

Grasp the Situation and Grab the Opportunities!

Central Committee's Call for the Pledge Campaign

Wednesday 17 December 2008, by [CPI \(ML\) Liberation](#) (Date first published: 16 December 2008).

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Consolidate and Expand the Gains on All Fronts!!

Strengthen the Party and Unleash the Full Initiative of the Entire Organisation!!!

Central Committee's Call for the Pledge Campaign

(18 December, 2008–16 January, 2009)

After decades of aggressive expansion, world capitalism is passing through a period of grave crisis. Big banks and other financial institutions have begun to collapse like nine pins in the US, the headquarters of the world capitalist economy. Huge sums of money are being pumped in by the American state to somehow keep these moribund institutions going. Passionate believers and advocates of unassailable American supremacy have begun talking about the decline of the US and a global shift of power from the West to the East.

For communists and anti-imperialists who had been sought to be pushed back by the marauding offensive of corporate globalisation and imperialist war, the time has come to hit back and surge ahead. Right in the US, the American people have made their presence felt through a powerful mandate in the recent Presidential elections which goes beyond the symbolism of sending for the first time a Black man to the White House. Inspired by the bold examples of Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, Latin America continues to defy the hegemony of US imperialism. Across the world, more and more people are getting organised to challenge the offensive of the US-led imperialist camp on all fronts.

Conditions are now particularly ripe in India for launching a powerful popular assault on the policies of the Indian ruling classes. Our comprador rulers have always looked up to the US as the ultimate model, following US-designed policies in every sphere. As a consequence of increased integration with the US, we are now importing every aspect of America's crisis on to our soil. While the financial crisis has been triggered by Wall Street, the three-day siege of Mumbai that has come to be known as India's 9/11 clearly showed that as a strategic ally of the US, India has now become a key theatre and target for global terrorism. With the comprador rulers getting increasingly discredited and exposed, revolutionary communists must come forward to save the country from the crisis that has been inflicted by imperialism and its Indian lackeys.

The elitist economic policies catering to the greed of the rich and the powerful and ignoring the need of the working people, rural or urban, have landed the country into a comprehensive economic crisis. Yet in the name of checking the economic crisis, the government is announcing further concessions for foreign capital and Indian monopolies. Even in a situation of crisis, the government diverts more resources in favour of capitalists by depriving the working people. We must resist this

course and fight more vigorously for the basic needs of the masses.

77% of Indian people live on a daily expenditure of less than Rs. 20. It is only by increasing the income and purchasing power of these people that the domestic economy can be saved and home market expanded. The way to rejuvenation of the national economy lies in the working class resistance to the onslaught of big capital, in the rural poor's fight for employment, wages, land, housing and subsidised supply of foodgrains and other articles of mass consumption, the peasants' struggle for cheaper inputs and easier low-interest credit and the student-youth battle for right to education and employment.

Even as we fight for a self-reliant economy and a vibrant democratic polity, the current crisis is also providing fodder and fuel to fascist forces and trends of diverse hues. Of late, we have seen a marked increase in violent attacks propelled by aggressive communalism, terrorism and/or regional chauvinism. Loud demands are being voiced in the media for resurrection of POTA or promulgation of even more draconian laws and for giving a free hand to the police and armed forces. In the wake of the recent terror strike in Mumbai, Indo-Pak relations have once again begun to deteriorate with cries of war rending the air. And the US is only too interested in fishing in the troubled waters of the Indian subcontinent.

Rabid rightwing forces in India seem to have discovered a golden opportunity in the post-Mumbai situation. We must thwart their design. There is a growing public outcry against ruling politicians in the country. We must try to canalize it towards a progressive democratic direction and emphasise greater popular participation and assertion to promote healthy democratic politics of the people. The fascist forces and jingoist communal campaigns can only be defeated by intensifying the people's movement for democracy and the CPI(ML) remains ever committed to move ahead resolutely in this direction.

Comrades, our Party had suffered a major setback soon after its formation in 1969. Thanks to the brave sacrifice of our immortal martyrs and the tireless and resolute efforts of the working class and the rural poor and the sympathy and support of broader democratic sections of our society, our Party was able to overcome that setback and revive and expand itself across the country. "The interests of the people are the interests of the Party," said Comrade Charu Mazumdar in his last writing and under the inspiring leadership of Comrade Vinod Mishra and the Party Central Committee, our Party revived itself by unleashing the energy and initiative of the people in every sphere.

Ten years ago we lost Comrade Vinod Mishra right in the middle of a meeting of the Party Central committee. In his last writing presented to the Central Committee, Comrade VM had placed the following central task before the entire Party: "A strong communist party firmly upholding the red banner of revolutionary Marxism, a powerful movement of the rural poor and an all-round initiative against the designs of the saffron power are the three major challenges before us in this year. Social democrats as well as anarchists of all hues are facing serious internal disorders due to faulty tactical lines and every advance we make will further destabilise them and establish us at the head of the left movement. Such a development is absolutely essential for building a democratic front that is really a people's alternative in contrast to various versions of bourgeois alternatives."

These last words of Comrade VM remain extremely relevant at the present juncture. During the last ten years, the Party has worked steadfastly to expand and intensify its rural work, strengthen the network of Party organization and uphold the red banner of revolutionary Marxism. Guided by the collective wisdom of the Party and armed with the revolutionary spirit that defines our Party, we have succeeded in spreading the Party to newer states and areas and crossing the 1,00,000 membership figure at the time of the Eighth Congress held in Kolkata in last December. And as far

as our rural poor mass base is concerned, at the 3rd National Conference of AIALA held at Ballia a few weeks ago, we recorded a membership strength of nearly 25,00,000.

If we can now organise this entire strength in a vibrant organisational network down to every panchayat and every ward of every town wherever we have some work, and unleash the full energy and initiative of this organised force in terms of militant mass struggles and bold political assertion, we will be able to realise Comrade VM's vision of putting our Party at the head of the Left movement and building and projecting a genuine people's alternative in contrast to various bourgeois alternatives.

The Kolkata Congress initiated a determined inner-Party struggle against all the alien trends like liquidationism, factionalism and federalism that weaken the Party and unleashed full-scale mass initiative towards fulfilling the Eighth Congress clarion call "People's Resistance, Left Resurgence". As we complete the year 2008, we can reasonably claim to have won some encouraging primary victory in this direction. The series of Party State Conferences and national conferences of mass organisations held in 2008 have unleashed a lot of energy and enthusiasm and indicated considerable potential for growth in almost every area.

As we begin a new year, we must grasp the new situation and grab all the opportunities that have come our way, consolidate and expand all the gains we have secured in 2008 and unleash the full initiative of the entire Party and its mass base. In 2009 we are set to face Lok Sabha elections as well as Assembly elections in several states. In April 2009, we will also be observing the 40th anniversary of our Party's foundation.

Let us all strive hard to make 2009 a year of bigger victories.

Eternal glory to our immortal martyrs!

Long live Indian Revolution! Long live CPI(ML)!

P.S.

* From ML Update, a CPI(ML) Weekly News Magazine, Vol. 11 No. 51, 16-22 DECEMBER 2008 (In lieu of editorial).