

Editorial

The Changing Face of Indian Politics

July witnessed what could turn out to be a fundamental shift in Indian politics. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh faced a non-confidence vote after four leftist parties (Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Forward Bloc and Revolutionary Socialist Party) withdrew from the coalition government. The immediate reason for the withdrawal was Singh's insistence on pushing through the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal which would give India access to U.S. nuclear technology in return for India's agreement to oversight by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The left bloc objected to the deal on the basis that it would tie India hand and foot to the global agenda of U.S. imperialism. However, these parties have

also come under intense pressure from their constituents over the increasingly blatant embrace by the UPA government of neo-liberal policies. These policies have seen the Indian working class and poor not only shut out of the fruits of India's current economic boom, but under increasing attack, including current attempts to privatize workers' pension funds. The left bloc forged an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the main party of the dalit ("untouchable") caste. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the main opposition party also promised to vote against the government, although the nuclear deal was initiated under a BJP government.

In the end, the Singh government survived the July 21 and 22 non-confidence vote, but only through the open bribing of opposition MPs, who were paid US\$6.5 million each for their votes. While the

See page 4: Indian Politics

Harper Government Attacks Farmer Control of Canadian Wheat Board

What do you do when you can't win? Change the rules of the game.

Privatizing the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) and abolishing farmers' collective marketing power has been a goal of the Harper government since it was elected in January 2006. To date, they have not been successful, losing three consecutive court battles. Without a majority, they are unable to legislate an end to single-desk marketing, and every back door method they have tried up to this point has failed. Increasingly frustrated, Harper vowed in June to "walk all over" anyone who stood in his government's way.

On August 1, late in the day before the start of a long weekend, the government tabled a regulatory

change which, if enacted, will remove the third-party spending limit in the CWB director elections.

Ten of the 15 members of the CWB's board of directors are elected from districts across Western Canada, with elections held every two years in five districts. The other five directors, including the President and CEO, are appointed by the federal government. Eight of the elected directors currently support single-desk marketing, with two elected directors and four of the government's appointees opposed. Elections will be held this fall, and the Conservatives are determined to get candidates who oppose single-desk marketing elected in at least two of the five districts, which would change the balance on the board of directors.

See page 4: Wheat Board

Manufacturing Parliamentary Approval to Race Ahead With Capitalist Reforms and Imperialist Agenda!

Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Ghadar Party of India, 26 July, 2008

The televised spectacle of the debate and vote of confidence in Parliament on 21st and 22nd July has once again exposed the ugly face of Indian democracy. In this representative democracy parliamentarians speak in the name of “aam admi”, while they pursue their narrow self interests and those of their corporate capitalist patrons. The vote of confidence showed that the outcome is not decided by the debate in parliament. It showed very starkly that the result had already been decided while the debate was a mere charade.

The events reveal that the Indian capitalist class, headed by the Tatas, Reliance and other monopoly corporate houses, is the one making the decision. The capitalists want the UPA government to survive and have ensured this result. The bourgeoisie considered it worthwhile to invest several hundred crores of rupees to make sure that “Singh is king”. Parliamentary approval was manufactured through whatever means at hand, including bribery, blackmail and kidnapping.

The capitalists of India and the world are happy that the Congress Party has won new supporters in place of the communist and left bloc. They are egging on the Congress Party to push through the nuclear deal and strategic partnership with the United States and accelerate the capitalist reform program. Their rising expectations are reflected in the upturn in the Indian stock markets.

The capitalist corporations are looking forward to the increased private profits that can be reaped from nuclear industry and trade. They are looking forward to the passage of several pending Bills in the parliament. One is to privatise workers’ pension funds. There are bills to liberalise foreign investment in banking, insurance and multi-brand retail sectors. There are also amendments to labour laws, to permit employers to super-exploit workers.

The bourgeoisie has managed to strengthen its position, both internationally and within the country. The Parliament has once again served the bourgeoisie to legitimise its rule and the course on which it is leading the country.

An important conclusion to draw is that *Parliament is not an instrument of the people’s will*. It is an instrument of the will of the bourgeois class. It is an institution to legitimise what is decided by a small minority in society – the capitalist class headed by the corporate houses, the Indian millionaires and billionaires.

People must not forget the context in which the Manmohan government was formed. In 2004, mass resistance to the so-called second generation of capitalist reforms, spearheaded by the Vajpayee regime, had grown wider and deeper. Workers and peasants were on the streets against the liberalisation and privatisation program. The BJP claimed that India was shining, but the broad masses of people rejected this slogan. It was in such a context that the bourgeoisie backed the Congress Party to form the government with the promise of making India shine for all, by implementing capitalist reforms with a “human face”.

The formation of the UPA government and its so-called Common Minimum Programme were moves to pacify the masses, by once again sowing illusions among them that a ‘middle path’ is possible, that would allegedly satisfy the bourgeoisie as well as the toiling masses. With one section within the communist movement extending support to this ‘middle path’, the bourgeoisie succeeded in temporarily pacifying and confusing the workers and peasants.

Four and half years after the formation of the UPA government, the so-called ‘human face’ lies in shatters. The ugly inhuman character of capitalism and market reforms is nakedly exposed for all to see. What the UPA government has pursued is the capitalist imperialist path, same as the NDA. This path is aimed at maximising joint exploitation and plunder of our land and labour by Indian and foreign corporations – and at India entering the elite club of top ten powers of the world. This is the path of liberalisation and privatisation, to serve the globalisation drive of the bourgeoisie. It is the path of intensifying state terror in the name of fighting

See page 3: CGPI Statement

Conservative Government's Propaganda War Against the Canadian Wheat Board

The Conservative government's attempts to destroy farmers' single-desk marketing agency have been well-documented in *Modern Communism*. New information released at the end of July illustrates how the Conservatives used millions of dollars in advertising spending to try and gain farmer support for their attacks on the CWB.

In response to an Access to Information request filed in February, the Conservatives had already reported in June that they spent \$1.2 million on advertising during a four-month period (January-March 2007) around their flawed and deceptive barley plebiscite. During the plebiscite, farmers were asked a leading three-part question, which one national pollster described as "diabolical". Despite the manipulative process, only 14 percent of those who voted wanted no role for the CWB in barley marketing.

Figures on total Conservative government spending on advertising during the 2007 fiscal year (April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007) are also now available and they are startling: Out of the 34 government departments and agencies which spent advertising dollars in 2007, the fourth-largest amount was spent by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada on convincing farmers to give up their single-desk - \$4.6 million.

This compares to \$17.6 million by the Department of National Defence, (including \$13 million on a recruitment campaign for the Canadian Forces); \$11.3 million from Human Resources and Skills Development, (including almost \$7 million on a campaign about Services Canada); and \$10.2 million from Health Canada (including an \$8 million campaign on healthy eating and living). The biggest portion of spending for the top three advertisers was TV advertising, which is considerably more expensive to buy than print and radio advertising. All these campaigns were also national. In contrast, government advertising around the CWB issue was on radio or in community papers and was focused entirely on the three Prairie provinces and a small section of the Peace River district in B.C., which means the \$4.6 million stretched roughly 50 percent more than the dollars allocated to the top three ad campaigns.

During this same period, the CWB was operating under a gag order, imposed by the federal cabinet, which prevented the organization from spending any resources on advocating retention of single-desk marketing. Not only did this gag order ban the CWB from advertising on the issue but basic corporate activities – letter writing, speech writing, posting materials on its web site – were also curtailed.

CGPI Statement...from page 2

'Islamic terrorism' and 'naxalism'. It is the path of organising bomb blasts to create panic and justify further attacks on human rights in the name of fighting terrorism. It is not possible to stay on this path and at the same time satisfy the needs of the workers and peasants.

While the confidence vote in favour of the UPA gives it another 4-8 months of life, the future in 2009 and beyond remains a big question mark. The bourgeoisie has cause to worry. Not only are both Congress Party and BJP discredited in the eyes of the majority of people. The entire system of parliamentary democracy faces a crisis of credibility. A lot depends on what the communists decide to do in this situation.

For communists to have any credibility among the people, it is essential to fight uncompromisingly against the liberalisation and privatisation program, and for a new economic orientation of fulfilling the needs of the toiling masses. Communists must exploit the credibility crisis of bourgeois democracy, to boldly put

forth a vision and program of radical overhauling of the political process, to make people the decision makers. It will be treachery if communists advocate any illusory middle path and align themselves to a parliamentary front that would stick to the capitalist imperialist agenda of the bourgeoisie.

The Communist Ghadar Party of India calls on all its members and supporters, and all Indian communists and revolutionaries, to rise to the occasion. The immediate task is to build and strengthen a political front of lakhs of workers' unions and organisations of peasants, of women, youth, oppressed nationalities, victimised communities and religious minorities, and of all parties that are interested in defeating the offensive of the bourgeoisie, in bringing the toiling masses to power and opening the path to all-round progress.

No compromise with the liberalisation and privatisation program!

No compromise with the imperialist foreign policy!

No compromise with communalism, state terrorism, and any violation of rights!

Indian Politics..from page 1

Congress Party managed to hang onto power in the short term, its blatant display of corruption and contempt for parliament has seriously undermined public confidence in the institution. This, in the longer term, weakens the mainstream parliamentary parties – the Congress and BJP – while strengthening the communist-socialist bloc and their BSP allies. If the various communist parties can put aside their differences and build a broad movement against imperialism and neo-liberalism, the political situation in India could undergo a fundamental transformation over the coming months and years.

Recent events, not only in India, but also in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and elsewhere, indicate that the people of the Indian subcontinent are in a mood for change. The Indian communist and revolutionary movement, the largest of its kind in the world, is ideally placed to lead the Indian working class and people to achieve real change. However, while it is the largest communist movement, it is also one of the

most fragmented and, until recently, the two largest communist parties – CPI and CPI(M) – supported the Congress Party’s “middle way”, capitalism with a human face. With that “middle way” now increasingly discredited, those parties now face intense internal and external pressures to abandon their traditional stance of supporting the Congress Party as the “left wing of the bourgeoisie” and adopt a program of revolution and socialism instead.

V.I. Lenin wrote that three great revolutions – Russia, China and India – would transform world politics and ensure the future of socialism. The Russian and Chinese revolutions did have a major impact on the twentieth century and the degeneration of those revolutions had an equally negative impact on the communist and revolutionary movement all over the world. If the Indian communist movement can rise to the challenge and take advantage of the opportunities now presenting themselves, it may well fulfill Lenin’s prediction and put an end to the current period of retreat of revolution.

Wheat Board..from page 1

Since February, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz has been calling on farmers to vote for open market supporters in the elections. The Conservative Party machine in rural Western Canada has already been doing work in advance of the elections, including polling and direct mail pieces. But once the election period officially begins in September, spending limits of \$15,000 per candidate and \$10,000 per registered third party take effect. The Conservatives are clearly nervous that without significant spending, they won’t be able to win two of the races. If they can remove the third-party spending limit, though, any party that registers can participate in the director elections and spend as much money as they want supporting or opposing candidates. Under the existing election rules, these third parties wouldn’t need to disclose their spending until two months after the elections are over.

The aim here is obvious – unleash a massive barrage of slick anti-CWB propaganda, paid for by the big financial interests who would best be served by the CWB’s demise. This would include grain companies like Cargill and Viterra, the railways, agribusiness monopolies like Monsanto and BASF, and the Conservative Party itself. The Conservatives are rumoured to have a chunk of money set aside for

this purpose – up to \$2 million, according to some reports.

Public comment on the Conservatives’ regulatory change is allowed until September 2, after which it is widely expected that the Conservatives will simply enact the change. There is some hope that the move will backfire on them and farmers will resent the interference in their elections. However, the ability of third parties to hide their spending until after the election is complete and to register as innocuous sounding groups means that farmers may have no idea who has produced the propaganda they are receiving during director elections.

Modern Communism

**Bulletin of the Manitoba Regional Committee
of the Communist Party of Canada
(Marxist-Leninist)
Editor: Ken Kalturnyk**

**To contact the Manitoba Branch of CPC(M-L):
Fax: 477-6741
Email: mrc-cpcml@mts.net
Internet: www.modern-communism.ca
Produced by volunteer labour**