

**POLITICAL RESOLUTION  
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**INTERNATIONAL**

- 1.1 The world has witnessed a sharp escalation in the aggressive moves by US imperialism. On the pretext of a global war on terrorism, the US unleashed a major war of aggression on Iraq, part of its plan to reorder West Asia to suit its global hegemonic plans.
- 1.2 The political resolution of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress had correctly warned that utilizing the September 11, 2001 attacks, the US would seek to expand the imperialist offensive. The occupation of Iraq followed the attack on Afghanistan. The US is targeting the two other countries in Bush's 'axis of evil' – North Korea and Iran. Syria has also been threatened. The sanctions and blockade of Cuba have been tightened; the progressive government of President Chavez in Venezuela has repeatedly been sought to be destabilized.
- 1.3 Characteristic of this phase of US imperialism is its brazen readiness to use military force, violating the UN charter, international law and national sovereignty. The US has set out a doctrine of pre-emptive war. Under its direction, the eastern expansion of NATO has taken place. NATO has adopted the new strategic doctrine of intervention outside Europe.
- 1.4 During this period, the world has seen imperialist war and aggression, the unilateral flouting of international laws and trampling of national sovereignty. This has made the world more unsafe, spawned rather than suppressed terroristic violence and has encouraged a host of sectarian ideologies.

**Significance of Iraq**

- 1.5 The war and occupation of Iraq has dramatically exposed the predatory nature of US imperialism which has no compunctions in trampling upon national sovereignty and in resorting to brute force to garner a vantage position to consolidate its hegemony. The British government played the shameful role of aiding and abetting this aggression. The occupation has exposed the true nature of the US war on terrorism. Iraq had no al-Qaeda, nor any weapons of mass destruction. What it has is the world's second largest oil reserves and a regime that was not willing to bow to US diktat.
- 1.6 The decade-long sanctions inflicted a terrible toll on the Iraqi people. The invasion and occupation regime has led to deaths of over 100,000

Iraqis, mostly civilians. Thousands of children have been killed, and an equal number maimed and permanently disabled. The brutal torture of prisoners by the American troops was starkly exposed in pictures of Abu Ghraib prison. Violence against women is spiralling and the secular nature of Iraqi society is being seriously undermined. The elections to the national assembly held under US occupation on January 30, 2005 have little legitimacy as it is clear that all policies will be dictated by the US.

- 1.7 Iraq highlights the central position of West Asia in the US global strategy. The control of the oil resources of West Asia and Central Asia is a key factor for the US to maintain the imperialist system and its own hegemony of the imperialist bloc. Iraq has therefore become the centre-point in the struggle against imperialist hegemony.

### **Imperialism under US Hegemony**

- 1.8 American leadership and dominance of the imperialist system was established after the Second World War in 1945. That remains intact despite some vicissitudes in the past when the decline of US economic power led to challenges from the other two centers, Europe and Japan. The US with its vastly superior military power is playing the role of hegemon and arbiter in the imperialist bloc. The US alone spends nearly fifty per cent of the total global military expenditure. It has in the nineties and after September 11 extended its military reach and established military bases and presence in new areas like Central Asia and former Soviet republics. It promotes the militarisation of Japan which prompted the Koizumi government to send troops to Iraq and embark on production of new weapons.
- 1.9 The United States shares with the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and Japan, the common interest of backing global finance capital and the transnational corporations. Being the strongest power, it acts as the hegemon of the imperialist system.
- 1.10 But while doing so, the US makes sure its national interests are served and its pre-eminent position protected. The US seeks to hegemonise the resources of the world. The control of oil resources is not confined to the middle-east. It extends to the Caspian Sea basin and the policing of the oil-pipelines being laid from the Caucasus and Central Asia. The absence of the Soviet Union and the ascendancy of the neo-conservative right wing circles in the US have led to the open advocacy of the imperialist role for America and the efforts to impose an imperial order by use of force, economic coercion, blockades and illegal threats.
- 1.11 The US has in this period adopted a new strategic doctrine which spells out how it will seek to retain world domination. For the first time, the strategy declares that the US will not allow any other

foreign power to catch up with the huge lead the US has established since the fall of the Soviet Union. Further, the strategy calls for use of force to desist potential adversaries from surpassing or equalling the United States in military strength. It advocates preemptive military strikes against countries or terrorist groups who supposedly threaten America's security interests.

- 1.12 The US withdrew from the anti-ballistic missile treaty of 1972 in order to build new weapons and missile systems such as the National Missile Defence. It refused to ratify the biological weapons convention. While reserving the right to produce new weapons and expanding the use of nuclear weapons, the US embarked on a counter-proliferation campaign targeting countries such as Iran, North Korea and Brazil to prevent them from developing nuclear technology. In contrast, Israel, under the special protection of the US, is allowed to keep nuclear weapons.
- 1.13 The role of the United Nations has been increasingly subverted. The United States has brazenly disregarded the UN Charter. The United Nations has to be restructured to prevent unilateral dictates, without which no rule-based and democratic international system is possible. Democratization of the UN system assumes importance as a check to imperialist hegemony.
- 1.14 With the re-election of President Bush, the aggressive reactionary sections of the US ruling classes will continue to espouse the doctrine of a neo-liberal imperialism which intervenes globally to establish 'democracy' and free markets and goes about this business with a big stick in hand.
- 1.15 Fighting this dangerous face of US imperialism, opposition to war and the imperialist sponsored suppression of movements for national liberation, defence of national sovereignty and opposition to economic coercion and blockades are the key tasks of this period.

### **Contradictions of the Capitalist System**

- 1.16 The current aggressiveness of imperialism is fuelled by the crisis in the world capitalist system and by the contradictions of world capitalism today. Programmes of liberalization and structural adjustment are a response to the present crisis of capitalism. At the same time, the drive to impose programmes of liberalization and privatisation indiscriminately on the people of the world has aggravated the crisis of capitalism just as the offensive of international finance has increased the instability of the world capitalist system.
- 1.17 The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress was held at a time when the global economy was in a recession. This specific period, which began in 2001, ended by

mid-2003. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the annual rate of growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the world rose to 3.9 per cent in 2003 and was estimated at 5.0 per cent in 2004. This recovery, however, was far from uniform, and the average figures for the world conceal great unevenness and variation in the economic growth experienced by different countries and regions.

1.18 On the one side, the annual rate of growth in the United States rose to 3 per cent in 2003 and has been estimated at 4.3 per cent in 2004. The main reason for the change from recession to growth in the United States was the increase in military expenditure, which increased more than 40 per cent in 2003 alone. Another reason for income growth at the international level was robust growth in China and growth in some Asian countries. By contrast, increase in national income was limited or even non-existent in many advanced capitalist countries, and economic growth bypassed many less-developed countries entirely. In the euro currency region, the annual rate of growth of GDP was 0.8 per cent in 2002 and 0.5 per cent in 2003, and an optimistic estimate of growth in 2004 is 2.2 per cent. Japan has faced recession for a decade, and the annual rate of change of its GDP was actually negative, - 0.3 per cent, in 2002. Although this figure rose to 2.5 per cent in 2003, by the end of 2004, analysts predicted that Japan's economy was slowing down again.

1.19 Recent economic growth in the United States has been driven by military expenditure. This military expenditure was financed by public borrowing, which led to a decline in the fiscal surplus and the creation of a fiscal deficit. In 2000, the US had a fiscal surplus of 2.0 per cent of the GDP; this was converted into a fiscal deficit of 3.3 per cent in 2003 and 4 per cent in 2004. As a result of the fiscal deficit, there was a sharp increase in imports, which, in turn, widened the balance of payments deficit. This phenomenon of 'twin deficits' - fiscal and balance of payments - in the US is the underlying cause of the recent decline in the value of the dollar and of fears of a collapse. The 'twin deficits' illustrate the unsustainable nature of the recent capitalist boom.

1.20 The US has been able to finance this deficit because of its position as the leading imperialist power, which makes the dollar the world's reserve currency, and the currency in which the world's financial wealth is mainly held. The status of the dollar helps attract capital flows into financial assets that are denominated in dollars and in the US. This perception by international capital of the United States being a safe haven is, clearly, not determined by the economic strength of the US but by its military might, which strengthens the conviction that it has the brute power to rearrange world economic relations to sustain its economic growth. The advanced capitalist

countries realise that a decline in the value of the dollar is inevitable; nevertheless, they do not want a sudden crash in its value. In other words, efforts to ensure a soft landing rather than a crash are under way.

- 1.21 The current recovery in the world capitalist economy, such as it is, has been characterised not just by jobless growth, but by 'job-loss' growth, thus showing that capitalism is unable to transfer any of the benefits of growth to the working people. In the US the unemployment rate rose from 4.0 percent in 2000 to 6.0 per cent in 2003. In the advanced capitalist countries as a whole the corresponding figures were 5.8 per cent and 6.6 percent.
- 1.22 The fierce onslaught of modern finance-driven capitalism against the working class and its hard-earned gains continues to characterise the advanced capitalist countries. In the countries of the European Union, and in Russia and Eastern Europe, where capitalism has been restored, the public sector is being privatised, the remuneration of workers reduced, and social security cut back.
- 1.23 Increasing unemployment, tax cuts for the rich and massive reductions in welfare measures for the poor are among the pernicious features of contemporary capitalism.
- 1.24 The global power of finance capital and its mobility tends to mute inter-imperialist contradictions. But this does not prevent conflicts occurring as during the Iraq war between the US and France and Germany. Cooperation and conflict now coexist in inter-imperialist relations. The European Union has been expanded and now has 25 countries. The expanded European Union with the new draft Constitution is constructed in a manner to serve the interests of big business and finance capital. Such a set up contains the basis for cooperation with the US while conflicts remain. The Communists endeavour to shift Europe away from the grip of transnational capital and the Atlanticist alliance as against the social democratic stance of integration with transnational capital.
- 1.25 The seamy side of US-style predatory capitalism has repeatedly been exposed. The exposure of fraud led to the collapse of the Enron Corporation; subsequently, a series of big corporations were found to be cheating the public and cooking their books. Thousands of employees lost their jobs when such companies closed down or had to be merged with others.
- 1.26 The Bush administration's close links with the oil and arms industry shapes its anti-environmental outlook. It is not surprising that the U.S., which promotes wasteful and environmentally harmful policies to fuel the super profits of big business, has refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol. The drive for profit and the consumerist nature of

contemporary capitalism cause and intensify the now serious problems of depletion of the ozone layer, climate change and loss of bio-diversity.

- 1.27 The morals-free pursuit of wealth is closely linked to the burgeoning of corruption and crime. The degeneration of human values can be seen in the pornography industry, now worth billions of dollars, and in the enormous growth in trafficking in women and children. The drug and narcotics trade generates funds that are ploughed back into pernicious business activities.

### **Assault on Developing Countries**

- 1.28 Finance capital dominates current-day capitalism. Its expansion drives the imperialist assault on the economies of less-developed countries. Its current offensive involves not just opening the markets of less-developed countries to commodities and foreign direct investment from the advanced capitalist countries, but also opening up the financial sector to permit free play of speculative finance in stock and capital markets in the search for superprofits. The inflow of such capital imposes a sharp decline in public expenditure in the recipient countries.
- 1.29 Finance capital is against deficit-financed state spending for a variety of reasons. The strategies pursued by dominant classes in the Third World countries have increased their dependence on global finance capital. In order to appease global finance, Third World governments have had to open their economies and cut back on state expenditures, especially expenditures on capital formation and welfare, in order to curtail deficits. Such policies have had the effect also of reducing national income-growth in the less-developed countries. In addition to these stresses and strains, the steep rise in oil prices from mid-2004, fuelled mainly by speculation, has hit the oil-importing developing countries very hard.
- 1.30 Evidence of the harmful results of such policies is overwhelming. Large parts of the developing world are characterized by persistence of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. Of the 4.9 billion people in developing countries in 2000, around 1.1 billion lived on less than a dollar a day, more than 950 million were illiterate, 1.2 billion lacked access to an improved water source and 2.7 billion lacked access to basic sanitation. Nearly 104 million children of primary-school-going age were out of school. The gap between the richest strata in the developed world and the developing countries widened rapidly. In 2001, the wealth of 497 billionaires was greater than the combined incomes of the poorest half of humanity. The GDP of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of all nation-states) is less than the wealth of

the world's three richest people combined. The contradiction between imperialism and the developing countries has further intensified.

## **Resistance**

- 1.31 The picture of the imperialist offensive will not be complete without underlining the intensifying resistance to it. US imperialism has the power to intervene militarily and politically around the globe, but contrary to its expectations, it is unable to achieve a smooth conclusion and consolidation. The centre-piece of the current resistance to the imperialist offensive is the struggle against the US occupation of Iraq. In the last twenty-one months, the popular resistance has grown in intensity and scope. It has succeeded in upsetting the US plan to plant a pliant regime in Iraq which is the first step towards 'democratising' West Asia. Contrary to the US blueprint, holding elections to the national assembly has not led to any let up in the resistance. The new regime itself is under pressure to demand an end to US occupation. The US plan to plant a pliant regime as a first step towards 'democratising' West Asia is being challenged by the forces of resistance.
- 1.32 The other important centre of resistance is the Palestinian movement for independence and statehood. During the past three years, the US backed Israel in its military attacks in the occupied territories, subverting the peace accord and in its efforts to sideline Yasser Arafat. The Israelis committed heinous crimes through continuous military attacks and by building a security wall across the West Bank, an act declared illegal by the World Court. Despite the connivance of the client Arab rulers with the US, the Palestinian struggle has gone on. The death of Yasser Arafat will not weaken the resolve of the Palestinian people.
- 1.33 The struggles in Latin America against imperialist globalisation, the unequal agreements like the Free Trade Area of Americas, enforced by the US, the imposition of neo-liberal reforms and attacks on national sovereignty form an important part of the world-wide resistance. Important struggles against privatization of electricity, water and natural resources took place in Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and of the landless people in Brazil. The defeat of every attempt by the US-backed opposition forces to topple President Chavez in Venezuela is an important landmark. Venezuela under the progressive leadership of Chavez is taking steps to break up the power of the oligarchy, undertake land reforms and provide health, education, food and housing for the poor. The election of Lula as President in Brazil on a left platform and the election of a leftwing candidate in Uruguay for the first time reflects the political impact of these movements.
- 1.34 Working class struggles against the attacks on jobs, social security and livelihood are taking place in all the major capitalist countries.

The trade union movement and the working class resistance constitutes the core of the movement against imperialist-driven globalisation.

- 1.35 The mass mobilizations against imperialist globalisation which began in Seattle in 1999 during the WTO meet, became a regular feature subsequently when meetings of the Fund-Bank or G-8 took place. With the threat of war looming on Iraq, this movement became an anti-war movement. Millions of people joined the anti-war protests of 2002–03 with unprecedented mobilization being seen on February 15, 2003 in major cities around the world. The World Social Forum and the regional forums became broad platforms for bringing together the anti-globalisation and anti-war forces.
- 1.36 In the WTO arena, the advanced capitalist countries sought to impose onerous conditions in the Doha round of negotiations. The fight against such imposition met with some success when China, India, Brazil and South Africa decided to coordinate their stand and were joined by other countries, making the group of 21 during the Cancun summit. Faced with this setback, the rich countries sought to regain ground through the recent Framework Agreement arrived at in Geneva.

### **Socialist Countries**

- 1.37 China's rapid economic growth and all-round progress has led to its emergence as a major power in the international arena. China has been registering over 9 per cent GDP growth annually in the last decade, making it the fastest growing economy in the world. The Chinese government and the Communist Party are engaged in tackling the problems of unemployment, regional disparities and the rise of corruption which are a product of China's rapid growth and engagement with the global capitalist system. Vietnam has maintained steady progress after adopting measures to reform the economy and its management. Vietnam achieved 8 per cent annual GDP growth from 1990 to 1997 and around 7 per cent from 2000 to 2003 making it the world's second fastest growing economy.
- 1.38 Cuba has withstood a new spate of hostile measures and sanctions by the Bush administration. It has steadfastly adhered to the socialist system and has not allowed the sanctions and blockade to erode its public health and educational system. The DPRK has refused to be intimidated on the nuclear issue by the US blackmailing tactics. It is pursuing the line of engaging South Korea for normalization of relations and creating the atmosphere for progress towards reunification. The socialist countries have to continue to work in an international situation which is hostile to the existence of the socialist system. They have to strengthen their economic base and raise the

living standards of the people while safeguarding the socialist system and its ideological base.

### **South Asia**

- 1.39 It is in this international setting that we have to see the developments in South Asia and India's neighbourhood.
- 1.40 Imperialism has spread its tentacles further in the countries of South Asia. The United States has strengthened its grip and influence over Pakistan after getting the Musharraf regime to cooperate with the war on Afghanistan and to eliminate the Al Qaeda. In Nepal, the United States supplied military equipment to the King to fight the Maoist insurgency. The King has utilized the situation to suppress democracy, impose emergency, and arrest leaders and activists of political parties. In Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the United States has signed military and security collaboration agreements and is regularly conducting joint exercises.
- 1.41 In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, the forces of Islamic fundamentalism have grown in strength. The growing US influence and the Islamic fundamentalist activity in Bangladesh have repercussions in the region. The fundamentalist forces are launching murderous attacks on secular and democratic personalities. In Sri Lanka, the halt to hostilities and ceasefire between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the Tamil tigers have not yet yielded any substantial progress in peace talks. In Myanmar, the military regime continues to suppress the democratic rights of the people. In all these countries, the conditions of the working people have deteriorated under the impact of imperialist globalisation and the anti-democratic measures taken to suppress the struggles of the working people.
- 1.42 Sectarian and divisive trends have been on the rise in the region. The struggle for democracy and the rights of minorities is an important issue in many of these countries. The Party supports the Left and democratic forces of Nepal who are struggling to restore democracy there. It is necessary to strengthen regional cooperation in South Asia through the SAARC forum and to promote bilateral trade, economic ties, as well as encourage people-to-people contacts between India and its neighbours. The CPI(M) stands for increased cooperation between the anti-imperialist and Left democratic forces in South Asia.

### **Struggle against Imperialism**

- 1.43 Imperialism poses the greatest threat to humanity. US imperialism is the spearhead of the reactionary offensive. Predatory finance capital and neo-liberal reforms have intensified the exploitation and poverty of billions of people. Imperialist war and aggression are a threat to the national sovereignty of countries. Imperialist oppression and

violence spawns terrorism promoted by fundamentalist and sectarian ideologies. With the dismantling of socialism in some countries and the entry of imperialist finance capital, ethnic and sectarian conflicts are the results. Terrorism motivated by religious fundamentalism which wreaks havoc on innocent people has to be firmly combated. But the elimination of all forms of terrorism requires an end to imperialist aggression and violence, state terrorism and the rapacious exploitation and abject poverty perpetuated by an unjust and hegemonic world order.

- 1.44 The fight against US imperialism cannot be conducted by a fundamentalist *jehad*, or by relying upon sectarian ideologies. Imperialism can be fought only by a progressive mobilisation of all the Left, secular and anti-imperialist nationalist forces. The CPI(M) will support all the currents of resistance against imperialism – the struggles for national liberation, the fight against neo-liberal economic policies and for the defence of national sovereignty, opposition to imperialist aggression and for the defence of the interests of the developing countries against imperialist capital.
- 1.45 The CPI(M) will actively support and establish relations of solidarity with the national liberation movements. It will support the socialist countries and espouse close relations with them. It will cooperate with all the platforms set up to fight against imperialist globalisation and will actively participate in the anti-war movements. The anti-globalisation and the anti-war movements should converge into a broad and powerful anti-imperialist movement.
- 1.46 The CPI(M) will continue to strengthen relations with the communist and progressive forces in different countries so that experiences are shared and a common outlook develops. The CPI(M) is committed to building up the worldwide struggle against US imperialism. Mobilizing the Indian people, who number 1.02 billion, against imperialist hegemonism and in defence of national sovereignty will be an important contribution to this global movement.

## **NATIONAL**

- 2.1 The most significant political development at the national level since the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress has been the clear defeat of the BJP-led NDA government in the Lok Sabha elections of May 2004. The people of India overthrew the RSS-controlled regime on account of its anti-people and pro-imperialist economic policies, its communal and divisive platform, its massive corruption scandals and its attacks on democratic rights. The simultaneous elections to the Andhra Pradesh assembly saw the even more decisive defeat of the TDP government, which had all along acted as the foremost agent of the World Bank. Three months later, the BJP-

Shiv Sena communal combine was humbled in the Maharashtra assembly elections.

- 2.2 The Lok Sabha elections resulted in the formation of the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre, which is dependent for its majority on the outside support of the Left parties. The CPI(M) and the Left increased their representation in Parliament to the highest figure so far. All these are welcome developments, which testify to the correctness of the political line adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress and of the electoral tactics employed in consonance with that line.
- 2.3 The BJP-led government ruled uninterruptedly for six years from March 1998 to April 2004. The danger posed by the RSS-guided BJP controlling the levers of power was evident during this period. The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress Political Resolution termed it as “the most reactionary government in independent India.” The policies of the BJP-led government in the economic, political, social and foreign policy spheres in these six years confirm this assessment. After the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party, the last two years of BJP rule witnessed the horrific fallout of the Gujarat pogrom. The Modi government, with the patronage of the Vajpayee government, actively worked to cover up all the crimes and refused to punish the guilty by subverting the police and prosecution machinery. After the victory of the BJP in the assembly elections the state continues to treat Muslims as second class citizens. The Christian community is also targeted and continues to live in insecurity.
- 2.4 The Vajpayee government sought to undermine the judicial process on the Ayodhya dispute and sought to push the VHP agenda for handing over the disputed site to the Hindu communal outfits by utilizing intermediaries to persuade the Muslims to give up their claim. The Vajpayee government continued the work of communalization of the educational system by introducing anti-secular ideologies in the curriculum and text books. History books were rewritten on communal lines. Artists, writers and cultural institutions who refused to accept the sectarian communal outlook were subjected to intimidation and assaults. RSS personnel were given key appointments in different institutions and promoted at different levels of government.

## **Economic Policies**

### **Agrarian Distress**

- 2.5 Under the BJP rule, neo-liberal economic policies were pushed with greater vigour. It was claimed, falsely, that these policies

result in higher growth. Actually, the decade of the nineties had a lower rate of growth in agriculture and industries than in the eighties. The growth rate in the three years 2000–01 to 2003–04 was lower than the decade of the nineties. Whatever output growth that took place was not accompanied by any significant growth in employment. The annual rate of growth of rural employment was 0.58 per cent between 1993–94 and 1999–2000 compared to the rural population growth rate of 1.5 per cent. The unemployment situation in rural India has worsened drastically while urban employment growth has come down markedly.

- 2.6 In rural India, worsening unemployment has been caused by the decline in agricultural growth rates and in particular foodgrains. Foodgrain production has in fact fallen below the rate of population growth during the nineties leading to an absolute decline in per capita food output. The average number of days of work for agricultural workers has sharply declined in most parts of the country. Rural development expenditure which was 14 per cent of GDP during the 8<sup>th</sup> plan period stands at only around 5 per cent currently. This drastic cutback is the most immediate cause for the acute distress among the rural poor.
- 2.7 Rural distress is not confined to the rural poor alone. Large sections of the peasantry, caught in a pincer between higher input prices and lower output prices, are faced with acute crisis. The withdrawal of subsidies on a host of inputs, the rising costs of electricity, irrigation, seeds and the decline in priority sector lending by banks have forced peasants to go to moneylenders to borrow at exorbitant interest rates which has resulted in increased costs of production.
- 2.8 Procurement operations by the government that provided some succour to the peasantry have got progressively whittled down; extension services by the government that were so important a feature of Indian agriculture have been virtually withdrawn from large parts of the country leaving the peasantry to the mercy of MNCs and spurious seed distributors; and lack of investment by the government has run down the infrastructure that sustained agricultural growth.
- 2.9 Steps to dilute land reform laws were taken in a number of states either by raising the ceiling levels or handing over surplus land to private parties. After acquiring agricultural land in the name of road construction, substantial portions are handed over to corporates including multinational companies. Such steps would make farming by large owners and corporate houses a certainty. Such policies would reduce the extent of

land for redistribution, accelerate the loss of land by poor peasants, and worsen inequalities in the rural areas.

- 2.10 The volume of rural credit declined and the distribution of credit shifted further in favour of large landholders. Village level data show that the exploitation of the poor in the informal credit market – that is, by moneylenders – intensified as a result of financial liberalisation.
- 2.11 The new trade regime (and in particular, the removal of quantitative restrictions on the import of agricultural products) and the emphasis on export-oriented production intensified the struggle of the poor and middle peasantry for their very survival while also leading to a decline in food production. This problem is particularly intense in the present context of a sharp fall in the prices of primary commodities internationally. The new trade regime also has very serious implications for land use, cropping patterns and the future of self-sufficiency in food.
- 2.12 The new trade and patent regime as well as the seed bill leaves the field of agricultural research at the mercy of multinational corporations, thus weakening public sector national agricultural research systems as well as open-access to international research institutions. Further, this regime infringes on the rights of farmers and indigenous plant breeders and threatens to lead, as has been written, “from biodiversity to genetic slavery.”
- 2.13 Continuing failure to deal with problems of water management, and to cope with problems of drought and floods has increased the suffering of the peasantry. The agenda of privatizing water resources is being pushed through which will drive the small peasantry who can’t afford the rates, off their lands. In addition, the failure to resolve inter-state water disputes has aggravated the water scarcity in some states.
- 2.14 The country is experiencing the worst agrarian crisis since independence. The entire agricultural sector is in disarray, and thousands of peasants have committed suicide. This crisis is the direct result of neo-liberal economic policies: these policies dictate the withdrawal of the State from all supportive roles other than the support of international finance capital; and agriculture cannot survive the withdrawal of the support system of the State.

### **Adverse Impact on Industry**

- 2.15 While the agrarian economy has been the most visible victim of the neo-liberal economic policies, large sections of the urban

petty producers and small capitalists have also been hit by the policies of “trade liberalization” enforced under the WTO, and by higher input costs (including for credit and electricity). This has had a direct bearing on urban unemployment. The BJP-led government accelerated its onslaught on the public sector in its last years in power. After privatising VSNL, Balco, Maruti and IPCL, the government was poised to go ahead with the privatisation of the HPCL and BPCL oil companies before it was ousted from power. Practically every sphere was opened up for privatisation and entry of foreign capital. Defence production was opened up for 100 per cent private enterprise with 26 per cent FDI. Even in the print media, 26 per cent FDI was allowed.

- 2.16 The fiscal policies of the BJP-led government reflected in its successive budgets, led to India having one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in the world. Tens of thousands of crores were gifted as concessions to big business and the rich while indirect taxes were heaped on the common people. Public expenditure in the social sector and agriculture was cut to contain the fiscal deficit. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act signifies the surrender to IMF dictates on fiscal management. Liberalisation under BJP rule meant a bonanza for the rich and growing deprivation and unemployment for the common people.

### **UPA Government on Same Path**

- 2.17 The UPA government is pursuing the same policies of liberalisation and privatisation. Notwithstanding certain policy announcements in the Common Minimum Programme, the government is unwilling to change course and, in essence, pursues the same policies as that of the Vajpayee government. Some instances of this are: the UPA government wants to further liberalise the financial sector by facilitating the takeover of Indian private banks by foreign banks by implementing a proposal to allow 74 per cent FDI in Indian private banks announced by the previous government. It is pushing for merger of PSU banks as a step towards privatisation. It has hiked the FDI cap in telecom to 74 per cent. It seeks to permit FDI in the retail sector. It desires to privatise the insurance sector further. It is going ahead with the privatisation of the Delhi and Mumbai airports, a step initiated by the BJP-led government. It proposed the raising of the FDI caps in telecom and insurance in the Union budget of 2004–05 which has been halted due to opposition of the Left. It seeks to circumvent the commitment not to privatise profitable PSUs by gradually disinvesting shares in these units to meet its budgetary deficit.
- 2.18 The UPA government has shown itself eager to fashion policies favourable to big business and international finance capital

while being tardy or negligent in protecting the interests of the working class and the working people. For instance, it first cut the EPF rate of interest to 8.5 per cent and it was only the Left opposition that forced a hike of one per cent to 9.5 per cent. It is pushing forward with the plan to privatise the pension fund of government employees. Contrary to the CMP commitment, the government is trying to push through the implementation of the Electricity Act, 2003, without any review. It has abolished Press Note 18 which provided some protection for Indian companies which enter into joint ventures with foreign companies. It's fiscal policies seek to curtail expenditure by cutting down subsidies necessary for the common people, while proposing tax concessions to the corporate sector and the rich. It has resorted to successive increases in the prices of petroleum products which are leading to price rise of essential commodities, while being reluctant to revise the excise and import duty structure which gives undue benefits to the oil companies. The government seeks to fulfil the CMP commitment to adopt an Employment Guarantee Act but has prepared a bill which dilutes the provision of providing minimum 100 days work for one adult in every rural household on minimum wages. It was only the intervention of the Left that ensured important amendments to the disastrous Patent Bill moved by the UPA government based on the original NDA bill.

## **Conditions Of The People**

- 2.19 The most visible symptom of the agrarian rural distress among the rural poor is the drastic curtailment of their per capita food availability and consequently its intake. Per capita foodgrain availability which stood at 180 kgs at the end of the 1980s has seen a drastic decline to an average of 155 kgs in the three years 2000–01 to 2002–03. This is the result of the “reforms” under BJP rule. In fact the per capita foodgrain availability in the country as a whole is now down to the level of what it was on the eve of the Second World War.
- 2.20 The number of farmers’ suicides has reached levels unheard of since independence. Such suicides have taken place in major parts of the country, with Andhra Pradesh topping the number of peasants ending their lives in desperation. More than 7,000 farmers committed suicide in the state in the space of three years. Thousands of farmers died in a similar way in other states, including Kerala. The big increase in migrating families looking for work is a measure of acute rural distress.
- 2.21 The “targeted” public distribution system actually led to the dismantling of the existing public distribution system which

itself was inadequate. Under the BPL scheme, a large number of poor people have been deprived of rations. This dismantling of the public distribution system has hit the poor the hardest, with the worst affected being the tribal areas where hunger and starvation deaths have become a regular feature.

- 2.22 Lakhs of families working in traditional industries whether they are in handloom, beedi, coir, cashew, fishing, or artisans have been rendered jobless and are forced to live in hunger and deprivation. Small scale and tiny sector units have closed by the thousands and the plight of the unorganized workers worsened.
- 2.23 The urban industrial workers have experienced not only growing unemployment but also a substantial increase in lockouts, cuts in the social wage, increase of insecurity and a reduction in their bargaining strength through attacks on trade unions and through attempts to deny them the right to strike. Labour laws, which offer limited protection are being undermined. Contract and casual work is being introduced on a large scale to deprive workers of legal benefits. Pension funds are sought to be privatised. Minimum wages and other protections are denied to workers in the unorganised sectors. The plight of the workers in tea gardens and coffee plantations has worsened with thousands rendered jobless and their families starving. The urban poor living in terrible conditions are becoming homeless due to slums being demolished in the name of urban development.
- 2.24 Children up to 18 years constitute 44 per cent of the population. The record with regard to children's welfare is shocking. 47 per cent of children below three years are malnourished. 40.7 per cent of children enrolled at the primary school stage drop out. Child labour is rampant with children undertaking arduous and hazardous work with no rights or protection whatsoever.
- 2.25 Unemployment has become the single largest problem for the people. This is a result of the liberalisation and privatisation policies pursued over the years. Rural unemployment, unemployment for the youth, educated unemployment and unemployment for women have blighted the lives of millions of families. The rate of growth of employment under BJP rule was a dismal 1.13 per cent. Existing jobs in the public sector and organised sector are being done away with.

## **Centre-State Relations**

- 2.26 The fiscal crisis of the Centre, which is precipitated by the neo-liberal reforms through its various tax measures is sought to be passed on to the state governments. The Centre compounds the problem by charging exorbitant rates of interest on loans given by it including those given from small savings and loans raised within the states themselves. When the state governments are reduced to a mendicant status, the Centre then thrusts upon them neo-liberal policies. During the nineties, the tax revenue raised by the state governments together as proportion of GDP did not decline while the tax revenue raised by the Centre did, and yet at the end of the decade it was the states which faced the fiscal squeeze.
- 2.27 Accentuation of uneven development has led to the growth of inter-state and intra-state disparities. This is giving a fillip to the demands for separate states based on the argument of backwardness, such as Telengana and Vidharbha. The Party will fight for the development of backward regions while adhering to the principled position of opposition to the division of linguistic states. Another aspect of growing concern is the inter-state problem with regard to the sharing of river waters and water resources. Such conflicts are growing given the increasing demand for water in agriculture and the unscientific use of water resources.

## **Issues of National Unity**

### **North-East**

- 2.28 The situation in the North-East is characterised by the continuing activities of the armed separatist groups and ethnic conflicts. The situation is complicated by the fact that the neighbouring country of Bangladesh has become a sanctuary for most of these extremist groups and imperialism is very much active in aiding them. Of particular concern is the role of the ISI of Pakistan which is well-known for its links to the US intelligence agencies. The ULFA leadership is based in Bangladesh and most of the ULFA cadres who fled Bhutan after the army operation are sheltering there. The two major extremist groups of Tripura, the NLFT and the ATTF and the separatist groups in Manipur have their camps across the border. The heightened intervention of foreign agencies poses a serious threat to national unity.
- 2.29 The growth of separatism and extremist activities are also the result of the wrong policies adopted by the Centre towards the North-East over the decades. The lack of special attention to

develop the region which has unique characteristics, the reliance on a nexus of corrupt politicians and bureaucrats to implement developmental work, and the insensitivity to the cultural and nationality sentiments of the different communities has created the space for separatism and foreign intervention. Excesses committed by the security forces have alienated and angered the people. In Manipur, a popular upsurge took place after the brutal killing of a woman by the para-military forces. The political process of providing regional autonomy to substantial tribal communities and a genuinely democratic set-up needs to be taken forward seriously. Steps have to be taken to protect the identity of the various peoples by stopping illegal migration from across the border. The North-Eastern region requires priority in building infrastructure, communications and generating employment for the educated youth. The serious problem of recurrent floods and river bank erosion in Assam is a national problem which requires urgent attention.

## **Jammu & Kashmir**

2.30 The elections in late 2002 saw the formation of the PDP-Congress coalition government headed by Mufti Mohd. Sayeed. The National Conference was defeated, being discredited by its joining the BJP alliance at the Centre and its corrupt misrule. Elections were held in a relatively free manner compared to the past. But the BJP-led government did not utilise this situation to advance the political dialogue. Its resolute opposition to autonomy and the RSS backing the idea of a trifurcation spoil the chances of a dialogue. The extremists sought to disrupt the peace by repeated attacks. After the UPA government assumed office, there has been no notable initiative to revive talks, along with the Indo-Pakistan dialogue. The excesses against ordinary people by the security forces heightens the alienation of the people suffering from the abnormal conditions. Such excesses should be curbed firmly.

2.31 The CPI(M) strongly advocates the provision of maximum autonomy for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Without assuring the Kashmiri people that their identity and culture will be fully recognised and their aspirations met in a democratic set-up within the Indian Union, the feeling of alienation cannot be removed nor the separatists countered. An autonomous set up should be created, with the regions of Jammu & Ladakh being given regional autonomy within this framework. Meanwhile, efforts to restore people-to-people relations between the two parts divided by the LoC must be encouraged. The steps taken by the Indo-Pakistan dialogue of a ceasefire on the LoC and reduction of military forces should be accompanied by suitable political measures. The J&K state needs serious efforts by the

centre to reconstruct its shattered economy especially in the sphere of employment generation.

## **Foreign Policy**

2.32 The BJP-led government had steered foreign policy on to a pro-American path. It proclaimed that Indo-US relations were the history of “fifty wasted years” implying that non-alignment was a mistake. It sought to subordinate India to the global strategic interests of the US, provided India was given de facto recognition as a nuclear power and a preeminent status in South Asia. The only result of this was to place India at the same level as Pakistan as one of the two allies of the U.S. The Bush administration belied the BJP’s hopes by relying on Pakistan in its war on terror and giving it the status of a major non-NATO ally. The Vajpayee government also cultivated strategic ties with Israel and went to the extent of advocating an India-US-Israel axis.

2.33 The UPA government has to adhere to an independent foreign policy as declared in the Common Minimum Programme. To achieve this, the Manmohan Singh government must make sure that issues such as the joint missile defence programme with the US are not pursued as they are not in the country’s interests. Nor should India make any commitment to join the US proliferation security initiative or accept continuance of US military forces in Iraq. To promote multipolarity in international relations, India should have close ties with Russia, China, Europe and Japan. Special emphasis has to be placed on ties with major developing countries in Asia, Africa and South America. India’s ties with its South Asian neighbours have to be strengthened. It is essential to review and end the strategic military and security cooperation with Israel, which is one of the most lawless states in the world and which continues to defend its occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands. The CPI(M) will endeavour to see that the harmful legacy of the Vajpayee government’s foreign policy is removed.

## **Women’s Issues**

2.34 The one and a half decades of liberalisation have worsened the conditions of women in terms of access to employment and being marginalized in the market. The closure of factories and the decline of traditional industries have led to women losing jobs on a large scale. The female work participation rate in urban India is extremely low, between 13 and 15 per cent. Women in the organized sector constitute only 18 per cent. 93 per cent of women workers in manufacture are in the unorganized sector where there is no protective legislation.

Patriarchal values and traditional prejudices coupled with market values have reinforced gender discrimination which is revealed in the most glaring form in the declining sex ratio. The 2001 census has shown that in the juvenile age group there is a considerable decline with the sex ratio being 927:1000. Discrimination and prejudice against women is reflected in the elimination of the girl child.

- 2.35 Promotion of market and consumerist values depict women as being sex objects while traditional feudal attitudes are responsible for vicious violence against women as witnessed in honour killings which are taking place in states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The atrocities against women whether they are through dowry murders, sexual assault or domestic violence are on the increase with the legal machinery unable to promptly punish the perpetrators. The CPI(M) will continue to fight against all forms of discrimination and violence against women. It calls for new legislation against domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse. Women must be entitled to equal property rights including in ancestral property and the long delayed one-third reservation for women in parliament and state legislatures must be passed into law.

### **Caste Oppression and Dalits**

- 2.36 The caste system contains both social oppression and class exploitation. The dalits suffer from both types of exploitation in the worst form. 86.25 per cent of the scheduled caste households are landless and 49 per cent of the scheduled castes in the rural areas are agricultural workers. Communists who champion abolition of the caste system, eradication of untouchability and caste oppression have to be in the forefront in launching struggles against the denial of basic human rights. This struggle has to be combined with the struggle to end the landlord dominated order which consigns the dalit rural masses to bondage. The issues of land, wages and employment must be taken up to unite different sections of the working people and the non-dalit rural poor must be made conscious of the evils of caste oppression and discrimination by a powerful democratic campaign. There are some dalit organisations and NGOs who seek to foster anti-Communist feelings among the dalit masses and to detach them from the Left movement. Such sectarian and, in certain cases, foreign-funded activities must be countered and exposed by positively putting forth the Party's stand on caste oppression and making special efforts to draw the dalit masses into common struggles.

## **Fight Caste Appeal**

2.37 The intensification of the caste appeal and fragmentation of the working people on caste lines is a serious challenge to the Left and democratic movement. Taking up caste oppression, forging the common movement of the oppressed of all castes and taking up class issues of common concern must be combined with a bold campaign to highlight the pernicious effects of caste-based politics. The Party should work out concrete tactics in different areas taking into account the caste and class configurations. Electoral exigencies should not come in the way of the Party's independent campaign against caste-based politics. Reservation is no panacea for the problems of caste and class exploitation. But they provide some limited and necessary relief within the existing order. Reservation should be extended to dalit Christians. In the context of the privatisation drive and the shrinkage of jobs in the government and public sector, reservation in the private sector for scheduled castes and tribes should be worked out after wide consultations.

## **Adivasis**

2.38 The 8.43 crore (84.3 million) tribal people are the worst victims of the new phase of capitalist development under liberalisation. They are subjected to the predatory exploitation of not only moneylenders, traders and contractors but also big business and multinational companies who are being given access to the mineral wealth in tribal areas. Recent years have seen a sharp cutback in the public distribution system and welfare schemes which have driven tribals to starvation and hunger deaths. The Forest Act and the bureaucracy deny them access to the forest and evict them from their traditional habitats. BJP rule saw the deep penetration by RSS outfits in tribal areas with efforts to communalise the adivasis and pit them against Christians and Muslims. The provision of regional autonomy in tribal-majority areas is necessary to protect tribal interests in land, culture and self-development.

2.39 The Party formulated a tribal policy document in 2001. This should be the basis for work in the tribal areas and for countering the disruptive forces which seek to foster separatism or communal tendencies among the tribal people. The UPA government has not scrapped the objectionable tribal policy document of the NDA, nor the eviction orders of tribals from forests which were issued by the NDA government. In the name of development, tribals are being displaced. No such projects should be implemented without a comprehensive relief

and rehabilitation project acceptable to the project affected people. The Party will have to take up these issues. The Party must take up the issues of land, access to forests, wages and development of the tribal areas as well as development of languages and cultures so that tribal people are ensured educational and employment opportunities.

### **Breaking New Ground**

2.40 The Party must identify with the aspirations and assertions of all the socially and economically oppressed sections. The Party bases itself on the basic classes, the working class, the semi-proletarian masses in the urban and rural areas, the poor peasantry and agricultural workers, both men and women. In order to link the Left with the other socially oppressed sections, the Party should champion:

- **the cause of the dalits against caste oppression, making their demand for social justice a part of the common democratic platform;**
- **the rising consciousness and movement of women for equality and gender justice viewing the women's question as not only a gender issue but a class issue;**
- **the struggle of the adivasis-tribal people for land, access to forests, an end to the inhuman capitalist and feudal exploitation, and protecting their identity, cultural and linguistic rights; and**
- **all social causes which help fight obscurantism, socially regressive customs and patriarchal and feudal practices.**

2.41 The Party has been opposing untouchability, caste discrimination, dowry, female foeticide, female infanticide and minority baiting. Based on the experience of recent campaigns against some of these evils, the Party should take the lead in taking up social issues for campaigns and struggles.

### **Approach To Minorities**

2.42 The CPI(M) is for championing the legitimate rights of the minorities against discrimination and fighting off the attacks by majority communalism. At the same time, the Party stands for democratic and progressive reforms within the minorities. It opposes fundamentalism and minority communalism which seeks to ghettoize and breed intolerance amongst the minorities. The Party is for special measures to provide education and access to jobs for the Muslim minorities. Attention has to be paid to the rights and needs of the working people and the poorer sections amongst the minorities and to bring them into the common class and mass movements.

## **Education**

- 2.43 The six years of BJP rule were notorious for the determined attempt to revamp the educational system on communal lines with text books and writing of history being the focus. Simultaneously, there was a stepped-up drive to privatise and commercialise education to the detriment of students and the people at large. The National Curriculum Framework and the Model Act for universities were drawn up with these twin goals in mind. The BJP-led government allowed private universities through the back door by providing for deemed private universities by amending the UGC Act. More than 170 private deemed universities were set up in the last two years. Moves were made to permit foreign universities to set up shop. The Supreme Court judgement in the T.M.A. Pai case promoted rampant commercialisation with private professional colleges free to set up their own norms for admissions and fee structure.
- 2.44 The UPA government must bring forward a central legislation to enable state governments to regulate admissions and fees in private unaided professional institutions. While the UPA government announced a 2 per cent cess for education, it did not take any steps to increase expenditure on higher education in the Union budget of 2004–05. The promise to spend 6 per cent of the GDP on education in the CMP needs to be pursued seriously. The provision of free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age must be also implemented stringently. At the same time, the flaws in the 86<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution regarding compulsory education till the elementary stage must be removed. The government has taken some steps to detoxify education, set up the Central Advisory Board of Education and withdraw flawed textbooks. However, much more needs to be done to undo the damage caused by prolonged BJP-RSS interference in education.

## **Health**

- 2.45 Neo-liberal economic reforms pursued since 1991 have further weakened the public health infrastructure in the country. Public expenditure on healthcare is just 0.9 per cent of GDP, one of the lowest in the world, and private expenditure is 84 per cent of total health care costs, making the country's health infrastructure one of the most privatised in the world. The present government has promised in its Common Minimum Programme that public expenditure on health will be increased to 2 to 3 per cent of GDP over the next five years. However, the first budget of the UPA government did not, in any manner, reflect this commitment. The government is finalising a Rural

Health Mission, but wider discussions are necessary to ensure that the mission does not become a prescription for further privatisation of the country's health infrastructure.

- 2.46 The ordinance brought in to amend India's Patent Laws, in order to make it TRIPS compliant, is deficient in terms of its ability to safeguard national interests and will lead to an increase in prices of drugs. There are attempts to reverse the national consensus arrived at in the National Population Policy, 2000, regarding the eschewing of a target-oriented population control programme, which is a matter of concern.
- 2.47 The CPI(M) demands that public expenditure on healthcare be increased to 3 per cent of GDP in the next five years and further to 5 per cent of GDP over a period of time. These resources should be utilised to strengthen the primary health infrastructure at all levels, so that comprehensive healthcare is made available by the government to all sections of the people.

### **Environmental Protection**

- 2.48 The problems of deforestation, soil erosion, pollution of air and water resources are all contributing to the degradation of the environment with resultant adverse effects on the well-being of the people. Government policy on environment often takes the wrong direction because it is not based on a people-oriented development framework which integrates environmental concerns. Instead of targetting the tribal and forest communities, the government has to act against the contractors and their patrons who are primarily responsible for the destruction of forest cover. Strict control must be exercised against industrial units using hazardous technology which affects the health of workers and the neighbourhood, rather than indiscriminately closing down factories in cities throwing out lakhs of workers from their jobs. Vehicular pollution can be checked by developing mass-transit and public transport systems and levying high taxes on luxury cars. There is an urgent need to check soil and river erosion which is damaging the lives of millions of people. The draft national policy on environment of the UPA government does not meet the requirements of a people-oriented, sustainable development based on environmental concerns.

### **Culture**

- 2.49 Developing a secular and democratic culture, which assumes vital importance at this juncture, requires an unremitting struggle to combat all communal ideologies which seek to distort cultural values. The Hindutva brigade's attacks on

cultural personalities and cultural productions serve as a warning not to relax this struggle. The UPA government must ensure that all the RSS personnel infiltrated into the cultural institutions are removed. The other threat to a democratic and popular culture is the onslaught of values of consumerism and commercialisation which are intrinsic to imperialist-driven globalisation. The forms of cultural expression rooted in popular culture are sought to be marginalised and coopted with the market-driven homogenous consumerist values. The globalisation of violence, sex and rampant individualism is having a pernicious impact on society, particularly the youth.

- 2.50 Culture has to be composite, representing the rich diversity of India. The efforts to strait-jacket culture according to sectarian-communal values must be fought back. The Party must struggle for a progressive and democratic culture which incorporates the ethos of national sovereignty, solidarity with all oppressed sections and an openness which accommodates dissenting views.

## **Media**

- 2.51 The electronic media is a very powerful medium which influences popular perceptions and tastes. The expansion of private satellite TV channels is the most significant feature of the recent period. The privately-owned Indian and foreign channels have become the most explicit conveyance of the liberalisation ethos and its cultural values. The rightwing economic policies find their most aggressive advocates in the big business dominated print and electronic media. Side by side, the concept of a public broadcasting system and the development of an autonomous Prasar Bharati was done away with by the BJP-led government. The UPA government is inclined to adopt the same approach as its predecessor. It is essential to have a strengthened Prasar Bharati that becomes a genuine public broadcasting service. Cross-media ownership must be prohibited to prevent monopolies. The UPA government should not further relax restrictions on foreign entry in the print media and electronic media. Foreign ownership in print media must be disallowed.

## **New Attacks on Democratic Rights**

- 2.52 The BJP-led government had promulgated POTA through a joint session of Parliament. As apprehended, this draconian legislation was used one-sidedly against the minorities in Gujarat and to suppress democracy and to put political opponents behind bars in states like Tamil Nadu and Uttar

Pradesh. An assault on democratic rights came through the higher judiciary following the Supreme Court endorsing the high courts prohibition of bandhs and “forcible” hartals. A number of high courts have come out restricting the holding of meetings and processions which are inherent right of all citizens. The higher judiciary has handed out judgements prohibiting activities of student organizations in campuses. The judgement of the Constitution bench of the Supreme Court on professional colleges adversely affected students’ access to higher education.

- 2.53 This was followed by the Supreme Court judgement denying the right to strike for government employees. This glaring attack on the right to strike has been taken up by high courts which have prohibited general strikes and even fined political parties for holding demonstrations. The Supreme Court has given a series of judgements which is against the interests of the working class. This heralds a new phase of trying to legally restrict or suppress the basic democratic rights of the people which is in tune with the ethos of the neo-liberal reforms and the demand of big business and foreign finance capital that the right to organise and protest be curbed.
- 2.54 The CPI(M) cannot accept any such restrictions or curbs on the basic right to strike and to organise collective protests. A powerful movement for these basic democratic rights has to be organised to counter this judicial and administrative onslaught.

### **Judiciary**

- 2.55 Reforms in the judicial system including the setting up of a National Judicial Commission are necessary to provide speedy relief to the people at an affordable cost. Corruption in the higher judiciary is a matter of concern and can no longer be ignored. There is also the trend of judicial encroachment of the powers of the executive, often due to the failure of the executive to discharge its responsibilities. There should be a proper balance in the relations between the legislature, judiciary and the executive and the exercise of powers in their respective spheres without encroaching into the legitimate domain of other organs.

### **Naxalites**

- 2.56 The naxalite groups which rely on armed squads are active in certain pockets of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar. They have a disruptive stance which targets all the bourgeois parties and the Left parties without any distinction while covering up their ideological bankruptcy with

revolutionary phraseology. Their activities include suppression of democratic rights of people and extortion and appropriation of funds meant for rural development. Their anarchic-terrorist violence provides the State the excuse to act against all democratic movements and for the police to step up their repression of the people. The recent merger of the PWG and the MCC to form the CPI (Maoist) can lead to stepped-up attacks in the states they are operating in and in the periphery like West Bengal. The CPI(M) will continue to conduct a political and ideological campaign against these forces to expose their disruptive and harmful activities.

- 2.57 As for those naxalite groups which have taken to mass political work and abandoned the adventurist armed struggle tactics, such as the CPI(ML) Liberation, the Party is prepared to work with them in united platforms in the fight against communalism, imperialism and on working class issues. However, unless they change their negative approach to the Left Front in West Bengal and their anti-CPI(M) stance, there is no scope for a Left platform with them.

### **Struggles & Resistance**

- 2.58 The working class put up determined resistance to the BJP-led government's offensive to dismantle the public sector and expand the sphere of privatization to new areas. The Nalco struggle in Orissa became a mass popular movement with major political parties supporting the Orissa bandh. This protracted struggle prevented the privatization of the profit-making enterprise. The period of the last three years saw a series of strike struggles by the coal mine workers against the threat of privatization, the strikes by state government employees in Kerala and Tamil Nadu against cuts in their benefits and the three day strike by employees of the oil companies against the privatization of HPCL and BPCL.
- 2.59 Two general strikes, the first by public sector workers on 16 April, 2002 in defence of the public sector, and the second on 21 May, 2003 against the economic policies of the government, saw millions of workers and employees joining the strike. Consequent to the Supreme Court judgement denying the right to strike to government employees, a big campaign was launched in defence of the right to strike including the collection of 40 million signatures by state government employees. The general strike of February 24, 2004 in defence of the right to strike and against the economic policies saw millions of workers and employees participating in the protest action. Workers of traditional industries like cashew, coir and

beedi have also conducted prolonged struggles in defence of their rights.

2.60 Protests against the WTO terms, against privatization of water, electricity and struggles for maintaining the public distribution system have taken place in various parts of the country. There have been struggles to protect the rights of tribal people for land and access to forests. Land struggles have taken place in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Assam, Jharkhand, UP, Kerala and Bihar. A prolonged and united struggle was waged by the peasants in Rajasthan in the Ganganagar and Bikaner districts for adequate supply of water through the Rajasthan canal. This struggle, which stretched over three months, saw six people being killed by the police and hundreds being jailed, some under NSA. The Party and the Kisan Sabha played a leading role in conducting this movement. The Rajasthan struggle shows how by picking up concrete issues and launching sustained struggles the movement can develop.

2.61 The period saw a number of struggles by students against high tuition fees and arbitrary admission norms of the professional colleges consequent to the Supreme Court judgement. In Kerala, a bitter struggle was conducted by the students facing severe police repression and struggle on the same issues took place in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka. The women's movement have conducted a number of struggles for food, employment and against sexual and physical violence against women. Intellectuals and artists mobilized against the communalization of culture and education.

2.62 These struggles contributed to creating the atmosphere which led to the isolation of the BJP led government and the defeat of the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. For increasing the Party's influence and for further advance it is necessary to take up the concrete issues for sustained struggles and link up these struggles to the struggle for alternative policies.

### **Lok Sabha Elections**

2.63 The BJP-led government advanced the elections to the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha by six months. After the BJP's victory in the Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh elections, the BJP leadership felt that the situation was in their favour and decided to hold early elections. They completely misread and underestimated the mood of the people. In the background of the growing discontent and widespread protests and struggles of the people, the BJP-led alliance was ousted from power. The Party formulated an electoral tactical line which called for the

defeat of the BJP and its allies, the formation of an alternative secular government at the Centre and for strengthening the representation of the Party and the Left in parliament. The results of the Lok Sabha elections showed that all the three goals set out by the Party were fulfilled.

- 2.64 The Party's central task as set out in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress was to isolate and defeat the BJP so that the BJP-led government could be dislodged from the Centre. The Party and left forces played an important role in mobilizing the people against the BJP-led government's policies. It is the continuous campaign and struggle against the communal platform of the BJP, its pro-imperialist and anti-people economic policies, its unprecedented corruption scandals and its attacks on democratic rights that helped to create the environment for isolating the BJP and its alliance. The struggles of the working class and other sections of the working people waged by the trade unions and mass organizations also contributed to this effort.
- 2.65 However, the BJP alliance could be defeated only by the cooperation of the Left with other secular and democratic forces. It resulted in the formation of the Congress-led UPA government which required the support of the Left to get a majority in the Lok Sabha.

### **Attitude to UPA Government**

- 2.66 The CPI(M) decided to extend support to the Congress-led alliance, the UPA, to form a government to ensure that there is a secular government at the Centre. After the popular verdict rejecting the BJP alliance, it was necessary to see that the BJP did not get any chance to make a comeback. Given the class character of the Congress and its commitment to pursue economic policies of liberalization, the Party was not for joining a government in which the coalition would be dominated by forces committed to these policies. The Central Committee therefore was prepared to support the Congress-led government so that the required numbers for a majority are ensured.
- 2.67 The CPI(M) and the Left parties broadly endorsed the Common Minimum Programme which was adopted by the UPA for its government. The CMP contains certain measures which, if implemented, can help protect the secular fabric, provide relief to the people in areas like agriculture and employment generation, and meet some needs in education and health. The CMP also provides correctives to the blatantly pro-American foreign policy of the previous government. The popular verdict

in the elections and people's aspirations for a better deal have had some impact, which reflects in some of the pro-people measures and the promise not to privatize profit-making public sector units. At the same time, the CPI(M) and the Left parties expressed their differences in certain areas of the CMP. They pertain to the advocacy of privatisation in various sectors, the refusal to go in for a universal public distribution system as against the targeted system and fiscal policies which affect the common people. The Party will support any step taken by the UPA government to implement the pro-people measures in the CMP. However, it must be underlined that the CMP does not change the basic thrust of the policies of liberalization.

- 2.68 The UPA government is moving on the understanding that the core issues of economic policies, liberalisation and privatisation should be left to the government to pursue. The Left is expected to raise its concerns about the impact of such policies on employment, food supply, education and health with a view in getting some minor concessions or relief for the people. Our Party cannot accept such an approach. The basic content of economic policies, the nature of investment, mobilisation and allocation of resources and fiscal policies are very much the Left's concerns as they have a direct impact on the work and living conditions of the people.
- 2.69 In the present situation the Party has to play an independent role. That role implies criticizing and opposing such steps of the government which are against the people's interests, or are a departure from the CMP and which are a continuation of the same type of policies as the previous government's. The people should be able to understand that the Party and the Left are not supporting the government for continuing with the same discredited policies of the previous communal and right wing government.
- 2.70 This independent role entails that the Party and the Left conduct political campaigns to project the independent positions of the Left and popular mobilisations and struggles to defend the rights and livelihood of the people. The mass organisations have to play an active role in forging the widest movements both for pressurising the government to implement pro-people measures included in the CMP and to fight against the ill-effects of the continuing policies of liberalisation and the effects of imperialist-driven globalisation.
- 2.71 The independent role of the Party does not mean confining to, or dealing only with the CMP and government related issues. It means taking up the demands of the Left and democratic programme set out by the Party. The issues of land, wages,

democratic rights of the working people have to be taken up and struggles conducted. The issues of the basic classes have to be championed and fought for. Not taking up such issues would mean undermining the independent role of the Party and weakening the struggle of the Left and democratic forces.

## **Features of the Current Situation**

### **The current situation is marked by the following features:**

- 2.72 First, the BJP was dislodged from the Centre in the last Lok Sabha elections. While this was a significant victory for the Left, democratic and secular forces, it must be noted that the BJP-RSS combine still commands substantial support. Apart from its 137 members in the Lok Sabha, the BJP has five state governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Jharkhand. It also has allies in the NDA like the Akali Dal, BJD, Trinamul Congress, JD(U), and the support of the TDP. In Orissa, it is in a coalition government with the BJD. In the BJP-ruled states, the RSS directed communalization of institutions and education continues. Attacks and intimidation of minorities and dalits are a regular feature. This is combined with reactionary economic policies which gift away precious assets to big capitalists and foreign capital.
- 2.73 The rise of the communal forces in the past one and a half decades and their six-year period in office has enabled the communal ideology and organizations to strike roots in different sections of society. It will be a mistake to underestimate their latent strength. Though the electoral setbacks in the Parliament and Maharashtra assembly elections have put them on the defensive and their tactics to make a revival on the Hindutva platform have not yielded popular support, the potential for their comeback exists. In the recent assembly election in Jharkhand, the BJP was able to utilize the disunity among the UPA partners to emerge as the largest single combination in the assembly and form the government. In Bihar, the BJP-JD(U) increased its strength, though they fell far short of a majority.
- 2.74 Second, the bourgeois-landlord combination headed by the Congress which is secular in character is at present in Government. The UPA has been able to benefit from the popular discontent against the previous BJP-led government's policies. It seeks to respond to the mandate of the people by assuring relief from the ill-effects of the six years of BJP rule, without making any major change in the economic policies.
- 2.75 Given the class character of the Congress and the performance of the UPA government which pursues policies of liberalization

and accedes to the demands of international finance capital, the impact of such policies on the livelihood and living conditions of the people is bound to generate discontent. The experience of the ten months of the Congress-led government confirms this.

- 2.76 The fight against the communal forces is also conditioned by the vacillations and lack of ideological firmness of the Congress. It seeks to rely on electoral tactics and manoeuvres to defeat the BJP. While the UPA government is committed to some steps to restore the secular principle in the State, they cannot be relied upon to carry out a consistent struggle – political and ideological – against the communal and divisive forces.
- 2.77 The Manmohan Singh government and most of the UPA allies are committed to pursuing the economic policies of liberalization and privatization. The situation is such that whereas the Congress-led combination can be supported for following the CMP in any step taken to undo the damage done to secularism in the past, it cannot be overlooked that the Congress-led government's policies on the economic front actually undercut the support for democratic and secular forces.
- 2.78 The regional parties continue to play an important role in national politics. Earlier, the BJP was successful in coming to power by winning over important regional parties as its allies. The Congress too succeeded in the 2004 election by allying with such parties. Given their class basis among the regional bourgeois-landlord classes, these parties have displayed vacillations and opportunism that emanated from their political interests in their concerned states. Their contradiction with the all India bourgeois-landlord classes is muted given their support for liberalisation. Increasing caste appeal is determining the mass base of some of these parties which is amongst the reasons for their opportunistic stances. The Party's stand of cooperating with secular regional parties who are prepared to fight the communal forces while opposing those who join hands with the BJP, was proved correct. In the recent period, it has led to the weakening of the BJP-led alliance, the NDA, and some of the regional parties like the DMK have joined the secular forces.
- 2.79 The intensification of the caste appeal in electoral politics and the formulation of the political forces on caste lines is a marked feature of the current situation. Caste based political mobilisation which was a feature of the Hindi states earlier has spread to other states too. This narrow appeal hampers the development of the democratic movement and helps perpetuate

patronage politics revolving around caste leaders who switch allegiances without any ideological or political convictions.

- 2.80 The Party and the Left have to be vigilant about the role of imperialism, which the bourgeois parties ignore. But in domestic economic and political affairs and in foreign policy, the influence of imperialism and particularly the USA has grown. Here again, except for some shift in emphasis, the strategic collaboration with the US and its deep inroads remain.
- 2.81 The third feature is the role of the Left in the current situation. The role of the Left is significant though its strength is limited. It is in a crucial position which should be utilized to advance the struggle against communalism, the pro-big business and foreign capital economic policies, and imperialism.

### **Strengthen Party & Project The Left**

- 2.82 The situation after the 14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha elections is such where people have heightened expectations from the Party and the Left. Such a favourable situation should be utilized to develop mass movements on political issues and to initiate struggles of different sections of the people on their economic demands. Adopting this course will enable the Party to advance. Otherwise, if we only cater to the expectations of the people that the Left can deliver relief through its support to the government, then it will only discredit the Party and the Left.
- 2.83 The Party and the Left are engaging the UPA government in discussions on economic policies and alternatives for development. For the first time, the Left's positions on policy matters and alternative policies are being widely purveyed among the people. The Left has given alternative proposals on FDI caps, patents, electricity act and foreign policy. The Party should utilize the situation not only to oppose the bourgeois-landlord policies but to offer concrete alternatives to government policies.
- 2.84 There are large sections of the people who are not within the organizational reach of the Party or mass organizations. They will respond to calls to defend their rights and to protect their interests. How far we can reach them and bring them into the ambit of the mass organisations and in contact with the Party's politics will determine the success we will achieve in utilizing the current favourable situation.
- 2.85 The urgency and the importance to reach out to wider sections of people and build broad platforms around issues have to be grasped. The defeat of the communal forces in the Lok Sabha

elections has provided an opening for the Left but it does not mean a change in the correlation of political forces. The UPA coalition headed by the Congress, given its class character, will not introduce any alternative policies. More people have to be rallied to the Left and democratic platform and the Left strengthened, if the space gained by the Left is to be expanded. It is imperative that the Party expand its influence and base beyond its strongholds in the three states.

- 2.86 The united platforms with other parties and groups to fight for people's issues should be accorded importance. During elections, to fulfill immediate electoral aims, the Party can enter into adjustments and understanding, but these are for the specific electoral purpose and should not be treated as durable alliances. It will be parliamentary opportunism if the requirements or prospects of an electoral understanding override the independent role of the Party. The independent role of the Party should not be circumscribed by such considerations.

### **The Role of the Party**

**Given the above situation, the Party has to play the following role:**

- 2.87 The Party has to build on the success of dislodging the BJP from the Centre and initiate a broad campaign to roll back the vantage points gained by the communal forces in different spheres of society, political, educational and cultural.
- 2.88 The Party extends support to the UPA government so that the levers of State power are not with the combination headed by the BJP. It is up to the UPA to ensure that its government has a stable tenure by implementing the pro-people measures in the CMP and by maintaining its political cohesion. The Party and the Left should continue to press the UPA government to see that the positive features in the CMP are implemented and carried forward. This can be accomplished only by bringing into play the pressure of mass movements and struggles.
- 2.89 The Party has no illusions about the basic approach and policies of the Congress-led coalition government. It should act as the sentinel of the people's interests and take appropriate measures in this regard when required.
- 2.90 The Party has to intervene and develop the struggles which are going to erupt under the impact of the liberalization process adopted by the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes and which are reflected in the UPA government's economic policies. The Party

has to champion the cause of national sovereignty, protecting the scope for independent decision-making through the democratic process of people centered economic policies.

- 2.91 It is for the CPI(M), the Left forces and organizations of the working people to mobilize the people and launch struggles to defend the interests of the working people and to bring about a situation where alternative policies come onto the national agenda.
- 2.92 The Party has to take up the issues of foreign policy, oppose the succumbing to the pressures from imperialist finance capital and to work to check the imperialist influence penetrating different spheres of society.
- 2.93 Inside Parliament too, the Party will exercise all the opportunities to defend the people's interests, push for measures to strengthen secularism and check imperialist influence. It will support any step which is in conformity with these three broad goals and will criticise and oppose specific policy measures which go against them.
- 2.94 The projection of the Left positions, the strengthening of the Party and the building of the Left and democratic platform are the key tasks in the coming period.
- 2.95 As against the BJP, the Congress and other bourgeois parties, the CPI(M) has to project the Left standpoint and alternative policies. They pertain to the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. At the ideological level, the Party should counter all the bourgeois and feudal ideologies that pervade society.
- 2.96 The Party can be strengthened by taking up the issues of the different sections of the people, in particular the working people. The expansion of the Party mainly depends on the development of the peasant movement taking up the multifarious problems thrown up by the agrarian crisis and building a powerful working class movement. Conducting independent struggles at the local level and linking these struggles to the broader political mobilization for a Left and democratic platform opens the way for the Party's expansion. For developing united movements encompassing all sections, the National Platform of Mass Organisations (NPMO) should be activated. Developing the mass organizations with an independent and democratic style of functioning constitutes an important link in expanding the mass movements.

## **Present Tasks**

- 2.97 Given the present situation the task is not only to carry forward the struggle against the communal forces but also to intensify the struggle against the policies of liberalization and the dictates of international finance capital. The CPI(M) and the Left therefore must wage a struggle on both fronts – against communalism and against the renewed push for liberalization. The struggle against communalism and the economic policies are in fact connected to the anti-imperialist task, as both the Hindutva forces and the liberalisers are distinguished by their pro-imperialism.
- 2.98 The Party reiterates that it is not possible to have a united front or alliance with the Congress. This is what determined our decision not to join a Congress-led government but to support it from outside. In the coming days the Party should have ties with all the secular parties within and outside the UPA who are not allied to the BJP. The Party is not for the consolidation of two bourgeois formations headed by the Congress and the BJP. The Party will work for the realization of a third alternative as the political situation matures for it.
- 2.99 As the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress resolution pointed out, the formation of a third alternative as a stable formation can come about only when the Left gets further strengthened at the all-India level. Without this, such combinations are short-term measures. The 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, summing up the experience of such third formations, also opined that it must be based on some common programme. The process of formation of such a third alternative, as distinct from electoral understandings for specific elections must begin by drawing the non-Congress secular bourgeois parties and other democratic forces into campaigns and struggles on common issues.
- 2.100 The formation of a third alternative will materialize only when there is a change in the stand of the political parties which are today either with the Congress or the BJP. As far as economic policies are concerned, most of the regional parties adhere to liberalisation-privatisation. Without effecting a change in the outlook of these political parties, it will not be possible to go towards the formation of an alternative political combination. This requires the intervention of the Party and the Left. It is possible to bring about a change in these political parties and the current alignments only by building big movements and unleashing struggles. It is only through such movements and struggles that the masses following these parties will be

influenced and a shift will take place. The key to bring about a change in the existing bourgeois-landlord combinations is for the Party and the Left to build big movements and united platforms by rallying all democratic and fighting forces representing the working people.

### **Left Front Governments**

- 2.101 The Left-led governments of West Bengal and Tripura are a vital component of the Left and democratic movement in the country. The Left Front government of West Bengal is unique in that it is in its twenty-eighth year in office. Some of the important elements of the Left and democratic platform have been taken up for implementation by the West Bengal government since 1977, though in a limited fashion. Whether it be land reforms, decentralised panchayat system, assuring democratic rights of working people, defence of secularism and communal harmony, West Bengal under Left Front rule has shown the way. In the three-tier panchayat elections of 2003, the Left Front won 67.2 per cent of the total seats, as compared to 58 per cent in 1998. To further economic development, the government is concentrating on developing the industrial and productive base which can generate more employment.
- 2.102 The Tripura Left Front government is in its third term in office since 1993. In the North-East, it stands out for its unique record of maintaining and strengthening tribal-non tribal unity, in the face of concerted and diabolical attempts by extremist groups to disrupt the unity of the people. Tripura is a shining example of how the communist approach protects national unity and counters the divisive forces. The setting up of the tribal autonomous district council and the work done by the Left Front government to promote balanced development have cemented the unity of the working people. The record of service for the common people and the poor has converted Tripura into a bastion for the Left and democratic forces.
- 2.103 Faced with the neo-liberal policies of the Centre, the Left-led governments have to struggle hard to pursue policies which ensure pro-people and balanced development. While promoting private investment, the Left Front governments defend the public sector in key areas, protect and, if possible, expand public expenditure in the social sector and project alternative policies to protect the poorer sections who are the worst affected by the policies pursued by the Central government.

## **Left Unity**

- 2.104 The progress in Left unity has mirrored the increased Left intervention in national politics. The Left's enhanced role in the post-election situation required increased coordination which is reflected in the regular meetings of the coordination committee of the Left parties. At the policy level, the Left is playing an important role in projecting alternative policies to the course adopted by the UPA government while cooperating with it to restore the secular principle and further isolating the BJP.
- 2.105 The CPI(M), as the largest Left party, has to undertake the work of not only strengthening the current unity of the four Left parties but also to draw in all the Left-minded groups and individuals on to a common Left platform. Such a broad unity and united intervention will be the lever for widening the movements and struggles and expanding the influence of the Left.

## **Left & Democratic Forces**

- 2.106 The Left platform is essentially a democratic platform along with the class demands of the working people that are an alternative to the bourgeois-landlord policies. It is this platform which should be the basis for rallying the democratic forces, so that the way is opened for the forging of a Left and democratic alliance.
- 2.107 The Left and democratic forces comprise not only political parties, but movements, groups and individuals who share a common outlook and goals. The CPI(M) as the largest Left party has to work towards rallying the forces for forging such a platform. The Left and democratic platform must have the following features. The concrete demands and alternative policies will flow from the perspective set out below:

### **(i) For national unity and secularism**

Implement principle of separation of religion and politics with necessary legislation; strengthen secular character of the State and its institutions; remove RSS infiltration in the State apparatus. Combat communal ideology in society. Ensure justice for all victims of communal crimes and violence perpetrated especially in Gujarat. Provide maximum autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir within the ambit of Article 370. Enforce rule of law and judicial process to resolve disputes such as Ayodhya.

### **(ii) For a democratic restructuring of agrarian relations**

Implement radical land reforms, distribution of surplus land and cultivable waste land to the landless. Provision of sufficient public

investment for agricultural development; expansion of irrigation facilities; credit to poorer sections of peasantry. Ensure procurement at minimum support prices for agricultural produce. Promote cooperatives run on democratic lines in all spheres. Protect biodiversity and seed rights of farmers. Protect land rights of adivasis and restore land illegally alienated from them.

**(iii) For an economy based on national sovereignty and people's needs**

Review policies of liberalisation including WTO agreements to strengthen self-reliant economic growth; streamline and strengthen public sector in core and strategic sectors; promote non-monopolistic industrial growth, encourage medium and small scale industries. Ensure adequate resource mobilisation by increased direct taxes, recovery of tax dues and curbing black money. Foreign capital investment to be based on national priorities and requirements of advanced technology. Regulate capital flows.

**(iv) For a democratic and federal political system**

For a truly federal system, restructure Centre-state relations with more powers to the states. Revise concurrent list in the Constitution for this purpose. Substantial increase in state share in divisible pool. Replace Article 356 with suitable clauses to be invoked in extraordinary situations with sanction of parliament. Revamp role of Governors. Expand democratic rights of citizens; scrap repressive laws like NSA and ESMA. Introduce proportional representation with partial list system in elections. Electoral reforms to curb money power and malpractices. Curb corruption by stringent action against corrupt public servants, businessmen and politicians. Develop public broadcasting system in electronic media with democratic control.

**(v) For the rights of working people**

Need based minimum wages for workers; recognition of trade union on the basis of secret ballot; statutory provision for workers' participation in management; end discrimination of women workers; equal wages for equal work. Comprehensive legislation for workers in the unorganized sector; ensure minimum wages for agricultural workers and other rights through Central legislation. Right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution. Provide right to strike as a basic democratic right.

**(vi) For people's welfare and balanced development**

Set up a universal public distribution system to cover 14 essential commodities; adequate procurement of food stocks by the State for this purpose. Implement employment guarantee act and food-for-work programme. Improvement of public health system and expansion of primary health centres with adequate stocks of medicines. Housing to be a basic right. Compulsory primary education and universal elementary education; free education up to the secondary stage.

Revamping educational system on democratic, secular and scientific lines. A comprehensive sports policy which provides adequate sports facilities for the youth.

**(vii) For social justice and equal rights for women, dalits, adivasis and minorities**

Equality for women in all spheres by ending all forms of discrimination. Equal rights in property; joint pattas for women; provision of one-third reservation for women in legislatures and Parliament; measures to abolish child labour.

Eliminate untouchability and atrocities against scheduled castes and tribes by stringent action. Ensure reservation quotas for them are filled. Ensure right to forest land and protection of the cultural identity of adivasis. Regional autonomy for contiguous areas with majority adivasi population. Equality of all Indian languages. Encouragement to Urdu language.

**(viii) For an independent and anti-imperialist foreign policy**

For an independent foreign policy with anti-imperialist orientation, end strategic military and security cooperation with US and Israel; no nuclear weaponisation; strive for universal nuclear disarmament; strengthen relations with socialist countries; support to anti-imperialist struggles and world peace; strengthen relations with China and promote India-China-Russia cooperation; promote political dialogue to settle Indo-Pakistan disputes; policy of friendship and closer ties with neighbouring countries in South Asia.

2.108 The Left and democratic platform presents the real alternative to the current bourgeois-landlord policies. The Party should conduct all its political and organisational activities with the aim of building the Left and democratic front by rallying all the parties, organisations, groups and individuals who will work together to realise the above platform. The formation of the Left and democratic front will be an advance towards the eventual formation of a people's democratic front to accomplish the people's democratic revolution.

## **Conclusion**

2.109 The Party and the Left are placed in a favourable situation in the country today. Due to the consistent struggle against communalism and the pro-imperialist and pro-rich economic policies, defence of national sovereignty against imperialism, more and more sections of the people are recognizing the Left as the defender of the people and the country's interests. Such a situation has to be utilized to take the Party's politics and

ideology to wider sections of the people who have not come within the ambit of the influence of the Left forces.

2.110 This is the time to launch a widespread campaign to take the message of the Party and the Left to the entire country. The Party should launch countrywide movements for land, food and employment. The platform of anti-imperialism, defence of people's economic interests and the fight against communal and divisive forces will elicit a big response if the Party reaches out to new sections of the people and in new areas. Building a powerful Party based on the communist principles of organisation and creatively applying Marxism to the living problems of Indian society is a key task.

2.111 The entire Party should go to the people with the message of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, to mobilize them and organise them, so that the struggle for a secular, united and sovereign India free from class and social oppression marches forward.

- **Conduct an all-sided struggle against communalism!**
- **Build a strong movement against the harmful economic policies of the Central Government and for alternative policies!**
- **Oppose US imperialist aggression globally and imperialist penetration in our country!**
- **Strengthen the Left and democratic forces all over the country!**