Workers' Weekly

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A Draft Programme for the Class

THERE are now some six weeks to go to the Party's next Consultative Conference. At this conference the Central Committee will report on the progress it has made in preparing a draft programme for the working class.

Why is this work so crucial at this stage? If the working class does not have its programme, it is self-evident that it can go nowhere. All the pressure is that the working class should be merely an appendage of the bourgeoisie. The TUC, for example, at its last Congress did not even want to discuss a programme for the working class. Instead, it quite openly pushed the idea that workers and trade unions should work to make companies more efficient. It has accepted lock, stock and barrel the argument of the Thatcherites that if everything is done to make companies more efficient, then workers will benefit as well. In other words, workers should subordinate their aims to those of the capitalists.

A modern programme for the working class which is appropriate to the modern times has to be based on modern definitions. The Labour Party at its conference claimed that it would rewrite its constitution for the 21st century. But, under the slogan of modernisation, its aim is quite simply to remove from its constitution any reference to the idea that the working class should collectively own and control the means of production. Modern definitions are based on advancing the cause of the working class by hitting at the bourgeoisie. Modernisation, as presented by Tony Blair, means submitting to the aim of the bourgeoisie to wipe out socialism as a system, as an ideology and as an aim of the working class.

Drafting a programme for the working class means fighting against those forces which want the working class to have no aims, which want it bound hand and foot to the bourgeoisie, which want it to have narrow, self-serving aims and not take up the problems facing society, of leading society out of crisis.

The question of whether or not the working class has

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International Seminar on Communism and the Requirements of Modern Democracy held in Chicago

THE international seminar on "Communism and the Requirements of Modern Democracy" opened on October 8 at the University of Illinois in Chicago. The meeting was held in a room lit by the bright red and gold banner proclaiming the title and date of the seminar, the second in a series on the retreat of revolution and the tasks of the communists and workers' movements to open a path for progress at this time. The keynote address, "Crisis of Values: For a Modern Indian Political Theory", was read out by Karen Naylor on behalf of Hardial Bains, national leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), as he is denied entry to the United States for political reasons, a blatant violation of his human rights and further proof of the hypocrisy of the US government which pays lip service to the concepts of democracy and human rights but never fails to flout them when it suits its purpose.

More than 100 participants were registered for the first day of the seminar, which is being sponsored by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Ghadar Party of India, the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), the Communist Party of Trinidad and Tobago, the US

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Keynote speech by Hardial Bains:

Crisis of Values: For a Modern Indian Political Theory

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CRISIS OF VALUES: FOR A MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THEORY

by Hardial Bains

The following is the text of the keynote speech of Comrade Hardial Bains to the international seminar on Communism and the Requirements of Modern Democracy, Chicago, October 8, 1994. The speech was read out on his behalf as he is not allowed to enter the United States for political reasons.

Comrades and friends,

I am sending you this speech since it is not possible for me to be in your midst personally as I am forbidden to enter the US for political reasons. The hypocrisy of US imperialism and its blatant lies about human rights fly in the face of the reality of its opposition to communism and its desire to crush the modern movement for liberty. I only hope my absence will not cause any difficulty to the success of your program. The views I am sending to you, which CPC(ML) is working on in cooperation with the Communist Ghadar Party of India (CGPI), will necessarily raise questions which require explanations and further elaboration. The fact that I am not there will make it that much more difficult to convey the full import of what is being said on these important questions.

I would like to wish you great success in this important seminar and would also like to express my sincere thanks to the host organizations, the US Marxist-Leninist Organisation and the Workers' Party, USA, for their hard work and fraternal cooperation.

Comrades and friends,

The collapse of the pseudo-socialist system and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 has created a profound crisis of values throughout the world. Central to this crisis is the deepening and broadening of the crisis of the political process, political institutions and the loss of confidence of the masses in politicians and political parties everywhere. By rejecting Karl Marx's doctrine of scientific socialism and the need for a political theory which can provide power to the people so that they can exercise control over their lives, a broad field of human activity pertaining to state and governmental affairs continues to remain the preserve of the few. Not surprisingly, Anglo-American imperialism has chosen this occasion to assert its superiority over everything internationally.

As the Soviet Union was collapsing, all countries of Europe with the exception of Albania (which signed later), together with Canada and the US, got together in Paris on November 14, 1990 and, in a demonstrative manner, signed a document called the "Charter of Paris for a New Europe". This was a charter to assert the superiority of that which had long become out-of-date. A New Europe nurtured on such a charter was bound to experience a deepening of its crisis of values as modern definitions and the striving of the peoples for progress clashed with the attempts to enslave the world anew. This document was a declaration of the bourgeoisie of Europe, the US and Canada under the sway of the monopolies, which upheld the free-market economy, pluralism and human rights based on their notion of democracy. The Charter states:

"We undertake to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations. In this endeavour, we will abide by the following:

"Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government. Respect for them is an essential safeguard against an over-mighty State. Their observance and full exercise are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace.

"Democratic government is based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections. Democracy has as its foundation respect for the human person and the rule of law. Democracy is the best safeguard of freedom of expression, tolerance of all groups of society, and equality of opportunity for each person.

"Democracy, with its representative and pluralist character, entails accountability to the electorate, the obligation of public authorities to comply with the law and justice administered impartially. No one will be above the law.

"We affirm that, without discrimination, every individual has the right to:

- freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief,
- freedom of expression,
- freedom of association and peaceful assembly,
- freedom of movement;

no one will be:

- subject to arbitrary arrest or detention,
- subject to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

everyone also has the right:

- to know and act upon his rights,
- to participate in free and fair elections,
- to fair and public trial if charged with an offence,
- to own property alone or in association and to exercise individual enterprise,
- to enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights."

Further:

"Economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility are indispensable for prosperity.

"The free will of the individual, exercised in democracy and protected by the rule of law, forms the necessary basis for successful economic and social development. We will promote economic activity which respects and upholds human dignity.

"Freedom and political pluralism are necessary elements in our common objective of developing market economies towards sustainable economic growth, prosperity, social justice, expanding employment and efficient use of economic resources. The success of the transition to market economy by countries making efforts to this effect is important and in the interest of us all. It will enable us to share

a higher level of prosperity which is our common objective."

In conclusion, the Charter of Paris states:

"Aware of the dire needs of a great part of the world, we commit ourselves to solidarity with all other countries. Therefore, we issue a call from Paris to all the nations of the world. We stand ready to join with any and all States in common efforts to protect and advance the community of fundamental human values."

Looking at the Charter of Paris as one piece, it is clear that it was a declaration of old Europe, joined by the US and Canada, an attempt to present old definitions to the world, definitions which it hoped to pass off as something modern with which to dominate the globe all over again.

But the "Paris Charter" did not sort out the crisis of values. On the contrary, this crisis worsened as the "Paris Charter" began to be imposed on the whole world in the aftermath of the end of the bi-polar division of the world.

The signing of the "Paris Charter" was also a pledge taken by Anglo-American imperialism to continue the Cold War under the new conditions and proclaim its victory over communism.

The central issue in the crisis of values is that today European values - those enshrined in the "Paris Charter" - are being imposed on the whole world. This crisis of values is deepening as a result of resistance to it by many countries and the peoples everywhere.

Where did these values enshrined in the "Paris Charter" originate? Their origin lies in the Anglo-American Cold War conception of democracy, a conception which has anti-communism and the advance of the imperialist system in favour of US imperialism as its aim - even though today there is a challenge to US interests on the part of the Germans, Japanese, French, British and others. These are the forces which have a stake in these values at this time. They may yet start pushing their own "values" at a later date. As a result, they are bound to clash with one another and with other expansionist forces and their values - be they Chinese, Russian or what is called 'Asian' or 'Islamic,' to mention but a few. Manifestations of this can be seen in the opposition to what is called 'Islamic fundamentalism' from a eurocentric point of view or to the position expressed by Indonesia, India and other countries on human rights, besides the clash with straightforwardly medieval forces such as the Vatican.

This Anglo-American notion of democracy and the values which accompany it are the expression of all the developments since the rise and decline of the bourgeoisie as the ascendant class and the civil society and world order it has given rise to in defence of private property - in other words the developments which mark the colonial and post-colonial periods and the period following World War II to date. The reason the clash is taking place over "values" is because the concrete conditions in each country are crying out for solution. The old system of democracy which prevails all over the world today needs a replacement. A new system based on modern definitions should take its place. Instead of dealing with political problems on the basis of a modern political theory, one which is not based on obsolete 19th century notions of 'good government', the rule of law and nationality, the clash is made into one of upholding values. In fact, the clash over values is one between progress and retrogression.

One issue to keep in mind is the summation of the colonial and post-colonial period marked by national liberation wars and neo-colonialism, not to mention the proletarian revolution. The work for a modern Indian political theory or a modern definition of Indian political theory, which amounts to the same thing, is part of this summation. Instead of developing one's own political theory, we have, on one hand, the pressure on the side of the progressive forces to have "indubitably native Marxism," such as Marxism with an "indubitably Chinese character" or the so-called "third road" of the Yugoslavs, which ultimately express a failure to cope with the demands of the time and to make their own contribution to the development of social science. On the other hand, we have the degeneration of scholarship into various trends such as deconstructionism and various Marxist interpretations to divert the movement. Such so-called Marxist scholarship and the fact that the progressive forces or intelligentsia in various countries such as India, educated in the heartlands of imperialism, get involved in that discourse all works to complement attempts to impose eurocentric values onto the entire world in general, including the workers and communist movement and countries such as India in particular. The form it takes is one of diversion over what is the issue facing a society in particular and the world system in general.

Today the battlefield all over the world is precisely over the issues of democracy, sovereignty (both in terms of where it rests vis-a-vis a body politic as well as of nation/state and the field of international relations) and human rights. Not only is this clash portrayed in terms of a conflict of cultures and cultural values but this is done in order to hide the fact that there is indeed a serious clash in the making between out-dated conceptions on ▶

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these very questions and modern conceptions based on modern definitions, those definitions which respond to the needs of not a ruling elite within each country and internationally, but human beings individually, in terms of their collectives and in terms of humankind as a whole and the civilization it gives rise to. It can only be sorted out by putting the realization of human rights at the centre of consideration on the basis of modern definitions and the creation of a civil society based not on the sanctity of private property, but on satisfying the claims of all on society by dint of the fact that its members are human. It requires harmonizing the individual, collective and general interests of society and the international system of states and the relations between them in consequence of these considerations.

The Charter of Paris shuns the collective interests and the general interests of societies in particular and the community of nations in general, making it appear as if individual interests are paramount whereas, in fact, they are left with no ground to stand on. If there are no collective interests, for instance, if people are not sovereign in a polity, what can the individual's right to vote amount to? If the general interests of society are not looked after, it is impossible to see how individual or collective interests can be satisfied. Can people have freedoms without first having shelter, food, clothing, sanitation and protection from disease guaranteed? The "Paris Charter" has policy objectives without recognizing such fundamental human rights. It recognizes the right "to own property alone or in association and to exercise individual enterprise" - a right which can only belong to the collective and the whole of society. The statement that every individual has the right "to enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights" is merely a red herring when only those who have property can enjoy such rights, while people can lay no claim on society, especially that it must provide them with food, shelter, clothing, education and health care. The Charter of Paris is actually a declaration that only those rights for which the bourgeoisie fought at its ascendancy are worth fighting for even in its decline, especially the right to private ownership of the means of production.

Having said this, what would be "modern Indian political theory" which does not fall into the pitfalls of bourgeois "left" scholarship which either tries to enter into the issue that Marx was European and didn't really deal with Asia from the perspective of Asian values and cultures, etc., or the indubitably Chinese form of the Marxism equation, or, conversely, simplistically argues that Marxism is a science and therefore applicable everywhere and leaves the issue there. Should modern Indian political theory go backwards and accept all the presuppositions of the "Paris Charter", in which the rights of individuals are recognized up in the air as policy statements with nothing concrete about them? For instance, can modern Indian political theory presuppose the existence of an "over-mighty State" and be satisfied with an "essential safeguard" against it, which is to say that this theory should accept the status quo as it exists in India at this time?

Discussion on Indian political theory dates back to the period of the Vedas. People are sovereign during the Veda period and it is they who administer themselves. However, the elected king and seven institutions, or seven-part state (king, minister, friend/ally, treasury, country, fort and army), which appear as standing above the people, are subordinate to them. This state disappeared at the end of the Veda period.

A notion of the political process at the time of *Yajurveda* can be observed from the following *slokas*:

"O people, ye are the givers of kingship, that brings knowledge and showers happiness, bestow on me the kingdom, in a righteous manner. Ye are the knowers of the government that showers happiness and the givers of kingship, bestow kingship on him, who can protect it. Ye are the definers of the duties of kings, and masters of a strong army, bestow on me the kingdom, in a beautiful speech. Ye are the givers of kingship and masters of strong army, bestow the kingship on the deserving."

"O king, who art thou? Who amongst us all are thou? Whose son art thou? What is thy name? We want to know and satisfy you.

"I am from amongst you, made of the same earth, same gallant people, become strong using the same life-giving substances."

We can see that the people during the Vedic period had the following theoretical considerations as they formulated political theory and based their political system on it.

1) *Praja* or the people, at a certain stage of their development, gave rise to an institution with seven organs to ensure the well being of all.

2) They gave it certain powers and retained certain powers with themselves. They retained the right of deposing any or all members of this institution, in extreme cases by beheading them.

3) Praja elected the Raja - the leader of this institution as well as the highest organ of this institution - *Sabha*, which deliberated on matters of life and war. In these deliberations, those who were not elected as its members could also participate and voice their suggestions.

4) To ensure prosperity, security and protection of all from hostile natural and social elements is the paramount duty of this institution. All the seven organs are there to help it for that end alone.

5) For this end and objective, this institution, its organs, and all the members of society have certain claims on each other and certain obligations towards each other.

6) This institution is created to harmonize the interests of individual with that of the collective and the general interests of society.

7) It recognizes claims of all members of society, and came into being to fulfil them.

8) In this political process, the members exercise their power directly without the mediation of anyone.

9) The ultimate power resides in the inhabitants, the Citizens, and all the Seven organs of political power derive their power from them and them alone.

The post-Vedic period had an ongoing debate on political theory for centuries with the theoretical considerations from the Vedic period completely negated. This debate continued in different forms until 1757 when the British established their hold on some parts of India. They be-

gan to popularize the notion that all Indians are merely spiritual and that their debates are only on religion and that the Vedas and other ancient materials were merely religious dissertations. They proclaimed Indian philosophy as merely religious, and through the state and the scholarship they introduced, they basically distorted and diverted discussion from political theory. The rise of the anti-colonial movement brought forth some discussion, but it came to no maturity or serious development. India's "political conscience" came under the pressure of perpetual violence on the part of the British, and every effort was made to ensure that Modern Indian Political Theory and Indian Philosophy were not seriously treated as things vital for the development of modern India.

According to John Lawrence (Viceroy of India, 1864-69), "We have not been elected or placed in power by the people, but we are here through our moral superiority, by the force of circumstances, by the will of providence. This alone constitutes our charter to govern India. In doing the best we can do for the people, we are bound by our conscience and not theirs."

One hundred and thirty-six years after the statement of John Lawrence, which he made in 1858 at the time of the annexation of India to the British Crown, it becomes clear that the question of values is really a vital one, deciding whether a people will be independent and the society will progress or the people are enslaved and the society will retrogress. What "constitutes the charter to govern India" at this time can be clearly seen as values brought forward from the British Raj, whose "moral superiority" was merely a pretension. The "force of circumstances" was really a pretext for those who violated the conscience of the Indian people, while the "will of providence" was imposed on the people on the basis of the utmost brutality, coercion and every form of violence and corruption.

John Lawrence declares that by appropriating power and concentrating it into its own hands, the British Indian state can do "the best" for the people by pursuing its own "conscience." Was what was best for the British Indian state also best for the people of India? The crushing of the conscience of the Indian nations and the formation of a distorted Indian conscience on the basis of British values was the aim of the British rule, and the main blow was directed against Indian political theory being transformed into modern Indian political theory with the Praja assuming the role it had during the Rigveda and Yajurveda periods.

The present Indian state owes its existence to the circumstance of the 1940s when British imperialism had lost its hegemony as a superpower over the world. India as a colony with seething anti-colonial sentiments had to choose its path under those circumstances. Besides British imperialism being weakened, the prestige of the Soviet Union as the victor over Nazism and fascism soared, and US imperialism replaced Germany as the centre of anti-communism, fascism and reaction.

The people of India did not make a choice in 1947, the year the Cold War officially began with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine. On the contrary, it was the British constitutional, political and juridical conscience which prevailed, and the people of India were brutally torn apart with the partition of the country along religious lines. Political power was transferred to those in whose interest it was to strengthen and maintain the state which was established by the British in 1858. The question of conscience, a chronic problem which had become acute with the imposition of British conscience in India, became even more acute in 1947. By 1994, the same question has appeared as a clash of values between the Indian ruling circles and Anglo-American imperialism, on the one hand, and between the Indian ruling circles and the people of India, on the other. The discussion on modern Indian political theory and modern Indian philosophy are at the centre of this clash.

The point at this time is not to debate what was positive or negative in this "transfer of power" in 1947. It is critical, nonetheless, to assess what was different in the state established with the transfer of power and how it is faring at this time. John Lawrence had committed to do "the best we can do for the people" and his "charter to govern India" came from "moral superiority," "the force of circumstances," and "the will of providence." The constitution promulgated in 1950 presents the state as the "trustee" of the "people," who are acknowledged as the source of all power. A trusteeship can exist only with the consent of the person or persons who may create it. One can see how the people slowly but steadily denied their consent to this trustee, if they ever provided it in the first place. By 1975, the people of India were on the threshold of a country-wide revolt which was only sabotaged by those who were the greatest defendants of this trustee and presented themselves as "alternatives" to Congress (I).

In terms of political theory, it may look as if the Indian Constitution was a departure from the British political conscience in terms of acknowledging the people as the source of power. However this is not so. What is gained by Indian political theory with the proposition that the source of all power is the people is lost with the notion of the state as a trustee, which is another name for British representative democracy and its political forms.

The notion of state as a trustee is British and European, but is alien to Indian political theory and to Indian conscience. Such a notion is also worthless, considering the task of elaborating a modern Indian political theory. The state as "trustee" justifies all its activity, its constitution, its structures and superstructures in the name of the people, while it acts in favour of interests contradictory to those of the people. However, it was crystal clear from the fundamental law that the trustee was none other than the state of civil society established to protect private property. The Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were from the outset tools of the trustee in its defence of civil society established to protect private property, while elections were held every so many years in order to provide it with a veneer of legitimacy. The trustee received power from those who had "the charter to govern India" not because they had been "elected or placed in power by the people" but because of "moral superiority", "the force of circumstances" and "the will of providence". What the British handed over to the trustee was what did not belong to them in the first place, that is, the "will of the people." Like the British, therefore, the trustee too was not "elected or placed in power by the people" themselves. One of the key problems of official political theory is that it claims the present state of India is legitimate and democratic because it is a trustee of the Indian people, while it is obvious that *it was not the people of India who appointed the trustee in their service in the first place.* Modern Indian political theory will have ▶

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to deal with this key problem. The trustee cannot claim to derive power from the people, so long as it is not subordinate to their will, acting only according to their consent. Either modern Indian political theory has to proclaim that a trustee is a trustee by dint of being a trustee (which would solve nothing), or modern Indian political theory has to declare openly that the source of power to the trustee can only come from the people and, for this reason, the trustee has to be subordinate to the people. Modern Indian political theory will have to answer these questions which can no longer be ignored. The clash of values is making it impossible to ignore or postpone the solution to these problems. It has become quite clear that political power in India was transferred to the trustee in order to ensure that the people do not realize their sovereignty. This was clearly a reflection of bad conscience. Something was placed between the people and their sovereignty, an illusion that the trustee belongs to them, which actually was not the case. The advocates of this notion of state as a trustee which is not subordinate to the will of the people smuggled into modern times the equation of the Raja and the Praja, in which the Raja is supposed to be working for the well-being of the Praja, which is his *dharma*, but is appointed by the deity. His appointment is predetermined. The Praja cannot determine who should be the king and cannot put the king-system in their service. Indian political theory cannot make any headway without dealing with this illusion. Either the trustee belongs to the people, in which case the trustee is appointed by them and it is the people who have the last word in everything, or it is the trustee who has the last word, in which case the trustee is above the people and does not belong to them.

This illusion that a trustee is needed has been fostered by the British ever since they established their Raj in 1757. They used post-Vedic writings bolstered with British imperial notions of the superiority of the white race in order to convince the people and international public opinion that Indians inherently cannot administer themselves and that the administration (and plunder) of India was the white man's burden. When the British finally conceded that Indians could administer themselves, they had in mind their own methods of administration which they constituted as an Indian civil service. Yes, Indians could administer the British state, but they could not have their own state and govern themselves. Thus, in 1918 the "ability of Indians to responsible self-government" was acknowledged for the first time. A Report on Indian Constitutional Reform advocated the "increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." A new Government of India Act passed by the British Parliament in 1935 remained the key document on which the Constitution of the Republic of India was based in 1950, alongside with some declarations taken from the experience of some other countries.

This illusion in the minds of the people that the state or the trustee is the one to look after their welfare and that it is not possible to do so without having a trustee or a king-system dates back several thousand years in India and is justified in various ways. Bhishma took for granted that the people could not administer themselves, and he worked to strengthen the king-system for the smooth-functioning of society. Political theory at the time of Bhishma presupposed the existence of Raja (the king) and Praja (the subjects). The Raja is appointed by the deity, who also rains favours on him, while a Raja who does not defend *dharma* can be overthrown by the Praja. The Praja, however, cannot establish the Raja, since the presupposition is that the Praja cannot administer themselves. The Raja is pre-ordained by the previous birth, etc. The notion that the Raja can be overthrown comes from an earlier period, the period of *Pahli Jhalak*, when the Sabha was sovereign. The Sabha elected the Raja, and if a Raja did not do his duty, the Raja could be punished and replaced by the Sabha. The Raja was subordinate to and in the service of the Sabha, while the notion that the Raja can be overthrown was kept as there were circles amongst the ruling class which could only be overthrown through the use of violence, but the fact that it is the people who were sovereign and could overthrow the king by dint of being sovereign did not matter any more. It has to be noted that the presupposition that the people cannot govern because of some inherent flaw was used by the British effectively with the co-optation of religious institutions and personalities and by placing them in positions of honour and giving them jurisdiction over education and many other social and cultural affairs.

People during the period of *Pahli Jhalak* had no need to seek an administrator. They were the administrators. They were the administrated. There was no private property. They did not need civil society for the defence of private property. They needed a society which could protect them from the vagaries of nature and other hostile peoples. The Raja and the seven institutions responsible for the functioning of different parts of their society were established in their service. This was a period of primitive communism, the negation of resistance coming from nature and other hostile peoples for their advancement. They were the ones humanizing nature and humanizing themselves in its course. They were the ones creating pre-history, a precondition for the period when the very actions of the people would overwhelm the vagaries of nature and anarchy at the foundation of a society, and a human history began to be created.

Bhishma appears at a time when *Pahli Jhalak* had already passed away. The end of *Pahli Jhalak* leads to a long period of violence and division amongst the people, a period of a steady advance of the productive forces and their sudden decline. Rise-and-fall, rise-and-fall was to become a pattern of society whose path to progress was blocked by the demand of the Raja that it is his *dharma* to maintain the status quo. Society was divided between classes, and the caste system appeared in society to perpetuate the class divisions and to ensure the supremacy of the slave-owners over the slaves. An intricate system - in which the Raja must defend *dharma*, that is, all the interests of the dominant class, while keeping the Praja in check - appeared. Indian political theory met its enemies in its nascent form. The struggle for its predominance takes a violent form with the Raja and the king-system as the protector of the forces responsible for its negation. Bhishma was a political theorist who advised the Raja how to perpetuate the king-system, while he gave to the Praja the role of merely an adjunct to that perpetuation. Bhishma appeared in the form of a warrior and thinker in order to ensure that Indian political

theory remains negated. His love for the king far exceeded his love for anything else. He himself had to admit that he had too much *pitr moh*, too much love for his father, the love he transferred later to the king-system.

Bhishma, being a theoretician of the supremacy of the Raja and fully fearful that the Praja would assert itself one day and become the administrator and the administrated in the sense of the Rigveda period where Sabha is the final authority, advised the Raja to be "benevolent." Danger comes to the Raja from the Praja if the Praja is not satisfied. According to Bhishma, in order for the Raja to strengthen the king-system, he must consider the Praja as the most important, and caring for and pleasing the population should be an integral part of the *dharma* of a king.

"A king should be mild. But not always, because then he will lack authority. But if he is harsh, it will cause enragement of people. So he should be generally mild and harsh when necessary -like the spring sun which is neither too warm nor too cool."

"Of the six forts - desert, water, earth, forest, mountain and man - the human fort (popularity) is the most impregnable as per the *Nitishastras*."

Further:

"So the king should always be kind to the four castes. A *dharmik* and truthful king will be able to please his subjects."

Bhishma warns that:

"A king that is too involved with vasanas (hunting, gambling, harshness, etc.) and who by overly hating some causes the people to be anxious, that king will be rejected by the people."

Bhishma proposes strict punishment for those who go against the status quo:

"Those who cause harm to the seven part state (king, minister, friend, treasury, country, fort and army) should be punished - whether he be guru or friend."

Furthermore:

"Those egotistic persons who have taken the wrong path without considering what should be done and what should not be done, they are punishable even if they are your Guru - such is *dharma*."

Bhishma concludes:

"So, the most important *dharma* of a king is to keep the people happy. Also, protection of truth, and simplicity (openness) in his dealings."

Bhishma perpetrated the grand illusion that the Raja will look after the Praja. Prof. U. Ghoshal, after studying this period, perpetrates an even greater modern illusion, when he wrote in 1966 that "the early Brahmanical authorities on the Sacred Law conceive the king to be the universal protector of the person and property of his subjects and set before him the threefold objective of ensuring to them freedom from fear and from want, thus anticipating the modern conception of a Welfare State."

Such a conclusion as Ghoshal draws also implicitly presents the modern welfare state in a positive light. During this long period of more than 2500 years from the time of Bhishma, there is no discussion about how people should govern themselves, and there is no rise of a welfare state during this period either. The Sabha does not appear as the expression of the sovereignty of the people again, the Raja was never subordinate to the people in this period, and the people were never in power in the manner they were during the Veda period.

The preoccupation and constant reminder to the people in the Indian subcontinent that they need a sovereign who looks after their welfare has been revived again with the notion of state as the trustee of the people. According to this, a great Raja is considered to be one who is moderate in levying taxes, spends money on infrastructure, always listens to the people and is just in handling grievances. This is very self-serving given the context in which the Indian people revolted against the British raj: it was precisely over the issues of onerous taxation and summary execution of justice, resulting in instant death for Indian rebels and progressive forces. But more importantly, nowhere in this conception is there place for the Praja to decide who ought to be the Raja. This notion only begins to appear with the Bhakti movement, which demolished the Brahmanical claim that an individual needs a Brahman to attain God. Once people could attain God without a "facilitator," a Brahman, they could also look after themselves without a trustee over them. Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor and the fighter for India's independence and one of the leaders of the First War of Independence in 1857, had proclaimed that after the British were defeated, it would be the people of India who would be sovereign and it would be they who would determine who should be ruler, that is, what kind of state should be established. The notion of trusteeship does not appear in his thinking. However, the notion of the people themselves being the administrators and the administrated does not appear either.

The British were not defeated in 1857. On the basis of the suppression of the insurgents, the British first strengthened the British system of land ownership which they had first established with the Permanent Settlement of Cornwallis in the 18th century, and then installed the same political system they had in Britain based on it. They enacted a state under their own sovereign along supranational lines, according to their own conscience, and slowly established a limited franchise strictly on the basis of property. When the propertied classes were confident that they could maintain political power in their own hands, they established the Indian Union and, eventually, they granted universal franchise with a political process which would only favour the propertied classes. Nonetheless, the aim and the role of civil and military administration remained the defence of private property. Bhishma subordinates the Praja to the Raja and lectures the king on how he should look after the Praja, while the "trustees" subordinate the people to private property and, according to the propagandists of the "free-market economy," people have to be satisfied with the "trickle down" effect of the success of the capitalist exploiters. The very notion of a Raja who will look after the Praja is confounded with a state as a trustee which would only look after private property. The British spread massive confusion on Indian political theory in order to protect their interests and to do what was "best" for the masses of the people by imbuing the notion of defence of private property as the fundamental condition for a modern civil society with the force of fundamental law. Modern Indian political theory will have to tackle this notion as well, because without eliminating the law giving it legality, it is not possible to have modern Indian political theory at all. The British carried out the negation of Indian political theory all over again. Modern ▶

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Indian political theory has to carry out the negation of this negation.

Marxism was brought to India by the patriotic forces who wanted to combine the victory of the anti-colonial struggle with deep-going social transformations which were due for a long time. Already modern productive forces in their development had created the need for the modern outlook of Marxism, which was a timely guide to action. However, Marxism was reduced to just a series of principles, instead of a guide to action, and debates about these principles continue to date. A communist and workers' movement which came into being in response to the necessity for deep-going social transformations was to be split according to the imaginary or real differences between adherents of these principles. As a consequence, Marxists of the earlier period could not pose the problems of Indian political theory and solve them according to the conditions on the soil of India.

Once problems of Indian political theory were not sorted out, a vacuum was created in the space available for the Marxists. This space is created with the introduction of modern machinery and modern methods of production in the midst of what was most backward, rotten and incapable of any advance. Modern Indian philosophy and modern Indian political theory were naturally the fields for which this space came into being. The petty bourgeoisie and middle strata, however, had their own grievances. They had hoped that catechism with militant revolutionary actions would work for them. The space destined for modern Indian philosophy and modern Indian political theory was filled after 1947 by all sorts of native and foreign forms of bourgeois ideology, blocking the path for the development of modern Indian political theory and modern Indian philosophy. This assisted the trustees themselves, who laid claim to all ancient traditions except those of Indian political theory of the period of the Vedas and refuse to accept its age-old struggle to assert itself. They condemned Indian philosophy to being merely a collection of religious postulates and not a theory guiding all facets of Indian life. As the experience of the entire "de-colonization" period has proven, if political theory remains that of the colonisers, there can be no end to colonization. In other words, Indian political theory with all its problems kept intact would assist those in whose interest it is to keep the economic system of exploitation and oppression established by the British. Political theory, however, does not remain unchanged. It strives to adapt to the new conditions. Nevertheless, such an adaptation does not change the essence of this political theory until such a time its problems are put on the agenda to be solved.

Seeing that the Indian Constitution and the political theory on which it was based had become outdated, a seminar on the Constitution of India had to declare in 1992 that "Our Constitution is the product of human experience over the ages, all over the world. It is not the work of one single individual. It will be an affront to the sagacity of those visionaries if today we blame the Constitution for any malady." Dr. Ambedkar, who is the author of the Indian Constitution as promulgated in 1950, stated at the end of his drafting endeavours that, "Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will be not that we had a bad Constitution; what we will have to say is that man was vile." Meanwhile, these parliamentarians and others who got together in 1992 in this seminar stressed that "...the Constitution has stood the test of time remarkably well, and essential values of democracy and rule of law have survived in our country till now." They did not wish to admit that their Constitution was both an anachronism and an anachorism.

The twentieth century has provided rich experience in the sphere of political theory. The notion of a state which looks after the interests of the people has assumed a form of universal truth accepted in words by all. The socialist state emerged as the instrument of emancipation of the working class. The social welfare state appeared in order to ensure that monopolies could escape destruction as a result of the laws of spontaneous development of capitalism and its destruction at the hands of the proletariat. For an Indian, it may look as if the entire world has finally come around to accept the notion that the Raja must serve the *Praja* or else face destruction at its hands. If an Indian believes such a thing as Ghoshal implies, he or she will be placing a serious block to progress.

Modern developments point to the fact that the very conception of Raja and Praja became outmoded a long time ago. With this notion of the Raja and the Praja, there could not be a proper Indian political theory. In order to make it look like theory, the Raja had to be presupposed as a person predetermined to be the Raja. An entire conception of *dharma* had to be created in order to justify the rule of the Raja over the Praja. The Praja had to be presented as a helpless and faceless mass, which becomes restless and overthrows the Raja if it is not satisfied. However, the Raja still could not be appointed by the Praja. Such a notion arose at a time when the productive forces were at a very low level of development. It was a period of self-sufficient village communities with very little intercourse between them. The Raja and other institutions arose to appropriate what was surplus while keeping the communities at the same stage. The monopolization of trade, the levying of taxes for protection and defence from the invaders appeared as the main forms of appropriation. People wanted to create for themselves institutions which would be of direct benefit to them under those circumstances as they existed during the Rigveda period. The Raja was an instrument to protect them from other peoples (foreigners) as well as from the vagaries of nature at that time. It was not the Raja but the Sabha which was sovereign. They created the Raja and demanded from the Raja and the other institutions to do all that was necessary for them. The Sabha was above all the other institutions. However, the Raja and the other institutions became a power unto themselves and metamorphosed into a state which would assist the most powerful. Such a power arose and fell over the period of several millennia many times, blocking the further development of the productive forces until foreign incursions made it impossible for them to rise and left the people with the pathos of foregone days and the melancholy of having nothing at all at the present time. The Raja/Praja equation did not work at this time as the productive forces began to develop and new relations of production began to appear under the pressure of these foreign invasions. The death knell of this notion of the Raja and the Praja called for the same thing which, at one time, was its progenitor, that is, social property. Social property is, nonetheless, not the same thing as communal property. Social property is the highest expression

of what the productive forces could achieve under the present circumstances, while communal property of that period which is still preserved to varying degrees in all parts of India is the lowest. The Indian state as a trustee has contributed to the introduction of modern machines and modern techniques, and a social process of production as the major form of production has come into being. However, this trustee is against the creation of social property as it is the defender of civil society which is based on the protection of private property. This trustee had created state property as a sector of the economy which belongs to the capitalist class as a whole, and it is now dismembering it in favour of private property.

Socialized processes of production are features which can achieve their full expression with the creation of social property. Private property has to be compelled to part with its resistance to opening the door of society to progress. This resistance can only be overcome on the basis of a modern definition of Indian political theory with its presupposition that the people of India have no choice but to govern themselves. They have no choice but to have a modern state, a free and equal union of all nations and tribal states, a modern state which stands firmly against international relations transacted on the basis of the needs and requirements of private property. Such a modern state has to work for the prosperity and progress of all peoples, and it has to proclaim that the condition for the prosperity and progress of one is the prosperity and progress of all. All countries, big or small, on the basis of the system of their own choice, will contribute to the creation of the new world. A modern Indian state will have to adhere to this principle of every nation having the right of self-determination, including the right to choose its own system. Such a modern Indian state can only be created by a class in whose interest it is to do such a thing. It will be the modern Indian working class. Such a modern Indian state will benefit the toilers of both the countryside and the cities. The working class will have to organize all the toilers and the middle strata around the aim of creating a modern Indian state based on modern Indian political theory and modern Indian philosophy. Such a class will have to use Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action, the world outlook of the proletariat, the negator and the refuter of Eurocentric claims to supremacy, the destroyer of all obstacles to opening the path to progress.

Socialized processes of production are mechanisms and forms making up the flesh and bones of a new society which has come into being in the womb of the old. Communal production, on the other hand, was an end-form, the final form of a mode of production and the society based on it, which had no future. The negation of such a society was the order of the day but there were no factors which could put an end to it and create a new society out of it. These factors were introduced by foreign invasions. These factors created the forces which would bring about the negation of negation of negation. Social property will be the key factor in this negation. Social property itself will eventually be transformed into communal property in its most developed form. It will be a radically different form from that which existed at the time of the Vedas. Communal property at its most advanced level, or what Marx called "the community of goods," will come into being as the condition for the withering away of the state and the dissolution of Indian political theory itself. The aim set by *Pahli Jhalak* will be accomplished, its light shining in its most profound form. Indian conscience will be the material evidence in the negation of negation of negation. A most modern society will be born whose sole aim will be the defence of what is human, transforming the entire world on this basis.

Can it be deduced from what has been said so far that the task in India remains the same as elsewhere and that there is therefore no need for Indian political theory? No, it cannot. On the contrary, modern Indian political theory is the key to the development of the Indian revolutionary movement and an indispensable tool for the negation of the property relations existing at this time which are retarding the development of the productive forces.

The consideration on which we must base ourselves is that the negation of existing property relations is the order of the day. Those property relations are imposed on the old communal relations. The old communal relations are still being maintained in places which help private property to flourish on this basis. An example of this is the monopolies taking over tribal lands for their benefit while keeping the property relations at the most primitive level. These are property relations according to the "conscience" which John Lawrence spoke about in 1858, the relations which foster the concentration of wealth on one pole and poverty on the other. These are relations of production set by the Charter of Paris, which are alien to the Indian development. These relations were imposed during the British Raj by creating the class of capitalists in the cities and countryside in whose interest it would be to create a civil society for the defence of private property. Indians, on the contrary, need a civil society in defence of social property, as the basis of their development. They want social property relations such as existed before, but in their most developed form.

India as a civil society at this time abides by some demands of the Charter of Paris, while it is opposed to others. What it agrees with is the entire political process, political theory on which it is based, the rule of law and the protection of private property. What it does not agree with is what is included in "rights of the individual." The present Indian state and its government still pay lip-service to collective rights, but only in the sense that it needs the union state for the development of capitalism, for the consolidation of its hold on the internal market and for the cornering of the world market. Thus they speak about cultural values, the Indian ethnicity rebelling against "western values," but in actual fact, it is a denial of equal rights and duties to all citizens, just as in the Charter of Paris. The question is not of ethnicity but of polity. The question is of people exercising control over their lives. As we look at this conflict, we see a great opportunity for the modernization of Indian political theory which would resolve it in favour of the people.

We are to look deeper into the Indian developments in which civil society is protecting not only modern private property but also property relations which are archaic and outmoded, including capitalist relations, which the British introduced, and ensure that the conflict between the Indian ruling circles and the "west" is exploited in favour of opening the path of society for progress.

We have to follow the Indian philosophical sense that all things and phenomena have a tendency to reveal themselves.

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We see in India the rise of this theory during the period of Pahli Jhalak, during the period of humanizing the environment. What is the Indian situation revealing today? It is revealing that both capitalist development and the old communal property relations are retarding the development of the productive forces. In terms of political theory, the most oppressive political system has been imposed on Indians which is blocking the solution of any problem. It has to be understood that while the notion of Raja and Praja is retrogressive under the present conditions, the notion of state as a trustee does not have the consent of the people either. It is a system which is ready to be overthrown.

Let us take, for instance, the notion of Zafar that it is the people who will determine who should be the ruler. The modern political system which presents the state as a trustee also claims the same, even though hypocritically, and people only elect a government and not a ruler. Even then the people have no role in governance. The notion that people must govern themselves has to be created from the concrete conditions of India. Such a notion has to be brought forward from the period of the Vedas, on the one hand, and from the experience of the period when the Raja became the sovereign, especially from the present period of the rise of the state as a trustee, which is opposed to being modern and is stubbornly opposed to the creation of modern Indian political theory. The notion of Raja has to be purged from Indian political theory in order to render it modern. What is to be added to the theory is the notion that it is the people who must govern and who themselves must be the governed.

What will be modern Indian political theory? First and foremost, a political theory can only be Indian if it has the power to eliminate the existing political system which no longer has legitimacy. It no longer has the consent of the masses as was the case at the time the British Raj handed over the administration of India to a limited franchise. As this system is based on private property and the perpetuation of all kinds of old property relations, its notion of rights is based on defending private property. This is a system alien to India and is extraneous to the needs of the Indian people. For this reason it is oppressive. It deprives them of having a system which is relevant to them. A modern political system has to be necessarily based on something else. What will that "something else" be?

In the economic sphere, the government of Narasimha Rao openly states that the aim of the prevailing system is to make the rich richer. Once the rich become richer in an endless spiral, this is supposed to have a "trickle down" effect and will benefit the people. Suppose we establish an economic system in which the old Indian notion that the Raja must look after the well-being of the Praja prevails. Will this economic system not be the same as that which Narasimha Rao is speaking about? Will the Raja not demand, as was the case in the past, that first I must be rich, then I will look after you? In other words, the notion of somebody else looking after the people which still prevails has to be eliminated. This elimination makes up an essential part of the "something else" which is needed at this time.

What will the people have to demand under the present circumstances? They will have to demand that capitalism must be ended and also the feudal, communal, patriarchal systems. They have to demand that they want to have the modern, most-up-to-date system. What kind of system will be the most modern, most up-to-date? They will have to answer that the old communal system served them very well until the feudal and patriarchal system superseded it. If we are to serve ourselves, we have to eliminate capitalism, feudalism and patriarchalism and advance from the primitive communism which served us so well to modern communism, the conditions for which exist at this time. Anything less than this will not serve the Indian masses.

Modern Indian political theory, by definition, will have to be that which will ensure the end of capitalism and any old system, on the one hand, and the creation of modern communist society, on the other. What was the key thing in primitive communism? The subordination of nature to the demands of human beings. Nature was forced to yield what human beings required at that time. What is the key thing in modern communism? The elimination of all relations of production which stop them from achieving what they wanted under primitive communism. The mastery of nature was the watchword under primitive communism. The mastery of human relations after ending all exploitation of persons by persons is the watchword of modern communism. The key thing under primitive communism was a self-sufficient community. The key thing under modern communism is a self-sufficient society. While the kinship under primitive communism was along blood lines and kinship under socialism is along class lines, the kinship under modern communism will be along species line.

Several millennia have passed since primitive communism existed in India. Human beings have gained a rich experience during this period. What is this experience telling Indians? What is the present revealing? What is it calling for? Can it be said that the historical lessons in the economic field tell Indians that they should have "shock therapy" and "trickle down" economics? Can it be said that the historical lessons in the political field tell Indians that they should have a political system where powers exist to protect and nurture private property and all old forms of property relations? No, the lessons of the experience of several millennia tell something else. These experiences have to be summed up candidly by starting from the present.

Warranted conclusions have to be drawn by keeping in mind the need for deep-going social transformations. The creation of a modern Indian political theory in the course of a movement for a modern society will make the carrying out of revolutionary changes for the sake of bringing about deep-going social transformations that much easier.

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International Seminar on Communism and the Requirements of Modern Democracy held in Chicago

Continued from page 1

Marxist-Leninist Organisation and the Workers' Party, USA. The Chicago seminar was jointly hosted by USMLO and the Workers' Party, USA.

The paper presented for discussion by Hardial Bains was received enthusiastically by all present and was followed by a panel discussion led by the Communist Ghadar Party of India and the Association of Indian Progressive Study Groups, which lasted for over two and a half hours.

The day ended with informal discussion over dinner and a feeling of great excitement amongst all participants for the next day's proceedings.

The second and final day on October 9, on which more people registered for the programme, saw the continuation of the lively discussion begun on the previous day. To facilitate the discussion, copies of the keynote address "Crisis of Values: For A Modern Indian Political Theory", were distributed to all participants.

Shortly after 10.00 am, the day began with the presentation of the paper "Eurocentric Opposition to Canadian Democratic Renewal", written by Sandra Smith, editor of the fax release on contemporary Canadian and world affairs *Today/Tomorrow*, and read out by Karen Naylor. The paper highlighted the block placed on democratic renewal by eurocentrism as well as by polycentrism, which, in the final analysis, favours eurocentrism.

The speech was extremely well received by participants, and was followed by a discussion session, presided over by a panel comprised of representatives of the Association of Indian Progressive Study Groups and the Communist Ghadar Party of India. People raised many comments on themes arising out of the speech as well as Hardial Bains' speech of the previous day.

A lunch break followed the morning session, with participants continuing to gather in small groups to discuss the points that were being raised in the course of the seminar.

Following the lunch break, a second paper by Hardial Bains entitled "Eurocentrism: A Block Against Progress" was read out by Karen Naylor.

Following this, representatives of the different parties sponsoring the event made their interventions. Speaking first was Chris Coleman, from the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), who thanked the host organisations, the United States Marxist-Leninist Organisation (USMLO) and the Workers' Party, USA, for organising the seminar. Chris Coleman pointed out that the working class and people of Britain, from where the Westminster system of government emerged, have also been afflicted with eurocentrist notions and the system of government they embrace which effectively keeps people from participating in governing themselves.

Karen Naylor, speaking on behalf of the Central Committee of CPC(ML), spoke next. She hailed the deliberations that took place during the second international seminar, saying they would "place progressive forces in good stead of our work". She noted that on September 25, CPC(ML) and other forces launched the Canada-Wide Campaign for Democratic Renewal and a Modern Constitution as a means of opening up the path to progress for Canada. She proposed that the third international seminar be held in Canada from March 25 - March 31, 1995.

Rod Eley, the leader of the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), also hailed the second seminar. His remarks addressed the possibilities for the Irish people that had opened up as a result of the advent of the peace process. He spoke of the need for the Irish working class and people to ensure this opening favoured them, and not Anglo-American imperialism.

The two host organisations, USMLO and Workers' Party, USA, concluded the conference with remarks on the situation in the US. Cathy Chandler, a representative of the USMLO, spoke about the democratic tradition in the United States and the need to take it further. Examining the ideas put forward by President Bill Clinton on how American democracy can be "renewed", she concluded that his proposals would actually move American democracy backwards. She called for progressive forces in the US to work together to hold a successful conference on what is required for the modernisation of American democracy.

Michael Thorburn, from the Workers' Party, USA, examined some of the problems faced by the American working class and people, who face all manner of social, political and economic attacks from the ruling circles.

The conference ended with the enthusiastic approval of all present for the holding of the third international seminar in Toronto, Canada, in March of 1995, the first having been held in this country, in Coventry, on January 2 and 3 this year.

WORKERS' WEEKLY WAS NOT PUBLISHED ON OCTOBER 1 AND 8.

International meeting held in Ecuador

IN July, an International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations was held in Ecuador, cordially hosted by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador (PCMLE). A delegation of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) attended. The 15 parties and organisations participating were as follows:

Communist Party of Germany (KPD)
Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist)
Communist Party of Columbia (Marxist-Leninist)
Communist Party of Chile (Proletarian Action)
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ecuador
Communist Organisation "October" of Spain
Workers Communist Party of France (PCOF)
Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist)
Organisation for the Construction of the Proletarian Party of Italy
Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)
Communist Labour Party of the Dominican Republic
Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (TDKP)
"Bandera Roja" Party of Venezuela
Revolutionary Communist Party of Upper Volta

The topics under discussion were: (1) The world situation and the stage of the working class movement; (2) Socialism and the struggle against revisionism; (3) The norms of the International Communist Movement. Papers had been prepared on these topics by the Ecuadorian, German and Turkish parties respectively. A full and frank exchange of views took place on these topics in a fraternal atmosphere.

It was agreed unanimously by the participants that such exchange of views should continue on a regular basis. A further International Meeting of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations was thus called for November 1995 in Paris, to be hosted by PCOF. It was agreed that all Marxist-Leninist parties and organisations should be invited. A Coordinating Committee was set up to facilitate arrangements. Proposals were made for topics. The meeting denounced the arrests of Fransisco Caraballo, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Columbia (Marxist-Leninist), and Hamma Hamani, of the Communist Party of Tunis, by their country's regimes.

The International Conference coincided with the 30th. Anniversary Celebrations of PCMLE, to which all participants were invited. These celebrations included a militant march through the centre of the capital, Quito, on July 30. This was followed by a Rally in the city bull-ring attended by some 2,000 people. As well as a speech by a spokesman of PCMLE, a message of greeting was given on behalf of the fraternal parties by the representative of PCOF. The Rally concluded with some vivid cultural performances by groups form the different parts and nationalities of Ecuador, including Native Indians and those of African descent, and finally with a dramatic firework display.

A Draft Programme for the Class

Continued from page 1

its programme is quite simply the issue of whether the class will unite to fight for its own independent class interests, or whether it will be mobilised to fight for some other class interests. It is the crucial question for the working class and therefore the crucial question for our Party to tackle. If the Party is to lead the working class in this period it has no choice but to take up the question of preparing a draft programme for the class.

The last Consultative Conference unanimously passed a resolution that this work should be taken up in addition to the continuation of the two-point programme. The publication of the **Report of the Proceedings of the National Consultative Conference of June 25-26** will provide a further impetus to the work of the units around the two-point programme. At that Conference, comrades from the Central Committee of the Party presented a number of papers supporting the proposal to take up the task of drafting a programme for the working class, and a number of other comrades made contributions on this and on the experience of the work of dissemination of the document *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis*. The **Report of the Proceedings** will provide a focus for the work of the study groups in the period up to the next Consultative Conference.

In a contribution to the last Consultative Conference, one of the comrades pointed out that "if the Party is the only force which is actually coming forwards with solutions for the problems of the people, by that very definition if it works in the way that people can see that, it will more and more move to the centre stage". Drafting a programme for the class and taking that programme widely out amongst the class will achieve precisely that, to put the Party in the centre of the struggle for the progress of society.

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