report and we stand on every word of it.

The 70th anniversary report is meant for a specific occasion and deals with a specific issue of peace. It also was meant for a wider audience. The questions which have been posed in the report are in fact an appeal to the western world, also to the

people in developing countries. This is meant to mobilise the public opinion there. The example of Japan and West Germany is meant to tell the American people that if they can develop without military industrial complex why can't you. The new relationship with developing countries is also meant to rally the people because its present situation is allowed to persist what would be the result. It gives a new tactical approach. This is not meant to provide an overall assessment of the world situation. Such an assessment is provided in the 27th Congress report. This is our basic document. If you feel that the formulations in the 70th anniversary report are harmful to you, don't use them; ignore them. You base yourself on 27th Congress report. So far as we are concerned we do not see any contradiction. Gorbachev makes many speeches. He keeps in mind the specific situation and deals with that. It is not possible to repeat fundamental analysis everywhere. The U.S. is not agreed on many questions. The nature of imperialism has not changed. They did not agree to stop nuclear tests. We are pursuing our proposals. They have not agreed to ban chemical weapons though in principle it is agreed to in the communique, they continue with SDI. But we are pursuing with our proposals and we consider the recent agreement as a big achievement.

I hope this will satisfy you. If some points are left we are again prepared to discuss. You are again welcome here. Or if you invite us we are prepared to go there. We give much value to the exchange of opinion. Gorbachev has said we alone do not have the monopoly of truth.

H. S. Surjeet

We would like to inform you about Indian situation and our intervention.

Dobrynin

I would be very happy to know. I myself wanted to ask.

H. S. Surjeet

Explained the situation and line which we are pursuing.

After listening, Comrade Dobrynin remarked that he is very much enlightened. He again laid the importance of India and its role in world affairs. This should be always kept in mind.

We thanked each other and meeting came to an end.

They had drafted the communique in Russian. We went to another room and discussed it. We suggested two amendments which they accepted. This was immediately released by TASS. When we came to airport we heard the whole communique on the Television.

Signed by

HARKISHAN SINGH SURJEET

II

NOTE BY THE CPI(M) DELEGATION

1. During our visit to the Soviet Union in connection with the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, the CPI(M) delegation had expressed our reservations on some of the formulations made in the report "October and Perestroika : The Revolution Continues" mainly with reference to its third section.

We expressed our desire to discuss with the CPSU leadership this matter, so that we could get clarifications and benefit from the discussions, before we place our report to the Central Committee of the CPI(M). We are thankful to the Central Committee of the CPSU for inviting us and providing us with this opportunity to exchange views.

We made a high appraisal of the documents of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and accordingly placed a report to our Central Committee and the decisions of the Congress have been popularised by our Party. We appreciated the Congress assessment of the world situation and the new changes sought to be brought about in Soviet society through perestroika. The formulations

contained in the Congress report provided a rich new understanding for meeting the requirements of advanced Socialism further in the Soviet Union.

Our Central Committee highly values the efforts made by the CPSU in relation to the struggle for peace and elimination of nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has also repeatedly made it clear that it will not give up military parity with the USA. At the same time, it has consistently waged the peace offensive which has greatly helped to rally the peace-loving forces all over the world. This great endeavour is undoubtedly producing results, as witnessed by the recent historic INF agreement concluded at the Washington Summit.

2. The Third chapter of the 70th anniversary report states that the new concept of foreign policy “proceeds from the idea that for all the profound contradictions of the contemporary world, for all the radical differences among the countries that comprise it, it is interrelated, interdependent and integral”.

We agree that in the contemporary world, the priority to be accorded to the prevention of nuclear war and the resultant consciousness to save humanity, requires new thinking. The interrelation and interdependence of the whole world in the common task of preventing nuclear war and saving humanity is a relevant point. Flowing from this, the creative initiatives taken by the CPSU leadership on the international plane are timely and have a profound impact. These combined with the defence preparedness of the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc and the widest popular mobilisation for peace have strengthened the central thrust of the CPSU, put imperialism on the defensive on this vital question confronting humanity.

But when the concept of the “inter-related, inter-dependent and integral world” and the “laws” governing it are applied to the analysis and resolution of the set of contradictions applicable to imperialism, the capitalist world and the Third World, we feel it causes confusion and has serious implications for the course of class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries and the Third World countries.

Discussing the social contradictions, the report poses three questions—(i) On the nature of imperialism and the possibility to influence that nature and block its more dangerous

manifestations (ii) Can capitalism get rid of militarism and function and develop in the economic sphere without it? (iii) Can the capitalist system do without neo-colonialism?

The analysis placed in the report on these three questions premised on the need for new thinking in an “inter-related, inter-connected and integral world”, in general, tends to ignore the sharpening of the class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries and the developing countries.

It also ignores the whole gamut of conflicts erupting or continuing, which emanates from the contradiction between imperialism and the newly independent countries including the anti-imperialist national liberation struggles.

3. On the nature of the world capitalist system, the report states that: “The post-war period has witnessed an in-depth modification of the contradictions that used to determine the principal trends in the world’s economy and politics.” It proceeds to explain the changed situation today. Among them are the “peaceful” repartitioning of the world and “the changes occurring within the technological and organisational infrastructure of the capitalist economy also helped to clear up contradictions and to balance different interests”.

The modification of the inter-imperialist contradictions is posed one-sidedly, while it is correct to point out that inter-imperialist contradictions do not lead to war due to the presence and strength of the socialist system, the consequences of the “peaceful” repartitioning of the world on the Third World and the aggravation of the related set of contradictions between imperialism and the Third World is absent. The scientific and technological innovations have brought about modifications in the structure of capitalism but such “modification” does not eliminate the destructive effects, unemployment, attack on the rights of working people and so on.

Further it states that “an alliance between a socialist country and capitalist states proved possible in the past when the threat of fascism arose, does this not suggest a lesson for the present...” The example of the anti-fascist alliance is not exactly relevant to the present situation, as the rise of fascism and war sponsored by

it sharpened acutely the inter-imperialist contradictions. Does this apply strictly to the contemporaneous world?

Similarly, in relation to the link between capitalism and militarism, it is not a correct analogy to cite the “economic miracles” of Japan and West Germany. Both these states prospered economically in the post-war decades under the American military umbrella. This obviated the need to divert resources to military expenditure and for some time served to fuel the economic growth. But as the report itself indicates, both states are rearming and going on the classical path of state monopoly capitalist societies. The role of these two states has to be seen in the context of the three main centres of present-day imperialism.

While rightly emphasising the appeal to the world people and ruling circles of all countries to prevent nuclear war, adequate note is not taken of the operation of the basic social contradictions and class antagonisms in the capitalist world.

4. On the third question, concerning the Third World and neo-colonialist exploitation, the report presents an analysis which tends to give a wrong direction. It speaks of the ongoing process in the international economic sphere having the force of an objective law: “There will either be a disaster or a joint quest for a new economic order which takes into account the interests of all on an equal basis.” What follows is a hazy analysis which seems to imply that imperialism will possibly heed the laws of the “inter-related integral” world and adjust its world economic system of plunder to the needs of the Third World and the ex-colonies. The future role of multinationals in the Third World is also erroneously projected: “For all their might, it is not the transnationals that will determine the Third World’s development; it is more likely that they will be forced to adjust to the independent choice that has been or will be made by the people.”

That the main currents in the Third World and role of developing countries is not properly assessed is also clear from the way the various regional organisations are indiscriminately grouped together under the common characteristic of “urge for national identity and independence”. “To a greater or lesser extent this characteristic of all the organisations, and their number is not

small—the Organisation of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Latin American Economic System, the South Pacific Forum, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and especially, the Non-Aligned Movement.”

In our opinion, it is wrong to group the NAM with organisations such as ASEAN and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

While dealing with the relationship between imperialism and the Third World, the report is conspicuously silent on the specific struggles being waged against imperialist intervention, whether it be in Central America, Southern Africa or the Middle-East. Neither does it dwell on the serious confrontation going on between imperialist manoeuvres for global domination and the fight being put up by many newly independent countries to defend national sovereignty and independence.

The way the three questions have been posed and sought to be answered in the Third section of the report would lead to the conclusion that all the contradictions can be modified/resolved through peaceful means. This approach applied crudely could result in the understanding that with the Soviet Union and the socialist system (under perestroika) making big advances by mastery of the productive forces and realising the full potential of socialist society; through peaceful competition, the superiority of the socialist system over the aggravating crisis of the capitalist system will be established, leading the people of the capitalist countries to pave the way for the peaceful transition to Socialism.

Such an understanding applied to India would also imply that with the Indian Government playing an important role in the world struggle for peace, if progress is maintained in this direction, this in itself would influence the course of social revolution in our country. Such an approach would mean passivity and disarming the working class movement. It is with this in mind, that we are also perplexed to see that there is no attention paid to the class struggles in the capitalist countries and no mention of the anti-imperialist centres of acute struggle. In this connection, the report of the 27th Congress in the first section: *The Contemporary World:*

Its main tendencies and contradictions” provided a balanced analysis of the contradictions and their interplay which enriched our understanding.

The current report, however, shows concern only with the contradiction prevailing in the international sphere between the two social systems. Its tackling and resolution is of vital importance to the world revolutionary process. At the same time, it will be wrong to conclude that dealing with this confrontation in the form of stopping nuclear war will automatically help resolve other contradictions. While the central task of preventing world war and preserving peace will go a long way in strengthening the revolutionary currents on the international scale, it will not be correct to assume that a stable and lasting peace can be brought about without strengthening the forces of democracy and Socialism in the different capitalist countries and without the intensification of the class struggles. The report in fact exaggerates the change in the correlation of forces, or the immediate potential for change in favour of Socialism. It also tends to underestimate the aggressive character and strength of imperialism. We apprehend that such an approach carried forward will lead to blurring the edge of class struggles in the capitalist world (both advanced and developing).

5. In the reference to the international Communist movement, while it is important to stress the independence and equality of all parties, it is also necessary to stress the common aims and principles which bind us together. Such reference was there in the CPSU programme adopted in the 27th Congress wherein it was stated “At the same time the experience of these decades shows the immense importance of the general laws of Socialism, such as: the power of working people, with the working class playing the leading role; guidance of society’s development by the Communist Party armed with the ideology of scientific Socialism; affirmation of social ownership of the basic means of production and on this basis the planned growth of the economy. . . .” The current report speaks only about the international movement which “is united by respect for the principles of confidence, equality, and sincere solidarity that have also been renewed”.

6. Finally, we wish to make a brief reference to one point in the first section, which is the evaluation of the Twentieth Congress. While making an assessment of the Twentieth Congress we recognise that it was an important contribution, in its international analysis, on the significance of the new epoch and the impact of the changed correlation of class forces in the world on the whole revolutionary process. It also initiated the struggle against the cult of personality. While acknowledging this, the report fails to take note of the impact of the 20th Congress on the world Communist movement and especially on some aspects which are negative must also be taken account of. The manner in which certain concepts related to peaceful co-existence, peaceful competition and peaceful transition were put in a simplified and mechanical fashion led to harmful consequences for the world Communist movement. Under the influence of these theories, many Communist Parties in the newly liberated countries, to name a few such as in Egypt, Syria, Sudan and Iraq suffered a setback. If the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution provides the opportunity for assessing the course of the international Communist movement, even summarily, the impact of the Twentieth Congress in this aspect must not be ignored.

It is with sincere concern for the theoretical and practical implications of the significant report made by Comrade Gorbachev at the 70th anniversary and its direct relevance to our own Party's programmatic and positions, that we have approached you for these discussions. We are confident that a fraternal and free exchange of views will benefit us and strengthen our common resolve to advance the struggle for peace, democracy and Socialism.

III

Note on Discussions with CPSU Circulated by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) per circular dated 28.12.1987

When our delegation attended the 70th anniversary celebrations in Moscow, we discussed among ourselves the report of Comrade Gorbachev and his intervention in the informal conference. We felt that the Third chapter of the report gives a wrong direction and has serious implications for us. We also had some points on the first

part in relation to the assessment of Stalin and evaluation of 20th Congress of the Party. We decided to inform the leadership of the CPSU about our reservations and sought a meeting with them to exchange opinions on those issues. We had also informed them that we cannot stay in Moscow after 8th November 1987. First they gave the impression that such discussions will be held on 8th but after having come to know about our strong views on some issues they thought this discussion cannot be held in half an hour or one hour time, and suggested that they invite our delegation in the middle of December only for discussions and we agreed to this proposal.

We received the invitation before 20th November to send a delegation and the dates of 15 to 18 December were agreed to.

We made a report to the Political Bureau and after discussions prepared a note for discussion with the CPSU. (The said note is given in the earlier pages.)

Our delegation consisting of EMS, Samar Mukherjee and Surjeet reached Moscow on 15th December. Flight was two and half hours late. We went to place a wreath on Lenin mausoleum at 12.15. We were informed about the whole programme of our stay. The arrangements were made for the discussions in the three institutions working under the Central Committee: The Institute of Marxism-Leninism, the Institute of Social Sciences and the Academy of Social Sciences. It is these institutions which prepare the materials for the Central Committee on the basis of their research. Meetings were arranged with the top specialists working in these institutions. The report about our discussions in the institutions is separately circulated as an information document. It was difficult to take exhaustive notes when serious discussions were on. Therefore, it is not possible to get full appreciation of the discussions from the notes. We can say that the discussions reveal that on some of the points whether they related to the contradictions, assessment of the 20th Congress on the role of Stalin they were on the defensive and we had some weighty arguments. But the level of discussions was quite good and their research of higher level. In all the three places more time was taken as compared to earlier planned. This happened on 16th and 17th December.

The last day was left for discussions with Comrade Dobrynin, Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The discussion lasted for two hours and fortyfive minutes. A separate report is

circulated of these discussions. Again it is difficult to say that everything is incorporated in the circulated report because of the fact mentioned earlier that during the serious discussions exhaustive notes became little difficult.

Since we participated in discussions it is necessary to convey to the Central Committee our assessment of the discussions which may not be so clear from the written reports circulated.

(1) On the Issue of Contradictions as dealt within the Third Chapter of the Report

In the beginning all tried to argue that only questions are raised but no answer is provided in the report. They are for debate but when pinpointed that such a poser can lead to distortions of fundamental positions and they are contrary to the understanding provided in the report of 27th Party Congress, Comrade Dobrynin made a categorical statement that they stick to the analysis made in the Party Congress report. The 70th anniversary report was meant for a broader audience. The questions raised are in the form of an appeal to the people both in Western World as well as in the developing world in order to rally them behind the struggle for world peace. He made it repeatedly clear that there is no question of deviating from the documents of 27th Congress. Nobody has the authority to either bypass them or change them. We are satisfied with the explanation. But we have to be vigilant always and we were right in putting forward our views in writings. We should also continuously go on educating our Party on the issues of our own understanding and experience.

(2) On the question of history of the CPSU we have to wait for the findings of the Commission. But it is admitted in the report of the 70th anniversary that Stalin fought against Trotskyism and defended Leninism, he succeeded in collectivisation and in building Socialism in Soviet Union, that the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was correct and he played an important role in the defeat of fascism in the war. It is not difficult to understand the harmful consequences of the cult of personality of Stalin. There are certain facts which can be analysed and understood but it is very difficult to go into all the facts of fifty years back without proper understanding and concrete circumstances in which those incidents took place. For instance the question of dealing with the middle peasant is one

such question. Such questions have to be understood as a part of the first experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

(3) Similarly, in evaluating the 20th Congress, the CPSU has taken the aspects which directly effected them. They have not taken up its impact on the international Communist movement specially in developing countries. They see the decline of World Communist movement in 70's but in developing countries it started after the 20th Congress. What happened to the CPs of Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Iraq and others? In our case, discussions started inside our Party that Nehru is building Socialism. The question of non-capitalist path and National Democracy. What are the lessons today? When we raised these questions the reply was that they have not gone into this aspect. It is necessary to go into this in order to draw proper lessons for international Communist movement.

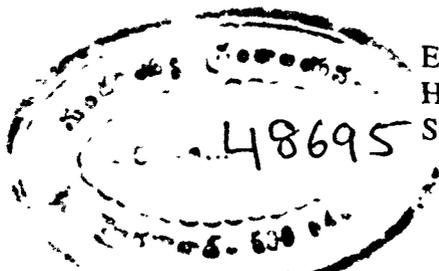
(4) We have to admit that significant change has taken place in the international situation. With the threat of nuclear war it is realised that nobody can be winner and such a war can lead to destruction of everything which humanity has created so far. This has brought a qualitative change in the thinking of the people on the issue of war. The Social Democratic parties, certain ruling parties of imperialist countries and the American public opinion itself apart from the world peace movement NAM etc. Significance of this struggle is to be properly realised and proper integration of the world struggle for peace and our struggle against our regime is necessary.

(5) There is a complete change in the attitude of CPSU towards other parties. They do not impose their ideas and try to understand the positions and experience of other parties. This is reflected in their documents as well as discussions.

We can say that our visit was successful, discussions were useful and we were able to frankly state our point of view and had a free and frank exchange.

Signed by

E.M.S. Namboodiripad
Harkishan Singh Surjeet
Samar Mukherjee



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