

Political Resolution
Adopted by the 22nd Congress
Of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Hyderabad, April 18-22, 2018

The period since the 21st Congress of our Party has seen a further consolidation of the political right in India. The BJP-led NDA government is pursuing a vicious four-pronged attack on the country and our people: through the aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal economic policies; the sharpening of communal polarisation in various forms; increasing authoritarian attacks against parliamentary democracy and institutions; and cementing India to the status of a junior strategic partner of USA and imperialism. This capitulation of our country's and people's interests to the diktats of US imperialism by the Indian ruling classes, must be assessed in the background of important developments taking place in the international situation which have a direct bearing on the Indian situation today.

International Situation

1.1 The main features of the international situation since the 21st Congress are the following:

(i) Though there are forecasts of a modest global economic recovery, the systemic crisis of global capitalism that manifested itself in the financial meltdown in 2008 continues.

(ii) This is leading to further intensification of economic exploitation of the vast majority of the people with the introduction of 'austerity' policies and attacks on their democratic rights in all capitalist countries. Protest actions and struggles against these attacks continue to grow in various countries of the world.

(iii) This continued economic crisis of global capitalism has resulted in further widening the economic inequalities both globally and in individual countries.

(iv) In its efforts to consolidate its global hegemony and to overcome the negative impact of the economic crisis, US imperialism is displaying greater all-round aggressiveness, particularly through political, economic and military interventions.

(v) In Latin America, a serious confrontation with US political and military interventions is taking place in various countries. USA is using its entire arsenal to destabilise the Left-led governments in

the continent and to reverse the popular anti-imperialist tide among the people.

(vi) The period has seen a further political rightward shift in many countries with the rise of extreme right-wing neo-fascist forces in Europe. The ascendancy of Donald Trump as the President of USA, representing the most reactionary sections of the US ruling classes, further strengthened this trend.

(vii) During this period, the cohesion of the imperialist camp and the muting of the inter-imperialist contradictions that we had noted in the 21st Congress, under the impact of this prolonged crisis of neo-liberalism, got weakened, with new conflict points and contradictions emerging between imperialist centres.

(viii) The trend towards multipolarity in the international political-economic order faces new hurdles with a pronounced pro-US shift in some countries like ours.

(ix) The future of international treaties like those on climate change and the WTO has entered a stage of uncertainty with the USA unilaterally withdrawing from some, and preferring to seek bilateral arrangements with independent countries as against multilateral arrangements.

(x) In all countries that constitute our neighbourhood very important developments are taking place which have a direct bearing on good neighbourly relations.

(xi) **Socialist Countries:** During this period, China's strength and its global influence have grown. Vietnam and Cuba have achieved a reasonable and sustainable growth of their economies. The main issue concerning DPRK is centred around its nuclear programme and missile deployment.

(xii) The observance of the centenary of the October Revolution along with annual international meetings of the Communist and Workers Parties continue to articulate international communist solidarity.

Global Capitalist Crisis

1.2 The global capitalist crisis propelled by the 2008 financial meltdown continues to plunge the capitalist system into one crisis after another. Global capitalism has not been able to recover to the levels of growth rate achieved in the last decade of the 20th century. Imperialist globalisation under the leadership of international finance capital continues to intensify the process of capital

accumulation through the operation of the methods we discussed and adopted in the Ideological Resolution of our 20th Congress, i.e., “accumulation through forcible expropriation”. This process is further intensifying capitalist exploitation resulting in unprecedented levels of widening economic inequalities and consequent misery of the vast majority of the world’s population. This is leading to a crisis of neo-liberalism itself.

1.3 The IMF-World Economic Outlook – October 2017 has projected an optimistic forecast for global GDP growth. It expects that as against 3.2 per cent growth in 2016 this will go up to 3.6 per cent in 2017, 3.7 per cent in 2018, reaching 3.8 per cent by 2020-21. This still remains lower than the pre-global financial meltdown decade that averaged a trend of over 4 per cent growth. Though painting an optimistic outlook, the IMF repeats its April 2017 caution that “medium term risks are still tilted to the downside”.

1.4 **Global Unemployment:** With marginally improved rate of growth of GDP it is usually expected that employment growth would follow. The IMF estimated that in the advanced capitalist countries unemployment rate fell from 8.3 per cent in 2010 to 5.7 per cent in 2017. This fall in unemployment rate does not imply a concomitant improvement in living conditions of the working people may be seen from the fact that the observed growth of wages and the earnings at the average rate of 1.8 per cent in 2016 and 2.3 per cent estimated for 2017 compares poorly with the average of 3.4 per cent recorded during the pre-crisis decade of 1999-2008. In other words, this moderate growth is volatile because the jobs that this growth delivers are not only quantitatively limited but also qualitatively poor. In the name of “labour market flexibility” aimed at reducing “wage rigidities” increasing recourse is being taken to low paying, part-time, casual or self-employment. Simply put, this modest growth recovery is taking place at the expense of squeezing the working people more, and intensifying economic exploitation ensuring profit maximisation – the classic character of capitalism.

1.5 The consequence of such modest recovery characterised by a stagnant if not declining share of real wages as a proportion of the GDP means that domestic demand in the economy is not growing sufficiently to promote greater investment in the production of commodities.

1.6 Advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics have expanded the potential use of automation well beyond simple, repetitive tasks and the factory floor. The emerging AI tools could affect a range of jobs and employment – from driving taxis and trucks to white collar jobs of “intellect” workers. The working class movement will have to address the new challenges of these technologies with appropriate slogans, goals and modes of organising the workers.

1.7 Under the neo-liberal dispensation led by international finance capital, the banks and financial institutions have accumulated huge amounts of liquidity which they cannot release to the markets because of a lack of growth in domestic demand inhibiting investment. According to the *Financial Times*, the major central banks in the world – the US Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan, the Bank of England and the Swiss and Swedish Central banks – now hold more than \$ 15 trillion (roughly Rs. 995 lakh crore) as assets, or **more than four times the pre-2008 financial meltdown crisis**. This has kept the asset price inflation high while the general inflation continues to be low. This is leading to a situation where the 'bubble' can burst once again, precipitating another financial crisis. Overall the international finance capital-led global economy is in a precarious state which can precipitate another round of financial crisis.

Widening Inequalities

1.8 This economic crisis has further accentuated the alarming widening of inequalities, spawned by neo-liberalism, both globally and in individual countries as we had noted in our 21st Party Congress. The process of the rich becoming richer while the poor getting further squeezed, continues to intensify. According to the Credit Suisse 2017, 2.7 per cent of the world population held 70.1 per cent of global earnings. On the other hand 85.6 per cent of the global population had a share of a mere 8.6 per cent of global earnings.

1.9 According to the World Inequality Report 2018 prepared by the World Inequality Lab (WIL), the global top 1 per cent earners in the world captured twice as much of the growth in global incomes as the bottom 50 per cent individuals since 1980. Income growth has been sluggish or even zero for individuals with incomes between the global bottom 50 per cent and top 1 per cent groups. Amongst the various countries of the world studied by this report, the rate of rise of inequalities as measured by the income shares of the top 10 per cent saw the sharpest rise from a little over 30 per cent to nearly 60 per cent in India since the implementation of the neo-liberal reforms between 1980 and 2015.

Growing Popular Protests

1.10 Under these conditions of compounding misery on the vast majority of the world's population, accompanied by increased attacks on the working class, on the trade unions, the peasantry and on democratic rights and civil liberties, popular struggles are erupting all across the world from the advanced capitalist countries to the developing world. However, as we noted in our 21st

Congress, these struggles are essentially defensive in character; defensive in the sense that they aim mainly to protect the existing livelihood status and democratic rights from further attacks and erosion. **These growing protests however are the foundations on the basis of which struggles against the Rule of Capital need to be consolidated in the future.**

- 1.11 **Crisis of Neo-Liberalism:** Ten years after the onset of global financial meltdown, it has by now become clear to a large number of people, particularly in the developed capitalist countries, what the rise of neo-liberalism has meant. It has created conditions whereby the bulk of economic growth has been cornered by a miniscule minority resulting in greater misery for the vast majority of the people. In the first two-and-a-half post-World War II decades, global capitalism saw a dynamic period of growth often referred to as the 'Golden Age of Capitalism'. In the USA, between 1948 and 1972, every section of the American population experienced increase in the standard of living. However, between 1972 and 2013 the bottom 10 per cent experienced fall in real incomes while the top 10 per cent did excessively well. The median real income for full time male workers is now lower than it was four decades ago. The income of the bottom 90 per cent of the population has stagnated for over thirty years. On an average, between 65 to 70 per cent of households in 25 high income economies experienced stagnant or fall in real incomes between 2005 and 2014. According to a Gallup poll in 2000, only 33 per cent of Americans called themselves working class. By 2015 the figure was 48 per cent, almost half the population. Misery of this vast section of the global population and such obscene levels of inequalities has created discontent of huge proportions which is seeking a political expression.
- 1.12 This crisis of neo-liberalism has created new contradictions leading to ruptures, conflicts amongst imperialist countries, such as Brexit. Emergence of new political forces and rising tensions are the order of the day.

Rightward Political Shift

- 1.13 The period since the 21st Congress saw a further political rightward shift in many parts of the world. Faced with the current crisis, imperialism pursues aggressive neo-liberalism combined with a global divisive agenda fostering domestic, local and regional tensions. This engenders the growth of racism, xenophobia and extreme rightwing neo-fascist tendencies. The triumph of Donald Trump in the US elections, the rightward mobilisation in the Brexit vote in Britain, the electoral gains of Marine Le Pen of the extreme right National Front in France, the advance of the Alternative for Deutschland in Germany, the formation of a rightwing government

in Austria which includes the extreme right Freedom Party, and representation of nearly a third of the European Parliament MPs from rightwing and extreme rightwing political parties are a reflection of this rightward shift. This tendency has also its consequent reflection in Indian politics.

1.14 In times of intense global economic crisis, a political battle over who would marshal the rising popular discontent surfaces. The political right-wing advances by rallying popular discontent and in ensuring that the Left and progressive forces do not emerge as a major alternative political force. These right-wing forces capitalising on people's discontent end up pursuing precisely those very economic policies that have led to this economic crisis, imposed unprecedented burdens on the people and caused the rise in popular discontent, in the first place. It is clear that in the coming days, the political direction in many of the countries of the world will be determined by the political success in marshalling popular discontent between the left-oriented democratic forces and the political right. Fascism arose with the support of the world's monopoly capital in the wake of the Great Depression of 1929-33. Fascist forces were able to successfully exploit the growing popular discontent amongst the people as a consequence of the crisis. In the current conjuncture, the rising popular discontent against the prolonged economic crisis is fuelling the rise of extreme right and neo-fascist forces.

1.15 **Countervailing Trends:** However, there are also countervailing developments of political struggles to stem this tide through the rise and emergence of Left-oriented platforms in various countries.

1.16 In France, in the first round of presidential elections, the candidate of the Left alliance, Jean-Luc Melenchon polled nearly 20 per cent of the vote. In the final round of elections, the ultraright party was defeated. However, nearly a third of the electorate abstained or voted blank, refusing to choose between a neo-liberal banker and a fascist. Similar resistance to the rise of the ultraright has been observed in some other countries.

1.17 In countries like Portugal and Greece, the Communist parties, the PCP and KKE have continued to remain a strong force and registered electoral gains. In Cyprus, AKEL, the Communist Party, improved its position in the recent local municipal elections.

1.18 There has been a rise of neo-left formations elsewhere in Europe. Syriza in Greece had won the elections on the promise of opposing neo-liberal reforms and reversing the attacks on the working class as well as restoring the eroded democratic rights of

the working people. In the final analysis, however, Syriza capitulated to the pressures of European finance capital which only created a greater space for the far right. The resultant discontent amongst the people in Greece is the terrain of the political battle against the far right. In Spain, a progressive party, PODEMOS, was formed and received substantial electoral support in alliance with left forces.

1.19 The revival of the Labour Party in the United Kingdom under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn reasserted the centrality of people's issues in the election campaign and in a sense revived the left agenda in the UK. In the USA, Bernie Sanders continues his campaigns amongst the working people, garnering support.

1.20 This period has witnessed the further marginalisation of the social democratic parties in Europe alongside the rise of the ultra-right. Social democratic parties like the PASOK in Greece, the Socialist Party in France, the Italian Socialist Party and the German Social Democratic Party as well as many of the Scandinavian social democratic parties have performed very poorly in the elections and are in a declining state. This is because they embraced neo-liberalism, betraying the interests of the working people. The classical character of social democracy – champion the working class when in the opposition; champion the bourgeoisie when in government – is being resoundingly indicted by popular rejection.

1.21 These developments clearly show that wherever the Left and Left oriented forces have vigorously championed opposition to neo-liberalism and imperialist aggressiveness and strengthened popular mobilisation and struggles, they have overtaken the social democrats, received popular support and registered advances. In the future this is going to be the arena for political battles. In the absence of an effective left-oriented opposition to neo-liberalism, it is the right that capitalises on the growing popular discontent.

Imperialist Aggressiveness

1.22 The global capitalist crisis provided the background for increased imperialist aggressiveness under the leadership of US imperialism. US military interventions or US-led NATO-led military interventions have been continuing in various parts of the world particularly in Central Asia, North Africa and Latin America. The interventions of the US-Israel nexus continues to hold the developments in the West Asia in its firm grip. NATO has further strengthened its presence as its military forces march into the Baltic states and Poland for the first time in history. US imperialism continues to aggressively pursue its strategic objective of "containment of China". US imperialism's aggressive actions against

socialist countries intensifies the central contradiction of the present epoch between imperialism and socialism.

1.23 **Donald Trump as US President:** The ascendancy of Donald Trump to the presidency of USA represents the victory of the most reactionary sections of the US ruling classes. This is a classic case of how the political right exploited popular discontent amongst the American working class to achieve victory. However, after becoming the President, Trump is stridently pursuing the neo-liberal policy trajectory. He has also reversed many of the approaches taken by the previous US administration with regard to Iran, Palestine, Cuba and Afghanistan. Trump has taken strident positions against Venezuela and DPRK, thus building up new conflicts and tensions. His wholehearted support to Israel and Saudi Arabia continue to exacerbate tensions and conflicts in the Arab world.

1.24 **Rising Military Expenditures:** Following a lull due to the global economic crisis, military expenditures have once again begun to rise. USA today spends 3.58 per cent of its GDP as against the global average of 2.3 per cent of the global GDP on military expenditures. US budget for 2018 allocates an unprecedented \$ 700 billion for defence expenditure. NATO's cumulative spending, of which over 70 per cent is accounted for by the USA alone, fell by 1.4 per cent in 2014, but rose to 1.8 per cent in 2015, further rising by 4.3 per cent in 2017.

1.25 Such increase in military expenditures by imperialism is directly aimed at further strengthening US imperialism's drive to establish its global hegemony. We had noted in our earlier Congresses that while continuing to intervene militarily in Latin America, West Asia and parts of Africa, US global military strategic focus had moved to the Pacific Ocean. With two-thirds of its naval fleet in the Pacific, USA specifically focusses on disputes in the South China sea in order to "contain China", which it sees as a potentially emerging rival to its designs of global hegemony.

Latin America

1.26 In Latin America, a serious confrontation is brewing between the people and US imperialism following sharp escalation in US political and military interventions in the region. Socialist Cuba continues to remain its focus of attack. Donald Trump has begun taking measures for the reversal of even the modest efforts for a thaw in the relations initiated by the Obama administration earlier. US imperialism is targeting Venezuela, forcing food shortages there. Likewise, in Brazil and Bolivia and other countries, US interventions are growing to arrest the rise of the Latin American left and to restore the former US control over the economy and politics of these countries. The US succeeded in ensuring the election of right-

wing neo-liberal Mauricio Macri as the President of Argentina. In a constitutional coup, Dilma Rousseff, the elected President of Brazil was impeached on trumped up charges of corruption. Former president Lula, who enjoys substantial popular support, was detained on similar charges in order to prevent him from contesting the upcoming presidential elections. The people of Brazil are engaged in an intense confrontation with the US backed right-wing forces, who want to trample upon the hard won democratic rights.

1.27 On October 15, 2017, Venezuela went to polls to elect their regional Governors. USA with its financing of the anti-Bolivarian reactionary forces had hoped that the government of Nicolás Maduro would face a severe setback in these elections. This, the US hoped, would set the ground for the defeat of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), party of Hugo Chavez, in the presidential elections to be held in October 2018. The PSUV eventually won 18 out of the 23 governorships. Clearly, the support for the Bolivarian Alternative continues to be strong amongst the people in Venezuela.

1.28 In Honduras, US imperialism has openly supported the re-election of President Hernandez despite widespread allegations of fraud in the Presidential elections on November 26, 2017. US imperialism has a long history of interventions in Honduras and other Central American nations. It inspired a coup in Honduras in 2009 to protect the large mining and 'sweat-shop' interests of multinational corporations in Honduras. Wide scale public protests against this election fraud have been brutally suppressed and a repressive regime supported by the US has been put in place.

1.29 In another Central American country, Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega has been re-elected on the back of popular measures that helped reduce poverty by almost 13 per cent points. Elsewhere in Latin America, apart from Venezuela, US imperialism is active in Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua, to try and destabilise these left-progressive governments.

West Asia

1.30 In the West Asia, the US-Israel axis continues to play a pivotal role aiming to weaken and isolate Iran for both economic and political control of US imperialism and the consolidation of Israel.

1.31 Despite the UN Security Council passing a resolution, for the first time in 2016, condemning Israel for continuing with its illegal settlements in East Jerusalem and West Bank areas of Palestine, Israel has brazenly prepared plans for creating and expanding

illegal settlements and thousands of new homes for Jews in East Jerusalem, the designated capital of the Palestinian State.

- 1.32 In this background, Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and shift the US embassy there from Tel Aviv is an open provocation to justify Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands and runs in stark contrast to all United Nations resolutions and the international community's stand that East Jerusalem is an Israeli occupied territory since 1967. An independent Palestine State with East Jerusalem as its capital is the internationally accepted position. The US administration is thus responsible for scuttling any possible peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. This decision by Donald Trump will trigger further tensions and conflicts in the region having global ramifications.
- 1.33 US interventions in other areas of West Asia continue. On the pretext of usage of chemical weapons, it is carrying out missile strikes on Syria. However, by now it has become clear that its efforts to effect a regime change in **Syria** have failed. The advance of the Syrian forces in the seven-year long prolonged civil war is a major achievement that goes against all efforts by US imperialism to effect a regime change in Syria. The ferocious war has claimed the lives of 400,000 civilians. The failure of Islamist forces backed by the US and its Arab allies will have a profound effect on the politics of West Asia. Russia's strategic military intervention in Syria has consolidated its influence in the region. The Russia-Turkey-Iran joint initiative has foiled US designs in the region. The US, now finding it difficult to achieve its objective of overthrowing the Assad regime in Syria, is shifting its focus towards **Iran** which continues to remain the main target of the US strategy in the region. Donald Trump has refused to certify the Iran nuclear agreement indicating that new pressures will be mounted both on Iran and in the region.
- 1.34 With **Saudi Arabia** as its ally, US imperialism in its efforts to weaken Iran has been encouraging the Saudis to continue with their military intervention in Yemen. The United Nations estimates that at least 50,000 children would have died in Yemen by end-December 2017 due to hunger and starvation.
- 1.35 In the meanwhile, internal political developments are unfolding in Saudi Arabia itself. With the ascendancy of Saudi Crown Prince Mohd. Bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's interventions in Qatar, Syria and Yemen continue. It is now targeting Lebanon in order to weaken the Hezbollah.
- 1.36 **Qatar:** The attempts by Saudi Arabia and its allies to isolate and undermine the Emirate of Qatar had found the support of US President Donald Trump, initially. Saudi Arabia has demanded that

Qatar immediately sever its diplomatic relations with Iran, the suspension of the Al Jazeera electronic media network and the expulsion of those associated with Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar and Iran share the joint South Pars gas field, the biggest in the world. Both need to cooperate in the Hydro Carbon sector as a consequence. While Saudi Arabia and UAE seek a regime change in Qatar, Qatar also has its allies in the region. However, at the same time, the US signed a \$12 billion deal to sell fighter planes to Qatar. Qatar is host to one of the biggest US military bases in the region with more than 10,000 US servicemen. Qatar also hosts the forward headquarters of US CENTCOM, which was crucial for US military operations in Syria and Iraq.

Africa

1.37 Religious extremist forces continue to dominate the North African region. The imperialist attack on Libya had not only destabilised the country, but is having serious repercussions on the entire region. The presence of religious extremist and terrorist forces has increased. In the name of combating terror, US is strengthening its military presence through the AFRICOM. There are reports of US soldiers killed in the so-called anti-terror operations in countries like Nigeria and Mali and the Sahel region. The US is intervening in the internal affairs of these countries with an intent to capture their rich natural resources, control the important trading routes and markets, and also contain the growing influence of China in the African continent.

Southern Africa:

1.38 In South Africa, Jacob Zuma, the President of the country and ANC was forced to resign after clinching evidence of his corrupt practices surfaced. His continuation in office threatened the cohesion of the tripartite alliance of ANC-SACP-COSATU. Cyril Ramaphosa, a veteran trade union leader replaced Zuma as the President. In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe was forced to resign from the country's presidency, after being the supreme leader of independent Zimbabwe for 37 years. Subsequently, Emmerson Mnangagwa was elected as the President of the ZANUPF and as its presidential candidate for the forthcoming 2018 elections.

Inter-Imperialist Contradictions

1.39 Under the conditions of a protracted global capitalist crisis and renewed imperialist aggressiveness, the cohesion of the imperialist camp is adversely affected. The muting of the inter-imperialist

contradictions in the wake of imperialist globalisation under the leadership of international finance capital that we had noted in the earlier Congresses is disintegrating. The Brexit vote is one example. The growing friction between Donald Trump's policies and the other capitalist centres like EU and Japan are intensifying. The cancellation by Donald Trump of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement championed by international finance capital has gone against the interests of Japan.

1.40 The imposition of increased tariffs on steel and aluminum imports into the US by President Trump followed by higher tariffs on a range of goods imported from China has raised fears of an emerging trade war. Such protectionist steps by the US will also bring it into conflict with its European allies.

1.41 The USA's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Treaty has sharpened the conflict between USA and the European Union. Donald Trump's insistence that the European allies undertake a greater share of financing the NATO alliance is also an area of growing tensions. The recent renegeing of Donald Trump from the Iran nuclear agreement has intensified conflicts between USA and other signatories to this agreement, viz. Germany, France, Russia and UK. European allies of the US are unlikely to endorse this move of Donald Trump. All these developments point to the fact that on the score of intensifying economic exploitation of the people for maximising profit generation through imperialist globalisation the imperialist camp may act cohesively, but on other issues, growing areas of conflict and contradictions are emerging.

Climate Change

1.42 The struggle for reversing the trend of environmental damage caused by years of global warming have once again come to a standstill with US President Donald Trump announcing that the USA will not endorse the Paris Agreement.

1.43 The apprehension that advanced countries will abdicate their responsibility has once again been vindicated. The Paris Agreement (PA) arrived at in December 2016 for an international regime to control greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has delivered a deeply unsatisfactory system that neither meets the requirements of science nor addresses the entrenched inequality between developed and developing countries. The PA structure of voluntary commitments has meant that the planet is hurtling towards global temperature rise of over 3 degrees C, far exceeding the agreed goal of 2 degrees C, let alone the ambitious aspiration of 1.5 degrees C.

1.44 USA had steered PA according to its own design. As against having binding targets for carbon emission reduction for developed countries in order to make them accountable for their historical responsibility for global environmental damage, all countries are now required to present only voluntary targets for emission reduction. Further, the earlier commitments for developed countries towards financial support and lower carbon emitting technology transfer have been set aside. The USA is pushing for acceptance of a climate change agenda dictated and driven primarily by the interests of private capital. The PA explicitly rejects any liability of the developed countries to compensate for their past actions. Though the developing countries managed to reiterate the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' in the PA, this is virtually negated. Now, under Trump, USA has walked away from the PA and hence any international climate control regime. This is in line with the US track record of having reneged earlier from the Kyoto Protocol. The US, despite being the world's second highest polluter, had in any case made negligible emission reduction pledges, far less than its European counterparts.

1.45 In future negotiations, especially at the global assessment of emission control efforts due in 2018, India should beware of efforts by developed countries to pressure it into making deeper reductions that would severely constrict India's development efforts. Whereas the present government made no effort, progressive forces should exert pressure towards adoption of low carbon emission measures that promote access to modern energy for the poor especially in rural areas including electricity, cooking fuel and mass public transportation.

Multipolarity

1.46 During the period since the last Congress, contradictory trends concerning multipolarity in international relations have emerged. With right-wing governments in India and Brazil, and with the ANC-COSATU-SACP alliance weakening in South Africa, the effectivity of BRICS has been adversely affected. BRICS, however, has successfully established the New Development Bank at Shanghai. Given the contradictory developments noted above, its effectiveness in countering the imperialist financial institutions has come under question.

1.47 The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) consolidated its role as an effective regional forum and has been expanded with India and Pakistan being admitted as full members. China has taken the initiative to establish the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank with 60 members including some from the developed countries.

1.48 In many of these fora that can be developed to strengthen multipolarity in international relations as opposed to US imperialism's drive to consolidate its global hegemony through unipolarity, India's role has become a crucial factor given its pronounced pro-US shift in foreign, defence and strategic positions. India refused to join the *One Belt, One Road* initiative of China. India's current pro-US imperialist stance will continue to adversely affect the vibrancy and future potential of these fora.

1.49 The potential of the regional fora in Latin America like the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), MERCado COMún del SUR (Southern Common Market) (MERCOSUR), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) and community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) as a counter to challenge US imperialist agenda has weakened with the establishment of right-wing governments in Argentina, Brazil and the US imperialist backed right-wing offensive in other countries.

1.50 The conflicts between Russia and the USA with its western allies that was sharpening at the time of our 21st Congress over Ukraine continues. Russia has successfully outmanoeuvred the USA and its allies in Syria. Russia has strengthened its ties with China and is actively working to strengthen multilateral fora like SCO, BRICS, etc. This is significant in the context of the move towards multipolarity in international relations as opposed to the unipolarity that USA seeks.

WTO Negotiations

1.51 As noted earlier, USA and other advanced capitalist countries are preferring to negotiate trade agreements at the bilateral and regional levels. The WTO is no longer the primary forum where global trade rules are decided. With over 160 countries as members of the WTO, USA and other advanced countries find it easier to break down resistance of the developing countries through such bilateral and regional arrangements.

1.52 India is currently negotiating two major trade agreements – the India-EU Free Trade Agreement and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which involves India and 15 other countries including 10 of ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Australia and China. The India-EU FTA negotiations are shrouded under secrecy. Some of the issues under negotiation are detrimental to the interests of Indian agriculture, allied activities and services.

1.53 India's efforts in safeguarding domestic interests as opposed to succumbing to international finance and US interests are

increasingly collapsing given the BJP government's pronounced pro-US shift. These talks are conducted in utmost secrecy and the negotiating texts are not shared, as they were done in the past. They are not placed even in parliament. Leakages of these texts from other countries indicate that India is succumbing to the pressures to further liberalise its trade rules well beyond what is required under the WTO framework. Of particular concern are the pressures to dilute India's patent rules which will adversely affect the costs of new medicines coming into India and investment rules that would compromise the role of the Indian government to regulate the activities of foreign corporations when they adversely affect domestic interests.

1.54 The WTO ministerial meeting in Buenos Aires at the end of 2017 had a discussion on e-commerce, an agenda foisted by the developed countries to liberalise trade in the guise of e-commerce. The definition of e-commerce is being broadened to include all trade that involves some form of electronic transaction. This virtually covers all sectors in today's world. Developed countries have demanded that e-commerce be exempted from domestic taxes. This will lead to a huge loss in the Indian government's revenue in the form of customs and other duties being forgone. This would severely impact upon Indian small and medium enterprises competing against mega global e-commerce companies. The African group of countries have opposed this move but India is yet to make its position clear.

1.55 In the course of these negotiations, it has once again become clear that India which was regarded as the leading voice of the developing countries in the WTO has already jettisoned that role seeking to cement its position as a junior partner of global capital.

Socialist Countries

1.56 **China:** During the period since the last Congress, China's economy expanded by an average annual growth rate of 7.2 percent. It has maintained its position as the world's second largest economy. It has contributed more than 30 percent of global economic growth. An important change brought by China in order to overcome the hardships caused by the global economic crisis was to concentrate on generating more domestic demand and consumption. In order to ensure this, it had steadily raised the minimum wages and initiated steps to lift more than 60 million people out of poverty. Employment too has registered steady growth, with an average of over 13 million urban jobs created each year.

1.57 The growing economic power of China is having an enormous impact on international relations. Many countries have joined the

Chinese initiative of One Belt One Road project that retraces the ancient Silk Route and the maritime spice trade route. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank mooted by China was also welcomed, with as many as 60 countries, among them some of the closest allies of the US like UK, Australia and South Korea too joining the initiative. Increasing assertion of China is witnessed in the strengthening of many multilateral organisations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, etc. Alarmed at the growing clout of China in international relations, the US has stepped up its efforts to contain China. It is intervening in the affairs of South China sea, Korean Peninsula and Asia-Pacific region. The coming days are going to witness intense competition between the imperialist US and socialist China.

1.58 The recently concluded 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) reflected the growing confidence and assertion of China. The Congress re-elected Xi Jinping as the General Secretary of the Party and adopted an outline for advancing the country on the path of construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. It has reiterated that this New Era builds on Marxism-Leninism.

1.59 The CPC Congress expounded a new concept, 'Thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era'. The Congress reiterated that "The principal contradiction facing Chinese society in the new era is that between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. We must therefore continue commitment to our people-centred philosophy of development, and work to promote well-rounded human development and common prosperity for everyone".

1.60 The Congress resolved to continue on its path of reform and opening up, simultaneously addressing the acute problems caused by imbalanced and inadequate development and concentrate on improving the quality of development. During this period, the CPC combated corruption in a big way and did not spare even some of the top level leaders who were caught and punished. The Party Congress decided to continue this struggle and further strengthen the Party by thoroughly cleansing itself of all such evils.

1.61 **Vietnam:** Vietnam continues to remain as one of the fast-growing countries in the region and its economy grew at an average of 6.3 percent during this period. In spite of this, the country failed to reach some of the targets it had set for itself, like becoming a modern industrialised country by 2020. This was because of the impact of the global economic crisis. In the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), it had decided to continue with the Doi Moi (renewal) policy, which had led the country on the path of industrialisation. The Congress concluded that "It is imperative to

continue innovating vigorously ways of thinking, creatively applying and developing Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought, remaining steadfast in the goal of national independence and socialism”.

1.62 The 12th Congress of the CPV had identified certain difficulties and challenges during the course of the implementation of renewal policies. Though the per capita income of the people had increased during this period, it had witnessed rising inequalities and disparities between the cities and the remote hinterlands. The Congress decided to address these issues through strengthening the Party and creatively applying Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh Thought in conformity with Vietnamese reality.

1.63 Both the CPC and the CPV have in the recent period exchanged high level delegations and have decided to resolve contentious issues between the two countries through negotiations. This is a positive development and will help in easing the tensions between the two countries and also in the neighbourhood of South China Sea.

1.64 **Cuba:** The Cuban economy continues to suffer from the unjust and inhuman economic embargo imposed by the US. Donald Trump has started to undo many of the positive measures intended to restore diplomatic relations between the two countries, a course embarked upon by Obama, and intensify the economic embargo. The economic difficulties many Latin American countries like Venezuela are facing, also have an impact on the Cuban economy. Repeated exposure to natural calamities like hurricanes also are adversely impacting the economy. In this background, the Cuban State and the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) have successfully effected a generational transfer of power. Raul Castro retired as the President of the State and Miguel Diaz-Canel representing the next generation took over. The period also saw the passing away of the legendary leader Fidel Castro. In spite of all these difficulties, the people of Cuba have rallied behind the Party and pledged to defend the socialist system and resolutely resist all the imperialist efforts of destabilisation.

1.65 The 7th Congress of the PCC had discussed and adopted a set of documents detailing the path of socialist construction and economic development in Cuba. These documents are to lay out the path for the future and the construction of a prosperous and sustainable socialist society. The Congress also resolved that neoliberal policies which encourage privatisation of State property and social services, such as health, education and social security, will never be undertaken under Cuban socialism. It also reiterated that the ownership of the basic means of production by all the people will continue to be the main form of the national economy.

1.66 **DPRK:** Defying US threats, DPRK has gone ahead with its missile development programmes and developed a long-range ballistic missile. The DPRK's reasoning is that this is the only sure guarantee to protect itself from any military attack by the United States. USA has been strengthening its military operations in the Korean peninsula and conducting its regular military exercises with South Korea armed with nuclear weapons. Earlier USA had installed the Thaad nuclear missile defence system in South Korea. It has further escalated the militarisation of the Korean peninsula threatening DPRK directly and also posing a threat to the People's Republic of China.

1.67 Over half a century of sanctions imposed against the DPRK have deprived the country of trading its rich mineral resources in return for food and other necessities for its people. Under these circumstances, in order to defend itself from the present threat from the US-South Korea military axis, the DPRK has been spending huge resources to strengthen its defence preparedness. However, recently new initiatives for cooperation with South Korea have been taken. The recent joint Korean contingent's participation in the Winter Olympics is a welcome thaw in the relations between the North and the South. The participation of the North Korean contingent in the Winter Olympics in South Korea represented a thaw in relations and it is being followed up by a summit meeting of the leaders of the two states on April 27, 2108. President Trump has indicated he might meet with DPRK leader Kim Jong Un in the coming days.

1.68 **Laos:** Laos' economic growth has been amongst the fastest in Asia, averaging more than 7% per year for most of the last decade. Laos made good progress in halving poverty, reducing hunger, and improving education and health outcomes. The growth in agriculture, which employs more than 73 percent of its workforce, and the recent expansion of labour intensive manufacturing, are expected to further help in poverty reduction.

Our Neighbourhood:

1.69 **Pakistan:** The battle between Islamic fundamentalism and the people in Pakistan continues with a large number of terrorist attacks and deaths of innocent people. The aftermath of the Obama-announced US withdrawal from Afghanistan has led to a more complex situation for the operation of fundamentalist forces. However, with Donald Trump now deciding on strengthening US deployment there, the spill over effect in Pakistan has to be watched. Recently, at the United Nations, Pakistan has called for an internationally supervised negotiated settlement in Afghanistan.

1.70 Politically, following the resignation of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief in the wake of the Supreme Court verdict in the Panama Papers case, the dominance of the military has further increased. While USA continues its efforts to rope in a willing India as a firmer ally in its policy to contain China, it continues to maintain its relations with Pakistan as usual notwithstanding some adverse comments now and then. India's relations with Pakistan show a further deterioration. The September 2016 *surgical strikes* have not resulted in any substantial reduction in terrorist attacks. Though there are reports of meetings between the National Security Advisors in third countries, talks at all levels between the two countries remain officially suspended and no immediate breakthrough in improving relations appears around the horizon. A strident anti-Pakistan position by the Indian government also feeds the BJP-RSS armoury of Hindutva nationalism and the sharpening of communal polarisation in India to consolidate their domestic position.

1.71 **Bangladesh:** As the Bangladesh general elections draw close, the spate of fundamentalist attacks in the country have grown. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to India on a State visit in early 2017. It is after a long gap that the head of the government of Bangladesh came on a State visit. While both countries claim the visit to be a success, the vexed issue of an agreement on the sharing of waters of Teesta river continues to remain elusive. The West Bengal Chief Minister had publicly opposed the earlier draft agreement between the UPA government and the Sheikh Hasina government. The BJP Central Government has made no substantive efforts to resolve this issue. The proposed amendments by the BJP government to the Indian Citizenship Act virtually granting citizenship to Hindu refugees who had come into India but denying the same to the refugees of other religions has also become a sore point between the two countries. Hindutva communalism in India strengthens Muslim fundamentalism in Bangladesh as well. In the general elections due in 2018 these matters are likely to fuel an anti-India campaign in Bangladesh, further adversely affecting our friendly relations.

1.72 India remained lukewarm to Bangladesh's request to mediate with Myanmar in the Rohingya crisis and the massive refugee influx into Bangladesh. Recently, China has put forward a three-stage plan for a solution to this humanitarian crisis: (a) achieve a ceasefire (this is now in effect); (b) both Myanmar and Bangladesh should keep communication lines open and continue discussions for a peaceful solution on repatriation of refugees; and (c) address a long term solution ensuring economic development of Rakhine State, which is the root cause of the conflict. Bangladesh has welcomed this Chinese initiative put forward by the Chinese Foreign Minister

during his recent visit to Bangladesh. Bangladesh already joined the One Belt, One Road initiative and welcomed the diplomatic initiative of China to solve an inter-state dispute in South Asia for the first time.

1.73 **Nepal:** After a long period of political uncertainties and frequent changes in government, Nepal has finally promulgated the republican Constitution under which elections were held in November 2017.

1.74 A significant development that took place recently in Nepal was the decision by the Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and the Communist Party of Nepal (MC) to form an alliance to contest the elections. Both the parties have together formed the government with K P Oli of the CPN(UML) as the Prime Minister. This is a welcome development. This communist alliance secured a major victory in these elections and has gained nearly two-third majority in the federal parliament. The communist alliance has also won a majority in six out of the seven provincial assemblies. These results herald a new beginning ushering in a period of political stability in Nepal. The progress towards consolidating the secular democratic character of the republic of Nepal will have a long lasting influence on stability and peace not only in Nepal but in South Asia as a whole. The CPN(UML) and the CPN(MC) have declared that they will soon merge into a single communist party. This is a significant development.

1.75 **Sri Lanka:** The coalition government between the SLFP and the UNP in Sri Lanka is currently working on a new draft Constitution with the desired objective to provide a political settlement to the long-standing Tamil question. In the interests of a united Sri Lanka providing maximum autonomy to the Tamil-speaking regions, it is hoped that these efforts will succeed. The recent attacks on Muslims by Buddhist chauvinists underline the lurking tensions existing between the various communities in Sri Lankan society. In the recently concluded local body elections, the ruling coalition of United National Party (UNP) and United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) suffered a defeat at the hands of Mahinda Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP).

1.76 **Bhutan:** The recent India-China stand off on the Doklam issue was finally resolved with claims of victory being made on both sides. The dispute is centred around land claimed by Bhutan and China, though Bhutan took a virtually neutral position on this matter. Bhutan has recently entered into a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement with Bangladesh. Bhutan is the only SAARC country that has not joined the One Belt, One Road initiative, apart from India. With all other countries having joined this initiative and expecting a very high infusion of Chinese resources for

infrastructural development in the course of the OBOR project, India's strident opposition to this is likely to complicate our neighbourly relations in the future.

1.77 Maldives: Serious developments are unfolding in the Maldives. The Maldives Supreme Court ordered the release of exiled former President, Mohamed Nasheed, acquitting him of all charges in the 2015 conviction on a terrorism charge. The Supreme Court also ordered the reinstatement of 12 former law makers as Members of Parliament. The Maldivian President Abdullah Yameen refused to comply with this Supreme Court order and declared emergency in the country. This has led to widespread protests and uncertainty. These developments in a SARC country will have to be closely watched.

Communist Solidarity

1.78 The International meeting of Communist & Workers parties continues to be held annually. The 2017 event in Russia to commemorate the centenary of the Great October Socialist Revolution was the highlight in this period. There are growing popular protests led by the Communist Parties in many countries. As noted earlier, it is clear that unless the political alternative to capitalism is strengthened by the communist parties and the Left parties marshalling the people's growing discontent and sharpening class struggles for mounting the working class-led assault against the rule of capital, this merciless exploitation imposed by imperialist globalisation cannot be ended.

1.79 As a contingent of the international communist movement, the CPI(M) has to make its contribution to this global struggle by strengthening itself in India and vastly increasing its capabilities to widen and strengthen the popular struggles of the Indian people against the economic, political and other manifestations of this onslaught.

Strengthen Anti-Imperialist Solidarity

1.80 The CPI(M) will vigorously conduct a campaign amongst the Indian people against the abject surrender of the BJP government to US imperialism and reducing India to the status of a subordinate strategic ally of US imperialism. The CPI(M) will oppose the manifestations of this subordinate status in all spheres – economic, strategic, defence and foreign policy.

1.81 The CPI(M) continues to extend its full support to the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation and for realising to the Palestinian people their long denied right to a homeland.

- 1.82 The CPI(M) will vehemently oppose the growing US-Israel-India nexus being advanced by the present BJP government.
- 1.83 The CPI(M) continues to firmly oppose all forms and varieties of terrorism sponsored by individual groups or State-sponsored terrorism.
- 1.84 The CPI(M) expresses its solidarity with the socialist countries of China, Vietnam, DPRK, Cuba and Laos and fully supports the efforts to strengthen socialism in their respective countries.
- 1.85 The CPI(M) expresses its solidarity with all forces fighting against neo-fascist forces, fundamentalism, religious fanaticism, obscurantism and reactionary forces.
- 1.86 The CPI(M) will further strengthen its links with the Left revolutionary movements all over the world, particularly in South Asia and Latin America.
- 1.87 The CPI(M) extends its complete solidarity with the socialist countries targeted by imperialism in various ways.
- 1.88 At the global level, the CPI(M), while cooperating and extending solidarity with all manifestations of anti-imperialist movements, against neo-liberalism, against US military interventions and aggressions, against the dangerous degradation of climate and environment and for universal climate justice, will seek to bring these various streams together to forge a mighty, all-embracing, anti-imperialist movement in the world.

NATIONAL SITUATION

2.1 The nearly four years of the Modi Government has led to the onset of a right-wing authoritarian-communal regime. This regime is characterised by an intensified pursuit of neo-liberal policies, resulting in all round attacks on the working people; the concerted effort to implement the RSS's Hindutva agenda which threatens the secular democratic framework of the State, attacks on minorities and dalits and the emergence of fascistic trends; a reinforcement of the strategic alliance with the United States and playing the role of a subordinate ally; and building the architecture of authoritarianism by curbing parliamentary democracy, subverting constitutional institutions and democratic rights.

2.2 The 21st Congress of the Party had assessed the political situation as follows:

"The Lok Sabha elections of May 2014 brought about a big change in the political situation. For the first time, the Bharatiya Janata Party got an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha while getting only 31 per cent of the votes. This has set the stage for a rightwing offensive comprising an aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal policies and a full-scale attempt by the RSS-led Hindutva forces to advance their communal agenda. Such a conjuncture presages growing authoritarianism". (Para 2.1)

2.3 The resolution had also noted the following main features:

- (i) "The eleven-month period of the BJP government is marked by an aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal policies with emphasis on increasing foreign capital in all spheres of the economy; increased privatisation; dilution of labour laws and land acquisition laws."
- (ii) "This all out onslaught against the people makes authoritarianism a necessity for the ruling classes in the current juncture".
- (iii) "There has been a qualitative change in the situation with the BJP being in government and the RSS game plan being put into effect".
- (iv) "What is unfolding is a multi-pronged effort to advance the disruptive Hindutva project which threatens the secular-democratic basis of the Republic".
- (v) "The Modi Government is intensifying the strengthening of strategic ties with the United States."
- (vi) "The growing authoritarian trends are reflected in the serious encroachment on democratic rights and attacks on civil liberties."

Current Situation:

- 2.4 The three years which have elapsed since the Party Congress have fully confirmed the correctness of this analysis and understanding of the political situation. What has been unfolding in the subsequent period is the intensification of all the components which constitute the right-wing offensive.

Economic Situation

- 2.5 Over the course of the last four years , the Modi Government has brought the Indian economy to the brink of a crisis. Although the government tried its best to conceal the economic slowdown by fudging the statistics, the truth is out. While the GDP series was revised to make it look better, even by the revised GDP series, growth has steadily declined from 8 per cent in 2015-16 to the estimated 6.5 per cent for 2017-18. This is the lowest rate of growth in four years. Statistics from the Labour Bureau show that, for the first time in Independent India, the absolute level of employment shrank between 2013-14 and 2016-17.
- 2.6 The economic slowdown has been sharpest in the key sectors of the economy and in particular in the informal sectors. Over the first three years of the Modi Government, agricultural GDP grew by only about 1.7 per cent per annum. Farm incomes have plummeted because of cuts in public expenditure, deceleration in support prices, reduction in public procurement, and a steep rise in cost of production on account of increasing privatisation of input provisioning and high indirect taxation on some of the key inputs. Crop insurance has been turned into a bonanza for the private insurance companies while farmers are denied relief from widespread crop losses.
- 2.7 Estimates of manufacturing sector growth based on different sources show contradictory trends lending credence to widespread suspicion that these statistics were being massaged to show a rosy picture of the economy. Short-term official statistics do not capture changes in informal manufacturing, the industrial segment that has been worst hit by demonetisation and implementation of GST. But even indices like the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) show that, barring spurts in a few industrial segments in different years, most core industries have seen sluggish growth over the last three years. During this period exports have seen a steady decline.
- 2.8 The banking sector is reeling under a huge increase in the burden of non-performing assets, with gross NPAs increasing from about Rs 2.6 lakh crores in December 2014 to 8.37 lakh crores in September 2017, as banks have been made to go soft on large corporate defaulters. While demonetisation saddled banks with

large amounts of deposits, sluggish credit demand has meant low credit off-take. The interest burden on these deposits has further eroded profitability of public sector banks.

- 2.9 While there are several sector-specific factors that have contributed to the economic slowdown, demonetisation and implementation of the GST regime stand out as policy initiatives that have disastrously affected all the major sectors.

Demonetisation

- 2.10 The central government had announced demonetisation of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 currency notes in November 2016. The government claimed that this move will curb corruption, black money and circulation of counterfeit currency and will counter terrorism. Data released by the RBI shows that 98.96 per cent of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes that were invalidated due to the demonetisation exercise had been returned, debunking government's claims that at least 4-5 lakh crore rupees of black money will not come into circulation. In fact, none of the stated claims of the government were realised through demonetisation.

- 2.11 The real intention of demonetisation, as the government itself revealed at a later stage was, to convert informal economy into formal economy. Demonetisation was a calculated move to open up profitable business opportunities for international finance capital. It was, in reality, a part of government's big-bang reform measures to push for a digital economy to benefit the big corporates and banks that operate credit/debit cards and e-wallets. This shift towards digital economy is intended to help the entry of foreign corporates into our retail financial sector. It was also an effort to indirectly benefit Indian corporates by mobilising resources to provide them with further credit. The monies deposited were used to recapitalise the banks that were affected by the non-payment of loans by these corporates, whose loans the government had written off as bad debt.

- 2.12 Demonetisation has adversely affected small retail traders and also resulted in the closure of many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) leading to massive job losses. Livelihood of unorganised workers was severely affected. Peasants were unable to market their produce, nor purchase seeds and fertilizers for the next sowing season. Over a hundred people died standing in queues to exchange notes. The restrictions imposed on transactions of cooperative banks also compounded the difficulties of rural people, specially in states like Kerala. People's confidence in public sector banks was dealt a severe blow.

GST

- 2.13 The introduction of GST, which is a pro-corporate measure and is a part of the neo-liberal offensive of the government, has increased the burdens on the people. The GST regime has undermined the federal structure which adversely affects the rights of the states and has increased the scale of indirect taxation. GST has put new burdens on the common people, small and tiny enterprises, traders and unorganised sector occupations. Various sectors of industries and services have been badly affected leading to loss of jobs. Agriculture and allied sectors too bore the brunt of GST. Compulsory furnishing of returns online has added to the problems of small traders and enterprises. Contrary to the claim that the GST has brought down the prices of many commodities, the fact is that due to the iniquitous tax structure, there has been a rise in prices of many commodities and services.

Banking Sector & Crony Capitalism

- 2.14 The banking system is burdened with a huge amount of bad loans. This is a feature of the crony capitalism which has been promoted by the earlier UPA government and the current Modi Government, as 85 per cent of the NPAs are owed by corporates and big business. In the last three and a half years under the Modi Government, Rs. 2,29,082 crores worth of loans of nationalised banks were written off. The Rs. 11,500 crore scam in the Punjab National Bank perpetrated by Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi and their fleeing the country before the CBI investigations has glaringly exposed the loot indulged in by the crony capitalists under the Modi regime.
- 2.15 Further the government has introduced the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill (FRDI) which will empower a Financial Resolution Corporation to sell a bank, merge it or invoke a "bail in" process. This new law and mechanism is proposed to be used as an instrument to close or merge public sector banks to advance privatisation. Moreover, the "bail in" provision can be used to appropriate depositors' money to bolster a bank which has doled out lavish loans to big business.

Privatisation Drive

- 2.16 As part of the aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal policies, the Modi Government has launched a large-scale privatisation drive. This has three aspects: (a) privatizing State-owned sectors like defence production, railways, banking, insurance and so on; (b) opening the State sector to 100 per cent FDI; and (c) privatisation of basic services like electricity distribution, water supply and transport.

Thus, the Modi Government is providing a bonanza for big capital, both Indian and foreign.

- 2.17 The Niti Aayog, which was established after dismantling the Planning Commission, has become the prime mover for the privatisation drive. It has recommended that 74 out of the total 235 central public sector enterprises should be closed or sold off through the strategic sale route. The Union Cabinet has given approval for the strategic disinvestment for 20 public sector enterprises. The Aayog has said that State monopolies like the railways, banks and electricity supply companies be opened up for private participation.
- 2.18 The privatisation drive covers all spheres of public sector enterprises. The prime target is the defence production sector. The Bharat Earth Movers Ltd is up for strategic sale. Under the strategic partners programme, major Indian private companies are being invited to tie-up with foreign weapons manufacturers to produce submarines, helicopters, fighter planes etc.
- 2.19 In the steel sector, the Durgapur Alloy Steel Plant and the Salem and Bhadravati Special Steel Plants are to be sold. In the railways, regulatory authority has been set up under which railway lines and other services will be opened up for the private sector. Already, under the PPP model, 400 railway stations are being put up for redevelopment. Coal blocks are being auctioned to private parties and existing coal mines are being privatised.
- 2.20 Through privatisation of basic services, neo-liberalism seeks to make all essential and basic services like water, electricity, transport, education and health to be treated as commodities in the market. Education and health have been particularly targeted for privatisation. The Niti Aayog as per its three-year action agenda wants to privatise health services at all levels. It has proposed private participation in district and taluk level hospitals. It has also proposed handing over government schools with less than 50 students to the private sector under the PPP model.

Agrarian Crisis

- 2.21 Every sphere of the working people's lives and economic activity in rural India – with respect, for example, to land acquisition and land reform policy, costs of cultivation and prices of output, credit and insurance coverage accessible to the poor, food security, cattle resources and international trade – has been set back severely by the policies of the Modi Government. Demonetisation had a deeply damaging and contractionary impact on day-to-day rural economic life as cash transactions predominate in the agricultural economy. The ban on all forms of cattle slaughter in some BJP-ruled states

and restrictions on cattle trade have adversely affected the farmers.

- 2.22 In general, the peasantry has been caught in the pincer represented by rising input costs and inadequate output prices. The impact of rising input costs and of inadequate product prices is not uniform across classes in the countryside. The impact is highly differentiated, and the heaviest burden of rising input costs falls on the shoulders of the poor and middle peasants.
- 2.23 Two phenomena characterise price policy over the last three years. The first is inadequacy: prices often do not even cover peasants' production costs. The second is that Minimum Support Prices, which historically have risen (though inadequately) from year-to-year, are stagnating. During the election campaign of 2014, Narendra Modi announced that he would implement the recommendations of the National Farmers Commission with regard to the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for crops of 50 per cent over the production cost. Soon after coming to power, the BJP Government filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court in February 2015 in which it stated that it was impossible to fulfil that promise. The increase in MSP announced in the past three years for rice and wheat have been the lowest in the previous five years.
- 2.24 The increased alignment of domestic and world prices under neoliberalism actively imported the volatility of international prices – formed in highly monopolistic market environments – into Indian agriculture. The Government of India is under pressure from the WTO regime to curtail the existing MSP and procurement policy on account of violating WTO regulations or the ceiling on product specific support. The intentions of the present government are clear from the report of the Shantakumar committee in January 2015 calling for privatisation of the Food Corporation of India and cessation of procurement operations, as well as the order to State governments preventing them from declaring a bonus or MSP higher than the centrally announced MSP. The latter has come with the threat that FCI will stop procurement operations in States that announce an MSP higher than the central MSP. These are clear warnings that with pressure from the WTO and the USA, the Government of India is withdrawing from its commitment to price support and procurement to millions of farmers.
- 2.25 The NDA Government has intensified the implementation of the policies of the UPA with respect to rural and agricultural credit. The most important beneficiaries of the revival of agricultural credit in the 2000s were corporate groups, joint-stock companies and other organisations. Agriculture has ceased to be an activity of commercial importance to the banking sector in general, which is a

matter of great concern. Indebtedness among the poor and middle farmers is growing rapidly.

2.26 The BJP governments at the Centre and the states are pursuing policies in favour of corporate and agri-business houses and against the interests of farmers in general. In the post-liberalisation period, price volatility and resultant income variability have been major causes of farmers' suicides and agrarian distress. However, the government, despite the demands made by peasant organisations, has ignored the issue of a comprehensive crop and income insurance scheme. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) only theoretically covers non-borrower farmers. The small and marginal farmers, particularly those belonging to Dalit and Adivasi categories, are thus excluded, since they cannot afford the premium.

Loot of Natural Resources & Environment

2.27 Since the advent of the Modi regime, there has been a severe onslaught on the already weak environmental regulatory framework and governance mechanisms directed at undermining them so as to facilitate corporate interests and a pro-rich development agenda. Under the present dispensation, various environmental regulations have been severely diluted, and environmental clearances for industrial or infrastructure projects including in ecologically sensitive forest and coastal areas have become routine, while due diligence in environmental assessment has become a rarity. Clearances have been given at breakneck speed for extractive industries including coal mining in forest and coastal areas with accompanying roads and other infrastructure including in critical wildlife reserves. The Forests Rights Act, the Scheduled Tribes Act, the Wildlife Act, the Coastal Zone Regulations and a host of other legislative provisions have been trampled upon or outrightly violated. Institutional systems for environmental impact assessment (EIA) are now sought to be structurally undermined by transferring EIA to the states. The doors have thus been thrown wide open for rapacious exploitation of natural resources and rampant damage to the environment, badly affecting lives and livelihoods of marginalized sections such as forest dwellers, tribals, fishers and others.

Conditions of the People

Unemployment

2.28 The biggest failure of the Modi Government has been on employment. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data, about 1.5 million (15 lakh) jobs were lost during January-April 2017 as compared to the previous four

months of September to December 2016. Every month around 10 lakh people are entering the labour force, with the majority unable to find jobs and remaining unemployed. As a result of demonetisation the labour participation rate fell from an average of 46.9 per cent between January-October 2016, to 43.5 per cent in April 2017. Apart from the shock of demonetisation, the lack of new investments and economic slowdown are the main reasons for the falling labour participation rates, which is leading to the rising number of unemployed. According to the OECD's Economic Survey of India 2017, over 30 per cent of youth aged 15-29 are not in either employment or education or training. The cut in mandays work under the MNREGA has aggravated the crisis in rural unemployment. A new feature has been the large-scale retrenchment of jobs in the IT sector where thousands of employees have been fired.

Inequalities

2.29 After 25 years of liberalisation, India has become one of the most unequal societies in the world. A 2016 study on the basis of the data collected by the National Sample Survey Organisation showed that the richest 1 per cent of Indians hold 28 per cent of all the wealth in the country. In 1991, it was 11 per cent. The average asset holding of the top 10 per cent in rural areas is almost 228 times the average asset holding of the bottom 10 per cent, while in urban areas the average asset holding of the top 10 per cent is almost 50,000 times the bottom 10 per cent. The inequality in asset distribution is more visible in urban India, where the top 10 per cent own 63 per cent of total assets, while in rural areas, the top 10 per cent own 48 per cent. The latest Oxfam report has found that top 1 per cent has gained 73 per cent of additional wealth generated in the country in 2017.

Food Security & Aadhar

2.30 The Aadhar bio-metric identification being made compulsory for accessing PDS rations has become an instrument for exclusion of lakhs of families. The failure of bio-metric authentication and the seeding of Aadhar card is depriving a large number of poor people from getting rations. Refusal to supply rations has led to hunger-related deaths in Jharkhand and other places. The Food Security Act provisions are not being properly implemented in many states and the Central guidelines are depriving a large number of deserving people from getting the priority status. This has had the effect of disrupting the PDS in Kerala. All this is leading to food security for the people getting seriously compromised.

2.31 Overall, Aadhar has become a comprehensive system of surveillance and is violative of the citizen's right to privacy. Moreover, the data base of the UIDAI is being made available to private interests to exploit commercially.

Price Rise of Petrol & Diesel

2.32 The people were deprived of the benefit of the steep fall in the international oil prices since 2014, because the Modi Government increased the excise duties on petrol and diesel nine times in the past three years. The tax component of the price of one litre of petrol is Rs. 21.48 and for diesel Rs. 17.33 as a result. With the upward trend in international oil prices, the prices of petrol and diesel have been rising again. The government refuses to provide relief to the people by cutting down the excise duties.

Attacks on Workers

2.33 In its pursuit of neoliberal policies, the BJP-led government took several measures to facilitate intensification of exploitation of workers. It has hastened the process of amending labour laws to benefit employers and improve 'Ease of doing business'. The Apprentices (Amendment) Act and Labour Laws Amendment Act have already been enacted. The Codes on Wages bill introduced in Parliament and the proposed Codes on Industrial Relations and Social Security will deprive workers of basic rights, including rights to organisation, collective bargaining and social security. Several BJP-ruled state governments have amended labour laws in the above direction. The Government of India has directed all the state governments to follow suit.

2.34 The share of contract and casual workers in the organised sector has increased. The government has decided to allow fixed term employment in all sectors depriving the workers service continuity, etc. This will hasten contractualisation of labour. According to Labour Bureau's fifth annual employment-unemployment survey report 2015-16, (conducted between April and December 2015), 77% of the households in the country have no regular wage/salaried person. 57.2% of the regular wage/salaried workers earn less than Rs 10,000 per month. 38.5% of contract workers and 59.3% of casual workers earn less than Rs 5,000. There are a large number of migrant workers in various states who are denied basic rights, without social security protection and discriminated against.

2.35 Female labour force participation which was 25.8 per cent in 2013-14, has come down to 23.7 per cent. The government refuses to implement the ILC recommendation to recognise as 'workers' the lakhs of workers, mostly women working in government schemes,

pay them minimum wages and provide them social security benefits. It is taking measures to privatise these schemes and dismantle them.

2.36 Lakhs of workers lost their employment and income due to demonetisation. According to the data put out by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), 90 lakh jobs were lost between October 2016 and October 2017. A majority of the listed companies have shown a net decline in their employment in 2016-17.

Women's Status: Regression

2.37 The last four years have seen a regression in women's rights to economic independence, security and autonomy. Violence against women, sexual, communal and domestic, murder, cyber crimes, and caste-based violence against dalit women have increased. With an average of 106 rape cases being registered every day in 2016, total crimes against women have increased by 2.9 per cent over the previous year, 2015. The most disturbing feature is the huge increase, by 82 per cent, in child rape cases. Harassment of women at workplaces has grown tremendously. Violence against disabled women and children have also increased. However, conviction rates remain low. On the other hand, women protection laws such as 498A of the IPC are sought to be diluted. Besides, the Nirbhaya fund is underutilised. This shows the utter failure of the Modi Government to prioritise women's security and implement the Verma Committee's recommendations.

2.38 Poor, scheduled caste and adivasi women have been most vulnerable with twin assaults on their economic and social rights. Women are not getting widow or old age pension also due to Aadhar problems. Price rise, weakening of food security, criminal neglect of the needs of self help women's groups have badly hit women. Unavailability of institutional credit put them under the clutches of usurious moneylenders and Microfinance Institutions. In this period even though more women are looking for jobs, work participation rates have come down because of lack of jobs. Women in the unorganized sector were very badly hit due to demonetisation. Alongside, the scope of work under MNREGA is getting drastically reduced.

2.39 Hindutva ideologies are being propagated in a most aggressive manner among the mass of women in the guise of religious beliefs and tradition. This is also reflected in moral policing of girls, vigilante groups and even state promoted formations like anti-romeo squads. This is also reflected in the effort to dilute laws against domestic violence and the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (PNDT Act), which is being

strongly resisted by democratic women's movements. Even while it seeks to hijack Muslim women's struggles for justice within the personal laws, the Government has refused to bring any legislation against so-called honour crimes, which are increasing. The general communal offensive by the RSS and its affiliates has also led to the increase in minority fundamentalist forces. Equal citizenship rights of women are targeted from both sides.

2.40 The Modi Government has virtually shelved the Women's Reservation Bill. On all these issues, Left and democratic organisations of women have been in the forefront to defend women's rights and status. The RSS has long opposed reservation on grounds that it 'disrupts' family life.

Dalits: Worsening Plight

2.41 Dalits are the worst affected by the aggressive pursuit of neoliberal reforms by the central and state governments. Drastic cuts in the budgetary allotments for social welfare and poverty alleviation programmes, education and health are playing havoc with livelihoods of the poor, especially dalits. Many SC & ST students are not getting their scholarships due to Aadhar problems. The NDA government had jettisoned the provision of SC, ST component plan in the central budget dealing a body blow to the development of these sections. Jobless/job loss growth, ban on regular employment even in government services state and central, contractualisation of work, all-pervading privatisation, lack of reservations in private sector are eliminating reservations for weaker sections, thus making unemployment among educated dalit youth particularly alarming.

2.42 Crimes against dalits are increasing. Data on atrocities against dalits show a steady increase over the years 2015 to 2017. The actual crimes are more as dalits are often not allowed to register a FIR. The brazen encouragement of caste prejudices by Hindutva forces in the name of age-old Indian culture, further emboldened sections of dominant castes to perpetrate discrimination and atrocities against dalits with impunity. The Supreme Court judgment diluting the provisions of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act further worsens the situation. Dalits have become targets of attack by cow vigilantes. The ban on slaughter of all forms of cattle and prevention of cattle trade have affected the livelihood of many dalits engaged in leather manufacturing and trade. Despite legal directions banning carrying of night soil by dalits, this demeaning practice continues with the government showing no interest in its abolition.

2.43 Discontent and resentment is increasing among dalits because of caste discrimination, daily oppression meted out to them and

increasing marginalization as a result of government policies. Their anger is manifesting in growing resistance against atrocities and humiliations. Mobilisation in Mumbai against the demolition of Ambedkar Bhawan, widespread movement against the Una flogging incident, countrywide protest movement against the institutional murder of Rohit Vemula of Hyderabad Central University, the mobilization organized by Bheem Army against attacks on dalits in western UP, the bandh in Maharashtra to protest against the attacks on dalits attending the Bhima-Koregaon anniversary, the all India bandh against the dilution of the SC/ST POA Act, are some of the prominent instances of this growing resistance.

- 2.44 In its project to polarize people on communal lines, the BJP and RSS are trying to influence dalits on communal lines by trying to appropriate Ambedkar's legacy and depict him as a votary of Hindutva, and against Islam. All the democratic and secular forces should be aware of these manoeuvres and expose the sinister design of these forces. Mobilization of dalits and other weaker sections for the cause of social justice should become an important plank in our fight against the Hindutva communal forces.

Attack on Adivasi Rights

- 2.45 Tribal identity and ways of life are sought to be homogenized and Hinduised through an offensive of the carriers of Hindutva ideologies and RSS adivasi organisations, who refer to adivasis as vanvasis tuned to Brahmanical readings of history. At the same time, traditional livelihoods, including access to minor forest produce, are being disrupted through aggressive neo-liberal capitalist policies in tribal inhabited areas in the name of ease of business, leading to massive displacement, migration and brutal process of proletarianisation of tribal communities in most parts of India under BJP rule. This has a long term devastating impact on communities, on their increase in economic vulnerability, food insecurity, poor health status, and increase in malnourishment. The condition of adivasi student hostels for girls and boys are deplorable and the criminal delays and refusal to increase funds for scholarships is a direct form of discrimination against adivasi students, many of whom suffer also due to the delay in receiving ST certificates. These are critical issues on which struggles have to be built up.
- 2.46 The introduction of laws like the CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority Act), the anti-tribal amendments to the Mineral and Mines (Regulation and Development) Act give sanction to landgrab of tribal land leading to huge displacements. In Jharkhand the BJP Government tried to amend the Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas tenancy laws to

permit takeover of tribal land but united struggles of the adivasis forced them to withdraw the amendments although the attempt is to bring them back in new forms. The Forest Rights Act, a landmark law, is sought to be diluted through incremental changes in the Rules to eliminate the role of gram sabhas. The dilution of Panchayats (**Extension** to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) and the provisions of the Fifth Schedule show the contempt that the Modi Government has for constitutional rights of adivasis.

- 2.47 This period has seen militant adivasi struggles against the all-round attack launched against tribal rights by the Modi Government and State Governments led by the BJP in the economic, legal, social and cultural spheres. Many of these agitations have faced police repression and firing. In the name of fighting Maoists, innocent adivasis have been falsely arrested or faced repression by the State forces including sexual assault on adivasi women. While opposing Maoist politics, democratic mobilization against State repression is necessary.

Minorities under Siege

- 2.48 The rightwing communal offensive has created a climate of fear and insecurity amongst the Muslim minority. The lynching of innocent Muslim men and boys by so-called *Gau Rakshaks* and the palpable bias of the state administration in dealing with such incidents in BJP-ruled states has heightened their insecurity. The BJP state governments like Uttar Pradesh have targeted the livelihood of lakhs of Muslims by closing down slaughter houses and retail meat shops. The ban on all forms of cattle slaughter has led to loss of livelihood for Muslims in the cattle and meat trade. Christian churches and congregations have been attacked in various places, particularly in BJP-ruled states like Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- 2.49 The official rhetoric of branding people as 'terrorists' and 'anti-national' leads to the indiscriminate use of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and sedition laws against innocent Muslim youth. It is this climate of repression which helps Muslim fundamentalism and extremism to grow. The Party and the mass organizations should take up all issues of harassment and targeting of Muslims. They must be made part of the wider platform of defence of democratic rights. The offensive of majority communalism is creating grounds for the activities of minority communalism and extremism. Such trends are harmful for the interests of the minorities and must be countered in order to forge people's unity to combat the threat from the Hindutva forces.

Taking Social Issues Forward

2.50 Successive Party Congresses have emphasized the importance of taking up social issues and linking them to the general political platform of the Party. This has become all the more vital since the Hindutva offensive targets women, children, dalits, adivasis and minority rights. The Party should be active in the campaign against violence on women and in defence of minority rights. The Party should champion the issues against caste oppression and discrimination, particularly concerning the dalits and most backward classes. The Party should extend full support to the activities of the dalit and adivasi platforms.

Hindutva Offensive

2.51 The last nearly four years have seen the unfolding of the blueprint of the RSS utilising State power to infiltrate RSS personnel in key positions in various institutions of the State. Most of the Governors of states appointed are BJP-RSS men, some of whom utilise their positions to advocate the communal agenda. Constitutional bodies are being subverted from within. BJP and RSS leaders openly express their desire to change the Constitution.

2.52 Educational and cultural institutions are being communalised. Institutions like the UGC, NCERT, ICHR and ICSSR have RSS men or those pliable to Hindutva, appointed as heads. Central universities like JNU, HCU and Pondicherry University have come under attack as efforts to change the course content, discipline teachers and attacks on students' unions and organisations have been made. History is being rewritten, and secular and scientific historical work rejected. The attacks on scientific institutions and science stems from the regressive Hindutva outlook. Outlays for scientific institutions and research have been cut. Anti-science views based on obscurantist and religious dogmas are being officially promoted. Such views have a dual impact on women and dovetail with the Manuvadi Hindutva view of women as subordinate to the male.

2.53 While the Hindutva agenda is imposed from above by the central government, at the ground level, the RSS-led Hindutva outfits have a free run. With a view to target the Muslims, *gau rakshak* gangs set upon cattle traders or farmers and conduct lynch-mob attacks. There have been over thirty killings on the issue of cow slaughter or beef in the past three years in these fascistic-type attacks. The BJP-RSS state governments openly patronise and back cow vigilantes. Targetting Muslims for 'love jihad' and branding them as 'anti-national' are other instruments used by the Hindutva brigade to create communal polarisation. Communal riots

are being systematically organized at the time of religious festivals like Ram Navami.

- 2.54 The other target of these gangs has been dalits who are involved in cattle trade and skinning of dead cattle. The brutal beating up of four dalit youth in Una, in Gujarat, was a part of this anti-dalit drive.
- 2.55 The Hindutva extremist groups have especially targeted intellectuals and writers who propagate rationalist and secular views. Narendra Dabholkar's killing was followed by the murder of Govind Pansare in Maharashtra. In Karnataka, Prof. M.M. Kalburgi became a target of these forces. They struck again, killing Gauri Lankesh. Such fascistic attacks are meant to silence and intimidate the opponents of Hindutva.

Jammu & Kashmir

- 2.56 There has been a sharp deterioration in the situation in the Kashmir valley since the last Party Congress. As apprehended then, the formation of a PDP-BJP coalition government in the state has only sharpened the communal divide between Jammu and the valley. The approach of the Modi Government has been, in practice, to deny any special status to Jammu & Kashmir. This has led to the alienation of the people in the valley with the Indian State to an extent never seen before.
- 2.57 The killing of Burhan Wani, a Hizbul militant, by the security forces in July 2016, led to a big popular upsurge. This was brutally suppressed by the security forces. Over 6,000 young people were injured and over 500 suffered eye-injuries, many were blinded either in one eye or both eyes by the use of pellet guns. Such repression gave a fillip to militancy, which, in turn, led to a crackdown by the security forces. While militant activities have been curbed to an extent, the alienation of the people remains deep.
- 2.58 The Modi Government has sought to tackle unrest and alienation with the use of force. It refused to heed the call for starting a political dialogue or accept the proposals of the parliamentary delegation which visited the state in September 2016. On the contrary, the legal challenge to Article 35A of the Constitution, meant to protect the rights of permanent residents, has further raised suspicions about the Hindutva agenda. The belated appointment of an ex-intelligence chief as the interlocuter has not inspired any confidence about the seriousness of the Centre's intentions.

2.59 The CPI(M) is totally opposed to the political approach of the Modi Government with regard to the problem of Jammu & Kashmir. The CPI(M) reiterates its stand that there has to be a political dialogue with all shades of the political spectrum. This must be accompanied by political dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue. There must be an end to police repression, the use of pellet guns and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. There has to be an assurance that the originally intended provisions of Article 370 would be restored and regional autonomy provided for the three regions – Jammu, the Kashmir valley and Ladakh.

North East

2.60 The main danger in the sensitive North Eastern region is the fertile ground being created for communal tensions and ethnic discord since the Modi Government came to power, followed by the formation of the BJP-led government in Assam. The introduction of the Bill to amend the Citizenship Act in parliament, whereby Hindu immigrants would be granted citizenship automatically, has raised fears of exclusion among the Assamiya community, other ethnic communities and specially the Muslims of East Bengal origin. The efforts to tinker with the process of enrolment in the National Register of Citizens, based on the cut-off date of March 1971, and monitored by the Supreme Court, is also causing anxieties, particularly for the people from East Bengal who are settled in Assam from pre-independence days. The BJP-led government refuses to recognize the devastating flood problem of Assam as a national problem and allot necessary funds to solve it.

2.61 The Naga Framework Agreement, the contents of which have not been made public, is causing anxiety and apprehensions among the people of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh about the status of greater Nagaland. The BJP and the RSS are seeking to win over various ethnic and tribal communities on the basis of their communal agenda. These moves threaten communal and ethnic harmony. All it seeks to do is to win over local elites and parties to its side to advance its political agenda.

2.62 The approach of the BJP government at the Centre is the same as that of past governments in refusing to act upon the need for a comprehensive development of the North Eastern region. The abolition of the Planning Commission has led to scrapping of the ten per cent of development funds being reserved for the North East. This will adversely affect the overall development of the region.

Assault on Federalism

- 2.63 The Modi Government has been centralising powers and systematically eroding states' rights. The implementation of GST has deprived the states of whatever powers they had to levy taxes. The Centre is imposing arbitrary cuts in funds to states. The use of Governors by the central government to impose President's rule was seen in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. The terms of reference set by the Modi government for the fifth Finance Commission is yet another assault on federalism and states' rights. The Governor of Tamilnadu and the Lt. Governors in Delhi and Puducherry are being used to intervene in state matters. The proposal to hold simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies can only be done by curbing the terms of the state assemblies or by abridging the power to vote out state governments. Such a proposal is contrary to the basic features of the Constitution.
- 2.64 The Central government and institutions are misusing their powers to impose diktats on the use of Hindi and other directives on education and culture which are an onslaught on states' rights.

Authoritarian Measures

- 2.65 The combination of Hindutva and corporate power is fuelling the drive towards authoritarianism. The period has seen a series of authoritarian measures. The Modi Government has denigrated Parliament by bypassing the Rajya Sabha through the subterfuge of classifying legislations as 'money bills'. It has resorted to the use of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act and sedition clauses to brand people as anti-national and suppress dissenting opinions.
- 2.66 The revelations by the four senior-most judges after the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, have raised disturbing questions of how the integrity of the higher judiciary is getting affected by extraneous pressures from the executive. The government is also seeking to get veto power on the appointment of judges on the grounds of national security.
- 2.67 The Modi Government is using intimidatory tactics to tame those sections of the media which have not fallen in line. Already a big section of the corporate media is stridently supporting the jingoistic and Hindutva line of the BJP. Threats of filing cases, removal of editors and pressure to suppress unfavourable news are resorted to.

Big Money and Corruption

- 2.68 The Modi Government has taken a step to legitimize corruption and slush money by corporates and MNCs. The introduction of electoral bonds, which will be anonymous, will lead to the ruling party getting kickbacks for contracts given through this method. Neither the entity giving the bond nor the recipient party need to declare the name of the donor. Further, the government has amended the law which sets a limit of 7.5 per cent of the company's net profits (average for three years) for donations to a political party. With this cap being removed, large amounts can be given legally. This will encourage money-laundering and bribery on a large scale.
- 2.69 The BJP government, which boasted there will be zero corruption under its rule, has been exposed with the Rafale fighter aircraft deal. The Prime Minister himself changed the extant order and made a new agreement in which instead of the public sector HAL, the Anil Ambani company is made a partner for the offsets to the tune of Rs. 21,000 crore. In the BJP-ruled states, there are corruption scandals galore, starting from Vyapam in Madhya Pradesh, the land and chikki scams in Maharashtra, the mining scandal in Rajasthan and the PDS scam in Chattisgarh. The scandalous affair of the company owned by Amit Shah's son is yet another example. The Modi government has not implemented the law to appoint a Lok Pal.

Electoral Reforms

- 2.70 The Modi Government's steps to legitimize big money in elections through electoral bonds underline the necessity and urgency of electoral reforms. VVPAT machines must be attached to all electronic machines and at least 20 per cent of the VVPAT ballot should be tallied with the results of the voting machines during counting. Measures to check money power requires state funding of elections. Instead, the BJP government has retrospectively amended the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act through the Finance Bill to legitimize the acceptance of foreign funds by political parties. The amendment enables subsidiaries of MNCs and companies controlled by foreign capital to donate money to political parties. This dangerous provision has to be scrapped. There has to be a basic change in the electoral system with the introduction of the principle of proportional representation. The Party's stand for proportional representation with a partial list system must be widely propagated.

Foreign Policy: In the US Camp

- 2.71 The shift from non-alignment towards a pro-US orientation in foreign policy coincided with the liberalization policies in 1991.

Over two and a half decades, successive governments of the Congress and BJP have moved towards strategic collaboration with the United States. After the ten-year rule of the UPA government which saw more steps towards forging a strategic alliance with the US, the Modi Government has intensified and widened this pro-US foreign policy.

- 2.72 The Indo-US Joint Vision Statement during the Obama visit in January 2015 committed India to coordinate with the US pivot to Asia and its geo-political strategy for the Asia-Pacific. Narendra Modi has gone further in joining the trilateral security alliance with Japan and US and graduating to the US-sponsored quadrilateral alliance with Japan, Australia and US.
- 2.73 The military collaboration has deepened with the US designating India as a 'major defence partner'. The India-US Defence Framework Agreement has been renewed for ten more years. A major step has been the signing of the Logistics Exchange Agreement called LEMOA which will allow US warships and air force planes to use Indian bases for refueling, servicing and maintenance. This is an infringement of Indian sovereignty, which no government dared to do before.
- 2.74 Relations with Israel have been deepened. Modi became the first Prime Minister to visit Israel and pointedly avoided visiting the Palestinian Authority, something which even the US Presidents do. In a departure, the Prime Minister did not attend the Non-Aligned Summit at Caracas.
- 2.75 India became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in June 2017. It is also part of BRICS. But the Modi Government is only concerned with the issue of terrorism and is not using these forums to strengthen regional cooperation and multipolarity.
- 2.76 The Modi Government's policy towards our South Asian neighbours has hampered good and close relations. By supporting the economic blockade of Nepal by the Madeshi agitation, India antagonized the people of Nepal and all political forces. For Bangladesh, the Indian stand on Rohingya refugees is not at all helpful. The Modi Government adopts a confrontationist attitude on Pakistan abjuring any possibility of dialogue. This is motivated by its narrow political interests of whipping up national chauvinism and sharpening communal polarization in the country.

Growing Resistance & Widening Struggles

2.77 The period has been marked by the growing resistance against the Modi Government's economic policies, the communal agenda and authoritarian onslaughts.

(i) There have been united struggles of the peasantry, chief among them being the eleven-day strike by farmers in Maharashtra culminating in the historic long march of peasants from Nasik to Mumbai that marked a new milestone in the history of peasant struggles; the spontaneous struggles of farmers in Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh) and neighbouring districts; the struggle against the amendments to the Santhal Parganas and Chhotanagpur Tenancy Acts in Jharkhand; and the sustained and widespread movement of farmers with the support of all sections of the rural population in Sikar and five other districts in Rajasthan. These struggles succeeded in wresting some of the demands from the state governments. United struggles by farmers' organisations succeeded in stalling the Modi government's move to dilute the Land Acquisition Act. The Kisan Parliament on November 20-21, 2017 organised by a united platform of 187 organisations saw a big mobilisation of kisans from all over the country. This was the most significant united kisan action in recent times. In all these struggles, the All India Kisan Sabha played a vital role.

(ii) The united platform of trade unions conducted a general strike on September 2, 2016 which widened the participation of workers and employees. There have been important sector-wise strike struggles against privatisation by bank employees, steel workers and BSNL employees. Notable among them were the anganwadi workers sit-in struggle in Bengaluru and a month-long state-wide total strike in Maharashtra. The first all India strike by road transport workers took place in April 2015 which saw massive participation. The three-day joint *mahapadav* of workers from November 9 to 11, 2017, outside Parliament in Delhi saw more than a lakh workers participating in a unique protest action. In all these struggles, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions played a vital role.

(iii) Against the communal authoritarian onslaughts there have been struggles of the students in central universities like JNU, HCU, FTII, IIT (Madras) etc. There have been mass protests and rallies against the fascistic type of attacks on minorities by cow vigilantes and killing of writers and journalists. A large number of prominent writers and artists returned their awards after Kalburgi's killing. There were countrywide protests after Gauri Lankesh's killing.

(iv) There were countrywide protest actions on the death of Rohit Vemula and the Una atrocity on dalits and united campaigns by Left and dalit organisations. The Dalit Swabhiman Sangharsh Manch emerged as a

platform of Left parties and dalit organisations which conducted rallies in various centers.

(v) A platform of mass, class organisations and social movements has been set up, the *Jan Ekta, Jan Adhikar Aandolan* (Movement for People's Unity & Rights) in September 2017. It has set out a charter of demands around which united campaigns and struggles will be launched.

To sum up the situation:

2.78 The BJP has consolidated its political position. Under the Modi Government, there has been an intensification of the neo-liberal capitalist exploitation of the people; the secular-democratic framework of the Constitution is being eroded with the pursuit of the Hindutva agenda; and the BJP-led government has bound India closer to the imperialist strategy of the United States. All this marks the onset of an aggressive neo-liberal authoritarian-communal regime.

2.79 At the same time, there are signs of growing popular discontent against the Modi Government's policies, which are also manifested in the growing resistance and struggles of different sections of the people. The contradictions between the ruling classes on the one hand, and the working class and peasantry on the other, have grown. We must intervene in the situation to take forward the various struggles of the working people.

2.80 Authoritarianism in different forms arises at various junctures when a system is dominated by the big bourgeois-landlord classes. Our tactics must be directed towards weakening the big bourgeois-landlord domination, if we are to effectively fight authoritarian rule.

2.81 The Party should step up its intervention to advance the struggles of various sections of the working people against the economic burdens being imposed upon them. Combining these struggles against the impact of the neo-liberal policies with the struggles against the communal agenda is the way to advance the struggle against the BJP-RSS combine. The struggles against the neo-liberal policies, Hindutva communalism and authoritarianism, are all inextricably interlinked.

Position of Political Parties

BJP

2.82 The BJP, as the Party Programme points out, is "a reactionary party with a divisive and communal platform, the reactionary content of which is based on hatred against other religions, intolerance and

ultra-nationalist chauvinism. The BJP is no ordinary bourgeois party as the fascistic Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh guides and dominates it. When the BJP is in power, the RSS gets access to the instruments of State power and the State machinery." The BJP is run and controlled by the fascistic RSS.

- 2.83 There is greater coordination between the RSS and the government under Narendra Modi as compared to the earlier Vajpayee government. Further, Narendra Modi was able to enlist wider support from the big bourgeoisie for the BJP.
- 2.84 The BJP has grown and replaced the Congress as the dominant political party of the big bourgeois-landlord classes. Utilising state power, the BJP-RSS combine has spread its organisation and influence all over the country. In order to expand its influence, the BJP has been co-opting defectors from the Congress and other bourgeois parties, especially in states where it has been weak, such as the North-Eastern states.
- 2.85 At present, the BJP is in government solely or in coalition in 21 out of 29 states. It has a majority in the Lok Sabha and has emerged as the single largest party in the Rajya Sabha. For the first time the President and Vice President both belong to the BJP-RSS stock.

Congress Party

- 2.86 The Congress party has the same class character as that of the BJP. It represents the interests of the big bourgeois-landlord classes. Its political influence and organisation has been declining and it has conceded the space as the premier ruling class party to the BJP. The Congress professes to be secular but it has proved to be incapable of consistently fighting the communal forces. The Congress had pioneered the neo-liberal agenda and forged the strategic alliance with the United States when it was in power. As the main opposition party, it continues to advocate these policies. It is necessary to oppose these policies.
- 2.87 The three basic tasks of the People's Democratic Revolution are anti-monopoly, anti-landlord and anti-imperialist. As the Party Programme points out:
- "However, these basic and fundamental tasks of the revolution in today's context cannot be carried out except in determined opposition to, and struggle against, the big bourgeoisie and its political representatives who occupy the leading position in the State".
- 2.88 The political representatives of the big bourgeoisie at present in our country are the BJP and the Congress. Based on our programmatic

understanding, the Congress represents the interests of the big bourgeoisie and landlords and adopts pro-imperialist policies. Therefore, we cannot have a tactical line which treats them as allies or partners in a united front.

- 2.89 But it is the BJP which is in power today and given its basic link to the RSS, it is the main threat. So, there cannot be a line of treating both the BJP and the Congress as equal dangers.

Regional Parties

- 2.90 The changed role of regional parties has been analysed and summed up in the review of the Political-Tactical line adopted by the 21st Congress. The regional parties represent the interests of the bourgeois-landlord classes of their regions whose class interests have been reflected in the attitude to the neo-liberal policies of the regional parties. We had also noted the opportunism which emanates from the desire to grab the opportunities provided by allying with the BJP or the Congress to be part of coalition governments at the Centre.

- 2.91 At the time of the 2014 Lok Sabha elections the major regional parties which had allied with the BJP were the Akali Dal, TDP and the AGP. Since then, the JD(U) has defected back to the BJP, betraying the mandate it received in the 2015 state assembly elections. After the death of Jayalalitha, the AIADMK got divided. The two major factions have reunited with both vying to be close to the BJP. The TDP has recently withdrawn from the NDA on the issue of special status not being granted to Andhra Pradesh. Other regional parties in power like the BJD in Odisha and the TRS in Telangana had initially refrained from opposing the Modi Government and sought to compromise with the BJP. The YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh has also adopted a similar posture. The Trinamul Congress in West Bengal is an autocratic and undemocratic party which indulges in competitive communalism vis a vis the BJP to consolidate its political power.

- 2.92 There are other regional parties which have not joined hands with the BJP. We should try and develop united actions on people's issues, against communalism and authoritarian attacks with these parties wherever possible.

- 2.93 The role and politics of specific regional parties in a state must be taken into account while working out our tactical approach to them. Such an approach must keep in mind advancing the Party's interest and for rallying the Left and democratic forces. However, there is no scope for a national level alliance with the regional parties.

Left Bases

- 2.94 The political resolution of the 21st Congress had underlined the importance of safeguarding the base of the Party and the Left in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura in the light of the reverses suffered in West Bengal. The BJP has been targeting the Left-led states of Kerala and Tripura. Since then the BJP has won the election in Tripura and after the results were declared, there have been widespread attacks designed to suppress the Party and the Left movement. The BJP has been targeting Kerala too where attacks on Party offices and workers have increased after the LDF government came to office.
- 2.95 The defence of the Party and its bases in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura assumes critical importance at this juncture. All necessary organizational measures must be taken to rebuff the attacks, protect the Party organization and to maintain and expand the links with the people.

Kerala

- 2.96 The CPI(M) and the LDF won the Kerala assembly elections in May 2016 getting 91 out of the 140 seats. The LDF polled 43.35 per cent of the vote as compared to the UDF which got 38.8 per cent. At the same time, the BJP along with its allies got 15 per cent. The LDF government has implemented many of the commitments made in the election manifesto. It has enhanced minimum wage in all sectors to Rs. 600 a day. It has increased pensions for various categories of people. It is taking steps to upgrade the public education and public health systems. It has provided reservation for SC/OBC in the posts of temple priests. The government has launched four missions: (i) Life – for providing housing to all homeless; (ii) Ardram – total health care project; (iii) to upgrade public education systems; and (iv) Haritha Keralam – green mission for total sanitation, organic farming and protection of rivers and watersheds.
- 2.97 Ever since the LDF took office, the RSS has stepped up its attacks on CPI(M) cadres and supporters. Thirteen comrades were killed and more than 200 Party members and sympathisers injured. Over 200 houses and around 50 party offices were also attacked, set on fire or vandalised.
- 2.98 The RSS and the BJP have been conducting an all India campaign against the CPI(M) and the LDF government falsely accusing it of targeting RSS-BJP workers to eliminate them. The Party and the LDF have conducted a vigorous mass campaign to counter the lies

of the BJP-RSS combine. At such a juncture, the Congress-led UDF is competing with the BJP to oppose the LDF government.

Tripura

2.99 The Tripura assembly election held in February 2018 has resulted in the defeat of the Left Front and the formation of a BJP-IPFT government. This is a big setback for the CPI(M) and the Left and democratic forces. The BJP-IPFT alliance got a two-third majority with 43 seats polling 50.5 per cent of the vote. The Left Front got 44.9 per cent of the vote and won 16 seats. There has been a reduction in 7.45 percentage points compared to the last assembly election.

2.100 The Left Front was continuously in government in Tripura for 25 years since 1993. The Left Front government had taken forward development work and social welfare measures which made Tripura stand out in the North-East as a model. It established an enviable record in social indicators. The government had reduced the percentage of people living below the poverty line by 62 per cent. The rights of the tribal people were assured under the Autonomous District Council set-up under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

2.101 Yet, despite this good all-round record, the BJP succeeded in rallying support by consolidating all the anti-Left forces. The Congress party was almost entirely appropriated by the BJP. The BJP allied with the IPFT whose slogan of a separate Tripura state for the tribals had an appeal among the tribal masses, particularly the youth. The slogan of change and the lavish promises made by the BJP and the Prime Minister attracted sections of the people. The huge amount of money spent succeeded in winning over other opposition workers and in influencing sections of the voters. There has to be an in-depth examination of how the tribal base of the Party was eroded; about the organizational weaknesses and the impact of the performance of local bodies.

2.102 The Party and the mass organizations are facing widespread attacks in the post-poll situation. Hundreds of Party offices were attacked, burnt down or ransacked; houses of activists and supporters attacked; trade union offices have been captured or destroyed. Panchayats and local bodies are being captured or paralysed by forcing members to resign or defect. The aim is to immobilize the Party and terrorise its mass base. The Party and the Left Front will stand firm in the face of this violent campaign. It will take the necessary steps to strengthen the organisation, mobilize people to resist the attacks and to maintain live links with the people.

West Bengal

2.103 The TMC regime has been maintaining its reign of terror and fascistic type attacks directed against the CPI(M) and the Left Front. After the 2016 assembly elections, the TMC launched widespread attacks against the Party, particularly in areas where the Party retained its mass base. Since June 2016, 31 CPI(M) members and supporters were killed by the TMC goons. Another move resorted to was to forcibly capture the panchayat samitis and gram panchayats and municipal bodies where the CPI(M) had a majority. Thousands of people had to leave their homes due to the threats and attacks. There has been a pre-election rigging of the 2018 panchayat elections through widespread attacks and violence to prevent nominations being filed by Left Front and opposition candidates.

2.104 The Party worked out a plan to revive its links with the people. Various jathas and padayatras have been conducted by the Party, the Left Front and the mass organisations. There was the Nabanna march of the kisan and agricultural labour organisations. The most recent campaign has been of the Bengal Platform of Mass Organisations (BPMO), which has conducted padayatras and jathas in most of the blocks and polling booths.

2.105 The TMC, while ostensibly opposing the BJP, is adopting such postures which facilitate communal polarisation. Thereby it seeks to marginalise the Left. The Party is fighting both the anti-democratic regime of the TMC and the communal machinations of the BJP. The Party has taken steps to streamline the Party organisation and improve the quality of Party membership so that the organisation can discharge its responsibility in this complex situation.

Independent Strength of the Party

2.106 The key to the advance of the Party and building the Left and Democratic Front is increasing the independent strength of the Party. This has become all the more important given the setbacks in West Bengal and Tripura and the lack of advance in other states apart from Kerala. It is only by expanding the base and influence of the Party that we can go towards the Left and democratic alternative. This requires an all-sided and concerted effort to forge live links with the people and to develop class and mass struggles and consolidate these into political influence.

2.107 The Party has to vigorously conduct political and ideological campaigns to counter the ideology and politics of the ruling class. The Party must intervene and take up struggles on social issues. The mass and class organisations should become the forums for

mobilising the widest sections of the people to organise them for sustained movements and broad-based struggles.

Left Unity

2.108 United actions by the Left parties have been taking place in many states apart from West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, notably in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamilnadu, Assam and Punjab. However, at the national level, given the divergent political positions taken by some of the Left parties, there have been difficulties in further strengthening and conducting united activities. The RSP and Forward Bloc state units of Kerala are in the Congress-led UDF. The CPI has adopted a political line which advocates uniting with all the secular parties, including the Congress.

2.109 After a gap, calls for united Left actions were given on the first anniversary of demonetisation and the 25th anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 2017. Some united understanding on the joint platform of mass organizations and social movements was also arrived at. We must conduct a principled struggle for Left unity based on a common political outlook.

Left and Democratic Front

2.110 The 21st Congress had called for restoring the primacy of the Left and Democratic Front. It is this front which is the real alternative to the bourgeois-landlord policies. The Political Resolution had spelt out the contours of such a front: "At present, the nucleus of the forces that can be drawn into the Left and Democratic Front are of the Left parties and their class and mass organisations; Left groups and intellectuals; socialists scattered in various parties and democratic sections within the secular bourgeois parties; democratic organisations of the adivasis, dalits, women and minorities and social movements which are taking up the issues of the oppressed sections. Only by drawing all these forces on to a joint platform based on a programme that is distinct and opposed to the policies of the bourgeois-landlord parties can the movement towards the Left and Democratic Front take a concrete shape."

2.111 A step in this direction was taken by the formation of the Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan – a platform of various class, mass organizations and social movements. More efforts are required to make this a powerful common platform which can launch countrywide united struggles. Our efforts should be to take forward these united struggles which can contribute towards the building of a Left and democratic alternative.

2.112 Efforts to bring together the Left, democratic forces including parties, mass organizations, democratic organizations, social movements and intellectuals around a programme relevant to the state must be made in all the states. At the same time, the Left and democratic alternative should be projected at the national level through united Left platforms.

2.113 Having treated it as a propaganda slogan for long, the entire Party has to be educated to take up this task as a priority in the coming days.

Left and Democratic Programme: An Alternative

2.114 The Left and democratic programme presents alternative policies to the neo-liberal and bourgeois-landlord policies. They include the basic demands of the working class, peasantry, rural labour and other sections of the working people. This broad set of issues and demands can be concretised for rallying the Left and democratic forces for projecting the Left and democratic alternative and to build class struggles and mass movements.

2.115 The contours of the programme are as follows:

1. **Secularism:** Separation of religion and State as the basic principle of secularism to be embodied in the Constitution; legislation to outlaw hate campaign based on religious communalism and caste chauvinism; removal of all RSS personnel from State institutions.
2. **Federalism:** Restructure Centre-State relations with more powers to the states; revise concurrent list for this purpose. Replace Article 356 with suitable provision; revamp role of Governors; provide maximum autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir by restoring Article 370.
3. **Democracy:** Expand democratic rights of citizens; repeal Armed Forces Special Powers Act and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act; remove sedition clause from the Indian Penal Code; abolition of death penalty; electoral reforms to curb money power; introduce proportional representation with partial list system; greater devolution of powers and functions to elected local bodies.
4. **Economic Policy & Development:**
 - (i) Restore planning to promote balanced and self-reliant development; develop the productive forces, generate employment and reduce economic and social inequalities.
 - (ii) Implement basic land reforms and ensure democratic transformation of agrarian relations; land to be distributed to landless rural workers; development of cooperative farming and marketing.

- (iii) Re-nationalise privatised public sector enterprises; roll back privatisation in basic services like electricity, water supply and public transport; health and education; curb monopolies; fiscal and tax measures for redistribution of wealth; stringent measures to curb black money; regulate financial flows; promote small and medium enterprises and protect traditional industries.

5. **Rights of Working People**

- (i) **Working Class:** Ensure statutory minimum wages for workers of not less than Rs. 18,000 per month and link the wage to the consumer price index; ensuring recognition of trade unions through secret ballot; guarantee of social security and workers participation in management. End contractualisation of jobs.
- (ii) **Peasantry:** Provide for cost of production plus 50 per cent as Minimum Support Price for agricultural produce; measures for debt relief for small and middle peasants; complete loan waiver to the small and middle peasantry by the Central government; protection of agricultural land from forcible and indiscriminate acquisition for non-agricultural purposes; prohibition of corporate agriculture and privatisation.
- (iii) **Agricultural Workers:** Central legislation for agricultural workers on wages and social security; housing sites and housing for rural workers; expansion and stringent implementation of MNREGA.

- 6. **People's Welfare:** Universal public distribution system with supply of essential commodities in addition to food grains. Universal pension benefit. Social security and health care for senior citizens. Safe drinking water and sanitation. Housing for urban and rural poor. Expansion of affordable public transport. Right to work, education and health.

- 7. **Gender Equality:** Provision of one-third reservation for women in parliament and state assemblies; putting in measures to prevent, curb and punish those responsible for all forms of violence against women and children; equal wages for equal work; rights of transgenders and sexual minorities.

8. **Social Justice & Citizens Rights**

- (i) **Dalits:** Abolition of caste system and all forms of caste oppression; strict punishment against practice of untouchability and for atrocities against scheduled castes; filling up of backlogs in reserved seats and positions and in promotions. Reservations in the private sector.

- (ii) **Most Backward Classes;** Ensure adequate reservation in education and jobs; provision for their social and economic development.
- (iii) **Adivasis:** Protect land rights of adivasis and restore land alienated from them; implementation of Forest Rights Act in full; minimum support price for minor forest produce; protection of tribal languages and cultures. Protection of 5th and 6th Schedules and Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996.
- (iv) **Minorities:** Stringent punishment for hate crimes against minorities; special provision for education, employment, health care and social welfare for the Muslim community.
- (v) **Persons with Disabilities:** Equal opportunities and level playing field; barrier free access to all public spaces, transport, communication, entertainment.
- (vi) **Youth & Child Rights:** Right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution. Provision of services for youth – sports, cultural and skill training – for their all-round development; ban on all forms of child labour.

9. **Education, Health & Environment:**

- (i) Expand public education system and upgrade its quality to make education for all realisable; public expenditure on education to be 6 per cent of the GDP; revise curriculum and subjects to make content secular and inculcate scientific temper; regulate fees and curriculum in private education institutions.
- (ii) Build a national public health system with central and state governments funding which can provide free care; public expenditure on health to be raised to at least 5 per cent of GDP to facilitate this. Regulate the private health care institutions; reduction of prices of essential drugs.
- (iii) Steps to reduce emission of greenhouse gases through effective regulation, energy efficiency in all sectors of production and consumption. Promotion of renewable energy; reducing energy inequality. Checking pollution of rivers, seas and other water bodies, particularly forests; conserve wetlands.

10. **Culture & Media:** Develop secular and composite culture to counter regressive communal and obscurantist influences; nurture folk arts and traditions; equal status for all national languages; promotion of Urdu and recognition as second language in certain states.

Strengthen public broadcasting services; prohibition of cross ownership of media; independent regulatory authority for media.

11. **Foreign Policy:** Reverse the strategic alliance with the United States; anti-imperialist and independent foreign policy.

Political Line

- 2.116(i) Given the experience of the nearly four years rule of the Modi Government it is imperative to defeat the BJP government in order to isolate the Hindutva communal forces and reverse the anti-people economic policies.
- (ii) Thus, the main task is to defeat the BJP and its allies by rallying all the secular and democratic forces.
- (iii) But this has to be done without having a political alliance with the Congress Party.
- (iv) However, there can be an understanding with all secular opposition parties including the Congress in parliament on agreed issues. Outside parliament, we should cooperate with all secular opposition forces for a broad mobilization of people against communalism. We should foster joint actions of class and mass organisations, in such a manner that can draw in the masses following the Congress and other bourgeois parties.
- (v) The Party will fight against the neo-liberal policies being pursued by the BJP government at the Centre and by the various state governments including those run by the regional parties. The Party will strive to develop united and sustained actions on the issues of people's livelihood and against the onslaught of the economic policies.
- (vi) Joint platforms for mass movements and united struggles at all levels must be built up. Resistance to the anti-people policies should be intensified. The united actions of the class and mass organisations must seek to draw in the masses following the bourgeois parties.
- (vii) Given the serious challenge posed by the Hindutva forces both inside and outside the government it is essential to build platforms for the widest mobilisation of all secular and democratic forces. The emphasis should be on building unity of people to fight the communal forces at the grassroots. These are not to be seen as political or electoral alliances. Similarly, broad unity to fight against the authoritarian attacks on democratic rights should be forged.
- (viii) The Party will give priority to developing and building the independent strength of the Party. It will work to broaden and strengthen Left unity.
- (ix) All Left and democratic forces should be brought together on a concrete programme to conduct united struggles and joint movements through which the Left and democratic front can emerge. In states, the various Left and democratic forces should be rallied to form a platform around a concrete programme. At the national level, the Left and democratic alternative should be

projected in our political campaigns and to rally all those forces who can find a place in the Left and democratic front.

(x) Appropriate electoral tactics to maximize the pooling of the anti-BJP votes should be adopted based on the above political line of the Party.

Tasks in the Present Situation

2.117 (1) The struggle against the Modi Government's economic policies must be intensified. All sections of the working people subjected to the exploitation and attacks of the neo-liberal policies must be mobilised and organised to fight for jobs, land, food, wages and livelihood. The Party should also intervene in all the spontaneous struggles which develop and take them forward.

(2) The Party and mass organisations have to be in the forefront of the fight against Hindutva communalism. This struggle has to be conducted in the social, cultural, political and ideological spheres. There should be a broad platform forged of the secular democratic forces to counter the activities of the communal forces.

(3) The Party should step up its efforts to advance the interests of the socially oppressed sections. The Party has to consistently champion the rights of women and counter the growing violence against women. The Left and dalit united platforms should be carried forward in defence of dalit rights. The Party has to defend the rights of adivasis in all spheres. Broad unity to protect the rights of minorities should be forged.

(4) The Party has to expand its campaigns to mobilise people in defence of national sovereignty and against the growing imperialist influence in the country facilitated by the strategic alliance with the United States. It should expose the ultra-nationalist posture of the BJP which is used to cover the subservience to US imperialism.

(5) The Party has to mobilise the widest forces to counter the growing authoritarianism and fascist attacks. There should be a broad mobilisation against the attacks on democracy, artistic freedom and academic autonomy.

(6) The Party must give priority to strengthening its independent role and expanding its influence and mass base by building up class and mass struggles. The Party has to pay special attention to the struggle against the attacks on democracy and violence against the Party and the Left Front in West Bengal. The defence of the Left Democratic Front government in Kerala is an important task.

(7) Left unity should be strengthened overcoming the existing shortcomings by focusing on joint actions and campaigns based on a Left platform. This should be the basis for drawing in other democratic

organisations and forces around a Left and democratic programme. It is through the movements and struggles around such a programme that a real alternative – the Left and democratic alternative will emerge.

Build Strong Communist Party

2. 118 In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to build a strong Communist Party throughout the country. It has to be a Party based on Marxism-Leninism and organised on the principles of democratic centralism. For a strong Communist Party with a mass base throughout the country, we must implement the organisational tasks set out by the Kolkata Plenum with a focus on:

1. Forging class and mass struggles on economic and social issues to widen the Party's influence and to rally the Left and democratic forces.
2. Adopting a mass line and establish live links with the people.
3. Streamlining the organisation to build a revolutionary Party with quality membership.
4. Making special efforts to attract youth to the Party.
5. Waging the ideological struggle against communalism, neo-liberalism and reactionary ideologies.

2.119 Let Us

- Wage the struggle to defeat the authoritarian communal regime of the BJP!
- Build a strong CPI(M) to advance the struggle for democracy, secularism, social justice and socialism!
- Forge a strong Left and democratic front to create a Left and democratic alternative!