

ON CERTAIN IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- i. Tumultuous developments and cataclysmic changes have taken place in the world since the Thirteenth Congress. The dismantling of socialism in the Soviet Union; the disintegration of the USSR; the collapse of the communist-led regimes in East Europe and the process of restoration of capitalism in these countries -- all constitute a big reversal for the world forces of socialism. These counter-revolutionary developments are giving rise to profound political, economic and social changes on a world scale.
- ii. These developments have also brought into focus a new offensive against Marxism-Leninism. World forces of imperialism, gloating over these developments, have unleashed a massive propaganda blitz against Marxism and communism. They are being blatantly assisted by the forces of social democracy and capitulationists within the communist movement itself. Denouncing Marxism and socialism, they embolden to proclaim that capitalism is the end of human social evolution.
- iii. In India too, the anti-communist forces are on an offensive. The CPI(M) is particularly targetted for its open partisanship in defence of socialism and Marxism-Leninism. These forces seek to obliterate the immense contribution of socialism to the material and intellectual development of human civilisation in the 20th century.

- iv. The complexity of the situation and the issues being questioned, encompass the history of nearly a century of human civilisation. This demands a wide, extensive and indepth study. Given the pace of developments and their nature, only some preliminary conclusions can be drawn.
- v. The CPI(M), from its inception, had to carry on a fierce struggle against deviations in the international communist movement. During this period of twentyseven years of struggle against revisionism and dogmatism, the CPI(M) was guided by its independent judgement on the basis of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, and from its own experience.
- vi. Once again in 1968, at the Burdwan Plenum on ideological issues, the CPI(M) had to carry forward this relentless struggle against modern revisionism advocated by the CPSU headed by Khrushchev. While combatting the revisionist deviation, the CPI(M) had to conduct an intense struggle against the left adventurist deviation advanced by the CPC which had a very adverse impact on the Indian Communist movement. It is these struggles that shaped the CPI(M)'s efforts to uphold the revolutionary cause of Marxism-Leninism and advance the Indian people's struggles.
- vii. It is this very same approach that led the CPI(M) to demarcate and publicly express its disapproval of many ideological positions put forward by the CPSU since after the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. The resolutions adopted by the Central Committee during this period define the framework of the CPI(M)'s analysis of these developments. Continuing this thread and approach, the CPI(M) is assessing the present day developments, the implications that they have for future world developments and for the strategy and tactics of the communist movement world wide as well as in India.
- viii. In this situation, when the international communist movement has been thrown into disarray with many communist parties reneging on the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, the CPI(M) attempts to gain a more indepth knowledge of the present day world. It is committed to deepen its understanding of these developments, of human social evolution and of the experiences and lessons that have to be learnt. Only in this way, can the working class and the people of India pursue their struggle for a people's democratic revolution and future socialist order for liberation from exploitation, social, political and national oppression.
- ix. The revolutionary changes of the twentieth century and the deep imprint of socialist thought and practice on the contemporary world need to be properly evaluated with all the victories and defeats, advances and setbacks.

2.0 GENERAL CRISIS OF CAPITALISM AND THE NEW EPOCH

- i. The Marxist analysis of the development of capitalism, its maturing into the stage of imperialism and the sharpening of its inherent contradictions resulting in recurring crises, have been resoundingly vindicated by the developments of the 20th century.
- ii. The October Revolution of 1917, itself a product of the maturing of the contradictions of world capitalism in the stage of imperialism and the decisive intervention of the Bolshevik Party, set in motion developments that constitute a qualitative leap forward in history. The consequent victories of the people in their liberation struggles had a worldwide impact.
- iii. The establishment of a society that for the first time abolished class exploitation, gave a powerful impetus to the people's struggles the world over. The guaranteeing of rights, inconceivable till then under capitalism, and the transformation of once backward

- economy into a mighty economic and military bulwark confronting imperialism, has confirmed the superiority of the socialist system.
- iv. This epoch-making revolution, the decisive role played by the USSR in the defeat of fascism, and the consequent emergence of the East European socialist countries had profound impact on world developments.
 - v. This was followed by the historic triumph of the Chinese Revolution. This was a source of great inspiration that galvanised the struggles of the peoples of the colonial countries for their liberation.
 - vi. The heroic Vietnamese people's struggle against imperialism, the Korean people's struggle and the Cuban revolution gave tremendous impetus to the growing working class struggles the world over. These anti-imperialist victories further strengthened the world forces of national liberation and socialism.
 - vii. These historic events and the process of de colonisation that began following the defeat of fascism, shifted the balance in favour of world forces of peace, national liberation and socialism, thus vindicating the understanding that this was an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism on a world scale.
 - viii. It was in this background that the international communist movement made an assessment of the contemporary world and adopted the corresponding strategy and tactics for advancing the forces of world socialism. The 1957 and 1960 conferences of the Communist Parties, endorsing the shift in the world balance of forces in favour of socialism, went beyond to formulate that socialism is becoming the decisive factor in shaping world developments.
 - ix. The May 1990 CPI(M) Central Committee resolution self-critically re-examined the basis of such an assessment. It had concluded that this assessment was a gross under estimation of the potential of world capitalism, both of its capacity to further develop productive forces as well as its capacity to adapt to changed circumstances.
 - x. The statement of the 1960 conference issued by 81 participating Communist Parties stated: "It is the principal characteristic of our time that the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of society." It goes on to say: "The world capitalist system is going through an intense process of disintegration and decay." And, "Capitalism impedes more and more the use of the achievements of modern science and technology in the interests of social progress." And that, "The time is not far off when socialism's share of world production will be greater than that of capitalism" "Capitalism will be defeated in the decisive sphere of human endeavour, the sphere of material production." The statement continued: "A new stage has begun in the development of the general crisis of capitalism," and talked of "the growing instability of the entire world economic system of capitalism". Based on such assessments the statement concluded that "Today the restoration of capitalism has been made impossible not only in the Soviet Union, but in the other socialist countries as well."
 - xi. Self-critically, it must be noted that the CPI(M), as a contingent of the world communist movement, was influenced by this incorrect understanding. It is therefore necessary to evaluate and re-examine the basis for such an assessment.
 - xii. In retrospect, it can be said that the general crisis of capitalism was simplistically understood. The historical inevitability of capitalism's collapse was advanced as a possibility round the corner. This was a serious error that inhibited a concrete scientific study of the changes that were taking place in the capitalist countries and the manner in

which it was adapting to meet the challenges arising from socialism. In the process, the clear warning given by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto was not correctly understood" the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production and thereby the relations of production and with that the whole relations of society".

- xiii. The inevitability of capitalism's collapse is not an automatic process. Capitalism has to be overthrown. An erroneous understanding only blunts the need to constantly sharpen and strengthen the revolutionary ideological struggle of the working class and its decisive intervention under the leadership of a party wedded to Marxism-Leninism -- the subjective factor without which no revolutionary transformation is possible.
- xiv. It is necessary to note that Marx and Engels had projected the triumph of world socialism as the post-capitalist stage in human evolution. The process of this worldwide transformation was conceived of on the basis of the overthrow of capitalism in at least some of the major capitalistically developed countries to begin with. The maturing of capitalism to the stage of imperialism and the sharpening of its inherent world contradictions, however, permitted the possibility of breaking the imperialist chain of world bondage at its weakest link. The Russian working class under Lenin's leadership, applying the inviolable Marxist tool of "concrete analysis of concrete conditions," converted this possibility into an epoch-making reality.
- xv. However, socialist revolutions triumphed, contrary to the expectations of Marx and Engels, in countries that were comparatively less capitalistically developed and relatively backward (except for Czechoslovakia). The absence of a triumphant revolution in any advanced capitalist country, by itself, imposed limitations on these countries to consolidate socialism. The relatively low level of productive forces and the associated backward production and social relations had to be substantially raised and at a break-neck speed, bypassing the stage of capitalism, to levels that could sustain socialist construction. This was particularly true of agriculture and the peasantry. The stupendous task of transforming agriculture based on petty production, on socialist lines had to be undertaken. This was a complicated process involving the transformation of a backward peasantry. This process had to be pursued relying purely on internal resources, without access to the higher techniques of production developed by capitalism and in hostile international atmosphere when world capitalism tried all methods at its disposal to asphyxiate socialism. It is, in fact, a testimony to the superiority of the socialist system that such a gigantic task could be achieved.
- xvi. Therefore, while the socialist revolutions reduced the physical size and levels of operations of the world capitalist market, in the absence of socialist revolutions in any advanced country, these basically affected neither the levels of productive forces already attained by capitalism nor its future potential. It was hence possible for world capitalism to adapt to the new realities of a reduced physical market and yet raise the levels of the productive forces. This is testified by its initiation of the scientific and technological revolution in the post-second world war period. This, in turn, tremendously expanded the world capitalist market giving further sustenance for its growth.
- xvii. It should be noted that capitalism's growth was based mainly on increased exploitation of the developing countries in addition to the scientific and technological revolution. Following the process of decolonisation, capitalist countries adapted to the changed circumstances by perfecting various forms of neo-colonial exploitation.

- xviii. At the same time, world capitalism had to adapt to changed circumstances in a different way. The establishment of a socialist society and its practice had a deep impact amongst the working class the world over, in the sphere of economic, social and political rights. Capitalism met this challenge to its order, partly by adopting welfare measures and granting rights that it never conceded to the working people before. In other words, capitalism was forced to share a minor part of its profits, in order to keep the rule of capital alive. The democratic rights that are today considered as inalienable from human civilisation, are the product of the people's struggle for social transformation and not the charity of bourgeois class rule.
- xix. Such an understanding not only underestimated the potential of world capitalism to further develop productive forces but also its capacity to influence the course of economic development of the socialist countries. Since 1917, imperialism forced the USSR to divert substantial portion of its resources away from economic development designed to enhance people's well-being. This was done initially through armed interventions, encirclement, trade embargoes, the second world war and more recently the nuclear arms race. However, despite these challenges the USSR achieved nuclear parity, thus acting as a powerful deterrent against imperialism's efforts to foist its will on the world. At the same time, it provided support and material aid to the national liberation struggles and to the newly independent countries, including India, in their struggle against imperialist efforts to subjugate their economies. This massive diversion of resources to meet imperialism's backward material and cultural levels, created many difficulties in the process of socialist construction.
- xx. Apart from these objective conditions, the subjective nature of overestimation of the forces of socialism in the 1957 and 1960 documents must be noted. This prevented a concrete scientific analysis of the changes that are necessary within the socialist countries in relation to changes in the world situation and the internal growth of productive forces. The rapid growth of productive forces under socialism that revolutionise the instruments of production warrant constant improvements in the methods of economic management. In fact, it is socialism that extended the frontiers of science into space by launching the first man-made satellite, sputnik. But, there were lags in utilising such advances for innovations in the production process for increasing the quality and quantity of consumer goods, increase productivity and strengthen the economic base. A scientific study, on whose basis timely changes are initiated to meet the new requirements, is an essential ingredient of socialist construction. Such changes are not confined only to the methods of economic management and production relations but extend to social relations and the superstructure as well. The failure to initiate such timely changes have created many problems that have contributed to the present reverses.
- xxi. However, notwithstanding these incorrect estimations and present-day reverses, the 20th century, particularly the epoch beginning with the October Revolution, was marked by the victories of the working class, the peasantry and people in every continent of the world, in varying degree.
- xxii. During this century, capitalism plunged humanity into two barbaric world wars claiming millions of lives. It produced and used nuclear weapons to demonstrate its inhuman superiority and plunged the world into a nuclear race with devastating consequences. It launched numerous wars to contain humanity's advance to socialism, intervened in the internal affairs of independent countries, organised coups, foisted reactionary and

- dictatorial regimes to suit its interests. Its most barbaric form was exposed in the fascist dictatorships.
- xxiii. On the other hand, the socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles imparted a richer content to human civilisation, by making it possible for the majority of the working people in many countries to lead their lives without national oppression and free from exploitation. This impact continues to chart the future course of human development towards national and social liberation. This process, however, will be long, complex and full of twists and turns. But the fundamental direction of the epoch continues to be that of a transition from capitalism to socialism.
- xxiv. However, the simplistic understanding that this period of transition means the immediate collapse of capitalism and the triumph of socialism on a world scale, needs to be corrected. Socialism, the period of transition from a class to classless society, implies the prolonged existence of both capitalism and socialism on a world scale. It is a period of continuous confrontation between the counter-revolutionary forces who wish to preserve the exploitative capitalist order and the revolutionary forces that seek to liberate humanity. This continuous struggle takes place both at the world scale and internally within the socialist countries.
- xxv. The success or failure of the forces of world socialism in this struggle, at any point of time, is determined both by the success achieved in socialist construction, the international and internal correlation of class forces and their correct estimation. A correct corresponding political-tactical line that follows, advances humanity towards socialism.
- xxvi. Incorrect assessments and estimation, based on ideological deviations, as history is witness, lead to distortions. These, buttressed by capitalist ideological offensive, have time and again derailed the Communist movement from its class moorings.
- xxvii. This history of the international communist movement illustrates the distortions that were based on incorrect assessments. The CPI(M), on a number of occasions in the past, dealt with how an erroneous understanding of a change in the correlation of class forces, following the defeat of fascism, resulted in some parties changing the political-tactical line and forms of struggle. The CPI(M) had also occasion to point out as to how peace-time capitalist economic growth, accompanied by stagnation in some socialist countries, succeeded in spreading right-revisionist illusions undermining the class content and revolutionary essence of Marxism. One of such manifestations was Euro-Communism.
- xxviii. The 20th Congress of the CPSU must also be seen in this light, as an attempt made in the name of estimating the correlation of forces under changed circumstances. The victory over fascism and the consequent international developments heightened the prestige and increased the influence of world socialism in general and USSR in particular. But instead of utilising these positive factors for enriching socialism, the gross distortion of the Leninist concept of peaceful coexistence and the advocacy of peaceful competition and peaceful transition by the CPSU leadership under Khrushchev, threw the door open for revisionism and class collaboration of the worst kind. As a consequence, many a communist party was virtually decimated leaving the international communist movement much emasculated.
- xxix. Capitalism was adapting in tune with changing realities and evolving newer forms of exploitation, and intensifying the ideological struggle against socialism. This required the strengthening of the ideological offensive by socialism and the struggle against capitalism. On the contrary, this was diluted, thus permitting imperialism and capitalism to gain a

further political advantage.

- xxx. This was combined by an ahistorical evaluation of the role of Joseph Stalin. The CPI(M), since the Burdwan Plenum in 1968, has repeatedly made clear its assessment of the positive and negative aspects of Stalin's leadership. While being severely critical of certain gross violations of inner-party democracy and socialist legality, the May 1990 C.C. resolution had stated: "The CPI(M) rejected the approach which, in the name of correcting the personality cult, is negating the history of socialism. The uncontested contribution of Joseph Stalin in defence of Leninism, against Trotskyism and other ideological deviations, the building of socialism in the USSR, the victory over fascism and the reconstruction of the war-ravaged Soviet Union enabling it to acquire enough strength to check imperialist aggressive moves, are ineradicable from the history of socialism.
- xxxi. The period following the 20th Congress of the CPSU had widened the ideological differences between various contingents of the communist movement. The CPC, while initially combatting the revisionist understanding, itself fell victim to left-sectarian deviation. The distortions during the cultural revolution and the three world theory advanced by the CPC, led to many a deviation and had disastrous consequences to the world communist movement. The following disunity in the world communist movement caused enormous damage to the world revolutionary movement and came in handy for imperialism to mount further attacks on socialism and the developing countries.
- xxxii. The CPI(M), which was born in the midst of a fierce struggle against these deviations, reiterates that the struggle to uphold the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism and the ability to correctly understand, interpret and intervene in the unfolding historical developments are inseparable. The failure of one leads to the failure of the other. The living essence of the creative science of Marxism is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the present nature of world developments in order to evolve the correct strategy and tactics to advance the people's struggles.

3.0 WORLD SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS

- i. The CPI(M) continues to adhere to the understanding that the present-day world developments can be comprehended only by a proper study of the four fundamental contradictions of the present epoch, viz, between the forces of world socialism and imperialism, between imperialism and peoples of the developing world, between imperialist countries themselves, and between capital and labour in the capitalist countries.
- ii. The CPI(M) continues to adhere to the understanding that of these four, the contradiction between imperialism and socialism on a world scale occupies the central role in this epoch. Further, that any of these four can intensify so as to come to the forefront of world developments at a point of time without replacing the central contradiction.
- iii. Notwithstanding the present reverses for the international communist movement, this understanding retains its validity, given the current historical developments. These reveal the intensification of all these contradictions, not their modification as the CPSU propounded. The CPI(M) openly disagreed with such an understanding. The subsequent world developments only strengthen the analysis then made by the CPI(M).
- iv. The intensification of the central contradiction is manifested in the current reverses for the forces of world socialism. These reverses have shifted the balance of class forces, on the international plane, in favour of imperialism, albeit temporarily, in the historical perspective. This permits a new aggressiveness on the part of imperialism which it is

already demonstrating in its quest for a "new world order". Its conduct in the war against Iraq, its open interference in the internal affairs of many countries in Africa like Ethiopia and Angola, in Latin America like in Panama, Nicaragua and its renewed aggressiveness against socialist Cuba -- all reveal imperialism's character to strengthen its hegemonistic domination over the world. It is mounting greater pressures on the People's Republic of China to open its market for imperialist exploitation.

- v. The contradiction between the Third World countries and imperialism is bound to intensify. Exploitation through the multinational corporations, the unequal and unfair terms of trade, and other methods continue unabated. This has resulted in a marked deterioration in the living standards of the people of the developing world. The IMF's World Economic Outlook of 1990 has revealed that the gap between the advanced capitalist countries and the developing countries excluding China, in terms of the rate of growth of real per capita income during the 1980s, has markedly widened. While in the decade of the 70's these rates of growth were more or less the same, the levels were glaringly disproportionate. These data include the growth rates for the rapidly growing economies in South East Asia. If these are excluded, the divergence in the rates of per capita incomes are even more dramatic. In fact, in Africa and Latin America, the per capital real incomes in 1990 were lower in absolute terms than in 1981.
- vi. Imperialism's intensified exploitation of the Third World countries is also reflected in the backbreaking debt that these countries are groaning under. The increase in debt burden between 1982 and 1990 amounted to U.S. 429.1 billion dollars. The total debt service payments between 1983 and 1990, however, were 1155.3 billion dollars. In other words, there has been a net transfer of resources from the developing countries to the advanced capitalist countries during these years to the tune of 726.2 billion dollars. The draining of these economies through debt is dramatically reflected in the fact that the total debt service payments made by the developing countries during 1982 and 1990 amounted to 1289.5 billion dollars which is higher than the total accumulated debt itself of 1265.2 billion dollars by 1990! A damning indictment of imperialist propaganda that monetary loans are the product of its benevolence and magnanimity designed to uplift the economies of the Third World.
- vii. While this naked expropriation of resources from the developing world is taking place, their economies are further burdened due to growing unemployment and inflation. This is the result of the retrograde economic policies adopted by the domestic ruling classes in many countries. This in turn makes these economies more vulnerable to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank. The net result is that the doubt burden of imperialism's profits and retrograde domestic policies falls on the shoulders of the working people and the unemployed in the developing world. According to the IMF, the international comparative inflation rates (annual rates of change of consumer prices) for the developed capitalist countries was 4.2 per cent in 1990, whereas for the developing countries it was 71 per cent. The comparative figure for 1988 and 1989 are 3.3 and 70.5; 4.4 and 104.1 per cent respectively.
- viii. In addition, the terms of trade of the developing world have been markedly deteriorating. In 1990, for the non fuel primary products, the annual percentage change in terms of trade for the developing countries, was minus 11.2 per cent. Thus the balance of payments position is continuously deteriorating, pushing them towards greater indebtedness.
- ix. Under these conditions of intensified exploitation, the peoples of the Third World countries

are bound to face a further onslaught on their living conditions. This rapacious plunder is bound to manifest in growing struggles against this loot, thus intensifying sharply the contradiction between imperialism and peoples of the Third World countries.

- x. In the political sphere as well, this contradiction is bound to intensify with aggressive demands being made by the dictates of the "new world order".
- xi. Under these conditions an important area of revolutionary movements will be the popular and democratic struggles in the Third World countries that have adopted the capitalist path. The bourgeois-landlord ruling classes of these countries, exploiting the people, pursue a capitalist path of development by compromising with feudalism, on the one hand, and succumbing to imperialist pressures, on the other. With such an intensified drive to transfer the burdens of world capitalist crisis on to the Third World countries, the struggles between the peoples and the ruling classes in these countries are bound to grow.
- xii. The inter-imperialist contradictions are also intensifying. The real GNP growth rates for 1990 for all the industrial countries was 2.7 per cent while for the USA it was 1.7 per cent. For the same year, the USA had a current account balance of payments deficit to the tune of minus 113.3 billion dollars while Japan had a surplus of 57.4 billion and Germany of 62.3 billion dollars. It is estimated that by 1993 Germany and Integrated Europe would account for 25 per cent of the world's gross product while Japan would account for 15 per cent. In the background of the growing indebtedness of the U.S. economy, these growth patterns reveal the potential for inter-imperialist conflicts in the economic sphere. The emergence of united Germany, on the other hand, is bound to generate economic conflicts with other developed European economies such as France, Italy and U.K. The intensification of this contradiction will manifest itself in the scramble for a redivision of the world's economic resources. However, notwithstanding the growing economic rivalry, U.S. leadership of the imperialist camp continues at the moment because of its nuclear and military supremacy.
- xiii. While the capitalist countries are not, as a whole, experiencing a sharp recession they are in the midst of a protracted period of slow growth. many advanced capitalist countries have already begun to experience recession. This slow growth rate, however, is accompanied by high rates of unemployment and inflation. The unemployment levels are amongst the highest since the second world war and this slow rate of growth is forcing many a cut in the social welfare benefits of the working people. The disparities between the rich and the poor continue to widen. In the USA, for instance, as compared to the 1970s the number of people below the poverty line increased from 24 to 32 million in 1988. Poverty and homelessness are on the rise. The top 1.5 per cent of the population owned nearly 25 per cent of all individual wealth while the top 10 per cent owned 65 per cent of the nation's wealth. Under these conditions, the intensification of the contradictions between capital and labour in the advanced capitalist countries is bound to intensify further. However, as noted earlier, capitalism still retains capacity to manoeuvre and manage its problems.
- xiv. The world that we are living in today is, thus, one where all the fundamental contradictions of the present epoch will intensify. As historical developments unfold, the forms of resolution of these contradictions will, however, vary. For example, the atomic age itself imposes limitations on the resolution of the contradictions through a war. Such a variation in forms, however, cannot be interpreted, as erroneously propounded by the CPSU, to mean the modification of contradictions. The above study of the contradictions reveals that imperialism, far from abandoning its predatory exploitative character, is intensifying this exploitation. In fact, capitalism's growth during the least decade has been

- at the expense of the people both at home and abroad.
- xv. This reality tellingly demonstrate the unjust and inhuman nature of capitalism. It is its rapacious plunder that is responsible for the terrible situation of hunger, misery, sickness, illiteracy that stalk the millions in the developing world. It is directly responsible for the dangers of nuclear holocaust and worsening major ecological imbalances. The increasing moral and ethical degeneration of capitalist societies, drug abuse, violence, racist and sexual discrimination are continuously debasing the finer qualities of human beings. Despite the perennial propaganda, intensified following these reverses to socialism, that 'capitalism is eternal', it today, as in the past, proves itself as a system incapable of solving the major problems confronting humanity.
 - xvi. The recent reverses to forces of world socialism, in this background, imply that the period ahead is one of intense class struggles.

4.0 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

- i. The reforms initiated by the CPSU under the slogans of perestroika and glasnost and the repercussions of these in the East European countries, reveal the existence of a latent crisis both at the level of the socialist state and that of the Party, its ideological and political foundations. In order to scientifically analyse this crisis and draw correct lessons, more information and deeper study would be required. On the basis of available information and facts, it is, however, possible to draw some conclusions.
- ii. The reforms initiated in 1985 by the CPSU assumed a concrete shape at the 27th Congress in 1986. The CPI(M) had welcomed the understanding of the need for reforms in the Soviet Union, their declared revolutionary goal being the strengthening of socialism.
- iii. The need for reform arose in order to correct and overcome certain errors and deviations of the past that led to relative stagnation in the socialist economy; the need to enrich the people with socialist consciousness that was neglected for many years; the need to eliminate bureaucratism which led to violations of democratic rights and civil liberties; the need to strengthen socialist democracy and to accelerate the social and economic development towards the fulfilment of the growing needs of the people.
- iv. The CPI(M) Central Committee in August 1988 had stated: "As a Party which takes its stand on Marxism-Leninism, we realise that advance of socialism in any country must be accompanied by increased initiative of the masses both in running the economy and running the state. Lenin's statement "every cook must learn to govern" must be a growing reality. A concrete form of these initiatives in the various stages of development embrace larger and larger number of people. Measures which contribute to the conscious participation of the masses are welcome and should be supported. Measures which free citizens from unnecessary restrictions and provide healthy dialogue within the limits of socialist society, strengthen the society. "But it has to be understood and underlined sharply that all such measures will strengthen society if the guiding role of Marxism-Leninism is preserved and the role of the Party as a leading force of society as vanguard of the working class is ensured."
- v. The CPI(M) repeatedly expressed its grave concern at the anti-socialist trends that started emerging through glasnost and perestroika. Capitalist prescriptions were being doled out as solutions to socialism's problems by the CPSU under Gorbachev's leadership.
- vi. These negative tendencies manifested themselves sharply in the outright negation of the past socialist achievements. In August 1988, the CPI(M) Central Committee had stated that

a "correct attitude towards the past assumes great importance in the process of implementation of the reforms to strengthen socialism. The negation of the past achievements, the glorious achievements of socialism since the October Revolution, overcoming the challenge of the civil war, imperialist encirclement and intervention, the building of the socialist economy, the glorious anti-fascist victory, sacrifices of millions of Soviet people during this period, the firm policy of peace and the struggle to avoid a nuclear war, the achievement of nuclear parity with the USA and the great working class constitution, it is on these foundations that the new democratic reforms will have meaning."

- vii. What emerged was an outlook which, while criticising the deformities and distortions of the past, deliberately ignored these achievements, thus delinking the reforms from the past proletarian history and curbing the future revolutionary potential of the working class. The Party ranks and people were thus disarmed against the concerted onslaught of anti-socialist forces.
- viii. This also permitted the intervention of imperialist forces who always sought to undermine socialism. The common thread of such interventions was seen in the collapse of the East European regimes within a span of a few weeks.
- ix. Serious departures were made by the CPSU from the direction of the documents of the 27th Congress. Put together, these amounted to a systematic effort at dismantling socialism and disintegrating the USSR, under the leadership of Gorbachev.
- x. In dealing with the international situation, the 27th Congress had highlighted the intensification of the four fundamental contradictions, and asserted that the correlation of class forces was in favour of peace, progress and socialism. However, soon after, in 1987, in the name of "New Thinking", this understanding was abandoned and the theory of modification of contradictions advanced. The CPI(M) had disagreed with this assessment and openly came out against it in 1988. Later the CPSU issued a Draft Platform which the 28th Congress adopted. Advancing the notion of a "humane and democratic" socialism, this thesis counterposed "universal human values" to class values, spreading illusions about the present-day imperialism and ascribing humanism to it. By advocating the "de-ideologisation of state to state relations," the CPSU negated any confrontation with imperialism and sought to create, in cooperation with it, "as safe and civilised world order". The May 1990 CPI(M) C.C. resolution dealt in detail with these and other erroneous concepts. This process culminated in the draft programme circulated for the 29th Congress. Not only was there no mention of imperialism but this went further to state: "A new civilisation which is being shaped in the process of present global development, disagrees with the habitual notions of classical industrial society, its rigid division into opposing classes, polarisation between labour and capital and confrontation of social system." The journey was thus completed. There are, according to the CPSU, no class divisions in society today, no antagonism between labour and capital, and no confrontation between imperialism and socialism. However, the CPSU's activities were decreed illegal by Gorbachev himself before the 29th Congress could take place!
- xi. In the sphere of the economy, reforms were advanced in order to "overcome the lack of correspondence between developing productive forces and relations of production." Intended to switch over the economy from extensive to intensive development, the 27th Congress report summarised the reforms by stating, "Socialist economic acceleration and the consolidation of socialism in practice should be the supreme criteria in the

improvement of management and of the entire system of socialist production relations." However instead of socialist economic acceleration systematically, capitalist reforms were being introduced. The Platform adopted by the 28th Congress advocated the creation of a fullfledged market economy undermining the role of central planning. In the name of encouraging private initiative hundreds of co-operatives were allowed which turned out to be the main source of profiteering and blackmarketing. Within a span of five years, the parallel economy grew to staggering proportions creating artificial shortage of goods. Despite a bumper harvest, the Soviet Union had to go around the world seeking food aid. The existing production structures were dismantled and virtual anarchy prevailed with widespread speculation, blackmarketing and hoarding flourishing. The various plans that were outlined for the transition to a market economy, all resulted, in practice, in setting in motion the restoration of capitalism.

- xii. The Party's role was systematically undermined. The Party Programme adopted by the 27th Congress stated that "the Communist Party, while retaining its class essence and ideology as the party of the working class" asserted that "the Party's Leading role in the life of Soviet society inevitably grows" (emphasis in original). The 28th Congress, however, talks of "no room for dictatorship of any class." In practice, the Party's leading role was abandoned. The office of the executive President was created on whose powers the Party had no control. The conversion of the great Bolshevik Party of Lenin into a mere social democratic one was complete in the draft programme prepared for the 29th Congress.
- xiii. In the sphere of ideology, there was a systematic erosion of the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. The 27th Congress Party Programme states: "The most important source of Party's strength and invincibility is the indestructible ideological and organisational cohesion of the Party," and "the CPSU is invariably guided by the time tested Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian, socialist internationalism" (emphasis in original). The 28th Congress, however, argued for healing the rift with social democracy and ending the "historic split in the socialist movement". The abandonment of the ideological foundations was complete in the draft programme for the 29th Congress which replaces Marxism-Leninism "by taking on board the entire gamut of socialist and democratic ideas produced by this country and the rest of the world". Proletarian, socialist internationalism is replaced "by a new look at the historical destiny of socialism" that denies the very existence of class struggle itself!
- xiv. Instead of deepening socialist democracy, national chauvinism was allowed to grow unchecked. The 27th Congress Party Programme, highlighting the successful solving of the nationalities question, states: "The CPSU proceeds from the fact that in our socialist multinational state, in which more than one hundred nations and nationalities work together, there naturally arises new tasks of improving national relations" (emphasis in original). The October Revolution had liberated the various nationalities from the 'Tsarist prison-house'. Undoing the oppression of centuries, a democratic nationalities policy was adopted that led to the flourishing of these ethnic groups, their cultures and traditions. However, over a period, negative tendencies developed and problems accumulated. Bureaucratism, violation of the policy of equality of languages in practice, over-centralisation, all led to the growth of discontent. Discontent also arose from another angle. These various nationalities, particularly the backward ones, made tremendous progress under socialism. These strides, hitherto unknown for centuries, by themselves created new and higher aspirations amongst these peoples. The failure to meet these --

cultural, intellectual and material -- led to the accumulation of discontent and mistrust. However, instead of resolving these within the framework of the socialist federation, anti-socialist forces exploited this discontent to fan chauvinism that led to bloody riots. Clearly violating the understanding of the 27th Congress, the platform on nationalities adopted by CPSU in 1989 and the referendum of 1991 which overwhelmingly voted for preserving the unity of the USSR, Gorbachev prepared to sign a new Union treaty sealing the fate of the USSR's disintegration on August 20, 1991. The result of all this has been that the socialist federation known to the world these 74 years no longer remains.

- xv. It must be self-critically noted that though the CPI(M), from time to time during these years, had the occasion to publicly express its disagreements with many of the above aspects, it could not gauge the depth and gravity of the damage these departures made to the cause of socialism in the USSR and the world.
- xvi. This process of systematic dismantling of socialism under Gorbachev's leadership was exploited to the hilt by the counter-revolutionary forces aided actively by imperialism. Imperialism was able to successfully implement its strategy of 'peaceful evolution' both in East Europe and in the Soviet Union. It fully exploited the advances in communications and information technology to achieve this.
- xvii. Such an imperialist attempt to internally subvert socialism in the People's Republic of China in 1989 was successfully thwarted by the CPC and the PLA.
- xviii. In the USSR too, an attempt was made to resist this process of dismantling of socialism and prevent the disintegration of the Union. This, however, failed. This was followed by an intense anti-communist offensive.
- xix. In addition to such attempts, it should be noted that the successes achieved by the anti-communist forces was due to the shortcomings, errors and distortions of the past that resulted in people's discontent alienating them from both the Party and the state. Instead of overcoming these, the revisionist policies pursued by the CPSU since the 20th Congress and intensified under Gorbachev's leadership have ultimately led to the dismantling of socialism and disintegration of the USSR.

5.0 MAJOR SHORTCOMINGS

- i. These developments have brought to the fore many important questions concerning socialist construction as was practised in these countries. It is, therefore, necessary to identify the major shortcomings and distortions that have led to the present situation in order to draw correct lessons.
- ii. Before discussing these, however, it needs to be underlined that the process of socialist construction was a hitherto uncharted course of human development. With historical hind-sight, understanding this dynamic process and experience of these socialist countries, it is possible to discern certain basic shortcomings.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

5.3 Class Character of the State under Socialism

- i. The dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the dictatorship of the overwhelming majority over a minority of former exploiting classes, as opposed to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which is that of the minority over the overwhelming majority, is the character of the state

during the period of transition from class to classless society.

- ii. The forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, are not constant or immutable. As the socialist society develops, the forms pass through varying and different phases.
- iii. The ability to transit from one phase to another is determined by the correlation of class forces, both internal and international, and its correct estimation. In a situation of imperialist intervention, the civil war and the all-out attempts to destroy socialism that was being born, the proletarian state had to crush the counter-revolution and eliminate the forces of exploitation. This demanded the centralised apparatus of a state which was also essential for building a planned economy. However, after this phase was over, as the socialist system and the state consolidated and the correlation of class forces changed in its favour, opportunities for widening democracy and new initiatives opened up. Unfortunately, incorrect assessments of the reality led to the earlier methods of running the state machinery being carried over into the subsequent period. This led not only to the failure to realise the full potential of widening and deepening socialist democracy and popular people's participation but also to distortions such as growing bureaucratism, violation of socialist legality and suppression of individual freedom and liberty. The movement to higher phases of the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat imply the progressive enrichment of socialist democracy.
- iv. However, in the name of correcting the distortions, the class character of the state cannot be abandoned. This would mean the abandonment of the revolution itself.
- v. The right to dissent within the socialist framework must be recognised. But, in doing so, neither the class character of the state nor the leading role of the party can be abandoned. The Party, as the vanguard of the working class, performs the leading role in the successful completion of the revolution and in the process of socialist construction. In fact, it continues to lead the state as long as the state continues to exist.
- vi. While the forms continuously change, adapting to the concrete developments in each socialist country, these need not and cannot be the same for different socialist countries. The specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat that will emerge in one socialist country, will depend upon the concrete socio-economic conditions and the historical background of these countries. Lenin, in *State and Revolution*, has stated clearly: "The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The transition from capitalism to communism certainly cannot but yield a great abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat" (emphasis added).
- vii. Due to the lack of any other historical experience apart from the Paris Commune, the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat that arose in the specific conditions of the Soviet Union, was more or less copied in the other East European countries disregarding the local conditions and historical developments.
- viii. This had serious implications for the development and deepening of socialist democracy in these countries. For, the historical evolution of some of the East European countries had already established the bourgeois parliamentary system with its corresponding rights to the people. The form of the proletarian state, in these countries, naturally should have been to consolidate the gains already achieved by the people. The ensuing deformities in the state functioning, bureaucracy and the apparent violations of socialist legality spread, leading to the alienation of the people from the state and the Party.

- ix. Another major distortion that needs to be noted, concerns the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the class as a whole, i.e., of the overwhelming majority. Often in practice, as has been revealed in the recent developments, this dictatorship of the class was replaced by that of the vanguard, the Party, and more often than not, by the leadership of the Party.
- x. The Party can exercise its leading role only through its constant interaction with the mass of the people, involving them in the functioning of the state and administration and winning their confidence for the consolidation of socialism. A leading role that is based on a constitutional fiat is, in fact, a departure from the very conception of the class character of the proletarian state. These distortions have resulted in the growing alienation of the people from the state and the Party, instead of drawing them more and more into the functioning of the socialist state by deepening socialist democracy.

5.4 Socialist Democracy And Democratic Centralism

- i. Socialist democracy survives and deepens on the material basis that is created by the socialist system. It carries forward the democratic gains achieved by the people's struggles in the past. The abolition of exploitation and the provision of the basic necessities of life, lays the material basis for practising wider democracy. Bourgeois democracy can only be formal in the sense that it guarantees some democratic rights without providing the material basis for the people to exercise them. Every citizen in the capitalist country has the "democratic right" to purchase anything that is produced. The overwhelming majority, however, lacks the necessary resources to exercise this right. Socialism, on the other hand, by taking care of the basic needs of the people, lays the foundation for practising real democracy in its widest and deepest sense. It, therefore, offers avenues and the atmosphere for the creative development of all aspects and complexities of the human personality. The departures and distortions that we discussed above, dampened such an advance. At the same time, it has to be underlined that the material basis for deepening democracy had been created by the socialist system.
- ii. Socialist legality guarantees rights that are hitherto unknown in human history. It opens upon wider possibilities for every citizen to exercise these rights. However, bureaucratism and other tendencies that prevent the widest participation of the people in running the state, administration and economy through participation in the local bodies of self-government like the Soviets and work collectives, can only lead to violations of socialist legality.
- iii. Guaranteeing the basic rights of food, shelter, employment, education, health care and social security, socialist democracy has to continuously expand and deepen, drawing in larger and larger number of people in the functioning of the state and society. The failure to do so, particularly in an atmosphere of rapid decline in the ideological consciousness of the people, will only provide further fuel to anti-socialist propaganda.
- iv. Democratic centralism is a fundamental pillar of the principles of organisation of a revolutionary party. It combines the aspects of democracy and centralism, both of which are necessary for the successful consolidation and construction of socialism.
- v. While combatting alien ideological trends, inner-party democracy is the sustenance of the Party's creative development. Therefore, while the strictest discipline is enforced in carrying out the decisions of the majority, inner-party democracy must be encouraged and strengthened. Unfortunately, in the name of centralism, inner-party democracy generally

can become the casualty, leading to the growth of bureaucratism which is the very antithesis of democracy. Tendencies alien to socialism, such as, corruption and nepotism also surfaced. An example of this was the institutionalisation of privileges to large sections of the leadership of the CPSU and other ruling communist parties. In this process, the vitality of this revolutionary principle is robbed, alienating the Party from the masses and the Party ranks from the leadership.

- vi. Instead of correcting distortions in the implementation of democratic centralism, the abandonment of this principle will only serve the purpose of disarming the revolutionary party from discharging its historic tasks. The recent experience underlines the need for the Party to be constantly vigilant against the degeneration of this revolutionary concept where inner-party democracy becomes a casualty and centralism dominates. Thus, the collective cheek of the people on the Party and the Party ranks on the leadership against the abuse of power and other alien tendencies, becomes undermined.
- vii. The socialist state drawn tremendous moral force and strength from the consciousness of the mass of people, their loyalty and commitment to advance socialism, patriotism, collective activity and creative initiative. Criticism and self-criticism from below is the conscious political activity which gives people, who are united by a singleness of purpose, the true feeling that they are the real masters of the socialist nation.

5.5 Socialist Economic Construction

- i. The fundamental characteristics of socialist economic construction are the social ownership of the means of production and centralised state planning. The former eliminates the basis for the exploitation of man by man and the latter lays the basis for a balanced economic development of the society as opposed to the uneven development characteristic of capitalism. Centralised planning also lays the basis for the socialist state to discharge its social and economic responsibilities to the people. It is through this process that socialism guarantees to all its citizens the essential requirements for their survival and development in a universal sense. Planning under socialism will have to take into account the existing levels of productive forces. Over-centralisation which stifles the initiative and innovation that stimulate production at lower levels, will adversely affect the further growth of productive forces.
- ii. The principle of socialist economy is "from each according to his ability; to each according to his work." Hence the question of material incentive is in-built in this period. But it has to be underlined that while material incentives are necessary during this period, socialism can sustain and flourish only on the basis of the collective socialist consciousness of the people as a whole and the ideological steadfastness of the ruling Communist Party.
- iii. It would be simplistic and erroneous to conclude that once the means of production are socialised and centralised planning established, then the methods of economic management that arise in those specific historical circumstances, continue to remain constant throughout the period of transition. In fact, in the backward economies where socialist revolutions have triumphed, the process of socialisation of the means of production themselves take a long period of time.
- iv. The constant need to update the methods of economic management was noted above. If such changes are not undertaken, then a period of rapid economic development can be followed by stagnation or even decline in growth rates. This is what has precisely happened in the case of the Soviet Union in the latter half of the 70's and 80's. Further, after

the consolidation of socialist relations, opportunities to raise the people's standard of living by producing greater quantity and higher quality of consumer goods arise. The failure to meet the ever rising demands of the people corresponding to the potential of the socialist economy, can only result in breeding discontent providing cannon-fodder to imperialism's anti-socialist propaganda.

v. **Forms of Property:**

- vi. During the process of socialist construction, whose time period varies from country to country, depending on the initial historical levels, the process of socialisation of means of production would go through prolonged phases. Diverse forms exist such as state owned enterprises, collectives, cooperatives and petty individual properties. The pace of the socialisation of means of production depends crucially on the initial levels of economic backwardness that these socialist states have inherited. Further, it depends on the concrete balance of class forces internally and the pressures that are mounted by class enemies internationally. Ideally, the pace should correspond to the historical circumstances and the levels of productive forces already attained. In periods of concerted internal and external onslaught of class enemies, such a process may have to be hastened for the very survival of socialism itself. The objective factors that impose such an intensification of the pace of socialisation of means of production, by themselves, create certain material conditions on whose basis distortions can occur in this process. At the same time, an incorrect estimation of the balance of class forces will also lead to grave distortions by undermining the rights of various forms of property-owners through state coercion and not through people's participation. Thus, laying the basis not only for people's alienation but also restricting the future economic potential.
- vii. Any attempt to straitjacket the forms of property, that destroys individual initiative, breeds lethargy and alienation which is contrary to the socialist spirit. At the same time, the attempts to restore private property as the only way to increase productivity and overcome the distortions means undermining the very basis of socialist economic foundations.
- viii. **Planning & Market**
- ix. It is unscientific and ahistorical to conceive of a market independent of state interference or even control. The decisive regulators of the market, even under the so-called open market capitalist economies, are controlled by the state. The state decides on the fiscal and monetary policies which accelerate or impede economic growth through the operation of the market forces.
- x. It would again be erroneous to conclude that under socialism the market will cease to exist. So long as commodities are produced, the market exists. The crucial question is not planning versus market but which dominates what. Under socialism, market is one of the means for the distribution of the social product. Centralised planning, utilising the market forces and the market indicators, will be able to efficiently develop the productive forces and meet the welfare demands of the people. Therefore, ignoring market indicators leads to greater irrational use of resources which will adversely affect the plan process itself.
- xi. Instead of improving such a combination, the attempt to replace state planning by market and allowing the decisions on the priorities for investment under socialist construction to be decided by the market forces, is only paving the way for the restoration of capitalism.

5.6 IDEOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

- i. The May 1990 Central Committee resolution, while reviewing the developments in the international sphere, had self-critically noted "the underestimation of revisionist and dogmatic deviations which led to tactics that adversely affected the strength of the international working class movement and blunted the edge of the class struggle through the predominance of economism. This was true both in relation to the movement of class struggle on the world scale and the impact it had on the collective consciousness of the peoples in the socialist countries itself. This can be seen in the rapidity with which the ruling Communist Parties in East Europe abdicated their role and embraced social democracy. While the objective factors for the intensification of class struggle existed, the subjective factor, i.e., the degree of organisation and socialist class consciousness of the working class on a world scale, was lagging. "It must be clearly noted that without the subjective factor -- the Party of the working class, with live contact with the aspirations of the people organising and leading their struggles and raising the collective consciousness of the people -- no revolutionary advance is possible.
- ii. As stated earlier, socialism can only be sustained and developed on the basis of the growing collective consciousness of the people which, in turn, is based on the material conditions created by socialist construction. Such a collective consciousness cannot be reared without the ideological steadfastness of the ruling Communist Party.
- iii. In the post-second world war situation, apart from the aspects discussed earlier, the objective basis for the urge amongst the Soviet people for peace must be understood. The tremendous sacrifices of the Soviet people, with over 20 million dead during the course of the anti-fascist war, naturally created a deep urge for maintaining peace at all costs. Taking advantage of this deep urge, an incorrect estimation of the international correlation of class forces was drawn by the 20th Congress of the CPSU when it advanced its revisionist concepts. Internally, within the Soviet Union, the impact of this revisionism led to a steady erosion of the class consciousness and vigilance, both amongst the people and the Party rank and file. Such an erosion amongst significant sections of the people and the working class facilitated the process of undermining of socialism with minimum resistance. And Gorbachev is able to get away with decreeing a ban on the CPSU's activities without much protest.
- iv. These distortions in the spheres of the functioning of the class character of the state under socialism, of strengthening and deepening socialist democracy, inability to adopt timely changes in the methods of economic management, erosion in standards of revolutionary morality and grave deviations in the ideological sphere, laid the basis for the growing alienation of the people from the Party and the state, thus permitting the counter-revolutionary forces, both internal and external, to act in concert to dismantle socialism.

6.0 World-Wide Impact of These Developments

TASKS BEFORE THE COMMUNISTS

- i. Following these reverses, as noted earlier, world imperialism led by the USA is demonstrating a new aggressiveness and is emboldened to dictate its 'new world order'.
- ii. Notwithstanding the recent advances made in the sphere of nuclear disarmament talks and the arms cut, imperialism is seeking to retain relative advantage in order to attain the necessary leverage to consolidate its hegemonistic designs. The present conditions create

- scope for greater threats of nuclear blackmail by U.S. imperialism.
- iii. These developments warrant the urgent need to unite the anti-imperialist forces, particularly in the developing world, and forge the unity in action with the working class in the capitalist countries and to strengthen their resistance against this renewed offensive.
 - iv. One important consequence of these developments is the favourable conditions created for the growth of reactionary neo-fascist forces in various countries. Targetting the progressive and revolutionary sections, these forces are mounting their political offensive.
 - v. The void in the international sphere, the absence of the socialist bulwark standing against imperialist designs, is bound to further expose the countries of the developing world to imperialist machinations and make them more vulnerable to its pressures. In this situation, where the exploration of the capitalist world order finds favourable conditions, the economic and political sovereignty of independent nations will come under greater stress. Many a Third World regime may, under pressure, capitulate, thereby increasing the burdens on the common people of these countries. This would naturally be accompanied by more repressive measures in these countries.
 - vi. The people of the former socialist countries are today finding to their dismay that the euphoria of "democracy" and "market economy" has not brought to them the pleasures and glitters of a consumer society. Instead, the social security guaranteed by socialism has been dismantled, unemployment is growing by leaps and bounds embracing almost half the labour force in some of these countries, and inflation is eroding the real values of their incomes. The consequent rising discontent is being sought to be utilised by neo-fascist reactionary forces whose ascendancy will only terminate the already eroding political and democratic rights of the people.
 - vii. Wilting under the pressure of an intense ideological offensive, many Communist Parties are abandoning the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism and embracing social democracy. Social democracy has always been and continues to be an ideology of reform within the capitalist system, thus rejecting class struggle and advocating class collaboration in its place. Its practice over the decades has demonstrated that at every point of time, when the class battles intensified, social democracy betrayed the working class. Its experience of running governments in many European countries, has only shown its true colours that, when in government, it supports the bourgeoisie and when in opposition it champions the working class demands only to betray them at crucial junctures. The importance of united actions with social democracy on global problems and for world peace should not be underestimated. But in its name, to abandon Marxism-Leninism and embrace the class collaborationist ideology of social democracy will only undermine even the existing gains of socialism and blunt the edge of the future revolutionary struggles. This ideological offensive has to be met squarely.
 - viii. Another erroneous conception that was being propagated by the CPSU is the understanding that Marxism-Leninism is not the only ideology that guides the Communist Party. To portray Marxism-Leninism as one of the many ideological streams of human thought and evolution, is the outright denial of this creative science. The work of Marx and Engels was the combination and advancement of French socialism, German philosophy and materialism and English political economy. Marxism-Leninism, as a creative science, assimilates the entire creative thinking at any point of time and advances this towards realising the revolutionary objectives by providing a guide to action, not only to interpret but to change the exploitative world order. The shortcomings and failures in the process of

constantly enriching this creative science in accordance with unfolding historical developments, is not due to its inadequacies or lack of scientific method of its content. It is due to the inadequacies and lack of scientific rigour on the part of those who have embraced this philosophy.

- ix. Marxism-Leninism is inherently materialistic, creative and intrinsically dialectical. It is hence supremely anti-dogmatic. It is a world-view that embraces the vision of liberation and expresses emancipatory ideals. It is a tool for understanding and analysing the multitude of phenomena that constitute changing historical situations. It is a guide to action that defines programmatic objectives for the people's struggle for liberation, subject to the necessary adaptations as required by changing historical situations.
- x. As a creative science, Marxism-Leninism identifies the tendencies and directions of development. In doing so it provides the possibilities for popular mass intervention in these developments in the pursuit of establishing an exploitation-free society. For instance, the historical inevitability of the replacement of the exploitation-based capitalism by socialism is not automatic. The key factor that can effect such a social transformation is the correct ideological, political and organisational leadership of the growing struggles of the working class, the peasantry and all working people. When this class consciousness is defused or blunted, the forces of counter-revolution exploit the situation to perpetuate their class rule.
- xi. The tasks confronting international communist movement at this juncture are indeed enormous. At a time when this ideological offensive has to be squarely and consistently met, the international communist movement is in disarray. Imperialism attempts to gain further advantage from this.
- xii. On the basis of the revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism and drawing correct lessons from these reverses, the unity of purpose and action between the communist forces in different countries must be built. This is necessary to uphold and strengthen proletarian internationalism. This must forge unity with all those struggling against the present imperialist offensive. Only this way can the imperialist efforts that seek to reverse the course of human history, be challenged. In this context, it is necessary to vigorously combat certain erroneous theoretical conceptions that are being advanced.
- xiii. Apart from those dealt with earlier, an erroneous conception that should be denounced is that capitalism is losing its exploitative character. It is, therefore, suggested that there is a convergence of socialism and capitalism in evolving a new 'civilised' world system. It is in fact being argued that multinational corporations are an example of socialist planning! Exploitation occurs under capitalism in the very production process. It is an integral part of its dynamics. The overthrow of capitalism is not only a moral question but a scientific and historically inevitable development to establish an exploitation-free society.
- xiv. Theoretically, it is possible to argue regarding the "interpenetration of the opposites" in a contradiction. But as we have seen above, the unfolding of contemporary historical developments reveals the intensification of capitalist exploitation and not the losing of its exploitative character. Convergence of socialism and capitalism in this background can only mean subsumption of socialism by capitalism.

- xv. Likewise, it must be underlined that notwithstanding the scientific and technological revolution, the tremendously increased rates of labour productivity and the increasing component of mental labour as opposed to manual labour since the days of early capitalism, though a change of great significance, do not negate the exploitative character of the system. Those who, therefore, argue that since the working class has changed its character from the days of Marx and Lenin, and hence the irrelevance of Marxism-Leninism, negate the very basis of capitalist production, viz., the generation and appropriation of surplus value. They thus negate the need for social transformation and act as apologists for the capitalist system.
- xvi. These and many other erroneous theoretical postulates that are likely to be advanced in the days to come, have to be frontally combatted in order to prevent any further spread of reformist illusions and dilution of the revolutionary content of the working class movement.

7.0 CPI(M)'S STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

- i. It is in this background that the CPI(M)'s struggle for socialism in India will have to be defined. It is very necessary to self-critically note that sufficient attention was not paid in the past to understand the actual conditions in the socialist countries. Notwithstanding the various occasions during the last two and a half decades when the CPI(M) had to join issues with various contingents of the international communist movement to uphold the revolutionary content of Marxism-Leninism, it must be noted that the information received from fraternal parties regarding the internal situation in the socialist countries, was accepted with excessive confidence. It was taken for granted that the problems and errors would be corrected and overcome. Thus, the task of equipping the Party rank and file with a proper understanding of the process building socialism and not idealising the socialist countries' experiences was wanting.
- ii. Having this self-criticism, the CPI(M) asserts that the essential elements of socialism is the elimination exploitation of man by man, class by class and nation by nation. It is this liberating influence that upholds and preserves human dignity and rights in their most comprehensive and universal forms that constitute the inspiration to carry forward the struggle. The CPI(M)'s struggle in defence of Marxism-Leninism in the international communist movement, its very formation, existence and the struggle against right and left deviations in the Indian conditions, enjoin upon it to draw correct conclusions on the basis of this experience to advance towards socialism in the Indian conditions.
- iii. The present socio-economic conditions and existing realities in India define the stage of the Indian revolution as the democratic stage: a stage where the unfinished tasks of the democratic revolution -- anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopoly capital -- will be completed. This requires the replacement of the present bourgeois-landlord class rule headed by the big bourgeoisie by a state of the People's Democracy headed by the working class.
- iv. The CPI(M) Programme clearly defines the class alliance -- People's Democratic Front -- that can fulfil the task of completing the democratic revolution. Based firmly on the worker-peasant alliance, this front will have the agricultural labour and poor peasant as the basic allies of the working class. This front will include the middle peasant and the rich peasant. The urban as well as other middle classes and broad sections of the national bourgeoisie will also be allies of this front. The CPI(M) Programme lists the basic tasks that

have to be completed in this stage. It defined the CPI(M)'s role as one "of uniting with all the patriotic forces of the nation, i.e., those who are interested in sweeping away all the remnants of pre-capitalist society; in carrying out the agrarian revolution in a thorough manner and in the interests of the peasantry; in eliminating all traces of foreign capital; and in removing all obstacles in the path of a radical reconstruction of India's economy, social life and culture." (Para 110)

- v. In order to successfully advance towards People's Democracy, it is necessary to change the existing correlation of class forces. This can only be accomplished by mighty struggles of all sections of the Indian people. Notwithstanding the development of capitalism after independence, nearly three-fourths of our population is dependent on agriculture. The millions of the peasantry, particularly poor peasants and agricultural labour whose sufferings continue to increase under the bourgeois-landlord class rule, will have to be galvanised in struggles for a radical transformation. This constitutes the bedrock of the people's struggles to change the correlation of class forces. These tasks enjoin upon the CPI(M) to strengthen its organisation, wedded to Marxism-Leninism, and its activities to build and lead the struggles against the present class rule that is imposing greater and greater burdens on the people.
- vi. Under the present circumstances, when the right-reactionary forces are mounting an offensive, it is necessary to strengthen the struggles to safeguard the unity and integrity of our country; to establish real equality of the people and fraternity between the various nationalities and ethnic groups that inhabit our country.
- vii. It is only after the establishment of People's Democracy and completing the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-monopoly capital tasks, can the Indian people advance towards socialism. What does socialism in Indian conditions mean?
- viii. It means, first and foremost, that people's power would be supreme. That democracy and democratic rights would be inseparable elements of the socialist juridical, political and social order.
- ix. It means that the socialist economic construction will be based on the socialised means of production and central planning. As long as commodity production exists, the market is bound to exist. As noted earlier, the market forces, however, shall be subsumed under the guidance of central planning. While various forms of property can and will coexist, the decisive form will be that of the social ownership of the means of production.
- x. Under socialism, the right to dissent, freedom of expression and plurality of opinion will flourish with the aim of strengthening socialism. The question of whether other political parties exist or a multi-party system will prevail, depends crucially on the role that these parties have played during the process of revolution and socialist transformation.
- xi. Socialism in the Indian conditions also means the creation of the basis for enriching and strengthening the existing democratic rights. It means the providing of the economic basis, the fundamental and essential requirement for the continuous deepening and development of the quality of human life, on whose foundations socialist democracy will flourish.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- i. Notwithstanding the twists and turns and the zigzags of history, successes and reverses, the developments of this century, particularly since 1917, reflect the profound impact of people's struggle in the evolution of human progress. The revolutionary transformations have brought about qualitative leaps in history and have left an indelible imprint on

modern civilisation. The consequent economic, political and social rights have now come to be considered inseparable from human civilisation. The national and social liberation process of the peoples has been irregular, complex, and will take a long time to complete. Just as history has shown that the transition from capitalism to socialism is not a one-strong transformation but a prolonged period of intense struggle, so will history demonstrate that the process of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and East European countries will not be as easy and simple as is being conceived. The hard-won rights of the people, won over a century of struggles, cannot be easily erased. The 20th century developments testify to the fundamental direction of contemporary human development towards national and social liberation.

The CPI(M), taking into account the evolution of the socio-economic systems of both contemporary capitalism and socialism, considered both at the world level as well as in each country, is committed to carry out a deeper analysis which has been hindered, as pointed out above, by revisionism and dogmatism in the international communist movement which, in turn, led to theoretical stagnation to a certain extent. Marxism-Leninism is the indispensable instrument for carrying out such an analysis for drawing the corresponding theoretical and practical conclusions. The CPI(M) pledges to strengthen the study of Marxism-Leninism and spirit of proletarian internationalism amongst its ranks and propagate the ideas of scientific socialism amongst the Indian people. The CPI(M) pledges to continue the fight against right revisionist and left sectarian deviations. It shall carry forward the task of mobilising the Indian people in struggles to change the present correlation of class forces towards the objective of people's democracy and socialism.
