

P. Govinda Pillai

**COMMUNIST
PARTY
OF
INDIA
(MARXIST)**



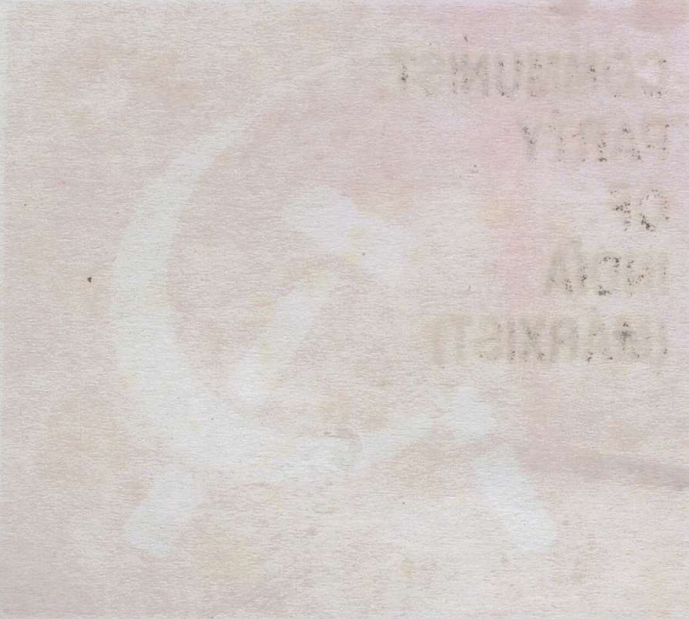
**DRAFT POLITICAL
RESOLUTION**

**16th Party Congress
CALCUTTA**

Oct. 5 - Oct. 11, 1998

320.954

COM



COMMUNIST
PARTY
OF
INDIA
MARXIST

DRAFT POLITICAL
RESOLUTION

Joint Party Congress
CALCUTTA

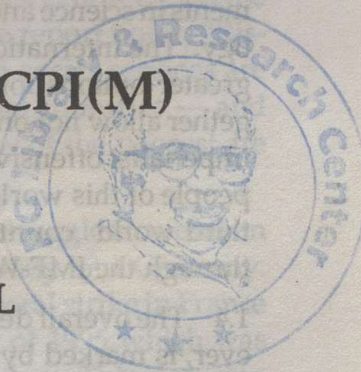
Oct. 5 - Oct. 11, 1958

300 881

100

Draft Political Resolution for the 16th Congress of the CPI(M)

J744



INTERNATIONAL

1.1 The events during the last three and a half years since the 15th Congress confirm the fact that the ideological offensive unleashed by imperialism after the disintegration of the Soviet Union is being resisted by progressive forces the world over. However, as was noted, these reverses to the forces of world socialism provide an opportunity for the expansion of capitalism, temporarily shifting the balance of forces in favour of imperialism.

1.2 Notwithstanding this, during this period, capitalism has shown more clearly its inability to solve the basic problems facing humanity. The tremendous growth of productive forces aided by scientific and technological advance have resulted in a situation where the economic growth that is taking place in the advanced capitalist countries is best described as "jobless growth." Another feature of this growth is fast growing disparities within and among countries the world over. The very class nature of capitalism is manifesting itself with a greater ferocity, intensifying exploitation of the working people and of the developing countries throughout the world. Such a pattern of development is posing a serious threat to the world's environment also. The ever growing and enormous potential for developing productive forces which has been opened by the scientific and technological revolution is being limited by the logic

of capitalist production relations and its search for maximum profits. In this process, all the major contradictions between imperialism and socialism, imperialism and the third world countries, labour and capital and inter-imperialist contradictions are getting intensified.

320.954 DRA

1.3 Globalisation has acquired a world wide dimension in the financial sphere with the current practically unhindered circulation of transnational capital. This process is helped by developments in science and technology, particularly information technology. The internationalisation of finance capital and the relatively greater options for exploitation of the third world countries together allow not only the consolidation of capitalism but also new imperialist offensives that are mounted against the majority of the people of this world. The attempts to doctor the economies of the third world countries to suit imperialist interests is proceeding through the IMF-World Bank and the WTO.

1.4 The overall development in the world capitalist system, however, is marked by the contrasting development of a degree that was not seen earlier. Germany and Japan, the vibrant economies of yesteryears, are now in the midst of a crisis with sagging growth rates, rising unemployment and threatened currencies. On the other hand the United States and Britain, the sick economies of yesteryears, have relatively lower and even declining unemployment rates, higher GDP growth rates than the OECD average, and strong currencies.

1.5 In the advanced capitalist countries, particularly of Europe, important developments have taken place. The rightwing offensive which began in the eighties targeted the social welfare benefits gained by the working class after decades of struggle. The absence of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe heightened the cuts as social security expenditure was no longer imperative to check the spread of socialist ideas. This trend was intensified with the efforts of the European Union countries to implement the Maastricht Treaty provisions. In order to keep the fiscal deficit down to 3 percent of the GDP which is the criteria for the European Monetary Union, the ruling classes in Western European countries are reducing public expenditure drastically and cutting down pensions, health, education and other welfare benefits of the working people. The restructuring of industry has led to high levels of

unemployment.

1.6 The important productive force, the working class is being devalued. The "jobless growth" has, according to the Human Development Report, 1996, resulted in 39 million unemployed in the OECD countries. Describing the world wide situation the Report states, "Unemployment is high and growing." The 1997 report notes that, "Many industrial countries have watched unemployment soar to levels not recorded since the 1930s and income inequality reach levels not recorded since the last century." On the impact of the neo-liberal economic policies the report notes, "Rising unemployment, falling wages and cuts in social services are driving many people into poverty in industrial countries — and threatening the futures of millions more. Many of the poorest are kept at the bottom by social exclusion."

1.7 It is on these issues that big working class struggles have taken place all over Europe particularly in France, Italy and Germany. The most significant protest action was the general strike in France by the public sector employees in the winter of 1995 which was directed against globalisation and privatisation. This growing resistance was also reflected in the massive South Korean workers strike of 1996. Though these struggles have so far been defensive in character (i.e. protecting the existing rights and benefits), they nevertheless constitute a growing resistance to new capitalist offensives.

1.8 The struggles of the working class against the discontent resulting from the attacks on social welfare and rights of the working people and the growing abandonment by the State of its social responsibilities is finding expression not only through trade union struggles but also has its political impact. This is seen in the recent election results in France, Italy, Britain and Greece where the rightwing ruling parties were dislodged from power and social democratic parties and Centre-left governments took office. However, a disquieting feature has been the growth of xenophobia and neo-fascist forces in some of these countries. Racism is also growing as a result of the social distortion and unemployment caused by the present conditions. The reactionary forces are seeking to exploit the growing popular discontent to their advantage.

1.9 An important development that continues to have a significant bearing on world capitalism is the crisis that erupted in the

economies of South East Asian countries. These so-called Asian Tigers held out as 'models' for third world countries were used to spread the illusion that the third world economies can only advance by following the prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank. Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and South Korea, which experienced high growth rates for several years are now in the midst of a deep crisis which began with the flow of capital out of their countries and weakening of their currencies. This currency crisis spread to Hong Kong and had global ramifications manifested in the world wide stock market crash in 1997.

1.10 In order to contain the crisis, the IMF and World Bank doled out an unprecedentedly massive financial assistance to shore up these economies. Yet, the crisis did not abate. On the contrary it deepened affecting Japan. The Japanese yen has depreciated significantly and the government has officially admitted that the country is in the grip of a recession. This in turn will further compound the crisis with serious implications for world capitalism. The economic crisis manifested itself in the severe defeat of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in the recent elections to Japan's upper house of Parliament leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister.

1.11 The internationalisation of finance capital and its consequent pressures for the removal of all barriers for its free movement in search of predatory speculative profits is the main factor triggering this crisis. The specific aim is to open the economies, particularly the capital markets of the third world countries for quick profits. This has shattered the illusion that the third world can develop as appendages of imperialist capital.

1.12 These IMF-World Bank pressures to open the economies of third world countries to international flows of speculative capital had ruined the Mexican economy in 1994. In 1997 the same policies have plunged the South East Asian economies in a serious crisis. Millions of people have been ruined and adversely affected by this crisis. Militant protests and spontaneous outbursts like food riots took place in many countries.

1.13 In Indonesia, militant student demonstrations catalysed a massive popular upsurge against the dictatorial regime of Suharto. He was forced to step down after nearly three decades of tyrannical rule. But the successor he nominated is continuing with the same

ruinous economic policies.

1.14 The lesson for the third world countries from this is obvious. With the IMF insisting that they switch over to full capital convertibility their economies will be at the mercy of international speculators and predatory capital. The G-15 summit held in Malaysia in November 1997 voiced the concerns of the developing countries about the predatory role of speculative finance capital and the unequal terms of trade. The IMF, in the meantime, is amending its articles of agreement to incorporate a mandate to oversee global capital account liberalisation.

1.15 In the erstwhile socialist countries, the process of restoration of capitalism is facing resistance due to the huge drop in living conditions of the people, increased poverty, unemployment and violent ethnic conflicts. The Human Development Report 1996 states, "In Eastern Europe and the CIS countries unemployment has ballooned (from zero) since the start of reforms in 1990, with wage employment falling sharply — by as much as 30 percent in Bulgaria and Hungary." The 1997 report states that these countries "have seen the greatest deterioration in the past decade. Income poverty has spread from a small part of their population to about a third — 120 million people." The popular discontent is expressed in the rejection of some of the rightwing regimes which had embarked on outright capitalist restoration in these countries. In some others, parties organised by the former communists have gained popular support and have come to power reflecting popular discontent with the capitalist restoration, though they do not mean a return to the socialist path.

1.16 The imposition of structural adjustment, the over exploitation of labour, the system of unequal trade, the plunder of natural resources by the imperialist powers and the multinational corporations continue to unbearably burden the third world people. According to the Human Development Report of 1996, of the \$ 23 trillion global GDP in 1995, \$ 18 trillion is in the industrialised countries and only \$ 5 trillion in the developing countries even though they have nearly 80 percent of the world's people. According to the 1997 Report, "The share of the poorest 20 percent of the world's people in global income now stands at a miserable 1.1% ,down from 1.4% in 1991 and 2.3% in 1960. It continues to shrink. And, the ratio of the top 20% to that of the poorest 20% rose from

30:1 in 1960 to 60:1 in 1991 — and to a startling new high of 78:1 in 1994.”

1.17 The development of regional economic blocs, noted in the last Congress, reflects the existence of the three major centres of world capitalism, their mutual rivalries and attempts to consolidate their position. The European Union with its drive to achieve monetary union is one pole. The other is the NAFTA led by the US trying to extend it southwards into Latin America. The third pole is Japan and its efforts to expand its sphere in East and South-east Asia.

1.18 The United States maintains its hegemonistic role in the imperialist system. This continues despite some conflicts with other powers like Japan, France and Germany. It is the US backing which emboldens Israel to violate the terms of the unequal peace agreement to deprive the Palestinians of real autonomy and block the formation of an independent Palestinian State. USA continues with its military manoeuvres in West Asia and inhuman sanctions against Iraq. Libya is also subject to sanctions. The “Dayton Accord” provided the basis for US intervention in the Balkans. The US is actively working to subvert and suppress progressive and revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, El Salvador and other Latin American countries. In Central Asia, the former Asian Soviet Republics are gaining increasing significance in US strategic designs. Besides US imperialism seeks to control the economic resources in this area, particularly the oil reserves in Azerbaijan.

1.19 US imperialism strengthened by the current revival of its economy is seeking to consolidate its global hegemony. The expansion of NATO eastwards and the membership of some of the East-European countries in NATO is a glaring expression of the US designs. The USA and other imperialist powers refuse to destroy nuclear weapons thus sabotaging all efforts to achieve universal nuclear disarmament. The much touted propaganda that the ‘end of the cold war’ would see marked reduction in armament expenditure resulting in a ‘peace dividend’ benefitting humanity, has just not materialised. The 1997 Human Development Report notes “The post-cold war reductions in military expenditures should have been seen as a major opportunity for social investment. Instead, the priority seems to be saving money and reducing services. The very idea of the welfare State has been called into

question and is under threat". On the other hand, by persisting with the theory of "nuclear deterrence", work on programmes for production of new weapons is growing, thus ensuring the nuclear monopoly in the hands of a few imperialist powers.

1.20 The United Nations instead of promoting disarmament, development, political solutions to conflicts and international cooperation tends to become an instrument of hegemonistic policies of the US and its allies. The democratic restructuring of the United Nations and its Security Council is urgently called for. The IMF, World Bank, WTO, NATO, a UN manipulated by the US and other great imperialist powers, constitute the main pillars of the imperialist vision of a new order. The imposition of its global economic agenda, political influence and military interventions constitute its new offensive.

1.21 The socialist countries China, Vietnam, Cuba and DPR Korea have sought to protect their path of socialist development in the face of the adverse world situation. China which has undertaken economic reforms has emerged as a strong economic power with rapid progress registered in every field of the economy. This development will have an important bearing in the future days in the resistance to imperialist domination. Hong Kong which remained a colony of British imperialism has now been reunited with China. This is an achievement of the policy adopted by the Communist Party of China of "one country - two systems". It is a setback not only to British imperialism but for imperialism in general.

1.22 Cuba which has been the relentless target of US imperialism and subjected to economic blockade and subversion has today reorganised its economic relations and is courageously defending the social achievements which are the fruits of the socialist system. Vietnam has made steady progress in rebuilding its economy and raising the living standards of the people. The DPRK has been firmly resisting US-Japanese pressures to undermine its sovereignty while facing a difficult food situation domestically.

1.23 Islamic fundamentalism, a phenomenon which has been prominent since the eighties, continues to pose a threat to secular-democratic forces in many countries. The Taliban in Afghanistan represents the most virulent and reactionary form of this trend. US imperialism is tacitly backing the Taliban to establish its hegem-

only so that it can reach out to Central Asia. The civil war in Afghanistan continues causing severe suffering to the people. Despite the Presidential elections Algeria is still in the grip of terrorist violence perpetuated by the Islamic fundamentalist groups.

1.24 South Africa, the most developed capitalist country in the African continent, is grappling with the problem of ensuring a just multiracial society where the black people can advance towards economic emancipation and social progress. This struggle is being waged by the progressive forces in a situation where big capital controls the economic system and the vestiges of the old regime hold powerful sway.

1.25 The CPI(M) reaffirms its deep commitment to defend socialism and expresses its firm solidarity with the socialist countries who face hostile imperialist manoeuvres.

1.26 The worldwide resistance to the attempts by imperialism to impose its unequal order and intensify exploitation is gathering momentum. This period has seen the revival and regrouping of communists, progressive and democratic forces and the growing fight back by the working class. The international trade union conference in Havana against globalisation and neo-liberalism in August 1997 manifested the growing urge for united struggles against the imperialist onslaughts. As have subsequent international meetings all over the world commemorating the 150th anniversary of the publication of the Communist Manifesto. The CPI(M) considers itself an integral part of this international struggle and solidarity against imperialism. As a Party based on proletarian internationalism, the CPI(M) will ceaselessly mobilise the Indian people to play their due role in the struggle against the imperialist order.

NATIONAL SITUATION

2.1 A new situation arose in the country with the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government assuming office in March 1998. For the first time, the reins of power at the Centre are in the hands of an avowedly communal party which works under the guidance of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. This has dramatically intensified the threat posed by the communal forces to the secular and democratic foundations of the polity and the preservation of national unity. Further the reactionary character of the BJP-RSS combine portends a bigger onslaught on the working people and the Left and democratic forces.

2.2 Before assessing how this changed situation came about it will be pertinent to recall how we analysed the situation in the 15th Party Congress held in April 1995. The Congress had come to the following main conclusions: (a) the period ahead will be marked by growing political instability; (b) the economic policies being pursued by the Congress(I) government will push the country towards greater indebtedness threatening our economic sovereignty and impose greater burdens on the working people; (c) the growing communal challenge gravely threatens the secular democratic foundations of independent India, its unity and integrity and disrupts the unity of the working class and toiling people.

2.3 On this basis the 15th Congress laid down the tactical line of (a) intensifying the struggles against the ruinous economic policies; (b) intensifying the struggle against the communal forces both politically and ideologically; (c) strengthening the unity of Left, democratic and secular forces. In order to achieve these objectives, the Party Congress highlighted the need to rally all sections of the people in developing resistance to these challenges. The Party Congress gave the slogan "to defeat the Congress and the BJP" and to work for the success of the third alternative.

2.4 Two general elections have taken place since then, in May 1996 and in February-March 1998. Both these elections have confirmed what was anticipated in the 15th Congress that the period of political instability continues with no party winning a majority in either of the elections. The results showed that (i) the period of one party dominance has ended with the Congress losing its

monopoly of power. The Congress suffered a rout in the 1996 elections and could not recover ground in the 1998 elections; (ii) alongside the decline of the Congress was the rise in the strength of the BJP which became the single largest party in the Lok Sabha in 1996 and also in the subsequent election; (iii) in the absence of the Left and democratic presence the discontent against the Congress misrule was utilised by the BJP to make substantial gains. The Left could not increase their strength in parliament.

2.5 The years since the 15th Party Congress have seen the continuing decline of the Janata Dal. It lost many seats in 1996 and suffered a split and further erosion in 1998. The regional parties are strong in certain states and their role at the national level has increased. However, given their state level preoccupation some of these parties adopt opportunist positions like the Telugu Desam party did in supporting the Vajpayee government after the recent elections.

2.6 As the two general election results show, unless the Left gets strengthened and the intervention of the Left and democratic forces steadily increases, radical change cannot be brought about. The communal and rightist forces will continue to channelise the popular discontent generated by the bourgeois-landlord rule, despite the fact that these very forces support the policies of liberalisation which forms the basis for the growing popular discontent. This is due to the weakness of the Left and democratic forces. Only the growing intervention of the Left and democratic forces can checkmate the communal and divisive forces who are misleading the people.

2.7 The 15th Congress political resolution had stated that both in the struggle against communalism and for opposing the economic policies, we should strive to ally with the secular bourgeois opposition parties. But in doing so it should be realised that their approach to economic policies is not the same as ours. Similarly, they will tend to take opportunistic positions in the struggle against communalism if it affects their electoral prospects. It is based on this understanding that the Central Committee worked out electoral tactics and made efforts to forge a third alternative.

2.8 The Party took the initiative to stop the BJP from forming the government in 1996 by the formation of the United Front. Apart

from the Left, the United Front consisted of parties such as the Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party and the regional parties including the TDP, DMK, TMC and AGP. The United Front was not in a position to form a government on its own. It was possible to form a secular government only with the outside support of the Congress.

2.9 In these circumstances, the Central Committee decided that the Party will not join the government and to support it from outside. On the basis of this the United Front was formed and a Steering Committee was constituted with our participation in it.

2.10 Fully conscious of the fact that all the secular bourgeois-landlord parties also favour the ruinous economic policies of liberalisation, the Party nevertheless participated in the efforts to draw up a common minimum programme with the prime objective of thwarting the attempt by communal parties to capture State power.

2.11 This Common Minimum Programme was a compromise document reflecting the views of the majority constituents of the UF regarding the direction of economic policy which was a continuation of the earlier Congress economic policies. However, at the same time it contained many other features which would have helped to advance the democratic movement in the country. These pertain to federalism, secularism, social justice etc as well as some commitments to give relief to the working people on certain economic issues.

2.12 While supporting this government from the outside, the Central Committee also decided that the Party should step up its independent activity, demarcate from the anti-people policies of the UF government and consolidate the Party's position and influence. Since the economic policies continued to impose burdens on the people, the consequent popular discontent would sought to be exploited by the communal forces for their advance. The Party's intervention should therefore be directed at trying to channelise this growing popular discontent into democratic channels.

2.13 The Congress party, which was increasingly worried about the investigations into corruption of its top leaders, intervened and withdrew support to the Deve Gowda government and demanded his ouster as a price for continuing support. In the United Front, despite the firm stand taken by the CPI(M) and the Left parties, most of the other constituents succumbed to this pressure. With the

advent of the Gujral government, the Congress party increasingly sought to make its presence felt. The overall performance of the United Front government shows that despite positive steps in foreign policy and Centre-States relations, it vigorously pursued policies which favoured liberalisation and privatisation. It failed to implement the major policy commitments in the CMP which were in the interests of the people: the one-third reservation for women in legislatures, the central legislation for agricultural workers, the Lok Pal bill, recognition of trade unions through secret ballot and strengthening the public distribution system by providing for foodgrains at half the price for people below the poverty line were all measures which were not seriously taken up for adoption or implementation.

2.14 The UF government fell because of the unjustified withdrawal of support by the Congress using the pretext of the Jain Commission report. The elections held in February-March 1998 led to a situation where the BJP advanced further through forging new alliances with regional parties and was able to form a coalition government at the Centre led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The advent of Sonia Gandhi into the leadership did not mark any basic change in the discredited policies of the Congress Party. The United Front suffered a setback and lost almost half the number of seats. The performance of the UF government could not make a positive impact on the people due to its failure to implement pro-people aspects of the Common Minimum Programme, the negative impact of the policies pursued by the state governments run by the non-Left constituents of the UF and the lack of cohesiveness and unity in facing the 1998 elections.

2.15 The formation of the Vajpayee government is part of the continued rightward shift in Indian politics which began a decade ago. The BJP has grown stronger with an increased percentage of votes and seats. With its allies it has added on more than 60 seats since the previous election. The growth of the BJP is accompanied by the continuing decline of the Congress party. The erosion of the Congress has resulted in a shift in class terms of considerable sections of the big bourgeois-landlords in favour of the BJP. It is this shift towards the reactionary party with a communal platform that has brought about a major change in the situation.

Economic Policies: Harmful Effect of Liberalisation

2.16 The liberalisation and structural adjustment policies pursued by successive governments since 1991 at the behest of the IMF and the World Bank are being carried forward much further by the BJP government. Even the short period it has been in office has thoroughly exposed the hollowness of the "swadeshi" plank, which it has been propagating. The period since the 15th Party Congress has debunked the claims of steady growth and the consequent benefits for the people touted by the advocates of liberalisation. Increasingly, these policies which favour foreign capital and big business are being shown up for what they are — inimical to economic sovereignty and harmful to the interests of the vast majority of the people.

2.17 Despite the adverse impact of the policies introduced by the Narasimha Rao government in 1991, the UF government which took office in 1996, carried forward these policies and in some respects went further ahead. In the 18 months of the UF government, there was further opening up to foreign capital, import liberalisation, emphasis on export oriented growth and liberal concessions to the affluent sections through tax cuts.

2.18 The BJP led coalition government has quickly abandoned its "swadeshi" platform. In the name of combating sanctions imposed by the USA after the nuclear tests, it has begun wooing MNCs in a big way to invest in India. One of the first acts of the Vajpayee government was to announce an exim policy which shifted 340 items to the Open General License list including a large number of agricultural commodities, thus removing quantitative restrictions on their imports. The first Union budget announced delicensing of coal, lignite and petroleum products, privatisation of the Indian Airlines and throwing the insurance sector open to private capital. The government has also declared war on the public sector by announcing that in all so-called non-strategic public sector units, 74 percent of the equity shares would be sold off.

2.19 Under liberalisation, the process of dismantling of the public sector is on, completely reversing the basis of self-reliant development in post-independent India. This will remove the only bulwark the country has against domination by imperialist capital. It hands over virtually free to the foreign and Indian monopolists

assets which were created by the people with great sacrifice. The experience of the last few years show that proceeds from the sale of PSU shares have been used for bridging the budget deficit and not for modernisation and upgradation of the PSUs. The BJP government's policy of privatisation of the oil industry and opening up the mineral reserves for exploitation by multinational mining companies is most harmful for the country's interests as it leads to the looting of its exhaustible natural resources. The UF government had earlier listed 35 industries for automatic entry of foreign capital upto 51 percent equity and raised the foreign equity limit from 51 percent to 74 percent in nine core and infrastructure sectors. The BJP government has now gone further ahead by providing counter-guarantees to power projects.

2.20 On the question of foreign investment, the issue is not whether we need foreign capital or not but what type of investment is required and on what terms. A large majority of the capital flows into the country has been in the nature of portfolio investment, which has the character of "hot money". In the seven-year period of liberalisation there has been 15 billion dollars of such investment, which is meant for speculative activities and not productive capital. Such portfolio investment is also leading to takeover of Indian companies by buying up their equity shares. Foreign direct investment which comes in as productive capital has mainly been for either production of luxury consumer goods, or for catering to the domestic market usually at the expense of domestic producers.

2.21 The seven-year period of liberalisation has been marked by a distinct slowdown of growth in the main productive sectors of the economy. The real GDP originating in growth and other activities, which had grown at 3.7 percent per annum during the 1980s, grew at only 2.8 percent during 1990-91 to 1996-97. This is compounded by the absolute stagnation in per capita food grain output. Between 1990-91 and 1996-97 the annual growth of foodgrain production has been 1.7 percent, falling below the rate of population growth. This points to the emergence of a serious food crisis caused by agricultural slowdown due to cutbacks in public investment and shift of acreage to export agriculture. Instead of implementing land reforms, land ceiling acts are sought to be diluted as witnessed in Karnataka and Maharashtra.

2.22 The living conditions of the rural poor has worsened. The

cutbacks in public investment and expenditure in rural areas, the lower employment intensity of export-oriented agriculture compared to foodgrains, and the increase in the average price which the poor have had to pay for their food, are the factors responsible. The wide fluctuation in the prices of non-food crops is adversely affecting the poorer sections of the peasantry. The peasantry, which was supposed to have benefited from the shift to export agriculture, is caught in a new trap. The plight of large number of cotton farmers who have been driven to suicide in Andhra Pradesh and similar cases in Karnataka and Maharashtra are indicative of this. The reliance on loans with high interest for purchasing inputs like pesticides, seeds and fertilisers leads to peasants getting into a debt trap when the prices of cash crops collapse or when crops fail.

2.23 In the industrial sphere, the slowdown in production led to a recessionary condition in 1996-97 and growth in industrial production will be even less in 1997-98 with capital goods sector exhibiting negative growth. The current stagnation is not just because of cutbacks in public spending but is also partly a result of dumping of foreign goods on the Indian market. The small-scale industries which made a substantial contribution to production and employment are badly hit by these policies. Sections of domestic capitalists have become apprehensive about the entry of multi-nationals on favourable terms and its adverse effects on domestic industry.

2.24 The trade deficit has widened sharply in the last two years and it is 6.8 billion dollars in 1997-98. This is despite the fact that the period witnessed an industrial recession, which depressed import demand. The basic trade imbalance, which was an excuse for "structural adjustment", has worsened rather than improved during the period of "structural adjustment".

2.25 On the fiscal front, the government has consistently refused to mobilise resources from the affluent sections through direct taxation. India's central tax revenue to GDP ratio remains one of the lowest in the world. The 1997-98 budget presented by Chidambaram gave away concessions worth Rs 10,000 crores to the rich and the BJP government's 1998-99 budget has also refrained from raising any additional revenue from direct taxes. Lowering the taxes on the corporate sector and the rich and increasing resort to indirect taxation, which burdens the common man, is a marked feature of liberalisation. After refusing to tax the rich and then

complaining about a resource crunch, successive governments have made this the basis for inviting multinational corporations.

2.26 The adverse developments of the nineties since the introduction of liberalisation have finally culminated in the present crisis of 1997-98. Foodgrain production is estimated to drop by over 50 lakh (5 million) tonnes compared to the preceding year, slow-down in the growth of industrial production continues and it will be less than 5 percent in 1997-98. Trade deficit stands at the highest ever in the nineties. The fiscal deficit is growing as also the government's revenue deficit. The sanctions imposed by the USA and its allies in the wake of the nuclear blasts will create serious difficulties with regard to foreign financial flows into the country, speculators will pull out capital from the country leading to further depreciation of the rupee. The rupee has touched a new low of 42 to a dollar. The external debt burden increased by around Rs 44,000 crore in the eight month period between end-September 1997 and June 1998 on account of the 15 percent depreciation of the rupee against the dollar. The BJP government's policies will end up strengthening the leverage of imperialism on the economy and India becoming more vulnerable to speculation by international finance capital.

Conditions of the People

2.27 The seven year period of following the IMF-World Bank prescriptions have been a period of unremitting deterioration in the living conditions of the ordinary people, particularly the rural poor. The percentage of people living below the poverty line rose from 34.3 in 1989-90 to 39.6 in 1994-95. Sixteen percent of the rural population have access to less than Rs 3 per day. The real wages of agricultural labourers fell during the 1991-95 period. Per capita availability of pulses declined from 41.6 gms in 1991 to 34 gms in 1996.

2.28 Continuous price rise has affected all sections of the people with the poor hit the hardest because of the prices of food items increasing most in the past few years. After the BJP came to power and the first budget, there has been a steep rise in the rate of inflation. Prices of vegetables, pulses, edible oils and all other essential commodities have shot up and made life unbearable for the people. The public distribution system is in shambles in most

places and the BJP-led government with its pro-trader bias refuses to take steps to strengthen it.

2.29 The period has witnessed shrinkage of employment opportunities affecting agricultural workers and women workers most. Employment in public sector undertakings declined by one lakh (0.1 million) in the five year period since 1991. The ranks of registered job seekers have swelled to 3 crore 76 lakhs (37.6 million). The State has reduced its responsibilities in the social welfare sector. Expenditure of central and state governments on education and health as a percentage of GDP has shown a steady decline in this period resulting in the deterioration of education and health services for the ordinary people. Fifty three percent of all children under five years in India suffer from malnutrition according to the UNICEF.

Struggle For Alternative

2.30 The CPI(M) has a full-fledged alternative economic policy. The alternative approach is based on raising domestic resources by widening the tax net and increasing direct taxes on the affluent sections; curbing inessential expenditure and increasing public investment. The industrial policy should streamline and strengthen the public sector in the strategic and core areas while encouraging domestic industry and indigenous technology. Foreign capital must be solicited on the basis of national priorities and technology needs.

2.31 The 15th Congress had placed an alternative path which required implementation of radical land reforms and rural employment generation 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 and caters to all areas in the country, expansion of primary education, literacy and health services, greater decentralisation of powers and larger devolution of financial resources from the Centre to the states and down to the panchayat level.

2.32 For realising these alternative policies, the struggle against the current economic policies will have to be intensified. In this context it needs to be highlighted that the impact of these policies is not confined to the economic sphere alone. Its retrograde impact

can be seen in all spheres of political and social life like media, culture, democratic institutions and the polity itself. The decadence that it spreads eats into the vitals of our social fibre.

The Communal Threat

2.33 The build up of the communal threat since the BJP-RSS-VHP offensive on the Ayodhya issue a decade ago has now acquired a new dimension with the BJP-led government at the Centre. What was being sought to be achieved through injecting communal poison and arousing communal feelings among the masses will be supplemented by the use of State power and the penetration of the State apparatus by the RSS outfits. The agenda of the BJP-RSS will now be sought to be advanced through the government in both an overt and covert manner. The "National Agenda" of the BJP and its allies does not contain some of the key aims of the Hindutva forces. The building of the temple at Ayodhya, the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 30 which gives protection to minorities and the imposition of a uniform civil code are some of the measures which have been kept outside the official agenda but which will be pursued by other means.

2.34 The RSS fronts like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal are going ahead with their communal agenda utilising the advantage of having the BJP in power at the Centre. For the Ram temple at Ayodhya, building materials and stone work is being carried out in various places in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh by the VHP. The Bajrang Dal has announced that it will train Hindu youth in every block of the country to combat "the activities of Christian missionaries and cultural invaders". The BJP has taken control of three key ministries — home, information and broadcasting and human resource development. These will be utilised apart from the Prime Minister's office which in the present dispensation decides appointments to key posts, to penetrate the administration and the educational system and the media. Secular principles will be subverted by the introduction of the communal ideology in the educational system and cultural institutions. The proposed National Reconstruction Corps will facilitate RSS penetration among the youth.

2.35 Even in the "national agenda" the BJP is pushing for those measures which will advance the aims of the RSS. The nuclear tests

and weaponisation is one such step. The other is the review of the Constitution which has been promised both in the BJP election manifesto and in the "national agenda". Under the cover of making a comprehensive review of the Constitution, the BJP wants to legitimise the change of the present parliamentary system and replace it with the presidential form of government. Such a move will facilitate an authoritarian system, undermining the spirit of federalism and trampling upon the rights of the States, which will suit the RSS in its pursuit of a Hindu rashtra.

2.36 Despite the facade of a coalition and alliance with many state-based parties, the BJP's talk of devolving more powers to the states is deceptive. Its conception of more powers to the state is confined only to the financial sphere while in the political sphere it seeks to reduce the role of state governments and force them to kowtow to the Centre. The arbitrary use of Central teams despatched to opposition ruled states to enquire into the law and order situation illustrates this anti-federal approach. The moment the BJP feels confident to go it alone it will ride roughshod over the rights of states especially those which have ruling parties politically opposed to it. The promise to form smaller states beginning with three new states is designed to break the linguistic basis of states so that a strong Centre can dominate the smaller states.

2.37 The reactionary character of the BJP has also been clearly brought out by the record of the state governments it has been running. The Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra has been openly anti-dalit exemplified by the massacre of 10 dalits in police firing in Mumbai. In Rajasthan, the BJP government refuses to act against atrocities on women and openly sides with feudal elements and big business. The Kalyan Singh government was formed in Uttar Pradesh after the BJP shamelessly organised defections of the Congress and the BSP MLAs by using money power and other corrupt methods. Some notorious criminals were sworn in as ministers and a 94-member ministry, the largest ever in the country, was formed. The UP episode showed to what depths of sordid intrigue the BJP can descend to in order to capture power. In all these states, the BJP shamelessly woos MNCs while talking about Swadeshi. The BJP-ruled states are marked by hostility to working class struggles and the use of repressive measures such as ESMA.

Minority Rights

2.38 The CPI(M) is committed to protect the legitimate rights of the minorities and defend them from the attacks of majority communalism. Contrary to the false propaganda of the Hindu communalists, the Muslims are a deprived community. Most of them are poverty-stricken and they are discriminated in education and jobs. The CPI(M) will work for equal opportunities in all spheres of society for the Muslim minority. It will strive for this by drawing the Muslim masses into the common struggles and democratic movement.

2.39 At the same time, the CPI(M) will counter minority communalism. Fundamentalist forces like the Jamaat-e-Islami and other organisations which are finding sustenance from abroad are seeking to exploit the alienation of the minorities. The fundamentalist forces seek to isolate the minorities from the rest of the people and prevent social reforms which will help the community to progress. They adopt a reactionary attitude to women's rights. The CPI(M) will not compromise on the issue of equal rights for Muslim women and will seek to break down the barriers which isolate the minorities from their class brethren in other communities.

2.40 The disruptive role of the Muslim fundamentalist groups was highlighted by the bomb explosions in Coimbatore on the eve of the general elections which killed around 60 people. These blasts were in retaliation for the communal violence unleashed by the Hindu Munnani, an RSS outfit, against the Muslims earlier on in the city. Such tactics are counterproductive for the minorities themselves and play into the hands of the Hindu communalists. The minorities become the worst sufferers when the State takes repressive measures and in the counter-offensive of the Hindu communalists. It is essential that the Party alongwith other Left democratic forces intervene well in advance before such a situation develops to see that the minorities are rallied alongwith other secular forces to defend their rights and do not fall prey to fundamentalist influence. The democratic consciousness in the minorities must be raised to enable them to see how the fundamentalist tactics are self-defeating.

2.41 The minority Christian community is also coming under increasing attacks by the majority communal forces. The RSS-BJP

is specifically targeting the Christian community. The front organisations of the RSS such as the VHP are threatening and intimidating these sections. Some churches in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have been destroyed or damaged. It is imperative in the interest of national unity and social harmony that such attacks by majority communalism are resisted and defeated.

Nuclear Jingoism

2.42 The Vajpayee government has surreptitiously and illegitimately reversed the long-standing nuclear policy of the country. Upto 1998, India's policy consisted of three components. Firstly, India did not accept the discriminatory treaties like NPT and CTBT which favoured nuclear weapon states and their monopoly over nuclear weapons. Second, India kept its nuclear option open and updated its nuclear technology which was primarily used for peaceful purposes. Third, India consistently advocated universal nuclear disarmament and called for specific steps to be taken in this regard by the nuclear weapons states. It is this policy which stood India in good stead, maintaining its sovereign rights, in tune with the non-aligned foreign policy and the policy for world peace through nuclear disarmament.

2.43 It is only the BJP which advocated the making of nuclear weapons. To fulfill the long-cherished RSS demand that India make the atom bomb, the Vajpayee government which itself is beleaguered with difficulties within its coalition and having a precarious majority in parliament, went ahead with conducting nuclear tests and announced that India is weaponising. The tests accompanied by a build up of statements against China by the defence minister was followed up by the letter of the Prime Minister to Clinton citing China as the main security threat along with Pakistan. At the same time, the BJP is conspicuously silent about the US military base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean which stocks nuclear weapons. The disruption of the process of normalisation of relations with China going on for the past one decade will only help US imperialism to intervene in the region in a bigger way.

2.44 The tests were followed by the jingoistic statements of the BJP-VHP-RSS leaders. The union home minister, Advani warned Pakistan that the Kashmir problem will be solved in the light of the new situation of India being a nuclear weapons power. The belligerent

erent statements directed against Pakistan and on Kashmir have provided the opportunity for the western powers to internationalise the Kashmir issue as is evident from the statement issued by the G-8; by the meeting of the permanent members of the Security Council held in Geneva and subsequently the UN Security Council resolution.

2.45 The nuclear tests by Pakistan in response to the Pokhran explosions can lead to a nuclear arms race unless both countries stop the competitive race and declare they will not weaponise. Any confrontation and arms build up between India and Pakistan will lead to diversion of priorities the country should have in dealing with the vital problems of the people concerning poverty, hunger, disease and unemployment. The resources which will be squandered in such a nuclear arms race will hit the poorest sections of our country most. Further, this will provide grist to the mill of the communal forces on both sides who using this atmosphere of confrontation will further spread the communal poison for their political benefits. We should pledge no use of nuclear weapons and initiate a dialogue with Pakistan so that both countries draw back from a nuclear arms race.

2.46 Communalism and jingoism will be the weapons utilised by the reactionary forces to launch further attacks on the livelihood of the working people and to suppress their democratic rights. This path must be stopped and rolled back. Otherwise there will be the threat of an authoritarian set-up being imposed on the country.

2.47 The BJP's nuclear policy has made India more vulnerable to imperialist pressures. A situation of instability in the region will only help imperialist strategic designs. India has been made more vulnerable to pressures to sign discriminatory treaties like the NPT and the CTBT. The Vajpayee government's offer to consider signing the CTBT signals capitulation to these pressures. In the name of resisting economic sanctions, the process of opening up the country to imperialist finance capital is being speeded up. The nuclear arms race will require resources for which India would be forced to take recourse to international borrowings, further mortgaging our economy.

2.48 The CPI(M) has consistently opposed the US-led hegemony of an unequal nuclear order and treaties like the NPT which perpetuate the monopoly of nuclear weapons in the hands of some

countries without advancing towards universal nuclear disarmament. The sanctions imposed by the western countries must be opposed by all patriotic forces in the country. These nuclear weapon countries and the others who have supported an unequal nuclear order in the world have no right, moral or otherwise, to impose sanctions on India.

2.49 The CPI(M) firmly opposes the BJP-led government's nuclear policy which goes counter to the longstanding foreign policy of non-alignment and peace and harms the relations with neighbouring countries. The CPI(M) calls for (a) not going in for weaponisation and deployment of nuclear weapons (b) India should continue to oppose discriminatory treaties and not sign the CTBT (c) India should continue to campaign for non-discriminatory agreements to check nuclear proliferation and for achieving universal nuclear disarmament.

Situation of Instability Continues

2.50 The BJP-led government was able to survive in office through a narrow majority thanks to the support extended by the TDP. The BJP-led alliance is riddled with inner conflicts and divergent pulls and pressures. The AIADMK led by Jayalalitha is demanding a price for its support — the undemocratic and illegal dismissal of the DMK government. A similar narrow partisan agenda dictates the outlook of the Trinamul Congress which has opportunistically aligned with the BJP. The dropping of three ministers successively within the first two months of the government, the clashes between Jayalalitha and Hegde which includes the Kaveri waters issue and the shameless appeasement and compromise with opportunist leaders out to get office makes the BJP-led coalition a mockery of the slogan of "stable government" which it had put out during the elections.

2.51 Heading such a rickety coalition, the BJP will be all the more desperate to take measures to try and consolidate its political position. Just as the nuclear bomb issue, other sudden manoeuvres can take place which can harm the interests of the country and national unity. Already the compromise with corruption has led to large-scale interference in the income tax department and other

sectors of the government machinery. This opportunism and appeasement of corruption both in the case of Jayalalitha and Sukhram exposes the hypocrisy of the BJP.

Caste Polarisation

2.52 An important feature of this period is the growth of caste feelings. As noted in the 15th Congress, there is a dual aspect. There is a growing upsurge among the dalits and other oppressed communities for social equality and to fight oppression. This is a welcome development which has to be integrated with the democratic movement. At the same time there are some negative aspects. Certain leaders of the dalits attempt to keep these sections away from the democratic movement and use them for electoral manoeuvres. The BSP leadership provides a graphic example of this opportunist vote-bank politics which led it to ally with the BJP. The Party has to vigorously take up the fight against caste discrimination, untouchability and social oppression along with the class issues of land and wages for the mass of the scheduled castes in the rural areas. While countering all narrow caste exclusiveness, the Party should emerge as the consistent fighter against all forms of social oppression.

2.53 The caste situation during this period has further aggravated. Aggressive efforts by certain upper caste sections to suppress the growing consciousness of the socially oppressed is accentuating conflicts. There is also the harmful trend of clashes between the OBCs and dalits when the latter try to assert their rights. The bourgeois parties are fomenting casteism for their petty electoral considerations. These developments are intensifying fragmentation of the people and disrupting class unity. This is leading to caste tensions. This tendency is very harmful to the growth of the democratic movement and has to be combated by the Party.

Adivasis

2.54 There is great unrest among the adivasis who after 50 years of independence are deprived of their elementary rights. They are subjected to the worst forms of exploitation. Their lands are snatched away, their right to forests denied, their lives disrupted

by displacement from projects and they are ruthlessly exploited by moneylenders and contractors. Their plight is being utilised by the bourgeois landlord parties to divert their discontent by raising the slogan of separate states. The RSS has been working through its front, the Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad, to mobilise non-Christian tribals in different parts of the country. They seek to disrupt tribal solidarity on a Christian-non-Christian basis to counter the influence of the church in these areas. The RSS seeks to uproot the tribal cultures and traditions and implant Hindu religious ideas among the tribals who have been outside the Hindu fold. This is being done in a systematic manner.

2.55 The Party should come out against such forces in defence of the rights of the tribal people to save lands, forests and protection of cultural rights. Based on the Party's programmatic understanding the tribal people should be provided with regional autonomy in contiguous areas where they live in large numbers so that they can manage their affairs and protect their rights better. This slogan must be taken up seriously and popularised among the adivasis.

Regional Forces

2.56 During this period demands for separate states have arisen from various quarters like Jharkand, Uttarakhand, Chattisgarh, Vidharba, Bodoland and Telengana. The economic imbalance and the consequent backwardness of certain areas, the perpetuation of backwardness in the adivasi belts and the utilisation of regional sentiments constitute the factors leading to such regional movements.

2.57 Some of the bourgeois parties are vying with each other to exploit regional sentiments by raising such slogans to gain political support. Further, certain parties particularly the BJP who have consistently opposed the linguistic formation of states are making efforts to divide the states. The CPI(M) has opposed further division of the existing states as this will only fuel more divisive and disruptive demands. The basic issue is that of overcoming the backwardness of these regions. Whereas for the tribal compact and contiguous areas, regional autonomy should be provided, the situation is different for the regions which are backward. Here in regions such as Telengana and Vidharbha, the Party has to seri-

ously take up the campaigns for overcoming the backwardness of these regions while opposing the demands for creation of separate states.

2.58 Regional parties have been in existence in various states for a long period of time. However, it is in the recent period, particularly after the 1996 elections that these parties have begun to play a heightened role through the coalition politics at the Centre. Some of these regional parties reflect the linguistic-nationality sentiments of the people of these states. Although in class terms, these parties generally represent the regional bourgeoisie and landlords, it will not, however, be correct to characterise all the regional parties in a single category. There are some that exploit chauvinistic or communal passions for their political advance. The regional parties are able to garner some popular support because of the aspirations of the people in these areas remaining unfulfilled due to the policies of the bourgeois-landlord parties at the Centre. Given the state-level preoccupation of these parties, they can take opportunistic positions purely dictated by narrow considerations of being in power. Thus in the past some of these parties allied with the Congress. Now with the BJP getting strengthened, parties like the TDP and the AIADMK have extended support to the BJP.

Jammu & Kashmir

2.59 The elections to the state assembly in Jammu and Kashmir in September 1996 marked an important stage in the struggle against the secessionist forces backed by Pakistan. The initiative taken to hold the elections at the appropriate time with about 50 per cent of the voters participating, was an achievement of the United Front government. The National Conference headed by Farooq Abdullah won with a two-thirds majority. However, the state government is yet to address the basic problems of the people who have suffered a lot in the past years. Improving the economic conditions and providing employment should be the priority. Conditions for the return of the minority community who fled the Valley has to be ensured. The ISI sponsored groups are still active and their terroristic violence in places such as Doda have to be firmly checked.

2.60 Instead of carrying on the struggle to get the Central govern-

ment to fulfill the earlier commitment to provide maximum autonomy to the state, Farooq Abdullah has caused immense harm to the cause of the Kashmiri people by allying with the BJP-led government at the Centre. Given the hostility of the BJP to the aspirations of autonomy and its stand of scrapping Article 370, there is the danger of alienation of the people in the Valley growing which will benefit the fundamentalist-separatist forces. The CPI(M) reiterates that the basis for a lasting solution is to provide maximum autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir within the framework of the Indian Union. Regional autonomy for Jammu and Ladakh should be given within this overall framework.

North-East

2.61 The entire North-East is a region which has suffered badly due to the wrong policies of successive bourgeois-landlord governments at the Centre. The narrow partisan aim of the Congress to garner support by patronising different groups of politicians and nurturing a corrupt nexus led to development being hampered and growing alienation. The United Front government made a good beginning by addressing the problems of the region by the successive visits of the two Prime Ministers of the UF government. The focus was on economic development and improving communications and infrastructure. With the BJP coming to power at the Centre, there is a danger of the situation worsening in the North-East. The BJP and the RSS have stepped up their efforts in this region. Their purpose is to check the growth of Christian influence. Such an approach will aggravate the existing tensions in the region. The predominantly Christian communities of the North-East will get further alienated and this will help the separatist forces.

2.62 The ethnic problems have become acute with inter-ethnic clashes in Manipur, Meghalaya and Assam. In Tripura, the two main extremist groups, the NLFT and ATTF, are operating with shelters across the border. All effort should be made to ensure that the Central government cooperates with the Left Front government and provides sufficient security forces to tackle the violent activities of these groups. The Bodo problem continues to fester. Imperialist agencies and the ISI of Pakistan are actively involved in fomenting discord and fueling separatism. The ULFA in Assam,

the NSCN in Nagaland, the PLA in Manipur are actively engaged in advocating separation. It is essential that these problems are dealt with an overall political perspective of seeking to eliminate the roots of the alienation and providing democratic avenues for the ethnic and minority groups. Every effort should be made to draw these groups into political negotiations. Priority should be accorded in the country's agenda to ensure the speedy development of the North-East region by giving up the attitude of neglect which has been prevailing so long.

Bankruptcy of

The Bourgeois-Landlord Class Rule

2.63 The overall degeneration of parliamentary and state institutions is a symptom of the crisis of the bourgeois-landlord system. Apart from the decay of the Constitutional institutions, there is the growing menace of the criminalisation of politics which has now invaded all the bourgeois parties. The threats to ordinary citizens from mafia groups and criminals who are often in connivance with the police has grown in the recent period and has now extended to the political system. Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have seen this phenomenon grow rapidly.

2.64 The growing instability of the bourgeois-landlord system is leading to calls from influential circles for modifying the political system. One such proposal, backed by the BJP, is the introduction of a presidential form of government to replace the parliamentary system. This is an authoritarian response to the political instability. Other suggestions include guarantee of a five-year term for the Lok Sabha, formation of national governments and direct election of Prime Minister by the Lok Sabha. The BJP government's move for a comprehensive review of the Constitution by a committee of experts must be seen in this light. All these measures seek to truncate parliamentary democracy and must be firmly opposed.

High Level Corruption

2.65 The 15th Party Congress and subsequent C.C. resolutions pointed out that corruption intensified due to the policies of liberalisation. It has further exposed how this institutionalised

corruption comes directly from the new economic policies involving a large number of leaders of the Congress, the BJP as well as other political parties. The hawala scandal, the Sukh Ram affair, the JMM bribery case, the Satish Sharma cases, the fodder scam in Bihar and the corruption cases against Jayalalitha are all glaring instances of corruption in high places.

2.66 The BJP is shamelessly appeasing and wooing corrupt politicians in order to keep its governments going. At the Centre, it accommodated Buta Singh, charge-sheeted in the JMM bribery case. It was forced to drop him after the Supreme Court rejected his appeal. In Himachal, it has joined hands with Sukhram who is facing a host of corruption charges. In its desperate quest to remain in power, the Vajpayee government has already allowed interference in the administrative and judicial departments to facilitate scuttling of cases against Jayalalitha. There is no difference between the BJP and the Congress as far as attitude to high-level corruption is concerned.

2.67 The Party has consistently fought against corruption as a part of the struggle against the economic policies. This has to be intensified by exposing the BJP's role.

Women

2.68 The worst impact of the new economic policies has been on women with loss of existing jobs and shrinking employment opportunities. This new onslaught comes on top of the increasing atrocities on women and oppressive customs such as dowry, sex determination tests and female foeticide. Even caste and community feelings are roused to justify atrocities on women and to oppose any action under the law. The much publicised demand for reservations in parliament and legislative has still not seen the light of the day as most of the bourgeois parties are opposing it. It is only the Left parties which have firmly backed the women's movement on this issue. The Party should actively work amongst women and combat the increasing activities of the communal and fundamentalist forces amongst them.

Child Labour

2.69 The indefensible practice of child labour continues despite

growing democratic opinion against it. In order to effectively remove this practice it is necessary to introduce universal and compulsory primary education backed by adequate finances and infrastructural support. The economic wherewithal to poor families would have to be provided through widespread provision of free tuition fees, mid-day meals, uniforms etc.

Development Issues

2.70 There is a growing demand among the people for grassroot level development. However, much of the benefit from the various developmental schemes do not reach the people who require it the most. Recent experience has shown that only when such funds are devolved by the state governments to democratically run local bodies and through them to the beneficiaries that the people in rural India get some benefits. The people's plan movement in Kerala involving the people at all levels of planning is an outstanding example. The experience of West Bengal and Kerala clearly show that an effective panchayat administration with adequate funds at their disposal can substantially improve the welfare of the people. This issue of expansion and proper utilisation of funds for developmental work must be earnestly taken up by the Party through mass mobilisation all over the country.

Population Policy

2.71 The fast increasing population which will cross the one billion mark at the turn of the century is a matter of concern. It reflects the failure of the population policies of successive governments. The current emphasis on target oriented methods focussing exclusively on fertility control of poor women and use of hazardous contraception has to be changed. The CPI(M) stands for a non-coercive policy based on creating awareness for family planning among both men and women. Such a policy should include important issues as development and improvement in living standards, control of infant mortality, women's literacy and incentives for small families. A bigger involvement of panchayats in family planning programmes should also be encouraged.

Expand the Educational System

2.72 Education and public expenditure on the educational system have suffered due to the policies of liberalisation. Fifty years after independence, nearly fifty per cent of the people are illiterate — a shocking commentary on ruling class policies. A majority of children drop out before completing the elementary stage of schooling. There will be no scope for changing this dismal situation unless the public education system is expanded and strengthened. For this, the privatisation and commercialisation of education encouraged by the current policies have to be reversed. The cuts in higher education outlays have to be halted and adequate funds provided. The CPI(M) will support the movement by the students and teachers for alternative policies which will make education accessible to all citizens.

2.73 The Vajpayee government is making conscious efforts to recast the content of education and infiltrate the Hindutva ideology into the educational and academic fields. The BJP control of the Human Resources Development ministry is being utilised for this purpose as is being done by its state governments in UP and Rajasthan. All secular forces must be mobilised to ensure that the government-run or funded educational institutions and bodies of higher research function on secular and democratic principles.

Media

2.74 The CPI(M) will support all efforts for the creation of a democratic cultural ethos which will serve the diverse cultural aspirations of the people. This requires combating the twin threats of an anti-secular, communal value system invading our culture and the onslaught of market-oriented consumerist values which debase our cultural foundations. Culture must be the preserve for secular-humanist values. Campaigns for literacy, popular science and for fighting obscurantist and socially reactionary values must be stepped up by mobilising progressive cultural forces and popular cooperative efforts.

2.75 The facilities granted to the foreign electronic media and the increasing privatisation of television broadcasting is having a disastrous effect on our society and particularly its cultural fabric.

It is a conscious attempt to influence society and the youth with socially pernicious values like obscurantism, consumerism, greedy individualism and emphasis on violence and sex. Foreign control of the media will pose a serious threat to our sovereignty by facilitating imperialist penetration. There has to be regulation of the foreign satellite channels. The entry of foreign enterprises in the print media should not be allowed. The Party will oppose the growing trend towards privatisation and commercialisation of the media. The prime need is to ensure an effective public broadcasting service through an autonomous Prasar Bharati. The Party will oppose any effort by the BJP government to interfere in the working of the Prasar Bharati Corporation.

Environment

2.76 The liberalisation policies are also leading to dangerous environmental degradation. Vast tracts of land are being sought by the multinational corporations and Indian big business which will further reduce the fragile forest cover required for India's ecological balance. Pollution of air and water resources is posing serious health hazards. Toxic industrial wastes are imported and dumped here. Safe drinking water is becoming scarce. The contractor/bureaucratic nexus gets away with the indiscriminate destruction of forests. While development cannot be a casualty in the name of ecological conservation, environmental concerns must be incorporated in a strategy of sustainable development.

Science and Technology

2.77 One damaging effect that these economic policies of liberalisation are having is the virtual stifling of domestic scientific research. Outmoded or ill suited technology is brought into the country which really does not suit our conditions or benefit the people. Its aim is only to garner greater profits. In every field of modern science, Indian scientists have major accomplishments. Adequate attention would have to be paid to domestic scientific research and development and the creation of a strong technology infrastructure.

Judiciary

2.78 Consequent to the institutionalised corruption pervading the whole system, the Narasimha Rao government did everything possible to protect and shield corruption in high places. It was the higher judiciary which intervened to see that investigations into corruption scandals were not covered up as in the hawala, St. Kitts and JMM cases. The failure of the executive brought into prominence judicial intervention. Unless the executive is made accountable and discharges its responsibilities, problems will arise if all matters are left to the judiciary. A proper balance between the parliament, executive and judiciary should be maintained. 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, the all pervading corruption is having its corrosive effects within the judiciary also. In order to insulate the judiciary from unhealthy pressures and to ensure its independence it is essential that a National Judicial Commission is set up for the appointment of judges to the high courts and the Supreme Court.

Foreign Policy

2.79 India's foreign policy based on non-alignment and peace has come under direct attack by the BJP-led government. Under the United Front government, steps were taken to improve relations with our neighbours particularly Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The ongoing improvement of relations with China led to the visit of Jiang Zemin and the signing of the agreement on confidence building measures in 1996. At one stroke, the Vajpayee government has jeopardised these gains. The openly hostile stand against China by the defence minister and the targetting of China by the Prime Minister in his letter to Clinton have set back the process of normalisation. The UF government had taken the correct decision not to sign the CTBT. By conducting the nuclear tests and boasting that India is a nuclear weapons state, the Vajpayee government opened the doors for mounting pressures on India to join the discriminatory treaties under threat of sanctions. Ongoing talks with Pakistan have been replaced by threats and counter-threats and the Kashmir issue is being internationalised by the short-sighted postures adopted by the Vajpayee government.

2.80 The Vajpayee government while protesting against the sanctions imposed by the United States, is not moved by any anti-imperialist principles. It is willing to continue the strategic dialogue with the United States and develop further the Indo-US military cooperation and joint military exercises which was first begun by the Rajiv Government in 1988.

2.81 The BJP government marked a break with the foreign policy orientation which has served India well in the past. The CPI(M) has to accord the highest priority to mobilise the people to fight the jingoistic foreign policy postures of the BJP. A broad unity can be forged for the restoration of the foreign policy orientation towards non-alignment, South-South cooperation and world peace. Contrary to the BJP's pro-imperialist postures, the struggle to restore India's anti-imperialist orientation in foreign policy must be waged vigorously. India has to take a firm stand to oppose all imperialist attacks on third world countries and national liberation movements. Defence of non-alignment, strengthening of bonds with neighbouring countries in South Asia and more South-South cooperation should be foremost on the agenda.

FEATURES OF THE NEW SITUATION

3.1 The BJP, which has emerged as the major party in the 1998 elections, has its ideological and philosophical basis in the pernicious theory of Hindu rashtra. This suits the interests of imperialism and sections of the ruling classes but is disruptive of national unity and social harmony in a country as diverse and plural as ours. This ideological base is inimical to the fundamental tenets of secular democracy, which forms the basis of independent India's Constitution. Its assumption of the reins of state power poses great dangers both to national unity and to the democratic movements. The BJP coming to power is not an ordinary change of government from one bourgeois party to another. This is so because, unlike other parties, the BJP is the political wing of the RSS which has a fascist ideology.

3.2 The BJP has grown in strength. It found new allies like the AIADMK, the Biju Janata Dal, the Trinamul Congress and Lok Shakti for the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, apart from its earlier allies the Shiv Sena, Samata Party and Akali Dal. It was able to poll 25.5 percent and together with its allies it could get 37 percent of the vote. But it was able to form the government. Though the BJP has grown in new areas and states, it must be noted that it is still a weak force in many states. It requires allies to come into power at the Centre.

3.3 The BJP-led coalition is an unstable and an opportunist alliance. Despite the BJP's best efforts and massive use of money, it could get only around 25 percent of the vote. It suffered reverses in states like Rajasthan and Maharashtra where it is in government. Its allies, particularly, the AIADMK Chief, Jayalalitha, is openly demanding that her cases of corruption be annulled by dismissing the DMK state government. The BJP has in the last few years been exposed to be devoid of any principles and willing to court corrupt and criminal politicians in its cynical pursuit of power. Resort to communal appeal, jingoism and corrupt manoeuvres cannot hide the fact that the BJP's hold on power is precarious. Its popular base is still a minority of the electorate with 63 percent voting against the BJP alliance.

3.4 It is clear that at present, no single party can come to power on its own. Both the major bourgeois-landlord parties, the Congress and the BJP, each have roughly one-fourth of the people's support. In order to assume the reins of State power, both need to find allies to form a coalition government at the Centre. The allies they are trying to win over do not fit in with their political-ideological framework but such temporary allies are sought opportunistically to meet the present situation.

3.5 The current situation is a result of the policies pursued by the bourgeois-landlord ruling class and their political agents. The Congress party's continuous decline is due to its adherence to the liberalisation policy dictated by the IMF-World Bank; its record of compromise with the communal forces resulting in the alienation of minorities; and it being corroded by high level corruption. The ideological erosion in the secular values of the Congress is glaringly shown in the last two years. Firstly, there was a defection of the majority of Congress MLAs from the UP assembly to the BJP. Later with the fall of the United Front government, some Congress leaders deserted the party and joined the BJP. Though the entry of Sonia Gandhi checked the exodus, there has been no attempt to critically review why such an erosion took place. The Congress is still riven by factionalism in most states.

3.6 Though the BJP appealed to the people in the garb of a "party with a difference", its policies in the economic sphere have only further strengthened the process of liberalisation and imposing greater burdens on the people. Having promised to fight corruption in high places during the elections, the BJP has in the most brazen manner embraced corrupt politicians and continues to defend them in order to remain in power. The BJP is the spearhead of the communal forces threatening national unity and the democratic movement. Despite all its tall claims of discipline, it is ridden with internal dissensions.

3.7 The United Front stood united in the face of the Congress blackmail and refused to succumb to the demand for the removal of the DMK ministers on the pretext of the Jain Commission report. However, the United Front got weakened and divided after the elections. The weakening of the Janata Dal, the Telugu Desam's betrayal and defection to the BJP and the opportunism of the National Conference reflects this disarray. One of the features of

the non-Left constituents of the United Front has been the pursuit of the policies of liberalisation where they are in power in the states. Whether it be the TDP government in Andhra Pradesh, or the DMK government in Tamil Nadu, or the Janata Dal government in Karnataka, they are in tune with the economic policies being pursued by the Centre. Despite these problems, the forces who can comprise the third alternative have to be regrouped.

3.8 The imperialist countries headed by the USA welcomed the formation of the BJP-led government. This was because of the assurance that the BJP would be following economic policies basically similar to that of the Congress. Further the imperialist forces do not want a government at the Centre, which would be dependent on the support of the Left. Despite the strain in relations with the western countries due to the BJP government's nuclear policy, the Vajpayee government has been signaling that it is prepared to come to an understanding with the United States.

3.9 The systematic purveying of market and consumerist values, the erosion of commitment to secular and democratic principles in the bourgeois-landlord circles and the enormous rise of communal forces; the loss of moral and ethical values witnessed in the large-scale looting of public funds and the willingness of ruling class politicians to act as the agents of big business have had their impact on the political situation.

3.10 The development of capitalism over the decades has created a large middle class. In the absence of a powerful democratic movement they come under the influence of the bourgeois-landlord classes. Illusions are fostered amongst them about the benefits of liberalisation. The communal forces are also able to exert an appeal on the urban middle classes. The bourgeois media targets these sections to foster mindless consumerism and anti-democratic values. They seek to depoliticise the younger generation belonging to the middle classes. The Party has to conduct intense ideological work amongst them to draw them into the democratic movement.

3.11 In the past three and half years, the struggles of the working class have seen strikes by coal workers, jute workers, insurance and bank employees, public sector employees, and other sections against the dismantling of the public sector, closures, retrenchments and cuts in their benefits. The struggle against financial sector liberalisation, in particular the opening of the insurance sector, privatisa-

tion of coal mining, oil industry, fertiliser and other sectors are continuing. The Central government employees conducted successful struggles on bonus and the implementation of Pay Commission recommendations. The state government employees launched struggles against downsizing and related issues. The struggles of the peasantry and agricultural workers for land, wages and against social oppression have taken place in different parts of the country. Notable among them being the agricultural workers' struggle in Andhra Pradesh, peasants' struggles in Rajasthan, Bihar and Karnataka. The fishermen have fought back the entry of foreign and joint venture trawlers. There have been many protest movements against atrocities and social oppression of women. The youth and students have been fighting against privatisation of education and lack of employment opportunities.

3.12 Despite all these struggles, it is a fact that in the 18 month period of the United Front government, there was no all-India general strike calls or bandhs against the economic policies as during the Narasimha Rao government period between 1991 and 1995. This lull in the mass movement was not helpful in channelising the popular discontent towards the Left and democratic forces. With the advent of the BJP-led government and the new attacks through the Union Budget and the stepped up privatisation, it will be necessary to develop wider and more intensive struggles.

Tasks Before

The Party

3.13 The BJP's coming into power at the Centre is the culmination of a rightward shift in national politics which has seen the rise of communalism and jingoism. In the present situation, the struggle against the BJP-RSS combine and the communal forces assumes utmost importance. There must be a proper appreciation of the danger posed by a communal party holding the reins of State power. The Party will have to make the fight against these forces its central task in the coming days.

3.14 The present political situation is also marked by the continuing onslaught of the policies of economic liberalisation which have harmful consequences for the people and our economic sover-

eighty; and the widespread corruption which has corroded the ruling establishment. The Vajpayee government faced with sanctions after the nuclear tests has stepped up the drive for liberalisation and privatisation to woo foreign capital. The growing economic difficulties presages more attacks on the working class and the people. The struggle against the current economic policies is part of the overall struggle against the global offensive of international finance capital and the imperialist countries who have made India a major target for the operations.

3.15 In the present conditions, the struggle against the communal forces, their designs to disrupt national unity and the democratic movement assume importance. This can be done only on the basis of a broad based mobilisation. The efforts to forge and strengthen the third alternative, in electoral terms, will have to be renewed. While there is no question of an alliance, or, united front with the Congress with its present policies, efforts must be made to reach out to its mass following which has a sizeable section of people adhering to secularism.

3.16 In order to advance the struggle to isolate the communal forces and to resist the attacks on the livelihood of the people, it is necessary to project a third alternative despite the setback to the United Front in the last elections. The forging of a third alternative is still relevant. The reforging of the unity of all the Left democratic and secular forces to meet the immediate situation is essential. The formation of the third alternative is a continuing struggle. Some of the secular bourgeois parties will come and go out of this formation. But strengthening of the third alternative depends on how far the Left and democratic forces are able to mobilise the people by unleashing mass struggles on key issues such as fight against communalism and liberalisation.

3.17 The Party and the Left forces must take the lead in fighting the economic policies. They have to take constant initiative for intensifying this resistance. It is necessary to see the link between the struggle against liberalisation and the fight against the communal forces. While striving for cooperation with all the secular bourgeois parties to isolate the BJP, the Party will not relax its opposition to the liberalisation policies either at the national or state levels.

3.18 It is in the context of this current situation, while carrying on

the struggle against the communal danger, the struggle against liberalisation has to be carried forward together. The key importance of the independent role and intervention of the Left becomes centered on these tasks.

3.19 It is the Left forces which have to take the initiative continuously to mobilise all the forces to fight the different aspects of liberalisation and its pernicious consequences, whether it be the working class, the peasantry, the agricultural workers, women, artisans and other toiling sections. All who are victims of the globalisation-liberalisation process should be brought into struggle by the Left-led united forums.

3.20 The Party attaches the utmost importance to the resistance being organised and built up through the forging of the broadest unity of trade unions, mass organisations and groups who have come together in such forums as the National Platform of Mass Organisations. The resistance to the economic policies put up in the last few years have shown that these policies can be fought and checked if mass struggles are built up. The fight for the reversal of these policies and the struggle for an alternative economic policy requires the further widening and intensification of the united mass movements and struggles.

3.21 One of the major tasks before the Party is to step up the political-ideological work in such a manner as to consolidate the influence gained through the various struggles led by the Party and the mass organisations. A continuous political campaign to counter the political slogans of the bourgeois-landlord parties and systematic ideological work to combat the communal and reactionary ideologies is necessary, if the Party has to consolidate its existing influence and win over new sections of people.

3.22 In the coming days, struggles on the basic class issues, of the industrial workers and of agricultural workers and poor peasants must be stepped up in a big way. Struggle for redistribution of ceiling surplus land, record of rights, minimum wages for unorganised workers and agricultural labourers and fight against social oppression are all issues for all-India movements.

3.23 Attention should be paid to build up an anti-imperialist movement, against the pressures of US imperialism to curtail India's sovereignty and security interests and the relentless efforts

to make India conform to the demands of finance capital through the IMF-World Bank and WTO institutions. While opposing the BJP government's nuclear weaponisation and jingoism, the Party should mobilise people against any compromising stand towards US imperialism.

3.24 While strengthening the Left and democratic forces, the Party will have to pay attention to developing the left, democratic and secular alternative to meet the immediate situation. Its concrete shape can be determined on the basis of the developments in the coming days. Our efforts should be directed towards such an alternative that meets the immediate requirements, in which the Left plays its due role.

Strengthen Left Unity

3.25 These key tasks require above all the strengthening of Left unity and the growing strength of the Left forces. For this, first of all the independent strength of the Party has to be expanded. This can be done if the Party is in the forefront of all the struggles against communalism, to defend national unity and against imperialism. The Party has to take up the political- ideological fight against the reactionary and divisive forces in a much bigger way. The pernicious philosophy of Hindutva, its inherently anti-democratic and reactionary character must be exposed among the people. The increasing reliance of the bourgeois parties to utilise caste appeal and perpetuate casteism must be countered. The Party's independent positions based on its programmatic understanding must be taken to the people and projected on a large scale. It is with this continuous political-ideological activity that the Party can consolidate politically the work done in the sphere of mass struggles and fight against economic policies.

3.26 The other aspect of strengthening Left intervention is the necessity to consolidate and carry forward Left unity. On the major national political issues, the Left parties have a broad common understanding which should be the basis for continuous united Left activities. Left unity has to be consolidated by joint political campaigns and organisational coordination. Both at the national level and the state level, this process has to be carried forward. This process has to be carried forward through the Coordination Committee of the four Left parties and by closer ties between the

CPI(M) and the CPI.

3.27 The CPI(M) and other Left parties supported the United Front government from outside. In spite of the CPI participating in the government, the coordination between the Left parties helped to tackle the situation from a common standpoint. There were differences with the CPI on some issues such as the formation of smaller states and implementation of reservation for the OBCs with creamy layer excluded etc. After the 1996 general elections, the Left together was able to play an important role in rallying all the secular forces to stop the BJP coming to power. It rallied other democratic and secular parties in forming the United Front. However, it could not exercise sufficient influence for the implementation of those policies which benefit the common man. A joint election manifesto was adopted for the first time by the Left parties during the 1998 general elections. This was a significant step forward though it could not be sufficiently projected during the election campaign.

3.28 The Left's emphasis on developing joint struggles and movements and drawing in the masses from all other parties should help the Left to widen its base and increase its strength and influence in the coming period.

The Left-led Governments

3.29 The three Left-led governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura represent the strongest bases of the Left and democratic movement in the country. Foremost among them is the West Bengal Left Front government which has completed a historic 21 years in office. The Left Front in West Bengal represents the most developed formation of the Left forces in the country which has been built up over decades of class struggles and mass movements. The Left Front government has shown that within the present framework, the Left can implement certain alternative policies despite the limitations of the bourgeois-landlord system. It has been able to consistently implement policies in favour of the working class, peasantry and other sections of the working people. The record of the Left Front government provides a standing testimony to the central importance of implementing land reforms

for making a breakthrough in altering the social conditions of the people. This has resulted in a steady increase in agricultural production and instilled confidence in the rural poor who have found a voice through the elected panchayati raj system and decentralisation of power. The holding of panchayat elections in May 1998 for the fifth successive term and the victory of the Left Front marks a unique record in the country. The Left Front government is now attending to the work of promoting industrialisation keeping in view the overall policy of liberalisation and ensuring that the public sector does not get weakened. The 21 year record of the West Bengal government also shows the difference of how a government can firmly uphold secular values in contrast to the record of bourgeois governments.

3.30 In Kerala, the Left Democratic Front government took office once again in 1996 after winning the elections. It has given primacy to decentralisation of powers and initiated a unique scheme for people's participation in the planning process at all levels. The LDF government has shown how the interests of the common people can be protected in the face of continuous price rise by preserving and strengthening the public distribution system. The LDF government has also taken concrete steps to eliminate high level corruption which was a marked feature of the previous Congress led UDF regime.

3.31 In Tripura, the Left Front government for the past five years has been firmly defending national unity and communal amity by countering the extremist challenge. In the North-East, it has set an example by consistently defending tribal-non tribal unity, reviving the panchayat system and the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council and taking measures to improve the economic conditions of the people in this inaccessible and landlocked state.

3.32 When the entire country is faced with the twin onslaughts of liberalisation and communalism, the Left-led governments have been the centres for projecting alternative policies, defending secularism and protecting the democratic rights of the people. It is the duty of the Party and the Left and democratic forces to support and project the policies and achievements of these governments.

Build Left and Democratic Front

3.33 The CPI(M) is pledged to work for the People's Democratic

Revolution. In the course of this basic aim, it sees the Left and Democratic Front as the transitional stage in the struggle to build the people's democratic front. As distinct from the third alternative against the BJP and the Congress, or the broad unity to keep the communal forces at bay, the real alternative to the bourgeois landlord policies can only come from the Left and democratic alternative.

3.34 The only way to change the correlation of class forces is by strengthening the Left and democratic forces and winning over the masses following the bourgeois parties on the basis of concrete slogans and demands arising out of the fight against the bourgeois-landlord policies and the political and ideological struggle against the ruling class ideologies. The immediate tactical line followed by the Party helps us to meet the concrete situation facing us today. But it alone is not sufficient to bring a real alternative which requires a radical change in the correlation of class forces.

3.35 All the work of the Party, politically, ideologically and organisationally, should be geared to the central task of strengthening and building up the Left and Democratic Front. This is a front which has to be built on the basis of mass struggles, popular movements and the forging of the widest unity of the working people. The Left and democratic platform alone can offer a fullfledged alternative to liberalisation and the destructive path of communalism and casteism.

Programme of Left and Democratic Forces

3.36 The 16th Congress of the CPI(M) presents the main features of the programme on which the Left and democratic forces can mobilise the people and advance.

(i) Defend Secularism

Separate religion from politics under the Constitution, strengthen secular character of the State and its institutions and combat anti-secular ideologies in the social sphere. Defence of national unity countering divisive communal and separatist forces. Enforce rule of law and judicial process for resolving disputes such as Ayodhya.

(ii) Federalism

Restructure Centre-State relations with more powers to the states; revitalise panchayat system and devolve powers. Replace Article 356 with suitable clause to be used only with the sanction of Parliament when national unity or the integrity of the country is threatened. Revamp role of Governors.

(iii) Strengthen Democracy

Expand democratic rights of citizens; withdraw repressive legislations like EMSA and NSA; strengthen parliamentary democracy by proportional representation with partial list system for elections; electoral reforms to eliminate malpractices.

(iv) Economic Policy

a) Roll back regime of liberalisation and privatisation. Self reliant economic growth; strengthen public sector in core and strategic sectors; encourage medium and small scale industries; ensure adequate resource mobilisation by increasing direct taxes and curbing black money. Foreign capital investment to be based on national priorities and requirements of advanced technology.

b) Implementation of radical land reforms, distribution of surplus land and cultivable waste land to the landless; adequate public investment for agricultural development; expansion of irrigation facilities; credit to poorer sections of peasantry.

(v) Rights of working people

Need based minimum wages for workers; recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot; statutory provision for worker's participation in management; end discrimination of women workers; equal wages for equal work. Ensure minimum wages for agricultural workers and other rights through Central legislation. Right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

(vi) For People's Welfare

Provision of a comprehensive public distribution system to cover 14 essential commodities; adequate procurement of food stocks by the State for this purpose; compulsory primary education and universal elementary education; free education upto the secondary stage. Revamping educational system on democratic and secular and scientific lines. Improvement of public health system

and expansion of primary health centres with adequate stocks of medicines. Housing to be given status of a basic right.

(vii) For Development

Promoting balanced development of all regions through planning. Decentralisation of development decisions upto the panchayat and local bodies level. Environmental policy integrated with needs for rapid and sustainable development. Promoting indigenous scientific and technological research for independent development.

(viii) For Social Justice

Equality for women in all social spheres by ending all forms of discrimination. Equal rights in property; joint pattas for women; provision of one-third reservation for women in legislatures and Parliament;

Eliminate untouchability and atrocities against scheduled castes and tribes by stringent action. Ensure reservation quotas for them are filled. Ensure right to forests, land and cultural identity of adivasis. Regional autonomy for contiguous areas with majority adivasi population.

Equality of all Indian languages. Development of a democratic, secular culture.

(ix) Foreign Policy

Non-aligned foreign policy with anti-imperialist orientation; no nuclear weaponisation; strive for universal nuclear disarmament; strengthen relations with socialist countries; support to anti-imperialist struggles and world peace; policy of friendship and closer ties with neighbouring countries.

Strengthen the Party

3.37 The success in advancing the Left and democratic forces by rallying all sections of the working people based on struggles for the Left and democratic programme requires a rapid and significant increase in the strength of the Party. The CPI(M) represents the most advanced sections who embrace the ideology of the working class. It has, in the period since the setbacks to socialism, stood firmly by the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. It is essential that the Party renew and sharpen its ideological outlook

based on Marxism and proletarian internationalism, so that it can discharge its responsibilities to forge the Left and democratic alternative and advance towards the People's Democratic Revolution. The ideological discussions initiated in the 1992 Ideological Resolution should be carried forward.

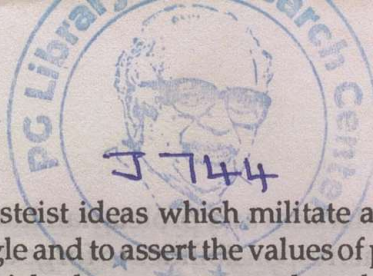
3.38 In the present context, the Party has to be the foremost fighter against the twin evils of majoritarian communalism and the IMF-World Bank sponsored liberalisation. It must be on the basis of developing mass movements drawing the vast sections of people who are today outside the purview of the Communist movement.

3.39 Sufficient attention has not been paid to building the Party organisation and streamlining organisational work. To be equipped to expand politically and organisationally, the Party must overcome the defects and shortcomings in its organisation and style of work. The entire Party has to be vigilant to ensure that alien class influences and harmful trends such as parliamentarianism, factionalism and erosion of Communist values which have surfaced do not take root. The revolutionary character of the Party based on democratic centralism must be strengthened. The rectification campaign conducted in the recent period must be carried forward to rid the Party of all unhealthy trends.

3.40 The Party must adopt a correct approach to the development of mass organisations. The independent broad based mass organisations drawing in millions of the working people with live contact with their lives and problems are the basis on which the Party can rapidly advance. The Party has a special responsibility to see that class unity and the unity of masses are forged through united activities launched from the united platforms of mass organisations.

3.41 On the basis of such intervention and activity the Party should appeal to the vast sections of people presently rallying behind the bourgeois parties. The conditions described above will adversely affect the livelihood of a vast mass of Indian people. The consequent discontent must be channelised behind Left and democratic forces. In achieving this, the Party should seek political allies who share our concerns.

3.42 The year long observance of the 50th anniversary of independence concluded on August 15, 1998. The year was utilised by the Party to conduct an ideological campaign against the commu-



nal, fundamentalist and casteist ideas which militate against the ideals of the freedom struggle and to assert the values of patriotism and secular democracy which alone can strengthen the basis of Indian unity. The anniversary year was also the occasion for the CPI(M) and the Left to create awareness among the masses of the failure of the bourgeois-landlord class to fulfill the aspirations of the people who made tremendous sacrifices for national independence. The experience of the past fifty years shows that fighting the economic battles, which are of great importance, alone is not sufficient. We have to also conduct the ideological struggle with equal emphasis against the bourgeois-landlord classes. This struggle has to be carried forward in the coming days.

3.43 Fifty years have passed since India became independent. Our Party has played an important role in the life of the country during this period in fighting against imperialism and bourgeois-landlord rule. On this occasion we pledge to build a mass revolutionary party capable of rendering historic service in leading the Indian people to full socio-economic emancipation and for an India free from poverty and exploitation.

Procedure for Sending Amendments to Draft Political Resolution for 16th Congress.

Following is the procedure to send amendments to the Draft Political Resolution of the 16th Congress of the CPI(M).

1. All amendments should invariably mention the para number.
2. Each amendment should be sent in a separate sheet of paper.
3. Each amendment should carry the name and unit of the concerned comrade/unit that is sending the amendment.
4. All amendments should reach us latest by September 15, 1998 at the following address:

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Central Committee,

A.K Gopalan Bhavan

27-29, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi - 110 001

5. The envelope should be marked "Amendments to Draft Political Resolution".

July, 1998

Price: Rs. 3.00

Published by Hari Singh Kang from A K G Bhawan, 27-29, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi - 110001 on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Printed at Progressive Printers, A-21, Jhilmil Industrial Area, G.T. Road Shahdara, Delhi- 110095. Phone: 2282847

P. Govinda Pillai



**DRAFT POLITICAL
RESOLUTION**

**16th Party Congress
CALCUTTA**

Oct. 5 - Oct. 11, 1998

320.954
COM