



## 220 Days and Counting: Zydus Workers' Struggle for Justice



Hundreds of workers of Zydus under the banner of Zydus Wellness Employees Union (AICCTU) have been protesting since past more than 220 days against the illegal lockout at company's Sitarganj (Uttarakhand) production facility in the state.

Zydus Wellness is an Indian consumer goods company and produces household goods like Glucon-D, Sugar Free, Complian and Nycil. The unit was closed by the company in the name of 'manufacturing and supply chain network optimisation exercise', leaving hundreds of workers out of job.

KK Bora, secretary of AICCTU Uttarakhand noted that the "Zydus, which is well known Indian brand is trying to take away the livelihood of workers under the false pretext of losses despite the fact that company's Q1 (April-June) net profit increased by 4.75% at Rs 137.01 crore for the year 2022. The unit closure at Sitarganj is just excuse to retrench workers to ensure super profit for the company, and such move is illegal."

On November 30, after Zydus workers' protest to Vidhansabha the government issued an order declaring the lockout at Sitarganj illegal under the labour laws.

The Zydus workers have demanded that the Zydus must comply with the order and remove its illegal lockout. Further, all the employees must be taken back and the pending wages and other benefits must be paid by the management.



Delhi: Anti demolition and eviction protest organised on 20 January at Jantar Mantar by residents of Tughlaqabad, Mehrauli and Fatehpur Beri, along with AICCTU and AISA.

### NOTE

Due to the 11th Party Congress of CPIML in February, the next Liberation will be a joint issue (March-April).



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# FESTIVAL OF THE RICHEST TAX THE RICH, NOT THE POOR

**'S**urvival of the Richest' is the title of the Oxfam Global Inequality Report 2022 released on January 16, 2023. The report, coinciding with the annual global jamboree of the rich and the powerful in the World Economic Forum, gives us a revealing picture of the growing income and wealth inequality, inequality that grew alarmingly during the pandemic and is reinforced constantly by the regressive taxation pattern in the neoliberal era where the poor are taxed heavily while the rich get away with paying very little taxes. This global picture becomes all the more shocking in Modi's New India where the richest are having a gala carnival.

The 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement had drawn the world's attention to mounting inequality with the slogan 'We Are the 99 Percent'. The Oxfam report tells us that the wealth of the richest 1% has grown faster during the pandemic. Before 2020 the top 1% segment was claiming half of all new wealth, in the wake of the pandemic the proportion has become almost two-thirds, or nearly twice as much as earned by the bottom 99%. Calculated on a daily basis, billionaire wealth has grown by \$ 2.7 bn a day. Globally, the richest 1% hold 45.6% of global

wealth while the bottom half have to make do with just 0.75%. In India, where the number of billionaires jumped from 102 to 166 in the midst of the pandemic (2020-2022), the top 1% now account for 40.6% of total wealth while the bottom half have only 3%.

For the poor, the economic crisis, described as polycrisis in the report, is felt primarily as a cost of living crisis driven by soaring food and energy prices. For the corporations this has meant windfall profits, defined as a surge of more than 10% above their average 2018-21 net profit. 95 food and energy companies made \$ 306 bn in windfall profits, more than two-and-a-half times in 2022 compared with the 2018-21 average. The report has used the term 'greedflation' to describe this conversion of people's pain into corporate profits. While profits have soared for these corporations, escalating prices of essential commodities have pushed over 70 million additional people into extreme poverty in 2020.

Champions of neoliberal economic policies like Narendra Modi and his ilk across the world want us to celebrate this windfall profit as deserved reward for creation of

“

*The burden of taxation has gradually shifted away from the corporates towards the individual income taxpayer.*

wealth and wait for this growth to trickle down to the bottom. But the annual inequality reports clearly reveal that instead of growth trickling down we have poverty spreading in the bottom and wealth continuing to accumulate at the top. The instrument of taxation which could have produced some redistributive effect is further aggravating this polarization. The Oxfam report uses an example to drive home this point: Elon Musk, currently the world's richest person, paid a true tax rate of just over 3% from 2014 to 2018, while Aber Christine, a trader in Northern Uganda selling rice, flour and soya and earning a profit of \$80 a month pays a tax rate of 40%.

The report makes a very persuasive case for using taxation to check billionaire wealth and increase revenue to fund welfare expenditure. Taxes on wealth (property tax,

inheritance tax and net wealth tax or one-off tax on the wealth of the super-rich) and income (personal income, capital gains and unrealized capital gains), if effectively applied could make a significant difference. The report gives the example of Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani to show how nearly 150 bn dollars revenue could be earned just from these two billionaires by levying 5% net wealth tax, 60% tax on dividends and 20% one-off tax on the unrealized capital gains of last five years (2017-22). Tax on unrealized capital gains of Gautam Adani alone could employ more than five million primary school teachers in India for a year while three percent wealth tax on India's billionaires can fund the National Health Mission for three years.

The case for progressive taxation becomes most urgent in India

which is still home to the largest contingent of the world's poor (228.9 million). But under Narendra Modi, taxes on the rich are steadily going down while the poor have to bear the brunt of indirect taxation through GST. A little less than two-third of the total GST is coming from the bottom 50 percent, as per estimates, one-third from middle 40 percent and only three to four percent from the top 10 percent. Even as the Oxfam inequality report focuses on mounting inequality, the Modi government boasts of launching the world's longest river cruise from Varanasi to Dibrugarh where passengers are assured ultimate luxury for fifty one days by paying 300 dollars per head per day. In the context of India, the India story of the global report should actually be rechristened 'Festival of the Richest'. ■



# JOSHIMATH AND BANBHOLPURA: SAVING UTTARAKHAND FROM CALLOUS GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE GREED

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*Let Uttarakhand give a fitting rebuff to the forces of corporate greed and autocratic governance and energise the battle for sustainable development and responsive democracy”*

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

**J**oshimath, the last city on the borders of Uttarakhand is fighting for its existence. New cracks are emerging each day in roads and buildings across the city, making the place totally unsafe and possibly unlivable. A callous administration that has refused to pay attention to every wake-up call and alarming signs all these years is now desperately marking houses and hotels that need to be vacated immediately.

This is one disaster that has not come unannounced. It has been looming large for all who cared to see. For years Joshimath residents have been knocking on the doors of every institution of the state with frantic appeals to stop construction and reorient policies. The very name of their fighting platform - Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti (Save Joshimath Struggle Committee) - conveyed the degree of the threat felt by Joshimath residents and their urge to defend the place that generations had developed with so much labour, love and hope.

Way back in 1976, an 18-member committee, headed by MC Mishra, the then collector of Garhwal had alarmed the government that indiscriminate construction must be stopped to save Joshimath from sinking. Yet no government really paid much attention to this serious warning. The foundation of the state in 2000 was in fact treated as a licence to go for reckless construction of roads, dams and tunnels in the name

of development and promotion of pilgrimage and tourism. Uttarakhand was branded as Urja Pradesh or the energy hub of India. The escalation of construction activities can be clearly assessed from this one figure: in 2000, at the time of notification of the state, Uttarakhand had a road network of 8,000 km and in two decades this has jumped fivefold to 40,000 km.

Periodically, government agencies have also warned the powers that be about the disastrous consequences of such ill-advised construction boom. In a report published in 2013, the National Institute of Disaster Management identified dam construction as a key reason for increasing flash floods - the region had recorded just four major flash floods between 1989 and 1999, the decade preceding the notification of the state and the number went up to 22 in the next ten years (2002-2012)! Most recently in February 2022, veteran environmentalist Ravi Chopra had quit as chairman of the High Powered Committee on the Char Dham Project terming the project an assault on the Himalayas.

The people of Joshimath have been protesting continuously against the disastrous Tapovan-Vishnugad power project ever since the proposal came to light twenty years ago. In the face of powerful local protests, the foundation stone had to be laid at Dehradun, 250 kms away from Joshimath. Strangely, the construction of the hydro power

project was awarded to NTPC, the corporation that deals with thermal power. We know what happened in Gujarat when the contract of bridge repair was given to a watch-making company. Uttarakhand has been experiencing Morbi type disasters at regular intervals. In 2009 a tunnel boring machine got stuck in the tunnel and till date water continues to flow out of that tunnel. In February 2021 flash floods washed away the 13 MW Rishiganga Hydroelectric Project and sounded the death knell for the historic village Reni, the birthplace of the 1974 chipko movement that blazed a new trail by bringing the survival of environment and ecology at the centre of democracy and development.

It is a colossal irony of history that the state that played such a pioneering role in giving a powerful mass dimension to the environment movement has been taken over by forces that are drunk on power and greed. Using power to plunder nature for profit and suppress the voice of the people for sanity and justice has become the mantra of governance. When after the February 2021 disaster a group of petitioners comprising residents of Reni village and Comrade Atul Sati, leader of the Save Joshiath Struggle Committee and member of the Uttarakhand State Committee of CPI(ML) went to the High Court seeking an immediate halt to the Tapovan-Vishnugad and Rishiganga power projects and the Helang-Marwari bypass and

rehabilitation of all disaster-affected people, the High Court dismissed the petition and levied fine on the petitioners calling them puppets of vested interests!

It should be noted that the High Court that showed such utter insensitivity to the plight of the disaster-affected people ordered immediate eviction of 4,000 families at Banbhoolpura of Haldwani by declaring them

encroachers on railway land. Had the Supreme Court not stayed this cruel eviction order we would have by now seen the bulldozer brigade uproot some 50,000 people in the midst of a freezing winter. Banbhoolpura is predominantly Muslim while Joshimath is a sacred place for Hindu pilgrims, but the imminent disaster that threatens both these places is not ordained by any religion. It is the quintessential product

of the corrupt rule of corporate greed, unbridled power and callous governance. Saving Joshimath and Banbhoolpura is actually an act of rescuing development and democracy from the trajectory of disasters. Let Uttarakhand give a fitting rebuff to the forces of corporate greed and autocratic governance and energise the battle for sustainable development and responsive democracy. ■



## PROTEST ACROSS UTTARAKHAND AGAINST GOVT. APATHY TOWARDS JOSHIMATH TRAGEDY

On 19 January, statewide protest demonstrations were held across Uttarakhand on the call of CPIML in solidarity with the struggling people of Joshimath. Addressing the protest in Haldwani, CPIML State Secretary Raja Bahuguna said, 'Uttarakhand's historic Joshimath Nagar is undergoing an unprecedented crisis. First the state government ignored the crisis by and now it's trying to hide the truth by banning information like the recent ISRO data on land subsidence rate. The governments, both central and state are rather seem to be interested in sidelining the issue and are clearly not serious about the issue of rehabilitation of people of Joshimath. The crisis in Joshimath is the result of unplanned development pushed by the government. The government must be held responsible for the crisis. "

CPIML has sent a memorandum to the government with the following demands:

1. The Central Government should immediately start the process of relief and rehabilitation for the people of Joshimath.
2. The tunnelling process of the NTPC Tapovan-Vishnugad project is responsible for the crisis. This project should be immediately stopped. NTPC should be fined twice the cost of the project for jeopardizing the existence of Joshimath. This amount of about 20,000 crores should be distributed among the affected people of Joshimath.

3. The central government should set up a high-level high-powered committee for the time-bound construction of a new Joshimath town. The process should involve members of *Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti* and local public representatives. .

4. Till date, the people of Joshimath have not received compensation for the lands acquired by the Defence Ministry for the Army in 1962. Now even those lands are in trouble. The government must also settle pending compensations for those lands at the current market rate before any displacement.

5. The lands on which the people of Joshimath have been cultivating for years, those lands should be registered in these people's names so that in case of its erosion, people can get land or value in lieu of it.

6. Massive dams like Pancheshwar should not be built in the Himalayan region.

7. A new action plan should be prepared for pro-people development taking into account the sensitive nature of Central Himalaya.

8. The work of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction should be done under the National Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Policy 2007. ■

# MILESTONES IN OUR LONG MARCH THROUGH TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

A Brief History of  
First to Tenth  
Congresses of CPI(ML)

*As the CPI(ML) returns to Patna for the 11th Congress of the party, it is time to take a quick look at the trajectory of the party's onward march through the previous ten Congresses. This is the second time a CPI(ML) Congress is being held in Patna (the previous one was the Seventh Congress held in December 2002). Of the ten previous Congresses undivided Bihar hosted four Congresses (the 2nd Congress in Gaya, the 3rd in Giridih, the 4th in Hazaribagh and the 7th in Patna). The other Congresses have been held in West Bengal (the 1st, 5th and 8th Congresses in Kolkata), Uttar Pradesh (the 6th Congress in Varanasi), Jharkhand (the 9th Congress in Ranchi) and Punjab (the 10th Congress in Mansa).*

## The First Congress, 1967



**T**he First Congress was held three years after the “Spring Thunder” in Naxalbari (May 1967) and one year after the formation of the CPI (ML) on 22 April 1969. It was held clandestinely in Kolkata in the guise of a marriage ceremony so as to protect the Congress and participants and organisers from the surveillance and attacks of the state machinery. A Communique issued by the Central Committee on May 24, 1970, declared:

“The Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) — the First Congress after Naxalbari, after the Party was rebuilt on Mao Tsetung Thought — was held about the middle of May 1970. The Party Congress was successfully held in underground conditions, conditions of utmost secrecy, and was attended by comrade delegates from various States of India, who had been elected by their respective State Conferences.

The Congress unanimously adopted the Party Programme,

the Party Constitution and the Political-Organizational Report and elected the Central Committee.” Comrade Charu Majumdar’s (CM) speech introducing the Political-Organizational Report at the Party Congress was adopted by the Congress as a Party document, in fact as part of the Political-Organisational Report.

The Congress also sent a Message of Greetings to Chairman Mao and passed a resolution paying homage to the great martyrs who had fallen fighting for the cause of the Indian revolution.

The Central Committee comprised comrades Charu Majumdar (elected General Secretary), Sushital Roychoudhury, Shiv Kumar Mishra, Kanu Sanyal, Saroj Dutta, Souren Bose, Satyanarayan Singh, R P Sharaf, L Appu, Vempatapu Satyanarayana, Adibhatla Kailasham, Mahendra Singh, Rajkishore Singh, Gurbax Singh, Appalasuri, Nagabhushan Pattanaik, Kodandaraman, Ashim Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar Ghosh, Ambaji Menon and Jagjit Singh Sohal. The first-named nine comrades were elected to the Political Bureau.

## The second Congress, 1976

The Second Congress was held on 26-27 February, 1976, in the countryside of Gaya (Bihar) in the backdrop of martyrdom of Comrade Subrata Dutta (Jauhar), in Bhojpur on 25 November 1975. Comrade Jawhar had been the GS since the reorganization of the Central Committee on 28 July 1974 -- exactly two years after the custodial assassination of CM, which had led to virtual collapse of the Party Organisation. With the departure of Jauhar, Comrade Vinod Mishra (VM) had been elected GS. Given the repressive environment of the Emergency, this Congress was also held in conditions of utmost secrecy. The Second Congress elected the CC and ratified the



appointment of Comrade Vinod Mishra as GS. It resolved to continue with revolutionary peasant struggle as the key link and work for an anti-Congress united front, as CM had directed in his last write-up.

### Special all-India Party Conference, 1979

This conference, which in political terms was no less important than a regular Congress, was held in Bhojpur between April 26 and May 2, 1979. The main purpose was to discuss and finalize a draft document prepared by the CC summing up the inner-party “Rectification Campaign” launched at the beginning of 1978 to emancipate our minds from old dogmas, grasp the dialectical-materialist viewpoint, and prepare the entire Party for the new tasks of the post-Indira period. Following intensive discussions among delegates, the revised document “The Present Situation and Our Party Line” was adopted unanimously. The conference marked the beginning of major changes in our policies and tactics commensurate with the new situation of late 1970s and early 1980s. It gave a great fillip to mass initiatives on diverse fronts and mass organisations began to take shape on various levels. And with the formation of the Indian People’s Front in April 1982, this mass dimension graduated within three years from local activism and state level initiative to all-India coordination and intervention.

### The Third Congress, 1982

The Congress was held in underground conditions in Giridih district from 26 to 30 December, 1982. The Congress discussed, debated and finally adopted the Political-Organisational Report, the Party Programme, Agrarian Programme (a first in our Party, it contained a deep study of the agrarian situation including an updated rural class analysis, a review of our rich experience of peasant struggles and a reformulation of our policies and tasks) and Party Constitution unanimously.

The Congress made a critical evaluation of the past, upholding the bold revolutionary imagination and struggles during the formative phase of CPI(ML), saluting the saga of great determination and glorious sacrifices

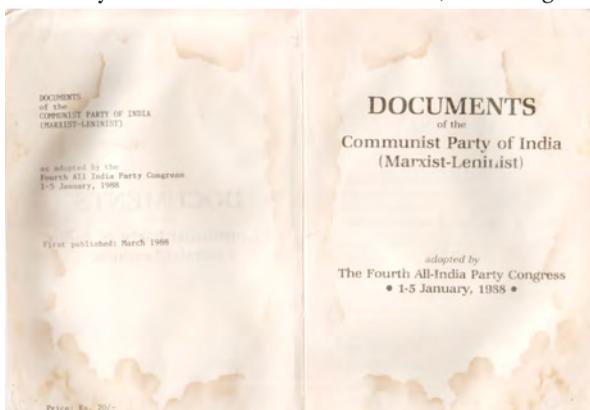
in the face of severe repression unleashed by the state and drawing lessons from the mistakes, excesses and generalizations committed during the first wave of revolutionary advance and assertion.

The Congress gave its green signal to the tactics of participation in elections, reserving the tactics of boycott as an option for very special conditions of revolutionary upsurge. At the same time, it reaffirmed the party’s resolve to grasp anti-feudal resistance struggle as the key link in all our multifarious initiatives, and to keep parliamentary struggles subordinated to the extra-parliamentary mass movements. A call to recruit tens of thousands of members and expand the Party Organisation was issued.

A new Central Committee with 17 members and 7 candidate members was elected by secret ballot. On December 31, the first plenary session of the Third Central Committee elected a Polit Bureau, re-elected Comrade Vinod Mishra as General Secretary and appointed comrades Swadesh Bhattacharya and P.V. Srinivas (Ganeshan) as secretaries to the Central Committee.

### The Fourth Congress, 1988

The Fourth Party Congress, held in a Hazaribagh village from January 1 to 5, 1988, and attended by delegates from 14 States and Union Territories, marked a turning point in the ideological-political consolidation and expansion of the Party. While rectifying old errors of judgement in the Party’s assessment of Soviet Union, the Congress



also joined issue with Gorbachev's illusory and euphoric discourse on 'peaceful' imperialism. The Party reiterated the basic principles of revolutionary communism -- defence of Marxism, absolute political independence of the Communist Party and primacy of revolutionary peasant struggles in democratic revolution -- in the face of a global offensive of bourgeois ideological trends.

The Congress also decided to advance to the broader arena of interaction with Left parties beyond the ML camp. In this context, the Political-Organisational Report observed that at present, in our relations with the CPI(M)-led alternative, struggle is the primary aspect and unity (in the Rajiv Hatao movement for example) the secondary aspect, but the situation may change:

"...in face of direct attacks by the Centre to overthrow Left Front governments and an upswing in the revolutionary struggles of the people and consequent strengthening of our forces, the situation may undergo a drastic change. Struggle may become the secondary aspect and unity primary, and conditions may mature for developing a broad left and democratic confederation on an entirely new basis." This flexible and dynamic tactical approach opened up new vistas for developing a broad, principled Left unity based on mass movements.

The Congress elected a 21-member Central Committee, which in its First Plenary Session on 5-6 January re-elected Comrade Vinod Mishra the General Secretary. It also elected a 7-member Political Bureau, a Standing Committee of the CC and also a Central Control Commission (CCC). The CCC in its first meeting elected comrade SB its chairperson.

### Special All-India Party Conference, 1990

Midway between the Fourth and Fifth congresses, a Special All-India Party Conference was held between 22 and 24 July, 1990 at New Delhi in a semi-legal manner. It discussed and adopted three documents on burning issues that demanded our urgent attention: (a) The



Present Crisis of Socialism (b) The Changed National Situation and (c) Challenges Facing Our Party and Party Restructuring in the Present Phase.

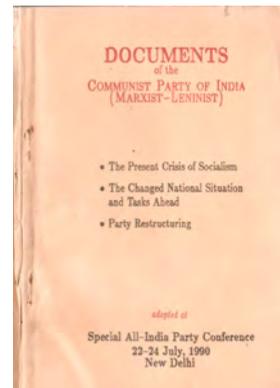
This was once again a transitional phase in the communist movement and in our own Party history. The Party made a very inspiring and eventful entry in the electoral arena, launching

a militant mass campaign to stop booth capturing and exercising the right to vote that the landless rural poor in Bihar had long been denied. This led to a lot of feudal violence including a bloody polling day massacre in Bhojpur district after the polling was over, but it could not stop the landless poor from casting their vote and sending their first representative to Parliament under the banner of IPF. A few months later, the IPF asserted again securing seven seats in Bihar Assembly elections and finishing second in more than a dozen contests. Later in October 1990 the IPF organised a historic mass rally in Delhi around the demand for jobs and check on price-rise.

### The Fifth Congress, 1992

Even as the party was opening up in measured steps, a new urgency to speed up the process was felt with the demolition of Babri Masjid and the onset of anti-Muslim riots. So the CC took a snap decision to hold it openly in Kolkata so as to confront the saffron flag of communalism with the red flag of communism and build up a broad left unity to this end. As comrade VM said in his maiden public speech following delegate sessions (20 and 26 December 1992) at a massive rally in Kolkata's iconic Brigade Parade Ground on 28 December,

"The Left must march forward and come up with its own vision, the vision of a Left alternative which alone can pull the country out of the current mess. By unity we do not



mean understanding among leaders or some formula for distribution of seats and ministries. We have nothing to do with such narrow, superficial unity. We are for unity on the basis of mass movements....”

Among other documents, the Congress adopted an ideological resolution which reiterated the Party’s commitment to the socialist project and communist vision while declaring its readiness to draw lessons from the collapse and disintegration of the USSR and weaknesses and distortions of the Soviet experience. The Congress elected a 17-member CC, which reelected comrade VM as GS and formed a seven-member Polit Bureau. The CC also elected a 3-member Central Control Commission, which elected Comrade Shankar Mitra as chairperson.

### All-India Organisational Conference, 1995



In July 1995, the Party held an organisational conference at Diphu in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. Among other things, the conference discussed problems and tasks like improving democratic centralism at all levels, removing various imbalances (e.g., the low percentage of women comrades in party membership and structures), strengthening the party structure at the grass-roots, with special emphasis on organising party branches and ensuring their regular functioning, vigorously expanding and consolidating the party, instituting a regular system of party education, and so on.

### The Sixth Congress, 1997

The Sixth Congress, held in Varanasi from 20 to 25 October 1997, marked the emergence of CPI(ML) as a formidable party of independent Left assertion in contrast to the opportunist official Left. The central task the Party set itself was very concisely articulated by comrade VM in his inaugural address:

“BJP’s ascendance to power twice in UP has clearly



demonstrated that if somehow this party manages to wrest the central power, it will pose the biggest threat to whatever is left of India’s secular polity, to democratic institutions, to progressive movements, to intellectual, aesthetic and academic freedom, to struggles of the rural poor, to social equality of Dalits and women as well as religious and national minorities and to friendly relations with neighbouring countries. We have before us the all-important agenda of forging a militant solidarity of all democratic secular forces to thwart the communal fascist takeover of India.”

In addition to the usual draft documents, three policy resolutions -- on tactics, on nationality question and on agrarian policy -- were discussed and adopted in this Congress which was attended by nearly 700 comrades from 17 states.

### The Seventh Congress, 2002

Over 700 delegates from all parts of the country participated in this Congress held in Patna between 25 and 30, November 2002. Following an animated discussion and adoption of the Political and Organizational Report as well as amended versions of the General Programme and the Party Constitution, a 41-Member Central Committee and a 5-Member Central Control Commission were elected. The new central committee elected a nine-



member Politbureau and re-elected Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya, who had been unanimously elected General Secretary following the sad and sudden demise of comrade Vinod Mishra in December 1998, as the GS.

On November 30, tens of thousands of people assembled at Patna's historic Gandhi Maidan to attend the concluding ceremony of the Party Congress. Party leaders apart, this session was also addressed by fraternal delegates from neighbouring countries including Comrade Madhav Nepal (from Nepal), and leaders from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Australia and Norway. The presence of guests from all over South Asia conveyed a refreshing message of growing cross-border solidarity among progressive forces in sharp contrast to the ruling classes' politics of jingoism and communal divide.

### The Eighth Congress, 2007

The Eighth Congress was held in Kolkata between 10 and 18 December, 2007. Attended by more than 1200 delegates and observers as well as guests from fraternal organisations in India and abroad, the Eighth Congress was clearly the biggest Congress so far in the history of the Party.

On the morning of 10 December, Party leaders as well



as leaders and activists from Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, Britain and Australia garlanded the statues of Mangal Pandey at Barrackpore and Bhagat Singh in Kolkata. Delegates and guests then assembled in a mass convention that denounced imperialism as a "War on Freedom, Democracy and Development" and resolved to resist imperialism in every sphere of life.

In addition to the Political-Organisational Report, the Congress adopted several other documents: (a) Basic Documents (updated General Programme and Party Constitution); (b) Resolution on International Situation (c) Resolution on National Situation and Our Tasks; (d) updated Agrarian Programme; (e) Resolution on Agrarian Crisis and the Way Out.

Delegates to the Congress unanimously elected a five-member Central Control Commission with comrades Rajaram as chairperson and a 47-member Central Committee, which in turn elected an 11-member Politbureau and comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya as the General Secretary.

### The Ninth Congress, 2013

This Congress held in Ranchi from 2 to 6 April, 2013, was attended by 1024 delegates and 163 observers. Comrades discussed and adopted a wide range of policy resolutions, namely, (a) working class movement, (b) agrarian and other rural struggles, (c) women's movement, (d) student-youth movement, (e) intervention in panchayats. (f) work in urban areas, (g) environmental protection and people-centric development and (h) people's progressive culture and alternative media.

The Congress elected a 59-member Central Committee, which in turn elected a 17-member Polit Bureau and re-elected Dipankar Bhattacharya as General Secretary. A 7-member Central Control Commission was also elected with Ramjatan Sharma as its Chairperson.

The Congress concluded on April 7, 2013 with an



impressive ‘People’s Alternative Rally’ at the Vidhan Sabha Maidan at Ranchi. The rally called for a people’s political alternative to the NDA-UPA models of pro-corporate and anti-democratic governance.

## The Tenth Congress, 2018

Held at Mansa, Punjab, between 23 and 28 March 2018, the 10th Congress deliberated upon and passed resolutions on (a) The International Situation (b) The National Political Situation; (c) The Party Organisation (d) Culture and Media and (e) Climate Change. The main focus of the resolution on national political situation was on the challenges of resisting the rise of fascism in India. It included a section on the key features of Indian fascism, and reflected on the various aspects of anti-fascist resistance. As Comrade DB said in his inaugural address to the delegate session,

“We now know for sure that the BJP is not just looking at another term in power by winning the next parliamentary elections, it is bent upon reshaping India in accordance with the Hindu supremacist blueprint of the RSS even as the latter marches towards its centenary in 2025. Behind the daily dose of hate and lies and state repression and privatised violence lie the undeniable trappings of Indian fascism that seeks to invoke and champion the most horrific features and regressive trends from our past, enforce the most bigoted ideas and prejudices on our minds and empower and unleash the most reactionary casteist, communal and patriarchal forces in our society. The enemies of liberty, equality and fraternity want to overturn the constitution of India and reshape the country to fit their Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan framework. The collaborators of British colonialism who betrayed India’s struggle for freedom now want to hijack and rewrite history by inflicting Savarkar over Bhagat Singh, Golwalkar over Ambedkar and Godse over Gandhi. This design must



be defeated. This disaster must be prevented. And it is to this most pressing challenge and urgent task of the hour that we are dedicating this Tenth Congress of the CPI(ML).”

The Congress concluded on 28 March 2018 with the election of a 77-member Central Committee, which in turn elected a 17-member PB and re-elected Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya as General Secretary. Also elected was a 7-member Central Control Commission with Comrade Brij Behari Pandey as its Chairperson. The CCC included a Gender Sensitisation and Justice Cell with comrade Lakshmi Krishnan as its Chairperson.

As a mark of respect to the fighters and martyrs of the historic Naxalbari peasant uprising in its fiftieth anniversary year, the Congress felicitated Naxalbari veterans like Comrades Khemu Singh, Nemu Singh, Bibhas Biswakarmakar (son of Babulal Biswakarmakar, legendary leader and martyr of Naxalbari), Kandra Murmu and Cyril Ekka (son of Budhua Oraon, respectfully addressed as Pitaji). Comrade Khemu Singh addressed the house on behalf of the Naxalbari veterans. ■

# RESOLUTION ON NATIONAL SITUATION

Draft Resolution for the  
11th Congress of CPI(ML)



**1.** We are currently passing through a period of intensified assault on the constitutional foundation of parliamentary democracy and on the livelihood and rights of the Indian people, accompanied by unmitigated corporate plunder of India's natural resources. The twin trajectories unleashed three decades ago in the form of neoliberal economic policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation and aggressive Hindutva - or Hindu supremacist redefining of Indian nationalism - converged to bring Narendra Modi to power at the Centre in 2014 and the government has since been systematically using state power to advance this two-pronged agenda. The campaign acquired considerable speed since Modi's return in 2019 and now ahead of the 2024 election and the RSS centenary in 2025 we can see an alarming escalation.

**2.** The assault on the Constitution is total – whether through dubious amendments violating the basic spirit and structure of the constitution or executive orders bypassing any parliamentary or judicial scrutiny. All key descriptors of the Indian Republic mentioned in the Preamble – socialist, secular and democratic – are being systematically undermined. The Citizenship Amendment Act linked up religion with citizenship by making a distinction among immigrants from neighbouring countries on the basis of religion. The EWS amendment has excluded SC/ST/OBCs from the so-called reservation for economically weaker sections of society. The deactivation of Article 370 and abolition of statehood for Jammu and Kashmir have stripped the

people of Jammu and Kashmir of much of their unique constitutional rights and have also set an ominous precedent for reducing states to centrally administered entities. The granting of special powers to the BSF over an area of 50 kilometres from the Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Pak border into the hinterland of the respective states marks another major intrusion into federal rights.

**3.** Separation of powers among the executive, legislature and judiciary and between the Centre and the states is central to the constitutional foundation of our republic. Under the Modi regime, the executive is continuously encroaching on the powers of the legislature and the judiciary. The government is routinely issuing ordinances and passing bills without parliamentary discussion and scrutiny. The brazenness with which legislators are being purchased, governments toppled and the offices of governors are being used to undermine and destabilise state governments ruled by non-BJP parties is another alarming sign of the subversion of the Constitution. Central agencies are routinely employed to erode the federal space and processes of admission, recruitment and deployment in the spheres of higher education and central services are being increasingly centralised putting states to disadvantage. The revenue centralisation through GST has also affected states adversely. The government has also made it abundantly clear that after packing the Election Commission of India with handpicked bureaucrats, and restructuring the Army through the Agnipath scheme, it now wants

to control judicial appointments. The law minister has even openly criticised the Supreme Court on the floor of Parliament for taking up bail petitions and PILs.

4. The unbridled centralisation of power has virtually replaced the parliamentary system of democracy with US style presidential form where the Prime Minister's Office has emerged as the main centre of power. The triumvirate comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval seems to constitute the strategic centre for most decisions of the Modi government. From demonetisation and GST to lockdown and farm laws, there have been several instances where the PM has taken and announced decisions without any institutional consultation. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, it was Amit Shah who surprised the Parliament with his sudden announcement of the unprecedented decision of stripping the state of all its constitutional powers and even its statehood to bifurcate it into two centrally administered Union Territories. In the case of Agnipath, the former Chief of Defence Staff was known to be opposed to the idea of replacing soldiers with job and social security with temporary soldiers working on short-term contracts without any job or social security, but after his death in an accident, the government took advantage of the lockdown to suddenly announce the Agnipath scheme. To use Modi's own words, these measures were all part of the government's strategy of turning crisis into opportunities.

5. The BJP's contempt for the constitution is often camouflaged as celebration of the constitution. Since 2015, the Modi government began celebrating the anniversary of adoption of the Constitution as Constitution Day, and it takes this opportunity to propagate its constitutional perspective that is totally antithetical to the values and visions of our Constitution. After celebrating the 75th anniversary of India's independence as Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, the government has designated the next twenty-five years till 2047 as Amrit Kaal and Narendra Modi has defined it as Kartavya Kaal, when duties of citizens should prevail over their constitutional rights. The 2022 Constitution Day was observed with the theme describing India as the Mother of Democracy, and the concept note circulated on the occasion described Indian democracy as an age-old Hindu civilizational entity, completely whitewashing the reality of India's caste system that has been identified as social slavery by every major social reformer and the toxic impact of religious conservatism and sectarianism that has obstructed the advancement of Indian society, while brazenly portraying the multicultural and multireligious Indian mosaic in Hindu supremacist terms.



6. In the 1990s when the BJP had first formed a national-level coalition, it had agreed to shelve the three most contentious items on its agenda – Ram Mandir, Article 370 and Uniform Civil Code. The BJP today is not only busy executing this agenda but also expanding it systematically. Even after terming the demolition of Babri Masjid an egregious constitutional violation, the Supreme Court chose to hand over the disputed land to the demolishers and the temple is now awaiting inauguration before the 2024 elections. The BJP also wants to scrap the 1991 legislation mandating 15 August 1947 as the cut-off date for determining the character of any place of religious worship (Ayodhya was declared an exception to this Act) so it can legitimise the Sangh brigade's agenda of transforming several mosques or Islamic monuments into temples. BJP-ruled state governments are enacting a series of measures targeting the Muslim community while the goon squads of the Sangh brigade persecute them on the ground in the name of enforcement of those measures. We have seen examples galore such as bans on Muslim students and teachers wearing hijabs in educational institutions, bans on religious conversion and interfaith marriages, on cattle trade, meat sale and beef eating, or on offering prayer in public and the targeted violence by both the state and its Sanghi stormtroopers including mob lynchings, bulldozing of homes, mass arrests and incarcerations, and encounter killings, to which these legal measures and bans lend legitimacy. Such violence has however not been confined to members of the Muslim community, attacks on other minority communities and Dalits, Adivasis and women has also grown considerably.

7. The assault on minorities and marginalised groups is accompanied by a systematic persecution of dissent and targeted attack on people's movements and a growing attempt to delegitimise the opposition in the parliamentary arena. The regime is using the colonial era pattern of framing citizens in conspiracy cases and

subjecting them to prolonged incarceration without trial and bail. The Bhima-Koregaon and Delhi Riots cases reveal the template of repression - planting false electronic 'evidence' through dubious means, levelling false charges of sedition and terrorism and invoking draconian laws like the UAPA, NSA and sedition law. We have seen Father Stan Swamy - who was targeted in this way because of his own work on behalf of the thousands of Adivasi youth incarcerated on false charges - become a martyr for the cause of justice and democracy. The suppression of dissent within India extends to the Indian diaspora and diaspora members critical of the Modi government and defending the cause of democracy in India are being stripped of their OCI (overseas citizen of India) status. Powerful protest movements like the Shaheen Bagh mass protests against the discriminatory and divisive amendments to the Citizenship Act or the united farmers' protest against corporate takeover of agriculture were sought to be portrayed as anti-national conspiracies and derailed by inciting mass violence against the movement. PM Modi himself led this demonisation campaign with terms like Andolanjeevi, urban naxal and 'kalamdhari naxal'.

**8.** With little institutional check and abundant money power, the BJP now practises the art of buying non-BJP MLAs on an industrial scale, thereby rendering non-BJP governments easy targets for toppling. Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were three glaring examples where the BJP bought its way to power by toppling governments. Governors' offices and central agencies like the CBI, ED, NIA are being used in brazenly partisan manners to pressurise and destabilise non-BJP governments. Beginning with the 2014 campaign for 'Congress-mukt Bharat' the BJP has now moved on to the theme of opposition-free democracy, openly advocating a single-party state where the BJP would rule and dominate over the entire country for the next fifty years.

**9.** While subjecting citizens to intense surveillance and a reign of all-pervasive fear and control, the Modi regime has been systematically handing over the economy and control over almost all public assets and services to a few chosen corporate houses. Privatisation has now taken the form of outright sale or a near-permanent lease of public assets which is being described as monetisation of idle assets. Like demonetisation, this monetisation pipeline too is a disastrous idea, which converts public assets built with public money and labour into private property. While the apologists of privatisation talk about increased efficiency and growth, reality flies in the face of such wishful talk and misleading propaganda. We can now easily see that increasing privatisation has only accentuated mass unemployment, poverty and mounting

inequality. Privatisation is increasingly pricing higher education and quality healthcare out of the reach of the poor and even the middle classes, thereby stopping any kind of upward social mobility and reinforcing the privilege and power of a predominantly Brahminical social elite.

**10.** The crony capitalism promoted by the Modi regime is drastically deepening the hiatus between the rich and the poor. During the Modi era, the number of dollar billionaires in India has jumped threefold, from 55 in 2013 to 166 in 2022. The pandemic added as many as 64 billionaires to this list in the two years from 2020 to 2022. Instead of using the tax system to bring about economic redistribution and equity, the government effectively uses it as a tool to rob the poor and reward the rich. There is no wealth or inheritance tax in India, corporate tax rate is steadily declining even as the scale of exemption and evasion keeps climbing and GST continues to affect the poor and the middle classes disproportionately. Estimates suggest that nearly two-thirds of total GST collection comes from the bottom half of Indian people, one-third from the next 40 percent and only about three to four percent from the top ten percent of Indian society.

**11.** If demonetisation had introduced us to the arbitrary, callous and disruptive nature of the Modi regime on a countrywide scale, the Covid19 pandemic gave us a prolonged taste of the same at an unimaginable human cost. In the early days of the pandemic, the government promoted all kinds of obscurantist and irrational ideas about facing the virus. The sudden announcement of lockdown without any planning and preparation landed the country in a massive humanitarian crisis. Migrant workers and their families had to bear the brunt, having to walk hundreds of kilometres and withstand harsh and humiliating conditions on the road and in so-called quarantine centres. Millions of households had to struggle to access food and other items of essential consumption. Lockdown, which is evidently a coercive and disruptive measure, was adopted by many countries as a temporary arrangement so the spread of the virus could be slowed down and time could be secured to step up the healthcare system. But in India lockdown was imposed as an end in itself, to secure regimentation and submission of the people at large, while the health system remained shockingly unprepared and under-equipped to cope with the enormity of the crisis. Instead of dealing with the massive scale of deaths and devastation caused by lack of adequate and timely supply of oxygen during the second wave of Covid, an unprecedented propaganda offensive was unleashed to hide and suppress the reality and project the failed regime as the saviour of the people.

**12.** The combination of indiscriminate privatization

and absolutely callous, arbitrary and irresponsible governance is pushing the country relentlessly along a downward socio-economic spiral which is reflected in the declining position of India in almost all global comparative indices. While the regime daily keeps blaming the past, the so-called seventy years of non-performance, for the current state of backwardness and deprivation that affects the overwhelming majority of Indian people, it remains mum about its own abject failure in meeting any of the targets it had promised after coming to power. The promise of universal housing with assured electricity, sanitation and drinking water that was to have been achieved by 2022, the 75th anniversary of India's independence, remains as remote as ever. The regime has now shifted the goalpost to 2047 while treating Indians to the fictional rise of India's stature in global perception, a propaganda campaign that is set to reach a crescendo around the G20 summit scheduled to be held later this year in New Delhi. Ironically even as the government claims to be ushering in a New India commanding the stature of Viswa Guru in global standing, there is a growing exodus of rich and privileged Indians to the US and other advanced capitalist countries in the western world, as well as increasing numbers of working class and middle class Indians braving oppressive and precarious working conditions and discriminatory immigration laws to seek livelihoods as migrant workers in the West and the Middle East. Over one lakh Indians gave up Indian citizenship in the first ten months of 2022 alone. The number of Indians who thus renounced Indian citizenship since Modi's ascent to power at the Centre has crossed more than 1.25 million.

**13.** Education and employment, the only means of upward social mobility in a society marked by extreme social inequality, are once again becoming the preserve of the rich. The elitist thrust of governance is becoming increasingly brazen with every passing day. The prime minister who mocks the needs and rights of the poor and the common people as 'freebie culture' flags off Vande Bharat trains and Ganga Vilas super-luxury cruise as the epitome of 'development'. This brazen pro-rich thrust of policies and governance coupled with utter neglect of the needs and aspirations of the poor and ordinary people and the growing uncertainty, deprivation and humiliation in their lives is creating tremendous frustration and vacuum in society. The Sangh brigade is stepping in with its clinical campaign of hate, lies and violence to exploit this frustration. The growing penetration of the Sangh brigade among the youth and women, especially within oppressed and deprived sections of society, is a cause of alarm, and must be countered in all possible ways.

**14.** The severity of the crisis, the brazenness of the

ongoing assault on the constitution and alarming erosion of the secular principles, federal framework and the right to dissent are also giving rise to powerful protests and people's movements. The massive protests against the CAA, especially the unprecedented participation of Muslim women and the historic farmers' movement at the Delhi borders have been two high points that have energised and inspired the battle for democracy across India. The government has sought to suppress these movements by unleashing brutal repression on the lines of the colonial rulers and using dubious spyware technology from Israel, but the courage and determination with which the persecuted activists have been facing this repression has bolstered the morale and strengthened the determination to intensify the resistance against this fascist onslaught.

**15.** The impact of the growing discontent of the people and mounting pressure of people's movements is beginning to be felt in the political and electoral arena. There are signs of dissension within the ruling NDA with three of the BJP's oldest allies - Akali Dal, Shiv Sena and JDU - having left the coalition. The Akali Dal left in the backdrop of the farmers' movement, the Shiv Sena had joined hands with the Congress and the NCP to form a non-BJP coalition and run the government for a period of two-and-a-half years before the BJP succeeded in engineering a split in the Sena and wrest power in the state, while Nitish Kumar once again left NDA in August 2022 and joined the RJD, Congress and the Left to oust the BJP from power. In a way, it was a reversal of what had happened in Bihar five years ago when Nitish Kumar had severed ties with his shortlived alliance with the RJD and the Congress to return to the NDA.

**16.** Among recent Assembly elections, we saw powerful anti-BJP verdicts in Jharkhand in 2019, West Bengal in 2021 and most recently in Himachal Pradesh in December 2022. In Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Punjab, where the BJP never had much electoral presence, the party fared quite poorly. But in West Bengal, the party gained tremendously to emerge as the main opposition party. In fact, with the CPI(M) and Congress failing to win any seat, within the precincts of the Assembly the BJP remains the only opposition apart from the lone Left-backed ISF MLA. In Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party swept the polls, fully capitalising on the mood and potential for change created by the farmers' movement. The AAP's performance in Punjab followed by its impressive showing in Gujarat where it secured a good vote share and a few seats has now fetched it recognition as a national party. Despite the BJP's all-out manipulations, the party also lost its power in the municipal corporation of Delhi.

**17.** In spite of getting defeated in several states, the BJP

today has reached a high level of overall domination on the all-India plane. The Congress, the main opposition party on the national level has been reduced to an all-time low in terms of both vote share and seats. Even though some regional parties have distanced themselves from the BJP, only a few of them play a directly oppositional role. Parties like the BJD in Odisha or YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh are typical examples of regional parties that prefer to stay aligned with the BJP on all key issues. Having grown primarily at the cost of the Congress, the AAP now objectively finds itself in a position where it has to contend with the BJP, but it is trying to emerge as a soft-Hindutva rival challenging the BJP on the latter's own terms. And governments run by parties like TMC in West Bengal and the TRS-turned-BRS in Telangana which are otherwise vocal against the Modi regime are mired in corruption and misrule. Most identity-based parties do not take any ideological position and keep silent even on urgent policy issues and steps that adversely affect the livelihood of the common people, and find themselves utterly vulnerable to the BJP's aggressive politics of communal polarisation and identity appropriation. The steady erosion of the BSP in Uttar Pradesh is a glaring example of this vulnerability of ideology-free identity politics in the face of fascist aggression.

**18.** We should understand that the BJP benefits from the rightward policy shift and Hindutva common sense that have developed over the last three decades. Because of this wider consensus and political continuum around neoliberal policies and Hindu supremacist politics, the lines of demarcation often get blurred and the opposition remains muted. If the BJP combines unbridled corporate plunder with aggressive Hindutva and inflicts this convergence on the country with the combination of brutal state repression and brazen extra-judicial violence, the opposition to this fascist offensive has to be driven by a consistent and courageous commitment to the vision of socialist, secular, federal democratic India. This calls upon the communist movement to discharge its historic responsibility at this critical juncture of modern India.

**19.** Unfortunately, the electoral strength of the Left camp has also suffered a huge erosion at a time when the BJP has reached its peak. The erosion in the electoral strength does not however signify any ideological-political irrelevance or obsolescence of the Left. The dramatic decline in the numbers of Left MPs and MLAs has been triggered almost exclusively by the CPI(M)-led Left's exit from power in West Bengal and Tripura and has its own specific contexts. In West Bengal the CPI(M) had first got hugely alienated from its own electoral base in the face of accumulated anti-incumbency of thirty-four years of rule compounded by major policy mistakes, especially



adoption of pro-corporate economic policies and forcible acquisition of agricultural land, and arrogance of power, and then found itself trapped in a situation where the political scene got increasingly polarised between the ruling TMC and an aggressive and ascendant BJP. The failure to acknowledge and address the changed situation and especially the suicidal indifference to the rise of the BJP in West Bengal even after surprisingly losing power to the BJP in Tripura only made matters worse. But during the same period the CPI(M)-led Left has done well in the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu while the emphatic electoral assertion of the CPI(ML) in Bihar has opened up new possibilities of Left resurgence in keeping with the demands of the situation.

**20.** The CPI(ML) and the Left movement must get their priorities right at this unprecedentedly critical juncture of modern India. Bold, consistent and persuasive ideological resistance to the regressive and disastrous fascist agenda; powerful and prompt mass initiatives to build sustained, determined struggles of the people; and broadest possible ideological-political cooperation and electoral understanding while focusing on the political assertion and advancement of the CPI(ML) and the Left - we must be steadfast in advancing along this direction. Even as the BJP's fascist expedition threatens to bulldoze India's three-tier political structure into a flattened political turf where the BJP wields total power, we will have to remain alive to the demands of every situation and every level. In the domain of panchayat and municipal governance, almost everywhere people have to face rampant corruption and denial of benefits and rights while the fight for education and jobs for all and transparency in recruitment has emerged as the most pressing concern of the youth in almost all states. Regardless of whichever party is in power, instances of caste and gender oppression and injustice and administrative apathy are endemic across India. The anti-fascist focus demands that we must uphold the people's interest and lead the battle for their rights in every context, without losing sight of the centrality of the battle against the Sangh brigade's fascist offensive. ■

# RESOLUTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE CRISIS

Draft Resolution for the  
11th Congress of CPIML

1. We are currently living amidst a global environmental and climate crisis as experienced in the form of increasing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, global warming and several other consequences. On 28 July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the right to access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment", with a message that nobody can take nature, clean air and water, or a stable climate away from us – at least, not without a fight. On the ground, we are witnessing serious episodes of climate change, destruction of natural resources & biodiversity, heavy pollution, uncontrolled dumping of waste and climate hazards. People are denied their rights over basic resources whereas big corporates are making huge profit out of those. The world is now about 1.1°C warmer than the 19th Century and the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere has risen by 50%. 2021 was the sixth-warmest year on record with surface temperature 1.04°C warmer than the pre-industrial period (1850-1900). Given that global temperature is currently rising by 0.2°C (@0.1°C) per decade, human-induced warming reached 1°C above pre-industrial levels around 2017 and, if this pace of warming continues, would reach 1.5°C around 2040.

2. The impacts of climate change cannot be just reduced to mere increase in global temperature. It has now begun to affect every aspect of human lives by seriously disrupting our agriculture, fisheries, natural resources, food security, rivers, lives and livelihoods. Intermittent monsoons, no rains, heavy snowfalls or frequent natural disasters have become a common experience now. In some regions, as the water cycle is getting disrupted, extreme rainfall is causing historic flooding - as seen recently in China, Pakistan and many places. Catastrophic warming, devastating heatwaves, worsening droughts, deforestation, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and mass extinction of species are few among other manifestations. Extreme temperatures are increasing the risk of wildfires, as seen in Europe last summer. With further warming, some regions could become uninhabitable, as farmland turns into desert. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if global temperature rise cannot be kept within 1.5°C, the UK and Europe will be vulnerable to flooding caused by extreme rainfall, countries in the Middle East will experience extreme

heatwaves and widespread drought, Island nations in the Pacific region could disappear under rising seas, many African nations are likely to suffer droughts and food shortages, Australia is likely to suffer extremes of heat and increases in deaths from wildfires.

3. People living in developing countries especially the poor and marginalized sections, the indigenous communities are in the most vulnerable state under this crisis facing serious challenges of unpredictable monsoon, water scarcity, poor air quality and situation like pandemic. Rising sea levels, combined with high tides, storms and flooding put coastal and island regions increasingly at risk. Coastal areas will see continued sea level rise throughout the 21st century, contributing to more frequent and severe coastal flooding in low-lying areas, storm surge and coastal erosion. For example, the Sundarbans is under serious threats causing the local fisher people and all inhabitants of the islands extremely vulnerable. The sea level of the Bay of Bengal is rising by 3-8 mm per year causing land erosion and inundation of the islands. The frequency of cyclones and intrusion of saltwater into cultivable land and upstream rivers has greatly increased. As per the reports, the coastal cities of the world including Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Bhubaneswar are susceptible to inundation. Pacific Ocean island nations have already begun to sink. 17 crore people in India live in coastal villages or towns. Around 230 million people in the world live less than 1 meter below the high tide level. In worst conditions, it is the most deprived and poor sections who will be suffering the most. (Scientific evidence about Sea Level Rise: Global Mean Sea Level rose by 1.5 mm per year during the period 1901-1990, accelerating to 3.6 mm per year during the period 2005-2015. It is likely to rise 0.61-1.10 m by 2100 if global GHG emissions are not mitigated)

4. The urban poor and slum dwellers, fisherpeople, landless agrarian labour, adivasis dependent on land, rural women are experiencing direct impacts of extreme weather conditions, floods, water logging and bearing disproportionate share of the burden caused by the shifts in ecological balance. On one hand the inequitable distribution of resources and the denial of basic rights place them in a situation of extreme precarity, and it is this situation of precarity, which places them in a situation where they are disproportionately impacted.

Those who are least responsible for climate change are the most affected.

**5.** Climate change also has adverse impact on food security especially for a country like India. With an altering weather pattern, the entire crop cycle of farmers will get disrupted. In the absence of a proper safety network provided by the government, the worsening agrarian crisis in the country is going to impact the farming community as well as the country's food security massively. The Indian government has officially recognised the threat climate change poses to agricultural productivity. In order to tackle the problem, rather than changing the methods, policies and practices that have caused the issue in the first place, all efforts are being made by the government to hand over means of agricultural production to big corporations.

**6.** Right now, 3.3 -3.6 billion people globally live under extreme climatic vulnerability. As per UNHCR, an annual average of 21.5 million people have been forcibly displaced by weather-related events such as floods, storms, wildfires and extreme temperatures since 2008. These numbers are expected to surge in coming decades reaching up to billions of people who could be displaced globally due to climate change and natural disasters. According to Global Climate Risk Index 2021, India is included in the top 10 most climate change-affected countries. In December 2020, the 'Costs of Climate Inaction: Displacement and Distress Migration' report estimated that by 2050 over 4.5 crore Indians will be forced to migrate from their homes due to climate disasters and at present, 1.4 crore people in India are displaced due to environmental disruptions. Inequity, conflict and lack of access to basic services like healthcare not only heighten sensitivity to hazards, but also constrain communities' ability to adapt to climatic changes. As effects are seen at both local and global level, along with combating the disproportionate impacts of the climate emergency there is a need to develop a responsible model that doesn't contribute to the cause of climate change.

**7.** Tragically, we can see every day public denial of this capitalism induced climate change by right-wing and conservative forces. This has been amplified by head of nations like Donald Trump, Bolsonaro, Narendra Modi, Václav Klaus and others who deny and spread conspiratorial theories over social media. Pseudoscience, myths and maliciously manipulated information is used to propagate anti-science temperament. It is important to note that some of these leaders like former US President Donald Trump, former Brazilian President Bolsonaro and others have been defeated by the people and leaders who recognise

climate change as threat to earth. It is commendable how Brazilian people rejected pro deforestation and pro big industry leader Bolsonaro by electing Workers Party leader Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who openly stood by the indigenous population's right to forest and livelihood and condemned the brazen effort to destroy the Amazon forest for the corporate thirst of profits. In India, the BJP government at Centre and in States where it is governing has been blatantly following policies that are not only unscientific towards dealing with climate change, but also leading to further degradation of environment and climate.

**8.** We need to build coalitions and alliances to fight against climate deniers and ensure pro poor policies are enacted to halt climate change. It is important to realise the class angle in climate degradation and exploitation of earth's resources. It is beyond doubt that the industrial and developed countries have contributed disproportionately more than the rest of the world. It is also important to recognise that the marginalised and the poor in these developed countries are at the receiving end of the climate crisis more than the elite of the same nations. The need of the hour is to build environmental solidarities across borders with the real victims of climate change – with the poor, people of colour, marginalised and indigenous people who bear a vastly disproportionate brunt of the climate crisis.

**9.** Climate crisis is driven by inequality. Therefore, we must not forget the huge disparity in carbon emission among countries and differentiate between the 'survival' and 'luxury' emission. At 2.4 tCO<sub>2e</sub> (tonne carbon dioxide equivalent), India's per capita greenhouse gas emissions (including land use, land-use change, and forestry -- LULUCF) were far below the world average of 6.3 tCO<sub>2e</sub> as revealed in the "Emissions Gap Report 2022: The Closing Window", released ahead of the UN Climate Change conference (COP27) in Egypt. The US remains far above this level at 14 tCO<sub>2e</sub>, followed by 13 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in the Russian Federation, 9.7 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in China, about 7.5 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in Brazil and Indonesia, and 7.2 tCO<sub>2e</sub> in the European Union. Per capita emissions range widely across G20 members: emissions of India are about half of the G20 average, whereas Saudi Arabia reaches more than twice the G20, it said. India's contribution to historical cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (excluding LULUCF) is 3%, whereas the US and the EU have contributed 25% and 17% respectively to total fossil CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from 1850 to 2019. China contributed 13%, the Russian Federation 7%, and Indonesia and Brazil 1% each. Least developed countries contributed only 0.5% to historical CO<sub>2</sub> fossil fuel and industry emissions between 1850 and 2019.

**10.** While holding the first world primarily accountable to reduce carbon emission, we must also hold the Indian government accountable to formulate environmentally responsible domestic policies. On the one hand, in the Glasgow Conference 2021, India has pledged to cater 50% of country's energy requirements from renewable sources by 2030 and achieve the target of net zero emissions by 2070. While on the other, we can see completely opposite gestures in action. For instance, in December 2019, an estimated 40000 trees were felled after the Modi government granted permission to divert forest land for an opencast coal mining project in Talabira in the eastern state of Odisha, displacing hundreds of local people in the process. A new open cast coal mine is ready to be set up in Deocha Pachami, West Bengal which is reportedly going to be the largest coal mine in Asia and second largest in the world destroying the environment and completely evicting thousands of adivasi people from their land, livelihood and culture. An ordinance has been passed to amend the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act of 2015 to open up the coal sector for commercial mining to all local and global firms after easing restrictions. Under the new provisions, Narendra Modi recently launched the auction of 41 coal blocks, many of which are located in dense forests in Central India.

**11.** We need to actively promote the production of solar, wind and other alternative energy, demand availability of mass public transport, clean vehicular fuel, clean cooking fuel and clean electricity. Renewable energy can only be a meaningful solution if it is done in a decentralized way ensuring access to common people and not handed over to a few corporate players like Adani, Acme, Birla as their profit making ground. Introduction of electric vehicles (EV) is shown as a solution to fossil fuel driven vehicles in our country. While no greenhouse gas emissions directly come from EVs, but the electricity that they run on, in large part, still is produced from fossil fuels.

**12.** We also need to keep in mind that one cannot allow promotion of nuclear energy in the name of combating climate change. Pushing for nuclear energy is not just technologically dubious; it will inevitably have disastrous consequences caused by disposal of nuclear wastes along with horrific health impacts to industrial and mine workers due to prolonged exposure to radioactivity. In fact, even the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is mandated with the task of increasing nuclear energy production in the world, admits, "Nuclear power is not a near-term solution to the challenge of climate change...The need to immediately and dramatically reduce carbon emissions calls for approaches that can be implemented more quickly

than building nuclear reactors". In addition, nuclear power plants essentially privatize profits and socialize the horrific human costs and risks. Therefore, we have to continue opposing the push for nuclear power in Koodankulam, Jaitapur and elsewhere where new plants are being promoted.

**13.** We note, the Indian government has made a grave mistake by discarding the Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) (distributing the burden of emission reductions based on historical emissions) at the international negotiations by succumbing to the pressure of US and other developed countries in Durban in 2011. India rather than forging unity with poorer and other developing countries has managed to accept the proposal of allowing per capita emission as a parameter for deciding emission cuts thereby disproportionately shifting heavy burden on to developing and poorer countries alike. We need to reiterate that these negotiations have to be based on the twin foundations of equality and historical accountability. Efforts are being made to dilute CBDR principle through the Paris Agreement and mechanism of Voluntary Emission Reduction programme where countries independently decide commitment reductions, which are not legally enforceable unlike the previous setup under Kyoto Protocol. This shift from mandated reduction to voluntary cuts dilutes efforts to combat climate emissions. Also, the developed countries' effort to penalise and vilify developing countries for not participating in emission reduction programmes has been resisted by developing countries. However, it is important that developing countries bring the class nature of exploitation where the rich and the privileged continue to be immune to historical emissions, whereas the poor are being made to adapt and accept the burden of reduction of climate emissions.

**14.** India along with developing countries need to condemn the most bizarre episode being the equation of greenhouse gas emissions from paddy farming and cattle rearing with luxury emissions from industries and cars in the heavily industrialised nations of the world. Developing countries, along with India have long held survival emissions cannot be curtailed and they need to be differentiated with luxury emissions. Any effort to categorise both under one framework is dangerous and needs to be resisted. It is important that India along with developing countries reiterate that negotiations should be based on per capita greenhouse gas emissions, historical contributions and CBDR principle.

**15.** It is important that the Indian government does not use international negotiations to relieve itself of its responsibilities to address climate change here. India

needs to evolve a climate friendly and environmentally sustainable model of development that caters development, resources, energy requirements and ownership of change to the poor and marginalised unlike the corporate model that deals with exploitation of people and resources for profits.

**16.** In India, the BJP Government has left no stone unturned to manipulate and dismantle environmental and Forest laws in the name of ‘ease of doing business’ to fulfill its neoliberal agenda. Years of struggles had resulted into enactment of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 which recognizes the individual and community rights of the forest dwelling scheduled tribes (FDST) and other traditional forest dwellers (OTFD) to forest resources, on which they have been dependent for their lives and livelihoods for generations. The new Forest (Conservation) Rules (FCR) 2022 blatantly violates the FRA and nullify the requisite to take consent from the tribals and forest dwellers before any ‘final’ clearance for any project in forest area would be given. We have also witnessed dilution of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) act, changing Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification, multiple violations of FRA to avoid NOCs from Gram Sabhas for linear projects. The FCR 2022 have various compensatory afforestation schemes which are literally incapable of replacing centuries-old forests that would have been cut, uprooted and burnt in the name of ‘development’. The entire design is to take away still existing powerful safeguard from the tribals and forest dwellers and streamline handover of forest lands to Adanis, Ambanis, Jindals and Vedantas to make profit out of the vast mineral and other natural resources of forests. Destruction of forest and environment by disempowering communities who have been living in sustainable relation with the nature, only to promote profit seeking capitalism, shows the climate irresponsible policy regime of the Indian government. In the 2020 Environmental Performance Index, India ranks 168th out of 180 countries, behind all South Asian nations except Afghanistan, which scored 178th place.

**17.** 17. An analysis by the Legal Initiative for Forest and Environment shows that from January to June 2019, a key panel overseeing wildlife sanctuaries and parks approved 63 of 70 development proposals, resulting in reduced protection for 216 ha of land. Between 2016 and 2019, an estimated 7.6 million trees were cut in India. In the northern state of Uttarakhand, about 25000 trees were cut in an ecologically sensitive area to build highways to Hindu pilgrimage sites. Government data reveal that India’s environment ministry has given clearance to 2256 of the 2592 (87%) proposals it had received in the past six years. The government has also approved over 270 projects in and around India’s

most protected environments, including biodiversity hotspots and national parks, since July 2014. In Dehing-Patkai National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) allowed North-Eastern Coal Fields (NEC) to conduct opencast mining in 98.59 hectares of Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary which is home to numerous endemic species and known as the ‘Amazon of the East’. This will shrink the habitats and increase human-animal conflicts. The government has declassified eco sensitive salt pans as wetlands in Maharashtra which would eventually open them for construction and housing projects. The recent proposal to pursue a massive ‘development’ project involving a container terminal, airport, township, and a power plant in the high-risk seismic zone of Andaman and Nicobar Islands region would result in irreversible damage to the pristine rainforests, indigenous tribal groups and wildlife.

**18.** On the agricultural front, environmentally degrading agricultural policies are being intensified to favour corporate control. In the name of fighting hunger, environmentally destructive GM crops are being reintroduced by Indian Government-Corporate nexus.

Today, the solution for adverse impact of climate change on agriculture that is being prescribed through the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation and Developed countries is to adopt “Climate Smart Agriculture” (CSA) policy. This will provide technology, seeds, finance, fertilisers and other inputs to farmers. However, the farmers and people cannot own these solutions as the ownership will remain with companies and industries that manufacture it. The example of the Green Revolution is in front of us. Though the policy made our country self-sufficient, it brought great misery to farmers and their families. Green Revolution benefited the landed farmers, thereby increasing inequality, use of pesticides and fertilisers, thereby causing massive soil pollution and adverse side effects to people in states like Punjab, Haryana and others. The after effects of the Green Revolution are still felt in Punjab, with massive groundwater depletion, soil degradation, massive dependence on fertilisers and pesticides. If this is the model CSA is wanting to replicate for fighting climate change, it would be a colossal disaster for not only the agriculture sector, but the country and earth in totality. The people who are pushing for CSA are the very fertiliser, pesticides, seeds and agro industries that first created the crisis in the agriculture sector. Now in the name of fighting climate change, they are reintroducing products and policies that have been fought and rejected by people and farmers across the countries.

**19.** Deteriorating air quality, water crisis, contamination in groundwater have posed serious survival challenges especially for the underprivileged sections. According to the IQAir 2021 report, India is home to 12 polluted cities out of the 15 most polluted cities in Central and South Asia. New Delhi has been ranked the world's most polluted capital city for the second consecutive year. As per the 2019 NITI Aayog report, India is suffering from the worst water crisis in its history, and almost 600 million of its population are water-deprived. 21 cities including Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai have significantly exhausted their groundwater resources by 2021. Despite spending thousands of crore of rupees for projects like Namami Gange and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, rivers are struggling with sewage and effluent contamination and several flow obstacles. Much hyped Jal Jeevan Mission could not ensure safe water supply and regular water quality monitoring and reports of Cholera outbreaks have surfaced again. Funds were drastically reduced for the Integrated Watershed Management Programme, crucial in fighting drought in the country by holistically conserving water, soil and forests. The programme has been phased down by making it a part of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.

**20.** The National River linking Project (NRLP) with far-reaching adverse impact on monsoon cycles and biodiversity, posing serious socio-economic challenges and disastrous ecological damage has started taking its shape. The Central Government has approved the funding and implementation of linking of the river Ken and Betwa, two tributaries of river Yamuna. According to studies, the proposed The Ken-Betwa River Interlinking (KBRIL) Project will lead to the submergence of a major portion of the core area of the Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, triggering a major loss of the tiger and its major prey species such as chital and sambar. This is the first link being implemented under this project out of 30 identified links (16 under Peninsular Component & 14 under Himalayan Component). This will completely transform our river system and wreak havoc across the country through massive displacement and loss of livelihoods as well as through loss of forest space and biodiversity. Numbers of dams, diversion weirs, canals will damage the natural flow of river and compromise the estuarine dynamics. This expensive project will also exacerbate the climate crisis. Destruction of forests is essentially a destruction of precious carbon sinks. In addition, it is an established scientific fact that water reservoirs are sources of methane and carbon dioxide in tropical climates. This is an attempt to seize peoples access over river water and hijack it for corporate interests.

**21.** Recent reports indicate that disastrous landslides have increased manifold in the fragile Himalayan landscape especially in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. While landslides and flash floods due to cloud burst are common in physiological terrains such as the Himalayas, recent increase in the number and scale of such disasters are to be ascribed to the skewed model of development espoused by the ruling class. Rampant development of roads in the name of tourism, construction of dams, hydro power projects and effects of climate change are mainly to be blamed for the increase in number and scale of such disasters. These development projects are undertaken at the cost of life and livelihood of the local population and for the benefit of urban centric industries and tourists.

The recent crisis of the sinking Himalayan town of Joshimath, causing severe cracks in residential and other buildings and effectively displacing many residents out of the town without any proper rehabilitation by the government, is a glaring example of what reckless human intervention can do to the fragile physiology of the Himalayas. The ISRO had released satellite images (which were mysteriously deleted later from their website) revealing that the town has sunk 5.4 cm in just 12 days. The major cause of this disaster is the uncontrolled construction of roads and buildings in the town for tourism purposes. Several scientists, environmentalists and activists have pointed out that the underground excavation for Tapovan Vishnugad hydropower project in the vicinity has caused draining out of ground water and land subsidence causing Joshimath to sink at such a pace.

It appears the Indian ruling class has learnt nothing from the disasters caused by big dam projects adopted since early days of independence. Big dams have already caused much havoc displacing hundreds of villages in the vicinity of these dams and destroying local forests and ecology. Prime Minister Narendra Modi proudly inaugurated the Sardar Sarovar Dam on Narmada River in 2017 ignoring decades of struggle by adivasis, farmers and environmentalists against the project. While the project of dams on Narmada has been set up with the claimed aim to provide irrigation to farmers and electricity to the people of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, reports suggest that water from Sardar Sarovar Dam is actually been diverted to industries while farmers in the drought prone areas of Gujarat await water for irrigation.

**22.** Globally, voices of protests and organized struggles led by victims of climate change, vulnerable communities, civil society activists, students and youth

are challenging the exploitative model and demanding action from the governments and corporations. We must salute the people in the forefront of resistance facing state terror and all atrocities at DeochaPachami, Aravali hills, Ayodhya hills, Buxwaha, Tilabani hill, Aarey, DehingPatkai, Vizhinjam and many other places. In a shameful way, Modi govt victimized 21 year old climate activist Disha Ravi for helping to “create” and share an online “protest toolkit” that outlined how to support the mass protests by farmers in the country. The charges include sedition, criminal conspiracy, spreading disaffection against the Indian state, and promoting enmity. At an international level, climate activists like Greta Thunberg, Licypriya Kangujam have drawn attention worldwide by their call for mass protests to urge governments to take definitive action on the issue of Climate Change.

**23.** We have to gear ourselves up to incorporate the climate change agenda into our daily activism and into specific demands and struggles. The role of student youth movement must include the agenda to develop consciousness about climate change. Adivasi, farmer and Agricultural labour organisations, trade unions and other mass organisations working in the hills, coastal areas and other ecologically sensitive areas, need to keep a watch on the forest-based policies.

The trade union movement must also play an active role in urban areas with initiatives to protect the environment and fight climate change. Trade unions need to frame demands regarding climate change and force reluctant industrial managements to incorporate far-reaching technological and factory level changes to address climate change. This could include demands for installing better pollution control equipment, demands for setting up infrastructure to conserve energy and water and so on. There is a need to ensure that industries do not flout laws and pollute air, water and the environment by releasing wastage. Blockage of water drainage and interruption in the natural water cycle is mainly caused by rampant concretisation driven by the interest of real estate sector. We have seen impacts of urban flood on the lives of residents, especially the slum dwellers. The urban poor and the working class are mostly at the receiving end of environmental degradation visible in urban areas caused by industries and the urban elite. Organising the working class to claim their right to clean city can be an important task to force the policy makers to formulate environmentally responsible policies.

**24.** There is a need to ensure that local forests and resources are not brought under the control of transnational corporations and governments, in

the name of creating a market for carbon sinks and ‘countering’ climate change. Poor countries in Asia and Africa cannot be allowed to become dumping grounds for the rich, and their precious natural resources must not be allowed to be plundered to alleviate climate change impacts generated in the industrialised nations. We also need to recognize the importance of environmentally sustainable way of life developed by local communities in forest and eco sensitive areas.

**25.** We need to reiterate the importance of public control over natural resources. At a time when various governments in the country – both state governments and the Central government – seem hell-bent on privatising natural resources, we need to resist all such moves. Addressing climate change cannot be divorced from the larger question of democratic control over resources and democratic decision-making. The climate crisis cannot be mitigated under a regime of profiteering and corporate plunder of resources. The climate crisis needs to be addressed on multiple fronts. At the international level, we need to push for more democratic negotiations and more sustained solidarities with the working poor and indigenous people across the globe. At the national level, we need to strengthen campaigns to protect local control over natural resources and to encourage energy management and efficient technology. Government must consult all the stake holder especially the marginalized vulnerable communities and give topmost priorities to Gram Sabhas at the local level.

**26.** It is necessary that any response to the issue of climate change also addresses social and economic inequities. Above all, the struggle against climate change is a systemic struggle, a part and parcel of the struggle against capitalism. It is necessary to recognize that the production pattern and profiteering ways promoted by capitalism have been largely responsible for the growing havoc caused by climate change, and it is not possible to address climate change without addressing this fundamental problem. Addressing climate change cannot be divorced from the larger question of democratic control over resources and democratic decision-making. Labour, economic and environmental policies of the neo-liberal state that push people into such precarious living will have to be challenged. The struggle against climate change is inseparably connected with the agenda of anti-imperialist action and ongoing struggles for social transformation, especially struggles against injustice based on caste, class and gender. ■

# RESOLUTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Draft Resolution for the  
11th Congress of CPIML



**T**oday, we stand at a critical moment in history. Fascism is on the rise globally with the consolidation of fascist regimes in a number of countries across the world accompanied by intense resistance movements, some of which, like the struggle against the Bolsonaro regime in Brazil, have been successful. The tragic destruction caused by neoliberalism is on display and the contradictions of the international capitalist system are ever more visible. The countries that implemented neoliberal experiments in previous decades, such as Ghana, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are experiencing complete economic collapse, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the US are continuing to aggressively push the same ‘magic pill’ of structural reforms and austerity. The international economy, which was already in decline is now almost visibly moving towards global recession.

At the same time there has been a shift towards a relatively multi-polar world with a crisis-ridden US and its allies facing an aggressively expansionist Russia and economically powerful China. A major war is being fought in Europe with the fascistic Putin regime in Russia invading and mercilessly attacking civilian areas in Ukraine, and Ukrainian forces fighting back armed with modern weapons supplied extensively by Western governments.

The global crisis of capitalism – which is also a climate crisis, has led to deep insecurity and deprivation which has been fertile ground for the rise of fascist and authoritarian forces all over the world, that have blamed inequality and insecurity, not on neoliberal policies but on minorities

and immigrants. Where these forces have achieved power, the resulting regimes have been marked by organised racial/communal violence by fascist groups; attacks on dissent, civil liberties, and freedom of speech; intensified anti-feminist politics and attacks on women’s rights and LGBTQ rights; the use of fake news to whip up hatred and prejudice; as well as personality cults and centralisation of power in the figure of a single powerful leader

The global Covid19 pandemic of 2020 has brought to the forefront the horrors of the capitalist system that put profit above lives. After decades of austerity and privatisation of healthcare and other essential services, in India as in a number of other countries of the Global South more people were killed because of the lack of affordable medical services and products than by the virus itself. Meanwhile, countries with stronger public health systems have been successfully able to deal with the health crisis during the pandemic. The direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic have everywhere exposed and deepened inequalities along lines of class, gender, race and other social divisions. After vaccines were developed, the stark global inequalities in access to vaccines or ‘vaccine apartheid’ have further underlined the injustice of a market driven, corporate dominated global health regime

While the pandemic has contributed to the economic slowdown, we witness a steep rise in the global wealth of the super-rich. In 2022 the world’s ten richest men doubled their fortunes from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion —at a rate of \$15,000 per second. In other words, a new billionaire is produced every 26 hours and at the same time



inequality contributes to the death of one person every four seconds. Despite the exponential rise of wealth, we are witnessing a spree of layoff, job-losses, wage stagnation and axing of social security measures and labour rights across the world under the false flag of ‘profit-loss.’ The governments across the world are using public money to bailout ‘loss-making’ corporate sectors, while imposing harsh austerity measures on the working people.

Globally, inequality, hunger and unemployment continue to rise as global capitalist forces continue to push for neo-liberal and austerity measures. Countries in the Global South that were once hailed as success stories of ‘Washington Consensus’ experiments are now at verge of complete collapse, with no protection for the common people from the extreme hardship and suffering. In countries like Lebanon, which implemented neoliberalism as a ‘miracle pill’ of economic prosperity, people are now forced to rob banks to withdraw their hard earned money even for their daily spending.

Though the imperialist US-led wars of the previous decade ended up in military (though often, as in the case of Iraq not economic) withdrawal of the US and the NATO forces, the imperialist core continues to expand its clout through covert and overt operations and alliances across the world. With the rise of China as a major economic powerhouse, the US led imperialist bloc is searching for new avenues to counter-China in an attempt to maintain and strengthen a unipolar world order.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the defeat of Donald Trump led to him organising an insurrection against the election results, a script that was re-enacted by fascist Bolsonaro supporters in Brazil. Though Trump was defeated, the white supremacist movement continues to gain strength in the US, and Trump’s appointment of

right wing conservatives to the judiciary has led to fresh victories for the far-right, notably the overturning of the right to abortion enshrined in the Roe vs Wade ruling. While the Biden government has attempted to undo some of Trump’s anti-people domestic policies, his government continues backing anti-immigrant policies and imperialist and hawkish foreign policies, including support to apartheid Israel.

## Latin America and Victories against US Imperialism

With the recent victory of Lula da Silva in Brazil defeating the fascist Bolsonaro, the electoral defeat of the US backed interim regime in Bolivia and the return to power of MAS, and the coming to power of left-wing governments in Chile and in Colombia, Latin America is witnessing a revival of left-wing and progressive governments. The popular and people’s movements in the region played a historic role in organising and fighting against the various right-wing regimes in Latin America that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s with the support and intervention by the United States. The initiatives of regional cooperation and solidarity spearheaded by Cuba and Venezuela, like the Bolivarian Alternative for Our Americas (ALBA) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), continue to play a vital role along with popular movements in ensuring the revival of progressive movements across the region.

The US continues to consider the Latin America region as its ‘backyard.’ Inhuman embargo and sanctions imposed by the US continue against Venezuela and Cuba. Cuba, in the aftermath of the passing away of Fidel Castro, continues to assert its independence from and defiance of US imperialism. At the same time as a result of the shortage of crude oil from Russia, the US has most recently started communicating with Maduro.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, while the global pharma industry was attempting to monopolise the Covid vaccines, the public biotechnology sector in Cuba successfully led research, development and production of affordable and public Covid vaccines. This adds another feather in the hat for the Cuban medical internationalism that had already been deploying famously known ‘Cuban Doctors’ to various countries across the world, to provide primary healthcare in the poorest areas and in emergency situations.

In Venezuela, the US continues to support anti-Chavista and right-wing forces in an attempt to destabilise the Bolivarian revolution. The people’s movement and communes are playing a vital role in resisting the right-wing coup attempts and are also defying the economic hardship caused by the US imposed embargo. While

the people unitedly continue to defend the Bolivarian revolution with the nationalisation of the private sector at its core, there had been attempts by the Nicolás Maduro government to initiate partial privatisation of public sectors.

In Bolivia, after the coup in 2019 against Evo Morales of the Movement For Socialism (MAS), a protracted popular and indigenous movement defeated the US backed coup regime and ensured the return of MAS. The coup was an attempt to undo the achievements of Morales government, including policies to decrease poverty rate and Constitutional provisions ensuring the participation of indigenous people in governance and decision-making. The indigenous people were earlier completely excluded from power with power being concentrated in the hands of the European-origin white, racist elite. Morales' tenure also saw an enormous surge in respect for indigenous culture and attire, including adoption of the Wiphala flag - ancestral flag of the indigenous peoples - as the second national flag.

In 2019, Chile witnessed a historic mass uprising by students and workers against the increasing inequality, right-wing violence and privatisation of public resources. This 2019 movement further consolidated the “social processes,” and in the 2021 General Elections held in November, Chileans vehemently rejected the right-wing forces and elected progressive candidate Gabriel Boric as the next President of Chile. The popular demand for changes to the current Constitution of Chile, which was inherited from Pinochet's bloody dictatorship passed the first referendum, but unfortunately failed to see through the ratification process. Boric and the left wing alliance has a historic task ahead to stop Chile from sliding back to Pinochet era barbarism.

Battered after the debacle and withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US imperialist tentacles are rising again and this time the target is - Haiti. The US and the CORE group ( Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, the European Union, and the Organization of American States) is attempting to organise a military intervention in Haiti, a country which had faced three US led interventions, with the first one in 1915.

The people of Latin America are however quite vigilant. The constitutional coup by right wing oligarchs in Peru against the democratically elected government of Pedro Castillo and the attempts by Bolsonaro supporters to sabotage people's verdict in Brazil shows us that right-wing forces are trying to reorganise. And the threat from US imperialism has not abated.

The on-going Leftward shift in Latin America is rooted in a long legacy of anti-imperialist and socialist mobilisation. Trade unions, peasant organisations,

women's organisations, and social movements of Afro-Latin Americans and indigenous people are organising and mobilising against the oligarchies and imperialism.

## Europe

Riding on anti-immigrant and economic crisis rhetoric, the far-right is on the rise in a number of countries of Europe. In Italy, the Brothers of Italy, which traces its origin to Mussolini's Blackshirts and whose membership include neo-fascists, have managed to come to power in the recent elections. Poland, Hungary, Austria and Sweden have elected right-wing governments and far-right political parties are on the rise in Spain, France, Finland and other countries in the region.

In Russia, the Putin regime is not only embracing a far-right politics with attacks on women's and LGBT rights supported by an increasingly powerful Russian orthodox church, suppression of dissent, and a macho cult of personality, but as its brutal actions in Ukraine reflect, is increasingly pursuing an imperialist agenda based on the notion of Greater Russia. Anti-war protests that broke out in various cities were brutally suppressed by the Putin regime.

In Ukraine the war continues with Russian invading forces being pushed back from some occupied regions, but no end to the war currently in sight. With the threat of nuclear war ever-present, there has so far been no direct intervention or imposition of a no-fly zone by NATO forces. The US is by far the biggest supplier of arms to Ukraine, followed by the UK and other Western countries. This is also the first time that the European Union as an entity has armed a non-member country. The Ukrainian government has meanwhile introduced a raft of anti-worker laws, banning of trade unions, and deregulations, which are seen as further creating conditions for foreign corporate investment. The fight in defence of self-determination naturally has the support of the people, including the left in Ukraine, and Putin's claim to be 'de-Nazifying' Ukraine is clearly propaganda. At the same time it should be noted that Ukraine's armed forces include significant fascist elements such as the Azov Battalion among others, and it seems that both sides are attracting and training foreign mercenaries affiliated with the European far-right, thus ominously strengthening the latter for the future.

The UK ruled by the Conservative Party has seen two new Prime Ministers, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, in the short period between 6 September when Boris Johnson quit and now. As the UK faces a deepening cost of living crisis intensified by ongoing policies of austerity, waves of strikes indicate growing labour militancy, even as the Labour Party has moved to the Centre-right under Keir Starmer, often seeking to match the Conservatives on

anti-worker, and anti-migrant policies in particular. Meanwhile the Conservatives with their open racism and Islamophobia are increasingly occupying the traditional space of the far-right. Sunak has declared that the discredited counter terrorism policy of PREVENT is to be 'refocused' on 'Islamic Terrorism' and Boris Johnson and Priti Patel's plan of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda is to remain in place reinforced by a plan to deport victims of modern slavery before their asylum claims are heard. Small boats on which refugees cross the English Channel are to be ruthlessly turned away, no matter how many lives are lost. Under Sunak, the links with Hindutva are likely to be strengthened with his parents-in-law, once somewhat distanced from the Modi regime, now openly embracing the RSS. Sunak is signing a trade deal with the Modi regime which has been condemned by both the British Trades Union Congress and Indian trade unions because it is likely to increase the most exploitative kinds of outsourcing and legitimise the Modi government's new Labour Codes.

As Europe witnesses a rise in far-right movements, the Mediterranean sea is increasingly becoming the graveyard of thousands of immigrants from Africa and Asia who are seeking to flee the conflicts which are a result of the policies of the US and European imperialism. An estimated 25,000 people have drowned in the Mediterranean while attempting to reach the shores of Europe since 2014.

In Turkey, Erdogan's authoritarian regime has intensified its grip on the country in recent years - dismantling secularism, suppressing dissent, controlling the media, and rewriting the constitution. In the northern Kurdish area of Syria, Erdogan's military along with the mercenaries from Syria launched a brutal military campaign in 2019. Meanwhile, the Kurdish population in Turkey continue to face discriminatory policies and Kurdish voices for self-determination are brutally suppressed.

## North Africa / Maghreb

**Morocco and Western Sahara:** In Morocco, state repression and surveillance on democratic voices continues unabated. In recent years, journalists, activists, labour unions, Amazigh speaking minorities and Sahrawi people have been arrested for criticism of the Moroccan government and security services. Inspired by repressive measures deployed by apartheid Israel, the Moroccan government has created an ecosystem of repression involving deep surveillance and state violence. Morocco continues to annex the West Sahara region, which is divided by a Moroccan wall (known locally as the 'wall of shame'), similar to the West Bank wall built by Israel.

In Egypt, the 2019 constitutional change extended President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi Presidency from 2022

to 2030. He first came to power in 2014 after the brutal Rabaa massacre overseen by his predecessor Mohamed Morsi following the 2011 Arab revolution. Fattah el-Sisi has implemented a series of austerity measures including cutting of food and fuel subsidies which has affected millions of poor people and democratic activists continue to face repression and disappearances.

Libya continues to face a severe political chaos since the 2011 US-NATO intervention and killing of President Muammar Gaddafi. Only a provisional government exists in the country, with political violence continuing unabated. Libya falls at the juncture of the Mediterranean migration route to Europe and is the home for one of largest migrant detention centres in the region. The European Union countries have created a shadow immigration system that captures them before they reach its shores, and sends them to brutal Libyan detention centres run by militias.

## Central And South Africa

Today, the United States's imperialist vehicle in Africa AFRICOM has penetrated as many as 35 countries in Africa. The US pursues this aggressive strategy in active collaboration with France and Britain. Military power and extraction go hand in hand as these countries grab Africa's rich resources - cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium while attempting to counter China's growing economic ties with African countries.

In Sudan, the people's mobilisation in 2019 led to resignation of country's long ruling president Omar al-Bashir whose regime had seen not only economic mismanagement, corruption and violence against democratic movements but the removal of food and fuel subsidies at the behest of the IMF leading to astronomical rises in the prices of food, medicine, and transport. In 2021, a coup by the Sudanese military overthrew the civilian government of Abdalla Hamdok leading to massive protests and a civil disobedience movement across the country against the coup. The military regime was forced to step down and reinstate Hamdok as the PM. However, economic hardship continues as the new government is removing subsidies in order to be eligible for the debt relief program of the IMF.

In the north central African country of Chad, France (the former colonial power) continues to meddle in the country's politics, including backing of the Transitional Military Council that seized power following the battlefield death of President Idriss Deby in April 2021. This led to a series of protests against the French role and its military presence in the country. France's neo-colonial ambition in the region is also visible with its military presence in Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR).

In South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa was recently elected

President of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) with the support of the South African Communist Party SACP, replacing corrupt Jacob Zuma as the new President of South Africa. Under Cyril Ramaphosa, crony capitalism, repression and racism are likely to continue to beset the South African Government. When striking mine-workers at Lonmin's Marikana mine were massacred by South African security forces in 2012, Ramaphosa notoriously called for even more repression.

The ruling ANC had long promised reforms to redress racial disparities in land ownership but even two decades after the end of apartheid, whites still own most of South Africa's land following centuries of brutal colonial dispossession. Despite rising inflation and economic hardship, the Ramaphosa government is intensifying privatisation and austerity measures.

## The West Asia

The uprising in Syria against the Bashar-al-Assad regime began as part of the Arab Spring. Assad unleashed brutal repression on the uprising, resulting in a civil war and humanitarian crisis, forcing lakhs of refugees to flee Syria. While the Russian military backed the Assad regime against the opposition, the US backed some of the opposition forces including al-Qaeda and al-Nusra, its former affiliate, and resorted to bombing Syria and seemed hell-bent on forcing a regime change. We oppose imperialist wars and US and Russian meddling in the region. What is needed is a United Nations (UN)-monitored process for a political solution to the civil war in Syria.

In Yemen, the civil war has continued since 2014 and the country's vital infrastructures is on the verge of complete collapse. The Saudi-led military offensive in Yemen, which is backed by the US, France and Britain has led to the death of 20,000 civilians. With the Cholera outbreaks and on-going famine, the UN puts the death toll in the Yemen war at 150,000. More than 50,000 children have died due to diseases and starvation and destruction of health infrastructure.

Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and its war against the Palestinian people has continued to escalate, with the 2014 siege of Gaza taking a horrendous toll of Palestinian lives. Gaza is still blockaded by Israel with no medical supplies and continuous shortages of food and essential necessities. The Israeli military aggression in Gaza in 2021 and 2022 led to the killing of more than hundreds of Palestinians (including more than 100 children). Thousands of Palestinian political prisoners, including several children are currently behind bars in Israeli prisons for defending the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

Following the November 2022 election Netanyahu has

returned to power, this time in coalition with two far-right Israeli parties. As a number of commentators have noted the Israeli state must now be seen as not only an apartheid, settler-colonial state but a fascist regime. It is continuing to pursue a policy of ethnic cleansing, annexing Palestinian land and expanding settlements.

The Palestinian resistance movement appears to be reorganising and consolidating itself in preparation for a third Intifada taking on both the occupation and the security cooperation with Israel by the Mohammed Abbas led Palestinian Authority. It has been almost three decades since the signing of the Oslo accords. They have failed totally to achieve any form of justice and peace for the people. Meanwhile, a number of countries in Arab region that once stood for the Palestinian cause have betrayed it and are now engaging in rapprochement with Israel.

Despite Israel's ceaseless attempts to discredit its critics by falsely conflating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement is growing in strength internationally and there is now very widespread recognition that Israel, like pre-1994 South Africa, is an apartheid state which must be opposed outright by anti-imperialist and anti-racist forces. Given India's growing strategic ties with Israel, it is important for us in India to strengthen the BDS movement.

Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain remain the strongest allies of the US imperialism in the region other than Israel, with these authoritarian countries hosting US military facilities and assets used in the wars in the region and across. These bases play a vital role in the US covert operations against Iran. The Arab Spring protests in these countries calling for democracy were brutally repressed - the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) deploying troops to quell the protests. In UAE, recently many Indian and other foreign-national workers were arrested and deported for demanding better working conditions.

The death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of Iran's morality police for alleged 'dress code' violation has sparked off a veritable rebellion in Iran. The simmering anger among Iran's women and the working people against the repressive theocratic regime and worsening conditions of life is now exploding in protests across Iran. Hundreds of people have been killed by the regime, but defying brutal repression protests continue to spread. We must extend warm and unconditional support to the fighting women of Iran to secure their full rights and freedom from theocracy and patriarchy. We also support the Iranian people's right to chart their own course free from any kind of Western intervention.

In Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh, a fallout of the US invasion of Iraq and the 'de-

Ba'athification' process has now fallen apart after being defeated on various fronts, including Syrian and Iraqi Kurdistan areas. Evidence has now emerged that the US and Saudi Arabia had funded Daesh while Israel is among those countries which had armed it. Though the US occupation forces finally completed its withdrawal in 2021, the political situation continues to be volatile with dominant forces attempting to monopolise political power and impose their control over the political process.

## South Asia

The dramatic capture of state power by the Taliban has plunged Afghanistan into tremendous chaos and uncertainty amidst reports of violent crimes against civilians, oppression of women and systematic assault on human rights and liberties. Minority populations like Hazaras and Skihis face increased threat of violence. American foreign policy is squarely responsible for the current mess. From the days of facilitating the rise of the Taliban in the 1980 and 1990s through the post-9/11 invasion and occupation of Afghanistan to the current juncture of unplanned exit of American forces, it is the American design of military intervention and occupation which has brought Afghanistan to this sorry pass. The Taliban takeover also led to freezing of Afghan foreign reserves- \$3.5 billion by the US. This will only exacerbate the hardship and economic crisis for the people of Afghanistan, who are already facing severe levels of poverty and hunger.

Pakistan has been passing through extremely tough and turbulent times. The country is in the midst of an unprecedented climate catastrophe caused by rich nations. Pakistan has 7253 glaciers the most outside of the arctic polar region - they're all reportedly melting fast. Monsoon rains in the country are 2.87 times higher than the national 30-year average. It is estimated that the widespread destitution and devastation caused by the floods will cost Pakistan at least 10 billion dollars. Yet, while some countries and companies in the Global North are wreaking havoc on the planet, countries like Pakistan are bearing the brunt of others' criminal recklessness and unfettered greed.

Currently, the country's military is at the helm of political decision making. The attack on Imran Khan, who was deposed as the Prime Minister in April 2022 after a no-confidence motion, signals a renewed phase of political instability in Pakistan.

After a brief ceasefire with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and mediation with Pakistan, the TTP has relaunched its terrorist activities in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Meanwhile, many people, especially from the minority communities,



including Ahmadis continue to face the brunt of Pakistan's blasphemy laws that have provided a potent excuse for mob lynchings and murders of religious minorities as well as secular and rational voices. Pakistan has also unleashed severe repression against the nationality movement in Balochistan, with disappearances and bombing of civilian areas. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan have also witnessed resistance by the Pashtuns against repression, disappearances, and human rights violations. Ali Wazir, a Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and co-founder of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) continues to be behind bars on treason charges for his activism demanding the rights and justice for the Pashtun community.

Kashmir remains the biggest long-standing dispute between India and Pakistan. Rather than making any serious efforts towards resolving the dispute, both Governments have only been busy perpetuating and aggravating it. In fact, India with its abrogation of Article 370 move in Kashmir has further exaggerated the conflict and attempted to push for a military resolution of the political question of Kashmir. The Kashmir dispute can achieve a permanent and peaceful resolution only through dialogue between representatives of the various sections of Kashmiri peoples as well as the Governments of India and Pakistan. Such a resolution must be in keeping with the aspirations of the Kashmiris to determine their own destiny.

In Sri Lanka, a powerful people's uprising triggered by a massive economic crisis and food and fuel scarcity forced President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to quit and flee the country. Ranil Wickremesinghe has been appointed as the president with the promise that his government will take the country out of the current economic crisis. Despite these promises, the Wickremesinghe government seems to be walking the same path, looking to the IMF for a solution and following the same heavy handed tactics, including use of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act, which the Rajapaksas used to silence any dissenting

and democratic voices. Meanwhile, the perpetrators of mass crimes committed by Sri Lankan forces on the Tamil population during the civil war continue to walk free as the successive governments refuse to take any action and discrimination against Tamil and Muslim populations continues. At the same time there is an increasing militarisation of all aspects of civilian life. Meanwhile India is playing a hegemonic big brother role and shopping for PM Modi's corporate friends, causing further harm to Sri Lanka's beleaguered economy and environment.

The Rajapaksa regime represented the disastrous combination of rabid Sinhala chauvinism, unbridled neoliberalism and nepotism. The recent people's upsurge however witnessed hopeful signs of unity among all sections of the population and an increasing realisation that along with key economic demands, the issue of dignity and rights for Tamil and Muslim communities are essential for a future democratic Sri Lanka.

In Bangladesh, democracy is in a crisis, with the ruling party mounting a neoliberal offensive, subverting democratic institutions, muzzling opposition parties and curtailing democratic rights in the name of 'fighting corruption'. In this vitiated climate, fundamentalist forces are also gaining ground and waging war on secular, progressive, and rationalist voices.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Bangladesh in their resistance to various environmentally destructive Indian projects and in their struggle for democracy and against fundamentalism and neoliberalism. For domestic political benefit, the BJP keeps making wild allegations about alleged illegal immigration or infiltration from Bangladesh and the BSF has been granted extended powers over fifty kilometres into the Indian territory from the Indo-Bangla border. Bangladeshis and Rohingyas are used as dog whistles against India's own Muslim population even as discriminatory amendment has been made to India's citizenship law ostensibly to protect non-Muslim minorities within Bangladesh from persecution and ill treatment. Such vitriolic narrative and discriminatory measures have adverse implications for bilateral ties based on mutual trust and accommodation.

In Nepal, the recent parliamentary elections produced a fractured mandate with the Nepali Congress emerging as the largest party in terms of seats and the CPN(UML) as the largest party in terms of vote share. After talks broke down over power-sharing between pre-poll allies Nepali Congress and CPN(Maoist), the latter stitched a post-poll alliance with CPN(UML). However, between them, the two parties did not have enough numbers to form government and they had to rope in five more parties including a newly formed outfit called the Rashtriya Swatantra Party and the old conservative pro-monarchy

party called the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party and three independent MPs. CPN(Maoist) leader Prachanda has become the new Prime Minister even though his party finished a distant third after the Nepali Congress and UML. This post-poll coalition is pretty disparate and its stability is naturally quite uncertain.

The communist movement had played the leading role in bringing about the abolition of the 240-year-old monarchy. The Maoists and the UML had emerged as the leading political parties in post-monarchy federal democratic Nepal giving Nepal's politics a clear leftward thrust. At one point, the two leading communist parties even merged to form a single communist party called Nepal Communist Party. But as the parties split while being in power, the old Nepali Congress regained political initiative and took advantage of the situation and came to power. More recently, the UML suffered another split with the rise of a new Communist party called Unified Socialist Party. The split and realignment in the Left camp has not only enabled the Nepali Congress to revive but also created space for new parties like the Rashtriya Swatantra Party. While the abolition of monarchy has become a settled fact, debate continues over the secular and federal character of republican Nepal. We wish the communist movement of Nepal continued success in consolidating democracy and leading the forward march of this Himalayan nation.

## China and South East Asia

In Myanmar, the military coup in February 2021 deposed the civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi leading to massive protests across the country. The military junta claimed that the coup was a response to Suu Kyi government's closeness to China and the junta wanted to strengthen ties with the United State. The Myanmar military forces imposed complete internet and media blackout and unleashed brutal repression against the anti-coup protesters killing more than 2000 people. In response to violent repression, the protests in Myanmar have taken the shape of an armed resistance movement under the banner of People's Defense Force with various existing armed liberation movements allying with PDF against the military junta.

The long-standing racial discrimination, denial of citizenship, and violence against the Rohingya minority in Myanmar had reached genocidal proportions in 2017. A large number of Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh, where they live in deplorable conditions in camps. Some also fled to India, and under the Modi regime they now face assault, harassment and deportation. Those Rohingya refugees already deported to Myanmar by the Indian government face immense danger to their lives.

India continues to refuse to sign the 1951 United Nations

Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol: India must do so at the earliest and treat all refugees, including Rohingya refugees, in keeping with international protocol and norms. There are also underlying geopolitical and economic factors underpinning the eviction of Rohingyas from the Rakhine region: including oil exploration projects, oil pipelines and other infrastructure projects like roads and ports, in which Chinese and Indian corporations have interests. We demand that the Indian Government ensure safety, dignity and refugee status for Rohingya refugees in India, and use all diplomatic initiatives to ensure full citizenship and safe repatriation of the Rohingya people returning to Myanmar.

For the Communist Party of China which recently observed its centenary and concluded its 20th Party Congress, socialism is increasingly being defined primarily in terms of communist party leadership over the state, which in turn is reduced increasingly to the centrality of the 'core' leader, and capitalism predominating over aspects of socialism in the economy. This has been accompanied by increasingly repressive majoritarian Han nationalist approaches to religious and cultural diversity. In short, the Chinese claim of building socialism with Chinese characteristics is increasingly becoming a euphemism for what should be described as capitalism with Chinese characteristics.

Meanwhile inequality continues to grow and oppressive working conditions in factories producing for the global market are increasingly visible. At the same time employment is increasingly shifting away from manufacturing and towards informal and precarious urban service-sector jobs. China is leading the way globally on surveillance technologies which not only monitor multiple forms of dissent and nonconformity but can lock those identified out of the basic means of survival. While it initially appeared to address Covid-19 much more effectively than many Western countries with health services depleted by neoliberalism, the pandemic then became a pretext for increasingly repressive lockdowns and targeting of dissidents generating extensive protests. The violent majoritarian oppression of the Muslim Uyghur minority has escalated further.

China is playing an increasing economic and geopolitical role internationally. While in many African countries it was initially viewed as an alternative source of investment to the imperialist West, increasingly its use of exclusively Chinese skilled workers and management and their racism towards Africans has come to light, as well as its use of debt to create dependency. China has spent a trillion dollars on its Belt and Road/New Silk Road initiative which seeks to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and sea trade networks and increase

Chinese influence and dependency on China.

The result of the presidential elections in the Philippines in May 2022 was an unimaginable tragedy for many who survived the decade long brutal dictatorship regime of Ferdinand Marcos (Marcos Sr). Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr or simply known as Marcos Jr, son of Marcos Sr managed to win the elections by securing nearly 30 million votes in his favour. He received backing from the outgoing authoritarian regime of Rodrigo Duterte through his daughter Sara Duterte who has been elected as the vice president. The United States-backed Marcos Sr's regime from 1965 to 1986 (with martial law in place from 1972 until 1981) had been one of the most brutal periods in the history of the Philippines. According to observers, for three decades the family have been taking advantage of the information vacuums left by uncritical history textbooks about the martial law period. Marcos Jr's campaign was focused on historical negation of the dictatorship crimes and whitewashing his fathers' brutal regime. The Philippines under the outgoing Duterte regime has already been witnessing rampant state sponsored attacks on democratic voices, red-tagging (term of witch-hunt against communists) and widespread extrajudicial killings under the name of 'war on drugs' campaign. The emergence of the Marcos-Duterte regime in the Philippines now threatens to push the country back to dictatorship.

In February 2019, Thailand witnessed massive student-initiated pro-democracy protests demanding immediate release of the pro-democracy movement activists and all political prisoners, ending the military-dominated rule and for free and fair elections for a democratic government, abolishing feudal powers and stop the use of repressive laws including the lese-majeste laws to silence dissent and initiation of democratic constitutional change. The movement was met with brutal crackdown and arrest of several leading members of the protest movement.

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo's regime is attempting to tighten his grip around the country's political landscape by dismantling existing labour laws and bringing in new criminal codes that include penalisation in defamation against the president. The criminal codes that puts ban on premarital sex, living together outside of marriage, and abortion led to massive protests by students in 2019. Widodo had also been attempting to bring an Omnibus Labour Law proposal to change the existing labour laws in the country. A series of protests were organised across Indonesia against the attempts by the government to trample workers' rights and guarantee corporate profits.

Communism / Marxism-Leninism symbols and identification continue to be banned in Indonesia.

Fifty-three years ago, in 1965-66, Indonesia witnessed the massacre of more than 10 lakh people in a brutal purge of communists and communist sympathisers by the Suharto regime. Indonesia's communist party, then the third largest in the world, was destroyed and crushed. Recently declassified files of the US embassy in Jakarta prove that the US Government and CIA not only had detailed knowledge of the massacre while it was ongoing but approved of it.

In the West Papua region of Indonesia, that is demanding self-determination, the Indonesian military is responsible for mass killings and extrajudicial murders. The 2019 protest in Indonesia also called for an end to militarisation in West Papua and release of all Papuan political prisoners.

The American administration, using racist propaganda to demonise North Korea, is justifying its economic war on and military encirclement of North Korea. The 2018 North and South Korea peace process has come to a halt, with the US restarting its military exercise in the region aimed against North Korea. The recent escalation in the region marks a major threat to global peace. The peace process between the two countries needs to be reestablished and the massive US military infrastructure deployed in the region must be withdrawn to ensure stability in the Korean peninsula. In Japan, people on the island of Okinawa have been continuously demanding removal of US military personnel and bases from the country. In February 2019, a referendum for the citizens of Okinawa, over 70% of voters - about 434,000 people - voted against the construction of the new Henoko base.

## Oceania

In Australia, a Labour party government was formed in the elections held May 2022 with mammoth challenges ahead. The decade-long centre-right coalition government had led to worsening of rights of workers and indigenous population. The previous coalition government had been aggressively pushing its pro-big corporate and anti-immigrant policies. Australia continues to detain refugees in inhuman detention camps based in Naru and Manus Island (handed over to Papua New Guinea) centres. Accords to reports, more than 20 refugees have committed suicides in these camps till 2021.

Meanwhile, indigenous population of Queensland in Australia continue to protest against Gautam Adani's Carmichael coal mine, which has become operational. The mine is a threat to the local habitat, including the Great Barrier Reef and the company has been accused of water table depletion around the mine area.

BRICS never lived up to its potential to promote multipolarity either against unilateral political domination by the US or the economic stranglehold of IMF-World Bank-

WTO. Even within BRICS there is very little development of economic cooperation among the member countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). India is also a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), but its role has remained largely low-key and it has made no effort to use this to promote better ties with China or other Asian countries. By contrast India has stepped up its military relation with the United States forming Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), which also comprises Japan and Australia. This Quad dialogue is just another name for the US military alliance in the region aimed at countering China in the "Indo-Pacific" region. India's involvement is against the sovereign interests of the country and the alliance is an attempt by the US to deploy its military personnel and assets in India to target China.

The growing identification of Indian foreign policy with the strategic priorities of the United States is accompanied by India's worsening relations and growing isolation with almost all its neighbours resulting in a major setback to the prospects of regional cooperation and friendly ties with neighbours. India's regional hegemonic attitude, the growing push for promotion of Indian corporate interests in the region and the attempt to define Indian nationalism in Hindu supremacist terms create a counter-productive environment deepening mistrust and tension in South Asia. The recent past has also witnessed border clashes between China and India with reports of Chinese incursion into areas hitherto under Indian control. The Modi government has refused to come clear with the actual state of affairs in the border region, stepping up anti-China rhetoric for domestic political calculations even as India's imports from China reached a record high in 2022 and trade deficit surged beyond 100 billion dollars.

As revolutionary communists, we cherish shared global peace and planetary survival. To this end, we shall continue to fight for reversal of policies of neo-colonial domination, imperialist intervention, military aggression and environmental degradation and climate crisis, while insisting on a suitable reorientation of Indian foreign policy and India's global role. We remain committed to developing closer ties with communist parties as well as progressive movements and forces all over the world and strengthening international solidarity against war and for freedom and human rights, against fascism, racism and Islamophobia. We must strengthen our solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom and develop closer cooperation and coordination with movements resisting fascism and predatory global capital. In South Asia we must aim to achieve closer cooperation among progressive forces - for peace and democracy, against war, terrorism, religious extremism, and the politics of hate and bigotry. ■

# SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS PROPOSAL UNDERMINES THE BASIC SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY AND FEDERALISM

**Text of CPIML's reply dated 16 January 2023 to the communication from the Law Commission seeking views on the proposal of Simultaneous Elections.**

**W**ere in receipt of your letter dated 23rd December 2022, seeking our views on the question of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislatures. We have carefully examined the Law Commission's Draft Report on "Simultaneous Elections" dated 30th August 2018. It is our considered opinion that this push for simultaneous elections, rather 'One Nation, One Election', which is the pet idea of the BJP is wholly unconstitutional and will ring the death knell for democracy and federalism in the country. Today in the name of 'One Nation, One Election' the BJP wants to set the political clock back and enforce a regimentation of the polity through constitutional amendments. Unfortunately, the Law Commission, seems to have been swayed by the BJP's agenda.

Following the adoption of the Constitution when our Republic began its journey as a parliamentary democracy, Lok Sabha and Assembly elections were held simultaneously. If the calendar changed by the second half of the 1960s, it was not because of any constitutional amendment. This was how the polity evolved. The overwhelming domination of the Congress began to erode, and as old parties split and new parties emerged and political realignments took shape, we witnessed a proliferation of parties, and the arrival of mid-term elections and coalition governments. The Law Commission's own observation indicates this (para 2.2): "The main reason behind the synchronised elections till then was the dominance and rule by one National political party and the regional parties were not powerful and influential."

The fact that the BJP today has acquired the kind of electoral dominance that the Congress used to enjoy fifty years ago cannot be the basis for amending the Constitution and turning the clock back. The BJP of course openly harbours the ambition of becoming India's ruling party, in fact the only party, for the next fifty years. But the constitution must not be amended to suit the ruling party's political ambitions.

Assembly and Parliament elections have their own specific contexts as do the panchayat and municipal elections. Clubbing elections together for logistical considerations will mean stripping Assembly elections of their autonomous domain and making them subordinated to the central context.

The assumption that holding simultaneous elections would make for logistical convenience and financial savings is not backed by any credible study or analysis of election expenses

or logistical arrangements. It is our opinion that the concerns being invoked to justify 'One Nation, One Election' are unsubstantiated and misplaced.

It is argued that frequent elections lead to massive expenditure and that from financial considerations "implementing simultaneous elections seem to be not only feasible but also desirable" (para 2.13). However, the Law Commission draft report itself acknowledges that "the data available does not clearly spell out the exact cost analysis" (para 2.7). This brings into question any conclusions drawn by the Law Commission on financial implications.

As per the draft report about 3586 crores was the cost incurred by the ECI on the 2014 elections (para 2.10). To put this in perspective, since the BJP came to power at the Centre in 2014, the Union government has spent Rs. 3,260.79 crore on advertising in electronic media and Rs. 3,230.77 crore on advertising in print media. If money is truly to be saved, the scope clearly lies elsewhere. Expenditure cannot be made a prime consideration in pursuing the core principles of democracy.

The assumption that holding simultaneous elections would make for logistical convenience and financial savings is not backed by any credible study or analysis of election expenses or logistical arrangements.

The Law Commission makes a rather disingenuous argument around MCC to seek justification for its proposal for simultaneous elections. This is rife with blatant contradictions.

The Law Commission clarifies that as per the MCC only new projects or programmes, or concessions or financial grants in any form or promises thereof etc., which have the potential of influencing the voters in favour of the ruling party, are restricted and that ongoing projects, for which beneficiaries have been identified prior to the MCC becoming operative, remain unaffected. It is further clarified that the ECI does not refuse approval for schemes undertaken for dealing with emergencies, calamities, welfare measures for the aged, etc., and concludes that "MCC cannot be blamed for a complete administrative paralysis". (para 2.21) and then to conclude quite to the contrary in the very next para in speculation that the "Government(s) may defer such schemes till the completion of the election process, thus slowing down the pace of their ambitious work." (para 2.22). Here too the Law Commission merely paraphrases BJP's written submissions at page 145.

Model code of conduct does not interrupt or slow down development; it only places certain restrictions on the

government to stop it from influencing the voters with announcements of new projects and policies. Elections enable the people to have a say and express their opinion about a government or its so-called development activities. Portrayal of MCC as an impediment to development militates against the centrality of the people in a democracy by privileging governance over the people's right to choose their representatives and express their opinion about any government and its performance or so-called development agenda.

We believe that the idea of simultaneous elections is contrary to the spirit and principles of democracy and federalism, and as such violates constitutional morality and the basic structure of the Constitution.

The Law Commission undertakes an exercise in erroneous legal interpretation of the doctrine of basic structure with the intention of limiting its scope. The Law Commission concludes that the meaning/extent of Basic Structure needs to be construed in view of the specific provision(s) under consideration, its object and purpose, and the consequences of its denial on the integrity of the Constitution as a fundamental instrument of governance of the country. (para 6.29).

The draft Report references *M. Nagaraj vs Union of India and Ors* [AIR 2007 SC 71], where the Supreme Court held that axioms like secularism, democracy, reasonableness, social justice, etc. are overarching principles which provide linking factor for principles of fundamental rights like Articles 14, 19 and 21, and are beyond the amending power of Parliament (para 6.19). In the same judgment, it is held as follows:

“To conclude, the theory of basic structure is based on the concept of constitutional identity. The basic structure jurisprudence is a pre-occupation with constitutional identity. In *Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru and others v. State of Kerala*, it has been observed that ‘one cannot legally use the constitution to destroy itself’. It is further observed ‘the personality of the constitution must remain unchanged’. Therefore, this Court in *Kesavananda Bharati*, while propounding the theory of basic structure, has relied upon the doctrine of constitutional identity. The word ‘amendment’ postulates that the old constitution survives without loss of its identity despite the change and it continues even though it has been subjected to alteration. This is the constant theme of the opinions in the majority decision in *Kesavananda Bharati*. To destroy its identity is to abrogate the basic structure of the Constitution. This is the principle of constitutional sovereignty. Secularism in India has acted as a balance between socio-economic reforms which limits religious options and communal developments. The main object behind the theory of the constitutional identity is continuity and within that continuity of identity, changes are admissible depending upon the situation and circumstances of the day.”

Transformative constitutionalism would mandate that

in addition to the basic structure test, in a democracy, constitutional amendments must also be tested against the ideals of constitutional morality, constitutional governance, and constitutional objectivity, which are all embodied by the Basic Structure Doctrine. However, the very concept of “constitutional morality” is entirely absent in the entire draft report despite the proposal for wide-ranging constitutional amendments that would effectively replace the existing system of parliamentary democracy.

In *Manoj Narula v. Union of India* [(2014) 9 SCC 1] it was held that:

*The principle of constitutional morality basically means to bow down to the norms of the Constitution and not to act in a manner which would become violative of the rule of law or reflectible of action in an arbitrary manner. It actually works at the fulcrum and guides as a laser beam in institution building. The traditions and conventions have to grow to sustain the value of such a morality. The democratic values survive and become successful where the people at large and the persons-in-charge of the institution are strictly guided by the constitutional parameters without paving the path of deviancy and reflecting in action the primary concern to maintain institutional integrity and the requisite constitutional restraints.*

In fact, we would do well to remember the judgment of the Supreme Court in *State (NCT of Delhi) v. Union of India* [(2018) 8 SCALE 72] (referred to at para 6.62 of the draft report), wherein it is held that:

*“58. Constitutional morality in its strictest sense of the term implies strict and complete adherence to the constitutional principles as enshrined in various segments of the document. When a country is endowed with a Constitution, there is an accompanying promise which stipulates that every Member of the country right from its citizens to the high constitutional functionaries must idolise the constitutional fundamentals. This duty imposed by the Constitution stems from the fact that the Constitution is the indispensable foundational base that functions as the guiding force to protect and ensure that the democratic set-up promised to the citizenry remains unperturbed. The constitutional functionaries owe a greater degree of responsibility towards this eloquent instrument for it is from this document that they derive their power and authority and, as a natural corollary, they must ensure that they cultivate and develop a spirit of constitutionalism where every action taken by them is governed by and is in strict conformity with the basic tenets of the Constitution.*

*60. Constitutional morality is that fulcrum which acts as an essential check upon the high functionaries and citizens alike, as experience has shown that unbridled power without any checks and balances would result in a despotic and tyrannical situation which is antithetical to the very idea of democracy.*

The Law Commission, in its bid to justify the wide-ranging amendments to the Constitution to facilitate simultaneous elections, has unnecessarily sought to play down the right to vote, and the right to elect in Indian jurisprudence. It

concludes that, in view of the above judicial pronouncements, the right to vote and the right to contest election are not fundamental rights and constitutional rights, given further shape by the Representation of People Act, 1951, thereby also making them statutory rights (para 6.43). By this reasoning it is argued that it is not part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

This leap in legal logic is without any basis whatsoever. Indeed, the Supreme Court in *State (NCT of Delhi) v. Union of India* [(2018) 8 SCALE 72] (Jst. Chandrachud's opinion) has held that:

308. *The basic structure doctrine was evolved by judicial interpretation in Kesavananda [Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, (1973) 4 SCC 225] to ensure that the fundamentals of constitutional governance are not effaced by the exercise of the constituent power to amend the Constitution. The postulate of the doctrine is that there are values which are so fundamental and intrinsic to the democratic way of life, a republican form of Government and to the preservation of basic human freedoms, that these must lie outside the power of legislative majorities to override by the exercise of constituent powers. The doctrine was a warning to “a fledgling democracy of the perils of brute majoritarianism”.*

The right to vote, and the right to elect, surely is fundamental and intrinsic to the democratic way of life and a republican form of Government that these must lie outside the power

of legislative majorities to override by the exercise of constituent powers.

In *Kuldip Nayar and Ors. v. Union of India and Ors.* [(2006) 7 SCC 1] it was held that parliamentary democracy and multi-party system are an inherent part of the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.

In *People's Union for Civil Liberties and Ors. vs. Union of India (UOI) and Ors.* [(2009) 3 SCC 200], it was held that democracy is a part of the basic structure of our Constitution and rule of law and free and fair election are basic features of democracy.

In *People's Union for Civil Liberties and Ors. vs. Union of India (UOI) and Ors.* [(2013) 10 SCC 1] it was held that free and fair election is integral to the basic structure of the Constitution.

Thus, parliamentary democracy, multi-party system and free and fair elections are all part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Any constitutional amendment to ensure mandatory simultaneous holding of elections to Parliament and State Assemblies will strike at the basic structure of the Constitution and undermine the basic spirit of democracy and federalism that constitutes the lifeblood of the Constitution.

We therefore appeal to the Law Commission to desist from pursuing this unwarranted and potentially disastrous idea. ■

## **CPIML DELEGATION ATTENDS 10TH CONGRESS OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' PARTY OF BANGLADESH**

The Tenth Congress of Revolutionary Workers' Party of Bangladesh was held in Dhaka from 6 to 9 January. A four-member delegation of CPI (ML) comprising Comrades Kartik Pal, Subhendu Sen, Meena Pal and Basudev Bose attended the Congress to express solidarity with the communist movement and the people of Bangladesh. A message of greetings sent from the Central Committee conveyed warm greetings to the delegates attending the RWPB Congress and wished the Congress every success. Senior CPNUML leader Comrade Ishwar Pokhrel was also present as an international guest. The Congress felt that the next general elections scheduled early next year should be held under the supervision of an interim caretaker government as previous elections held under the Awami League dispensation have been marked by massive irregularities. The Congress was preceded by a public meeting and procession attended by representatives of various opposition and Left

parties active in Bangladesh. The Congress called for a powerful mass movement for restoration of secular democracy, strengthening of people's unity and guarantee of people's rights. The Congress elected a 25-member Central Committee with Comrade Saiful Haq reelected as General Secretary.



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SAVE DEMOCRACY!  
BUILD THE INDIA OF  
OUR MARTYRS' DREAMS!**



**SAVE DEMOCRACY  
SAVE INDIA  
RALLY**



**GANDHI MAIDAN, PATNA  
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