



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
21st Congress
Samar Mukherjee Nagar
Visakhapatnam, April 14-19, 2015

Draft Resolution

Against the Land Grab Bill

The 21st Party Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against and condemns the pro-corporate and anti-farmer amendments to the Right to Fair Compensation, Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, that the Modi Government is trying to push through Parliament by using its single-party majority status in the Lok Sabha.

It has failed to push the Bill through the Rajya Sabha because of the united stand of most opposition parties. The Government response, that of promulgating the Ordinance a second time, underlines the authoritarian nature of the Government.

The scrapping of the draconian colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894 and the unanimous adoption of the new law in 2013 came after much struggle against forcible land acquisition and sacrifice by peasants and the rural poor and their organisations.

Although the 2013 Act had several weaknesses as far as protecting food security, farmers and the rural poor were concerned, with respect to which the CPI(M) had moved amendments in Parliament at the time, the present Amendments moved by the Modi Government seek to eliminate whatever protection the 2013 Act provides farmers. It is noteworthy that, at the time, the BJP itself had voted for the Bill.

The CPI(M) and the Left seek to strengthen the Act to benefit farmers and the rural poor, while the Modi Government aggressively pursues the line of helping business corporations at the cost of the farmers and the rural poor.

This Party Congress rejects the false propaganda of the Modi Government that those who oppose the Land Bill are anti-development. As the amendments to the Bill clearly show, the path of development of the Modi Government is corporate development and not people-centric development.

The main thrust of the Modi Government amendments are to weaken the mandatory requirement for consent of farmers by expanding the list of projects for which consent of farmers is exempted. These are now to include industrial corridors as well as infrastructure projects in the PPP mode, which will cover the majority of projects. Equally objectionable is the exemption given to these projects from any social impact assessment. This means that the numbers of those affected, cost-benefit analyses of projects in terms of their social impact, and even objective assessments of the actual extent of land required for individual projects

will not be undertaken, and that corporates will have a free run. The protection given in the 2013 Act against the acquisition of multi-cropped irrigated land, though inadequate in itself, has been scrapped altogether. The special reference to maintaining the requirements of food security has also been scrapped. The provision for the return of unused land within 5 years has been weakened.

The amendment permits acquisition for one kilometer of land on each side of a designated road or railway line of an industrial corridor to be handed over to corporates, which will mean the acquisition of a very large amount of land without having to obtain the consent of farmers. If the Government is so sure that this is in the interests of the farmers then why is it afraid of taking farmers' consent? The fact is that there is mounting discontent and anger against the Land Bill across the country.

The 21st Party Congress of the CPI(M) notes that the Government amendments are coming at a time when official records show that land previously acquired for industry is either unused or misused for real estate purposes. The Comptroller and Auditor General found gross violations of regulations in 17 States. He also noted that, out of a total of 45635.63 hectares of SEZ land allotted until 2014, work had begun in only 28488.49 hectares.

The 21st Congress of the CPI(M) calls upon its units to mobilise people against the Land Acquisition Amendment Bill. The CPI(M) will resist any attempts at unjust land acquisition and land grab. The Party will build the broadest possible unity against such moves and will intensify efforts to ensure that land is distributed to the landless.

This Congress resolves to intensify its protests against the Bill, and to support all struggles of kisans, agricultural workers and Adivasis in this regard.
