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The CPI(M): Its Lineage and Praxis in a Changing World

I

The Bolshevik Revolution was followed within a very short period of time by the formation of Communist Parties in most parts of the world which joined the new, Communist, International. India too had formed a Communist Party in 1920. The biggest question before the new Communist Party was how to relate to the bourgeois-led anti-colonial struggle, and, linked to this, how to relate to the other classes in society, in particular the bourgeoisie.

In the beginning there was a certain sectarianism that marked Communist thinking on these questions. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928) formulated some extremely important and valid theses on the colonial question, such as ‘colonialism leads to a pauperization of the peasantry in the colony, but not to its proletarianization’, whence it followed that agriculture could not be treated as being capitalist despite there being a large number of agricultural labourers; but it, had a sectarian understanding on the question of the appropriate strategy and tactics for the Communist parties in the colonies.

This fact, together with the extreme repression let loose by the colonial government upon the Communists, as exemplified by a series of Conspiracy Cases, such as Peshawar (1922-27), Kanpur (1924) and Meerut (1929), that put leading Communists behind bars, restrained the growth of the movement, though the Communists acquired great prestige in the eyes of the youth of the country. This prestige, together with the appeal of Communist ideas emanating from the Soviet Union, meant that while the Communist Party remained limited in size, large sections of the youth belonging to non-Communist organizations were also inspired by Communism, especially Bhagat Singh and his comrades in the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army. The Karachi Congress resolution passed just a few days after Bhagat Singh’s execution, showed clearly the imprint of these progressive ideas in its vision that a free India would be a secular, democratic and egalitarian society, with universal adult franchise, and equality before law for all citizens, irrespective of caste, community and gender.

The Seventh Congress of the Comintern (1935), held in the aftermath of the Nazi rise to power in Germany, marked a fundamental break with the sectarianism of the Sixth Congress. It called for a United Front against the fascists; and in colonized countries it called for a multi-class people’s united front in the fight against

imperialism. The specific application of the Seventh Congress resolution to the Indian situation came in the form of the Dutt-Bradley thesis one of whose consequences was that some communists (not all) joined the Congress and worked through it. This had to be done in a clandestine manner, since dual membership, i.e. belonging both to the Communist Party and to the Congress, was not allowed by the latter, unlike, say, in South Africa where one could be a member of both the SACP and the ANC.

The Communist Party itself (and not just those Communists who were inside the Congress) worked together with the Congress Socialist Party. All this contributed to a powerful Left current within the anti-colonial struggle. A consolidation of this Left tendency had been facilitated by a meeting that Rajani Palme Dutt and Ben Bradley had had with Jawaharlal Nehru in Lausanne in Switzerland when the latter had gone to visit his ailing wife in a sanatorium just before her death.

The economic programme suggested by the Dutt-Bradley thesis for the Anti-Imperialist People's United Front included the right to strike, banning reductions of wages and dismissals of workers, an adequate minimum wage and 8-hour working day, a 50 per cent reduction in rents and banning the seizure of peasant land against debt whether by the imperialist rulers, or native princes, or zamindars and money lenders.

The 1930s were a period of acute crisis for the peasantry because of the Great Depression. The peasantry got heavily indebted; and there was an exodus of distressed peasants to cities where they swelled the reserve army of labour. The anti-colonial struggle got greatly strengthened under these conditions and the United Front tactics not only contributed to this, but also led to a strengthening of the Communist movement among the peasants and the workers. Another area where there was a big upsurge was in the Praja (states' people's) movement against the feudal rulers, where the Communists led many uprisings. This entire upsurge led to the victory of the Congress in the elections held to provincial assemblies at the end of the 1930s, where many Communists were elected as Congressmen.

This phase of United Front came to an end with the German attack on the Soviet Union. The Communist Party's understanding that the nature of the war had changed because of this attack, though striking a sympathetic chord among many leading Congressmen, was officially rejected both by the CSP and the Congress, which actually launched the Quit India movement at this very time. Even though many Communists who had been members of the Congress were also jailed for long periods as part of the colonial government's crackdown on the Quit India movement, their having opposed the Quit India resolution was used both to identify them and as an excuse to expel them from the Congress by the bourgeois Congress leadership, as the country moved towards independence and the fear of sharing power with Communists in Congress loomed large before this leadership.

With independence, the question of the nature of the new State that had come into being and the relationship that the Communists should have with the ruling Party came to the fore. It caused intense inner-Party debate and ultimately divided the Party. The CPI(M)'s theoretical position, enshrined in its programme, took off from

Lenin's position in pre-revolutionary debates within the RSDLP, a position that was to underlie, one way or another, all third world revolutionary programmes in the twentieth century. Lenin's argument had been that in countries where the bourgeoisie came late on the historical scene, of which Russia had been a classic example, it lacked the capacity to carry through the anti-feudal democratic revolution, for fear that an attack on feudal property could well rebound into an attack on bourgeois property. It therefore could not fulfil the democratic aspirations of the peasantry. Only a revolution led by the working class in alliance with the peasantry, could carry the democratic revolution to completion (and then lead on to socialism), by breaking up feudal property, smashing feudal privileges, and redistributing land. This, far from holding back economic development, would in fact make it more broad-based by enlarging the size of the home market through land reforms, and also more vigorous, by accelerating the growth of agriculture.

The post-independence Indian State's eschewing of radical land redistribution, and its encouraging feudal landlords instead to turn capitalist on their khudkasht land, along with an upper stratum of the peasantry that had acquired ownership rights on land from large absentee landlords, was reflective of the bourgeoisie's entering into an alliance with landlords. Since it was a bourgeois-landlord State under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, that was pursuing capitalist development, which in the countryside entailed a mixture of landlord and peasant capitalism, the task for the proletariat was to replace this State by an alternative State formed by building an alliance with the bulk of the peasantry, and to carry the democratic revolution forward, eventually to socialism. While the bourgeoisie had ambitions of pursuing a capitalist path that was relatively autonomous of imperialism, it was, the Party noted, also collaborating increasingly with foreign finance capital.

Two aspects of this characterization deserve attention. First, it recognized that while capitalist development was being pursued, it was not under the aegis of imperialism, unlike what ultra-Left characterizations depicted. The bourgeoisie was by no means subservient to imperialism, a fact of which the use of the public sector against metropolitan capital, economic decolonization with the help of the Soviet Union, in the sense of recapturing control over the country's natural resources from metropolitan capital, and the pursuit of non-alignment in foreign policy, were obvious manifestations. Developing capitalism at home in other words did not mean for the post-independence State joining the camp of world capitalism.

Second, the State, while it manifested its class character in defending bourgeois and landlord property and ushering in capitalism, including junker capitalism, did not act exclusively in the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landlords. It appeared to stand above all classes, intervening even in favour of workers and peasants from time to time. Thus while it presided over a process of primitive accumulation of capital, in the sense of the landlords evicting tenants to resume land for capitalist farming, it also prevented primitive accumulation in the more usual sense, of the urban big bourgeoisie encroaching on peasant agriculture or artisan production. On the contrary, it not only reserved a quantum of cloth to be produced by the handloom sector consisting of petty producers, but also intervened in agricultural markets to purchase produce at remunerative prices, an intervention of which the agricultural capitalists, whether kulaks or landlords, were by no means the sole beneficiaries.

Likewise, a whole array of measures for agriculture, such as protection from world market fluctuations, subsidised inputs, subsidized institutional credit, new practices and seed varieties being disseminated through State-run extension services, though they conferred the lion's share of benefits on the emerging capitalist class in the countryside, also benefited large numbers of peasants who were not proto-capitalist.

The capitalist development that was pursued was thus of a *sui generis* nature. It was a capitalist development from within, not necessarily with the blessings of imperialism, and, notwithstanding increasing collaboration with metropolitan capital for acquiring technology, also even at the expense of metropolitan capital. Because of this peculiar character, it did not cause an unbridgeable hiatus within society, i.e. within the ranks of the classes that had fought imperialism together during the anti-colonial struggle. Put differently, while the bourgeoisie betrayed many of the promises of the anti-colonial struggle, such as land to the tiller, it did not, as long as the dirigiste regime lasted, betray the anti-colonial struggle altogether. This is also why the Party while putting itself in opposition to the regime, supported many of its measures, such as bank nationalization, the development of the public sector, using the public sector for recapturing control over natural resources from metropolitan capital, the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, and others.

This *sui generis* character of the capitalism that was being developed has misled many into thinking that it was not capitalism at all. One version of this misunderstanding is to characterize the economic regime as the pursuit of 'non-capitalist' development, which is a negative description that does not identify a ruling class at all, which is a theoretical non-starter. The other version does identify a ruling class and a path of development, but in a manner that is untenable: it sees the middle class or the petty bourgeoisie in a wide sense, consisting of the urban middle class and its counterpart in the rural area, the well-to-do peasants, as the ruling class, and it sees the path of development as typical of an 'intermediate regime' that is neither capitalist nor socialist. The argument here is that while, historically, middle-class hegemony has never been a durable phenomenon, the post-war world was one where it could exist as a lasting phenomenon because of the simultaneous existence of a capitalist and a socialist camp. Events have already shown this analysis to be mistaken but this mistake itself is testimony to the *sui generis* character of the post-independence dirigiste regime.

III

It was clear from the beginning however that the dirigiste regime could not be a durable one because of its inner contradictions. Its growth was essentially home-market-based and the growth of the home market in a country like India depends crucially on the rate of growth of agricultural, especially foodgrain, production. In an economy where State intervention ensures that there is no overall 'slack' in the economy caused by insufficient aggregate demand, the extent to which people buy industrial goods and services is determined by the surplus purchasing power they have left over after meeting their foodgrain purchases; the growth of their demand for industrial goods and services of all kinds depends therefore upon the growth of this surplus. The greater is the excess of foodgrain growth rate over the population

growth rate, the faster is the rate of growth of this surplus, and hence the faster the growth of the home market in a dirigiste regime.

Now, per capita foodgrain availability in India increased after independence to around 180 kg. by the end of the 1980s under the dirigiste regime, thus reversing the more than 25 percent decline over the last half-century of colonial rule, from around 200 kg. at the beginning of the twentieth century to less than 150 kg. by independence. But the growth rate of foodgrains production was not rapid enough to enlarge the home market sufficiently to generate a GDP growth-rate in excess of about 3.5 to 4 percent without causing serious inflation that was electorally dangerous for the government and had to be avoided. The rate of employment growth, at this rate of GDP growth, was about 2 percent per annum which was roughly the same as the rate of population growth at that time, so that the backlog of unemployment too kept growing at this rate. The promise that independence had held out, in short, was belied by the tardiness of growth in employment opportunities in the modern sector.

The reason why the rate of growth of foodgrains output, despite being much higher than in the colonial period, was still not sufficiently high, has to do with what was said earlier about the absence of radical land reforms. The effect of land reforms in India was that while the composition of ownership of the top 15 percent of landholdings underwent a change, with large absentee landlords being removed from the scene and their holdings given to the richer tenants against a payment, the proportion of total cultivated land with these top 15 percent holdings did not diminish, as would have happened had there been any radical land redistribution.

With the net sown area more or less fully used up by the early fifties, agricultural growth depended upon two factors: an increase in cropping intensity (i.e. a rise in gross sown area) and a rise in productivity per acre of gross sown area. Irrigation typically increases both, but the degree to which it does so depends upon the number of farmers who can utilize its benefits; and land redistribution increases that number. Besides, to the extent that voluntary cooperative and collective farming raises yields by enabling the construction of yield-raising projects through community labour, land redistribution, which is a pre-condition for a more egalitarian agrarian structure that is conducive to such voluntary collectives and co-operatives, constitutes a powerful means of raising yields. The absence of land redistribution in short played a major role in keeping down employment growth under dirigisme.

While this contributed to the general disappointment among the people with the dirigiste regime, the urban middle class, that had been a strong supporter of this regime, whence the erroneous reading of it as an 'intermediate regime' or a middle class regime, found that it had greater opportunities if the economy was opened up to freer trade and capital flows. With such opening up it (or its progeny) could migrate abroad with ease; and it also stood to benefit from the relocation of capital that was occurring from the high-wage advanced economies to the low-wage third world economies. Its support for the dirigiste regime started waning.

The most important factor behind the demise of dirigisme however was the change that was occurring in the structure of world capitalism. Persistent current account deficits on the U.S. balance of payments were incurred because the U.S. was maintaining a string of bases all over the world to encircle the Soviet Union and

China, but did not have access to the 'drain of wealth' from colonies that Britain had had in the earlier period; these deficits therefore had to be financed by a printing of dollars (which were declared to be 'as good as gold' under the post-war Bretton Woods system and were officially convertible to gold at \$35 per ounce of gold). This led to an outpouring of dollars from the U.S. that found their way into the coffers of European and American banks who in turn wanted to lend them wherever profitable. They did not want to be hamstrung by any capital controls imposed by any country, as was prevalent under the Bretton Woods system; they wanted the whole world opened up for their financial investment activity.

The emergence of this international or globally-mobile finance capital, whose size swelled further with the two oil price hikes of 1973-74 and 1979-80 (that further swelled the deposits with metropolitan banks) put pressure on countries like India. This was done through institutions like the IMF; simultaneously they were tempted through offers of an easily available source of finance to cover their balance of payments deficits. Unlike Africa and Latin America, India resisted the lure of financial inflows for quite some time; but it finally succumbed in the eighties, which then opened the way for the full-fledged introduction of a neo-liberal regime.

A major reason for this succumbing was the sea-change that had taken place meanwhile in the attitude of the Indian big bourgeoisie. It had abandoned its project of building a capitalism in India that was relatively autonomous of imperialism. Remaining confined to the home market had become stultifying for it; it tried for a while therefore to keep its control over the home market intact, while getting attached to foreign capital for forays into the international market. But foreign capital was having none of it; it wanted entry into India's home market as a quid pro quo for letting Indian capital make joint forays with it into the international market. The Indian big bourgeoisie had to yield finally; and thus was the transition to neo-liberalism effected in India, though somewhat later compared to elsewhere.

All these factors had been operating even before the collapse of the Soviet Union, but with that collapse they decisively tilted the balance in favour of a shift to a neo-liberal regime

IV

The dirigiste regime we have seen had run into a dead-end: going along with the regime as before swelled the ranks of the unemployed, but any effort to accelerate growth to reduce the magnitude of unemployment led to inflation, including in food prices. Neither option, of growing unemployment or an acceleration in inflation, could be tolerated by people, and they made their opposition clear within a framework of electoral democracy. The continuation of the status quo had thus become incompatible with electoral democracy, which led to an attempt for a while to jettison the framework of electoral democracy altogether, through the imposition of an Emergency during 1975-77.

The CPI(M) strongly opposed the Emergency and stood firm in defence of the rights of the people. In the elections that followed, it got substantial representation in parliament (22 seats); and in the state assembly elections in 1977 it formed for the first time a Left Front government in West Bengal (its earlier governments in the state

had been United Front governments, formed through post-election alliances with non-Left parties that had not lasted long, even though these governments had started the process of land reforms in the state, as had the first Communist ministry formed in 1957 in Kerala).

These land reforms were carried forward by the Left Front ministry in West Bengal through the 'operation barga' that registered share-croppers. These sharecroppers had been denied any tenancy rights until then as they had been unregistered and hence had remained unrecognized; in addition the long-delayed land redistribution which had been started in the state by the two UF ministries earlier was carried forward.

Land reforms, together with certain other measures, led to a rapid acceleration in the rate of growth in West Bengal agriculture. One such measure was a step-up in plan outlays for agriculture, irrigation and other complementary activities; the other was the institutionalization of the rule that 'whoever tills the land must reap the harvest'. Earlier, after the land had been cultivated by the tenant, the landlords' thugs used to take away the harvest (and give the tenant whatever the landlord pleased); the institutionalization of the rule that the tiller must reap the harvest and give only the legally-due share to the landlord (for which he got a receipt) helped to change the balance of power in the countryside and provided an incentive to the tenant to raise yields. Such was the resulting acceleration in growth that during the 1990s, West Bengal showed the highest rate of decadal agricultural growth among all the states in the country. Accelerated agricultural growth created an expansion in demand for non-agricultural goods in the countryside, which was met through an increase in output of a whole range of small and medium enterprises.

The other major area where the LF government broke completely new ground was the democratic devolution of powers and resources to the elected Local Self-Government Institutions. Plans were prepared at various levels by LSGIs and a whole range of projects suited to local needs and involving local decision-making and participation, were implemented by these institutions. True, democratic devolution later became the accepted policy all over the country, especially after the amendment of the Constitution to this end; but the LF government in West Bengal played a pioneering role.

The LDF government in Kerala went a step further. It handed over the management of a number of institutions like schools and hospitals, together with the staff working in these institutions, to the LSGIs, while their salary bill continued to be paid by the state government. In addition, it made it mandatory to transfer a certain amount of plan funds each year, decided by the State Finance Commission to the LSGIs to spend according to their own priorities determined by the Grama Sabhas.

In Kerala too there was a stepping up of agricultural growth under the LDF government, though its magnitude was necessarily limited because of the geographical constraints upon agriculture in the state; but an increase in purchasing power of the people through welfare expenditures from the state budget, also contributed to an expansion in local demand, and hence a rapid growth in the non-agricultural small-scale sector. In fact, between 2004-05 and 2011-12 the growth in per capita real GDP in Kerala, apart from being much more evenly distributed among the people, was roughly the same in absolute terms as in Modi's Gujarat, which had

bragged incessantly of its high growth.

In Tripura too which was the third Left-ruled state, there was a significant improvement in the social indicators over this period. But in addition to social and economic indices, the LF governments' achievements lay in another major innovation. This was the introduction of autonomous councils as a way of resolving the demands of separatist movements, such as the Gorkhaland movement in West Bengal and the tribal autonomy movement in Tripura.

Through these actions of the three LF governments, a certain Left development strategy becomes discernible. Its main elements are: put more purchasing power in the hands of the working people through a faster agricultural growth and through transfer payments from the state; bring about a change in the balance of power between the different classes in rural society; let the increased demand arising from larger local purchasing power encourage local production in the petty production sector which would generate larger employment and have larger multiplier effects on the economy; significantly step up social expenditure, especially on education and wealth; and strengthen local-level participatory democracy.

The pursuit of this strategy however becomes difficult over time because of the fiscal constraints that become increasingly tighter on the state governments owing to the tax concessions given by the Centre to the big bourgeoisie that reduce tax revenue, and also to the centralization of resources with the Union government; but the fact that the strategy enjoyed the overwhelming support of the working people is clear from the prolonged electoral successes enjoyed by Party-led Left governments. In fact in West Bengal the working people reposed faith in the Left Front government for a record period of 34 years.

There is however a conflict between this strategy and the neo-liberal strategy pursued by the Central government. The agrarian crisis, caused essentially by the withdrawal under neo-liberalism of Central government support to the petty production sector, including peasant agriculture, at the behest of globalized finance capital, restricts the purchasing power in the hands of the working people. Centralization of resources through measures like the Goods and Services Tax (advocated by Bretton Woods institutions), leaves little with states for welfare expenditure, including for the maintenance of government-run schools and hospitals. Privatization of education and healthcare further reduces the real incomes of the working people, and so on.

The West Bengal LF government's decision to invite large-scale investment to the state by the private sector to accelerate industrial growth has to be seen in this context. Experience has shown however that this alone is insufficient; it has to be supplemented by other initiatives for industrialization. An innovative move would be to encourage industrialization through LSGI-owned units (in the manner of China's Township and Village enterprises) or through cooperative-owned units (as is being tried out in some places in Kerala); and when capitalists are setting up units in the state, co-ownership with LSGIs or with peasant co-operatives (through part-payment for the land acquired for this purpose through equity of the enterprise) can be tried, so that conflicts over land acquisition do not arise. In short, a whole range of innovative measures by the Left are urgently needed for going forward.

The Party, and the Left in general, today faces unprecedented challenges. The first of these arises from the muting of inter-imperialist rivalry that has occurred of late. A belief in the enduring presence of acute inter-imperialist rivalry had informed the thinking of communist parties from their inception; and this was considered conducive for revolutionary praxis. In fact, Lenin in one of his last writings had mentioned how 'internal antagonisms and conflicts' among imperialist countries had given a 'respite' to the Bolshevik Revolution that had enabled it to survive (Better Fewer But Better); by the same token however the muting of inter-imperialist conflicts, and that too at a time when the Soviet Union no longer exists, poses a major challenge to Communist praxis everywhere.

There is a second factor which has added to this challenge, namely that neo-liberalism not only immiserizes the working people in absolute terms but also has the effect of weakening their capacity to fight back. The absolute immiserization in India is well-known: the proportion of rural population unable to access 2200 calories per person per day, the Planning Commission's earlier benchmark for rural poverty, increased from 58 percent to 68 percent between 1993-94 and 2011-12; the corresponding figures for urban India where the benchmark is 2100 calories per person per day, were 57 percent and 65 percent respectively.

The mechanism through which this comes about is also well-known: the greater distress of the agricultural and petty production sector owing to the withdrawal of State support, results in an out-migration of distressed peasants to urban areas in search of jobs; the growth-rate of jobs however slows down at the same timer (to a rate even below the growth rate of population) despite the higher GDP growth that relocation of activities from the metropolis under neo-liberalism brings about. In India between 1991 and 2011 censuses for instance the number of 'cultivators' went down by 15 million, some becoming 'agricultural labourers' and others migrating to towns where a given number of jobs was shared out among more people.

The increase in the share of the reserve army of labour in the genuine work-force (whose size is always underestimated because people drop out of the work-force owing to the 'discouraged worker effect'), has a restraining effect even on the wage rate of the organized segment of the work-force, as its bargaining strength gets reduced. Two other factors contribute towards this: one is the global mobility of capital, which means that if workers in one country show greater militancy then capital shifts its location to some other country where workers are comparatively less militant, which therefore acts as a damper on militancy everywhere; the other is the privatization of public sector units. Everywhere in the world workers in the public sector are better organized and more militant than those in the private sector. Privatization therefore serves to restrain workers' militancy.

Neo-liberalism thus has the effect of weakening workers' capacity to struggle compared to the dirigiste period. The workers during the neo-liberal period in India have no doubt launched massive strike actions but there is a weakening of their striking power compared to earlier. Likewise, for the peasants and petty producers who are ruthlessly victimized by neo-liberalism, and for whom getting organized is in any case a more difficult and prolonged process, neo-liberalism had weakened their

striking power, because of which their resistance had taken the form of individual suicides on a mass scale rather than of launching organized struggles. Their recent struggle, supported by the workers, against the three farm bills is all the more glorious for having overcome these limitations.

Neo-liberalism thus has the a dampening effect on class struggle, and encourages, as the other side of the coin, 'identity politics', not in the sense of the struggles of the socially oppressed, the Dalits and the OBCs, for their rights and for achieving a modicum of equality; rather the 'identity politics' that gets a boost under neo-liberalism is the attempt by the ruling classes to divide the working people by playing on their caste and other identities through token gestures to particular segments to get their allegiance without ensuring any gains to the oppressed as a whole. The extreme form of such politics which, as we shall see, comes to the fore during the crisis of neo-liberalism is communal-fascism that is directly funded and promoted by the big bourgeoisie.

But while communist politics is not in the forefront as it was during the dirigiste period, it can burst forth when a suitable conjuncture presents itself, by completely overcoming all such divisive politics. The crisis of neo-liberal capitalism heralds the arrival of such a conjuncture. This crisis is the result of the extreme growth in wealth and income inequality under neo-liberalism, in the world as a whole and within each country, which gives rise to a tendency towards over-production; and State intervention that could offset such a tendency becomes inoperative because globalized finance capital confronting the nation-State compels the latter to obey its dictates. These dictates include eschewing fiscal deficits and taxes on the rich, the only two ways of financing State expenditure that can possibly stimulate the economy.

VI

It is in this conjuncture that the corporate-financial oligarchies in many countries across the world are promoting fascistic forces to keep the neo-liberal agenda going. India is no exception to this trend: the corporate-financial oligarchy here has entered into an alliance with the fascistic Hindutva elements and this corporate-Hindutva alliance currently dominates our polity. It portrays the Muslim (and on occasions the dalit and the Christian) as the 'other', a target of hatred, and uses this hatred as a means of shifting the discourse away from the peoples' conditions of life, so that matters like inflation and unemployment are forgotten, and the alliance remains in power despite the crisis. Even the crisis is often sought to be passed off as resulting from the 'appeasement' of this 'other' by previous governments.

This alliance works exclusively in the interests of finance capital, both the domestic corporate-financial oligarchy and also globalized capital. It took advantage of the pandemic to rush through legislation curbing workers' rights and then the three farm laws that would have completely withdrawn the residual state support for agriculture, exposing this sector to corporate encroachment. A year-long struggle by the peasants, supported by the workers, against these infamous laws has finally seen their repeal; but the government has not given up on its agenda, as is clear from the fact that the co-lending arrangement to agriculture that it is instituting,

between nationalized banks and its favoured big business houses, will pave the way for corporate encroachment upon this sector using resources deposited in banks by the public.

The farmers' struggle however, coming after a period of comparative lull in resistance, has opened the way for an upsurge of struggles by the working people. That will open the scope for democratic politics by defeating the corporate-Hindutva alliance and its effort to subvert the Constitution. But the defeat of the fascistic elements cannot be decisive until the conjuncture that led to the emergence of these elements is overcome, which requires a transcendence of neo-liberal capitalism. The party not only has to unite politically all the elements that swear by the Constitution to defeat the corporate-Hindutva alliance, but also get them to agree on a minimum economic agenda of providing relief to the working people that neo-liberalism typically prevents, thereby breaking through the boundaries of neo-liberalism.