



Political Resolution

***Adopted at the 20th Congress of CPI (M)
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International

1.1 The period since the 19th Congress has seen the unfolding of the biggest economic crisis in the capitalist world since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This crisis is a direct outcome of the neo-liberal capitalist trajectory driven by international finance capital. This prolonged crisis points to the unsustainability of finance capital-driven globalisation. There are growing protests worldwide against the neo-liberal order and its impact seen in increasing inequalities and rising unemployment. More and more people are coming out in the advanced capitalist countries against the vicious attacks on their livelihood and social welfare benefits.

1.2 Faced with prolonged economic crises, imperialism led by the US is trying to shift the burden of the crisis on to the developing countries and intensifying its military intervention through NATO in West Asia and other regions. On the other hand, the Left governments in Latin America have shown that there is an alternative to neo-liberalism. The trend towards multi-polarity is strengthening and the trend of regional cooperation is growing, especially in Latin America. Resisting imperialist hegemony and building progressive alternatives to the neo-liberal order comprises the main challenge today before the Left and progressive forces worldwide.

Global Capitalism in Crisis

1.3 The global economic crisis which started in 2007-08 was brought about by the depredations of finance capital through reckless lending and speculation. The big business and private financial institutions which had perpetrated the crisis were bailed out by the State in the US and Europe by pumping in billions of dollars of tax payers' money. Once they were salvaged, the imperialist powers – especially the US, Germany, France, UK – started advocating austerity measures and cutbacks in public spending to shift the burden on to the working people. Unemployment, evictions from homes and drastic cuts in social welfare are the austerity measures for the people, while the private banks and financial companies are once again making big profits at the expense of the state exchequer.

1.4 The *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012* released by the UN in December 2011 notes the growth slowdown of the world economy from 4 per cent in 2010 to 2.8 per cent in 2011, warning that there is a risk of another round of recession. The report says that the

developed economies of the US, Europe and Japan taken together would grow only at 1.3 per cent in 2012.

Eurozone Debt Crisis

1.5 The sovereign debt crisis in Europe is threatening to unravel the European Union. The debt crisis is a result of economic recession and the consequent falling government revenues coupled with corporate and bank bailouts by the state exchequer. Corporate debt has been converted into sovereign debt. The public debt to GDP ratios of the developed countries have increased sharply since 2007. Greece has been affected the most. Rather than restructuring Greek debt and aiding its economic recovery, the EU-IMF combine has imposed stringent austerity conditions against loans advanced to the Greek government. This has deepened the recession in Greece and compounded its debt problem. There is widespread fear about a Greek default, which will impact several international banks and the financial markets.

1.6 Other European countries such as Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Italy are also facing a serious debt crisis. The fiscal austerity measures undertaken in response to the sovereign debt crisis across Europe, rather than solving the problem, have been further weakening growth and employment prospects. There is apprehension regarding sovereign debt defaults and the future of the euro. The EU countries, with the exception of Britain, at the instance of France and Germany have agreed to a fiscal union agreement in order to restore confidence in the euro. This will mean a loss of sovereignty of the European nations on their national fiscal policy. Budget deficits and public spending will be drastically curtailed leading to lower growth and higher unemployment. The crisis in Europe and the relative weakening of the economic power of the United States indicates that inter-imperialist conflicts will develop.

Impact of Crisis

1.7 The unemployment rate averaged 8.6 per cent in the developed countries in 2011. The unemployment rate in the US has remained around 9 per cent since 2009. The ILO estimated that by the first quarter of 2011, almost one third of the unemployed in developed countries had been without a job for more than one year, the situation affecting about 15 million workers. The rate of joblessness among the youth in developed countries increased from 13 per cent in 2008 to 18 per cent at the beginning of 2011. The drastic public spending cuts being implemented today are leading to a further deterioration of the employment situation.

1.8 The gap between the rich and poor in the advanced capitalist countries has reached its highest level for over 30 years. An OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) report finds that the average income of the richest 10 per cent is now about 9 times that of the poorest 10 per cent across the OECD. In the United States, the total wealth of the top one per cent is more than the total wealth of the bottom 90 per cent. With the housing boom collapsing, in the United States, millions of houses have been repossessed by the banks which had

mortgages on them. More than one million houses were lost by Americans in 2010 alone. This has badly hit the middle classes.

Developing Countries

1.9 The major developing countries have sustained a relatively higher growth rate during the past four years compared to the developed capitalist countries. These 'emerging economies' were invited into the G20 after the G8 proved unequal to the task. With the continuance of the economic crisis these countries are also witnessing a slowdown in the pace of economic growth. Another recession in the developed countries would have a significant adverse impact on the developing countries through slowdown in exports, decline of primary commodity prices, and reversal of capital inflows.

1.10 The relative strength of the economic power of the 'emerging economies', particularly that of the BRICS countries, indicates shifts in the balance of economic power. The growing strength of the 'emerging economies' will have a complex impact on the contradiction between the developed advanced capitalist countries and the developing countries. The effort by imperialism to maintain its hegemony and to rely on the ruling classes of the developing countries is bound to intensify the contradiction between imperialism and the people of the developing countries.

Imperialist/NATO Interventions

1.11 The global capitalist crisis and the weakening of the US economy and those of the western countries are accompanied by the unabated aggressive manoeuvres and militarism by imperialism. In such a situation, US imperialism is even more determined to maintain its hegemonic influence. In order to do so, it is utilizing the NATO as the global instrument of domination. The United Nations Security Council is often suborned for this purpose.

Afpak Strategy in Disarray

1.12 In Afghanistan, US President Obama sent 30,000 more troops in 2008. The war against the Taliban has not made much progress. Most of the NATO allies have begun withdrawing troops from there. The United States has announced that it will withdraw its combat troops by 2014 but intends to maintain its military bases with 25,000 soldiers stationed there after that. In the meantime, the US hopes that the Afghan army will be built up to counter the Taliban. The US is also trying to hold talks with the Taliban through the Saudi and Gulf intermediaries. The US effort to get the Pakistani armed forces to be in the frontline of the 'war against terror' by clearing the border provinces of the extremist forces has gone through a tortuous course. The relations between the Pakistani army and the United States have been strained. The Pakistani army refused to act against certain extremist groups based in the border areas of Pakistan. After a decade of US intervention, the region is still destabilized and the so-called 'war on terror' has fuelled further extremism and terrorism.

Aggression in North Africa & West Asia

1.13 After Afghanistan, NATO was used for the military intervention in Libya. After the toppling of Gaddafi's regime and his brutal murder, Libya has come within the western sphere of influence. Syria is the next target. It is the only secular Arab regime left in the region. Efforts to foment a civil war utilizing Turkey, a NATO partner as the base, are aimed at 'regime change' in a country which has so far refused to accept the imperialist dictates. The final target is Iran, the only country with major oil and gas reserves that is outside the influence of the imperialist bloc in West Asia. Apart from the US and EU sanctions, in a hostile move, the European Union has decided to ban import of Iranian oil from July 1, 2012.

1.14 In Iraq, after over eight years of wanton aggression and occupation, the US has withdrawn its troops after failing to get the Iraqi government to sanction the continuance of US military bases. Instead, the US will maintain an enhanced force in Kuwait next door and strengthen its naval presence in the Persian Gulf.

1.15 The United States is using the 'regime change' in Libya to advance its interests in Africa where it has a growing military presence and an Africa Command (Africom). The formation of a new State of South Sudan by the division of the biggest country in Africa, Sudan, is also sought to be utilised by the United States which hopes to establish a large military base there under the Africom.

1.16 In the Asia-Pacific region, the United States is increasing its military presence and forging alliances for its policy of containing China, which it sees as the main strategic threat in the coming decades. Japan, Australia and India are seen as partners by the United States in this strategic design.

1.17 Barack Obama, when he assumed office as President, sought to project himself as a peace-maker. However, as was to be expected, he has served the interests of the US ruling classes by dispatching more troops to Afghanistan, launching the aggression on Libya in collaboration with France and Britain, and ratcheting up tensions with Iran using the nuclear issue as the pretext. What has changed is the conscious effort under President Obama to get on board the allies in Europe for joint interventions in West Asia and other global issues. The use of NATO as a collective instrument for the imperialist order reflects this cooperation.

Popular Uprisings in Arab Countries

1.18 The popular uprisings in the Arab world are a significant development. They were fuelled by spiralling price-rise, unemployment, corruption and despotic rule. The revolt in Tunisia led to the overthrow of the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali. Close on the heels of the Tunisian uprising came the historic peoples revolt in Egypt which brought down the 30 year-old Mubarak regime. The popular uprising in Egypt, the biggest Arab country, posed a real threat to the US strategic designs in West Asia. The United States had relied on Egypt for controlling West Asia, using the Israeli-Egyptian alliance as the lynchpin. Popular uprisings threatened to

engulf the despotic regimes backed by the US such as in Bahrain and Yemen.

1.19 The USA and its NATO allies engineered the intervention in Libya using the protests against Gaddafi's regime to divert attention and hijack the popular uprisings against regimes friendly to them. This was accompanied by the US-approved Saudi intervention to suppress the protests in Bahrain which hosts the headquarters of the Fifth Fleet of the US navy. Efforts to destabilize the Syrian regime are also part of this process. In Tunisia and Egypt, elections were held and Islamist parties have secured a dominant position. The military council continues to exercise control in Egypt. The US is willing to countenance Islamist forces coming to power in these countries provided they do not challenge US interests and imperialist hegemony in the region.

Palestine & Israel

1.20 The popular upsurge and the overthrow of the Mubarak regime in Egypt had its impact on the Palestinian movement. The Fatah and Hamas have established a better working relationship. The Palestinian move for membership of the United Nations met with wide support in the General Assembly. Israel, which had launched a ferocious attack on Gaza in 2009, became alarmed by the events in Egypt. Israel is refusing to stop its settlement building which could set the stage for peace talks. Within Israel, there have been mass protests against the deteriorating living conditions of the people. The Israeli leadership is adopting a bellicose attitude towards Iran and is even contemplating preemptive military strikes against its nuclear installations.

Resistance & Protest Movements

1.21 The prolonged capitalist crisis and the steps taken by international finance capital and the ruling classes to impose austerity measures and pass on the burdens to the people have led to an eruption of struggles and protest movements in Europe, the United States and other developed capitalist countries. In Europe, Greece which has been the epicenter of the debt crisis, has seen continuous protests and general strikes in the last two years. There have been mass protests mainly by the youth in Spain and general strikes by workers in Portugal, Italy, France, Britain and other countries. Students and youth are in the forefront of the protests against public spending cuts in education and rise in tuition fees.

1.22 The 'Occupy Wall Street' protest in New York which began in September 2011 against bank bail-outs, corporate greed and the unchecked power of Wall Street, got the support of large sections of the people. The protests spread across seventy cities in the US and spurred solidarity actions in eighty-two countries. In the US, the trade unions, students and other sections of the people joined the protests, bringing to the fore the issues of unemployment, homelessness, income inequalities and the subversion of democracy by the big corporates and financial elite. The police have evicted the protesters in many cities using force and repression, but the movement continues.

1.23 With the crisis in Europe showing no signs of abatement, the anti-capitalist protests are bound to intensify in the coming days. The social democratic governments got discredited for adopting the neo-liberal austerity measures. While these mass protest actions are going on, utilizing the effects of the crisis, growing joblessness and cuts in social benefits, the rightwing forces are seeking to exploit the discontent among the people by targeting immigrant workers, arousing racial feelings and Islamophobia. The danger of rightwing authoritarian forces has been growing.

1.24 The current protests and struggles are taking place in the absence of an effective political alternative force. It is this absence which enables the ruling classes to carry on with minor adjustments and shifting the burdens on to the people. The emergence of a strong Left alternative alone can assure any substantive changes.

1.25 In Russia, popular discontent has been rising against the ruling regime and the rapacity of the capitalist order which fattens on the plunder of the oil and gas resources of the country. In the parliament elections in December 2011 and in the Presidential election in March 2012, unfair means were adopted to prop up the ruling party, United Russia. There have been big protests against these undemocratic methods. Despite these malpractices, the Russian Communist Party got 19 per cent of the vote and 92 seats in parliament, emerging as the main opposition party, thus indicating its growing popularity.

Latin America

1.26 The advance of the Left forces in Latin America and the policies adopted by the Left-oriented governments have challenged the neo-liberal orthodoxy and the traditional US imperialist influence in the region. Venezuela and Bolivia have been in the forefront in implementing policies which have reversed privatization, established state control over oil and gas resources, implemented extensive land reforms, promoted collective enterprises and ushered in democratization of the political system. Along with the governments in Ecuador and Nicaragua, they have focused on improving health care and education, and redistribution of wealth to reduce income inequalities.

1.27 The existence of Left governments is a result of the prolonged struggles of the working people and the popular movements against neo-liberalism and privatization. The series of electoral victories and election or reelection of Presidents in Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Nicaragua, Peru and El-Salvador are an affirmation of the political trend in Latin America which is posing an alternative to neo-liberal globalisation.

1.28 The formation of the CELAC, the Community of 33 Latin American and Caribbean nations in December 2011 in the Venezuelan capital is a significant development. While all the Latin American countries have joined together, the US and Canada have been kept out of this regional grouping. This marks a clear break from US hegemony in the region.

Socialist Countries

1.29 The remarkable economic growth of China has continued in the past few years. It has emerged as the second biggest economy after the United States. China weathered the global financial crisis more effectively than other countries. The Chinese government responded to the global financial crisis by providing a massive fiscal stimulus for developing infrastructure, rural development and boosting domestic demand, unlike the corporate bailouts in the advanced capitalist countries. China's rate of GDP growth has been 8.7 and 10.3 per cent in the years 2009 and 2010 respectively. However, the rapid economic growth has been accompanied by widening inequalities – in terms of income and wealth distribution, regional and social development, rise in corruption and the resultant tensions. The growing economic strength and influence of China has led to the United States responding with diplomatic, political and military moves to contain the influence of China in the region.

1.30 Vietnam has also registered steady progress. It recovered from the impact of the global recession and in 2010 it registered a GDP growth rate of 6.78 per cent, though the problem of high inflation remains. Vietnam has made progress in reduction of poverty and in the development of backward regions.

1.31 The DPRK has been rebuffing the various efforts by the US and its allies to isolate it. The DPRK has strengthened its economic ties with China and Russia in the recent period.

1.32 Cuba has successfully rallied the Latin American countries across the board to counter the US blockade and embargo. This success can be seen in Cuba becoming a member of the newly formed Community of Latin American and Caribbean countries. Cuba has adopted economic reforms to allow small entrepreneurs and self-employed enterprises and regulated market relations. Through these reforms, Cuba hopes to rejuvenate its economic and social set up. Cuba continues to have the most advanced public education and healthcare systems.

Multi-polarity

1.33 The global economic crisis has enhanced the importance of the developing countries in the world economy. This was reflected in the formation of the G20, in order to coordinate economic policies globally, for which the G8 was no longer suitable. The formation of the BRIC grouping in 2009 of Brazil, Russia, India and China, which has been expanded to BRICS with South Africa in 2011, is in keeping with the increasing weight of developing countries. The BRICS is coordinating its positions on issues like UN reforms, international trade, climate change, etc., and seeking more say for the developing countries in international fora. This grouping will acquire more significance when cooperation on economic issues gets extended to common political positions on international issues. In Latin America, regional blocs have advanced. The formation of CELAC without the US and Canada signifies the new trend. Earlier the formation of ALBA (Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas) was a major step. Russia is also pushing for the expansion of the

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The inclusion of regional powers like India, Pakistan and Iran in the SCO will strengthen the trend towards multi-polarity in world affairs.

Climate Change

1.34 The 19th Party Congress had noted the threat posed by climate change and the disastrous consequences for the world if emissions of greenhouse gases are not checked. The climate crisis is a consequence of the predatory and iniquitous nature of global capitalism. Advanced capitalist countries with about 20 per cent of the world population have contributed 74 per cent of the accumulated carbon dioxide in the atmosphere while the developing countries with 80 per cent population have contributed only 26 per cent. While the developed countries have thus largely caused the climate crisis, its impact is going to be felt most by developing countries and the world's poor.

1.35 Developed countries as a whole have not honoured their Kyoto Protocol commitments to reduce their emissions to 5.2 per cent less than their 1990 emissions by 2008-12. The US, which reneged and never ratified the Protocol, has actually increased its emissions by 17 per cent. The developed countries led by the US are pushing the burden of reducing emissions on to the developing countries and maximise their share of future atmospheric carbon space well beyond their fair share. Equity requires that each person on earth is entitled to an equal share of the global atmospheric commons. Yet, brushing aside this self-evident principle of per capita entitlement, US wants developing countries like India also to cut emissions, when its per capita emissions are less than 1/13th of that of the US.

1.36 From Copenhagen to Durban, successive climate conferences have weakened global emissions regulation and diluted the principle of equity in per capita emission. The decision of the Durban conference in December 2009 to launch a new round of negotiations to arrive at legally binding commitments for all countries by 2015, with implementation starting from 2020, has tilted the balance sharply in favour of the advanced capitalist countries and threatens onerous emission reduction responsibilities for developing countries. India has progressively diluted its position and leaned towards the US position against legally binding commitments. India needs to rework its climate change position to make equity a central plank in negotiations for a future globally binding arrangement. Progressive sections all over the world must forge a united position and bring pressure on their respective governments to reach a meaningful and equitable climate change agreement.

South Asia

1.37 **Pakistan:** Pakistan has been in the vortex of increasing violence by extremist and fundamentalist groups. The civilian government is increasingly dependent on the United States but there is also growing tensions in their relations; Pakistan is vulnerable to the repercussions of the conflict in Afghanistan and in its border areas. The killing of Osama bin Laden, who had been living in Abbottabad, by the US Special Forces,

highlighted how the extremist groups are well entrenched in the country with the connivance of sections of the intelligence and security agencies. The US drone attacks on the Pakistani Taliban have inflamed public opinion because of the deaths of innocent people including women and children and led to retaliatory terrorist attacks. The recent breach in the military cooperation arising out of the killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers by the US on the Afghan border has led to a drastic scaling down of security cooperation which will have a far-reaching effect.

1.38 The killing of the Punjab Governor and the sole Christian minister in the Federal government shows how the fundamentalists and terrorist forces are operating with impunity. There has been a deterioration in the living conditions of the people who have been suffering from price rise and growing unemployment. The three areas of conflict which have developed in the recent period will have a significant bearing on the future course of developments in Pakistan. First, there is the conflict in the relationship between the United States and the Pakistan military establishment; secondly, there is the tension which has developed between the civilian government and the army on the alleged memorandum submitted to the US authorities about the danger of a coup; and thirdly, the confrontation between the Supreme Court and the government on the pursuit of corruption cases. Pakistan can establish a democratic system responsive to the people's aspirations only when the fundamentalist-extremist forces are isolated and when its subordinate relationship to the US is dispensed with.

1.39 **Bangladesh:** The restoration of full-fledged parliamentary democracy in 2009 was an achievement which led to the victory of the Awami League-led alliance and assumption of power by the Sheikh Hasina government. Since then, steps have been taken to restore the secular principle in the State. The rightwing-fundamentalist forces are seeking to undermine the secular-democratic measures. The recent plot for a coup, which was foiled by the army, illustrates this danger. The economic crisis and steep rise in food prices have affected the people badly. There has been significant progress in cooperation between India and Bangladesh. The Bangladesh government has taken certain steps to curb extremist groups like the ULFA operating from within its territory. The agreement to exchange enclaves and demarcate the boundary between the two countries during the visit of the Indian Prime Minister is also a positive development. Both countries should work out an accord for the sharing of the Teesta river waters.

1.40 **Nepal:** After a prolonged period of stalemate which lasted for two years, since the resignation of Maoist leader Prachanda from the Prime Ministership, there has been an agreement to break the deadlock. After the assumption of office of Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai the three major parties arrived at an agreement on integration of sections of the Maoist combatants into the armed forces and the rehabilitation of others. This opened the way for the completion of the framing of the new Constitution but this requires the cooperation of all the three major parties. It is essential that the peace process be completed so that Nepal can have a republican and democratic system which is in tune with the people's aspirations.

1.41 **Myanmar (Burma):** The military regime held elections in 2010 under a new constitution which was designed to present a civilian façade to its rule. With the assumption of office of the President by Thein Sein, some steps were taken to relax the military autocratic rule and restore certain democratic rights and release of political prisoners. This was responded to by Aung San Suu Kyi. She and her party, the National League for Democracy, won 43 out of the 44 seats they contested in the by-elections. The thaw in the relations between the democratic opposition and the government after decades of authoritarian rule is a positive step. India, which has good relations with the Myanmar government, should help promote further measures which can usher in a democratic system.

1.42 **Sri Lanka:** The military defeat of the LTTE brought to an end the two and a half decade-long civil war. The Sri Lankan government has still not completed the resettlement and rehabilitation of all the displaced persons affected by the conflict in the Tamil areas. There should be a credible investigation into the atrocities committed in the last phase of the war and those responsible should be held accountable. Even three years after the end of the armed conflict, the Sri Lankan government has not taken any worthwhile steps to reach a political settlement on the Tamil question.

1.43 The Sri Lankan government has to expedite the political discussions and adopt specific measures for the devolution of powers and provision of autonomy for the Tamil-speaking areas of the North and Eastern regions. It is in this manner that the Tamil people can be assured of their rights within a united Sri Lanka. The Indian government should continue its diplomatic and political efforts to ensure the full rehabilitation of the Tamil people and to arrive at a political settlement of the Tamil issue.

1.44 The CPI(M) expresses its solidarity with the democratic and progressive forces in South Asia and will strive to increase the cooperation between the Left, democratic and secular forces in the region.

Conclusion

1.45 The capitalist triumphalism which characterized the period after the fall of the Soviet Union has abated. It has been replaced by debates among the ruling classes about the future course of capitalism. Increasingly, people are coming out in protests against the attacks on their economic rights and hard won gains. In the Arab world, the popular uprisings against autocracy have ushered in major political changes. Latin America has shown that there can be an alternative path of development to the neo-liberal policies. Communists and Left forces around the world should build and strengthen the anti-imperialist movements and unite the working people against the predatory exploitation of finance-driven capitalism so that a political alternative to the system emerges. To get out of systemic crisis the only alternative is socialism. The strengthening of the working class movement and the building of a broad-based Left political alternative is the need of the times.

1.46 In India, the struggles against imperialist globalisation and the anti-people neo-liberal policies are interlinked. The CPI(M) extends its solidarity to all those forces who are struggling against imperialist domination and defending their national sovereignty. The CPI(M) will strive to build a strong anti-imperialist movement in India as part of the Left and democratic movement in the country.

National Situation

2.1 The 19th Congress of the Party had concluded that the UPA government was, in the main, pursuing policies for the benefit of big business and foreign capital. It was decided that the Party should continue to oppose these neo-liberal policies and adopt an independent position while extending support to the government. Further, the Party should strive to isolate the BJP and the communal forces that were seeking to recover lost ground. The Party should oppose the strategic alliance with the United States and mobilize people against imperialist influence. The Party Congress called for mobilizing the people on alternative policies and to organize the working class and other sections of the working people against class exploitation and social oppression. The Party Congress had warned that the role played by the CPI(M) in fighting the neo-liberal policies and the strategic alliance with the US had resulted in the Party becoming a target for the ruling classes and imperialist circles and that West Bengal, the strongest base of the Party, was already under attack.

2.2 Within three months of the Party Congress, the Left parties withdrew support from the UPA government as it went ahead with the nuclear deal with the USA, contrary to its earlier assurances. Having lost the majority, the UPA won the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha through the immoral use of money power and encouraging defections from the opposition. Subsequently, the Congress-led alliance won the parliamentary elections in May 2009, though it could not get a majority. The UPA-II government has been pursuing the same economic policies that it pursued in the first term, but more aggressively. The three-year period of the UPA-II government has been marked by:

- (i) Relentless price rise of essential commodities
- (ii) Massive high level corruption which began in the UPA-I term
- (iii) Continuance of the pro-US foreign policy and strategic alliance with the U.S.
- (iv) The working class, peasantry and other sections of the working people continue to suffer from intense exploitation and deprivation.

2.3 Freed of the dependence on the Left parties, the Manmohan Singh government has been pushing ahead with its neo-liberal policies;

it has been constrained to some extent because of the lack of a stable majority in parliament. Engulfed by a spate of corruption scandals, the Government is seen to be in a state of drift and the ruling Congress is unable to give it the necessary political direction.

Neo-liberal Agenda

2.4 The UPA-II government has sought to regain the momentum for implementing neo-liberal policies, which had slowed down during the earlier tenure due to Left opposition. The thrust of the neo-liberal agenda is to undermine the role of the public sector and facilitate the unfettered exploitation of resources and profiteering by domestic and foreign big corporates. The disinvestment agenda has been revived with over Rs. 47,500 crore worth of public equities in CPSEs sold since 2009. The government has made it mandatory for all profit-making CPSEs to divest at least 10 per cent of their equity in the stock market.

2.5 With the privatization of oil and gas resources, the private sector has already surpassed the public sector in domestic natural gas production. The largest private sector deals today are being struck over India's oil and gas resources. Mining is also being opened up in a big way for the foreign and domestic corporates through changes in mining policy. The private sector already accounted for 63 per cent of the 218.6 million tons of iron ore produced in 2009-10, over 45 per cent of which was exported. Moves are also on to privatize coal mining. Loot of mineral resources through illegal mining and reckless exports has become rampant as a result of the opening up of the mines and minerals sector.

2.6 The UPA government is pushing legislations to increase the FDI limit in the insurance sector, deregulate the banking sector and allow pension funds to be invested in the stock market. These moves will make India's financial sector vulnerable to speculative finance capital. The prevention by the Left of various legislations on further opening up the financial sector, in fact, had allowed India not to be devastated by the global financial crisis. A bill to allow foreign universities to open shop in India is also pending. FDI cap in defence is also sought to be enhanced.

2.7 The UPA cabinet took a decision to allow 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail during the winter session of parliament in 2011. This will affect the livelihood of the 40 million-odd small retailers and squeeze the farmers and small producers. This step met with widespread opposition from political parties, traders and mass organizations forcing the government to announce a suspension of the decision. But the Prime Minister has announced the resolve of the government to go ahead and the Union Budget 2012-13 has also proposed the same.

2.8 With 100 per cent FDI allowed in the pharma sector, MNCs are buying out the domestic pharmaceutical companies and establishing their stranglehold over the Indian drug market. Three of the top five drug sellers in India today are MNCs. The increasing concentration of

the drug market is leading to phenomenal rise in the prices of medicines. The government is unwilling to curb FDI in the pharma sector or extend effective drug price control.

2.9 The draft National Water Policy 2012 which is in line with earlier World Bank recommendations promotes privatization while “shifting” the role of the government as a service provider. Its thrust on market principles means that the urban and rural poor will have to pay high tariffs for accessing what should be a fundamental right to safe drinking water.

Inflation and Price Rise

2.10 The UPA government has utterly failed to check inflation and spiralling prices of essential commodities. The annual WPI inflation rate was at 9.1 per cent in November 2011, though it decreased slightly to 6.55 per cent in January 2012. Food inflation has been over 10 per cent for a record 38 months between September 2008 and October 2011. Such a prolonged period of double digit food inflation is unprecedented in the post-independence period. Indian consumer price inflation is the highest among all G-20 countries. Prices of food items like pulses, vegetables, fruits, edible oils, sugar, milk, eggs, meat and fish have witnessed very steep increases, causing great hardships to the people. The neo-liberal food policies of the government are responsible for high food inflation. Hoarding of food items, speculative futures trading, faulty export policy and the penetration of big corporates in the food chain combined with stagnant productivity and low growth in agriculture have contributed to spiraling food prices.

2.11 Following the deregulation of petrol prices, successive hikes have taken the price of a litre of petrol in Delhi from Rs. 40 in 2009 to over Rs. 65 in 2011. The Central Government continues to levy a high level of taxes on petro products. The hikes in prices by Rs. 3 per litre for diesel, Rs. 2 per litre for kerosene and Rs. 50 per cylinder for LPG in 2011 have also contributed to inflation.

2.12 Urea prices have been hiked by 20 per cent since 2010 and it is being sold at black market prices. With the decontrol of non-urea fertilizer prices, DAP and MOP prices have increased by over 100 per cent since 2010. Rise in agricultural input prices have directly contributed to cost-push inflation. Rather than controlling input prices, the government is intent on cutting subsidies on fuel and fertilizers.

2.13 The government has allowed a sharp depreciation of the rupee without timely intervention. This has added to inflationary pressures because India has to import oil and fertilizers. The successive hikes in interest rates by the RBI have also contributed to cost increases across the economy.

2.14 The UPA government has consistently refused to accept the CPI(M)'s proposals for a rollback of the hikes in the prices of petroleum products; ban on speculative futures/forward trading in essential commodities; release of the excess food stocks held in Central godowns to the states at BPL prices for sale through the Public

Distribution System; and to strengthen the PDS by making it universal. These measures would have gone a long way in arresting the relentless price rise.

Food Security

2.15 The Central Government's policies have weakened the PDS and reduced its capacity to provide relief from food inflation. The APL/BPL division has led to large-scale errors of exclusion denying the poor access to cheap foodgrains. There was a national outcry at the Planning Commission's fraudulent poverty line set at only Rs. 32 per capita per day for urban areas and Rs. 26 per day for rural areas. But these estimates continue as the benchmark in all targeted policies.

2.16 The proposed Food Security Bill is a highly centralized Bill that not only retains the targeted system but increases the categories in the priority (BPL), general (APL), and excluded categories, further dividing the poor. All entitlements are made conditional. The central government will continue to override the state governments in deciding the number of households eligible for subsidized foodgrains. All entitlements are made conditional on state governments accepting the Centre's framework of neo-liberal reforms, which include anti-people measures like cash transfers and food coupons. The introduction of the Aadhar scheme is meant to hasten the process of introducing food coupons and direct cash transfers. This will eventually dismantle the PDS, announcement and procurement of foodgrains and facilitate the takeover of the food economy by agribusinesses and corporate retailers.

2.17 Restoration of the universal PDS is the only credible way to ensure food security. CPI(M) stands for the universal right to 35 kg of foodgrains per month for each household at not more than Rs. 2 per kg. Essential commodities like pulses, edible oils and sugar should also be distributed at subsidized prices through the universal PDS.

Economic Slowdown

2.18 There has been a slowdown in GDP growth to around 7 per cent in 2011-12 compared to 8.5 per cent the previous year. The global economic slowdown and the neo-liberal policies pursued domestically have led to this slowdown. The declining purchasing power of the people due to relentless inflation has led to reduction in domestic demand. This has contributed to the slowdown in industrial production and deceleration in the core sectors.

2.19 The employment situation has worsened. Despite GDP growth, the latest NSS data (66th round) show a dramatic deceleration in total employment growth in India, from an annual rate of around 2.7 per cent during 2000-2005 to only 0.8 per cent during 2005-2010. Growth in non-agricultural employment fell from 4.65 per cent to 2.53 per cent, even at a time when annual GDP growth was above 8 per cent during the latter period. A slowdown in GDP growth will further worsen the employment situation.

2.20 Public investment needs to be stepped up to stimulate the economy. Plan expenditure has come down to 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2010-11 from 5.6 per cent in 2009-10. The fiscal stimulus announced in the wake of the global economic crisis in 2009 mainly comprised of tax breaks and not enhanced public spending. Corporate tax concessions worth Rs. 2,28,045 crore were doled out between 2008-2011. The tax-GDP ratio, which had gone upto 12 per cent of GDP in 2007-08, has fallen to 9.5 per cent in 2010-11, constraining public expenditure. This needs to be reversed and greater resources mobilised by taxing the rich to spend on welfare programmes and building public infrastructure.

2.21 The Central PSEs also need to step up their investments. Gross value addition in CPSEs stood at only 6.3 per cent of India's GDP in 2009-10. CPSEs in telecom, civil aviation and fertilizers are incurring losses because of flawed government policies. The reserves and surplus of CPSEs stood at over Rs. 6 lakh crore in 2009-10, which must be drawn upon to make new investments and contribute to economic expansion.

Agrarian Situation

2.22 Nearly 60 per cent of India's population continues to be dependent on agriculture. Growth in agriculture has been around 3 per cent during the 11th Plan period (2007-12), below the 4 per cent target. Agricultural growth targets have not been met since the 9th Plan onwards. The per capita net availability of foodgrains per day declined from 510 grams in 1991 to 438 grams in 2010. Supply of major agricultural crops has not kept pace with demand on account of lower rate of increase in yield, inadequate irrigation coverage and excessive dependence on monsoon. This is one of the reasons for food price inflation.

2.23 As per the National Crime Record Bureau, 2,56,913 farmers have committed suicide across the country between 1995 and 2010. Debt is the major reason for farmers' suicides. Farmers' suicides have increased in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh in 2011, due to the crash in cotton prices. Sericulture farmers in Karnataka and other states have also been in distress. In West Bengal and Kerala, after the Left-led governments went out of office, suicides by farmers have been occurring regularly. High cost monocropping of cash crops has become the most risky venture for Indian farmers.

2.24 The neo-liberal policies are responsible for the crisis being faced by the peasantry. The recommendations of the National Commission of Farmers have been ignored. The minimum support prices announced by the central government do not cover the sharp rise in the cost of cultivation for most crops. Procurement operations by the central agencies are also limited in scope and severely constrained by the lack of storage capacity. Inadequate public investment and cuts in subsidies have meant rising cost of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertiliser, fuel/power, etc. Rising input costs and unremunerative prices have made farming unviable for many farmers. Rural credit is mainly

cornered by the rural rich and deployed in non-agricultural activities and the denial of institutional credit forces the ordinary peasants to depend on moneylenders. Lack of access to cheap credit and depressed returns from agriculture have driven many farmers into high indebtedness and debt-driven suicides on the one hand and distress sales of their land on the other.

2.25 The small and marginal peasants, who comprise over 80 per cent of all farm households in India, are the main victims of the agrarian crisis. The sharecroppers and poor peasants who also labour in others' lands face intense exploitation besides bearing the brunt of the crisis. The rural rich, comprising the landlords and rich peasants, continue to exploit the tenants and agricultural labourers through myriad channels including denial of tenancy rights, usurious interest rates on loans and low wages. The rural rich are also making investments in diverse non-agricultural activities like real estate. The incidence of corporate and contract farming has increased.

2.26 The condition of agricultural workers has steadily deteriorated. Under the impact of neo-liberal policies landlessness is increasing and this is adding to the number of agricultural workers which stood at 14 crore (140 million) in 2010. There is no statutorily fixed minimum wage and no comprehensive social security measures for agricultural workers in many states. They are the worst hit by rise in prices of essential goods. The MNREGS is being diluted and the workers are being denied their rightful wages. Agricultural workers live under precarious conditions and in most states there are no efforts to provide them with house sites and houses. The condition of women agricultural workers is worse. Indebtedness is increasing among agricultural workers and they are facing a crisis of subsistence. Government policies are forcing the rural poor to migrate and work under dismal conditions to other areas or to urban centres. The Central Government has refused to bring in a comprehensive legislation for the fixation of wages and social security benefits for agricultural workers.

2.27 The neo-liberal strategy of withdrawal of state support to agriculture and increasing trade liberalization through FTAs and tariff cuts are meant to drive the small peasants out of agriculture. The penetration of agriculture by Indian and foreign corporates is proceeding apace. Land reforms are being reversed. The struggle for land reforms and uniting the mass of the peasantry and agricultural workers against landlords and rural rich, corporates entry into agriculture and State policies are the main tasks before the Party in the countryside.

Land Acquisition

2.28 Land acquisition for SEZs, corporates and mining using the draconian 1894 Land Acquisition Act saw a number of struggles by farmers and agricultural workers and the local people against forcible land acquisition. Protests against land acquisition took place in over 40 districts in 17 states in the past three years. Tens of thousands of acres were taken over with the farmers and the dependents on land

being given meagre compensation and no rehabilitation measures. Adivasis were particularly affected by the dispossession of their lands and displacement from their traditional habitats. Thousands of fisherfolk have been evicted from their habitats along the coast, resulting in the loss of their livelihoods. In Uttar Pradesh, the Yamuna Expressway project involved large scale acquisition of land not only for the highway but also for setting up townships by the promoter. Fourteen people were killed in various agitations against land acquisition in western UP in Aligarh, Mathura and Greater Noida. There have been struggles against land acquisition in Haryana, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In Maharashtra, people waged a determined struggle against land being taken for the Mahamumbai SEZ of Reliance Company in Raigad district resulting in the cancellation of the project. The Party and the kisan and agricultural labour organisations should take the lead to fight for the rights of the peasants on land and to oppose any forcible land acquisition.

2.29 The Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill 2011 proposed by the government does not adequately protect the farmers in terms of the compensation and rehabilitation criteria and does not make its provisions mandatory for private land acquisition. Exemption for large-scale acquisition of land under the Acts covering mining, railways, SEZ etc make the Bill a mockery. Mineral rich tribal areas will be opened to corporates, adversely affecting tribal rights on land.

2.30 The CPI(M) will fight for a Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation Bill which will protect the interests of the land owners, specially small landowners and their dependents on land like sharecroppers and agricultural workers, and to prevent coercive or exploitative land grab.

Two Decades of Liberalisation

2.31 2011 marked two decades of the initiation of neo-liberal economic reforms in India. In these two decades policies of liberalisation and privatization have been pushed by the central government, alongside greater integration into the global economy. The neo-liberal policies have been implemented irrespective of the party in power, with full support from the ruling classes led by the Indian big bourgeoisie. While big business and the urban elites are enjoying the benefits of faster income growth and rising purchasing power, the working class and lower middle class in the urban areas and almost all the agrarian classes excluding the landlords and rural rich in the rural areas are experiencing dwindling opportunities of livelihood. This period has witnessed the further widening of inequalities in income and wealth distribution, increased regional and social disparities. Prosperity for the upper classes on the one hand and greater exploitation and deprivation of the majority of working people on the other has become the hallmark of the neo-liberal regime in India.

Big Business

2.32 The main beneficiaries of the neo-liberal reforms have been the big bourgeoisie. The wealth and assets of the Indian big business houses have sky rocketed over the past two decades. The number of dollar billionaires (net worth over \$ one billion or approximately Rs. 5,000 crore) increased from 13 in 2003 to 55 in March 2011 in the Forbes list.

2.33 Indian big businesses have also emerged as global players over the past decade. India's stock of outward FDI increased from around \$2 billion in 2000 to \$79 billion in 2010. Annual outflow of FDI reached \$43 billion in 2010-11. Many of these foreign investments by Indian corporates are going into acquisitions of big corporations in the developed countries, like the \$12 billion acquisition of Corus by Tata Steel and the \$2 billion acquisition of Jaguar and Land Rover by Tata Motors. Indian agribusinesses are also acquiring large tracts of lands overseas for cash crop farming in Africa, Latin America and East Asia. As per one estimate, more than 80 Indian companies have invested about Rs. 12,000 crore (\$2.4 billion) in buying or leasing huge plantations in African countries that will be used to grow foodgrains and cash crops for the Indian market.

Exploitation of Workers

2.34 Total employment in the organised sector, which was 28.2 million (2.82 crore) in 1998 stood at 27.5 million (2.75 crore) in 2008. In the organised sector of the manufacturing enterprises as per the Annual Survey of Industries, wages as share of net value added which was close to 30 per cent in the 1980s, declined to around 20 per cent in the 1990s and has gone down to its historical low of 10 per cent by 2008-09. On the other hand, the share of profits in net value added was lower than the share of wages throughout the 1980s, around 20 per cent. After liberalisation in the 1990s, it went above the wage share and was around 30 per cent for most of the 1990s. Since 2001 it started increasing and the profit share reached 60 per cent by 2008. The share of contract workers in the total workforce in the factory sector increased from 20 per cent in 1999-2000 to 32 per cent by 2008-09. These contract workers are not only deprived of security of tenure but also of social security benefits.

2.35 Thus not only is high GDP growth failing to create enough jobs, the nature of jobs being created is also very exploitative. As a result the profit share is increasing and permanent regular workers are being substituted by contract workers, reducing the bargaining power of the workers vis-à-vis employers. NSS 2009-10 revealed that among all the workers at the national level, about 51 per cent were 'self-employed', 33.5 per cent were 'casual labour' and 15.6 per cent were 'regular wage/salaried' employees. Casual employment has registered significant growth, particularly among women workers.

2.36 The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) has reported that out of the total workforce of 456 million (45.6 crore) in India in 2004-05, the informal sector accounted for 393.2 million (39.3 crore). Thus the unorganised sector constituted

86 per cent of total workers in 2004-05. It is this segment of the workforce who are most exploited, resulting in 77 per cent of the Indian population spending less than Rs. 20 per day. Artisans and weavers have been badly hit and they are steadily losing their means of livelihood. There is increased inter-state migration and the exploitation of this migrant labour has increased.

2.37 Because of the inability of the neo-liberal regime to generate gainful employment, the masses are being pushed into the swamp of the informal sector and forced self-employment, to live a life of insecurity and impoverishment. Self-employment for such workers often means that they are forced into petty low productivity activities with meagre and uncertain incomes. This is the section which is bearing the brunt of the economic slowdown and backbreaking food price inflation.

Massive Corruption:

Hallmark of UPA Regime

2.38 The UPA government has become synonymous with high-level corruption. The unfolding of the 2G spectrum scam has resulted in the arrest and prosecution of the former telecom minister from the DMK, a sitting MP, some bureaucrats and corporate executives. 2G licenses and spectrum were allotted to the telecom companies in 2008 at throwaway prices causing enormous losses to the exchequer, in the range of Rs. 57,000 crore to Rs.1.76 lakh crore, as per the CAG estimates. All efforts to cover up this corruption scandal, the biggest since independence, failed due to the Supreme Court's intervention and its supervision of the CBI investigation into the case. The roles of the former Finance Minister and the Prime Minister have also come into question. The 2G spectrum case has dramatically exposed the nexus between big business, ruling politicians and bureaucrats, which is an outcome of the neo-liberal regime and is the fountainhead of corruption. The links of the corporate media with this nexus was further exposed by the Radia tapes.

2.39 A Congress MP along with his cronies has been arrested in the Commonwealth Games scam, where overpriced contracts were awarded to favoured companies against kickbacks. The CAG report also exposed corruption in the CWG-related projects undertaken in Delhi by various agencies under the central and state governments. The KG basin gas scam involves the artificial inflation of capital costs of gas extraction by Reliance Industries Ltd. in connivance with the petroleum ministry, causing losses to the government exchequer. Illegal mining, which involves thousands of crores of rupees, is perpetuated by the corrupt nexus. Other scams like IPL, Adarsh housing, the deal between ISRO's Antrix Corporation and Devas multimedia for S-band spectrum, have also occurred. All these cases reveal how the decision making process at the highest level of government is distorted by cronyism. The role of the Congress leadership and its allies in government in all these corruption cases is

sought to be covered up and the government was seen to be doing everything to protect the corrupt nexus.

2.40 A study by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) estimated the present value of illicit capital outflows from India till 2008 to be at least \$462 billion (over Rs. 23 lakh crore). These illicit financial flows were the product of bribery and kickbacks, criminal activities and tax evasion. The GFI study noted that deregulation and liberalization in the post-reform period of 1991-2008, accelerated the outflow of illicit money from the Indian economy.

2.41 The government continues to drag its feet on unearthing black money and funds illegally stashed in Swiss banks and offshore tax havens. It refuses to release the names of those holding secret accounts which are available with it. The CPI(M) demands that these funds stashed abroad be confiscated by the government and used for development expenditure. The Mauritius route is the biggest conduit to round trip black money into India to make tax-free profits. 41 per cent of total FDI inflows into India are routed through Mauritius. The Double Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Mauritius, which is being misused extensively, should be scrapped.

2.42 Sharing the same economic ideology with the Congress, the BJP cannot provide an alternative platform to combat and curb corruption. The former Chief Minister of Karnataka, several ministers and MLAs from the BJP have been indicted in land scams by the state Lokayukta. The Reddy brothers, involved in illegal mining, were ministers in the BJP government and one of them has also been sent to jail. The record of the BJP-led NDA government was replete with murky defence deals, the UTI scam, and sale of public assets at throwaway prices. The BJP's campaign against corruption does not carry any credibility.

Anti-Corruption Measures

2.43 The massive corruption and exposure of the big scandals led to public outrage. The demand for an effective Lokpal Bill raised by the Anna Hazare-led movement found widespread support, particularly among the middle classes. The government, which was unwilling to adopt an effective law, was finally compelled to bring legislation after sustained public pressure. But the official Bill presented to parliament is a weak one designed to dilute the powers of the Lokpal and make it dependent on the government. The manner in which the government refused to take up the amendments moved by the opposition in the Rajya Sabha at the end of the Winter Session of 2011, exposed its intention not to have an effective Lokpal.

2.44 The CPI(M) has been demanding the setting up of a strong Lokpal which will have an independent basis and its own investigating machinery. However, the Party and the Left have a different approach from the Anna Hazare group on the wider question of combating corruption. The CPI(M) holds that high-level corruption has become endemic as a result of the creation of a big business-ruling politician-bureaucrat nexus which has been spawned by the neo-liberal regime.

The State is facilitating the loot of natural resources by the corporates and the biggest corruption scandals have taken place in land, gas, spectrum and mining sectors. Apart from the Lokpal, a set of measures have to be undertaken. A National Judicial Commission should be set up for the appointment of the judges with powers to investigate and act against corruption in the judiciary. Electoral reforms must be initiated to stop the use of illegal money during elections. Above all, the struggle to reverse the neo-liberal policies which facilitate corporate loot and foster corruption through the nexus must be waged with determination. The CPI(M) will strive to build up broad based united movements against corruption and for judicial and electoral reforms.

Communalism

2.45 Since the Lok Sabha elections of 2009, the Hindutva forces have sought to recover from the defeat of the BJP by advancing the communal agenda. At the political level, there has been the constant campaign against 'Islamic terrorism' and the targeting of the Muslim community on this charge. At the ground level, the stock in trade of the communal forces – creation of communal tensions and stoking violence has also been in evidence. Since the 19th Congress, communal violence took place in Hyderabad, Bareilly, Ahmedabad, Nanded, Gopalganj, Moradabad and Rudrapur. According to the Home Ministry, there were 791 communal incidents in 2009 resulting in 119 deaths and injuries to 2,342 persons. In 2010, there were 658 incidents resulting in 111 deaths and injuries to 1,971. Communal politics draws sustenance from such a state of affairs. Minorities, both Christian and Muslim, continue to be targeted in the BJP-ruled states of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. In Rajasthan, where the BJP lost government, there have been a series of communal incidents.

Terrorist Threat

2.46 The RSS-BJP combine's efforts to project terrorism on a communal basis suffered a serious setback when the role of Hindutva extremist groups in terrorist violence emerged. The Malegaon blasts, the Ajmer Sharief, Mecca Masjid and Samjhauta Express blasts have all been traced to certain Hindutva extremist elements. Pragya Thakur, Assemanand and their cohorts are facing trials for these heinous offences. The RSS-BJP tried to defend these elements by accusing the government of persecuting the Hindutva religious figures but the solid evidence of their role has nullified these efforts. The Gujarat government's record of police encounter killings, such as the Ishrat Jehan case, its continuing cover up of the 2002 pogroms and the subversion of law and order and justice system is a standing testimony of how inimical the Hindutva ideology is to a secular and democratic order.

2.47 The last four years have also witnessed the continuing violence perpetrated by certain Muslim extremist groups. While the Mumbai terrorist attack of November 2008 was perpetrated by a jihadi group from Pakistan, there have been terrorist attacks like the three serial

blasts in Mumbai in July 2011 and the Delhi High Court bomb blast which have killed scores of people and injured hundreds. The terrorist activities of both Muslim and Hindu extremists have to be fought and countered. The extremist communal ideology spawns terrorist violence and they must be exposed and isolated by mobilizing the people. The campaign against communalism and terrorism should be conducted by exposing their interconnection.

Disruptive Violence of the Maoists

2.48 The full extent of the disruptive activities of the Maoists and its harmful effects for the democratic movement have become clear in the last three years. There is a rise in Maoist violence in Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and parts of West Bengal. The Maoists are working in the tribal and forested areas in these states, and also in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Maharashtra. They are pitting the tribal people against the State through armed actions by which they invite the full brunt of State repression on the tribal people. The Maoists do not attack only the security forces. They target a wide range of people, including political parties, and those who refuse to cooperate with them.

2.49 The startling fact is that the Maoists have killed 210 cadres and supporters of the CPI(M) in West Bengal in the last three years. This exposes their true character – under the cover of revolutionary rhetoric they act as an instrument of the anti-Left forces. The Maoists have killed more persons belonging to the CPI(M) than all the other political parties in the entire country.

2.50 The terrorist methods adopted by the Maoists were exposed by the horrific killing of passengers in a bus exploded by the Maoists in Dantewada and by the derailment of the Jnaneshwari Express which killed 149 passengers. Such gruesome acts of terror are committed by the Maoists against the common people.

2.51 The Maoist tie up with the Trinamul Congress to carry out its attack on the CPI(M) constitutes a heinous chapter in the history of Naxalism. The Maoists are known to strike deals with various bourgeois parties during elections as in Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Odisha for money. They run an extortion network to raise 'taxes' from contractors, businessmen and local officials.

2.52 The Maoists are thus a degenerated form of ultra-Left adventurism. They have to be fought by exposing their retrograde ideology and disruptive politics. Some sections of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia which claim to be Left, continue to support the Maoists. Their dubious positions should be ideologically combated and exposed.

2.53 The Party should fight the Maoists politically and ideologically and mobilise democratic opinion against the incessant violence of the Maoists, their fascist-like intolerance of political opponents, and their targeting of CPI(M) cadres and supporters in West Bengal.

North East

2.54 The situation in the North East is marked by the prevalence of identity politics based on tribal and ethnic groupings and the continuing discrimination and neglect by the central government. The discontent and alienation of the people is sought to be utilised by extremist groups who prey on ethnic and tribal differences.

2.55 The people of Manipur have experienced hardships due to the blockade of the highways leading into the state for a continuous 120 days. This was an outcome of the competing claims of Kuki and Naga groups in the hill areas. Throughout this period of the blockade, the Central Government remained inactive and refused to intervene to get the blockade lifted. Various tribal and non-tribal groups have set up their armed wings, which are extorting money and challenging the writ of the administration. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act has not been withdrawn despite widespread popular demand.

2.56 The economic development and infrastructure of the region has suffered because of the corrupt nexus of bourgeois politicians, bureaucrats and contractors who siphon off central funds. Tripura is the only exception to this pattern in the region.

2.57 The chances for peace in Assam have improved with the tripartite talks between the ULFA leadership, state and central governments, after the Bangladesh government handed over many of the top ULFA leaders residing there. The majority section of the ULFA leadership decided to give up the armed struggle and enter into talks. A small section headed by Paresh Baruah is still holding out against the peace process. The peace talks with the NSCN(IM) have been going on though there has been no breakthrough. The demand for Nagalim i.e. greater Nagaland is a stumbling block. The central government should take the initiative for talks with all other extremist groups in the North Eastern region for a political settlement.

2.58 In Tripura, due to continuous political work, developmental activities and firm action taken by the Left Front government, the extremists have been isolated, their violent activities curbed and tribal-non tribal unity maintained. This is a model for the rest of the North Eastern region.

Jammu & Kashmir

2.59 The state has witnessed a substantial reduction in violence perpetrated by the militants and extremists. However, this has not led to any reduction in the alienation of the people in the valley towards the Indian State. The mass protests which took place in the summer months of 2010 resulted in the deaths of 120 young men and teenagers. These youth, who were protesting by pelting stones at the security forces, were brutally gunned down. Stationing of the army in large numbers and the oppressive security apparatus is a constant source of irritation and anger for the people. The central government, as is its wont, has not acted upon the assurances which it gave in the aftermath of the mass protests.

2.60 Despite widespread demand, the government has failed to withdraw the Armed Forces Special Powers Act from large parts of the state; where the army is not deployed. Neither has the UPA government taken substantial steps to advance the political dialogue with all shades of opinion in the state. The appointment of three interlocutors cannot be a substitute for this. The CPI(M) had set out a comprehensive proposal to reduce tensions, build confidence among the people, and to promote a political dialogue. These include scaling down the armed forces deployed in the state; withdrawal of the AFSPA from most parts of the state; and dismantling the oppressive security structures. The excesses and violation of human rights by the security forces have to be investigated and the guilty brought to book. Steps should be taken to encourage people-to-people movement and contact across the LoC. At the political level, to meet the aspirations of the people, there has to be the provision of maximum autonomy for the state and regional autonomy for all the three regions.

2.61 The Party should advocate the political steps required as spelt out in the resolution on Jammu & Kashmir adopted by the Central Committee in its November 2010 meeting and mobilise the democratic and secular forces in the country to see that a political solution is found for the long standing problem of Jammu & Kashmir.

Telangana Agitation & New States

2.62 The agitation for a separate Telangana state gathered momentum during the last two years. The demand raised by the Telangana Rashtriya Samiti, the BJP and others got the support of the Telegu Desam Party before the 2009 assembly elections and of Congressmen of that region subsequently. The CPI too declared support for a separate state. Only the CPI(M) has maintained a consistent position that it is not for the division of the linguistically reorganized state of Andhra Pradesh. This is in line with the Party's stand that the breakup of states which were reorganized on linguistic lines after a prolonged movement for the formation of linguistic states, is not warranted.

2.63 The Central government aggravated the situation with the Home Minister making an announcement about the formation of a new state, then backtracking and announcing the Justice Srikrishna Committee to look into the question. Even a year after the Committee submitted its report, the Centre has failed to take any decision. Since the delay leads to aggravating divisions among the people, it is essential for the Central Government to announce its decision without further delay.

2.64 Demands for separate states like Vidarbha, Gorkhaland, Bodoland, Kamatapuri, and so on, exist. The CPI(M) reiterates its opposition to the breakup of states that were linguistically reorganized as part of the democratization of the state structure. The demand that small states should be formed as a matter of principle cannot be accepted. Small states which are economically and financially not viable will become totally dependent on the Centre and weaken the federal set-up. Where there is a backward region within a state, special

measures should be adopted for the socio-economic development of that area. There can be provision of regional autonomy wherever required.

Identity Politics

2.65 The growth of identity politics based on caste, religion, region, tribe and ethnicity is posing a major challenge for Left politics in the country. The ruling classes and imperialist finance capital find such politics eminently suitable for their interests. Fragmentation of the people on the basis of identity and dividing and keeping them separate by resort to identity politics ensures that there is no threat to the State and the rule of capital.

2.66 Identity politics finds fertile soil among those groups and communities who suffer from social oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Sections of the people who suffer from caste, tribal or gender oppression are prone to be mobilised by identity politics. Some NGOs and narrow parochial groups fund such politics based on identity with a view to erode class solidarity and class-based movements.

2.67 The CPI(M) has to counter identity politics by building common class-based movements, while at the same time taking up the issues of caste, social and gender oppression experienced by different sections of society.

Foreign Policy

2.68 The foreign policy in the eight years of the UPA government has been marked by the departure from the independent foreign policy due to the pursuit of a strategic alliance with the United States. Starting from the July 2005 joint statement by the US President and the Indian Prime Minister, the steps to forge such an alliance have progressed. Since the 19th Congress, more steps have been taken to cement the alliance.

2.69 India signed the End Use Monitoring Agreement to facilitate the sale of weaponry by the United States and to meet its conditions. Rs. 40,000 crore of weaponry had been purchased from the United States. The visit of President Obama in October 2010 saw the twin agenda to prise open the Indian markets for the business and commercial interests of the United States and draw India into a closer security and military relationship. President Obama's endorsement for India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council came with the condition that India should cooperate with some of the vital strategic goals of the United States. India is fully on board with the US strategy in Afghanistan. India has voted for the fourth time against Iran on the nuclear issue at the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline has been effectively scuttled; instead the US-sponsored Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline has been signed by India.

2.70 India abstained in the UN Security Council on the resolution on Libya which opened the way for the NATO and western intervention.

But it is unable to come out squarely against the role of the NATO outside Europe given its support to its role in Afghanistan. In February 2012, India voted along with the US and its allies in the Security Council on a resolution against Syria. While India is a member of the BRICS and a participant in the trilateral consultation of foreign ministers of India, China and Russia, the strategic tie-up with the United States and Israel prevents India from playing a major and effective role in promoting multi-polarity by pursuing an independent foreign policy.

2.71 There have to be sustained efforts to develop and improve relations with China. This is in India's interests and should be seen in the context of the United States trying to draw India into a strategic tie-up designed to contain China. China has become India's largest trading partner with \$ 63 billion (Rs. 3,15,000 crores) trade registered in 2010-11.

2.72 The resumption of dialogue with Pakistan in 2011 was a positive development. The granting of Most Favoured Nation status to India by Pakistan, the talks to increase confidence building measures on the line of control in Jammu & Kashmir, are all steps in the right direction. India should continue to pursue the Pakistani government to take firm measures against the extremist elements operating from its territory.

2.73 The struggle for an independent foreign policy and a break-up of the strategic alliance with the United States is directly connected to the struggle for an alternative course of development, away from the neo-liberal model in India. The foreign policy and the strategic alliance forged have a direct bearing on the domestic policies and the lives of the people, whether it is FDI in retail or the free trade agreements which have an adverse effect on farmers and small producers – all these are linked with the Indo-US strategic alliance. The import of expensive nuclear reactors which will hike up the costs of energy and increase the environmental hazards is because of the commitments made under the nuclear deal. The deprivation of cheaper energy through the Iran gas pipeline is also because of the pro-US foreign policy. The rising bill of expensive imports of weapons from the United States which diverts scarce resources from basic services and development is also due to this strategic alliance.

2.74 The CPI(M) will assiduously campaign among the people for an independent foreign policy which will also be part of a new trajectory of development for the country.

Aftermath of the Nuclear Deal

2.75 The aftermath of the Indo-US nuclear deal has exposed the claims of the Manmohan Singh government and it has confirmed what the CPI(M) has been saying about the iniquitous nature of the deal and its straight jacketing of India's foreign policy. The specious claim that the nuclear deal would ensure full civilian nuclear cooperation which will enable India to access sensitive nuclear technology has been exposed. In June 2011, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, at the instance of

the United States, issued fresh guidelines prohibiting transfer of reprocessing and enrichment technology to non-NPT signatory countries like India. Thus India now has only the option to buy expensive nuclear reactors from abroad and nuclear fuel without getting the latest technology. India had committed to buy 10,000 MW of nuclear reactors from the United States as a quid-pro-quo for the deal. Along with this, it had promised to legislate so that there would be no liability for foreign suppliers. With this in view, it brought the civil nuclear liability legislation to Parliament with the aim of excluding foreign suppliers' liability. But this was not accepted by Parliament and a clause providing for recourse to foreign suppliers' liability was included. Now efforts are on to dilute the foreign suppliers' liability in the law through the formulation of Rules under the Act.

2.76 The fact that the UPA government is trying to appease the United States by excluding their companies from being liable in case of a nuclear accident is a gross betrayal of the right to life and safety of Indian citizens. Even after the Fukushima accident in Japan, which is one of the large-scale nuclear disasters in history, the UPA government is bent upon satisfying the United States and other nuclear suppliers like France. It has put forward the dubious proposal that 40,000 MW of imported nuclear plants are required by 2020 to cope with our energy requirements. For this, an agreement has been reached to buy the latest nuclear reactors from the French company, Areva, which are the most expensive, whose technology is untested, and which have not been commissioned anywhere yet. These reactors are to be set up in Jaitapur, Maharashtra. The local people have been conducting a sustained struggle against the nuclear project.

2.77 The two reactors set-up in Koodankulam and purchased from Russia much before the nuclear deal falls in a different category. The local people have various apprehensions about the safety and the impact on the environment of these reactors, especially after the Fukushima accident. It is necessary to conduct an independent safety review and allay the apprehensions of the people before commissioning the plant.

2.78 The CPI(M) has demanded an immediate halt to the import of nuclear power plants to Jaitapur and other locations. Existing nuclear power plants in India should undergo a thorough safety review to be conducted by an independent body. There has to be an independent and autonomous nuclear safety regulatory authority. The proposed legislation by the government to set up such an authority will only make it a controlled body captive to the government.

Big Business, Money Power and Politics

2.79 Politics and the political system have borne the direct impact of neo-liberalism – the nexus between big business and politics has become pronounced. Policies made by successive governments openly serve the interests of the big bourgeoisie and foreign capital at the expense of the people. The unprecedented use of money power in elections is a direct outcome of this nexus. Big money is corrupting the

entire system. Bourgeois parties are selecting candidates on the basis of their money power. Money power is now percolating down to the panchayat elections. Distribution of money to voters is becoming the norm in many states. This poses a serious danger to the democratic system. The Party has to conduct a broad-based campaign against money power in politics and in elections; it has to expose the growing subversion of public policy making by big business and expose those bourgeois parties which are utilizing such methods.

2.80 Parliamentary democracy itself is getting corroded by the insidious use of money power and by the neo-liberal outlook. The subversion of democracy is occurring through money, criminality and the influence exercised by mafia groups at various levels. There is an increasing tendency to undermine institutions that are directly answerable to the people. The politics dictated by neo-liberalism has resulted in the growing restrictions on democratic rights – the right to hold demonstrations, public meetings and general strikes are being circumscribed or prohibited by administrative measures and judicial fiats. The corporate media is used to manufacture a consensus against protests by the working people.

Electoral Reforms

2.81 Electoral reforms are a vital necessity both for safeguarding the democratic system and to check political corruption. Stringent provisions have to be made in the election rules against the use of money power and illegal money in elections. State funding in kind and supply of election materials should be introduced. There has to be equitable access for election propaganda in the media. The law should be amended to prohibit paid news and make it an electoral offence. The basic reform of the electoral system requires the introduction of proportional representation on a partial list system to obviate, to some extent, the use of money and muscle power. The partial list system would mean that 50 per cent of the seats would be filled from lists of candidates put out by the parties proportionate to the percentage of votes the parties get and 50 per cent would be elected from territorial constituencies. The CPI(M) and the Left have to bring electoral reforms on to the main political agenda.

Centre-State Relations

2.82 The trend of centralizing powers in the hands of the Centre and encroaching on the powers of the states has continued without respite. While political interventions like use of Article 356 against state governments have declined given the fact that there are coalition governments at the Centre and the ruling alliance often does not have a majority in both the Houses of Parliament, the assault on the states' rights has gone ahead both in the financial and legislative spheres. Implementation of neo-liberal reforms is made a condition for transfer of resources and grants. Centrally-sponsored schemes are used for this purpose. The 13th Finance Commission has continued the trend of the earlier two Commissions and made more stringent conditionalities. The Centre refuses to devolve 50 per cent of the share of taxes to the

states. The UPA-II government has been pushing through a series of legislations which encroach on the powers of the states in areas such as education, cooperative institutions and even in the proposed legislation on food security. The setting up of a National Counter Terrorism Centre encroaches on the police powers of the states. Though the dependence of the states on the Centre has grown, there is growing resentment at the overbearing attitude of the Centre. The CPI(M) has consistently stood for restructuring of Centre-State relations and the Party should be in the forefront in taking up the issues of protecting the rights of the states and working for the restructuring of the Centre-State relations.

Women's Status

2.83 The hypocrisy of the UPA Government on issues concerning women's rights is exemplified by its refusal to push for the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha even though almost two years have passed since its adoption in the Rajya Sabha. After several States had taken the initiative, the Central Government legislated for 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayats and local bodies. India is now behind most of its neighbours, including Pakistan and Afghanistan, on the issue of women's representation in Parliament. In the Global Gender Index that uses four parameters such as labour participation, education, health and survival, and political empowerment to measure the gender gap, out of 135 countries, India's ranking went down from 98 in 2006 to 113 in 2011. India's 2011 census revealed another horrifying reality, namely the rampant use of sex selection methods to kill female fetuses. The child sex ratio came down in 2011 to just 914 females to 1000 males, the lowest since independence and a sharp drop of 13 points in just a decade. In this period, the overall impact of Government policies on women's lives in the form of price rise, irregular employment and consequent fluctuating incomes, as well as increasing violence have led to a deterioration in women's status. Neo-liberal policies with their emphasis on cutting social subsidies have added to women's domestic workload and their almost sole responsibilities in the care economy. The high prices of essential commodities have added to the numbers of malnourished women and girl children. 42 per cent of children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition.

2.84 At the national level the UPA Government has claimed as a great achievement the fact that 51 per cent of workers in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) worksites are women. The truth is that the increasing number of women workers reflects higher distress levels among women who are forced to accept MGNREGA work, in spite of the high work norms and hard work, because they have no choice. This is further confirmed by Government figures which show that the wages earned by women under MGNREGA are less than the minimum wage sometimes by upto 25 to 30 per cent. In this period, the trends of contractualisation and casualisation of the female work force in particular have grown. A larger number of women are involved in home based work with very low piece rates and no labour or social insurance rights. The Government itself is the greatest

exploiter of female labour as can be seen in the exploitative conditions of work of over 50 lakh women employed in various Government projects such as Anganwadi workers or as Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in the rural health mission or as mid-day meal workers in the schools. Shamefully the Central Government continues to treat these lakhs of women as 'honorary' workers giving them a pittance, displaying the patriarchal attitude of the State towards women's work. In urban areas the large force of domestic workers, mainly women, have still not been recognized as workers at the national level although struggles in some states have won them some rights.

2.85 A serious consequence of privatisation of the banking sector and the erosion of priority sector loans is the reversal of the gains made by self-help groups covering over three crore women. The promotion of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) in a completely deregulated framework and exorbitant interest rates, to substitute the earlier bank loans and linkages with the self-help groups, has had a devastating effect. These moneylenders of the neo-liberalisation age have driven hundreds of women to suicide and thousands of families have been ruined because of the unregulated practices of the MFIs supported by the Central Government. In particular the SHGs among ST and SC women have suffered the most.

2.86 Neo-liberalism has spawned cultures which degrade and oppress women in their crude projection of women as sex objects. Newer forms of exploitation and blackmail like cyber crimes proliferate and the legal framework to deal with these is extremely inadequate. Crimes against women have grown, including crimes against children, against dalit and tribal women and so-called honour killings of couples. It is shocking that the Central Government has not yet brought the laws against sexual assault, against sexual harassment at the workplace, or the law against child abuse to Parliament which have been pending for several years. In spite of assurances, the Central Government has refused to legislate against honour killings because of the pressure of some state Governments, notably the Haryana Government where this crime is most rampant.

2.87 Women's struggles and movements have taken place on a number of issues in this period. Women's mobilization in democratic struggles has also increased. The Party has to make a stronger and more sustained intervention on social issues affecting women, along with leading the struggle of working women for better pay and working conditions.

Problems of Muslim Minority

2.88 The Muslim minority has been disappointed by the failure to effectively implement and follow up the recommendations of the Sachar Committee which had made a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic status of the Muslim community. The UPA government has refused the demand raised by the CPI(M) that there should be a sub-plan for the Muslim minority on the lines of the sub-plan for the

Scheduled Tribes, so that dedicated funds for the development of areas with substantial Muslim population can be allocated.

2.89 The report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities headed by Justice Ranganath Mishra was tabled in Parliament by the government after a long delay. The report has recommended 10 per cent reservation for jobs at all levels under the Central and state governments for the Muslim minority and 5 per cent for other minorities on the basis of their being regarded as 'socially and educationally backward'. Amongst all the states, only the Left Front government in West Bengal implemented the granting of 10 per cent reservation for Muslims categorized as OBCs.

2.90 The UPA government has refused to heed these recommendations. Instead, it has announced a 4.5 per cent reservation for all the minorities within the 27 per cent reservation for OBCs. This is a step which militates against even the existing scope for OBC Muslims. Such a paltry share makes it a mockery for large sections of deprived Muslims.

2.91 The CPI(M) supports the recommendation to provide 10 per cent reservation to Muslims excluding the 'creamy layer' as suggested by the Ranganath Mishra Commission; the benefits of reservation enjoyed by the Scheduled Castes should be extended to their counterparts among the Muslims and the Christians. To implement these recommendations, the present quota fixed for backward classes and Scheduled Castes should not be disturbed. Additional allocation should be made from the open quota. To exceed the 50 per cent ceiling placed by the Supreme Court, the Constitution should be suitably amended.

2.92 The Muslim community has also been the target of indiscriminate arrests, harassment and violation of human rights by the State whenever terrorist incidents have taken place. After such incidents, Muslim youth have been rounded up, subjected to torture and implicated in false cases. Those Muslim youth arrested for the Mecca Masjid blast in Hyderabad and the Malegaon blast in Maharashtra were released after years in jail when it was found that an extremist Hindutva organisation was behind these attacks. A number of Muslim youth belonging to the Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh were also rounded up at different times and implicated in many cases without any substantial proof. This biased and discriminatory treatment by the police and investigating security agencies is a gross injustice and it only feeds into the communal stereotyping of the Muslim community. The CPI(M) demands an end to such discrimination and violation of human rights.

Assaults on Tribal Rights

2.93 In this period, the takeover of tribal land by Governments for corporates in the mining sector as well as also for power and irrigation projects and the subsequent displacement of tribals has been a major issue facing tribal communities in India. The Central Government has not only given permission for such takeover as in Andhra Pradesh,

Jharkhand, Orissa, but has also actively encouraged it. The provision in laws like PESA [Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996] for prior gram sabha consent is openly violated. At the same time, the historic Forest Rights Act is being sabotaged with the exception of Tripura where it has been effectively implemented. The granting of land titles for individual and community rights to tribals is seen as a barrier to corporate entry in the mineral-rich tribal areas. The national average of rejections of claims is more than fifty per cent. New conditions outside the law and Rules are being introduced to reject claims, mainly of tribals. The discrimination against equally poor and deprived non-tribal traditional forest dwellers because of the impossible-to-prove condition of 75 years residence in the forest has resulted in the mass denial of rights to these sections. An urgent amendment to the Act to remove this clause and bring it in consonance with the 1980 cut off date granted earlier by the Supreme Court for such sections, is essential to bring justice to these communities.

2.94 The issue of tribal land takeover is made more critical by the provisions of the draft Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act which, in the name of public purpose, does away entirely with the mandatory provision of taking prior consent from tribals. Thus the issue of protection of tribal land is a crucial one which the Party will have to take up in a sustained manner. At the same time the right of tribals for a stake in the mineral wealth is also most important. The Central Government has proposed equivalence of annual royalty to be levied on the mining company for the development of the tribal area. This is a pittance and is totally unacceptable. On the other hand, the guidelines of the Supreme Court in the Samata case for recognition of tribal rights in the mineral wealth excavated from tribal land should form the basis for a policy on this issue, based on tribal participation and consent.

2.95 The other issues raised earlier, such as the criminal negligence of the health and education requirements of tribals and particularly of tribal students; the utter failure of the Central Government to set up training institutes for youth in tribal areas to address the critical areas of tribal unemployment; the backlog in the reserved quotas for STs in Central and State Government employment; are all equally relevant today as there has been no improvement in the last three years. On the contrary, the Central government is guilty of not only violating the guidelines for the Tribal Sub-Plan by much lower budgetary allocations for tribals than the mandatory minimum of 8.2 per cent of the total allocations, but also in diluting the guidelines by giving exemptions to various ministries.

2.96 In many tribal areas, tribals are caught between the Maoist depredations on the one hand and harassment by security forces on the other. While mobilizing the tribals against the extortionist anti-poor actions of the Maoists, the Party must stand up for the rights of tribals against State repression. The Party will organise the tribal people and lead their struggles in defence of tribal rights to land, forests and for an equitable share in development.

Dalit Issues

2.97 For the 16.66 crores of the scheduled caste population (16.2 per cent of India's population), caste oppression constitutes the greatest assault on their human rights. Landlessness, denial of access to water supply, public roads, burial grounds and other services blight the lives of the dalits. More than a million are forced to work as manual scavengers despite a legal ban on the practice. The increasing atrocities on dalits are shown by the fact that even registered cases average 30,000 per year under the SC Act and have a significantly low conviction rate. The bourgeois-landlord order provides formal constitutional and legal rights without enforcing them in any meaningful manner.

2.98 The privatization drive and ban on recruitment in government jobs has shrunk the prospects for dalit employment. The Special Funds allotted for the Scheduled Caste Component Plan (SCSP) are being misused and diverted. It is essential that central legislation be enacted for enforcing the allotment of SCSP and to ensure that the funds are non-divertible and non-lapsable. The gaps in quota utilization remain unfulfilled. The Central Government has refused the legitimate demand of reservation in the private sector. A broad movement should be built to achieve this.

2.99 The fight against untouchability and caste oppression of dalits has to be actively taken up by the Party. In recent years the anti-untouchability movement initiated by the Party and other progressive forces in Tamillnadu and Andhra Pradesh has made significant progress. This must be taken up in other states as well.

Rights of Disabled

2.100 Persons with disabilities, continue to face stigma, discrimination and denial of basic human rights and often outright cruelty. There has been an undercounting of the actual numbers of disabled which has denied them a basic share in resource allocations. Large numbers of disabled belong to the poorer sections and are thus doubly disadvantaged. The present legal framework is utterly inadequate and both the law and policy require a reorientation from a rights based perspective. The failure to ensure the rights of the disabled; the failure to provide education, employment and livelihood; deprivation of health services; the failures at integration – all are issues that have to be addressed urgently. With the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is an urgent need to revise existing legislations to bring them in conformity with the Convention. The welfare and advancement of disabled citizens is crucially linked to the recognition of their rights as equal citizens, not as recipients of charity or patronage.

Education

2.101 India ranked a poor 134 out of 187 countries ranked in terms of the human development indicators (HDI) in 2011. 26 per cent of all Indians are still illiterate, as per the Census 2011, with female illiteracy at 35 per cent. Mean years of schooling in India stood at 4.4 in 2010,

which is much lower than the global average of 7.4. Gross enrolment ratio in higher education stands at around 15 per cent, as against the world average of 26 per cent. Total expenditure on education (centre and states combined) comprised less than 3 per cent of GDP in 2010-11. This exposes the backward state of education in India and the lack of commitment of the Indian State to educate the people.

2.102 The much touted Right to Education Act has not succeeded in ensuring access to school education for all children, mainly because of the lack of adequate public funding. At the same time the special requirements of disabled children are ignored. The Centre has refused to share the major proportion of financial resources required. Rather, privatisation of school education is being promoted in the name of subsidizing 2,500 'model' PPP schools set up by private entities across the country. The bulk of the teachers recruited in government schools are on contract. School education is a basic right, which must be universal and provided by the state.

2.103 A neo-liberal offensive has been unleashed by the UPA-II government in the sphere of education to centralize and commercialise education at all levels. A number of legislations are being pushed by the Centre which undermine federalism, weaken democratic structures and promote private profiteering in higher education. The Foreign Educational Institutions Bill will only lead to foreign players opening commercial teaching shops charging exorbitant fees and fleecing the students. The proposed legislation to form a National Commission for Higher Education strikes at the very roots of autonomy and diversity of higher educational institutions. These need to be opposed resolutely.

2.104 The provision for 27 per cent OBC reservation has not been implemented properly in most educational institutions. Vacancies in teaching and non-teaching posts are deliberately being left unfilled, affecting the quality of education. The public higher educational system needs to be revamped and democratized. Private institutions in professional disciplines like engineering, medical, management, etc., have converted education into a lucrative business. Private universities sanctioned by state governments have proliferated. In BJP ruled states, steps have been taken to communalise the educational system through the rewriting of the curriculum and school textbooks. Central legislation is required to regulate fees and admissions in private educational institutions and to ensure social justice in higher education.

2.105 Democratic rights of students, teachers and non-teaching staff are being curbed. Students' union elections are prohibited in many educational institutions. The new TMC-led government in West Bengal has launched a severe offensive against the long cherished democratic principle of running educational institutions in West Bengal through elected representatives of the academic community in governing bodies and university senates. Physical violence is being orchestrated in student union polls by the TMC in order to intimidate student activists, discredit student politics and further their rightwing agenda of banning all forms of democratic politics in campuses. The student

movement led by the SFI in Kerala waged a determined struggle in 2011 against the malpractices resorted to in admissions, charging high fees and violation of norms. Hundreds of students were injured by the police in brutal lathicharges and stun grenade attacks.

2.106 Sports activities for the youth is not getting the priority and attention that they deserve. Playgrounds and sports facilities are lacking, particularly for the poorer sections of the people. The commercialization of sports is hampering the development of sports for all, particularly rural youth.

2.107 The CPI(M) will vigorously advocate access, equity and quality in education for all.

Healthcare

2.108 Public expenditure on health services continues to languish at around 1.2 per cent of GDP. The public health system has collapsed in many parts of the country and over 70 per cent of healthcare expenses are borne by Indians through out-of-pocket expenses. Maternal and child deaths are rampant. The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) never acquired the desired momentum and is plagued by corruption. Plans for an urban health mission have been repeatedly shelved under pressure from the powerful private medicare lobby. Gross deficiencies in the public healthcare system have provided further space for unbridled expansion and consolidation of the private medicare sector, led by big corporate chains. In the absence of public health care, poor patients are left at the mercy of this unregulated private sector, which often provides care of dubious quality at exorbitant rates.

2.109 The public health insurance schemes are deficient since they allow limited reimbursement for hospitalized patients and usually cover only patients in the BPL category. All these schemes largely rely on the private sector to provide hospitalization care. These schemes, thus, not only do not provide adequate coverage for health care, but also are a way of strengthening the private sector through public resources.

2.110 With the entry and consolidation of MNCs in the pharmaceuticals sector, drug prices have increased sharply. The government is reluctant to effectively control the prices of essential medicines. The proposed drug pricing policy seeks to fix prices of drugs at existing rates, which are exorbitant in many cases and sanctify rampant profiteering by drug companies. An amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, in 2005, has liberalized norms for foreign companies who conduct clinical trials of new products in India. Unethical clinical trials are being conducted on Indian citizens, both in the private and the public sector.

2.111 The CPI(M) demands that the government take urgent steps to ensure that a comprehensive and universal provision of health care by the public sector, is free at the point of delivery of healthcare. Public expenditure on healthcare needs to increase to 5 per cent of GDP. The NRHM should be envisioned with a new mandate, capable of strengthening the public health system in all parts of the country – in

both rural and urban areas. The private sector needs to be strictly regulated at all levels. Prices of all essential drugs should be controlled using a cost-based formula, and all necessary drugs should be made available free of cost at all public facilities. The government should monitor the prices of patented drugs and bring all patented drugs of public health importance under price control. Strict regulations must be put in place to restrict clinical trials in India being conducted by big pharma companies.

Media in Corporate Grip

2.112 The media in India has been totally transformed by the two decades of liberalisation. The print and electronic media have become part of the corporate business. The major newspapers and TV channels, both national and regional, are run by big business. The entry of 26 per cent FDI in the news sector and 100 per cent equity in the non-news sector has led to the global media baron Murdoch controlling a significant chunk of the electronic media. With this has come a dramatic change in the role and content of the media. The corporate-run media seeks to manufacture consent for neo-liberal policies. In pursuit of profit, it purveys an endless diet of sensationalized news and programmes centred on sex and violence. Consumerism is dominant as advertisement revenue is crucial. The commodification of women and the portrayal of obscurantist values is having deleterious effects on society. Successive governments have promoted privatization and the downgrading of the public broadcasting media. Neo-liberal values have spawned the phenomenon of 'paid news' and private treaties between media houses and corporates.

2.113 The CPI(M) stands for democratization of the media and an end to the grip of big business over this vital sector. This requires the reversal of the policy of allowing FDI in the media; prohibition of cross ownership of media (which would mean a business house running a newspaper would not be allowed to go into television and so on); the revamping of the Prasar Bharati so that a public broadcasting service becomes an important segment of the media; an independent regulatory authority in the form of a media council to cover the entire media instead of the existing Press Council.

Culture

2.114 Culture is sought to be moulded by the values of consumerism, commercialization and individualism which is the dominant ethos in the market-driven neo-liberal order. Simultaneously, attacks on the secular and inclusive character of culture by Hindutva forces continue, as do their attacks on cultural personalities and productions. Over the past years, caste-based organisations have also attempted to impose their censorship on cultural productions, especially films. The powerful mass media is projecting not only a market-driven culture but also promoting regressive features such as patriarchal values on women, glorification of violence, superstition and obscurantism which have a harmful impact on society.

2.115 India is a country rich in folk arts and traditions which give expression to the joys and pains of peasants, artisans, tribals and others. With the deepening agrarian crisis and the market-driven culture, these arts and their practitioners face an uncertain future. The development of a secular, democratic and composite culture has to be the agenda around which all progressive and democratic forces should be rallied. The Party will fully aid and support this endeavour.

Political Situation

Congress

2.116 The Congress-led UPA alliance won the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. Though it could not get a majority, it got the support of parties like the SP, BSP, RJD and JD(S) in order to have a majority. The big bourgeoisie, the dominant section of the ruling classes, extended support to the Congress. The Congress also benefited because a substantial number of people did not want the BJP to come back to power. The Congress gained more support among the minorities, the middle classes and youth.

2.117 Three years hence, the exposure of massive corruption in the UPA regime has alienated a large section of the middle classes. With growing unemployment, many of the youth are getting disillusioned. Sections of the big bourgeoisie are openly voicing their displeasure at the failure of the government to push through more neo-liberal reforms. The Muslim community in many places still supports the Congress in the absence of a secular alternative. The Congress also benefits from the BJP's lack of credibility in the BJP-governed states. The failure to curb the relentless price rise by the UPA government has adversely affected the Congress. This alongwith the high level corruption has contributed to lowering the Congress party's image.

2.118 The UPA government has been trying to further push the neo-liberal agenda in its second term. It has been thwarted in some instances because of the precarious majority it commands in the Lok Sabha. It has to win the support of those parties supporting it by manoeuvres and striking deals each time it has to get a majority vote. The Congress party has been trying to cover up the neo-liberal policies with social welfare measures. In this context, important social welfare measures like the food security legislation get truncated. The Congress' attempt is to showcase these diluted measures as its commitment for the '*aam aadmi*'. But increasingly, these measures are getting restricted by the overall framework of neo-liberal policies.

2.119 The Congress has been trying to retrieve its base and influence in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar without much success. In the Bihar assembly elections, the Congress fared poorly. It could not make much headway in Uttar Pradesh in the assembly elections recently. In Andhra Pradesh, the split in the party by Jaganmohan Reddy has created difficulties. The UPA alliance has also been weakened with the massive defeat of the DMK in Tamilnadu in the assembly elections. The

other major ally, the TMC, after its success in West Bengal, has been asserting its opportunist positions on various matters.

BJP

2.120 The internecine warfare in the BJP intensified after the defeat in the 2009 elections. Its subservience to the RSS was once again exposed when the RSS had to intervene in the leadership crisis. Even now there are various contending forces. The recent projection of L.K. Advani through his rath yatra against corruption is an instance. Though the BJP has suffered reverses electorally, its base is more or less intact in states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Uttarakhand. The BJP has been trying to cash in on the corruption issue. But it has been hampered by the notorious record of the Yeddyurappa government in Karnataka and its brazen nexus with the mining mafia. The arrest and jailing of Yeddyurappa further dented its image. However, the anti-Congress feeling on the corruption issue has benefited the BJP among sections of the urban middle classes. The performance of the BJP in the Bihar assembly elections and the growing anti-Congress feeling among sections of the people have boosted its morale and it is trying to win over new allies to the NDA.

2.121 The efforts of the BJP under RSS direction to mobilise people on the communal agenda such as the temple in Ayodhya or 'Islamic terrorism' have not yielded much response. The BJP as the major opposition party in parliament is opposing some of the policies of the UPA government with a view to garner support, even though it has no basic difference with the economic policies of the Congress. The BJP is committed to the neo-liberal policies; it is not only a communal party but a rightwing alternative to the Congress party.

Regional Parties

2.122 Most of the regional parties represent the interests of the regional bourgeoisie and the rural rich. The politics of many of these parties are marked by opportunism in their attitude to the Congress and the BJP. When in government, they follow neo-liberal policies. With coalition politics being the norm at the Centre, these parties have opportunities to join governments led by either the Congress or the BJP depending on their interest in the state. Both the Congress and the BJP are compelled to ally with some of the regional parties in order to strengthen their alliance and form governments at the Centre.

2.123 The ruling classes have always been in favour of a two-party or two-front system headed by the two big bourgeois parties. This would ensure that the class interests of the big bourgeois strata are addressed by whichever combination comes to power. Our efforts are directed towards preventing the consolidation of two such alliances. We should develop and maintain relations with those regional parties that are not with either the Congress or the BJP. Such cooperation is possible for joint actions on people's issues, defence of national sovereignty, Centre-state relations, etc.

2.124 Despite the vacillations shown by these parties, our approach should be to cooperate with the non-Congress secular parties in parliament on an issue-to-issue basis. Outside parliament, we can have united actions on people's issues to widen the movement.

CPI (M) & The Left

2.125 Compared to the situation at the time of the 19th Congress, there has been a big change as far as the position of the CPI(M) and the Left are concerned. When the 19th Congress was held in 2008, the Left had emerged stronger after the victories in the West Bengal and Kerala assembly elections in 2006. In Tripura too the Left Front won for the fourth consecutive time in 2008. However, in the Lok Sabha elections in May 2009, the Party fared badly, getting the lowest number of seats ever. In the assembly elections in 2011, the Left Front was defeated in West Bengal for the first time since 1977. In Kerala, the LDF lost the elections, albeit narrowly.

2.126 These electoral reverses, and the fact that the Party has made no substantial advance in any other state, have weakened the position of the Party and the Left at the national level. It is in such a situation, that the ruling classes are going ahead with the neo-liberal policies and the communal forces are trying to gain ground. Hence, the strengthening of the CPI(M) and the recovering of the ground lost by the Left assume importance.

Left-Led Governments

2.127 The 2011 assembly elections witnessed the defeat of the Left Front in West Bengal for the first time since 1977. The Left Front government had been in office continuously for 34 years. This is no doubt a setback for the entire Left and democratic movement in the country. But the achievements of the Left Front government cannot be wished away. The implementation of land reforms, the democratization of the panchayat system and decentralisation, ensuring the rights of the working people, the maintenance of communal harmony and inculcation of secular values are amongst them. These are all under attack under the new regime of the Trinamul Congress. Efforts to undermine land reforms and seize the land of peasants are underway; the panchayat system is being undermined and the role of the elected representatives is being replaced by the bureaucracy. Rights of the working class and trade unions are under assault. There are widespread attacks on the CPI(M) and the Left, and violation of democratic rights.

2.128 We must counter these attacks by mobilizing the people; defend the gains of land reforms; and build the movements of the basic classes and the people. Learning from experience, we should overcome the weaknesses at the political and organisational level and reestablish our links with the people who have got alienated.

2.129 In Kerala, the narrow electoral victory of the UDF by a 1 per cent margin and the LDF falling short of a majority by 3 seats cannot be seen as a rejection of the LDF government and its policies. In

Kerala, the working people have actually supported the CPI(M) and the LDF in substantial measure.

2.130 In both states, the Party will endeavour to win more support of the people.

Defend Tripura Government

2.131 The Left Front government in Tripura has established a creditable record of service to the people. It is an example of a corruption-free government. It has an exemplary record in reduction of poverty, provision of basic services to the people, tribal welfare, and nurturing the unity of the tribal and non-tribal people. The Left Front government has become a target of attack for the Congress and other rightwing forces. There has to be vigilance against the activities of the extremist forces as they are linked up with extremist organisations in the North East. The Party and the Left forces in the country should defend the Left Front government of Tripura and demand that the Central Government provide adequate resources to the state for ensuring pro-people development.

End Violence

Defend Democracy in West Bengal

2.132 The CPI(M) has come under severe attack in West Bengal. After the Lok Sabha elections in May 2009, concentrated attacks took place on the Party cadres, members and supporters, especially in the rural areas. These attacks got intensified after the assembly elections in May 2011. A feature of this attack has been the targeted killings by the Maoists and the violence unleashed by the TMC-led combine. Altogether 550 comrades of the CPI(M) and the Left Front have been killed in this terror campaign since the 19th Congress of the Party. Of these, 59 comrades have died after the assembly election results in May 2011. Hundreds of Party offices, trade union and other mass organisation offices have been captured or attacked in many places. Thousands have been arrested or implicated in false cases. The attacks by the TMC goons are often aided by the police. Elected panchayat members are intimidated and prevented from functioning. This is a planned offensive to weaken the Party and to snap its links with its mass base.

2.133 This attack on the Party in West Bengal is an attack on the CPI(M) as a whole. It is an onslaught on democracy and democratic rights. The entire Party should defend and extend solidarity with the West Bengal unit of the Party. It is an urgent task of the Party to mobilise public opinion and all democratic forces to expose and condemn these attacks. Democratic opinion should be mobilised to demand that the TMC stop such attacks and the state government take firm steps to create a peaceful atmosphere.

Intensify Joint Movements

2.134 The Party sought to develop united Left actions and joint movements by various political forces at the all-India level. The Left parties conducted a number of joint campaigns. The major effort was on the price rise issue. The Left parties conducted a picketing and court arrest programme against price rise on April 8, 2010, implementing the call given by the Left parties rally held in Delhi on March 12. It saw the participation of 20 lakh people. This was followed by the April 27 hartal called by thirteen parties which was a success. The Left and secular opposition parties again gave a call for a hartal on July 5 against the fuel price hikes. The NDA also called a bandh on the same day. This became one of the biggest protest actions in the last two decades.

2.135 A significant development has been the united platform of all the Central trade unions. A general strike was held on September 7, 2010 at the call of the Central trade unions except the BMS. This was followed by a call for *jail bhara* on November 8, 2011, in which all Central trade unions including the INTUC and BMS participated. It is estimated that 7.5 lakh workers and employees joined the picketing. For the first time, all the Central trade unions, including the INTUC and BMS, gave a joint call for a strike on February 28, 2012. This historic action saw the participation of ten crore workers and employees in the strike. The development of a united platform of all Central trade unions is a landmark in the history of the working class movement in the country. This should act as a fillip for united action by different sections of the working people and the mass organisations.

2.136 There is a need for intensifying and conducting broad-based struggles as the present state of the movement is not adequate to counter the neo-liberal policies. The issue of land and land acquisition, food, employment and regularization of jobs, and protection of livelihoods requires wider mass movements. This can be accomplished when we draw people from outside our sphere of influence by initiating united actions.

Party's Political Line

2.137 The CPI(M) has to politically fight the Congress and the BJP. Both are parties which represent the big bourgeois landlord order which perpetuates class exploitation and is responsible for the social oppression of various sections of the people. They pursue neo-liberal policies and advocate a pro-US foreign policy. Defeating the Congress and the UPA government is imperative given the crushing burden of price rise, unemployment, suffering of the farmers and workers on the one hand and the brazen corruption and big sops to big business and the wealthy sections. Isolating the BJP and countering its communal and rightwing agenda is necessary and important for the advance of the Left, democratic and secular forces.

2.138 As against the Congress and the BJP, the CPI(M) puts forth the Left and democratic alternative. Only a Left and democratic platform can be the alternative to bourgeois-landlord rule. This alternative needs to be built up through a process of movements and struggles

and the emergence of a political alliance of the Left and democratic forces. In the course of these efforts, it may be necessary to rally those non-Congress, non-BJP forces which can play a role in defence of democracy, national sovereignty, secularism, federalism and defence of the people's livelihood and rights. The emergence of such joint platforms should help the process of building the alliance of the Left and democratic forces.

2.139 In the present situation we should strive for joint actions with the non-Congress secular parties on issues so that the movements can be widened. On specific policy matters and people's issues, there can be cooperation in parliament with these parties. As and when required, there can be electoral understandings with some of these parties.

Strengthen Independent Role

2.140 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.

2.141 The political-ideological work of the Party should be developed based on our class outlook. The political intervention of the Party should be there on all major issues. Much more attention has to be paid to the independent political campaign and mass mobilisation around the political platform of the Party in the coming days. This should help to demarcate the Party from the bourgeois parties and their politics. The Party should counter the ideology and politics of the bourgeois parties. The Party should take its political campaign and work to new areas and new sections. The participation in elections and activities in the parliamentary forums should be dovetailed to the development of the mass movements and the political mobilisation of the people.

2.142 The Party's work among the basic classes should be given priority. The lag in the work amongst the peasantry and the rural poor in building class and mass struggles has to be overcome. The Party has to expand its influence among the workers in the organised sector in the manufacturing and strategic industries and give importance to bring the unorganized sector workers into the movement and conduct political work amongst them. The Party should pay attention to fostering the worker-peasant alliance.

2.143 The specific issues of the dalits, minorities, tribals and women have to be taken up as part of the general democratic platform.

2.144 Despite the emphasis given to develop sustained struggle on local issues in the last two Party congresses, this has not been adequately done. This weakness should be rectified. The various issues of the people concerning their livelihood, land, supply of foodgrains through the PDS, job security, fair wages, access to health care, education and basic services, all of which are affected by the neo-liberal policies, should be taken up for conducting sustained struggles locally and also to launch statewide movements. Movements against the neo-liberal policies should be launched at the all India level and in the states.

2.145 The Party has to step up its political work among the youth and the unemployed. Special attention has to be paid to work in the urban areas, particularly in the slums and among poorer sections. The Party should take up the environmental issues which affect the people, particularly the poor and the vulnerable sections whose livelihoods are affected.

Left Unity

2.146 The four Left parties, the CPI(M), CPI, AIFB and RSP, have been working unitedly at the national level in the past two decades. During the period of the UPA-I government, this cooperation became more intense as many policy matters and people's issues had to be dealt with.

2.147 In the recent period, on a few issues, such as the formation of Telengana state, the CPI(M) and CPI have had different stands. This has created some difficulties in Andhra Pradesh. However, at the national level, overall, the Left parties have been taking a united stand and initiating joint actions. In the current situation when the Left has suffered reverses in the elections and there has been a setback in West Bengal, it is all the more important to preserve and strengthen Left unity. There may be different views on the course of events and the problems of the Left Front government in West Bengal. But these have to be addressed in a critical and fraternal manner so that it does not weaken the Left Front. The ferocious attack on the Left should be met with a collective resolve and by going to the people in a united way.

2.148 There has to be greater emphasis on the independent role and projection of the Left. The necessity of Left unity is all the more imperative today as only the Left parties are the consistent fighters against the neo-liberal policies and imperialist influence.

2.149 There are a number of Left-minded groups and individuals outside the Left parties who should be brought together on a platform on issues which the Left advocates. For this, the Party should take the initiative.

Left and Democratic Programme

2.150 After two decades of liberalization and the pro-big bourgeois-landlord policies pursued by successive governments at the Centre, it has become all the more clear that the only real alternative to the

bourgeois-landlord order is the Left and democratic alternative. It is the Left and democratic programme which truly represents the interests of various sections of the working people, whether they be industrial workers, workers in the unorganized sector, peasantry, agricultural workers, the middle class, small shopkeepers and the intelligentsia. It is by mobilizing all sections of the working people in support of the Left and democratic front programme that we can advance towards the formation of a people's democratic front and to bring about a fundamental social transformation.

2.151 The Left and democratic programme currently has to include the following major policies and demands: (i) For thoroughgoing land reforms and a democratic transformation of agrarian relations; (ii) For a self-reliant path of development, strict regulation of international finance flows, nationalize mining and natural oil resources; planned development and balanced growth; (iii) Reduction of economic and social inequalities, check on monopolies and promotion of public sector; fiscal and taxation measures for redistribution of wealth; (iv) For a democratic and federal political system; restructuring of Centre-State relations and effective democratic decentralisation; constitutional changes to deepen democracy, international agreements to be ratified by Parliament; (v) Firm measures to curb high-level corruption; electoral reforms, introduction of proportional representation with the partial list system; (vi) Separation of religion and State as the basic principle of secularism to be embedded in the Constitution; firm action to curb communal forces; (vii) Rights of the working people to be ensured – fair wages and guarantee of social security, representation of workers in management; (viii) Universal public distribution system for food and essential commodities; (ix) Development of public education and public health systems to ensure citizens' right to education and health; (x) Ensuring social justice by end to caste oppression, equal rights for women, protection of rights of dalits, minorities and tribal people; (xi) Protection of environment and equity in access to energy, water and other national resources; (xii) For an independent foreign policy based on ending imperialist hegemony.

Tasks Ahead

2.152 The main task is to fight against the whole gamut of neo-liberal policies which are affecting the lives of various sections of the people. The working class, the peasantry, agricultural workers, workers in the informal sector, low wage and salary earners, artisans and working women – are all subjected to intensified exploitation, destruction of their livelihoods and displacement from their land. They are deprived of basic services like health care and education. A resolute fight against neo-liberal policies has to be taken up at all levels, national, state and local.

2.153 Communal politics continues to pose a danger as it is seeking an opportunity to push forward the communal agenda. The RSS and its political wing, the BJP, represent the main vehicle for majority communalism and the Hindutva ideology. Though the BJP suffered electoral setbacks, there is no let-up of communal activities. In the

coming days the struggle against communalism and the Hindutva based activities needs to be carried on. At the same time, the Party should be vigilant to counter minority communalism and extremism.

2.154 The UPA government is working to strengthen the strategic alliance with the USA at all levels including military collaboration. This alliance influences domestic policies and is the main deterrent to an independent foreign policy. The Party has to step up the opposition to the Indo-US strategic alliance and its various manifestations. It should rally all the patriotic, democratic sections against this tie-up with the US and mobilize people for the pursuit of an independent foreign policy and against imperialist intervention around the world.

2.155 The Party will champion the rights of the dalits, tribals, minorities, women and other oppressed sections as part of the general democratic platform.

2.156 The entire Party will work to rally the people and the democratic forces to defend the CPI(M) and the Left in West Bengal, to help fight back the violent attacks and to overcome the adverse situation.

2.157 The Party will strive to rally the broadest democratic and secular forces around an alternative set of policies. The Party will work to strengthen Left unity and to consolidate the forces of the Left while waging a determined struggle against the disruptive activities of the Maoists.

2.158 The CPI(M), based on the Left and democratic platform of demands, will mobilize the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers, artisans and other sections of the working people to fight against the anti-people policies and to defend their livelihood and rights. The Party should pay attention to winning over the masses under the influence of the bourgeois parties by drawing them into united struggles on their issues and problems.

The Way Forward

2.159 The 20th Congress of the CPI(M) calls upon the entire Party to take up these tasks and endeavour to fulfill them. The Party has to be in the lead to fight against the neo-liberal policies which are harming the interests of the working people. We have to conduct the struggles for land, food, employment and social justice. The CPI(M) has to counter the forces of communalism and divisiveness and defend secularism. We have to combat the imperialist pressures in all spheres.

- We shall resolutely counter the attacks and the efforts to isolate our Party by relying on the people.
- Imbued with Marxism-Leninism, the Party will ceaselessly work among all sections of the working people and mobilise them around the left and democratic platform.
- Let us build a powerful Communist Party throughout the country, a Party capable of mobilizing all sections of the working people.

- With renewed determination we shall continue the struggle to end class exploitation and social oppression of the Indian people so that we can go forward towards a new, alternative path – towards people's democracy and socialism.