

Political Resolution
Adopted at the 21st Congress
Of The Communist Party of India (Marxist)
Visakhapatnam, April 14-19, 2015

- 1.1 There has been a big political change in the country since the last Party Congress. The advent of the BJP government represents the consolidation of the rightward shift in Indian politics. It welds together the neo-liberal thrust and the Hindutva drive with a pro-imperialist orientation. Already the impact can be seen in the nakedly pro-big business policies which will further deepen social inequalities and intensify the exploitation of the working people. This combined with the offensive of the Hindutva forces poses new and serious challenges to our aim of changing the correlation of class forces in favour of the working people. To properly appreciate the situation, it is first necessary to analyse the international situation, which has a direct bearing on the national situation.

International Situation

- 1.2 The international situation since the 20th Congress has been characterized by:
- (i) An uncertain and tenuous recovery from the global financial crisis of 2008.
 - (ii) The continuing US effort to retain its hegemonic role globally through military interventions and its dominant role in the world capitalist system through its control of the financial and banking systems, the dollar as the reserve currency and key technology.
 - (iii) The destructive consequences of the US-led interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria in West Asia and Afghanistan, resulting in widespread human casualties and rising Islamist extremism.
 - (iv) A new round of confrontation with Russia due to US and Nato powers expansion eastwards and more specifically in Ukraine.
 - (v) The US concentration on Asia and the consequent strategic and military manoeuvres aimed at containing China's growing power and influence.
 - (vi) The growing strategic cooperation between Russia and China; the BRICS countries taking steps to strengthen mutual cooperation; regional cooperation in Latin and South America; all this resulting in strengthening of the trend of multi-polarity.

- (vii) The struggles of the working class and popular movements against austerity measures in Europe and the emergence of new Left and popular parties and movements.
- (viii) The Left-led governments that continue to struggle as in Venezuela in the face of rising imperialist backed opposition. They have maintained their support for an alternative path as in Bolivia, Uruguay and Ecuador.

Global Economy

- 1.3 The ongoing economic crisis is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a systemic crisis that is deeply rooted in the intrinsic laws of the capitalist system. The financial crisis erupted in 2007-08 due to reckless lending and speculation and resulted in the sub-prime crisis leading to corporate insolvency. The next phase was the massive bailouts of the banks and financial corporations by the State. This in turn led to corporate debt being converted into sovereign debt and the sparking off of another phase of crisis. The steps taken by the ruling classes to overcome each successive phase of the crisis meant intensification of the exploitation of the working people and attacks on their livelihood and social welfare.
- 1.4 The present phase of the crisis is unfolding with the governments drastically cutting expenditures by imposing 'austerity measures'. This is a naked attack on the hard won rights of the working people. This attack on their economic rights is accompanied by an attack on their social and political rights. This sows the seeds of a future crisis, where the consequent decline in the people's purchasing power will intensify this ongoing crisis.
- 1.5 In this background the so-called economic recovery, if any, is visible only in a limited geographical area (mainly the US), and even there it is still weak, and is more visible in GDP growth numbers than in employment trends. On the other hand, Europe is still in the midst of a recession and Japan has seen a worsening of its long-term poor growth record. Above all, the so-called "emerging markets", especially China and India, which were expected to compensate for low growth elsewhere, have in recent times experienced deceleration in growth.
- 1.6 Since 2009, world industrial production growth has averaged only 40 per cent of the rate achieved before the recession and only 60 per cent of the long term average. The productive sectors of world capitalism are growing very slowly. According to the UNCTAD Report of 2014, the world economy grew only by 2.3 per cent both in 2012 and 2013. It is not expected to do much better in 2014. Only China grew at 7.4 per cent in 2014.

- 1.7 The fragility of the recovery is accentuated by various other factors which are coming into play. The scaling down on quantitative easing (easing dollar credit) in the US will adversely affect growth and the balance of payments situation in the “emerging” economies. The sharp decline in international oil prices are the result of a combination of factors. A decrease in global demand due to the economic slowdown, the increase in US oil production due to shale gas exploration and the reluctance of Saudi Arabia to cut down oil production in response. The slide in oil prices has already affected Russia, Iran and Venezuela. The fall in oil prices have contributed to the uncertainties of the global recovery. With rising political tensions across the world from Ukraine to West Asia, the growth prospects of the world capitalist economy in 2015 are poor, though differentiated across regions.
- 1.8 Neoliberal capitalism has created the worst inequalities. According to the Oxfam report on global wealth, almost half of the world’s wealth is owned by just one per cent of the population. The wealth of the one percent richest people in the world amounts to \$ 110 trillion. That is 65 times the total wealth of the bottom half of the world’s population. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, in the US, the average income of the richest 10 per cent is 16 times as large as the poorest ten per cent. In most OECD countries, the gap between the rich and the poor is at its highest level since 30 years.
- 1.9 The ruling class response to the crisis and the recession has been by intensifying the exploitation of labour and cutting down of public expenditure. The intensification of labour exploitation is indicated by the fact that between 1999 and 2013, global real wage growth lagged behind the growth of labour productivity. If China, which accounted for much of the global growth in real wages is excluded, real wage growth was only 1.3 per cent in 2012 and 1 per cent in 2013 (Global Wage Report, 2014-15, ILO).
- 1.10 Unemployment continues at a high level of 8.4 per cent in the developed capitalist countries, according to the World Economic Studies and Prospects 2014 of the United Nations. In the European Union countries, unemployment is still higher at 11 per cent. These official figures are a gross underestimation. Youth unemployment is double the overall rate, according to the ILO. The three years since the 20th Congress have seen sustained high levels of unemployment, long average period of unemployment and poor earnings from work across the entire capitalist world.

Efforts to Retain Hegemony

- 1.11 In the background of the long term decline in its economic power, especially in the light of the 2008 financial crisis, the United States

which is the leader of the imperialist bloc, had to face new challenges and difficulties. Its military interventions in West Asia starting with Iraq had failed to fulfill its strategic goals of stabilising the region under its control; Russia continued to be assertive in the face of the US-NATO advance eastwards; the emergence of China as the second largest economy and a major power threatened US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region. Nor was it easy for the United States to push through its diktats in multilateral organisations like the WTO.

- 1.12 The United States has sought to retain its hegemony by continuing military intervention in West Asia, the strategic pivot to Asia and by increasing its confrontation with Russia over expanding the West's influence in the former republics of the Soviet Union like Ukraine. It seeks to maintain its dominant role in the world capitalist system. With the aim of containing China's growing economic clout and expanding its reach into other economies, the United States has initiated two major trade treaties which cover two-thirds of the world economy – in the Asia Pacific region and with the European Union.
- 1.13 The period has seen the destructive impact of the US-NATO military intervention in the last more than two decades – in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. The secular albeit authoritarian governments in Iraq and Libya were overthrown by force resulting in loss of national sovereignty, large scale violence and the rise of Islamist extremist forces. In Syria, the US and its allies' intervention has brought widespread destruction through civil war with the Islamist extremist forces gaining the upper hand in the opposition. US imperialism created the conditions for the rise of such forces as the ISIS by its occupation of Iraq, by backing Islamist militias against Gaddafi in Libya, and by the support extended to the Islamist extremist forces in Syria (along with US allies – Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar). The contradictory aspects of US policy have become glaring, with the US bombing of the ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria, while its Arab allies are supporting the Islamist forces on the ground in Syria. At the same time, President Obama is seeking to reduce confrontation with Iran by arriving at an agreement through talks on the Iran nuclear issue.
- 1.14 The US interventions were also aimed to suppress and divert the wave of popular uprisings which began in Tunisia and Egypt. The intervention of the US and its allies like Saudi Arabia and Qatar in Libya and Syria have led to the unleashing of the fundamentalist forces. The US support to the Saudi-led military intervention in the civil conflict in Yemen is another such instance. Egypt, where a popular revolt had ousted the Mubarak regime, has returned to military authoritarian rule after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood government.

- 1.15 In Afghanistan though President Obama had declared that US troops would be withdrawn by the end of 2014, subsequently, the US decided to continue its military presence there. An agreement was made with the new Afghan government to keep 13,000 US-NATO troops in military bases in the country.
- 1.16 The US extends its full support to Israel. The rightwing Israeli government utilised the turmoil in the Arab states to launch two successive rounds of brutal aggression against Gaza killing hundreds of people including women and children and destroying large scale civilian property. Settlements are being expanded in the West Bank. A move to declare a Jewish State has been initiated.
- 1.17 The United States has set up a global surveillance system to spy on countries, governments, organisations and individuals by monitoring and tapping into the internet and telecommunications. The United States assisted by the UK, does this brazenly in the name of national security and fighting terrorism. This is a direct threat to the national sovereignty of countries and violates the fundamental rights of individuals.

Ukraine

- 1.18 Ukraine has been targeted as part of the eastward expansion of NATO. The US and EU backed the movement to oust the elected government in order to facilitate Ukraine coming into the orbit of Western influence. They gave tacit recognition to the neo Nazi militias. This led to the rebellion in the Russian speaking parts of Eastern Ukraine. The US and the EU imposed sanctions on Russian entities and prominent business and political personalities. Russia has responded by banning food imports from Europe and the US. After failing to dislodge the Donetsk and Lugansk governments, a ceasefire was agreed upon. However, the US and the NATO powers are stepping up the confrontation with Russia. The Ukraine conflict reflects the contradictions between major capitalist powers in Europe, the US-EU on one side and Russia on the other.

Pivot to Asia

- 1.19 The Obama administration announced a strategic shift to concentrate in the Asia Pacific region. This pivot to Asia is being pursued by the strengthening of military ties with its close allies and stationing of the bulk of its naval forces in the Pacific. The US intends to strengthen its military ties with India and promote a remilitarization of Japan as a counterweight to China.

Trade Agreements

- 1.20 Instead of relying on multilateral agreements, the United States is going for bilateral and regional agreements with the twin aim of maintaining its dominance and containing China.
- 1.21 The US has initiated the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in order to create the largest free trade area to deepen the economic integration of the US and its Asia Pacific allies, while simultaneously containing the economic influence of China by excluding it. The agreement aims to remove tariff barriers which leads to increase in prices of medicines, change intellectual property rights and strengthen the power of financial institutions.
- 1.22 Simultaneously, negotiations are on for a Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the European Union and the United States which the US considers as a companion agreement to the TPP. When negotiations are completed this EU-US agreement would establish the biggest bilateral trade deal ever negotiated. This agreement would increase corporate power and make it more difficult for governments to regulate markets.

Japan

- 1.23 The Shinzo Abe government took steps to enhance the role of the armed forces by changing the interpretation of its role under the Constitution. Abe with the support of the US is stepping up Japan's defence potential and arms production. Japan has been taking a more aggressive position on the dispute with China on some islands in the East China sea. With Abe winning the parliament election, steps will be taken for closer security alliance with Australia and India, with the aim of forging a quadrilateral alliance between US-Japan-Australia and India.
- 1.24 Along with this, the US has strengthened its strategic ties with South Korea and embarked on joint military exercises, which added to the tensions in the Korean peninsula. With the presidency of South Korea going to the conservative party, there was a reverse in the efforts to deescalate tensions and resume negotiations with North Korea.

Growing Multi-polarity

- 1.25 The BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – took further steps to give concrete shape to their cooperation on institutional lines. The 6th BRICS summit in Brazil, set up the New Development Bank and a Contingent Reserve Arrangement. The NDB has a positive potential if it is not run on the lines of the World Bank. On the political front, on important questions such as Syria and Iran, the BRICS has disagreed with the position of the United States and has opposed military intervention. Despite its limitations,

given the nature of the governments in most of these countries, the consolidation of the BRICS forum is significant in the context of the growing trend towards multi-polarity.

- 1.26 The existing regional forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Community of Latin American And Caribbean States (CELAC), Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have further developed their areas of cooperation. Along with BRICS, other regional multilateral bodies are being set up such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank initiated by China which has 46 countries as founding members including India. All these regional forums and institutions are strengthening the multi-polar trend.

Popular Struggles Against Austerity Measures

- 1.27 In the aftermath of the global financial crisis, various struggles and protest movements had developed. After the Occupy Wall Street movement, protests against austerity measures continued in many countries. In Greece, big working class actions were conducted under the leadership of the Trade Union Confederation PAME. A new Left formation Syriza emerged opposed to the austerity measures and the E.U bailout package. It has won the January 2015 parliament elections getting 149 out of 300 seats and polling 36 per cent of the vote. This is a significant political development. In Spain, the Indignados movement (movement of the indignant) continued and a political force Podemos, which is challenging the mainstream parties, has emerged. Portugal has also seen big working class actions and protest demonstrations. Similarly, in Britain, France, Italy, Iceland and Belgium too there have been large-scale working class protest actions against their respective government's attacks on the people. Another area where the workers have been holding militant strikes and actions is South Africa, particularly the strike by the platinum and other mining workers. In the US, there have been widespread protests after the racist police shooting of a young black man in Ferguson which was followed by similar shootings in other cities by the police.
- 1.28 The popular discontent against the austerity measures has grown and this was reflected in the European Union parliament elections, where the protest was against the national governments which are pursuing these measures. At the same time, extreme rightwing parties have been active and have made gains with their xenophobia, anti-immigrant platform and their rhetoric against the EU. Such forces have grown in Greece, Italy, Netherlands, France and United Kingdom.

Rise of Reactionary Movements

1.29 There has been a growth in virulent forms of fundamentalism, xenophobia and sectarian chauvinism around the world. The recent period has seen the rise of the ISIS and other extremist forces in West Asia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Islamic fundamentalists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and North Africa, Buddhist chauvinist groups in Sri Lanka and Myanmar and extreme rightwing neo-Nazi parties in Europe. These are both a product of imperialist intervention and a result of the retreat from universal progressive values which took place after the setbacks to socialism.

Climate Change

1.30 After a weak outcome of the penultimate Climate Summit in Lima, crafted deliberately by developed countries led by the US, the stage is set for the Paris Summit in December 2015, when a new global agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol is to be clinched. It is now clear that the US and other advanced capitalist countries will end up grabbing most of the atmospheric commons, leaving developing countries little room for growth and for lifting living standards of their people. The principle of equity between developed and developing countries has been rudely discarded with "common but differentiated responsibility" (CBDR) having been diluted significantly. An emissions control architecture based on voluntary pledges as pushed by the US is now most likely to form the basis of the Paris Agreement from 2020 onwards. Current low pledges by the US and other developed countries are likely to lead the planet to 3-4 degree C temperature rise, compared to the agreed goal of limiting global warming to 2 degree C, with devastating consequences especially for developing countries and for the poor all over the world.

Latin America: Left Advance

1.31 Despite the setback suffered by the death of President Hugo Chavez, Venezuela and the Left governments in Latin America have struggled to advance the alternative path challenging neo-liberalism and imperialism. Venezuela has faced difficult challenges economically and also due to the virulent rightwing opposition backed by the USA which has imposed sanctions on the country. Despite this, Venezuela has pursued policies of subsidised food stores, free food kitchens, setting up a network of free health centres in communities and increasing access to free education and basic services like electricity and potable water.

1.32 In Bolivia, the Morales government's nationalization of the oil and gas sectors has led to a sharp increase in their revenue from gas accruing to the government i.e. 82 per cent. Telecommunications and electricity have also been taken over into the State sector. Bolivia has achieved the highest rate of poverty reduction in Latin

America with a 32.2 per cent drop from 2012. In Ecuador, expenditure on education has doubled from 2.6 to 5.2 per cent of the GDP. The minimum wage has risen by 40 per cent in real terms in the last five years. Poverty has fallen dramatically since 2009 by about one-fourth over the last five years.

1.33 Elections held in the last three years have returned Left governments with a renewed mandate. In Bolivia, President Evo Morales was reelected with 61.6 per cent of the vote. Left governments were reelected in Ecuador, Uruguay and Nicaragua. In the largest country in South America, Brazil, Dilma Rousseff was reelected as President fending off a concerted challenge from the rightwing forces.

1.34 By and large, the Left advance has been maintained in Latin America. The recent announcement of steps to normalize relations between Cuba and the USA must be seen in the background of the unanimous view of all countries in South America that Cuba should not be isolated, which the US could not ignore.

Socialist Countries

1.35 China, which emerged as the second biggest economy in the world at the time of the last Party Congress, has continued to progress. The course adopted since 2012 emphasises sustainable development and quality of growth rather than GDP growth. Given the economic and social restructuring taking place, the Chinese economic growth of 7.4 per cent in 2014 is significant. Vietnam has registered economic growth in the last 3 years marked by a significant increase in exports. The success in poverty reduction has been substantial. The national poverty rate came down from 22 per cent in 2005 to 7.8 per cent in 2013, though inequality is still growing. The DPRK has withstood the sanctions imposed on it and successfully countered the provocative moves of the US and the South Korean government. Cuba has been updating its economic system and implementing reforms since 2011. Cuba has achieved a big victory in the release of the Cuban Five and in the decision to establish diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US. President Obama has openly admitted the failure of the policy of isolating Cuba for the last five decades though the economic blockade by the US has not been withdrawn.

South Asia

1.36 The situation in South Asia is marked by the deterioration of the living standards of the working people because of the neo-liberal policies being pursued by the governments in the various countries. The Nawaz Sharief government was formed in Pakistan after the parliament elections in 2012. The period saw the continuing threat

from the fundamentalist and extremist forces with the horrific massacre of school children in Peshawar exemplifying the danger. In Nepal, the efforts to formulate a new Constitution have not fructified even after the second Constituent Assembly was constituted in 2013. The deadline of January 2015 for the Draft Constitution to be adopted has been missed. In Bangladesh, the Jamaat-e-Islami and fundamentalist forces have been resorting to violent protests after the War Crimes Tribunal sentencing some of its top leaders. The progressive and democratic forces have been mobilizing against the threat posed by the rightwing fundamentalist forces as witnessed in the Shahbag movement. In Sri Lanka, the Rajapakse presidency came to an end with his defeat in the presidential election in January 2015. Maithrapale Sirisena, the candidate of the combined opposition has assumed office with a pledge to end the executive presidency. The advent of a new government has aroused hopes for a political settlement of the Tamil question which had remained unresolved in the past six years, since the end of the civil war.

- 1.37 The SAARC has been unable to realise its potential for economic cooperation and trade, due to the India-Pakistan stand off. This was visible in the SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in November 2014.

Anti-Imperialist Solidarity

- 1.38 The CPI(M) will strongly oppose all the US manoeuvres to strengthen its influence and strategic ties in South Asia. The Party will cooperate and strengthen its relations with all the Left, progressive and anti-imperialist forces in South Asia.
- 1.39 The Party will extend its full support to the struggle of the Palestinian people against Israel's occupation and for an independent State. The Party is opposed to the Indian government's security and military collaboration with Israel.
- 1.40 The Party expresses its solidarity with the socialist countries of China, Vietnam, Cuba, DPRK and Laos. The Party fully supports the struggle of the Cuban government and the people to end the US led blockade.
- 1.41 The Party will actively work for building solidarity with the Left and revolutionary movements in Latin America and in particular Venezuela where the revolutionary forces are combating the rightwing opposition backed by imperialism.
- 1.42 The struggles against imperialist aggression, the manifold struggles against the neo-liberal order being imposed by imperialist globalisation and the movement to protect the environment and for

climate justice should all be welded together to form a powerful anti-imperialist movement.

National Situation

- 2.1 The Lok Sabha elections of May 2014 brought about a big change in the political situation. For the first time, the Bharatiya Janata Party got an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha while getting only 31 per cent of the votes. This has set the stage for a rightwing offensive comprising an aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal policies and a full-scale attempt by the RSS-led Hindutva forces to advance their communal agenda. Such a conjuncture presages growing authoritarianism.
- 2.2 The 20th Congress held in April 2012 had noted that the Congress-led UPA government was pursuing further the neo-liberal agenda in its second term. The exposure of massive corruption, the relentless price rise and growing unemployment was alienating a large section of the people, particularly the middle class and youth. The political resolution also noted that communal politics continues to pose a danger as the RSS and its political wing the BJP seek an opportunity to push forward the communal agenda. The resolution therefore called for fighting against both the Congress and the BJP. The resolution also pointed out that the UPA government was working to strengthen the strategic alliance with the USA at all levels. The CPI(M) was facing a severe attack in West Bengal and efforts were being made to isolate the Left in general. The 20th Congress called upon the Party to expand its independent role, strengthen Left unity and mobilise the working class, peasantry and other sections on the basis of a Left and democratic platform.
- 2.3 The main developments and features since the last Party Congress are as follows:

Overall Features

- (i) The UPA-II government concluded its term in office with an ignominious record of high level massive corruption, unprecedented price rise and growing unemployment. The period saw the continued push for neo-liberal policies with the Manmohan Singh government opening new areas for FDI as in retail trade and greater privatisation.
- (ii) The BJP, which had lost the previous two general elections, was able to take full advantage of this situation. Backed by the big bourgeoisie and the full strength of the RSS, Narendra Modi was effectively projected, with the help of the corporate media, as the leader who would govern well and deliver.

- (iii) At the same time, the RSS and its outfits went into action a year before the elections to create communal tensions and mobilise support through communal polarization. The country witnessed a significant increase in communal incidents, with the spurt of communal violence in Uttar Pradesh being a glaring instance.
- (iv) The victory of the BJP and the advent of the Modi government has unleashed a rightwing offensive. The twin forces of corporate power and Hindutva are fuelling the rightward shift.
- (v) The eleven month period of the BJP government is marked by an aggressive pursuit of neo-liberal policies with emphasis on increasing foreign capital in all spheres of the economy; increased privatisation; dilution of labour laws and land acquisition laws. There is a wholesale pursuit of the Hindutva agenda which threatens the secular-democratic basis of the Republic.
- (vi) The foreign policy direction of the UPA II government continued to strengthen strategic ties with the United States and thus acted as a detriment to an independent foreign policy. The Modi government is intensifying this approach.
- (vii) The UPA government was embroiled in a series of corruption scams which brought the issue of high level corruption to the fore. Such huge corruption was a systemic outcome of the neo-liberal regime and the flourishing nexus of big business-ruling politicians-bureaucrats.
- (viii) There has been a further acceleration of social and economic inequalities. The exploitation of the working class and peasantry has intensified. The main sufferers have also been those already oppressed and deprived, the adivasis, dalits, minorities and women.
- (ix) The disruptive activities of the divisive forces also surfaced such as the largescale attacks on Muslims by Bodo extremist outfits in the BTAD and non-BTAD areas in Assam followed by attacks on Adivasis. There have been attacks on the people from the North East in different parts of the country.
- (x) There was an alarming increase in the scale and nature of attacks on women. Sexual assaults against women, young girls and children grew exponentially. Patriarchal and market values have resulted in widespread violence against women.
- (xi) The period saw the growing united actions by all the central trade unions which culminated in the historic two day general strike in February 2013. The united struggle of the trade unions against dilution of labour laws is continuing.
- (xii) The period saw the continuing attack on the CPI(M) and the Left in West Bengal by the TMC and the state government. The CPI(M) and the Left suffered serious electoral reverses in the Lok Sabha elections, which underlines the need to strengthen the CPI(M) and the Left on a priority basis.

Economic Situation

- 2.4 The last two years have served to confirm that the neo-liberal growth trajectory has entered into a phase of serious crisis and the initial expectations that countries like India would be able to escape the prolonged crisis of global capitalism have been belied.
- 2.5 The most prominent indicator of the crisis is the slowing down of growth from the very high levels that had been maintained for nearly a decade, barring the period immediately after the global crisis. The signs of the slowdown had emerged in the second half of 2011-12 itself. In 2012-13 and 2013-14 the annual rate of growth of GDP was below 5 per cent and the data for the first two quarters of 2014-15 suggest only a minor increase will take place in this year. While the slowdown in growth has been widespread across sectors including many services and also construction, the worst hit has been the industrial sector. Manufacturing growth has been close to zero for more than 40 months since July 2011.
- 2.6 The UPA government sought to meet this situation by a slew of measures to further the interests of foreign capital and to appease Indian big business. Further tax concessions and dilution of tax provisions were made to benefit foreign companies and Indian big business. The government decided to allow 51 per cent FDI in multibrand retail trade; the banking laws amendment Act provided for foreign banks to have 26 per cent voting rights on the shares they hold in Indian banks instead of the earlier 10 per cent cap; it opened the way for industrial houses to operate private banks; the pensions Bill was adopted to privatize pension funds and to allow 26 per cent FDI in pension funds. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy announced provided for a drug pricing control regime which would help the big Pharma companies including MNCs to make super-profits.
- 2.7 Under the UPA it was precisely those expenditures with an important bearing on the lives of the common people – agriculture and rural development; fertilizer and food subsidies; and social sector expenditures which bore the brunt of the expenditure control strategy along with capital expenditures. In real terms the annual expenditure on these heads was lower in the five years of UPA II than in the last year of UPA I. The BJP government's measures such as the slashing of expenditure on the MNREGA programme, health budget and other welfare expenditure or stepping up of the disinvestment programme clearly indicate that more of the same can be expected in the coming days. There are proposals for reducing the coverage of the PDS, introduction of the cash benefit scheme instead of food and dismantling the food procurement mechanism which will severely affect food security.
- 2.8 The BJP government is aggressively pursuing neo-liberal policies. The BJP government announced FDI in railways; increased the FDI

cap in defence production. It has increased FDI in insurance to 49 per cent and relaxed norms for FDI in real estate. The Planning Commission has been replaced by the Niti Aayog which is a body under the Prime Minister and financial allocations to the states will become more centralized.

- 2.9 The Union Budget for 2015-16 provides for disinvestment of PSU shares worth Rs. 69,500 crores. The government has passed legislation for private mining by amendment of the Coal Nationalisation Act leading to denationalization. E-auction and reverse auction of coal mines is part of this process. The government has deregulated diesel pricing. It has given environmental clearance to a large number of projects in mining and power in the forested areas. It will adversely affect the rights of the tribal people and the environment. After the BJP government's coming to power the economy has grown at a slow pace. The index of industrial production is not expected to be beyond 2.5 per cent. Agricultural production in 2014-15 came down to a mere 1.1 per cent.
- 2.10 The inflationary process has been heavily concentrated in food items. The trend of sharply rising food prices has been the dominant one for nearly a decade and resulted in more than a doubling of prices of most food items in this period. While growth continues to be modest, the rate of inflation continues to be high for the common people. Though the government points to the wholesale price index coming down, the rate of inflation for food articles remains high at 8.63 per cent in 2014-15. This is despite a significant decline in the import prices of crude oil which should have translated into a decline in the energy prices and the rate of inflation. There has been a steep fall in international oil prices amounting to 55 per cent since June 2014. But the Modi government has raised excise duties on oil imports four times in this period, thereby preventing the benefits of the decreased petrol and diesel prices being passed on to the people.
- 2.11 Unemployment has increased in the last three years. The rate of employment growth has been less than one per cent resulting in the ranks of the unemployed swelling in both urban and rural areas. Of the 15-29 age group who number 330 million (33 crore), the unemployment rate is 13.3 per cent. The slowdown in the industry and economy is creating joblessness for engineers and technical personnel. The number of women workers has come down drastically. Jobs which are available are low-paid and with no job security. This is a typical phenomenon in the neo-liberal regime.
- 2.12 Instead of pursuing a policy of enhancing public expenditure and investment to stimulate growth, other measures to attract private investment and stimulate profits are also being pushed. Key aspects

of this include: a) further strengthening of the position of capital relative to labour through changes in labour laws which can increase 'flexibility'; b) making it easier for big business to acquire cheap land for real estate, infrastructure, mining and industrial projects at the expense of peasants and tribal populations – by making amendments in the land acquisition laws through an ordinance; c) increased handover of national resources to corporate houses through privatization of public sector enterprises and activities – the very process which had led to a mushrooming of corruption during the UPA regime; d) lowering of environmental standards which would allow more projects to get approval; and e) tax concessions and loan write-offs which would make it more difficult to find resources for meeting the needs of the people; and f) significant cuts in social sector expenditure.

- 2.13 The response of the Indian State to the crisis reflects the narrow class perspective of its bourgeois-landlord basis. The steps it has taken have focused on overcoming the crisis by placing greater burdens on the masses. As such it is reinforcing the contradictions between the interests of the ruling classes and the working people – both the working class and the peasantry. This all out assault against the people makes authoritarianism a necessity for the ruling class in the current juncture.

Agrarian Conditions

- 2.14 Agrarian conditions in India have further deteriorated for the broad mass of the poor and middle peasants and agricultural labourers in the last three years. The long-term slowdown of agricultural growth continued and per capita food grain availability remained stagnant. Public investment in capital formation in agriculture declined as a share of agricultural GDP. Farmers' suicides continue in many states – Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal etc. As per National Crime Records Bureau, 11772 persons in farming and agriculture committed suicide in 2013. The proximate reasons for such agrarian distress is that farming is unviable and increasingly a loss-making proposition, particularly for small and marginal farmers. This crisis in small-peasant farm economy, marked by a sharp rise in input prices and the lack of proportionate rise in output prices -- has intensified.
- 2.15 On the one hand, the prices of inputs, such as seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, power and fuel have sharply risen after 2012 due to the policies of the government. The downgrading of public agricultural research has led to an intensification of the market power of multinational and domestic corporates in seed production and distribution. The control of corporates over inputs for farming is growing. On the other hand, the sharp rise in the costs of a variety of inputs has not been compensated by corresponding increases in

output prices. In fact, the prices of crops like tea, rubber, pepper, coconut, cotton, tur, gram and onion have either stagnated or declined. The fall in prices of agricultural commodities in international market has adversely affected farmers. Strengthening the public procurement system is one form of relief in such circumstances but the new government is determined to dismantle public procurement system and invite multi-national corporations and retail giants into farm-gate purchase. The sugarcane farmers are affected by failure of the state to ensure the payment of dues worth about Rs 110 billion from sugar mills.

- 2.16 The increase in agricultural credit has been extremely skewed in favour of multinational corporations, agri-business houses and large farmers. Small and marginal farmers are being squeezed out of the formal credit system forcing them to depend on moneylenders. The indebtedness among the peasantry is growing.
- 2.17 New policies on co-operative credit societies seek to undermine the foundations of India's Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperatives by converting them into "banking correspondents" of commercial banks, barring them from accepting deposits and reducing them to intermediaries between commercial banks and their customers. There is no comprehensive crop insurance system to cover damages due to natural calamities, price crash or crop failures.
- 2.18 Landlords and big capitalist farmers have been beneficiaries of rural change under liberalisation. For hired wage-workers, agricultural and non-agricultural, wage rates continue to be, in absolute terms, low, and characterised by very wide regional differences and sharp gender discrimination. In addition, the average number of days of employment received by rural workers is abysmally low, particularly for women. The plight of the migrant workers is dismal and so is the condition of migrants' families in their home villages.
- 2.19 The BJP government has amended the Land Acquisition Act passed by parliament in 2013 by promulgating and re-promulgating ordinances. These undemocratic methods are resorted to, to benefit the corporates and profiteering by real estate speculators and land mafia. The ordinance and amending legislation erodes the protection afforded to farmers through the consent clause and ignores the concerns of millions of people dependent on land. The doggedness with which the BJP government has pursued this move has exposed its anti-farmer character.

Sharpened Inequalities

- 2.20 The period has seen the accentuation of the economic and social inequalities due to the neo-liberal policies. As per the Forbes list 2014, the 100 richest people in India are all billionaires (\$ 1 billion

is equivalent to Rs. 6,200 crore). This is 45 more than the figure of 55 in the same list in 2011. The combined wealth of these 100 billionaires comes to \$ 346 billion. The share of top 1 per cent in the total wealth of households has increased from 36.8 per cent in 2000 to a phenomenal 49 per cent in 2014 (Credit Suisse, Global Wealth Report).

- 2.21 As against this obscene wealth, more than 80 per cent of rural households in India had a daily per capita consumer expenditure of Rs. 50 or less in 2011-12. This was also true of 45 per cent of all urban households. The per capita availability of foodgrains was 164 kg per year in 2012, which is below the figure in 1991 when per capita availability was 186 kg per year.
- 2.22 The burgeoning wealth and profits of the big capitalists is a result of the intensified exploitation of labour. The share of wages in the net value addition in the factories sector in 2011-12 was down to 11.9 per cent compared to 25.6 per cent in 1990-91.
- 2.23 The corporate sector and the rich have also been the beneficiaries of State largesse. Between 2008-09 and 2013-14, over a four year period tax revenues forgone amounted to Rs. 29.52 lakh crores.

Conditions of Workers

- 2.24 Changes in the nature of employment of workers to facilitate intensified exploitation mark the neo-liberal regime. The average real wage per worker in the organised factory sector had declined. It was Rs. 108.41 in 1990-91, which has come down to Rs. 103.76 in 2010-11. Contractualisation, casualisation and outsourcing of work are the methods by which there is intensified exploitation of labour. The share of contract workers in total organised employment increased from 10.54 per cent in 1995-96 to 25.7 per cent by 2009-10. Home-based workers, mainly women, to whom companies outsource work are paid a pittance as piece-rate wages. The "scheme" workers employed in the various schemes of the government are paid a nominal honorarium and denied all statutory benefits. A large segment of the unorganized sector are migrant workers whose plight is the worst with miserable working conditions based on daily wage labour and no social security.

Corruption & Black Money

- 2.25 The spate of corruption scandals that were exposed during the tenure of the UPA-II government was indeed unprecedented. It showed how corruption has been used to facilitate loot of natural resources under the neo-liberal regime. Earlier, the 2G spectrum case had exposed the big business-politician-bureaucrat nexus. Subsequently, in 2012, the CAG report showed how the coal block

allocation led to private companies enriching themselves to the tune of Rs. 1.86 lakh crores. The Augusta-Westland helicopter deal and the bribery case in the rail ministry followed. There have been a spate of corruption scandals in the states like the Saradha chit fund case in West Bengal, chit fund and mining scandals in Odisha, irrigation scam in Maharashtra, entrance exam scam in Madhya Pradesh and the solar panel scam in Kerala.

- 2.26 The corporate media and popular perception ascribed this sort of corruption to corrupt politicians and bureaucrats without pointing to the source of the corruption which is the neo-liberal regime. It is this that enabled big business houses to indulge in corrupt practices. The Lokpal Act passed by parliament in 2013 has set up an institution to look into cases of corruption defined under the Prevention of Corruption Act. However, for the CPI(M) and the Left, the fight against corruption necessarily involves the dismantling of the neo-liberal regime and the corrupt nexus.
- 2.27 The government itself admitted that the country suffered a loss of Rs. 20.92 lakh crores as illicit outflows since independence. Of this Rs. 11.28 lakh crores were lost between 2008 and 2010. However, the UPA government did nothing to bring back the illegal money stashed abroad. The Modi government is also following the same path after promising to bring back black money within hundred days of coming to power. Neither the BJP nor the Congress are talking about the steps to be taken within the country to stop the generation of black money and to unearth the illegal funds.

Hindutva Project: Threat to Secular Democracy

- 2.28 The victory of the BJP in the Lok Sabha election was preceded by a systematic campaign on a communal agenda by the RSS and its front organisations. Cow slaughter, allegations of Muslim youths luring Hindu girls, Bangladeshi Muslim infiltration and general propaganda about Muslims being appeased for vote banks were used to create communal tensions and provoke communal polarization. The year 2013 saw a significant rise in communal incidents with the bulk of them being concentrated in Uttar Pradesh. The violence in Muzaffarnagar in September 2013 succeeded in creating communal polarization in Western UP. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and Karnataka also witnessed communal incidents. After the results of the elections and the advent of the BJP government, incidents continue to occur in various states, the aim being to send a signal to the minorities that they have to live in a subordinate position under BJP rule.
- 2.29 There has been a qualitative change in the situation with the BJP being in government and the RSS game plan being put into effect. There is close coordination between the RSS and ministers in key

portfolios. To facilitate this, the RSS has set up six groups. The educational system is a prime target. The new education policy is in the offing with change of curriculum and text books to introduce communal content. History is to be rewritten and Sanskrit pushed at the expense of other Indian languages. The personnel to head the top policy making bodies in higher education and research to undertake this work are being appointed. From the Prime Minister downwards obscurantist values are propagated and the scientific temper undermined.

- 2.30 What is unfolding is a multi-pronged effort to advance the disruptive Hindutva project which threatens the secular-democratic basis of the Republic. The statements by BJP leaders and MPs threatening those who do not agree with the Hindutva ideas; the glorification of Nathuram Godse; the "reconversion" of Muslims and Christians to the fold of Hinduism; the demand that the Ram temple be built at Ayodhya – are all part of this RSS driven plan. Hindutva defends and strengthens existing caste structures in the name of Hindu tradition. It also advocates retrograde patriarchal notions which see women as repositories of the community and family "honour" expecting them to conform to subordinate status to uphold so-called tradition, the latest onslaught being the dictate to Hindu women to produce more children.
- 2.31 With government patronage, the network of RSS organisations in the field will be provided State support and funds. The RSS organisations are especially concentrating on coopting the dalit and adivasi communities into the pan-Hindutva ideology and order.

Way to Fight Communalism

- 2.32 The fight against the Hindutva forces and other forms of communalism must be integrated and combined with the fight against the neo-liberal policies and their effects on the working people. It is by mobilizing the people in defence of their livelihood and against the burdens imposed on them by the BJP government and the BJP state governments that the campaign against the communal forces led by the RSS can acquire a mass appeal.
- 2.33 The onslaught of the Hindutva forces and their attacks on minorities are creating conditions for the rise of extremist and fundamentalist forces in the minority community. Therefore attention should be paid to combat minority communalism, which again helps to strengthen the majority communal forces.
- 2.34 Given the danger posed by the communal forces, we should strive for the broadest mobilization of the secular and democratic forces. Joint platforms are necessary for a wider united movement against communalism.

2.35 The tactics to fight against the RSS-BJP combine should be given concrete shape not only in the political sphere but also in the ideological, social, cultural and educational fields. It is in these areas that the communal ideology and values are purveyed and gain influence. Along with the political struggle, the Party and the mass organisations should undertake the following:

- (i) Ideological and political material in popular style must be prepared for use in the campaign to expose the reactionary and divisive nature of Hindutva and other forms of communalism. The intellectual resources and research centres run by the Party should be deployed to mobilise intellectuals, historians and cultural personalities for the ideological fight against the communal forces.
- (ii) In the educational field, initiatives at the pre-school and school level should be taken with the help of teachers and social organisations.
- (iii) Special attention to organise social and cultural activities to propagate secular and scientific attitudes among the working class and in the working class residential areas by the Party and the trade unions.
- (iv) Develop cultural and social activities with a view to combat the pernicious, casteist and obscurantist values purveyed by the communal forces. The popular science movement should be harnessed for this purpose.
- (v) Develop the organisational work in the adivasi areas and among the dalits to counter the multifarious activities of the RSS outfits.

Defence of Minority Rights

2.36 The Hindutva offensive targets the Muslim minority community in particular. The 'reconversion' campaign and the so-called love jihad campaign are creating insecurities and fear among the minorities. There has been a series of attacks and vandalism of Christian churches in different parts of the country including Delhi. The genuine issue of socio-economic deprivation of the Muslim community and the Sachar report recommendations have been pushed off the agenda with the BJP coming to power at the Centre. The BJP-led government in Maharashtra has scrapped the 5 per cent reservation for Muslims in education. Beef consumption has been banned in Maharashtra and Haryana. The defence of minority rights and the demand that special measures be undertaken for the educational and economic advancement of the minorities assumes crucial importance.

Jammu & Kashmir

2.37 The formation of the PDP-BJP government in the state is going to aggravate the communal divide between Jammu and the valley. The coalition partners have diametrically opposed agendas whether it be Article 370 or the continuance of AFPSA. The political question of Jammu & Kashmir was not addressed by the UPA government in its second term in any meaningful manner. The Central government should start a dialogue with all shades of opinion in the state. The CPI(M) reiterates that Article 370 should be preserved with its original intent and AFSA be revoked from the state. A political solution has to be based on provision of maximum autonomy to the state with regional autonomy for the three regions viz Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Direction of Foreign Policy

2.38 The orientation towards a pro-US foreign policy began with the advent of liberalisation in the 1990s. The UPA government forged a strategic alliance with the United States moves for which had been initiated by the Vajpayee government. The Modi government's intention to go forward on this path is clear. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Washington in September 2014, the renewal of the Indo-US Defence Framework Agreement for another ten years (from January 2015) was announced. The BJP government is strengthening strategic and military ties with Japan and Australia, and a security cooperation framework agreement has been signed with the latter. The Joint Vision Statement on the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region made during the Obama visit in January 2015 has for the first time explicitly aligned India's 'Act East' policy with the U.S. pivot to Asia to contain China. The consequences of this approach will be the emergence of quadrilateral security alliance involving the U.S, India, Japan and Australia.

2.39 The BJP government is strengthening its security and strategic collaboration with Israel. It is also adopting a confrontational stance with Pakistan after calling off the foreign secretary level talks last year. While relations with Russia are being nurtured, the BJP government should not let its ideological predilections come in the way of improving and strengthening relations with China.

2.40 The Party has to constantly campaign against the strategic tie up with the United States and advocate an independent foreign policy which alone can serve the country's interests well. The Party has to step up efforts to develop anti-imperialist activities and movements.

The State and the Neo-Liberal Regime

2.41 The State and its institutions are being corroded and influenced by the neo-liberal outlook. The State is increasingly acting as the instrument for big capital to grab natural resources and accumulate

capital. The State acts as a facilitator for the market forces and to remove any obstacles opposing them. At the same time, the role of the State as a provider of welfare measures is under attack. The neo-liberal impact has led to an increasing nexus between business and politics. Big money pervades the electoral system. The intertwining of politics and business has corroded democratic institutions. Parliamentary democracy is getting attenuated as a result. Basic economic policies are decided irrespective of parliament and legislatures. The Modi government is relying more and more on ordinances to push through major policy measures thereby undermining parliamentary democracy.

- 2.42 The states are compelled to pursue policies of privatisation, imposition of user charges and privatisation of agricultural markets through conditionalities imposed on fiscal transfers and through loans taken from the World Bank. It is in such a situation that efforts to communalise the institutions of the State are taking place under the BJP rule. The concept of a national security State is sought to be promoted. All this presages an authoritarian regime being put in place.

Struggle for Electoral Reforms

- 2.43 The corrosion of parliamentary democracy by big money and the distortions of the first past the post elected system underline the importance of basic electoral reforms. The Party should campaign for the introduction of proportional representation with a partial list system. Along with this there should be State funding in kind and stringent measures to curb money spent illegally for elections. It is essential that the expenditure incurred by the Party is included in the candidate's expenditure in elections.

State Repression, Curbs on Democratic Rights

- 2.44 The growing authoritarian trends are reflected in the serious encroachments on democratic rights and attacks on civil liberties. There are more and more curbs on the right to protest, hold demonstrations and public meetings being imposed by various state governments. The judiciary is also being utilised to place such restrictions.
- 2.45 State repression is being exercised through draconian laws. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) enforced in Jammu & Kashmir and Manipur has led to killings of civilians with impunity by the armed forces. The State machinery is also utilizing the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) to target Muslim youth in the name of fighting terrorism. In the last three years, innumerable examples are there of Muslim youth incarcerated for long periods being acquitted of all charges by the courts. The sedition clauses in the

Indian Penal Code are being used indiscriminately against popular movements and against those who are fighting government policies. Section 66A of the IT Act was used to suppress dissenting views on the internet and social media, till it was struck down recently by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional. Increasingly, the police is used to serve the interests of the ruling party and there is a nexus of the police, ruling politicians and mafia gangs in certain places. A dangerous feature which is emerging is the use of the police for carrying out the illegal diktats of the Hindutva forces targeting the minorities in BJP ruled states.

- 2.46 All these underline the importance of mobilizing all democratic forces and citizens groups for the defence of democratic rights and civil liberties.

II

Current Political Situation

BJP & Congress

- 2.47 The present situation is marked by a significant shift in the relative strength of the two major parties of the ruling classes. The BJP has gained strength at the expense of the Congress. It was able to win 282 seats by getting only 31 per cent of the polled vote in the Lok Sabha elections. However, it was able to win new support from amongst the middle classes, youth and from among other backward classes in the rural areas. That the BJP has been able to advance into new areas was seen in the way it has won the assembly elections in Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir though it suffered a defeat in Delhi. The BJP was in disarray from the two successive defeats in the parliament elections. It was finally the RSS intervention which made the party select a new leadership. A notable result of this has been the strengthening of the grip and control of the RSS over the party.

- 2.48** The Congress party's long term decline which was masked by the UPA victories in the 2004 and 2009 elections, has come back to the fore. The disastrous record of the UPA-II government resulted in the mass discontent and erosion of the popular base of the Congress. The Congress party's adoption of neo-liberal policies and the resultant corruption is primarily responsible for this. That the party is unable to recover yet is seen from the defeats it has suffered in the state elections in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Delhi. It is facing a crisis in choosing a new leadership.

Regional Parties

- 2.49 The Party had noted the change in the role of the regional parties in the past one and a half decades. In class terms, the regional parties reflect the aspirations of the bourgeoisie of their regions. This has led them to conform by and large to the neo-liberal policies. Further, they display opportunism and vacillation with regard to the BJP and Congress in order to suit their political interests in the state. The Telugu Desam Party and the Lok Janshakti Party allied with the BJP in the Lok Sabha election. The NCP which was in alliance with the Congress in Maharashtra broke with it and made overtures to the BJP after the assembly elections.
- 2.50 The AIADMK and the BJD fought independently and did well in the Lok Sabha elections. However, they are both taking a pro-BJP government stance subsequently. The BJD and AIADMK governments in Odisha and Tamilnadu are pursuing neo-liberal policies. Both the AIADMK and the DMK in Tamilnadu are plagued by corruption cases involving their top leadership. Parties like the Samajwadi Party, the BSP and JD(U), when in government, follow essentially the same policies as that of the Central government
- 2.51 It is necessary to fight against the policies of the state governments run by the regional parties which adopt anti-people and anti-working class positions. It is also essential to launch a political campaign against the bourgeois ideology and politics of the dominant regional parties so that the masses can be won over from their influence.
- 2.52 The parties which sprung up from the erstwhile Janata Dal have announced they will unite. The SP, RJD, JD(U), JD(S), INLD and SJP are merging into a single party. If this materializes, they can emerge as an effective force in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and some other pockets in North India. However, it remains to be seen whether they can formulate a coherent programme with a democratic social and economic content.
- 2.53 Parties based on the Muslim community have been active and made headway in certain areas. The All India United Democratic Forum (AIUDF) has established itself in Assam where it is the main opposition party in the assembly. It has been trying to expand to other states, though not with much success. The Majli e-Ittehadul Muslimeem (MIM) which was entrenched in the Hyderabad region is expanding its reach. In the Maharashtra assembly election in November 2014, it won two seats and came second in three more. Its extremist rhetoric is attracting sections of the Muslim youth. The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) is a party floated by the extremist Popular Front and it is trying to expand in the southern states. In some areas, such parties are garnering support, given the

acute dissatisfaction with the secular bourgeois parties amongst the minorities

- 2.54 A new political party to emerge since the last Congress is the Aam Aadmi Party. It originated from the anti-corruption movement led by Anna Hazare. The AAP emerged as a major party in the Delhi assembly elections in November 2014 and later in Punjab during the Lok Sabha elections. The AAP won an unprecedented victory winning 67 out of the 70 seats in the February 2015 assembly election in Delhi. The AAP has had an appeal to middle class sections, urban poor and youth, particularly in Delhi. However, apart from agitating on popular issues, it has not come out with a clear cut programme and policies.

Mass Struggles & Mass Movements

- 2.55 The CPI(M) and the Left parties conducted a sustained campaign on food security. Starting from block level, it led up to a five day mass dharna in Delhi in July-August 2012. Subsequently, mass picketing was resorted to in September. This was followed by a mass signature campaign for a universal public distribution system in which 3.5 crore signatures were collected. The CPI(M) and the Left parties took the initiative to mobilise other non-Congress secular opposition parties against the FDI in retail and disinvestment of PSU shares. A countrywide strike and protest was held on September 20, 2012 which became a powerful protest action. The Party also observed a protest day against violence on women and demanding firm measures to curb such violence all over the country on October 30, 2012.
- 2.56 The Party undertook its largest mass campaign in recent times by conducting the *sangharsh sandesh jathas*. These four jathas covered over 11,000 kms in March 2013. They culminated in a big rally on March 19. The rally gave a call for mass picketing on six demands between May 15 to 31. The Left parties held a convention in July 2013 to bring out an alternative set of policies. Rallies were held in various states to popularize this platform.
- 2.57 In the coming period, emphasis should be on developing mass struggles and movements by the Party and the mass fronts and organise struggles and movements on the problems and issues affecting different sections of the people. It is only by building powerful mass and class organisations that the Party can advance and the Left and democratic forces be strengthened.
- 2.58 The development of the mass movements and class and mass organisations of the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers, women, students, youth, tribals and dalits is essential for the advance of the struggles against the neo-liberal policies,

communalism and social oppression. The expansion of the mass and class organisations and their mass influence is key to enhancing the independent strength of the Party and for rallying the Left and democratic forces.

Working Class

2.59 The united struggles which developed under the joint platform of all central trade unions and national federations which resulted in the historic two-day strike in February 2013, should be carried forward. The struggle against the dilution of labour laws and the withdrawal of existing social security benefits should be conducted by this united platform. The two-day strike of coal mine workers was a result of this unity.

2.60 The working class front should concentrate on organizing workers in the key industries, new manufacturing units and expanding service sector. It should further develop the movement and organise the vast masses of workers in the unorganised sector with special attention to organizing working women. The trade unions should organise social, educational and cultural activities in the working class localities and take up social issues. The Party should pay attention to work in the working class residential areas and conduct activities to counter the activities of the communal organisations.

Kisan

2.61 The struggles and movements in the agrarian front should be oriented towards the poor peasants, agricultural workers and the rural poor. The differentiated nature of the impact of the agrarian crisis among various sections among the peasantry, regions, crops and periods, the strong ideological influence of the landlords and richer sections must be taken into account in organising agitations and struggles and rallying the peasantry against the anti-peasant policies. These problems have to be surmounted by planned and determined organisational work, by raising correct slogans and building movements on comprehensive land reforms and indiscriminate acquisition of land, forest rights, rights of tenants, struggles to resist neo-liberal policies and free trade, against corporate takeover of agriculture, water, seeds and forests, for remunerative prices and expansion of credit facilities. The growing distress inflicted by the neo-liberal policies provides wide possibilities for uniting the mass of the peasantry to fight against these policies

Agricultural Workers

2.62 The agricultural workers front should continue to take up issues related to employment and wages, MGNREGA, migrant labour, land,

forest lands, price rise and food security, house sites, social security, caste discrimination, women agricultural workers issues, comprehensive central legislation for wages and social security measures for agricultural workers. These issues should be taken up for building powerful agricultural workers movements in most of the states in the coming period. There are visible changes in the nature of work of the agricultural workers in the rural areas. They should be studied concretely and strategies ought to be evolved to organise rural workers.

Women

2.63 The exponential increase in crimes of sexual violence against women and children require a concerted effort to build up broad based resistance through united action by women's organizations, other mass organizations and groups. With the offensive of communal forces, a most critical issue is how to counter the communal and anti-woman ideology and practice by the Hindutva forces among women. This will have to be combined with more struggles against the specific impact of neo liberal policies on the lives and livelihood of women, especially the poorer sections of women. In the coming days, the women's organisation will also have to intensify its work on the issue of violence against women which has assumed extremely vicious forms and also find ways to reach out to broader sections of young women in urban centres who are the targets of sexual assault and harassment. A special thrust should be given to social reform initiatives within all communities and religions. The struggle for 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures must be carried forward with the cooperation of the democratic movement as a whole.

Youth

2.64 The youth movement has to be developed by taking up various issues of the youth concerning unemployment, lack of opportunities for advancement, paucity of sports and cultural facilities and the concerted effort to depoliticize the youth. The youth front should be in the fore in taking up social and cultural issues which can also inspire the youth to democratic and secular ideals. This should be a part of the enhanced campaign against the communal forces.

Students

2.65 The student front has been struggling against commercialization and centralization in the education sector during the UPA-II regime. With the BJP government in power, steps to communalise the education sector have begun. With no increase in the budgetary allocation for education, commercialization is on the rise. The main thrust of the student movement should be against the

commercialization and communalization of education. There should be emphasis on fighting for the democratic rights of students. Broadbased united movements should be built up on these issues. Special attention has to be paid to organizing and drawing students into the movement from the burgeoning private educational institutions.

Adivasis

2.66 The formation of a separate platform for adivasis has given impetus to work among adivasis in different States where major issues such as implementation of the Forest Rights Act, displacement, education rights, issues connected with tribal right to minor forest produce and tribal women's security have been taken up. This work must be taken further through strengthening local struggles and building organization. The issue of protection of tribal land under the fifth schedule and PESA should be taken up. The issue of community certificates and inclusion of certain tribal communities in the scheduled tribe list are also problems which need to be addressed. The class approach to adivasi issues must be fully combined with social and cultural issues. This will prove effective against the communal onslaught of the RSS in tribal areas.

Dalits

2.67 The struggle against caste oppression of the dalits constitutes an important part of the democratic movement. The fight against untouchability and other forms of caste discrimination; against atrocities and sexual assaults on dalit women, the struggle to ensure that reservation and welfare measures for dalits are fully implemented; reservation in private sector for dalits; the legal basis for SC/ST sub-plan/special component plan to be enforced and the overall struggle against the caste system needs to be taken forward. The formation of the dalit platform should provide a fillip to the dalit emancipation movement.

Political Line

2.68 The Party has to fight against the BJP and Modi government's policies. This is the main task at hand. This requires a concerted opposition to the Modi government's economic policies and its Hindutva oriented social, educational and cultural policies. The Party has to conduct a political-ideological struggle against the BJP-RSS combine. However, the fight against communalism cannot be conducted in isolation. It has to be integrated with the struggle against the neo-liberal policies and in defence of the people's livelihood.

- 2.69 While the main direction of the struggle is against the BJP, the Party will continue to oppose the Congress. It has pursued neo-liberal policies and it is the Congress-led UPA government's anti-people policies and massive corruption which helped the BJP to acquire popular support. The Party will have no understanding or electoral alliance with the Congress.
- 2.70 The fight against the neo-liberal policies requires the struggle against such policies being pursued by the state governments, including those run by the regional parties. It is also necessary to politically oppose the bourgeois-landlord politics and policies of the regional parties in order to organise the working people and mobilise them around the Left and democratic platform.
- 2.71 The Party will give primary attention to developing and building the independent strength of the Party. At the same time, the Party will strive to develop united actions on people's issues, defence of national sovereignty, states rights and against imperialism with other democratic forces and non-Congress secular parties. Joint platforms for mass movements and united struggles are necessary if the Party is to expand its independent strength. The united actions of the class and mass organisations will seek to draw in the masses following the Congress, the BJP and the other bourgeois parties.
- 2.72 The Party will actively work to rally the Left and democratic forces so that a Left and democratic front can be forged step by step. This can be done only through the process of developing united struggles and joint movements. The electoral tactics of the Party should be guided by the Party's interests to strengthen itself and to help the rallying of the Left and democratic forces.

Left Unity and Movements

- 2.73 The process of Left unity was so far confined to four parties at the national level – CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc and RSP. Since the Lok Sabha election, there has been emphasis to widen and strengthen Left unity. With this in view six Left parties which includes the CPI(ML)-Liberation and the SUCI(C) came together on a 9-point charter of demands for a joint campaign in December 2014. In the states also united Left platforms have developed. In Punjab, four Left parties – CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML)-Liberation and CPM(Punjab) came together for a joint movement on a charter of demands and a joint movement has been going on since September 2014.
- 2.74 In West Bengal 17 left parties and groups have come together for joint actions against imperialism and communalism. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh 11 Left parties are working together. In Maharashtra, the Peasants & Workers Party rejoined with the

CPI(M) and CPI in the recent assembly elections. The efforts to widen Left unity and forge a broad Left platform including parties, groups and individuals must be taken forward.

Left Bases

- 2.75 The Political Resolution of the 20th Congress had noted the weakened position of the Party and the Left at the national level due to the electoral reverses in West Bengal and Kerala and because the Party had made no substantial advance in any other state. During the period since, the Party has sought to overcome the situation, particularly with regard to the three strong states of the Party.
- 2.76 The concerted violence and attack on the CPI(M) and the Left in West Bengal which was launched in 2009 continues. It has surpassed the scale and scope of the violence and terror of the 1970s. In the last three years, there have been successive rounds of attack meant to suppress the Party's activities and to intimidate its cadres, as was seen during and after the panchayat elections in 2013 and the post poll violence after the 2014 Lok Sabha election. Party cadres, supporters and even those who voted for the Party were targeted in these successive rounds. Women have borne the brunt of the violence in many areas and have courageously resisted the attackers. The State machinery has been blatantly misused to file false cases against Party activists. The TMC leaders and MPs made speeches inciting violence, rape and killings. 163 Party members and supporters were killed since the Assembly elections in May 2011.
- 2.77 The misrule of the TMC government, the Saradha scam and the involvement of the top TMC leadership, the worsening plight of the working class and the peasantry, the widespread crimes against women and the loot and extortion have all been features of the current situation. The TMC's opportunist politics and fascistic actions have created the basis for the BJP to make gains. The Party has been working to overcome the adverse situation. It is campaigning for the defence of democracy and democratic rights, mobilizing the people on the issues of their livelihood and economic problems to conduct struggles. It is also campaigning and countering the rising threat of the communal forces. Such campaigns and struggles are getting increasing support from the people.
- 2.78 In Kerala, the Party and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) have been conducting struggles against the anti-people policies of the UDF government. Various mass movements occurred during this period, the notable being the two-day siege of the Secretariat by lakhs of people on the demand for the resignation of the Chief Minister in the solar panel scam. The Party and the LDF have conducted struggles against price rise for food security and against the cases

of corruption in the Ministry such as the bar bribery case involving the Finance Minister. The LDF was able to improve its position in the Lok Sabha election though the defection of the RSP was a setback. Steps should be taken to strengthen the LDF.

2.79 Tripura is the state where the Party and Left base has expanded since last Party Congress. In the Assembly elections held in February 2013, the Left Front won a decisive victory for the fifth successive time. The Left Front won 50 out of the 60 seats polling 52.3 per cent of the vote. The Party won a sweeping victory in the three-tier panchayat election in July 2014. The Left Front gained majority in more than 95 per cent of the gram panchayats, 98.3 per cent of the panchayat samitis and 99 per cent of the zilla parishad seats. In the Lok Sabha election of 2014, the CPI(M) won both the seats with huge margins polling 64.4 per cent of the total vote. The good work done by the Left Front government and the Party's intervention in all the political and mass issues have helped to expand the influence of the Party. Steps should be taken to consolidate this. There should be vigilance to defend the Left Front government from the attacks by the BJP government at the Centre.

Strengthen & Expand Party

2.80 The 20th Congress Political Resolution had stated:

“In the current situation, when the Left has suffered serious electoral reverses, and when West Bengal, the strongest base of the Party, is under attack, it is of the utmost importance to expand the influence and base of the Party in other states. To accomplish this, it is essential to strengthen and expand the independent role of the Party. This is the key to advancing the Party. The independent activities of the Party on political, economic issues and social issues are necessary to activate the masses and to heighten the consciousness of the people to join the movements and struggles. The mass organisations should become independent forums for mobilising the people and organising them, for broad-based movements which will draw in the masses outside their fold.” (Para 2.140)

2.81 This continues to be valid and has added relevance in the present situation, especially after the Lok Sabha election of 2014. In the context of our reduced strength in parliament and the weakening of the mass base of the Party, it is absolutely vital to expand the independent role of the Party and enhance its strength and mass base. The emphasis of the Party has to be on developing class and mass movements. The link with the struggle against neo-liberal policies is the development of sustained struggles on local issues.

- 2.82 The Party has to provide the lead to the class and mass organisations to develop their independent functioning to launch broad-based movements and struggles.
- 2.83 There has to be a bold initiative to take on the politics and ideology of the bourgeois-landlord parties and to counter them with the CPI(M)'s political line and the Left and democratic programme. The Party must intervene and take up struggles on social issues.
- 2.84 The Party should politically and ideologically equip its cadres to undertake the political struggle and to counter the ideology and politics of the ruling classes.
- 2.85 The Party has to revamp the organisation and reorient it to take up the political and ideological tasks and the capability to conduct militant struggles.

Left and Democratic Front

- 2.86 The Left and democratic front is the real alternative to the BJP, the Congress and other bourgeois-landlord forces. This is a front comprising the classes that should be mobilised for the People's Democratic Front. Hence, this front cannot be merely an alliance for elections or for the formation of a government, but must emerge as the front of all the fighting forces representing the working class, the peasantry, the agricultural workers, the middle class, artisans, small shopkeepers, traders and so on.
- 2.87 At present, the nucleus of the forces that can be drawn into the Left and Democratic Front are of the Left parties and their class and mass organisations; Left groups and intellectuals; socialists scattered in various parties and democratic sections within the secular bourgeois parties; democratic organisations of the adivasis, dalits, women and minorities and social movements which are taking up the issues of the oppressed sections. Only by drawing all these forces on to a joint platform based on a programme that is distinct and opposed to the policies of the bourgeois-landlord parties can the movement towards the Left and Democratic Front take a concrete shape. A step in this direction would be to build a common platform of the various class and mass organisations with a common charter of demands. Special emphasis must be given to joint struggles of workers and peasants.
- 2.88 The struggle for building Left and democratic unity will proceed differently in different states. Various types of Left and democratic combinations will emerge in the states and they will contribute to the building of the Left and democratic front at the all India level. The focus of all the tactics adopted by the Party should be for the realization of a strong Left and democratic front.

The Left & Democratic Programme

2.89 The Left & democratic programme is one that encompasses the alternative policies to the bourgeois-landlord-neo-liberal framework and includes the immediate demands of the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers, rural labour, shopkeepers, artisans, middle class and the intelligentsia. The demands and issues contained in this programme can be the basis for political campaigns, struggles and mass movements by the Left and democratic forces.

2.90 The programme must consist of:

- (i) For a path of development which will promote self-reliance while engaging with the global economy, develop the productive forces, maximize employment and reduce economic and social disparities. There has to be planned development with decentralisation.
- (ii) For thorough going land reforms and democratic transformation of agrarian relations; development of cooperative farming and marketing.
- (iii) Check on monopolies, promote public sector in key industries and basic services, fiscal and tax measures for redistribution of wealth; stringent measures to curb black money; checking corruption at all levels.
- (iv) Separation of religion and State as the basic principle of secularism to be embedded in the Constitution. A democratic and federal structure with restructuring of centre-state relations.
- (v) **Working Class:** Ensuring statutory minimum wages for workers of not less than Rs. 15,000 per month and the wage to be linked to the consumer price index; ensuring recognition of trade unions through secret ballot; guarantee of social security and workers participation in management. End contractualisation of jobs.
- (vi) **Peasantry:** Steps to ensure the viability of peasant cultivation and making farming remunerative. Protection of agricultural land from forcible and indiscriminate acquisition for commercial non-agricultural purposes. Prohibition of corporate agriculture and privatisation.
- (vii) **Agricultural Workers:** Central legislation for agricultural workers on wages and social security; house sites and housing for rural workers.
- (viii) **Education & Students:** Public expenditure on education to be 6 per cent of the GDP; provision of free and compulsory education upto the secondary level; strengthen the public education system both in terms of quality and expansion;

- regulate fees and curriculum in private educational institutions.
- (ix) **Youth:** Right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution. Provision of services for youth – sports, cultural and skill training – for their all round development.
 - (x) **Health:** Public expenditure on health to be raised to at least 5 per cent of GDP. Strengthening and expanding the public health system; regulating the private health care centres; control of prices of essential drugs by adopting a cost based pricing formula.
 - (xi) **Environment:** Taking steps to reduce emission of greenhouse gases through effective regulation, energy efficiency in all sectors of production and consumption. Promotion of renewable energy; reducing energy inequality. Checking pollution of rivers and other water bodies. No privatisation of water resources.
 - (xii) **People's Welfare:** Universal public distribution system with supply of essential commodities apart from food grains. Universal pension benefit. Social security and health care for senior citizens. Safe drinking water and sanitation. Housing for urban poor. Expansion of affordable public transport.
 - (xiii) **Women:** Provision of one-third reservation for women in parliament and state assemblies; putting in measures to prevent, curb and punish those responsible for all forms of violence against women and children; equal wages for equal work.
 - (xiv) **Dalits:** Abolition of caste system and all forms of caste oppression; strict punishment against practice of untouchability and atrocities against scheduled castes; filling up of backlogs in reserved seats and positions and in promotions. Scheduled caste status for dalit Christians; reservations in the private sector.
 - (xv) **Adivasis:** Protect land rights of adivasis and restoring land illegally alienated from them; implementation of the Forests Right Act in full; minimum support price for minor forest produce; protection of tribal languages and cultures.
 - (xvi) **Minorities:** Protection of minority rights. Special provisions for education, employment and social welfare for the Muslim community.
 - (xvii) **Child Rights:** Ban on all forms of child labour. Universalisation of ICDS/child care for age 1-6.
 - (xviii) **Persons with Disabilities:** Rights based framework, amend Constitution to provide for making disability a prohibited ground for discrimination; equal opportunities and level playing field; barrier free access to all public spaces.
 - (xix) **Democratic Rights & Electoral Reforms:** Introduce proportional representation with partial list system; provision of State funding in kind for elections; repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act; revamp the Unlawful Activities Prevention

Act; remove sedition clauses in the IPC; abolition of the death penalty.

- (xx) **Culture & Media:** Development of a democratic culture, free from the corrupting influence of market-driven values. Secular and composite culture to be developed to counter the regressive communal and obscurantist influences. Nurturing the folk arts and traditions. Strengthen public broadcasting services; prohibition of cross-ownership of media; independent regulatory authority for media.

2.91 The Tasks

- i. The fight against the rightwing offensive must be taken up squarely. The BJP government's economic policies which are part of the neo-liberal drive should be stoutly opposed. All manifestations of the neo-liberal attack on the working people should be resisted by organizing and mobilizing the different sections of the working people.
- ii. The Hindutva agenda of the BJP-RSS combine must be fought politically and on the ground by the Party and the mass organisations in the social, cultural, ideological and educational spheres. The broadest mobilization of the secular and democratic forces against the communal danger and in defence of secular values should be undertaken.
- iii. The Party should consistently take up the anti-imperialist agenda. This includes mobilizing the people against the growing strategic ties with the US and the ruling classes succumbing to US pressures. Support should be extended to all anti-imperialist struggles world wide.
- iv. The Party should step up its efforts to defend the interests of the socially oppressed sections, dalits, adivasis and minorities. The Party has to directly intervene to defend the rights of women and to fight against the growing attacks on women.
- v. Fighting against the authoritarian danger posed by the rightward shift by a broad mobilization in defence of democratic rights, artistic freedom and opposing curbs on parliamentary democracy.
- vi. The struggle to defend the Party and the Left from the violence and attacks on democracy in West Bengal must be supported by an all India campaign to defend democracy and democratic rights. The Left and democratic forces should defend the Tripura Left Front government from attacks by reactionary forces and hostility of the central government.

vii. The Party should give utmost attention to expanding its independent role and enhancing its strength and mass base. The Party should stress on united actions on class and mass issues. The class and mass organisations should provide the thrust for united struggles and movements to draw in the masses following the bourgeois parties.

viii. Building and widening Left unity, rallying the various classes and working people around the Left and democratic programme so that progress can be made towards forging the Left and democratic front.

Call to Build a Strong Party

2.92 In the critical situation facing the country, it is of paramount importance to build and strengthen the CPI(M). Let us go towards building such a strong Party:

- By making the Party a vibrant and militant body to carry out the struggles of all sections of the working people
- By strengthening the Marxist-Leninist ideological foundations of the Party
- By reorienting and strengthening the organisation to fulfill the tasks set out

Let us advance the cause of democracy, secularism, social justice and socialism!

Only the Left and democratic alternative can save the country from the havoc being inflicted by neo-liberal capitalism and majoritarian communalism.

Let us go towards building a strong Left and democratic front.

The 21st Congress calls upon the entire Party to go to the people with this message.