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Crisis of Neo-Liberalism

Manifold Ramifications

The Political Resolution adopted by the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had noted the crisis of neo-liberalism that has arisen due to the prolonged current systemic crisis of global capitalism. This is manifesting itself in multiple ways: further consolidation of the political right, globally and domestically; aggressive imperialist political/military interventions with the aim of controlling the world's economic/mineral resources and to consolidate US global hegemony; coercion on developing countries to further open up their domestic economies for profit maximization; creation of new ruptures and conflicts amongst the imperialist countries as well as rising social tensions in the pursuit of a divisive agenda imposed by imperialism, amongst others. Such a pursuit engenders the growth of racism, xenophobia and extreme right-wing neo-fascist tendencies, buttressing the political rightward shift in many countries.

Analysing the Indian situation, the Political Resolution has concluded that there is a further consolidation of the political right. This is reflected in a vicious four-pronged attack on the country and our people. These are: (a) the aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal economic policies, (b) the sharpening of communal polarization in multiple forms, (c) increasing authoritarian attacks against parliamentary democracy, institutions and people's democratic rights, and (d) cementing India to the status of a junior strategic partner of USA and imperialism.

Each one of these needs to be assessed in the background of the crisis of neo-liberalism which has a direct bearing on the Indian situation.

CRISIS OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM

The systemic crisis of global capitalism that manifested a decade ago in the global financial meltdown of 2008 continues with no signs of any meaningful recovery. This crisis is intensifying further the levels of exploitation of the vast majority of the world's people. Every response of global capitalism to overcome the crisis has laid the seeds of a new deeper crisis. Neo-liberalism's essential thrust is profit maximization, the *raison d'être* of capitalism.

In pursuance of this thrust, the capitalist State, needs to create the legal-administrative structures to facilitate profit maximization. Neo-liberalism buttresses this with a theoretical construct around the 'God' of Capitalism – Market. Markets, as capitalism always deliberately and misleadingly asserts, allocate resources efficiently, serve public interest and are self-regulatory and self-correcting. Based on the so-called Washington Consensus, in the late 1980s neo-liberalism theorized that free trade, open markets, privatization, de-regulation, reduction in governmental expenditures to facilitate an increase of the access for private sector as the best ways to boost economic growth. By now, it is clear with the continuing global crisis that neo-liberalism boosted unprecedented accumulation of profits leading to low growth and exponentially escalating levels of income inequalities.

2001 economic Nobel Prize winner Joseph E. Stiglitz, ideologically far removed from Marxism, had said in an article: 'The end of Neo-liberalism?': "Neo-liberal market fundamentalism was always a political doctrine serving certain interests. It was never supported by economic theory. Nor, it should now be clear, is it supported by historical experiences. Learning this lesson may be the silver lining in the cloud now hanging over the global economy." (www.project-syndicate.org)

NEO-LIBERALISM: GENESIS OF THE CURRENT CAPITALIST CRISIS

In pursuit of profit maximization, neo-liberalism has imposed a global economic re-ordering. It has created new avenues for profit maximization and privatized most, if not all, of public utilities and social expenditures. As a result of these policies, the economic and income inequalities have sharply widened amongst the rich and poor in every country and between the rich and poor countries. The consequent vicious attacks on people's livelihood saw a decline in the purchasing power among the majority of world's people. In order to overcome the crisis caused by this, if there are no buyers for commodities that capitalist production produces, then neither profits can be generated nor economic growth takes place leading to a crisis. Cheap credit and sub-prime loans were provided to the people, so that their consumption expenditures can rise permitting the pursuit of profit maximization. The inability of the vast majority of the people to repay these loans led, amongst other things, to the global financial meltdown in 2008. The consequent crisis was sought to be overcome by bailing out the bankrupt financial institutions. This entailed humongous bailout packages that the capitalist governments offered. This was essential because the current phase of imperialist globalization is led by international finance capital whose hegemony has to remain unchallenged to further pursue neo-liberal profit maximization. These trans-national banks and financial institutions were bailed out. This, however, led to the next stage of the crisis where corporate insolvencies were converted into sovereign insolvencies. Global capitalism is now seeking to emerge from this stage of the crisis created by threatening sovereign insolvencies (where the country's debt vastly outstrips its GDP) by vastly reducing government's expenditures in the social sector through the imposition of austerity measures, i.e., severely attacking people's livelihood by increasing the working hours; cutting pensions; eliminating all social sector expenditures; and withdrawing even the meagre socio-economic safety net provisions that the capitalist governments were making earlier. This, in turn, is leading to a further sharp reduction in the purchasing power of the people indicating that another round of crisis is imminent.

It is clear that no amount of reform within the capitalist system can permit capitalism to emerge from this crisis. A political alternative to capitalism is the only solution to end the vicious misery of the vast mass of the people. This would require the emergence of the political alternative, i.e., socialism as a powerful force based on the widespread struggles by the working class and the working people all across the world, i.e., by sharpened class struggles. In many countries like those in Latin America, these anti-imperialist, anti-neo-liberal protest movements had led to the emergence of elected anti-imperialist governments. These, however, are the targets today of imperialism seeking to weaken the resistance to its neo-liberal order.

This prolonged economic crisis of global capitalism has created a crisis for neo-liberalism and its trajectory, as a consequence of growing popular discontent against this trajectory. This is having a multi-fold impact on global and domestic developments.

The growth of popular discontent against the misery imposed by neo-liberal reforms is sought to be nipped in the bud by the forces of world reaction and imperialism. This is essential to continue the pursuit of profit maximization and to not permit this rising popular discontent consolidating as a political alternative to capitalism. This discontent is sought to be diverted through the global agenda of fostering domestic, local and regional tensions resulting in the growth of racism, chauvinism, xenophobia and extreme right-wing neo-fascist political tendencies. By disrupting and diverting the struggles against capitalist exploitation into such divisive agendas, global capitalism seeks to further pursue the trajectory of profit maximization, despite the continuing crisis. The objective of the political right is precisely this: establish political control for further maximization of profits by further intensifying capitalist exploitation.

In many countries the traditional social democratic parties and centrist parties had surrendered to the neo-liberal trajectory and, hence, vacated the political oppositional spaces. This is sought to be filled up by the political right. The CPI (M) 22nd Congress Political Resolution noted: "This period has witnessed the further marginalization of the social democratic parties in Europe alongside the rise of the ultra-right. . . . This is because they (social democratic parties) embraced neo-liberalism, betraying the interests of the working people."

The Political Resolution has noted: "The triumph of Donald Trump in the US elections, the rightward mobilization in the Brexit vote in Britain, the electoral gains of Marine Le Pen of the extreme right National Front in France, the advance of the Alternative for Deutschland in Germany, the formation of a right-wing government in Austria which includes the extreme right Freedom Party, and representation of nearly a third of the European Parliament MPs from right-wing and extreme right-wing political parties are a reflection of this rightward shift. This tendency has also its consequent reflection in Indian politics."

Before coming to the Indian situation, let us examine the emergence of the Trump presidency in the USA. This happened when the median real income for full-time male workers in the USA was lower than it was four decades ago. The income of the bottom 90 per cent of the US population has stagnated for over 30 years. The growing discontent amongst the working American people was marshalled by Trump and the Republican Party not by seeking to reverse the neo-liberal trajectory but by diversionary and disruptive slogans that would permit the continuation of this very trajectory imposing even greater burdens on the people. Growing unemployment amongst the US working people was met with the propaganda of restricting immigration from the rest of the world under the campaign that 'foreigners are taking away your jobs'. The growing unemployment was also ascribed to American capital locating production units outside USA and creating jobs in those countries while Americans remain unemployed. The promise made was to stop the flow of American capital outside its shores for setting up production units. The restrictions on immigration and the campaign that foreigners are cornering American jobs are leading to the growth of racism, which is manifesting itself viciously. All of Trump's measures like imposing larger taxes on imports while forcing the world to accept US products without any duties is leading to trade wars that has a great potential for creating further instability for the global economy and intensifying the crisis.

This political rightward shift is nothing else but an attempt to prevent the growing popular discontent from taking the shape of a political alternative to capitalism. This permits the predatory character of capitalism and its profit maximization to consolidate despite the global capitalist crisis. For instance, in 2017, 82 per cent of the additional wealth generated globally was cornered by 1 per cent of the global population. Likewise, in India, 73 per cent of the additional wealth generated was cornered by 1 per cent of the Indian population – India's ultra rich. The shift to the political right is to ensure the continuation of such intensified economic exploitation and profit maximization.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE POLITICAL RIGHT IN INDIA

It is precisely this phenomenon of the political rightward shift accompanied by an aggressive pursuit of the neo-liberal trajectory of intensification of exploitation of the people globally, that finds an expression here in India. The grandiose declarations of this BJP Central government in 2014, of *achhe din* (good days) accompanied by illusory balloons floated of prosperity for the people and growth of the economy were designed to mask the opposite. Popular discontent in India has manifested itself during the last four years in the growing struggles by the working class, by the peasantry, agricultural labour, youth, women, etc.

To prevent this growing discontent from emerging as a political alternative, the RSS/BJP seek to divert this discontent through the pursuit of aggressive communal polarization amongst our people. The mushrooming of private armies under State patronage has led to horrendous instances of mob lynching. Under the pretext of 'cow protection', 'moral policing', 'love jihad', 'child lifting', murderous assaults, particularly on the religious minorities, Muslims, and the socially-oppressed sections, Dalits, are growing alarmingly across the country, especially in the BJP-ruled states. Such assaults accompanied by divisive slogans breed social tensions and conflicts. Various slogans are employed in various parts of the country, in the North East, in Jammu & Kashmir, in the South – whether on the issue of language, or, Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, or, on fomenting ethnic and religious divide (like the current discord over the draft NRC in Assam). Such tendencies are growing under State patronage diverting people's anger away from intensified exploitation. While such communal polarization is seeking to tear asunder the unity of our social fabric, it imposes grave dangers for the very unity and integrity of our country. This sharpening of communal polarization and fostering of social tensions is buttressed by the propagation of Hindutva nationalism as synonymous with Indian nationalism. Hindutva nationalism, based on exclusivity and intolerance, in fact, negates Indian nationalism that is based on inclusion and equality of all Indians, "irrespective of caste, creed or sex", as our Constitution proclaims.

IDEOLOGICAL PROJECT OF RSS

The present BJP Central government, simultaneously pursues, as the political arm of the RSS, the latter's agenda of transforming the secular democratic character of the Indian Republic into the RSS ideological project of a rabidly intolerant fascistic 'Hindu Rashtra'. This, in itself, is a grave assault on the present Indian Constitution. A natural corollary of this is the systematic undermining of all institutions of parliamentary democracy and Constitutional and statutory authorities. Beginning with the undermining of Parliament itself, the developments in the highest judiciary, the question marks over the neutrality of the Election Commission, the appointments to investigative agencies of the State like the CBI, the appointments of the heads of institutions of higher education and research bodies to the dismantling of regulatory authorities in the field of education are all manifestations of such growing authoritarian attacks. These are aimed at facilitating the realization of the RSS project of establishing its conception of a 'Hindu Rashtra' in India.

This consolidation of the political right in India disrupts, through sharpened communal polarization, the unity of those very classes – the most exploited in Indian conditions, i.e., the working class, the poor peasantry and the agricultural labour – who form the backbone for strengthening the struggles against the neo-liberal offensive.

The unity in struggle of these most exploited classes of the Indian people forms the core of the advance of the class struggle in India with the eventual aim of forging the people's democratic front

that shall lead the people's democratic revolution. It is this advance of the class struggle in India that the consolidation of the political right seeks to disrupt. A further consolidation of the political right means a further correspondent pushback of the advance of the class struggle in India. Defeating this RSS/BJP agenda is the essence of the current battle to advance the class struggles in India.

AGGRESSIVE PURSUIT OF NEO-LIBERALISM

This consolidation of the political right in India is facilitating humongous profit maximization by the Indian ruling classes led by the Indian big bourgeoisie. At the same time, foreign capital is provided greater access to exploit the Indian economy for its profit maximization.

Under the present BJP government, there is no area of economic activity, including defence production, where foreign capital's entry is not automatically permitted. 100 per cent automatic clearance of foreign capital to maximize profits in India and repatriate them to their countries has now become the norm. There is no public sector undertaking that is not being privatized, including the Indian Railways, Air India, defence production and the communications network.

Education and health sectors are increasingly dominated by private capital denying quality education and quality healthcare to the vast majority of our people. All public utilities and services like public transport, electricity, water, postal services, etc., are being privatized.

Both demonetization and the introduction of GST have also been measures to expand avenues of profit maximization for foreign and Indian corporate capital. Apart from all valid critiques of both these measures that have been widely discussed and are the focus of people's agitations and struggles, how these measures help the process of profit maximization need to be comprehended. All stated objectives of the Prime Minister, when he dramatically demonetized high value currency notes, have been proven beyond any shadow of doubt as being shallow excuses. Instead of unearthing black money, this has been converted into 'white money', instead of confiscating counterfeit currency, this has been legalized; instead of ending corruption, the rates are doubled with the introduction of Rs. 2,000 notes in place of Rs. 1,000 notes. On the question of terrorism, instead of terrorist strikes declining due to restrictions on cash funding, such incidents have actually escalated.

What demonetization actually did was to facilitate the initiation of a shift to a plastic/digital economy by providing massive profits to credit card companies through 'transaction costs'. Further, demonetization has shattered the cash based petty production and trading that constituted more than 50 per cent of the country's commercial transactions, from the sale of fish to fresh vegetables to milk, etc., being virtually eliminated due to cash restrictions. These have led to the destruction of the livelihood of crores of people dependent on such daily cash transactions. These activities are now being taken over by e-commerce corporates or corporate retail giants. Vegetables are no longer available with the vendor who used to come to your doorstep but people have to go to Reliance Fresh outlets now.

The GST has, it is abundantly clear by now, virtually destroyed the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that accounted for the huge segment of small scale production in the country. These MSMEs generated significant employment (next only to agriculture) in the country and provided livelihood for crores of Indian people. This area of production is also now being taken over by big corporate capital in collaboration with foreign capital.

Further, India's rich mineral resources have now been thrown open to be exploited for profit maximization to both foreign and domestic corporates. Thus, this political rightward shift facilitating the intensification of the neo-liberal trajectory is imposing greater and greater misery on our people.

CRONY CAPITALISM

Crony capitalism is nothing but profit maximization through the loot of public monies. This is a throwback to the methods of primitive accumulation under the neo-liberal order, as analysed in the CPI (M)'s 20th Congress 'Resolution on some Ideological Issues'. This had noted: "Such an assault by the process of primitive accumulation has opened up hitherto unknown avenues for large-scale corruption."

Such massive levels of profit maximization, aided by crony capitalism of the worst order, facilitates the loot of India's resources and people's savings in a manner hitherto never seen. The Rafael aircraft purchase scam highlights the legalization of corruption at high places. The non-repayment of loans taken by corporate India, by one estimate, is placed at a whopping Rs. 11.5 lakh crores. The guilty are permitted to leave our country and are never punished. Officially, this BJP government has written off close to Rs. 4 lakh crores of such corporate debt. At the same time, this government refuses even a one-time loan waiver to the Indian farmer who is increasingly being pushed to committing distress suicides, because of the growing debt burden. The class character of this BJP government cannot be more unambiguous!

IMPERIALIST MILITARY AND POLITICAL AGGRESSIVENESS

This prolonged global capitalist economic crisis is leading to greater aggressiveness displayed by USA through military and political interventions across the globe. Given the crisis of neo-liberalism, US imperialism seeks to control the major economic reserves across the world in order to overcome the impact of this economic crisis. Further, in its efforts to further strengthen its global hegemony, it seeks a unipolar world under its leadership. Political/military interventions are also aimed at strengthening these efforts. US/NATO military interventions are continuing in various parts of the world, particularly in West Asia, North Africa and Latin America. Under the Trump Presidency, the US budgetary allocation for defence in 2018 increased to an unprecedented level of \$700 billion. Apart from the continuing military interventions, US global military strategic focus has shifted to the Pacific Ocean with two-thirds of its naval fleet deployed there. US imperialism's specific focus is around the disputes in the South China Sea region to "contain China", which it increasingly sees as a potentially rising rival to its designs of strengthening its global hegemony.

The US-Israel nexus has strengthened its grip in West Asia following Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and shift the US embassy there from Tel Aviv. This was rightly seen as an open provocation to justify Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands and runs in stark contrast to all United Nations resolutions and the international community's stand that East Jerusalem is an Israeli occupied territory since 1967. An independent Palestine State with East Jerusalem as its capital is the internationally accepted position. The US administration is thus responsible for scuttling any possible peaceful negotiations between Israel and Palestine. This decision by Donald Trump will trigger further tensions and conflicts in the region having global ramifications. This is already reflected in the merciless killing of nearly 60 Palestinians, on a single day, in April 2018. Israeli armed forces opened fire on people demonstrating at the Gaza border fencing demanding return of occupied lands.

With its efforts to effect a regime change in Syria having failed, US imperialism is shifting its focus towards Iran. USA has walked out of the Iran nuclear agreement and re-imposed earlier sanctions and threatened additional sanctions not only on Iran but on any country that maintains trade or commercial relations with Iran.

In Latin America, a serious confrontation is going on between the people and US imperialism following a sharp escalation of US political and military interventions. USA is targeting Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and seeking to destabilize the anti-imperialist elected governments there and to prevent the return of such forces to government in the future.

In the name of combating terror, USA is strengthening its military presence in Africa through the *Africom*. Reports of US military casualties in anti-terror operations are coming in from Nigeria, Mali and the Sahel region. The US is intervening in the internal affairs of these countries with an intent to capture their rich natural resources, control the important trading routes and markets, and also contain the growing influence of China in the African continent.

GROWING INTER-IMPERIALIST CONTRADICTIONS

This crisis of neo-liberalism is, also, adversely affecting the cohesion of the imperialist camp. The Brexit vote, the cancellation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement by USA, US withdrawal from the Paris climate treaty, the recent developments in the G-7 summit, threatening the cohesion of the world's club of most powerful economies, the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran – are all leading to strong differences and disagreements between the developed capitalist countries like France, UK and Germany and others like Russia and China with the USA.

At the economic level, in order to soften the impact of the crisis on itself, USA has begun to increase tariffs and duties on its imports. This has begun a virtual trade war between USA and other countries which are now imposing counter tariffs. This is bound to adversely impact the current crisis of neo-liberalism.

SOCIALIST CHINA

During the last three years, the Chinese economy expanded by an annual average growth rate of 7.2 per cent. It is the world's second largest economy today contributing more than 30 per cent of global economic growth, annually.

This growing economic power of China is having a big impact on international relations. Many countries have joined the Chinese initiative of the 'One Belt, One Road' project that retraces the ancient Silk Route and the maritime spice trade route. This Modi government, in order to appease US imperialism, is the only country in South Asia, apart from Bhutan, not to join. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank mooted by China was also welcomed, with as many as 60 countries, among them some of the closest allies of the US like UK, Australia and South Korea too joining the initiative. The increasing assertion of China is witnessed in the strengthening of many multilateral organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, etc. Alarmed at the growing clout of China in international relations, the US has stepped up its efforts to "contain China". It is intervening in the affairs of the South China Sea, Korean Peninsula and the Asia-Pacific region. The coming days are going to witness intense competition between the imperialist US and socialist China – a reflection of the intensification of the central contradiction of our epoch between imperialism and socialism.

MULTIPOLARITY

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) held its summit simultaneously with that of G-7. The contrast between the two was obvious to the whole world. While the G-7 was plunged into disarray

by the USA, the SCO has now consolidated its role as an effective regional forum with India and Pakistan becoming full members. China is taking the initiative to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with 60 members, including some from the developed countries. Elsewhere in Latin America, regional fora continue to play an important role as a counter to challenge the US imperialist agenda. With the establishment of right-wing governments in Argentina, Brazil and with US, which backed interventions strengthening the right-wing offensive in other countries, new problems have been created for such regional cooperation.

Conflicts between Russia and the USA continue to sharpen. Russia has successfully outmanoeuvred USA and its allies in Syria. Sino-Russian ties are being strengthened and both are working together to strengthen multilateral fora.

All these developments show the growing resistance to US efforts to impose its unipolarity to strengthen its global hegemony.

INDIA: CEMENTING ALLIANCE WITH USA

In this background, instead of utilizing the growing inter-imperialist conflicts and emerging multipolarity to our advantage by strengthening India's independent foreign policy positions and independent interventions in multilateral fora, this BJP government continues to further cement India as a junior partner of US imperialism. Apart from surrendering to the diktats of international finance capital, the RSS/BJP expects that cementing a strategic alliance with the USA will enable it to obtain international support for its domestic agenda to transform the character of the Indian Republic into its project of a 'Hindu Rashtra'.

Though, of late, some vacillations are visible due to the above noted developments at the international level such as at the SCO summit, or, in continuing to buy defence equipment from Russia and oil from Iran in defiance of US threats, the main tendency of this Modi government continues to remain that of surrendering India's interests to the dictates of US imperialism.

This is now visible in the negotiations that are proceeding between India and USA on the draft Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). This provides a legal framework for the transfer of communication security equipment from the USA to India facilitating 'interoperability' between Indian and US armed forces. This also links with other pro-US militaries that use such technology. Overriding defence ministry reservations that fear intrusive US access to Indian military communication systems, the Modi government is proceeding to further strengthen its status of a subordinate ally of US imperialism. This comes after the strategic defence agreement, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), which actualizes India as a 'major defence partner' of USA, permitting USA to access our military installations and obliges India to provide all support, logistically and materially, to US military interventions against sovereign independent countries.

GROWING RESISTANCE

The Political Resolution adopted at the 22nd Party Congress noted: "In times of intense global economic crisis, a political battle over who would marshal the rising popular discontent surfaces. The political right wing advances by rallying popular discontent and in ensuring that the Left and progressive forces do not emerge as a major alternative political force. These right-wing forces capitalizing on people's discontent end up pursuing precisely those very economic policies that have led to this economic crisis, imposed unprecedented burdens on the people and caused the rise in

popular discontent in the first place. It is clear that in the coming days, the political direction in many of the countries of the world will be determined by the political success in marshalling popular discontent between the left-oriented democratic forces and the political right. Fascism arose with the support of the world's monopoly capital in the wake of the Great Depression of 1929-33. Fascist forces were able to successfully exploit the growing popular discontent amongst the people as a consequence of the crisis. In the current conjuncture, the rising popular discontent against the prolonged economic crisis is fuelling the rise of extreme right and neo-fascist forces."

At the same time, the resistance to the rise of the political right is also growing in many parts of the world. The French elections saw the resistance to rise of the ultra-right. However, the choice, which was that between a neo-liberal banker and a neo-fascist, led to nearly a third of the electorate abstaining from voting in the absence of a Left alternative.

In countries where there are strong Communist movements and struggles under the Communist Party's leadership like in Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, etc., the resistance to the rising political right is gaining ground.

The Labour Party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn in the UK has been resisting the neo-liberal onslaught by the political right and bringing back people's issues to the centre of the political agenda. In the USA likewise Bernie Sanders continues with campaigns championing people's issues and advanced the slogan of democratic socialism. Elsewhere in Europe many neo-Left formulations have emerged as platforms of popular resistance.

INDIA

There has been growing resistance among various sections of the Indian people against this right-wing BJP government's economic policies, communal polarization and authoritarian attacks. The peasantry has displayed a big resistance that continues. The working class, after two successive annual all-India industrial strikes and a massive siege of the Parliament, is now preparing for another round of an all-India industrial strike action. The proposed August 9 'Jail Bharo' and the September 5 'March to Parliament' is seeing the emergence of a worker-peasant unity in struggle which has the potential to emerge as the core of the popular resistance and forge a worker-peasant alliance in the future.

Various new platforms for struggles are consolidating. The unity between the Left movements and the Dalit protest movements is strengthening. Various peasant organizations have come together on a common platform and strengthened the resistance against this Modi government's retrograde anti-farmer agrarian policies. Intellectuals and students are participating in big protest actions against growing intolerance and attacks on rationality and reason mounted by the Hindutva forces. In various institutions of higher education, the students and the academia are mounting resistance against attacks on our education system and the efforts to convert these institutes of learning into intellectual Hindutva laboratories.

This growing resistance, both globally and domestically, confirms the conclusion arrived at the CPI (M) 22nd Congress Political Resolution: "However, there are also countervailing developments of political struggles to stem this tide through the rise and emergence of Left oriented platforms in various countries."

Further, the Political Resolution notes: "These developments clearly show that wherever the Left and Left oriented forces have vigorously championed opposition to neo-liberalism and imperialist aggressiveness and strengthened popular mobilization and struggles, they have overtaken the social democrats, received popular support and registered advances. In the future this is going to be the

arena for political battles. In the absence of an effective Left-oriented opposition to neo-liberalism, it is the right that capitalizes on the growing popular discontent.”

THE IMPERATIVE: DEFEAT THE POLITICAL RIGHT,
OUST THIS RSS-BJP GOVERNMENT

In the final analysis, in order to advance the popular struggles against this intensified exploitation and growing misery of the people, it is essential that the political right needs to be defeated. The struggles against neo-liberalism will have to be intensified on the basis of an alternative policy trajectory that will eventually lead up to the consolidation of the political alternative to capitalism. It is precisely such intensification of popular struggles that the political rightward shift disrupts through its divisive agenda, pursuing policies that further advance the neo-liberal trajectory in the process.

Therefore, the counterposing of intensifying class struggles versus adoption of tactics, including electoral tactics, to isolate and defeat the political right represented by the communal forces in India would be tantamount to remaining oblivious to the current complex realities. Following a rich, intense discussion at the Party Congress, the Political Resolution analysed the International and National situation and adopted the following political line that the Party needs to implement in the current conjuncture:

(i) Given the experience of the nearly four years’ rule of the Modi Government it is imperative to defeat the BJP government in order to isolate the Hindutva communal forces and reverse the anti-people economic policies.

(ii) Thus, the main task is to defeat the BJP and its allies by rallying all the secular and democratic forces.

(iii) But this has to be done without having a political alliance with the Congress Party.

(iv) However, there can be an understanding with all secular opposition parties including the Congress in parliament on agreed issues. Outside parliament, we should cooperate with all secular opposition forces for a broad mobilization of people against communalism. We should foster joint actions of class and mass organizations, in such a manner that can draw in the masses following the Congress and other bourgeois parties.

(v) The Party will fight against the neo-liberal policies being pursued by the BJP government at the Centre and by the various state governments including those run by the regional parties. The Party will strive to develop united and sustained actions on the issues of people’s livelihood and against the onslaught of the economic policies.

(vi) Joint platforms for mass movements and united struggles at all levels must be built up. Resistance to the anti-people policies should be intensified. The united actions of the class and mass organizations must seek to draw in the masses following the bourgeois parties.

(vii) Given the serious challenge posed by the Hindutva forces both inside and outside the government it is essential to build platforms for the widest mobilization of all secular and democratic forces. The emphasis should be on building unity of people to fight the communal forces at the grassroots. These are not to be seen as political or electoral alliances. Similarly, broad unity to fight against the authoritarian attacks on democratic rights should be forged.

(viii) The Party will give priority to developing and building the independent strength of the Party. It will work to broaden and strengthen Left unity.

(ix) All Left and democratic forces should be brought together on a concrete programme to conduct united struggles and joint movements through which the Left and democratic front can emerge. In states, the various Left and democratic forces should be rallied to form a platform around

a concrete programme. At the national level, the Left and democratic alternative should be projected in our political campaigns and to rally all those forces who can find a place in the Left and democratic front.

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