



View of the gathering at the Conference.





Mass rally at Shaheed Park, Kanpur.





Mass rally at Shaheed Park, Kanpur.

# Only communism can save India!

#### Comrades!

I bring to all of you revolutionary greetings from the Central Committee of the Communist Ghadar Party of India. Red salute to all the communists and working class activists who are assembled here to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1925 Conference which resolved to establish the communist party in India! Red salute to all those who could not come but are with us in mind and spirit! Red salute to all the militant fighters against imperialism and capitalism all over the world!

It is truly an important occasion on which we have gathered here, at this historic city of Kanpur. What we are going to discuss are the most burning issues facing the working class and communist movement. The decisions that we make have a crucial bearing on the fate of the movement and on the future of India. Each one of us must participate in this conference with the full recognition of our responsibility to the class and to our people.

# Comrades!

This is the land that gave birth to some of the most irreconcilable fighters against colonial rule in 1857. It is from here, in Meerut, Kanpur and from all over the country that the most courageous fighters rose in revolt in the First

War of Indian Independence. Those patriots emerged from the peasants and artisans, the productive classes of society. They came from the women and youth who refused to accept colonial bondage and slavery. The best sons and daughters of our people rose in rebellion, to end their bondage and establish a system that would ensure the well-being of all.

The patriots of that time gave rise to the profound call, "Hum hain iske malik! Hindostan humara!" India belongs to those who toil and produce the material blessings, hence it is we who will decide her fate. It is we the Indian people who are sovereign, they asserted. This call reverberated across the length and breadth of the subcontinent. It inspired the broad masses of people to join the war against the common enemy, the alien occupier and coloniser.

The British rulers could not tolerate this assertion by the Indian people of their sovereignty. They unleashed the most brutal violence to suppress the First War of Indian Independence. They imprisoned and murdered Bahadur Shah Zafar for the "crime" of voicing the conviction of the patriots of that time, that it is only the Indian people who can decide the kind of political system that should exist in India. They murdered countless patriots all over the country for voicing this conviction. It is right here in Kanpur that the British hanged so many of our martyrs from the banyan tree that is called the *Buda Bargad*. Red salute to all the patriots of 1857! Red salute to the heroic martyrs of Kanpur!

## Comrades!

The British colonialists brutally crushed the first war of Indian independence. They consolidated the capitalist system of plunder of the land, labour and natural resources of this vast and rich land. And as they developed this system of plunder, they gave rise to the propertied classes of big capitalists and big landlords of India. These were classes who benefited from the capitalist system of plunder. They became interested in preserving the State and economic system established by the colonisers. British colonialism established the capitalist system of plunder, and the Indian propertied classes got a share of the loot.

The British colonialists built the centralised Indian State. The Indian Civil Service, the armed forces, the jails and judicial system were all based on the "rule of law" as defined by the colonialists. This colonial state was the main instrument to ensure that India remained the property of the British Crown. The State served to suppress and terrorise those who opposed the plunder of their motherland.

However, repression could not eliminate the aspiration of the Indian people for emancipation from colonial bondage. Brutal violence unleashed by the colonial Indian State could not do away with the thought that India belonged to the Indian people, and that only they could determine the destiny of India. The patriots declared that freedom was the birthright of the Indian people (azadi humara janamsidh adhikar hain!).

The flames of the anti-colonial struggle erupted again and again, spreading to all parts of the Indian subcontinent. *Revolution is the inalienable right of the people of Hindostan!* With this powerful argument, the Ghadarites, Bhagat Singh and others called on the people to take up arms to overthrow the system of exploitation.

To contain these flames and to prevent another revolutionary uprising against colonial rule, the British imperialists created a safety valve. In 1885, they assisted their collaborators, the big capitalists and big landlord

classes, to establish the Congress Party. The Congress Party was built in the image of the European bourgeois parties, trained to speak in the name of the whole nation but to serve strictly the interests of the propertied classes. As the masses of Indian people repeatedly rose in revolt against their conditions, the Congress Party worked to ensure that these struggles would be confined within the limits of what was acceptable to the colonial rulers.

However, the development of capitalism not only gave rise to the propertied classes in India. It also gave rise to the working class, the gravedigger of capitalism. In all the industrial cities of India at that time, in Bombay and Madras, in Calcutta and Kanpur, as well as in the mines and railway yards and plantations, there emerged organisations of workers that unfurled the red flag, the flag of class struggle against the exploitation of labour.

The Kanpur Conference in 1925, where the decision was taken to establish the Communist Party of India, took place just 8 years after the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia that shook the foundations of the whole capitalist world. The October Revolution was a source of great inspiration to the Indian working class. Inspired by this revolution, communists emerged all over India among the fighting workers and toiling peasants, putting forth the vision of reorganising society to get rid of capitalism, feudalism and all forms of exploitation of labour. The Soviet Union served as the concrete example that working people could indeed build their society without any capitalists or landlords to rule over them, a society without exploitation of any kind.

The Kanpur Conference of 1925 was a historic landmark because it showed that the Indian working class had matured to the extent that it recognised the need for its own political party. In concrete terms, this was the recognition that the workers and peasants could not seek their emancipation by following the bourgeoisie and its Congress Party, who advocated political independence without social revolution.

Communists from all parts of India, as well as Indian communists from abroad, decided to get together in Kanpur in 1925. Their common aim was to form one party of the working class, a party that would fight for the aim of socialism and communism, through the elimination of colonial rule and the capitalist system. In other words, the significance of the Kanpur Conference is the recognition by the advanced section of the Indian working class that only communism could save India from continued bondage and plunder.

However, if a sober assessment is made of what was achieved and what was not achieved by the Kanpur Conference of 1925, it must be admitted that a clean break was not made with social-democracy, that is the ideology and politics of the Congress Party, of conciliating with the status quo. Right within that conference there were those who advocated the view that Indian communists should hide their aims and adopt a policy that would be acceptable to the colonial rulers. There were those who argued against the Communist Party of India building close links with the international communist movement, arguing that this would inspire the colonial rulers to attack the communists. There was also the view put forward that the communist party should be a loose federation, not organised on the basis of democratic centralism like the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Stalin.

In spite of such serious shortcomings in the sphere of ideology and organisational principles, the Kanpur

Conference of 1925 was, in political terms, a historic landmark. It is a landmark because it heralded a new period in India, with the working class emerging on the scene with its own all-India party. Red salute to the communists who assembled in Kanpur 75 years ago! Red salute to all the communists of today who want to uphold that glorious tradition!

### Comrades!

The birth of the communist party in India was inspired by the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. The October Revolution of 1917 opened a new epoch in the history of society. The victory of the proletarian revolution and the rise of the Soviet Union proved the basic thesis of Karl Marx that capitalism would inevitably be overthrown by the exploited masses led by the working class, who would establish socialism, the next stage in the development of society. It proved the thesis of Lenin that capitalism had reached its final stage of imperialism and was ripe to be overthrown. It established the fact that socialism was not merely a future prospect but a problem to be taken up for solution on an immediate basis.

The Great October Socialist Revolution showed that the door to end all forms of exploitation could be opened up if the working class organised itself under the leadership of its vanguard communist party, to lead the struggle to establish a new state, the state of dictatorship of the proletariat. It showed how the working class could use such a state to eliminate capitalism, step by step, and construct socialism, the first stage of communism.

Marx established, with the precision of science, the economic law of motion of capitalist society. He proved that capitalism was a crisis ridden system. He analysed the

fundamental contradiction of capitalism and showed that capitalism would not be able to get out of this contradiction. On the contrary, capitalism inevitably intensifies this contradiction, leading to repeated crises and massive destruction of human life and material assets.

The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is that between the social character of production and the private character of ownership of the means of production. The private owners advance the capital to invest in factories and hire workers, not for the sake of serving society and producing what society needs. They do so in their own private interest of pocketing the surplus value as private profit.

The source of the profit that the capitalist owners pocket is the exploitation of labour. The labour power of the workers is bought as a commodity by the capitalists. As a result, the value that is paid to the workers as wages is less than the value that is created by setting them to work. The private owner of capital pockets the difference. Marx showed that such a system, based on the exploitation of collective labour for private profit, inevitably leads to periodic crises. And with each crisis, social productive forces are destroyed. Workers are thrown out of work and machines lie idle and rot. One section of capitalists gets ruined while another section buys up their assets and becomes even bigger. Production becomes increasingly social but the ownership of wealth remains private and becomes increasingly concentrated in fewer and fewer hands.

The capitalists shut down the factories when the rate of private profit goes down, no matter how terrible the consequences are for the workers and for society as a whole. Right here in Kanpur, the destructive results of the laws of capitalism can be clearly seen. Textile factories lie idle and workers are out on the streets without work. And

at the same time, there are people on the streets without adequate clothing to protect them from the cold! Why then are the mills closed down? Who is responsible for this? Who is responsible for the miserable plight of the working class and people of Kanpur? It is capitalism and the bourgeoisie that are responsible for destroying the textile industry and the livelihood of thousands of workers in this city, and all over India.

First, it was the capitalists who amassed enormous profits through the exploitation of the textile workers in Kanpur. Then, technology in the industry advanced and new investment was required. While a few big corporations undertook such investments, most of the capitalists in Kanpur decided to shift their capital to some other sphere of the economy, rather than face a falling rate of profit. The government stepped in to bail out these capitalists and assist them to shift their capital. The State bought up the mills, paying handsome amounts from public funds to the capitalists. At that time it was said that this was being done to protect the interests of the workers. The real motive was to enable the private mill owners to shift their capital elsewhere.

Today, the Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Government of India want to completely close down the mills in the state sector, clear the workers out and sell the land to private companies once again. This is part of the first phase of the program of public sector reform and privatisation, which has been initiated by the Government of UP with technical and financial assistance from the World Bank. So, the illusion that intervention by the bourgeois state can protect the workers has been completely shattered. Today, it is clear to all the workers of Kanpur that the State and government machinery work for the capitalist class. The State intervenes in the economy when the

capitalists want it to do so. It withdraws from the same sphere when the capitalists want it to withdraw. It is a state of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Capitalism, which has reached its highest and last stage of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, is a man-eating system. It destroys the productive forces of society, both the human forces and natural resources. Lenin concluded that in this epoch of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, crises and the destruction of productive forces is not just a periodic phenomenon. It is a permanent feature of the capitalist system. Not a single moment passes when capitalism is not destroying some productive asset or natural resource or human life in some part of the world.

In India, the capitalist system has spread to all parts of the country. It has ruined tens of thousands of small producers and thrown them into the ranks of the proletariat, the class which has no property except its own labour power. Indian capitalism is characterised by a very high degree of monopoly and concentration of capital. It is a system where the entire resources of the country are at the disposal of monopoly houses, multinational corporations and financial oligopolies, Indian and foreign. The entire process of social production is oriented towards enriching the monopoly bourgeoisie and enabling it to reap the maximum rate of profit. The monopoly bourgeoisie controls the State and the State intervenes in the economy according to whatever suits the greed of the monopolies.

Lenin and Stalin taught the working class that this is the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. One of the features of this epoch is that the bourgeoisie has ceased to be a progressive force in society. Capitalism and the bourgeoisie have become roadblocks to social progress. Whether it is the agrarian question or the

national question, or the question of wiping out the remnants of feudalism and colonialism, only the proletarian revolution can provide the solution.

Nowhere is this more evident than in India, where capitalism has developed while preserving the remnants of feudalism, including the hated Brahmanical caste system. Capitalism preserves the caste system because caste based oppression facilitates maximum exploitation of labour. The bourgeoisie also organises inter-caste wars to divide the toiling masses and make them fight one another.

Comrades, the productive classes of society—the working class, toiling peasantry and other working people—are demanding that the advances of science and technology be used in their interests, to ensure their well-being. Why should all the toiling masses of India, for instance, not enjoy a level of living that can be considered human by modern standards? The bourgeoisie is unable to hide the fact that capitalism does not provide human conditions for all. The objective conditions are demanding that society be lifted to its next higher stage, the stage of socialism, a society that provides for all.

The fulfilment of the aspirations for human conditions of life for all members of society is possible today. It is possible not only to feed, clothe and house everyone, but also to provide everyone with modern household articles and reliable electric power supply, along with universal education, a healthy environment and basic health care services. It is possible to do all this with the given level of human and material productive forces and the potential for their further enhancement. What stands in the way is a mode of production based on the exploitation of labour by capital. What stands in the way is a system where the greed of a rich minority of exploiters dominates every

decision. The exploiters are the masters of society, while those who work day and night are the slaves.

The solution lies in suppressing the exploiters and eliminating the economic basis of the present system in which the private greed of a minority is the driving force in society. The solution lies in creating a new system of economic relations, based on the principle that the well-being of each member of society is the condition for the well-being of society as a whole. To do so, the working class has to champion the outlook that we, the producers of wealth, are the masters of society. It has to lead all the toiling and oppressed masses in a revolution to establish a new political power and, step by step, carry out the transformation from capitalism to socialism.

To ensure that political power lies firmly in the hands of the toiling masses, the revolution must smash the existing Indian State, which is one of the remnants of colonialism, an organ of national and class oppression. It must consolidate the new state power to create socialism and enable its advance. The establishment of social ownership of the means of production, in place of private capitalist ownership, is a profound transformation that can only be brought about by building and consolidating the state of dictatorship of the proletariat. The new state power is essential to ensure that labour triumphs over capital. The proletarian revolution will resolve the fundamental contradiction of capitalism and lift society to the next higher stage. Everyone can be provided with human conditions of existence, and the economy can be reproduced on an extended basis without crises or destruction of the environment.

Comrades, the objective conditions are crying out for the proletarian revolution. The conditions in India are crying

out for the working class and communist movement to come forward to lift society out of the crisis. Only communism can save India!

The proletarian revolution is not some future prospect or an empty slogan. It is an immediate problem to be taken up for solution. The conditions exist for the reorganisation of Indian society to provide for all. The task is to organise the working class to fulfil its historic mission. This is the call of the times. This is the meaning of the slogan that only communism can save India!

#### Comrades!

Ever since the birth of the movement for communism, the reactionary forces in society, led by the bourgeoisie, have been spreading the most outrageous lies about communism and the communist party. Imperialism and the bourgeoisie are mortally afraid of the theory and organisation of the working class, the two crucial weapons to dig the grave of the bourgeoisie. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union about a decade ago, imperialism and the bourgeoisie have intensified their offensive against communism and the communist party.

The bourgeois propaganda claims that socialism is finished. But comrades, it is capitalism that is in deep crisis today, all over the world. It is against the capitalist driven globalisation process that the working class and people have risen up in mass protests, not only in Asia, Africa and Latin America, but also on the streets of Seattle, Prague, London, Washington and all over the world.

What the bourgeoisie wants to hide is that it is capitalism, not socialism, which has brought misery to the working people of Russia and other nations of the former Soviet Union. The laws of capitalism were given full scope to operate within the Soviet Union many decades ago, while the problems posed by the development of socialism were not addressed. This process led to the degeneration of socialism into a hybrid system that was socialist in form but capitalist and imperialist in content. The Soviet Union became a social-imperialist superpower contending and colluding with US imperialism to dominate the world.

After Hitlerite fascism was defeated and the war-torn economy was reconstructed, new problems emerged in the socialist Soviet Union. The further development of socialism at that time required further deepening of proletarian democracy, enhancing the role of the working people and enabling them to govern themselves. In the sphere of the economy, there was need to enhance the role of the working people in making key decisions about production and distribution, including the remuneration of labour. The Communist Party of Soviet Union, with Khrushchev at the head, concentrated all such decisions in the hands of the State, which it brought under the control of the party. The dictatorship of the party replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat. Pseudo-socialism replaced real socialism. Marxism-Leninism was revised to justify this about-turn.

Since the outward form of state ownership of the means of production remained, it appeared as if it was socialism. But the working class no longer controlled this state. A ruling clique in the party controlled the state. Socialism was replaced with state capitalism, driven by a military machine. The Soviet Union emerged as an imperialist superpower to contend with the US for markets, territories and spheres of influence. State monopoly capitalism and imperialism were presented as socialism by the revisionist theoreticians.

Exploitation of labour was restored, while keeping up the pretence that the Soviet Union was socialist. Unemployment, poverty and other ills of capitalism reappeared in Russia, leading to increasing discontent among the working masses. This reached a crisis point in the 1980s. Then came Gorbachev who openly began to abandon all semblance of socialism and advocate *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which meant liberalisation and privatisation.

The discontent of the masses of people with Soviet social-imperialism was manipulated to destroy all the institutions built under socialism. The final blow was dealt by Yeltsin, who established bourgeois representative democracy and classical capitalism in Russia. As a result of these developments over the last few decades, Russia has been converted from a bastion of peace and progress into a warmongering, reactionary and expansionist power. Life for the masses of peoples of the former republics of the Soviet Union has become a living hell. Russia is today known for its very high rates of poverty, crime and prostitution, AIDS and all kinds of disease.

Making use of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, imperialism and the bourgeoisie have launched the greatest offensive against the working class and peoples in this period. This offensive goes by the name of market reform and multi-party democracy. Soon after the fall of the Soviet Union, the imperialists got together to sign the Charter of Paris, which was a declaration that the big powers of the world, led by the US, would impose market reforms and multi-party democracy as the universal values to be followed all over the world. It was a justification for suppressing with fire and sword any people who dared to establish any other system of their choice, for unleashing slander campaigns and naked aggression against Cuba, Libya, Iraq and other countries.

The aim of the bourgeois imperialist propaganda that socialism is dead is to convince the people that there is no alternative to capitalism and capitalist reforms. The aim is to make the working class and people accept and reconcile themselves to this offensive. It is to make them give up the class struggle.

In ideological terms, the bourgeoisie wants everybody to accept the notion that society has no obligation towards anyone except the rich and powerful minority. Taking the cue from imperialism and world reaction, the Indian ruling class has been pushing the notion that there is no alternative to deal with the economic crisis except to further intensify the degree of exploitation of labour and plunder of natural resources. They have also been asserting that there is no alternative to deal with the political crisis except to further strengthen and perfect the state and political system inherited from the colonisers and the democracy imported from Europe.

In the name of liberalisation, doors have been opened wide for foreign capital to flow into any sector of the economy and intensify the exploitation and plunder. In the name of privatisation, a double burden is being imposed on the backs of the working class and people, making them pay for the losses of the state owned industries so that they can be handed over to private capitalists. In the name of globalisation, the Indian bourgeoisie is compromising national sovereignty for its own narrow ends. It is demanding that the Indian working class should give up its rights so that Indian capital can become globally competitive.

#### Comrades!

The Indian working class and people do not accept this notion that the State has no responsibility towards them.

The peoples of this subcontinent have centuries of experience of state-craft. We uphold the notion that has developed out of this experience, that it is the duty of the State to provide *sukh* and *raksha* for all members of society. When a State does not fulfil this condition, then that State loses its authority over the people. Hence the Indian working class and people cannot and must not accept the notion that the State has no obligation towards its members.

The Indian bourgeoisie, in order to justify the privatisation of Modern Foods India Limited, gives the argument that the State should not be in the business of making bread. The workers of Modern Foods have rightly challenged this assertion of the bourgeoisie. They have raised the legitimate question: if providing food, shelter and livelihood is not the business of the State, what then is its business? The struggle of the workers of Modern Foods has revealed that it is the greed of private monopolies and oligopolies for the maximum rate of capitalist profit that is the motive force behind privatisation, not anything else.

Prime Minister Vajpayee, in his recent speech to the big capitalists at a meeting in Delhi, said that it was not possible for the government to ensure jobs for all. As far as the growing numbers of unemployed youth are concerned, he says the government has no money to provide any new jobs so they should seek jobs in the private sector. And those who cannot find any job there should start some small business of their own. He says his government will give some small loan to start such a business. He is saying this at a time when the greed of private monopoly capitalists, which his government caters to, is destroying more jobs than it creates. He is asking youth to start their own small shops at a time when medium-scale and even some big business enterprises are going bankrupt and

getting swallowed up by the monopolies and multinationals! What hope does an unemployed worker have to flourish in business?

The essence of what Vajpayee is saying is that the youth have to fend for themselves in the market place. The same is the prescription for the adults and the elderly. This notion that each person should fend for himself or herself in the market place, while the government's duty is only to protect capitalist property and distribute some crumbs as charity, is totally unacceptable. This negation of our being, this *anarth*, is being presented by the Prime Minister as the right thing to do. European ideas and values belonging to the 18th and 19th centuries are being peddled as the best for India in the 21st century!

The BJP pretends to be upholding the best of Indian traditions when it talks about *Hindutva* as being the essence of Indian ethos. However, the championing of the "second generation of reforms" by the BJP-led Government in New Delhi has completely exposed the hollowness of these claims. By upholding the notion that people have to fend for themselves in a market oriented economy, the BJP is negating one of the key ingredients of Indian political thought, that it is the duty of the State to provide *sukh* and *raksha* for all members of society. This notion finds expression in works as ancient as the Mahabharata as well as in more recent thinking, including that of the Sufis and Bhaktas who rose to challenge the Brahmanical order before the advent of the British in India.

The Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata states that, "there is no greater sin for a King than not to defend his people". It also states that, "King who does not enjoy the confidence of his people, who violates their dignity, is killed by his own people very soon". The BJP, by advocating that the State

has no duty to protect all citizens, is not only negating the *rajdharma* inherited from our ancestors, but also accepting the European vulgarisation of Indian thought. It is presenting *adharma* as *dharma*.

The unifying thread underlying the Indian ethos is the struggle against injustice through the millennia. This struggle has given rise to the Indian conception of the rights and duties of individuals within society. We the communists and working masses of India, if we remain true to the best of our traditions, can only reach one conclusion. Revolution is our *janamsidh adhikar*. It is our bounden duty to overthrow this State which negates our rights.

The first act required of the working class, to open the path to the revolutionary transformation of Indian society, is to firmly grasp political power in its hands, in alliance with all the oppressed and toilers of the land. In essence, what is required is for the working class to assert that we, the toiling people, are the masters of India. The patriots of 1857 declared, *Hum hain iske malik! Hindostan hamara!* We communists have to clearly define who this "hum" consists of today. In the modern conditions, it consists of the workers, peasants, women and youth. So the working class needs to champion the slogan: *Hum hain iske malik! Hum hain Hindostan! Mazdoor, kisan, aurat aur jawan!* 

## Comrades!

There is a groundswell of anger among the masses of Indian people against the *adharma* that is being imposed in the name of market reforms. Workers in textile mills, power corporations, banking and insurance, postal workers—all such organised sections of the working class have come out on the streets against the privatisation program and anti-social offensive of the bourgeoisie.

Small producers in the towns and villages are also opposing the drive towards globalisation and liberalisation. The toiling peasants of India do not accept the argument that subsidies to agriculture must be cut so as to fulfil the conditions of the WTO. They do not accept that multinationals or Indian big companies must be given a free hand to monopolise agricultural trade and invest in plundering the fertile lands of India. The women and youth of our country do not accept the market orientation of the economy either. It is not acceptable that hospitals and colleges should all be oriented towards private profit maximisation.

The year 2000 has been marked by the rising tide of opposition to the anti-social offensive of the bourgeoisie. The year began with nearly 100,000 power sector workers in Uttar Pradesh launching a powerful struggle against the privatisation program. Since then, more and more organised sections of the working class have come out on the streets against liberalisation and privatisation.

In Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and other countries which have been devastated by the crisis of capitalism, there is rising opposition to imperialism and the reform program of the bourgeoisie. Massive strikes and shutdown of big cities have taken place in the heartland of capitalism, such as in France, Japan, Canada, Britain and the US. The big imperialist powers are not able to hold any summit or international meeting these days without thousands of people gathering in the streets to denounce them and their plans.

What these developments show is that the tide of revolution is soon going to turn. From a period when world revolution has been in retreat and the enemy has been on the offensive, we are approaching a period when the revolutionary tide will rise once again. What we are

witnessing today are the early signs that indicate that the high tide is on the horizon. The most important question is that when this high tide arrives, will the working class be prepared to ride this tide to its logical conclusion of overthrowing capitalism through the revolution? Whether the working class will be adequately prepared depends on us, the communists. This is the challenge facing Indian communists today.

#### Comrades!

There have been many times in the past that revolutionary tides have swept the shores of India. But these tides did not lead to revolution. The reason was that the bourgeoisie managed to defeat the working class, in political terms, and ride the tide each time. The bourgeoisie thereby survived in power and preserved the existing system.

Now what is the reason that the bourgeoisie managed to defeat the working class each time? The reason lies in the fact that those who occupied leading and influential positions in the communist movement tailed behind the bourgeoisie, thereby undermining the struggle of the working class for its own aims. Such leaders refused to stick to the fundamental conclusions of Marxism-Leninism that this was the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. They refused to acknowledge the fact that capitalism and the bourgeoisie were no longer progressive and hence it was only the proletarian revolution that could lift society out of the crisis. They refused to give up the belief that some "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie could lead India forward at this stage.

In the 1940s, in the mid 1960s and then again in the 1970s, large sections of the working class and the oppressed rose in revolt. Each time, it was one section or

another of the bourgeoisie that rode the tide, with communist leaders painting them as the "progressive" bourgeoisie. First it was Nehru who was promoted as the representative of the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Then it was Indira Gandhi with her slogan of "garibi hatao!"

This pre-occupation with looking for the "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie has become a real disease in the communist movement. Those who are the carriers of this disease are obsessed with the finer points of identifying which are the "progressive" bourgeois parties and forming parliamentary fronts with them. Those who they call "progressive" one day turn out to be reactionary the next day. It is high time that we put an end to such deception. It is high time that this disease is rooted out of the communist movement. This is one of the key components of preparing the conditions for revolution.

It is high time that we confront the worn out justification that is offered by those who tail the bourgeoisie, that the working class is not yet ready to lead the class struggle. This is a blatant lie, comrades. It is an assertion that has no basis in real life. All the developments around us, including the enthusiastic response with which the Kanpur workers have welcomed this conference, show that the working class is more ready than ever before to fight against capitalism and capitalist reforms. It is precisely these "leaders", who have succumbed to the anticommunist pressure and are collaborating with the bourgeoisie, that are not ready to take the lead. They are not ready to build the revolutionary front of the working class. They are not ready to give up the line of tailing behind some "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie.

The root of the problems in the Indian communist movement lies in the fact that it has still not made a clean

break with social-democracy. There are influential parties and leaders who believe and preach that the working masses are unfit to rule, that only this or that section of the bourgeois class can rule society. Such conciliators with social-democracy have reduced communism to merely a noble policy objective, which is forever dangled before the working class as a distant prospect. As far as the present is concerned, it is always only some section of the bourgeoisie and its representatives that are promoted as the leader of society, behind whom the workers are asked to line up.

Social-democracy is a bourgeois ideological trend that came forward to rescue the bourgeoisie from the general crisis of capitalism in the 20th century. It is consistent with the conditions in which the bourgeois class established and expanded the state sector of economy to further its own interests. It is a form of bourgeois rule that seeks to reconcile the class contradictions wherever possible. According to this ideology, it is not possible or necessary to get rid of the capitalist system. What the toilers need is only some government policies to protect them from the worst evils of capitalism. Social democracy was spread in India mainly through the Congress Party.

Following the rise of the Khrushchevites in the Soviet Union, modern revisionism provided further ideological justification for those in the Indian communist movement who had compromised with social-democracy and were tailing the bourgeoisie. Throughout the Nehruvian period, the followers of modern revisionism in India spread maximum illusions among the workers about the so-called socialistic pattern of society. They spread the illusion that it was possible to achieve socialism peacefully through the parliamentary struggle, that the lion and the goat could drink from the same pond. They justified this position by

pointing to the fact that even the Communist Party of Soviet Union, at the head of the Soviet social-imperialist state, supported the Nehru government. They called on the working class to support Nehru and his daughter Indira, allegedly to prevent the "reactionary" section from growing stronger. In this way, they diverted the working class from the crucial task of developing its own independent program for the revolution. They went so far as to unite with the bourgeois state in its brutal suppression of communists in the Naxalbari period.

Today, there has been a major shift in the strategy of the Indian bourgeoisie, in line with the international trend. The bourgeoisie has abandoned the slogan of the "socialistic pattern of society" and is promoting liberalisation and privatisation instead. What is behind this shift in strategy? The old strategy landed capitalism in very deep crisis. The loot of the public treasury reached such a high level that the State was left with no funds in its hands. To get out of this crisis the bourgeoisie needed a new strategy. Through privatisation and liberalisation, the bourgeoisie hopes to expand the space for the monopolies to reap the maximum rate of profit, while shifting the burden of the capitalist crisis onto the backs of the toiling masses.

The rising opposition among the working class and people in all parts of the country, to the privatisation and liberalisation program, is posing a serious problem for the bourgeoisie. Any question of returning to the old strategy of expanding the state sector is ruled out because the State does not have the money for it. Faced with the opposition to its reform program, the bourgeoisie has begun to promote the illusion that there is a "third way". And this "third way" is to give liberalisation and privatisation a "human" face, through "people's participation", "decentralised governance", "community

driven development", etc. The aim of this line is to reconcile the class contradictions that have begun to intensify, in India and all over the world. A large number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are being created and financed by imperialism to confuse the fighting forces, accommodate some of them and reconcile them to the status quo.

Given that both liberalism and social-democracy have been exposed and discredited in the eyes of the people, the bourgeoisie wants to spread the illusion that there is some other, less painful path of capitalist development. But history shows that when both liberal democracy and social-democracy fail to avert the prospect of revolution, the bourgeoisie resorts to fascism. Hence the working class and people need to be extremely vigilant and have no illusions whatsoever about this "third way".

The new US President Bush has called for "compassionate conservatism" in his opening speech. World Bank's President Wolfensohn is calling for "market reforms with a human face". All the imperialists of the world are singing the tune that poverty can be reduced and eliminated from the world if only capitalist reforms are implemented with a "compassionate" face. This is a sign of the desperation of the bourgeoisie to hide the ugly face of capitalism that is being opposed in all continents.

The theoretical justifications for the "third way" are being manufactured at the London School of Economics and other institutions of the imperialist bourgeoisie. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the British State are among the greatest champions of this "third way". The age-old links of the British State with the State and political parties in India are being used to poison the minds of workers and line them up behind the "third way".

The BJP and the Congress Party are both singing the tune that capitalist reforms must be given a "human" face. This is also the slogan of Naidu's Telugu Desam Party and other regional bourgeois parties in power in the states. Each of these parties claims to be a better reformer than its rivals. But the real issue for the working class and people is not the selection of the best party to implement capitalist reforms with a so-called human face. The real issue is to put an end to the inhuman and man-eating system of capitalism once and for all.

Modern revisionism is no longer in power today. Those who used modern revisionism to justify conciliating with social-democracy in the past are today gravitating towards the "third way". Their justification is that there is allegedly no other alternative. They are advocating a "third front", once again pursuing the age-old method of seeking out "progressive" bourgeois parties to unite with. Communists have to direct the ideological struggle today precisely against those who are creating illusions about the "third way" and about a "third front".

The CPI(M) led Government of West Bengal claims that it will serve the working class by implementing market oriented reforms with a "human" face. While claiming to be a party that is based on Marxism, the CPI(M) is repeating the anti-Marxist lies manufactured in London and Washington, that it is possible to reform capitalism so as to get rid of its ills such as poverty. The West Bengal Government is receiving a major program of technical and financial assistance from Tony Blair's Government in Britain, to implement projects for poverty reduction.

Those within the communist movement who are advocating an anti-BJP parliamentary front at this time claim that if the BJP is removed from power, then India

can be saved. This will be true if the BJP is the source of all the problems. But communists must know that the source of the problem lies deeper. The problem lies with the rule of the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system, which this rule defends. It lies with the existing Indian State and political system, which were inherited from colonial times and have been preserved by the bourgeoisie.

The issue for the working class is not the replacement of one party by another in power. This is the aim of various propertied interests in society. It is not the aim of the working class movement. The aim of the working class is to replace one system by another, to replace capitalism by socialism. The first condition for this transformation is to replace one kind of political power with another, that is to replace the existing bourgeois state with a new state power of the workers and peasants. This is the strategic aim of the working class and communist movement.

Comrades, we must stick to the fundamental conclusions that have been drawn from the experience of the working class movement and summed up on a scientific basis by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. There are only two main social forces in combat in this epoch, the camp of reaction led by the bourgeoisie and the camp of revolution led by the proletariat. There are only two roads possible for society at this time, the capitalist road and the socialist road. There is no middle road. There is no "third way". There are only two kinds of political fronts that are possible —a bourgeois reactionary front or the proletarian revolutionary front. There is no other "third front".

We must stick to the fundamental conclusion of our science that the State is an organ of class rule. The post-colonial Indian State is the organ of the big bourgeois class and its allies to suppress the workers, peasants, women

and youth of all nations, nationalities and tribes. It is an instrument for the advance of capitalism, for increasing imperialist penetration of India, and for the preservation of the remnants of feudalism and colonialism. The class conciliators in the communist movement call on the working class and people to defend the Indian State and Constitution, instead of exposing their true character as instruments that preserve the legacy of colonial enslavement and plunder. They spread the same illusions that the Congress Party has been spreading, that this State and Constitution are "secular" and "democratic".

We are living at a time when the system of representative democracy is being increasingly discredited all over the world, exposed as nothing but the naked rule of capital. This is happening even in Britain, the country that gave rise to this system. The latest presidential elections in the US have exposed the American system of democracy as the rule of a privileged class of propertied men who are represented in the "electoral college". To call for the defence of this democracy, and to merge with it, as some in the communist movement are doing, is to chain the working class to bourgeois rule.

Such a policy has reduced various communist parties to nothing more than electoral machines. The aim of the communist movement is presented by such parties to be the formation of communist-led governments through the existing electoral process, while keeping the bourgeois state intact. However, it must be admitted that the workers in West Bengal or Kerala are no closer to emancipation than their brothers and sisters in the rest of the country, even though they have had the benefit of communist-led state governments for many years. What is the lesson to be drawn from this?

The main lesson to be drawn is that the system of democracy that exists in India is designed to ensure that political power will always be exercised in the interests of the bourgeois class and against the interests of the working class. The bourgeoisie claims that this democracy is above all classes; that the people are free to elect the government of their choice. But in fact, the political process is designed to ensure that only those who are committed to preserving the capitalist system, and who implement what the monopoly bourgeoisie wants, can be elected to power.

Hence the aim of a communist party cannot be to bring itself to power within this system. The aim of a communist party is to bring the working class to power, to replace one kind of state power with another so that capitalism can be buried and replaced with socialism. This aim cannot be achieved if communists merge themselves with the existing parliamentary democracy. On the contrary, communists have to fight for a new political process that would ensure that it is the workers, peasants, women and youth who are the masters of society.

Communists have the duty to expose the fundamental nature of the Indian State as an organ of class oppression and national oppression, and as a legacy of colonialism. To call for the defence of the "secular" and "democratic" foundations of the Indian Republic, as some in the communist movement are doing, means to completely capitulate to the rule of the bourgeoisie. The leaders of CPI(M), for instance, say that the Constitution of India must not even be reviewed, let alone changed. But Marx said that communists stand for the most radical rupture with the existing state and system of society. Have the leaders of CPI(M) forgotten this basic teaching of the Communist Manifesto?

Marx drew the fundamental lesson in 1871, from the experience of the Paris Commune, that the working class cannot take hold of the readymade bourgeois state machine and use it for its aims. The working class has to smash the bourgeois state and establish its own state power. Lenin says that Marx and Engels regarded this lesson of the experience of the Paris Commune "as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the Communist Manifesto. Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the Communist Manifesto". (State and Revolution)

On an immediate basis, communists have to put forward the vision of such a new state power and organise the working class to fight for it. The well-being of each is the condition for the well-being of all. This will be one of the principles governing the new state power of the working class and its natural allies. Such a state will provide constitutional guarantee for the right to livelihood, and for all the inalienable rights of all individuals and collectives in society. All those who work will be looked after, and so will the children, the elderly and the disadvantaged. Nobody will be permitted to live by exploiting the labour of others. This is consistent with the principle that it is the duty of the State to ensure sukh and raksha for all.

In place of a talk shop parliament and a permanent civil service, the aim of the working class is to integrate the legislative and executive powers. Only then will those who make the decisions also be accountable for their implementation. All the functionaries of the State should be paid workmen's wages. And in place of judges appointed

by the government, there should be judges elected by the people.

The working class has to dismantle the arrangements that the bourgeoisie has made to impose its will on the whole of society. These include the mechanisms for spreading terror among the people and organising diversions. The repeated elections, bomb blasts, inciting of communal passions and communal violence, destruction of Babri Masjid and other diversions such as the Mandal Commission—it is through such methods that the first generation of market reforms has been implemented in the 1990s. Entire networks of intelligence agents, official and unofficial armed groups, and arms merchants have emerged to create the diversions and disasters on a periodic or continuous basis. In place of such anti-people and anti-social arrangements, the working class must establish new arrangements, including the worker-peasant alliance as the mainstay of the new political power.

The working class and all the toilers have to establish their own Constitution, the fundamental law that would govern the new society and state. Such a constitution would guarantee all the rights of the people, including their right to livelihood. It would provide for enabling mechanisms for all members of society to affirm their rights.

Can the working class achieve such things? It not only can but must do so if India is to be saved from further disasters. What is standing in the way is the activity of the class conciliators in the communist movement. Those who have merged themselves with the existing bourgeois state are telling the workers, "No, you are unfit to rule. Just defend the existing state, vote us into power, and we shall defend you". They are fooling the people and preventing the working class from organising to seize political power

in its hands. They constitute the main roadblock to the advance of the working class and communist movement. The struggle against this roadblock has become the urgent and necessary condition for preparing the subjective conditions for revolution.

#### Comrades!

We are living at a time when imperialism and the world bourgeoisie are intensifying their offensive against the very concept of the nation and national rights. In the name of peacekeeping and peace-making, US imperialism and other big powers are giving themselves the right to interfere anywhere, and to station their troops to crush and partition nations as they please. In such a situation, the Indian big bourgeoisie has thrown all caution to the winds and is eager to play the imperialist game, to pursue its ambition of big power status. After having asserted its status as a nuclear power, the Indian bourgeoisie is building close alliances with the US and other imperialists, to isolate Pakistan and consolidate its position as a regional superpower. This is increasing the danger of war and imperialist intervention in South Asia.

As the bourgeoisie of a large country of continental size, the Indian big bourgeoisie has always harboured imperialist ambitions. It has behaved in a typical imperialist style with respect to the nations, nationalities and tribal peoples within India, denying them their right to self-determination. In the period of the bipolar division of the world, the Indian bourgeoisie and State pretended to be following an anti-imperialist foreign policy. Today, when the bipolar division has ended, the illusions that were created about anti-imperialism and "non-alignment" have been shattered, with India emerging as the "natural ally" of the US imperialists. The Indian

bourgeoisie is exposing its true colours as an imperialist bourgeoisie, which is desperate to join the club of big powers of the world.

The present situation calls on communists to rise to the defence of national sovereignty, in opposition to the offensive of imperialism. We must defend the right of all nations, nationalities and peoples to self-determination, their right to decide their own destiny, including what kind of state and political system they wish to have. This holds good for the Indian people as a whole, as well as the people of Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland and others. We must oppose every attempt to violate national rights, both on the part of outside powers and on the part of the Indian State itself. We must oppose those in the communist movement who call on workers to support the Indian State and its suppression of national rights in the name of "defending the unity and integrity of India".

The discontent and seething revolt against the Indian Union among the peoples of various nations, nationalities and tribes in the country—the Kashmiris, Punjabis, Manipuris, Nagas and others—is objectively a factor that favours the working class and the revolution. But the conciliators in the communist movement preach to the working class that those who refuse to accept the legitimacy of the Indian Union pose a threat to the unity and integrity of India. Using the slogan of "defending the unity and integrity of India", they justify state terrorism and the forcible suppression of the national aspirations of the various nations, nationalities and tribes within the present day Indian Union.

The line of justifying the use of force against national liberation movements in the name of defending the unity and integrity of India is the line of the ruling big

bourgeoisie. Both the BJP and the Congress Party are proponents of this line. The content of this line is the defence of the colonial structure of the central state as an organ of suppression and violation of the national rights of all the constituent peoples of India. In essence, it is the defence of the colonial legacy and the colonial definition of India. By calling on workers to take up this slogan as their own, these conciliators with the bourgeoisie are preventing the working class from fighting for the constitution of a new voluntary union of the peoples. They are blocking the struggle for a new State that would recognise and defend the national rights of all the constituent peoples of India. By calling for the defence of the existing Indian Union, they are preventing the working class from fighting for revolutionary transformation.

By calling upon the workers to take the side of the Indian Union and support the brutal suppression of the peoples of Kashmir, Punjab, Manipur, Nagaland and other nations, nationalities and tribes, the advocates of "unity and integrity" serve to convert these potential allies of the working class movement into its enemies. They thereby serve the bourgeoisie and the status quo. They bring great discredit to communism.

The CPI(M) claims to be "waging an irreconcilable struggle against BJP fascism". But in fact, by supporting the State and its slogan of defending the unity and integrity of India, the CPI(M) and others who follow this line are helping to justify the use of naked and brutal force by the most reactionary section of the monopoly bourgeoisie.

The source of the danger of fascism does not lie in one particular party of the bourgeoisie. It lies in the big bourgeois class and its imperialist drive in the conditions of

the crisis of capitalism and the rising opposition among the people. To prevent the danger of fascism, the working class has to be armed ideologically and organisationally to fight the bourgeoisie and build the political unity of all the oppressed in the course of this struggle. Lining up workers behind some "progressive" bourgeoisie or some "third front" does not help to arm the working class ideologically or organisationally. By diverting and dividing the working class, this line actually serves to pave the way for brutal suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

## Comrades!

An essential condition to open the door to the revolution is that the working class is organised around its own independent program to lift society out of the crisis. The bourgeois political parties are claiming that they have found a solution for the economic problems of society. Their answer is the globalisation of capital and production through privatisation and liberalisation. They claim to have found a solution to the political problems. Their answer is to improve "good governance", which means to prettify the existing political system and political process of representative democracy, which is both outdated and alien to Indian conditions. What is the alternative that communists must champion at this time?

The working class must wage the struggle against privatisation and the bourgeois offensive today with the perspective of an alternative to the existing system. In opposition to the slogan that everyone must fend for himself or herself in a market oriented economy, the working class must insist on the principle that it is the duty of the State to ensure *sukh* (prosperity) and *raksha* (protection) for all members of society. The well-being of each must be the condition for the well-being of all!

The solution to the problems of food supply, electric power, irrigation and drinking water supply, for instance, is not to transfer ownership from the state capitalist sector into private hands, but to establish social ownership and control over the means of production. In a socialist system, the working people would together control the production and distribution of goods and services. They would control political power in their hands and use this power to ensure that the economy fulfils their needs.

How is the struggle for this new orientation to be waged within the present conditions? It is to be waged by demanding those changes in the sphere of the economy and the political process that would not only block the path of liberalisation and privatisation, but at the same time also open the path for deep going revolutionary transformations.

The bourgeoisie claims that there is not enough money available to ensure education, health and other basic social services to all members of society. But they hide the fact that the reason there is no money is because the State is continuing to pay the biggest sums to the rich. What if we communists were to propose that there is a way that money can be found on an immediate basis to look after the *sukh* and *raksha* of all members of society? It can be found provided the State stops paying the rich.

An enormous amount of money could be gathered, for instance, if the Central Government were to declare a moratorium, i.e., indefinite suspension until further notice, of interest and loan repayments to the World Bank and IMF. And the state governments could declare a similar moratorium on debt service payments to the Central Government. Such measures can be taken easily, at one stroke, to save resources from unproductive use and invest them in the well-being of the people.

Further, large sums of money could be found if unproductive military expenditure is cut back. One of the factors for the rising expenditure in the name of "defence" and "security" is the deployment of the armed forces against various peoples within India. Immediate ending of state terrorism and armed occupation in Kashmir, the Northeast and other parts of the country would be one effective way to cut unproductive spending. The resources thus saved could be used for providing basic needs. The arms race and warmongering against Pakistan are other factors which drain a considerable part of the funds available to the State. An immediate halt to the arms race and warmongering would be another way to cut the use of productive resources for destructive ends.

Money could also be found if the State took over foreign trade and internal wholesale trade in its own hands by imposing a ban on all private capitalist operations in this sphere of the economy. This is diametrically opposed to the plans of the bourgeoisie to open up agribusiness to the multinational and monopoly companies. If the trade in food and other essential commodities is nationalised, then instead of profits from this trade filling the pockets of monopolies and profiteers, all the surplus generated by buying and selling essential commodities could be concentrated in the hands of the State. It is the duty of the State to ensure the trade in agricultural inputs and outputs to ensure a secure livelihood to the peasantry and to ensure adequate and affordable supply of agricultural produce to the urban population. Further, the surplus generated from this trade could then be deployed to look after the well-being of the population.

A huge quantity of money could be raised at one stroke by confiscating all unaccounted cash through demonetisation of the rupee, that is, by forcing everyone to exchange old notes for new ones. All the hoards of black money hidden in the form of cash could be unearthed in this manner. All the taxes and fines on this hidden wealth could be deployed to ensure the welfare of the toiling masses.

We must demand that all buying and selling of land between private parties be banned, so that no small peasant family can be forced to part with its land. We should at the same time also demand that the State extend special assistance for peasants to pool together their land holdings and their labour, to build cooperative farms. This will enable increased productivity through the use of modern machinery and scientific techniques, and the benefits would be shared among the tillers on the basis of work done.

Will everybody agree to these proposals? The vast majority of the population has nothing to lose and everything to gain from these proposals. But one tiny but most powerful minority—headed by the big bourgeoisie and imperialist interests—stands to lose. But why should the claims of this parasitic minority take priority over the claims of the working people, who constitute the vast majority? The working class must challenge the bourgeoisie on this vital question as to whose claims take priority.

The working class must assert its claims and those of all the toiling and oppressed masses. At the same time, the working class has to prepare to wield political power so as to actually ensure that society fulfils these claims. Unless those who work wield political power, society cannot be reorganised to serve the toiling masses.

Today, a rich minority in society wields political power. The obvious result is that the economy and society are geared to fulfil the interests of only this rich minority. If the economy is to serve the interests of all those who toil, then

the toiling masses have to wield power in their hands. The existing system and political process of representative democracy keeps the toiling people out of power. People can at most vote the ruling party out, but they have no say in shaping the destiny of society. The working class and people should demand such changes that would restrict the monopoly of the "recognised" parties and the privileged political caste, while expanding the space for the workers, peasants, women and youth to participate in politics.

The working class can and must demand that political parties must not be permitted to select the candidates for elections. The right to select candidates is an essential part of the right to elect and be elected. This right belongs to all the electors. Workers, peasants, women and youth must be able to exercise this right. Committees must be established in every factory, every village, every mohalla, so that the people can select candidates from among their peers and prevent the representatives of vested interests from standing as their candidates. In this manner, we communists should work to turn elections into an arena of proletarian class struggle for the renewal of the political process.

Those who are elected should be deputies and not "trustees". To be a deputy means that the people set the agenda and the one who is elected is deputed by the people to carry out and implement that agenda. The deputy can be recalled at any time by those who elected him, if he or she does not carry out the agreed upon agenda. To be a trustee, on the other hand, means that people hand over all power into the hands of these "representatives", who are then free to carry out the agenda set by the bourgeoisie, until the next elections come. The working class and all the oppressed must be organised to challenge the existing system of

representative democracy and fight for a system of direct democracy where the masses of people themselves set the agenda for society.

We communists should lead the workers, peasants, women, youth and all the oppressed to form *lok sangharsh samitis*, organs of struggle against oppression and for the empowerment of the people. We must build forums where the people can assert their claims, discuss the agenda for society and how to combat the offensive of the bourgeoisie on an immediate basis.

The bourgeoisie has announced its plans. It wants to achieve 9% capitalist growth through accelerated privatisation and liberalisation. It wants to make the people pay the full cost for all basic services. So we should pay more for electricity, water, education, health, transport and so on, while tax money is used by the State to continue paying the rich. Tax money is being consumed by interest payments to the World Bank and other big banks, in maintaining the bureaucracy and the expanding armed forces and financing state terrorism in the name of "security". Tax money is also being handed out to big capitalists, in the form of fertiliser subsidy and export incentives. Why should the people pay for services while the State uses the tax collections to fill the pockets of the rich? The lok sangharsh samitis could be built and developed as organs of struggle of the broad masses of working people against the anti-social offensive of the bourgeoisie.

The Indian big bourgeoisie is creating a dangerous situation in this region by seeking close collaboration with the US and other imperialists to pursue its own imperialist ambitions. In the interests of peace in South Asia, the working class must demand immediate repudiation of state

terrorism and all hegemonic designs by the Indian State. We must demand that India actively pursues peaceful and friendly relations with all the neighbouring States.

Comrades, will the existing governments at the centre or in any of the states be willing to implement such a bold program of radical measures? Will they be prepared to declare a moratorium on servicing the debt owed to the World Bank, for instance, or to block the path to agribusiness and multinationals in food trading? No bourgeois government in India will be willing to do so at this time. If the working class insists on such demands, the class struggle will intensify. The political unity of all those opposed to the present course of society will be strengthened, while the bourgeoisie will get further split and be weakened.

The revolutionary forces can be prepared around such a fighting program, so that, as the tide turns in favour of the revolution, the working class can seize the initiative and begin implementing this program for the renewal of India, thereby opening the door to the anti-imperialist, antifeudal, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist revolution.

#### Comrades!

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has selected Kanpur as the testing ground for its program of privatisation of the power sector. The bourgeoisie has selected Kanpur as the test case for several reasons. One of those reasons is that the bourgeoisie thinks the working class and its organisations are divided and in a state of disarray in this city. One of the challenges facing communists is to prove the bourgeoisie wrong on this point.

The working class and communist movement must take up

the banner of defending the rights of all. We must defend the right of every working family in town and countryside to be provided with reliable and adequate electric power at affordable prices. Will Enron or the Tatas or some other private profiteer ensure power supply to every peasant family in Eastern UP?

Whose claims should come first? The claims of the masses of people that they need reliable and adequate electric power supply at affordable rates, or the claims of private profiteers who demand guaranteed rates of super-profit?

Private orientation of social production is the cause of the problems. It cannot be the solution. In the power sector, it is precisely the private vested interests who have squandered public assets. In Uttar Pradesh, it is well known that one crore of rupees finds its way into the pocket of the Energy Minister every day, from the bribes and theft in the power sector. The bourgeoisie claims that the only way to prevent the widespread corruption and theft is privatisation, which means to replace one form of loot and plunder by another form.

The working class movement must challenge the false assertion of the bourgeoisie that there is no alternative to privatisation. We must insist on the principle that it is the duty of the State to ensure adequate supply of essential articles of mass consumption at affordable prices. A government that cannot do so is not fit to rule! This should be one of our fighting slogans.

Comrades, let us announce to the bourgeoisie that we communists have determined that the Kanpur workers can and must be organised to foil the plans of the bourgeoisie. Whether Kanpur becomes a privatisation success story, or it becomes the centre of the struggle against

privatisation—this depends on what we Indian communists decide today. If we pool our efforts and work together to provide leadership to the working class, then it is indeed possible to hoist the red flag in Kanpur and foil the plans of the bourgeoisie.

#### Comrades!

The essential condition for the working class to become the *malik* of India is that it should be led by one united communist party. In spite of the lakhs of dedicated communist fighters in our country, the working class cannot be adequately prepared for the coming revolutionary tide as long as there is not one united communist party providing clear and decisive leadership to the class. As long as different parties send different signals to the class, the proletariat will be unable to emerge as the leader of a revolutionary front against the bourgeoisie. This situation assists the bourgeoisie to keep the working class disoriented, and to pursue its own self-serving agenda.

This historic Conference of communists must unequivocally resolve that this situation of a divided communist movement cannot be tolerated any longer. We must collectively decide and take the next step towards the restoration of unity of Indian communists in one party. What is that next step?

Comrade Lenin said that before the communists of Russia could unite in one party, and in order that they could unite, it was essential to draw clear lines of demarcation. This thesis of Lenin has been misunderstood and misused in the Indian communist movement many times in the past. The results have been disastrous each time.

Comrades, the key point to grasp is that the ideological

struggle has to be waged against the bourgeoisie, and against all tendencies within the working class movement that conciliate with the bourgeoisie. When communists begin instead to attack each other in the name of ideological struggle, it does not lead to any real advance in the movement. It leads to splits and to the weakening of the movement.

In 1964, for example, those who split from the CPI and formed the CPI(M) claimed that they were waging an ideological struggle against modern revisionism. They charged the leaders of CPI with being revisionists. But instead of strengthening the unity of communists, they split the party into two almost equal halves. They waged a sectarian struggle, disconnected from the task of building the political unity of the working class and people, at a time when the tide of revolution was on the rise. They behaved in typical Brahmanical style, asking the broad masses of members of the communist party to support one set of pundits against another. In the name of ideological considerations, they split the political unity of the working class.

Did the working class gain from the split in 1964? Did modern revisionism, whose essence was to conciliate with social-democracy and the rule of the bourgeoisie, get defeated within the Indian communist movement as a result? This question has already been raised in the movement. So far, the leaders of CPI(M) have refused to seriously address this question and provide an answer. They will have to provide an answer sooner or later because the politically conscious workers are not going to stop raising this legitimate question.

Since that split in 1964, despite the heroic efforts of communist revolutionaries, the struggle against modern revisionism and against conciliation with social-democracy could not be taken to its logical conclusion. The Indian communist movement has remained fractured for over 35 years. The time has come to make a clean break with social-democracy and all forms of bourgeois ideology. The time has come to make that break which ought to have been made but was not made in 1925, nor in 1964. There have also been other occasions when lines of demarcation have been drawn on a sectarian and factional basis, leading to further splits. For instance, whether one was a follower of Russia or of China became a dividing line. Later, which faction of the Communist Party of China one was supposed to follow became another dividing line among Indian communists.

If the split in the communist movement is to be overcome, then it is essential to wage the ideological struggle against those who are blocking the path for communism to advance. The lesson to be drawn from the experiences of the past is that the ideological struggle has to be waged around the questions posed by the real struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie. It has to be waged in the midst of the Indian working class, by arming the workers to think on their feet and differentiate between what serves their interest and what serves the bourgeoisie. It has to be waged with the aim of restoring the unity of communists around the line of class struggle. It has to be waged by carrying out discussion, debates and agitation for the solution of society's problems.

The line of demarcation that needs to be drawn in the Indian conditions today is between those who wish to lead the proletarian class struggle and those who are calling for unity with the bourgeoisie by creating illusions about a "third way" and a "third front". Once we agree on this basic principle, then all other differences among communists can be resolved within one communist party.

The working class has to be ideologically armed to distinguish between fighting for communism, on the one hand, and collaborating with the bourgeoisie on the other. Once the workers begin to distinguish between the two lines, the differentiation will further develop. The roadblocks to communism will get exposed and the diehard class collaborators will be thrown out of the movement. Thus the conditions will be created for the establishment of a single vanguard communist party in which all Indian communists can militate.

## Comrades!

What kind of communist party does the Indian working class need today? It is clear that what the working class does not need is another parliamentary party, a party that is organised as an electoral machine, to establish and defend party rule. It does not need a party that merges with the existing state and bourgeois democracy which are based on alien definitions and theories imported under colonial rule. Nor does it need a party that descends to individual terrorism, leaving the masses of people as passive spectators.

The working class needs a party that would serve to empower the class with theory and organisation. It needs a party that would make the class conscious of its immediate and strategic aims and enable the class to get organised to fight the bourgeois offensive. It needs a party that would enable the class to build a revolutionary front against the bourgeoisie.

The need today is to discuss openly in the communist movement and among the worker activists the theory and principles of organisation, such as democratic centralism, the structure of the party and issues related to party building. Such discussion should not be confined within this or that party alone. They are the common concern of all communists and of the working class as a whole. At the present time, it is not the custom or practice within our movement to discuss such questions openly, cutting across party lines. We have to create the atmosphere and the mechanisms for such discussion to develop among all communists.

Is it not possible for communists belonging to different parties to discuss on an ongoing and regular basis the crucial questions facing the working class at this time, questions of how the struggle is to be waged against the bourgeois offensive? It is not only possible; it is essential that we do so. The working class is demanding a unified leadership. It is the duty of communists to provide such leadership. There is no need to insist, as a precondition, that we should agree on every detail and every point contained in some document, before we can start working together. The theory of the Indian revolution and the immediate program of the working class will take final shape only in the course of intensifying the class struggle.

The greatest sentiment and widespread demand of the masses of workers and toiling peasants of our country is that all those who champion the red flag be united in one single party. Our vision is that in each factory and workplace, each educational institution, mohalla and village, communist basic organisations are built in which all those who consider themselves communists militate in; with these communist basic organisations constituting the granite foundation of the single unified communist party with a single centre. How do we move from the present point, when there are so many different parties and groups in the communist movement, to a situation where the working class is organised as a single and united political

force, with the advanced section in a single unified communist party?

One of the most important steps towards this goal, in our party's opinion, is for communists to co-operate in building the organs of class struggle in the midst of the working class and people. Whose interests get served if communists belonging to different parties build rival unions in the same factory or institution? Only the interests of the bourgeoisie, not the interests of the working class. Hence, let us cooperate to build one fighting union in one factory.

Comrades, we communists also need to co-operate and work together to build the broad organs of class struggle, the *lok sangharsh samitis* in the mohallas and villages, in college campuses and wherever the broad masses of workers, peasants, women and youth can get together. It does not matter which party one belongs to. Communists should pool their energies to build the organs of class struggle in the midst of the exploited and oppressed masses. We communists can and must lead the work to build a whole network of such *lok sangharsh samitis* at this time.

Another immediate step, which we would like this Conference to consider, is to decide on an arrangement to facilitate discussion among communists on a continuing basis. If communists belonging to many different parties regularly exchange views, take collective decisions and fight to implement those decisions, a new situation will be created in the communist movement. Communists of various parties will begin working for the success of one common project. Favourable conditions will thereby be created for the restoration of unity of Indian communists in one party.

## Comrades!

There is nothing that can save imperialism and the bourgeoisie from their inevitable demise at the hands of the working class, the most thoroughly revolutionary class in modern society. Another high tide of revolution is approaching. Let us unite to prepare the working class to ride the tide to victory this time.

Come comrades! Let us resolve to take up the challenge facing the Indian communist movement. The tasks facing us are crystal clear. The most crucial task is to build the organs of class struggle in the midst of the working class, and defeat the line of tailing the bourgeoisie. Let all communists resolve to help build such organs of struggle against the anti-social offensive, as the foundation of political unity against the bourgeoisie. Let us build communist cells as the mainstay of the vanguard party of the Indian working class.

There is a need to speak our minds today, on this historic occasion of the 75th anniversary of the 1925 Kanpur Conference! Let us make this Kanpur Communist Conference 2000 a historic landmark on the path of restoring the unity of Indian communists! Let us organise the working class and all the toiling and oppressed masses to foil the plans of the bourgeoisie and open the path to the revolutionary transformation of society!

Down with capitalism and the bourgeois offensive! Down with the class conciliators in the communist movement! Inquilab Zindabad! Resolution adopted at the Kanpur Communist Conference, 2000

# One working class, one program, one communist party!

- 1. The workers, peasants, women and youth of India are waging an extremely difficult struggle today, in defence of their livelihood and rights, against the stepped up attacks by the bourgeoisie. All over the country, workers are fighting against privatisation, closures, layoffs, contract labour, intensified exploitation and insecurity of employment. Peasants are rising up in opposition to the penetration, domination and plunder of agriculture by the multinational and Indian monopoly companies in the name of liberalisation and globalisation. Broad masses of people are fighting against the terror unleashed on them by the armed forces of the Indian State. They are fighting against the remnants of feudalism, including the hated Brahmanical caste system that continues to oppress the toilers.
- 2. There are many parties, including some within the communist movement, that are promising to end the miseries of the people if only they are voted to power. But life experience has shown that whichever party runs the government, it is only the program of the big bourgeoisie that gets implemented. It is capitalism that

keeps growing. It is the big bourgeoisie that wields political power. The State—that is, the bureaucracy and armed forces, the courts and jails, etc.—serves to preserve the rule of the capitalists and suppress any challenge to this rule. The multi-party democracy and party dominated political process serve to keep the toiling masses out of power.

- 3. The solution to the problems of growing exploitation and oppression of the workers and peasants lies in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by socialism. Such a transformation of society is possible only if the working class leads all the oppressed in one united struggle to smash the oppressive Indian State and establish a new state of the workers and peasants. To do so, it is essential that the working class is united as one political force around this single aim, with one revolutionary communist party at its head.
- 4. What the Indian working class needs today is not any parliamentary party that is interested only in their votes. Those in the communist movement who have merged themselves with bourgeois parliamentary democracy have reduced communism to a policy objective, which is always out of reach. The working class needs a revolutionary communist party that would arm the class ideologically and organisationally to consistently battle and defeat the bourgeoisie.
- 5. Restoration of unity of Indian communists in one revolutionary communist party is the urgent need of the hour today. Unity of communists can only be established on the basis of intensifying the struggle against privatisation and liberalisation today, not by giving up this struggle and reconciling with the status

quo. Unity of communists can be restored only on the basis of a resolute struggle against those in the communist movement who are conciliating with bourgeois ideology and tailing some allegedly "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie.

Taking the above into consideration, we the communists and Indian patriots who have assembled in Kanpur on December 25, 2000, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party in India.

- Work towards the restoration of unity of Indian communists, by pooling the energies of all revolutionary communists to provide unified leadership to the struggles of the working class and all the oppressed;
- Oppose and expose those in the working class and communist movement who are creating illusions about a parliamentary front with some "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie at this time; and
- Build organisations of class struggle among workers, peasants, women and youth, to intensify the struggle against liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation and the capitalist offensive, to work tirelessly to advance the alternative program of the working class, with the revolutionary perspective of overthrowing capitalism, establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and building socialism.