

MARXIST

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Editorial Note

As general elections draw close there is a frantic effort by the BJP government to repackage and market old schemes relating to people's welfare as 'vote catchers'. One of the latest such efforts is the announcement of 'Ayushman Bharat'. This promises to provide 50 crore people a health insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh per annum. J.S. Majumdar exposes the fraud associated with this programme.

This article points out that there is a two-pronged attack on people's health apart from abandoning publicly funded universal healthcare objectives. These are the privatization of the public healthcare system and replacing it with an insurance driven healthcare system which operates primarily on the calculations of profit maximization. Ayushman Bharat, hence, is not only the abandonment of the government's responsibility towards universal healthcare but also the route for profit maximization by Foreign and Indian Insurance Corporates.

The Modi government is handing over people's healthcare in India to the troika of corporates, private hospitals and drug marketeers. The cost of healthcare will now be determined by this troika. To facilitate this process e-retailers like Amazon and Walmart have been permitted to enter the medicine supply market as corporate suppliers. Apart from everything else 7.5 lakh medical retailers will lose their livelihood. In short, this is a programme designed to deny people their basic health needs and to make the health sector as a profit generator at the expense of people's welfare.

We had assured our readers that as a part of the commemoration of the 200th birth centenary of Karl Marx, *The Marxist* shall carry

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articles on various aspects of the experiences of people's struggles for human emancipation. These discussions also observe 150 years since the publication of *Das Capital* and the centenary of the October revolution. In this context C.P. Chandrasekhar revisits the Soviet experiment of a planned economy. The phenomenal economic achievements of the Soviet Union, rising to the levels of becoming the anti-imperialist countervailing power on the world scene, are often brushed aside with the argument that since the Soviet Union collapsed in the 1990s, its economic experiment was a failure. This article establishes certain key elements of the Soviet experience which have implications that go beyond the Soviet planned economy's historical trajectory.

The planning principles advanced for the first time in human history overcame the anarchy associated with the capitalist decision-making process where every individual capitalist takes decisions individually on the basis of calculations for profit maximization. Planning further ensured the execution of socially beneficial projects that are unlikely to attract investments in a profit-driven capitalism.

By adopting the planning system, the Soviet Union achieved such heights, within a period of three decades, what took capitalism three centuries to achieve. The result was a fully employed workforce with universal education and healthcare. Apart from many other scientific achievements, it is this foundation that empowered the Soviet Union to breach the frontiers of knowledge by venturing into space with the launch of the Sputnik in 1959.

It is a different matter why the Soviet Union collapsed eventually. The CPI(M) has analysed these factors at its 14th Congress in Madras in January 1992. This concluded that the collapse was generated by mistakes and shortcomings in the process of building Socialism (the first such experiment in human history). This in no way negates the revolutionary potential of Marxism-Leninism and the pursuit of the Socialist ideal.

Archana Prasad discusses the methodological issues that

arise out of the historical reality of the interaction between capital and existing social institutions that are prevalent as capitalism develops. This analysis is based on the unfinished writings of Karl Marx on the ethnological and anthropological texts.

This article explores some of the important insights provided by Marx that need to be drawn upon by Marxists to understand the dialectical phenomenon; how capital adapts and negotiates with the concrete reality, on one hand, and how pre-existing institutions can be re-moulded and reshaped by capitalism, on the other.

This is of practical relevance to us in India where class formations, as capitalism develops, are happening over a complex stratification of a pre-existing social order based on caste divisions and caste-based oppression. This is an area that requires further examination and treatment on the basis of the rich insights provided by Karl Marx.

Upon being re-elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Xi Jinping outlines the tasks before the CPC and the People's Republic of China for the coming period of five years till the next Party Congress.

Addressing the first session of the newly elected Central Committee Xi Jinping expressed his determination, collectively along with the new central leadership and relying closely on all party members and the Chinese people of all ethnic groups for support, to make the greatest possible efforts to live up to rising people's expectations.

He reiterates that the 19th Congress of the CPC roused the country to remain true to the original aspirations of the Socialist Revolution and work together to forge ahead. He underlines the tasks of this historic mission.

This mission, he describes by saying the following, 'It is our Party's historic mission in the new era to unite all the Chinese people and lead them on the path of Chinese socialism to realize a moderately prosperous society, and then take the next step

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toward building a great modern socialist country and achieving national rejuvenation. The torch of history has now been passed to us, and while we should be brimming with confidence as we take on this heavy responsibility, we must also tread with caution. We are confident because we are empowered with Marxist truth, the strong leadership of the Party, the correct path of Chinese socialism, and the great unity of the Party, military, and people. However, we are cautious because we must continue difficult trials to develop Chinese socialism, constantly fight in the face of various risks and challenges, and have the courage to reform ourselves so that we may resist the corrosive influence of degenerate ideas.’