

CR

Communiqué

Vol. 1, No. 1

February 2024

Contents

Introducing <i>CR Communiqué</i>	3
On Basic Documents	4
On Martyrs	5
On Gaza	8
On FCA Amendment	10
Statement on International Situation	12
Statement on National Situation	66
Recent Assembly Elections	120
Com. Nitai Das	127

11

Comrades and friends,

This is the inaugural issue of *CR Communiqué*, organ of the Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India. This issue is a large one due to the documents contained herein; future issues will be smaller.

The "*All India Representatives' Meeting of Comrades of CPRCI(ML) in Defence of the Line*" was held successfully in November 2023. It rejected the wrong line adopted by the majority CC of CPRCI(ML), and upheld the basic line of CPRCI(ML), which is the same as the correct line in the communist revolutionary camp since its emergence.

The following pages contain the resolutions of the meeting on the Basic Documents; martyrs of the international and national communist movement; Israel's attack on Gaza; and the amendment to the FCA. These are followed by the statements on the international and national situation adopted by the meeting. The Meeting also adopted a Statement of Position.

The meeting adopted "Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India" (CCRI) as the name of the organisation, and elected a Central Committee.

Comrades, the real worth of these steps will be proved by what we do in the time to come. As is stated in these documents, we are faced with serious and challenging tasks. Let us apply ourselves in true communist spirit to them.

-- Editor, *CR Communiqué*.

Resolution of All India Representatives' Meet

On the Basic Documents, Particularly on Path of Indian Revolution

We firmly reiterate our commitment to the Basic Documents of CPRCI(ML). We resolve to implement our line embodied in these Basic Documents.

However, a major wrong trend entered the CPRCI(ML), misinterpreting some crucial aspects of the Path of Indian Revolution and Organisational Line, thus constituting a wrong line.

In view of this, it is necessary to emphasize the following points, that are already contained in the Basic Documents:

1. Implementation of the line centered on building of the agrarian revolutionary movement is the immediate and principal task.
2. Agrarian revolutionary movement should be built in all areas of our agrarian work, including commercialised pockets.
3. Development of the Party is linked to the advance of the practice of the line.
4. Further development of the existing correct line is linked to significant advance in line-implementation.

November 2023.

Resolution of All India Representatives' Meet

On Martyrs

We pay homage to the martyrs of the communist movement, worldwide, in our country, and in our party organisation.

World people have time and again waged revolution to liberate themselves from imperialism, capitalism, and all exploitation. In the present era, communists have been in the vanguard of these bitter struggles and have given their lives in the service of the struggling people. Under their leadership, nearly half of humanity was liberated and began constructing socialism, in the Soviet Union, China, and the rest of the socialist camp. Communist fighters also led the people in liberation struggles against colonialism and imperialist occupation. It was the millions of communist martyrs that resisted Hitler-Mussolini-Franco-Tojo fascism, and broke its back. The defeat of fascism weakened imperialism itself and led to the liberation of a large number of countries and the emergence of a socialist camp.

After World War II, as the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations and peoples emerged as the principal contradiction in the world, the communists of Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kampuchea, Laos, Yemen, Cuba, Peru, Philippines, Nepal and other countries led the fight against neocolonialism and imperialist aggression. Countless communists fell in these liberation struggles. Communist revolutionaries take inspiration from all these martyrs and cherish their legacy.

In our country, countless communists were martyred in the struggles against colonialism and native feudalism, most outstandingly the great people's armed struggle of Telangana (1946-51), which liberated over 30 lakhs people over 3,000 villages, and established the line and path of revolution for India.

The Naxalbari and Srikakulam armed struggles followed 21 years later. In the course of them the present communist revolutionary

camp, as such, emerged. The Naxalbari armed revolt re-asserted the protracted people's war path for India and the centrality of the Agrarian Revolution to liberate India. We pay homage to the countless martyrs of the different organisations and trends in the entire communist revolutionary camp in our country over the past more than five decades.

Finally, we pay homage specifically to all of those comrades of our own organisation (the CPRCI-ML, formed in 1995), who devoted their lives to the revolution, among them: (statewise):

Andhra Pradesh: Nimmala Krishnamurthy (Agency Area); Jangamaiah (Agency Area); Vasantada Ramalingachary; Srikakulam Rama Rao; M. Pratap; Arika Gorapanna (Agency Area); Majji Ramamurthy Naidu.

Orissa: Sambaru Madkami; Sadashiv; Sukura Madhi; Sadanand Nayak; Haribandhu Nayak; Judishtir Goud; Samarendra Nayak; Sukumar Sikdar; Swaraj Khemundu.

Punjab: Harbhajan Sohi (former Secretary, CC, CPRCI-ML); Jagsir (Amritpal Passi); Thana Singh; Zora Singh Jalajan; Sadhu Singh Takh-tupura.

West Bengal: Gunadhar Murmu; Sadhan Ray; Asit Ghosh.

In this context, we make separate mention of com. Purshotam Pali, who, though he died before the formation of CPRCI(ML), represented this trend. He scaled the walls of Rajmundry Jail, and resumed work underground in the Koraput region, thereby laying foundations for the Koraput adivasi movement till the time of his death.

In the context of the present meeting, we specially mark the comrades who resolutely applied themselves to the task of building the agrarian revolutionary movement and defending the centrality of this task. Among them, this gathering makes particular

mention of com. Sukumar Sikdar. He left his home state and went to work to build the agrarian revolutionary movement among the adivasis in another state. He did so out of his own firm conviction in the crucial nature of this task. He exemplified the communist values of selflessness, discipline and integration with the people. When the two-line struggle emerged in our organisation, he stood steadfastly with the correct line, and would have carried forward with us today the central task of line implementation centered on agrarian revolutionary movement.

The way to pay homage to these martyrs of the international and national communist movement and those of our own organisation is to take forward that mission, fully conscious of our own historical responsibility.

November 2023.

Resolution of All India Representatives' Meet:

**Demand an Immediate End to the US-Backed Zionist
Attack on Gaza!**

**Join the World Solidarity Movement with the Heroic
Palestinian People!**

**Condemn Modi Regime's Collaboration with Zionist
Fascists, in Service of US Imperialism!**

The heroic October 7, 2023 strike on the Zionist settler colonial state of Israel by the Palestinian resistance forces of Gaza was part of the just Palestinian national liberation struggle. It was a counter-attack against Israel's decades of suppression of the Palestinian people, its stealing of their land, its transforming the whole of Gaza into a concentration camp, and its imprisonment and slaughter of Palestinians for resisting this oppression. The imperialists and their hangers-on slander the Palestinian militants, labeling this a 'terror attack' and a 'war crime'. It is clear as daylight that the October 7 operation was not an indiscriminate attack on Israeli civilians. Rather, it is the Zionist state, not the Palestinian fighters, that was responsible for any deaths of civilians during the strike. The Palestinian fighters aimed to take Israeli hostages alive to trade them for the thousands of Palestinians already being held hostage in Israeli jails.

The Zionist state and its US imperialist patrons are guilty of genocidal war crimes against the Palestinian people, by showering Gaza with bombs, not only directly slaughtering over 10,000 but deliberately creating conditions whereby multiples of that figure will die. The forced displacement, bombing of hospitals, killings of medical personnel, targeted killings of media persons, lackout of power, and denial of food, water and sanitation, are all Hitlerite war crimes carried out with the full-throated backing of the western imperialist countries, who are rushing weapons to Israel to carry on the slaughter. The aim of the Zionist state is to drive out the Palestinians and capture their land and resources. The aim of the

US imperialists is to tighten the US grip on the resource-rich West Asian region, and crush all defiant forces there, so as to restore their declining hegemony over the world.

Despite talk of a multipolar world emerging, neither Russian imperialism nor capitalist China, who are in other serious conflicts with US imperialism, has gone beyond issuing statements. They have not even provided humanitarian assistance to the heroic Palestinian people in the worst hour of their distress, nor carried out active diplomacy to rally countries against Israel's ongoing genocide.

Most of the Arab regimes, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, are collaborating with the US imperialists and Zionists. It is only out of fear of their own indignant masses, who are full-throatedly supporting the people of Gaza, that the Arab rulers are making some critical noises about the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians.

Rather, it is the people of the world who have risen in militant protest against both Israel and US imperialism, and will force the criminals to pay a heavy political price for this latest of their crimes. The world people's response of solidarity with the Palestinian people underlines the fact that the principal contradiction in the world today remains that between imperialism and oppressed nations. The Palestinian people's long, tortuous and sacrifice-filled struggle is for national liberation, through destruction of the Zionist state and the establishment of a single, secular state of all peoples of Palestine. This struggle continues to inspire the people of the world, and instills in them the will to fight till liberation.

The comprador, Hindutva fascist Narendra Modi regime has fully supported the US imperialists and Zionists, labeled the justified resistance by the Palestinians as "terror", and tried to crush all the Indian people's expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people. It all the more becomes the duty of the Indian people to express their solidarity with and support of the heroic Palestinian resistance struggle, as a part of their own revolutionary work.

Zionist Fascists Quit Palestine!

November 2023.

Resolution of All India Representatives' Meet:

Build Resistance Movement Against FCA Amendment and the Attack on Forest-Dwellers!

The Narendra Modi government's Amendment to the Forest Conservation Act is the latest and most brazen attempt by the Indian ruling classes and imperialism to snatch away the land and forest of the forest-dwelling communities, principally the adivasis. The FCA Amendment removes vast areas of forest from the purview of the Act, so as to remove all constraints on the capture of these areas by the corporations of Indian compradors and the imperialist countries. Various categories such as "public utilities", camps against "left-wing extremism", and "any other purpose specified by the Central Government" will be allowed to grab forest lands freely. Even the meagre provisions available to the people under the Forest Rights Act, such as the requirement for gram sabha consent for projects on forest land, have been thrown into the rubbish bin by this Amendment.

Even earlier, the ruling classes have been grabbing forest land, but they will step up their attacks manifold after the passing of this Amendment. Indeed, even before the framing of new rules under the Act, which is stipulated under law before implementation of the Amendment, the rulers have begun to implement it freely. In other words, the Amendment is a signal to the ruling classes for wholesale plunder of the forests. In the same vein, certain state governments are scrapping or loosening the legal provisions preventing the sale of tribal land to non-tribals.

However, over the course of nearly two centuries, first under British colonial rule, and later under comprador-feudal rule, the forest-dwellers have risen again and again in defence of their forests. Time and again the rulers have been compelled to retreat in the face of heroic resistance by the struggling adivasis and other

forest dwellers. In each such uprising, the people have asserted that it is they, and not the marauders, who have collective right over the forests, forest land, and all associated resources. It is due to these movements that the marauders were not able to capture all the forests. We pay homage to all these heroic fighters. We call on all the democratic and revolutionary forces to build a powerful resistance movement on the ground to fight back this latest attack, and in the course of building such a movement, advance the struggle for the collective sovereignty of the adivasis and other forest dwelling people over the forests, forest lands, and all associated resources.

November 2023.

Statement on the International Situation

The Imperialist Crisis Is Intensifying; Organise the Masses to Fight Back Imperialist Plunder and Aggression

(Adopted November 2023)

I

A century has passed since the victory of the Great October Revolution and the forging of the third international of the working class, the Communist International. Seven decades ago, revolutions triumphed in a number of other countries, and a mighty socialist camp emerged, encompassing a third of the world's population. These revolutions provided humanity living evidence of a social order free of exploitation, misery, unemployment, and war-mongering, one in which the vast masses of people wielded real political power.

Despite the later reverses which restored capitalism in these countries, their achievements can never be wiped out of the historical consciousness of the world people. The people of the world will struggle, fail and struggle again until they have re-established socialism and renewed their march toward a new world free from all exploitation and oppression.

Each contingent of the world proletariat wages revolutionary struggle in its own country as part of the world revolution. To do that, it must make a concrete class analysis of world politics and economics as a whole and of actual world conditions, that is to say, of the fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world, and in its own country. It must periodically take stock of developments in the objective situation in the world and in its own country. This analysis guides its practice in the current period.

The fundamental contradictions operating in the contemporary world are:

- (1) the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism;
- (2) the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries; and
- (3) the contradictions among imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist groups.

While the struggle between imperialism and socialism runs throughout the present era, the contradiction between the socialist system and the imperialist system has become non-existent for the time being. It will re-emerge only with the victory of the proletarian revolution in one or more countries.

The principal contradiction operating worldwide remains the contradiction between oppressed nations and imperialism. It is this contradiction that continues to be the stormiest, and holds the greatest promise for the outbreak of revolutions and breaches in the world imperialist order. In recent years, the imperialist powers made staggering expenditures, waged wars and spread wholesale terror; they took advantage of the continued lack of a socialist state that could have lent support to the oppressed nations; and they enjoyed a decade-long muting of inter-imperialist contradictions, which allowed them to focus all their fire on the Third World. Despite all these favourable factors, they did not succeed in subduing the oppressed nations as they wished. Moreover, long-standing reliable stooges of imperialism were periodically shaken by massive popular upsurges such as the Arab Spring. The imperialists, in particular US imperialism, have thus fallen short of their grandiose economic and political aims.

Moreover, even the massive gains made by imperialism in the name of 'globalisation' could not prevent the world imperialist economy from sinking into crisis in 2008. Since then, despite

unprecedented efforts of the imperialist chieftains, and accelerated loot of the oppressed nations, the crisis was only temporarily staved off. It is now set to intensify once more.

These economic and political failures are intensifying the internal contradictions of the imperialist countries and camp:

— Today, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries has taken a significant turn, and is intensifying. The recent strike waves in Britain and France are the latest signs of this trend.

— The contradiction among imperialist countries, and among monopoly capitalist groups too, has taken the form of proxy war in Europe itself. At least two poles have emerged, and further fissures may take place. The world situation has become explosive.

No crisis, however acute, will result in a revolution unless the proletarian revolutionary forces arm themselves with the correct line and policies, organise themselves and lead the masses in a revolutionary way. At present, no doubt, the subjective forces of the different contingents of the proletariat worldwide are still weak. As such this fact constitutes part of the objective situation confronting each individual contingent of the world proletariat. However, the proletarian revolutionary forces in different countries, even amid great adversity, have defended their ideology and persisted in their course. As they apply their ideology and grapple with the problems of revolutionary practice, they will make breakthroughs in their respective revolutions. And a breach anywhere in the imperialist front worldwide will be a beacon to the revolutionary forces and masses everywhere.

In recent years, the fundamental contradictions at the world level have sharpened severely, posing grave and urgent challenges before the world proletariat.

*** Intensified plunder of the Third World and the working masses:**

Using the Covid-19 crisis as an instrument and a cover, the imperialist countries have intensified exploitation and outright plunder of the people of all lands. In particular, they and their compradors have grabbed the assets of the people of the Third World, and pushed down the wage levels of workers of all lands. This has resulted in a massive increase in poverty, unemployment and misery at one pole, and wealth of the ruling classes at the other pole. This imperialist attack has been fiercest in the Third World countries, where hundreds of millions of people have lost assets, livelihoods and wages even as the imperialists and comprador class have accumulated unprecedented riches. The world economy, which has not recovered from the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, is entering another Great Depression.

*** Inter-imperialist rivalries intensifying, threatening broader war:**

The existing structure of imperialist powers, headed by the US imperialist superpower, is under unprecedented strain. All the imperialist aggressions of the last two decades have failed to achieve their ends. This is due principally to the long-drawn resistance waged by peoples of the Third World, even in the absence of revolutionary leadership. Frustrated by these failures, the imperialist powers are now beginning to turn on one another. The basic content of their rivalries is the contention for shares in the loot of the world. Developments have now taken a distinct and significant turn, and are now breaking out into proxy war, such as in Ukraine. These rivalries are heightening the danger of a broader war.

*** Proliferation and strengthening of fascistic forces:** Due to the present limitations of the proletarian revolutionary forces, the intensifying class contradictions are not yet finding their proper outlet in revolutionary class struggle. Taking advantage of this situation, the ruling classes of both the imperialist countries and the Third World are fostering fascistic forces of various types, to pre-empt the class struggle and intensify exploitation and expropriation of the

masses. These fascistic forces are trying to re-shape the minds of the people in a fascist direction, and are staging brazen assaults on the democratic and revolutionary forces of the people. As the world crisis intensifies, and economic hardships of the people intensify, these ruling class political and physical attacks too are set to intensify. The proletarian revolutionary forces must entrench themselves among the basic masses, lead their struggles for their class demands, and in the course of these struggles defeat the fascist threat.

The world proletarian revolutionary forces must lead the people of the world to confront this triple attack of imperialist plunder, war and fascism with the weapon of class struggle.

II

Nature of present world imperialist crisis

Imperialism, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, is a paper tiger. On this we should base our strategic thinking. We should not fear it, should not be deterred from the path of revolution. At the same time, it is a living tiger, a real tiger which can devour people, and on this we should base our tactical thinking. This profound formulation of com. Mao is confirmed by the reality of the present world situation. On the one hand, the imperialist order is confronting multiple crises. On the other hand, imperialism is attacking the people all the more ferociously and dangerously.

The world imperialist economy is in the grip of a comprehensive crisis. In essence, its character is a crisis of overproduction. On the one hand capitalism has unleashed enormous productive power, and at the same time all that the existing productive forces can produce cannot be absorbed, due to the poverty of the working masses, and due to the necessity for capitalists to make a profit

on that production. In other words, the crisis of overproduction is due to the exploitation of the masses, and the capitalists' relentless drive for accumulating wealth. The existing productive forces more than suffice for the toiling people to meet their real material needs and enjoy a dignified and secure existence; all that prevents them is the capitalist system (whereby the means of production are in private hands).

The giant financial and speculative boom between 2002 and 2008 was followed by the great global financial crisis of 2008. Since the world economy had become more tied together through imperialist globalisation in the preceding two decades, the boom directly affected all parts of the world economy, and correspondingly the crisis did so too. Since an unprecedented quantity of credit had been pumped in throughout the world during the boom, the full purging of these financial excesses was not possible, nor did a recovery take place. There is no durable or vibrant revival even after the lapse of more than a decade.

Imperialism always tries to extricate itself from crisis by throwing the burden onto the oppressed nations. It does this by invading their markets, depressing their wage levels, depressing the prices of their export commodities, and extorting their assets. As a result of these processes, real wage levels are falling in large swathes of the Third World, the peasantry are receiving lower prices for their produce, and the economies are sliding into recession. The imperialists are using the debts of these countries as a lever to force them to sell off their national assets and natural resources at depressed values. While such measures add to the accumulated wealth of the imperialist countries, they do not revive demand for their corporations, without which the recovery cannot take place.

The latest outbreak of economic crisis has gripped the world economy for 15 years now, without any reliable reprieve. Each superficial sign of recovery has yielded to a fresh downturn. This eco-

economic crisis has intensified rivalries among the imperialist powers or blocs to grab shares of the global economic surplus. Now these rivalries are resulting in political developments which in turn contribute to the economic crisis, as in the case of the Ukraine war and the US-China trade war and military shadow-boxing.

Impact of inter-imperialist contention on globalisation

In these conditions of deepening economic crisis, there is a sharpening of contention among imperialist countries/blocs. The contending countries pursue two methods of contention. The US is the chief representative of the first method, using brute economic and political force to extort a larger share for its national capital. This includes (1) giant subsidies for US producers, particularly in key industries involving advanced technology; (2) conflicts such as trade wars or even armed conflicts, which might result ultimately in shrinking total production worldwide, and therefore total surplus; (3) a partial restructuring of global production networks, which are at present centered in China (including partial 'de-globalisation'). It may face setbacks when such pressure faces resistance (e.g., US attempts to reduce European trade and investment links with China). If the US-led process continues and intensifies, separate global production networks will emerge, headed by different imperialist countries.

The US can take advantage of its sole superpower position to extract certain gains. But by resorting to force, the US is in fact betraying its economic weakness. At the same time, even this method does not attempt to do away with globalisation, since the US's leading corporations have thoroughly globalised production structures; it is an attempt to re-shape globalisation in line with the US drive for hegemony, and extract a greater share through arm-twisting. This drive of US imperialism clashes with the interests of some of

the other leading imperialist powers, such as France and Germany, who have protested vocally.

The second method of contention, represented chiefly by China, is the method pursued by US imperialism in its heyday, namely, of intensified globalisation, penetrating markets through trade, loans, and investment, building political and military ties on this basis, and capturing economic territory thereby. However, since China is pursuing this in a period of growing contention for economic territory, this method cannot proceed in its natural way, i.e. of 'peaceful' competition. It too must proceed in a contentious way.

Even amid this growing contention, for the oppressed nations themselves 'globalisation' remains the banner under which their economies are continuously re-shaped by imperialism for intensified exploitation and predation. Imperialist influence and control are never a spontaneous process of interaction between imperialism and oppressed nations, but always involve domination and extortion; hence any shifts in the relative strengths and influence of different imperialist powers are never 'pure' economic processes, but involve power relations.

Anti-imperialist struggles of world people playing key role in accentuating other contradictions

At the same time, principally due to the heroic anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples of the Third World, the economic and political hegemony of the leading imperialist power (the US imperialist superpower) has declined at a faster pace than in earlier years. This decline of US imperialism has been taking place for five decades, and continued even after the collapse of its superpower rival in 1989-91. In this period, US imperialism's reckless global drive of aggression and bullying was actually an attempt to rejuvenate its imperialist strength. The relative weakness and compliance of other imperialist powers created an illusion of US omnipotence for some time.

This illusion has been punctured. It was punctured not primarily by the re-emergence of imperialist rivals, but chiefly by the gritty resistance of the oppressed countries and peoples. Even without aid from imperialist rivals of the US, and at a terrible human price to themselves, the masses of the oppressed countries held US imperialism to a stalemate in each such bid. Thereby they collectively undermined it as a whole.

The cumulative effect of this decline is manifesting itself at a number of flashpoints across the globe, where the US imperialists are less able than before to exercise their writ over defiant countries and peoples of the Third World.

In this situation, the leading western imperialist powers, which had joined the US imperialists in their criminal ventures are voicing their distinct imperialist interests, and the Russian imperialists are coming out into direct opposition. This underlines the fact that the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed countries and peoples continues to be the principal contradiction worldwide, chiefly determining the course of world development.

The different imperialist powers are seeking out new alignments and spheres of influence in the changing situation. Thus the contradictions among imperialist countries are sharpening, even as their alignments are still fluid. All such contradictions in the enemy camp are objectively a reserve for the revolution. The use of these contradictions is contingent on the strength, clarity and capability of the revolutionary forces, which must be developed in the thick of class struggle.

The world imperialist system can never be free of war. At no time after the collapse of the Soviet Union has the world been free from the torment of war, but these have been in the main wars of imperialist aggression, principally by US imperialism, on the people of the Third World or weak capitalist countries such as former Yugoslavia. However, as the leading imperialist powers/blocs shift the focus of their strategies from the Third World to one another,

the rivalry has taken the form of inter-imperialist proxy wars, as in Ukraine.

Emergence of imperialist blocs

As yet US imperialism alone enjoys the status of a superpower, aspiring for global hegemony, with investments, political influence and military bases and operations spanning the entire globe. It still is able to act with impunity. However, it is in decline, and this decline is in the process of divesting it of its superpower status.

The revival of Russian imperialism, and the possibility of its forming a bloc with China, do not mark the revival of Russia as a superpower, in the sense of a power that can contend for exclusive global hegemony. The circumstances under which the Soviet Union became a superpower no longer obtain. Rather, this development marks the transition to an international regime of blocs, in which all of the blocs fall short as contenders for global hegemony. Neither the number of blocs, nor the alignment or polarisation of different powers among the blocs, nor the time span of this transition, is clear as yet.

As Russia possesses a vast nuclear arsenal (and associated military technology), comparable to that of US imperialism, it would be a vital component of any rival imperialist bloc. France and the UK too have sizeable nuclear arsenals with scope for rapid scaling-up, and Japan and Germany can create sizeable arsenals within a short time. As such the emergence of multiple nuclear-armed imperialist blocs is mainly a question of political decision on the part of these other imperialist powers, contingent on the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions.

Hence, the tactical policy of the world proletariat at present will be to target the major imperialist powers, in particular US imperialism. Since other imperialist powers exercise influence and control in specific regions, specific powers will be targeted with respect to

specific regions. However, since US imperialism remains the sole global-hegemonic power, the tactical policy must take care to bring it under fire in all regions. Moreover, till there is a qualitative change in the respective statuses of different imperialist powers, the edge of anti-imperialist struggle must be against US imperialism.

With regard to Syria, which is a Third World country, the direct and indirect aggression by US imperialism must be targeted, the just national resistance by the Syrian people must be upheld, and Syria's right to take help from any other power to defend its sovereignty should be upheld. At the same time, the imperialist interests and calculations of Russia in intervening on Syria's side must be exposed and warned against.

The current war in Ukraine is an unjust war, of which the Ukrainian people are the immediate victims. It is a war between two sets of bandits, the US-led imperialist bloc and Russian imperialism. The people of Ukraine are the immediate victims of this struggle between bandits. They must fight to free themselves from both bandits, including crucially their own ruling classes, who have cast the people into death and destruction by tying Ukraine to the war-chariot of the US imperialists.

Not only the Ukrainian people, but the people of the whole world are suffering in multiple ways due to the war, and face the threat of even worse harm and devastation. They too must rise up to oppose the war as an urgent task. Within this overall frame, the people must place the edge of their struggle against the war-designs of the US imperialist superpower, which is driving this war to prolong its global hegemony. At the same time, the imperialist interests and annexations by Russian imperialism must be exposed and opposed.

The US imperialists and their European allies overthrew the erstwhile government of Ukraine and set in motion the reactionary transformation of the country. The Ukrainian ruling classes then hitched themselves to the war chariot of the US imperialist super-

power, thereby forfeiting the right to claim defence of national sovereignty against Russia's attack. At the same time, Russia is a monopoly capitalist country and an imperialist power. Thus it too is not defending its national sovereignty against attack, nor the rights of the Donbass people (the Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine), but defending its present and future imperialist interests.

In the course of the war, Russia has faced unexpected difficulty in achieving its military aims in Ukraine fully, as a result of which Russian armed forces are tied down. This casts doubt over Russia's ability to project its military power worldwide. At the same time, the US imperialists' attempts to crush the Russian economy, including by seizing Russia's foreign exchange reserves, have not succeeded. The Russian economy has continued to function, and its exports of petroleum products have only changed direction. Instead the US-led sanctions have given an impetus to efforts by various countries to explore alternative mechanisms of trade and financial flows, and stores of value, outside the dollar.

Further, Russia is calculating that the strains imposed by the present crisis on the European imperialist powers will increase the rifts in the western imperialist alliance. For example, the sabotage of the Nordstream gas pipeline, which has been carried out by the US or its proxies, denies Europe cheap Russian gas, and forces it to purchase expensive American gas. Given the dependence of German industry on gas, this poses a major threat to the competitiveness of German industry. Despite this, as yet the US has been able to maintain its grip on the western imperialist alliance, and, along with its faithful ally Britain, it has been able to rally the major European powers to support its war in Ukraine.

These developments illustrate (1) the relative decline of the US imperialist superpower; (2) the limitations of Russian imperialism even in its immediate vicinity; and (3) the cracks in the western imperialist alliance. All these trends indicate a phase of transition.

At the same time, no Russia-China bloc has emerged as yet:

Russia and China have been building economic and strategic ties (for example in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa forum, and infrastructure projects spanning the two countries) and have carried out joint military exercises. However, during the Ukraine war, China has not provided any military assistance to Russia, and not directly helped it defeat western imperialist sanctions. It has abstained on certain important votes regarding the Ukraine war in international forums, and has taken care to maintain neutrality, including in its economic ties with Ukraine. Hence, even in a situation in which the US imperialist superpower is targeting China with relation to Taiwan and other questions, and simultaneously pursuing a proxy war with Russia, Russia and China have not formed a full-fledged alliance.

Imperialism's attacks on the people intensify

Even as the principal imperialist power is weakening, and the imperialist camp is undergoing a phase of transition and uncertainty, imperialism's attacks on the people have not diminished. In fact, imperialism as a whole is exploiting and devastating the world people with unprecedented ferocity, ruthlessness, and recklessness. Exploitation and devastation have taken new and more dangerous forms, imperilling the livelihoods and social fabric of billions of people, and even the very natural environment itself, thus ultimately all human civilisation and existence.

Even as the imperialist powers/blocs are contending with one another with regard to the distribution of the loot, they are all pressing to increase the loot itself. For the people of oppressed nations, the impacts of the different multilateral trade deals pressed by different blocs are on the same ruinous lines. All the imperialist powers/blocs press for the opening up of Third World countries to imports and foreign investment, deploy loans and tightly controlled technology to capture markets and extract superprofits, and preda-

torily acquire land and natural assets in the Third World. For the people of the oppressed nations, this fact remains primary for their revolutionary practice. It is the advance of their revolutions that will open up scope for them to make use of the inter-imperialist contradictions.

Imperialists and their minions have also devised new political means and tactics, and revived old ones, to counter-attack people's strivings for control over their own destiny. The two most prominent are the menacing use of information and communications technology and associated media; and the promotion of sectarian strife (racism, communalism and fascistic ideologies) to pit the masses against one another, instead of against the ruling classes. Thus even as the world conditions make revolution a more urgent necessity, the proletariat and the world people face severe challenges in uniting, forging their instruments and liberating themselves from the imperialist world order.

The communist revolutionary parties and forces need to strengthen themselves ideologically, politically and organizationally in order to win over the masses and gain leadership over their class struggles. They must do this in the course of integrating with the masses and resolving the concrete questions of class struggle in order to show the masses the way forward. For it is the people who make history.

III

Present state of neocolonial exploitation and oppression

In the last quarter century, there is no basic change to neocolonial relations. At the same time, some partial changes have come about under the project of 'globalisation'. 'Globalisation' re-shapes the world economy to enable imperialism to get hold of super-exploited Third World workers, invade Third World markets, and grab

Third World natural resources and land. The various aggressive means being employed by imperialism at present undermine the stability of the neocolonial order, since they undermine the pretensions of the native ruling classes, the allies of imperialism, to independence and people's welfare. Repeated changes of government which carry little credibility, mass upsurges such as those in Tunisia, Egypt, and other Arab countries in 2010, and mass upsurges and protests in most countries in Latin America are visible manifestations of this instability of the neocolonial order.

Increased role of predatory accumulation; tightening grip of imperialism, more direct intervention

Today imperialism has reached an advanced level of degeneration, when it is in a desperate hurry to accumulate wealth by any means. In this phase it has brought predatory means to the fore once again, particularly in its loot of the Third World. This is damaging the stability of neocolonial rule, as intermediate sections too are displaced, masses of people are thrust urgently into fierce resistance, and the facade of democracy and welfare gets damaged. Nevertheless, as earlier, the two forms of wealth accumulation – exploiting in the course of production, and grabbing by force – remain intertwined.

The pattern of concentration of capital in giant monopolies that Lenin laid bare a century ago is even more marked today. Just 500 giant firms account for 40 per cent of world GDP. More than 30 per cent of global trade takes place within individual MNCs, i.e., among their subsidiaries in different countries. These giant firms, employing their respective imperialist State powers, have been re-shaping the world according to the requirements of their continuing accumulation of capital.

On top of submitting to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the rulers of Third World countries have signed another 400 region-

al trade agreements and 4,000 bilateral investment treaties which have gone much further than even the WTO in enforcing the opening up to imports, removal of domestic subsidies, removal of protections to domestic producers, and monopoly rents (e.g., patents) to corporations of imperialist countries. Disputes under these treaties are adjudicated abroad, under the domination of multinational corporations. All these treacherous treaties have been negotiated, enacted and implemented by the local agents of imperialism ruling in the Third World, who put on a periodic sham show of resistance in international forums.

Expansion of the global reserve army of labour and depression of wages

'Globalisation' policies implemented by Third World rulers have handed over more and more sectors of the Third World to imperialist capture, destroying domestic industries and livelihoods in those countries. Imperialist-dictated policies have attacked the productive activities and livelihoods of people in the Third World, thus expanding the reserve army of labour there. (The 'reserve army' is the pool of unemployed or under-employed workers who can be drawn on by the capitalists to replace their regular employed workers. This threat keeps down the level of the wage.) By opening up and penetrating further the Third World economies, imperialism and its agents have succeeded in placing a vast sweated labour force at their disposal, consisting of both active and reserve armies of labour. Whereas about 1.4 billion people toil worldwide as wage workers, in the active army of labour, another 2.4 billion or more languish in the global reserve army of labour, either unemployed or eking out an existence in the unorganised sector and agriculture. Further, the labour of women performing unnumbered types of daily labour for the family's survival is keeping down the costs of reproduction of labour power, and hence is indirectly exploited by the

capitalist employing the worker. Thus the myriad labour of all these toilers indirectly enters into the extractions made by imperialism.

By gaining access to this huge reserve army, Capital ensures that wages everywhere are kept at the lowest possible levels. Both active and reserve armies are made up of different layers, dispersed over different segments of the Third World. Thus a Mexican worker will work for 16 per cent of US wages, a Chinese worker for 4 per cent, and Indian and Bangladeshi workers for 2 per cent.

On the one hand, this globalisation of labour increases the links among the different contingents of the world proletariat, increasing the scope for joint actions in the spirit of trade union solidarity, anti-imperialism and proletarian internationalism. However, given the vast labour reserves in the Third World, and the practice of international capital to maintain a multiplicity of supply chains, the workers in these chains by and large do not possess effective striking power, as in the ability to paralyse production.

More basically, globalisation does not lay the basis for a simultaneous world revolution, as the unevenness among nations, in particular the division between imperialist and oppressed nations, remains and is continuously reproduced. The working class of different countries must first carry out revolutions in their own countries, and de-link from the imperialist shackles, to achieve liberation. So the main field of working class action remains national, in alliance with the peasantry and other revolutionary classes. However, they should use the increased links with workers of different countries to spread the message of proletarian internationalism and working class solidarity.

Predatory capture of land

Imperialism has re-shaped the laws and policies of the dominated countries to capture national assets and finite resources, including the most basic of all, land. Upto 200 million acres have

been shifted from growing food requirements to real estate or export crops, the natural environment has been damaged, and tens of millions of peasants have been dispossessed. The imperialist-ruled world economy and the stunted, distorted economies of Third World countries are inherently unable to absorb these dispossessed toilers in regular wage work. This process is not proletarianisation but pauperisation. Myriad toilers survive on meagre means of subsistence, including agriculture and petty livelihoods of various types, based on family labour.

As such, imperialism continues to require alliances with forces of native reaction in the semi-colonies and dependent countries, in order to maintain its social domination there and prevent the pauperised masses from rising in revolt. And hence the long-pending democratic revolutionary tasks remain critical to the revolutions in these countries.

Unequal exchange, imperialist extortion

World trade under imperialist domination is a machine for squeezing surplus out of the Third World through unequal exchange. The Third World loses each year a sum equivalent to one fourth of its official national income in this way. Moreover, the heavy, often hidden, environmental costs of producing exports, such as mineral wealth, leather goods, or palmolein are dumped on the Third World people without recompense. Imperialist agencies exploit periodic Third World debt crises in order to drive down their export prices even further. Thus unequal exchange is not a spontaneous process, but is sustained by imperialist intervention and extortion, and the faithful service rendered by the comprador ruling classes of the Third World.

Because of such unequal exchange, the import bills of most Third World countries are perennially higher than their export earnings. As a result, they hunt for foreign loans or foreign investment, and

accept the terms placed by imperialist capital. The IMF and World Bank have long provided loans to such countries, and used the conditions to enforce the writ of the imperialist countries. According to the World Bank, the indebtedness of Third World countries has now risen to 170 per cent of their GDP.

Rule of foreign financial capital

While this practice of mortgaging countries for foreign loans continues, now the main source of foreign funds to the Third World is foreign investment (direct investment in firms, investment in debt instruments or share market investment). Vast sectors of these Third World economies have been captured by foreign capital in the last two decades. Foreign investors dominate the share markets too. A large part of this investment can fly out of the recipient country at short notice.

This means that foreign investors can respond to any Government policy or political development which displeases them by withdrawing capital, and plunging the economy into a crisis. They are also represented by international credit ratings agencies which assess the 'risk' of each country, and brazenly demand policies favouring foreign capital. The Third World rulers dance to the tune of these agencies. Thus the huge foreign speculative investments in India act as one more permanent, in-built mechanism for foreign capital to exercise indirect rule.

This underlines once again that parliamentary democracy under such a rule can only be a mere sham, where the real, material 'vote' of a handful of foreign speculators must prevail over the paper votes of the entire citizenry. The oppressed masses cannot break decisively from imperialism and chart their independent course as long as they remain within the framework of their existing States.

In the name of 'liberalisation', 'globalisation', and 'financialisa-

tion', imperialism and its local agents have created multiple financial channels, licit and illicit, to suck wealth out of the Third World. The sums transferred out of the Third World in a single year are \$2 trillion more than the entire foreign investment, loans and aid they receive in that year. Another \$1 trillion is transferred through other means, such as multinationals' practice of shifting profits (through fraudulent accounting) between their subsidiaries in different countries. Combining these transfers, more than \$16 trillion has been transferred out of the Third World since 1980.

Much of this wealth is routed legally and illegally to tax haven countries. In these tax havens alone imperialists and their Third World compradors have piled up \$21 trillion, that is, about one-fourth of world GDP. This sum is well over twice the entire debt of the Third World (\$8 trillion) – a further proof that the Third World countries have paid their 'debt' many times over to the international usurers, even as they continue to fall deeper in debt. In order to service their debt they contract new debts and open themselves to vulture-like foreign investors. Entire economies have been made subject to fickle inflows and outflows of imperialist capital. The meagre social claims of the Third World masses, won through earlier struggles, have been relentlessly attacked in order to meet the claims of international usurers. In the name of reducing government deficits, precious national assets are privatized and handed over to foreign investors for a song.

Global chains reproducing neocolonial relations

Through globalisation, imperialism has been able to use vast networks of production sites spread over the Third World to manufacture goods. By 2013 more than 450 million people worked in these global commodity chains, producing everything from agricultural products to electronic goods and cars.

The intellectual peddlers of imperialism depict this as the industrial development of the Third World. However, in the entire chain, the overwhelming bulk of the income accrues to multinational corporations at the start of the chain (management, technology and design fees) and at the end (transport, marketing, and branding), which are located in the imperialist countries. Hardly 10 per cent of the income comes to the Third World countries where the actual manufacture takes place. Contrary to the propaganda of imperialist ideologists, these chains do not help Third World countries 'catch up' with the imperialist countries. Instead, they reproduce the existing exploitative relations and gulf between the metropolitan countries and the Third World. They break the internal linkages of the Third World economies and make them dependent on external markets. By 2010, these networks accounted for \$2 trillion in sales.

Shrinking share of wages and peasant income, depression of demand, massive accumulation of wealth at the summit

Using this sweated Third World labour force as a lever, imperialism is able to attack its own working class, and depress its wages. The real incomes of more than two-thirds of households in the imperialist countries have fallen. Yet the shift of production out of the imperialist countries does not lead to a corresponding growth of wages in the Third World. Imperialist penetration destroys Third World subsistence employment in agriculture, small trade, and small manufacturing units. By creating more unemployed workers, this replenishes the Third World reserve army, and thus keeps down wages.

Through the combination of its policies in the Third World and in the imperialist countries, imperialism has greatly shrunk the share of wages in the total social product of the world economy, even to the point of shrinking the real incomes of vast masses of working people. Imperialist globalisation is thus an attack on the working

class of the imperialist countries too. The share of wages in world output, which during most of the 20th century had been considered an unchanging ratio, has fallen steadily since the 1980s. Correspondingly the share of profits, which go to Capital, has risen steadily.

In the name of controlling inflation, imperialists impose harsh austerity measures on the Third World through their local regimes. Certain agencies of the State, in particular the central bank, are given 'autonomy' from the political establishment, their top cadre are parachuted from international agencies, and these institutions are made answerable primarily to international capital. They enforce austerity ruthlessly, starving the economy of demand. The prices peasants and petty producers receive for their output, and the wages of workers, are suppressed. Thus so-called 'inflation control' is actually deflation of incomes of the toiling masses.

The suppression of workers' wages and the prices received by petty commodity producers, and the predatory capture of natural and other national assets, have correspondingly enriched a tiny elite of monopoly capitalists, financial parasites, and their hangers-on. They have created a world of both unprecedented wealth and unprecedented inequality. The top one per cent of the world population owns 44 per cent of world wealth. The top 11 per cent owns 83 per cent of the wealth. The bottom 57 per cent of the world population owns 2 per cent of the wealth. The consciousness of these staggering inequalities has spread among the masses everywhere, resulting in mass upheavals or agitations in country after country, from the Third World to even the imperialist countries. However, the process of imperialism by which this simultaneous enrichment and impoverisation take place needs to be laid bare.

The role of finance has increased enormously in the global economy. This represents a great intensification of imperialist parasitism. Financial liberalisation and globalisation enable imperialist capital to enter or exit any economy and any sector in the world. They enable vast fortunes to be accumulated in the frenzied trad-

ing of paper claims on the underlying surplus value, which is generated in actual production. They enable the creation of giant financial bubbles which generate growth for a period, followed by deep depressions when these bubbles burst. They enable US imperialism to extort surpluses from the entire world, to pay for its trade deficits. They enable the predatory capture of national assets by imperialist vultures in the form of privatisation and acquisitions. However, this financialisation is not a separate stage of capitalism. It is an aspect of the present-day imperialist economy. In order to carry out its extractions, it ultimately depends on the production of surplus in the actual production of goods and services by billions of toilers.

The present dominance of finance does not rule out the emergence of other models of capitalism which place, at least for a time or in certain respects, restraint on finance. These models may emerge in the course of the present crisis. However, the tendency toward financialisation is inherent in capitalism, the entire aim of which is the accumulation of wealth in private hands.

Imperialism and the environment

In the recent period the destruction of the natural environment has come to the fore as an immediate threat to the existence of vast numbers of people. While the question of the environment has always been an aspect of class struggle, the urgency of this aspect has now increased. It is all the more necessary to bring a revolutionary class perspective to the spontaneous resistance being undertaken in various parts of the world.

Under capitalism, the purpose of production is not to meet people's needs, but to accumulate capital. There is no contradiction between the finite resources of the earth and the finite material needs of the people for a dignified and cultured existence. But

there is an inherent contradiction between the finite resources of the earth and capitalism's limitless accumulation drive.

In the course of its history capitalism has re-shaped the natural environment according to the requirements of its accumulation drive. Imperialism, the latest stage of capitalism, has accelerated this destruction to bring the world to the brink of environmental catastrophe. It is estimated that, since 1970, 60 per cent of the world's wildlife vertebrate population has been wiped out.

Multinational corporations have grabbed vast tracts of land in the Third World, in the course of this grabbing the water resources housed there. Vessels from the imperialist countries have grabbed the oceans from the small fishers of the Third World using both 'legal' means and outright piracy. Industrial ships, making up just 1 per cent of the global fishing fleet, grab 60 per cent of the seafood catch, often permanently depleting the supply of different species and robbing the Third World diets of a vital source of protein and nutrients. In this robbery, the rulers of Third World countries are complicit, either selling the country's fishing rights for a pittance, or permitting illegal fishing by foreign vessels. Imperialist countries' corporations are also grabbing the seas for their mineral wealth, ignoring both the fact that the seas are a global commons, which belong to no country, and the environmental consequences of such mining. The melting of the Arctic ice, a grave sign of catastrophic global warming, has spurred a race among imperialist powers to exploit the mineral treasures beneath the melting ice sheets.

Take up the climate question from a militant anti-imperialist perspective

The calamity of climate change is a creation of capitalism, later imperialism. But it is now being used to further the aims of imperialism, at the cost of the victims of imperialism. The poorest 50

per cent of the world's population (3.5 billion people) are responsible for only 10 per cent of carbon emissions, while the richest 10 per cent of the world's population (700 million) are responsible for 50 per cent of the carbon emissions. The imperialist countries also calculate that the Third World countries, which are located in already warm zones, and are still dependent on agriculture, will be the main victims of climate change. Severe weather events are already occurring, taking a heavy toll of the people in the South.

The response of the imperialist countries to the threat of climate change over the past four decades has been:

-- First, to exhaust as much as possible of the global carbon budget (in effect, racing to colonise what is left of the world's atmosphere) for their own enrichment, before Third World countries can use it. The imperialist countries account for at least two-thirds of cumulative emissions of carbon. The consumption of an average US citizen results in 12 times the carbon emissions as that of an average Indian. Even now, the US is making vast, long-term investments in fossil fuels, and is one of the world's largest oil and gas exporters.

-- Second, to apply pressure on the Third World countries to bear the burden of preventing climate change, by curtailing the Third World's own emissions, at a heavy economic cost. Countries such as India have taken on commitments to curb their emissions, without receiving in return either compensation, financial aid, or technology. As part of this, lands are being grabbed from indigenous peoples the world over, and handed over to corporations for 'afforestation'.

-- Third, to pressurize the Third World to buy imperialist countries' technology for 'renewable energy' and other mitigation.

-- Fourth, to make plans for exploiting the multiple crises (food, water, energy, migration, unrest, regional wars) that will be engendered by climate change, to serve imperialist hegemonic strategies.

The comprador rulers of the Third World countries, bought over by the bribes and lobbying of the imperialist powers, have failed to unite and vigorously demand that the imperialist powers reduce their emissions and pay Third World countries the costs of mitigation and 'adaptation'. Instead these comprador rulers have chosen to strike separate deals with the imperialists, thereby serving the imperialists' interests. Second, they have not taken any steps to prepare their own people for 'adaptation' to climate change (which would mean protecting people and their economic activity from the negative effects of climate change). Thus the struggle of the Third World people against climate change must also be targeted at their own comprador rulers.

Powerful corporate and financial interests of the imperialist countries have stakes in new renewable energy and other 'green' technologies. Thus the coming years will see intense pressure from the imperialist countries for Third World countries to make changes in a way that will be profitable to the imperialist countries. They will also place pressure for 'afforestation' and dispossession of forest dwellers in the name of reducing carbon emissions.

In the coming years, the impact of climate change will be felt more and more. Its negative impact will be greatest in the tropical regions, where the Third World countries are located. In particular the peasant masses will face even more irregular rainfall, unusual temperatures, new pests, and destructive weather events, which may lead to a fall in production even in absolute terms. The life systems of forests will be severely affected in unpredictable ways. All these changes will accentuate the existing class contradictions, since poor peasants, including tribals, are the least equipped to face these disruptive changes. At the same time, various parasitic domestic class forces will use these calamities to make trading profits and to grab land.

The current movements of petty bourgeois youth in the imperialist countries, and to some extent in the Third World, for measures

to mitigate climate change, lack the above anti-imperialist and class perspective. Hence, whatever the intentions of many participants, they can easily be manipulated to serve the aims of imperialist countries, turning their fire instead on the people of the Third World in the name of a 'climate emergency'. For this reason the petty bourgeois climate campaigners are receiving lavish publicity from the imperialist media, being invited to address global summits, and so on. The people of the Third World need to beware of such movements, and take up the climate question from a militant anti-imperialist perspective.

Questions of 'human rights' and 'terrorism', weapons used by imperialists against oppressed countries

Among the political weapons imperialism has used against the Third World in the recent period, two important ones are 'human rights' and 'terrorism'. US imperialism invaded ex-Yugoslavia in the name of 'humanitarian intervention' in 1999. Under US imperialist tutelage, the United Nations in 2005 adopted the doctrine of 'responsibility to protect', which provides imperialist countries legal license to commit aggression in Third World countries in the name of protecting the citizens of those countries from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Under these banners the imperialists have been terrorising and ravaging Libya, Syria, Yemen, and other countries. The real human rights of the people of these countries critically include their sovereignty and independence from imperialism. It is necessary to systematically expose the insidious propaganda of the imperialists as well as sundry imperialist fronts masked as 'human rights' organisations.

After the collapse of the USSR, US imperialism decided to use the fight against global 'terrorism' as a justification for its global hegemonic drive. This gained additional force with the 9-11 attacks in the US. Thereafter not only the US, but other imperialist powers too (such as France, Britain, and Russia) have adopted terrorism as

the justification for heightened internal repression and imperialist interference and intervention. This has also been adopted by other reactionary powers such as India. Imperialists and all reactionaries also include communist revolutionaries, liberation fighters and popular forces opposing imperialist occupation (e.g. Hezbollah and Hamas), and even the regular armed forces of states such as Iran, under the term 'terrorists'. Communist revolutionaries need to expose the use of the bogey of terrorism as a method of suppressing the people. They need to assert the justice of their cause, and show how it is the imperialists and their stooges who are terrorists.

At the same time, US imperialism has also systematically promoted certain Islamic fundamentalist terrorist forces to subvert and attack countries which resist its domination, as well as undermine its capitalist and imperialist rivals. These fundamentalist forces may attract desperate youth disoriented by the ravages being carried out by imperialists in their lands. But, because these forces are socially regressive, lacking any democratic aims or popular character, they are liable to be turned by imperialism to its own uses. In this fashion the US backed reactionary fundamentalist forces in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and other places to achieve its aims. Even if US imperialism is forced to withdraw from the region, it will leave behind a legacy of sectarian poison and strife. Overcoming this will be a challenging task for any democratic force that arises in the region. In the Third World countries, it is only the completion of the democratic revolutionary tasks that can clear away the soil on which reactionary fundamentalist terrorism can grow.

New methods of imperialist aggression

In the period after the collapse of the Soviet superpower, US imperialism ran rampant worldwide, waging imperialist aggression, subversion, and interference. It bombed and invaded the ex-Yugoslavia region, carving out a separate state and stationing

its troops there for the long term. The turning point in its global campaign of aggression began with its War on Terror, starting in 2001. It systematically embarked on a planned series of invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, at a staggering human toll. Its subordinate Israel repeatedly invaded and bombed Lebanon and the Gaza strip, wreaking devastation. The US continues to partner its Saudi underlings in invading and bombing Yemen and carrying out wholesale war crimes. It imposed brutal sanctions on Cuba, Venezuela, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Iran and other countries over long periods, thus starving them of essentials and indirectly causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands, or compelling them to flee their motherlands.

The US imperialist army's historic defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese people, and the domestic opposition to that war, have hampered it from engaging in a full-fledged ground war to date. Hence the US has resorted to the use of air power, including drones, limiting its own casualties, but exacting a terrible toll of civilians in the targeted country. Thus, while about 7,000 US troops have been killed in invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, the loss of Afghan-Pakistan and Iraqi life, directly and indirectly, has been about 2 million in all.

Based on comrade Mao's analysis related to different stages of China's revolution, communist revolutionaries have considered that, in a semi-colonial country, the principal contradiction internally changes when the form of imperialist rule changes from indirect to direct, namely, when an imperialist power invades and occupies the country. Now it is necessary to take account of imperialism's increased ability to intervene also through methods short of direct occupation. These include the imposition of 'no-fly' zones, the use of drones for surveillance and bombing, the use of internet viruses to sabotage infrastructure, the use of social media to disrupt society and subvert State powers, and so on. US imperialism has increasingly resorted to proxy armies in places such as Syria,

Somalia, Yugoslavia, and Sudan, dismembering these countries and creating catastrophic conditions for the people there.

In the last twenty years US imperialism perfected various techniques of subversion of, and interference in, defiant states who do not submit to its dictates. In one such method; known as 'colour revolutions', it mimics the methods of people's movements: it manufactures mass protests, symbols of resistance (such as certain colours), and martyrs, and publicises these through the media and social media. In this way it gives political cover to military coups and other such conspiratorial seizures of power by its pawns, or at the minimum causes havoc and devastation in the targeted country. This method has been employed or attempted in Ukraine, Georgia, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, Bolivia, Iran, Libya, Syria, and elsewhere.

However, the people are waking up to such methods and resisting them. When assessing what appear to be popular movements or mobilisations in different parts of the world, it is necessary to place them in relation to the contradiction with imperialism, and within that, in relation to the leading imperialist power.

Implications of new technologies

The latest technologies in the sphere of information and communications technology (ICT), automation, and biology harbour tremendous positive potential for the masses under socialist production relations, and point to the objective urgency of bringing about socialism. Under socialist relations, the developments in ICT would enable vast millions to work collectively, coordinate their efforts on a real-time basis, and eliminate waste and disproportions in production. They would be able to overcome many practical difficulties which hampered the socialist pioneers. The developments in automation would enable the shortening of the working day and the fuller development of human beings. The developments in biology may enable conservation of land and water resources in

agricultural production, the more effective treatment of many diseases, and other benefits. However, at present, under the control of imperialism and reaction, these very technologies play the opposite role, give rise to new threats to humanity, and create grave new hurdles for the masses and the revolutionary movement worldwide.

-- Developments in biology, controlled by multinational corporations, are creating new monopolies, which extract monopoly rents from millions of peasants and from victims of disease. There is no effective social restraint on the activities of private corporations, who may use bio-technologies for sinister purposes such as cloning or modifying human beings, creating new species or viruses, and unleashing havoc.

-- Automation imminently threatens the employment of millions of workers in the developed capitalist world. Its impact on the Third World is restrained for the moment only by the fact that labour power there is so cheap that investment in automation may not be profitable.

-- The unprecedented spread of electronic media is being used for political manipulation, ruling class and fascist propaganda, diversion, tracking of individuals, and invasion of the sovereignty of Third World countries.

-- Further, state powers are constructing vast, centralised networks of identity documents, CCTV cameras, facial recognition, drone surveillance, DNA databases, and the like. These are being linked to a whole spectrum of activities, such as travel, payments and communications. Such networks are enabling arrests, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations.

At the time of the emergence of the internet, there were widespread illusions that it could develop as a democratic, horizontal medium. The scope for using the internet to contact unprecedented

ed numbers of people, to express views against the establishment, and to mobilise people created the basis for these illusions. Moreover, internet activism offers an alternative to the hard work of building class struggles, especially among the basic masses. As with all legal opportunities, the internet and IT technologies have a dual character. States are routinely controlling access to websites, tracking internet users, censoring content, or shutting down the internet itself at will. Giant corporations in the IT sector act in close coordination with imperialist powers to control the flow of information and suppress the truth.

Despite this, and because of this, it is necessary for communist revolutionaries to master the new technologies, learn to protect themselves and use them consciously for their work. However, materialising the progressive potential of these technologies is dialectically linked to growth of democratic revolutionary movements on the ground, the latter being basic.

IV

Sharpening capital-labour contradiction in capitalist countries, and the ruling classes' political response

The entire process of development in the globalisation phase has further undermined the social and political solidity of the imperialist-ruled world order. The shift of manufacturing from the imperialist countries to centres of cheap labour power in the Third World, and the corresponding degradation of wages and job security in the imperialist countries, has partly destabilised the earlier class peace. In the Third World countries, and even in weaker capitalist countries such as Greece, the increasingly predatory nature of imperialist extractions disrupts the economic and social life of the people, and presents a stark choice between the salvation of the country and submission to vulture-like foreign financial capital.

As a result of this economic crisis, imperialist globalisation is facing political challenges in both the imperialist and the dominated countries. The institution of the labour aristocracy has been a key stabilising element of the imperialist system, dampening the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. However, in the imperialist countries, the labour aristocracy is experiencing a deterioration in its wages and social claims. As a result, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has sharpened, and is bound to sharpen further. In order to restore the institution of the labour aristocracy to its former strength, the imperialist bourgeoisie would need to greatly step up the extractions from the Third World, thereby sharpening the principal contradiction.

The working class in the imperialist countries faces unemployment or degraded employment. For the last four decades the ruling class globally has aggressively propagated 'neoliberalism'. Neoliberalism is essentially a political drive of the ruling classes to reverse all historical gains made through struggle by the toiling masses, and nakedly transfer wealth to the exploiting classes. Under neoliberal ideology, the living standards of the toiling masses cannot be improved by directly addressing their needs, but can be improved only as a spontaneous by-product of successful private capital accumulation. Hence the role of the State is only to ensure private accumulation. The international bourgeoisie trumpets this ideology taking advantage of the fact that there is at present no socialist state power which stands as a living proof of the opposite.

Using the ideological cover of neoliberalism, the ruling class in the imperialist countries is stripping away the social claims of the working class (healthcare, education, social insurance) won through the struggles of an earlier generation. This led first to a crisis of social democracy in these countries, since social democracy could no longer both serve the ruling classes and promote welfare measures. Erstwhile social democratic parties like the Labour Party in the UK, the Socialist Party in France, and the Social Democrats in

Germany had to re-fashion themselves into aggressive neoliberal parties on the lines of Blair's "New Labour". In the US, the already right-wing Democratic Party moved well to the right of the economic positions earlier held by the arch-reactionary Reagan.

However, this dismantling of social democracy in turn led to a crisis of bourgeois 'liberal democracy' itself in these countries. Several of the leading western imperialist countries are near paralysed in wrangling among ruling class political forces, such as Trump vs. the Democrats, Brexit vs Remain, northern Europe vs southern Europe in the EU. The economic crisis appears to have precipitated divisions in the ruling classes along the lines of distinct economic interests, particularly those with greater and less stake in globalisation.

In their internal strife, the ruling class representatives of the imperialist countries have even violated the earlier taboos against denigrating the highest offices such as the Presidency and Prime Ministership, thereby undermining the imperialist image and prestige which the ruling classes are otherwise careful to protect in their common interests. No doubt, even amid this strife, these countries continue to actively pursue their imperialist strategies, but they are necessarily affected by such internal turmoil. In many European countries there have been frequent changes of government and deadlocked parliaments.

In the present political crisis, the ruling class of the imperialist countries have promoted a variety of new political forces. One such stream is made up of new social democratic forces, claiming to be free of the taint of the earlier leaderships/parties. Thus Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, Melanchon in France, Die Linke in Germany, Corbyn in the UK, and Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez in the US have all emerged in this period claiming to espouse socialism. The actual economic programmes proposed by them have nothing to do with socialism, and are at best welfare states similar to what prevailed in these countries before the rise of neoliberalism in the

1980s. In fact they are willing to settle for even less, as can be seen from the bankruptcy of the pseudo-radical Syriza and Podemos. None of them adopts an anti-imperialist stand or supports the anti-imperialist struggles around the world.¹ The ruling class media in these countries both promote and demonise these forces, portraying them as radical leftist forces, thus confusing those seeking a true revolutionary alternative. As such these parties serve mainly as a safety net to prevent the working class from leaving parliamentary politics and forging its own political representative. The tactics to be adopted vis-a-vis such forces would depend on the actual situation of the revolutionary forces in those countries.

One of the great bulwarks against class conflict in the imperialist countries, namely, the labour aristocracy, is thus facing erosion. Even as the earnings and standards of living of the working class in the core imperialist countries remain far higher than those of their counterparts in the Third World, their current tangible deterioration objectively increases the scope for class politics and struggle.

As a result, the imperialist countries are witnessing churning and initial upsurges among their working classes. Particularly in France, these movements have at times broken the bounds of legality and directly confronted the State. They indicate the simmering class wrath below the surface.

At the same time, long years of domination by social democratic and reformist politics, and the absence of a strong proletarian revolutionary force, have placed political handicaps on the working class in the imperialist countries. These are exemplified by the fact that, in France, two distinct types of movements have taken place: an outstanding upsurge of the more downtrodden and dispersed sectors of the working class, the Yellow Vest movement; and a major trade union struggle against Macron's plan to slash pensions. The former movement, displaying greater revolutionary spirit and

1 When Corbyn voiced some positions that did not suit imperialist interests, his own party subverted him even more actively and ensured his defeat.

forms, lacks organisational structure, rejects the concept of leadership, and pitches its demands as those of 'citizens' against the State. The latter movement comprises vast organised sectors of the working class, and spreads across many sectors, but remains under the leadership of the trade union bureaucracy. What is needed is a revolutionary movement of the working class. In the US, similarly, the Occupy Wall Street movement struck a chord among sections of the working people outside of the unionised sections of the working class. However, its formulation of the target as "1%" was populist, and diverted from class politics and the tasks of class struggle. As a result, the Occupy movement eventually disappeared without a trace. The US has also seen a tide of trade union struggles of diverse sections (school teachers, UPS postal workers, auto workers, metal workers, construction workers). In these struggles the direct action of the workers constantly strained against the hold of the trade union bureaucracy. Similar opportunities and hurdles confront the working class movement in different imperialist countries. There is much strenuous and painstaking work to be done for communist revolutionaries to get a political foothold among the workers in the strongholds of imperialism.

In conditions of weakness or inadequacy of the proletarian revolutionary forces, a second, more dangerous, alternative is being brought to the fore by the ruling classes in the imperialist countries, namely, the forces espousing reactionary nationalism, racism, and fascistic ideologies. Such forces are always sustained by the ruling classes and kept in store for such time as they may be needed. Given the deterioration in their wages and social conditions, and the bankruptcy of liberal democracy, sections of the working class seeking a radical solution may get diverted towards such forces. (A related phenomenon is the rise of elected 'strongmen' leaders in various countries, misleadingly referred to as 'populists', such as Trump in the US, Erdogan in Turkey, Putin in Russia, Bolsonaro in

Brazil, etc. The rise of these forces indicates that both the masses and the ruling classes, for very different reasons, are fed up with the existing system. Even in cases where these leaders do not as yet have organised fascist parties with them, their reactionary and chauvinistic platforms prepare the ground for the emergence of such parties.)

The new social democratic forces are completely incapable of fighting fascistic forces, and their eventual capitulation to neoliberalism actually strengthens the fascist forces. The fascistic forces can be effectively countered where the working class wages a militant fight against the system itself, and thereby lays claim to the political ground for which the fascistic forces are contending. The existence of such a working class political force is crucial in order to rally around itself all other anti-fascist forces.

The targets of the attacks of fascistic forces in the US and Europe are now the immigrant workers, who are performing the most sweated and oppressed labour in those societies. They represent, in a sense, the Third World within the imperialist countries' working class. It is a special task of the proletarian revolutionary forces to organise these sections for their defence against fascist and racist attacks, while building broad working class solidarity.

The advance of class consciousness among the dominant white working class sections cannot take place solely through their own struggles against neoliberal policies (although that is necessary and favourable). It is also linked to the advance of anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World, and the building of their solidarity with those struggles. Without entering into struggle against fascism, racism and imperialism, the dominant sections of the working class in the imperialist countries cannot shed the 'master mentality' and acquire proletarian consciousness.

V

Present situation of the camp of imperialist and capitalist countries**International currency status and US imperialism's global hegemony**

The US dollar remains the leading international currency, used for most international transactions. It makes up the biggest share of countries' foreign exchange reserves. It is thus the leading safe haven for capital worldwide, i.e., the leading form in which the rich of the world store their wealth. As a result, US imperialism can print money at will and use it to pay other countries. This enables it to be the greatest global parasite in history. When the US definitively took over this chief parasite status from British imperialism after World War II, it was also by far the strongest and largest of the imperialist economies. Later, as that gap with other imperialist powers narrowed, it relied increasingly on its military superiority and political domination to prop up the status of the dollar.

The eurozone is of comparable size to the US economy. But the euro failed to dislodge the US dollar as the leading international currency, principally because the leading components of the European ruling classes failed to economically integrate and politically unify the eurozone. The global financial crisis revealed the cracks in the eurozone to the point where the very future of the euro was in doubt.

The renminbi has the backing of China's expanding global economic presence and its growing military might, as well as the potential backing of Russia. In response to US sanctions in 2018, Russia sold \$100 billion of its US dollars and replaced it with euros and renminbi. However, the renminbi as yet accounts for only 2 per cent of world foreign exchange reserves, compared to 62 per cent

for the US dollar.

As part of the Ukraine war, the US and Europe sanctioned Russia and seized control of its foreign exchange reserves. While this dealt a heavy blow to the Russian economy, it also sent a signal to all countries that their foreign exchange reserves are similarly vulnerable to seizure by the western imperialist alliance. Moreover, the western imperialist sanctions on Russia compelled various countries to devise alternative methods to trade with Russia and to make international payments. As a result many countries are exploring alternatives to the dollar as international currency.

However, an international currency is not simply a mechanism which can be agreed upon at will. In the present world imperialist order, it ultimately reflects the hegemonic status of the leading imperialist power or powers.

These facts indicate that there are still sizeable hurdles to be overcome for any shift away from the dollar as international currency. However, as and when such a shift takes place, it may take place in a rapid and disorderly fashion, causing great upheaval in the world economy. It would be resisted by US imperialism, implying inter-imperialist conflict.

US military and intelligence expenditure is the world's largest, at over \$700 billion, and equivalent to the military expenditure of the next eight countries. US imperialism maintains a network of over 800 military overseas bases of varied sizes worldwide, housing 2 lakh troops. From these bases the US military can quickly carry out attacks on the people of the region. This network was expanded in the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and yet further taking the alibi of the 9-11 attacks. Its main purpose is for the US to exercise global hegemony, and to punish any defiant force or country that resists US domination.

However, that military superiority has been taking a beating at the hands of the most downtrodden, even destitute, masses of the

Third World. After spending an estimated \$2 trillion on invading and occupying Afghanistan, the US has been defeated, and is exiting the country in humiliation. After spending \$3 trillion on invading and occupying Iraq, it is unable to exercise its writ effectively there. These and other military expenditures of the US in maintaining its global hegemony were made with borrowed funds, and the debt has added to the strain on US government finances.

Stung by its failure to suppress the rebellious Afghans, Iraqis, and other oppressed peoples, US imperialism is now squabbling with its imperialist allies in an effort to extract cash from them. It has demanded that other NATO powers increase their expenditures for the alliance. It has threatened to scale down its presence in Africa, where French interventionist military forces in ex-French colonies depend on US military infrastructure. Thus the sharpening of the principal contradiction, between imperialism and oppressed nations, is accentuating the contradiction between imperialist countries.

Situation of Russian imperialism

When Soviet social imperialism collapsed, it was replaced by Russian imperialism, which was much weaker. US imperialism took advantage of this collapse to cripple the Russian economy further, with the aim of eliminating it permanently as an imperialist contender. The impact of these measures was comparable to a war. On the dictates of the IMF and US advisers, Yeltsin imposed sweeping liberalisation and privatisation that shrank the economy by more than 40 per cent, created mass poverty and sharply reduced life expectancy. At the same time these policies created a tiny elite that captured the country's wealth and sent much of it to banks abroad.

However, US imperialism could not succeed in its aims. This was principally for reasons of historical development. The Russian

bourgeoisie as a whole, despite being enormously weakened, did not regress and turn comprador. Rather, it essentially retained its imperialist character, albeit in a modified form. Finding itself under threat of complete subjugation, the Russian bourgeoisie re-asserted itself and backed a new political leadership, represented by Vladimir Putin's ascent to power in 1999.

The Russian bourgeoisie was able to draw on various specific strengths in its revival.² It retained its advanced technological strength in certain fields, particularly in the military industry, space, software, petroleum industry, and basic sciences. It possessed oil and mineral wealth to fund the rehabilitation of its manufacturing and services industries. It retained multiple economic and security ties with several of the ex-Soviet republics, and some longstanding links with other countries. Its nuclear arsenal still matched that of US imperialism. In order to rally the Russian people, it could deploy the ideology of Russian nationalism, cleverly combined with select symbols of heroic Soviet socialist achievements which the masses still cherish. After Putin's coming to power, the power of the Russian state and military were revived with revived funding, and the power of private oligarchs with Western ties was systematically broken. The economy was stabilised and then grew rapidly for eight years, consolidating the political grip of the bourgeoisie.

Throughout, including during the period of greatest weakness and crisis of Russian imperialism during the 1990s, US imperialism pursued an aggressive policy toward it. It encroached on Russia's erstwhile possessions and sphere of influence, disrupting and invading ex-Yugoslavia, step by step drawing East European countries into NATO³, sponsoring 'colour revolutions' in Georgia, Ukraine, and

2 Russian imperialism no longer could draw on certain strengths which its predecessor, the social-imperialist Soviet Union, inherited from its socialist past, such as the international prestige enjoyed by the USSR due to its socialist image.

3 Preparatory steps taken over the 1990s culminated in the NATO expansions of 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2017.

Kyrgyzstan, and fomenting armed insurgencies in Muslim pockets within Russian territory (Chechnya, Ossetia, Abkhazia). This process climaxed in the armed overthrow of the government in Ukraine, and its replacement with a regime aligned with the US. Russian imperialism initially retaliated by seizing the Ukrainian province of Crimea, in order to keep control of the critical Russian naval base at the Crimean port of Sevastopol. Then, even as the western imperialists continued to integrate Ukraine militarily with the NATO alliance, Russian imperialism invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Unlike Soviet social imperialism, which donned the garb of international communism and anti-imperialism, Russian imperialism lacks a full-fledged ideological cover for its hegemonic ambitions. It resorted to various alibis: the global fight against Islamic terrorism; opposition to the cultural 'degeneracy' of the western imperialist countries; the fight against Nazism in Ukraine; the defence of the Russian-speaking people of Donbass; and finally, the need to oppose the domination of the world by a single power (the US). The latter alibi is coming to the fore increasingly. However, as yet Russian imperialism has intervened militarily only where its core strategic interests are directly at stake. In Syria, it was in danger of losing its naval bases, and in Ukraine, it was facing a more direct military threat from NATO. While Russia has begun to use its veto on the U.N. Security Council, that body has become largely irrelevant to stopping US aggression. In the case of Venezuela, Iran, and other targets of US imperialist bullying and aggression, Russia hitherto restricted itself to general statements.

With the outbreak of war between Russia and the US proxy Ukraine and the western imperialist sanctions on Russia, there is a partial change. Russian imperialism, in contention with the western imperialist alliance, is stepping up its efforts to increase its ties and influence worldwide. This contention is visible even in countries which have been longstanding close allies of US imperialism.

Thus the inter-imperialist contention, which was in practical terms restricted to specific regions, is spreading to the rest of the world.

The status and position of China

The rapidly changing status and position of China has been the major unresolved question of the international situation for the last quarter century. China's development has had an impact on all three fundamental contradictions in operation: the contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples, the contradiction between Capital and Labour in the capitalist countries, and the inter-imperialist contradiction.

In the socialist period till 1976, China's socialist order not only ensured a minimum decent existence for all, but laid the foundations for rapid socialist development in future. Possessing meagre material resources, and under adverse circumstances, the Chinese masses deployed their labour power heroically to create productive assets. Through socialist policies of education, as well as through a vast network of rural enterprises, they created a vast, intelligent, educated working class, including technical workers and scientists. If China had continued on the socialist path, these achievements would have been the foundations for miraculous socialist development. But once the working class was defeated after Mao's death in 1976, these achievements were put to the use of the new bourgeoisie which had seized power within the Party itself.

'Primitive accumulation' was carried out initially by handing over state-owned enterprises at throwaway prices to government officials and persons with Government connections, and later through forcible land acquisitions. The new bourgeois rulers of China step by step invited and obtained vast imperialist investment, making the country a manufacturing base for the imperialist countries, and as a result the world's largest exporter. China in turn provided a steady supply of cheap labour power to foreign owned factories,

as well as hugely subsidised infrastructure and land. China invested its vast export surpluses abroad, sizeably in US government bonds. This allowed the US to keep importing goods from China, in effect feeding like a bloated parasite off the labour of the Chinese working class. Thus, after capitalist restoration, China's development has served the imperialist countries.

However, the bourgeoisie of China after capitalist restoration differs basically from the bourgeoisies of semi-colonial and dependent countries like India, for reasons of historical development. It does not share power with feudal classes, the latter having been eliminated in the new democratic revolution. It displays an independent industrial capitalist, rather than a comprador or narrow mercantile, outlook.

As a legacy of socialist development, the Chinese bourgeoisie received a relatively educated, healthy workforce, independent technological capabilities at various levels, and huge undervalued assets both in the urban and rural areas. The erstwhile Communist Party, now a capitalist party under the same name, provided a cohesive organisational and administrative structure first for efficiently managing the transition from socialism, and then the capitalist accumulation process. The ruinous experience of capitalist restoration in the erstwhile USSR provided lessons by negative example. The Chinese rulers therefore maintained relatively more control over finance and financial liberalisation and globalisation.

Along the lines of the Japanese ruling class in the 19th century, the present Chinese ruling class advanced its aims in a systematic, not spontaneous, fashion. It sustained very high rates of industrial investment by enforcing a brutal decline in the share of wages over a period of two decades. It compelled foreign investors to take Chinese partners and share technology with them. Starting with low technology products such as garments, it steadily moved up the value chain. China's distinct model of monopoly capitalism carries out State strategic planning of private investment and uses State-

owned banks to promote private monopoly capital. Ruling party leaders are tied by family and other ties to the owners and executives of giant private corporations, but the State continues to direct and discipline the latter.

For a long period, capitalist China focussed on its internal development and maintained a low international profile, abstaining from intervening in world developments. It stressed its "peaceful rise" and limited its stated external aims to protecting its developmental needs, such as the supply lines for oil imports. Accordingly it established a chain of investment relationships with countries along these routes, such as Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Maldives. Its trade with raw material-producing countries in Africa and Latin America grew rapidly in line with its rapid industrial growth.

Despite China's low profile, US imperialism by the turn of the century identified China as a future rival, targeted control of China's supply lines and sources of oil imports, and pressurised or disrupted regimes which did not fall in line. (Over time, however, China's actual investments and trade with these countries have proved more durable.) China and Russia set up the Shanghai Cooperation Council, an embryonic security organisation parallel to NATO. Meanwhile China has strengthened and re-structured its military, among other things allowing it to project force abroad. It has acquired a military base in Djibouti (Africa), and has funded major commercial ports in countries such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

The logic of capitalist development dictates that China strive to exercise hegemony. In 2017 the 19th Party Congress of the CPC announced an official shift of stance. It signalled that China would no longer restrict itself to economic growth ("peaceful rise"), but would lay claim to being among the leading global powers, with a "world class" and modernized military. As ideological cover for its hegemonic drive, China now poses as a champion of global eco-

conomic integration (represented by the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank), international co-operation (on terrorism, climate change and other global threats), and Third World economic development.

Underlying the Chinese rulers' grandiose rhetoric of global development is the drive to accumulate capital, which is a compulsion for capitalists in the capitalist system. To advance this accumulation drive in the era of imperialism, every major capitalist power must also be an imperialist power.

GDP Per Capita

Country	GDP per capita (\$) 2018, (rounded off to nearest '000)
US	63,000
Germany	48,000
UK	42,000
France	41,000
Japan	39,000
<i>EU (avg for 28 countries)</i>	<i>37,000</i>
S Korea	31,000
<i>World avg</i>	<i>11,000</i>
Russia	11,000
China	10,000
Brazil	9,000
S Africa	6,000
India	2,000

However, there is a key difference between China and the historical imperialist powers. Lenin described imperialism as "a world

system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries."⁴ This system enables the imperialist countries to secure their domestic base by bribing their own working class, making them into a labour aristocracy. But for China such a bribe is impossible, as its own vast population is a large part of that "overwhelming majority". Despite its unprecedented growth, it remains a relatively poor country, whose per capita income remains a fraction of that of the metropolitan powers. China is marked by sharp internal class contradictions. Wary of this, the Xi Jinping leadership has undertaken some wage increases, increase in rural welfare spending and ostentatious displays of the symbols of socialist-era China, trying to claim the mantle and credibility of Comrade Mao. These may lull the Chinese working class for some time, but they cannot do so for long, "as the underlying class contradictions remain, and will get accentuated in any economic crisis.

At the same time, externally, China is facing the strategic targeting of US imperialism. In 2018, the US adopted a new strategic doctrine declaring that "great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus of US national security." China's ruling class is thus advancing its hegemonic drive in the midst of sharper external contention and the potential for sharpening internal class contradictions.

4 Lenin said that "capitalism has now singled out a *handful* (less than one-tenth of the inhabitants of the globe; less than one-fifth at a most "generous" and liberal calculation) of exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world simply by 'clipping coupons'.... Obviously, out of such enormous *superprofits* (since they are obtained over and above the profits which capitalists squeeze out of the workers of their "own" country) it is *possible to bribe* the labour leaders and the upper stratum of the labour aristocracy.... This stratum of workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labour aristocracy... [is], the principal social (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*." (Emphasis in original)

VI

Stormy principal contradiction

The stormy principal contradiction has been manifested in different forms across the globe.

There have been great upsurges against the local stooges of imperialism in Tunisia, Egypt, and Bahrein (the 'Arab Spring'). These demonstrated once again that even the most powerful despots are unable to resist the aroused masses. However, for lack of revolutionary leadership, these immense and impressive popular uprisings by and large did not target imperialism and its policies as such, and hence imperialism was to shuffle its deck of stooges and restore its neocolonial grip after a period of turmoil.

In Latin America, where the long history of anti-imperialist mass movements have entered the collective consciousness, the mass upsurges in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and other countries have consciously targeted imperialism and neoliberal policies, and articulated class politics. Hence, even while imperialism has fought back viciously against these upsurges, and at some places reversed the gains won by the people, it is unable to stamp out the anti-imperialist consciousness and struggle. The recent mass upsurges in Chile, Ecuador and Bolivia testify to this.

Imperialism, in particular US imperialism, has attacked regime after regime in the Third World that refuses to buckle to its commands. Yet these regimes, representing to one extent or the other their peoples' defiance of imperialist dictates, have refused to submit, even under years or decades of sanctions, encirclement, harassment, proxy wars, and so on. Some regimes were no doubt defeated in this struggle: Mugabe of Zimbabwe was removed through a palace coup, Gaddafi of Libya through an invasion, the Workers' Party of Brazil through a conspiracy, and Morales of Bolivia through a military coup. However, Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela and Iran,

while undergoing enormous hardship, subversion and threats, have stood firm. This sustained defiance would have been impossible without the support of the people.

In the last two decades, in a number of Latin American countries, parties were elected to power which pursued policies opposed by US imperialism. To one extent or another, these regimes attempted to assert State control over the country's major natural resources and distribute part of the revenues in the form of welfare benefits. In the period of global economic boom, these policies delivered some tangible material benefits to the working people (correspondingly, in the period of global economic slump, when commodity prices fell, the revenues shrank and these regimes suffered fiscal crises).

However, these regimes restricted themselves to the sphere of distribution, and not production. As long as production relations were not touched, the native ruling classes were able to organise themselves, fight back and strangle the economy with the help of, and under the direction of, US imperialism. They made a mockery of the pretensions to parliamentary democracy in these different countries, suborning various institutions to their ends. Even where, as in Brazil and Bolivia, the overthrown regime was able to return to power through elections, the hands of the regime are now even more tied with respect to distribution.

Thus the recent experiences of Latin America underline once more the Marxist and Leninist truths regarding the content of revolution (change in ownership of the means of production), the class basis of State power, the nature of parliamentary democracy and legal opportunities (particularly in the countries which have not consummated democratic revolutions), the need for a dictatorship of the revolutionary classes, and the need of a party armed with revolutionary theory to lead the people's liberation struggle. At the same time, the positive experiences of these regimes, in particular people's identification, participation and resistance struggles, must

be garnered.

The principal contradiction has also been manifested where imperialism has carried out proxy invasions of countries and the masses have waged glorious resistance.

Syria is the outstanding example of this, where US imperialism armed, trained and unleashed proxy armies of Islamic fundamentalists to remove the Assad regime. Syria was subjected to a terrible trauma of war, emigration of millions of refugees, fueling of sectarian hatreds, rape of women, and destruction of cultural heritage. The Assad regime and the Syrian people resisted at first on their own, then with the help of Iran and Hezbollah, and finally with the help of Russian imperialism. (Russian imperialism stood to lose its naval base on the Mediterranean in case of a regime change in Syria. It stood to gain an important foothold in the region if it succeeded.) The defeat of the US-backed forces, as well as of the monster ISIS created directly or indirectly by the actions of US imperialism, marked a turning point in US imperialism's domination of West Asia.

Israel's repeated invasions of Gaza inflicted a terrible price on the heroic Palestinian people, but did not succeed in crushing their resistance. Its two invasions of Lebanon in this period similarly inflicted suffering on the people, but the Zionist armed forces were dealt counter-blows by the Hezbollah resistance forces. As in the case of the earlier expulsion of the Zionists from Lebanon by the armed forces of Hezbollah, this resistance proved inspiring to all the Arab peoples, demonstrating that the Zionist army could be defeated. In the case of Yemen, the Saudi army and its mercenaries, armed and directed by the US military, have been waging a genocidal war to prop up their stooges, but have been steadily losing to the Houthi rebels.

These inspiring resistance struggles deal blows to imperialism and prove once more the truth of comrade Mao's assertion that a

weak nation can defeat a big and powerful nation if its cause is just.⁵ However, they lack, or are weak in, the necessary internal dimension of anti-imperialist struggle. Without a democratic revolution against native reactionary forces, based on a democratic change of production relations, these struggles can play only a partial defensive role, and cannot bring about a real liberation of the masses. The stark implications of this can be seen in Afghanistan, where the heroic fight of the Afghan masses against the US imperialist invaders was led by the fundamentalist Taliban, as a result of which the retreat of the invaders is to be followed by the restoration of reactionary Taliban rule. Further, such forces, lacking any agenda of social liberation, are ultimately amenable to accommodation with one or the other imperialist power, thus negating even the anti-imperialist aspect.

The most thoroughgoing and significant resistance to imperialism comes from the struggles led by the proletarian revolutionary forces in different countries, the highest form of which is the armed struggle led by these forces. Even in this period, amid seemingly adverse world conditions, such struggles have been initiated and advanced. However, all of them have faced serious hurdles in advancing beyond a certain point. Here the critical question has been whether these forces have steadfastly upheld and creatively applied the revolutionary line in their respective countries, including the perspective of protracted people's war.

-- The heroic people's war in Nepal, which liberated the rural areas of the country and surrounded the cities, demonstrated in practice the continuing viability of people's war in the present world conditions. At the same time, the eventual tragic fate of that struggle

5 "Innumerable facts prove that a just cause enjoys abundant support, while an unjust cause finds little support. A weak nation can defeat a strong, a small nation can defeat a big. The people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country. This is a law of history." -- Mao Zedong.

showed how departure from this revolutionary line results in political and practical bankruptcy, betraying the immense sacrifices of thousands of martyrs.

-- Having overcome grave deviations in the late 1980s which caused severe setbacks, the Communist Party of the Philippines renewed its dedication to the people's war path and rebuilt its forces. The people of the Philippines continue on the path of protracted people's war, against the comprador-feudal regime subservient to US imperialism.

-- Different communist revolutionary contingents of many other countries, including India, are persevering in their struggle to apply and defend the correct line and build the revolutionary movement.

VII

Tasks

In the present world conditions, communist revolutionary forces the world over must steadfastly defend and uphold their ideological political heritage, including the Great Debate and the theory of continuing class struggle under dictatorship of the proletariat. While maintaining flexibility to allow exchange and solidarity with various forces that remain under the influence of revisionism for want of an alternative, they must combat all liberal and revisionist tendencies, including the tendency to form joint fronts at the party level with revisionist forces.

By and large it appears that the communist revolutionary camp was unable to win over significant numbers from the revisionist camp in the past three decades. This was so despite the collapse of the social imperialist backers of the revisionists, and despite the revisionists' ideological disarray. This failure is mainly due to the communist revolutionary forces' failure to make adequate headway in

their application and practice of the revolutionary line. The only guarantee of the Marxist-Leninist character of different communist revolutionary parties and forces is their constant struggle to defend and implement the revolutionary line.

The communist revolutionaries must implement the revolutionary line for their respective countries, namely, of socialist revolution in capitalist countries, and new democratic revolution in oppressed nations, followed by the building of socialism. They must gather forces over a long period for insurrection in capitalist countries, and build towards, or advance, protracted people's war in oppressed nations. They must integrate with the masses and win leadership over their struggles through application of the line to specific conditions.

In this course they can achieve unification of communist revolutionary forces (where not already achieved) on the basis of the correct line in their respective countries.

While basing themselves on class struggle, and without diluting the class approach, the communist revolutionaries must pay attention to anti-fascist tasks. In the capitalist countries, where bourgeois democratic consciousness has a material basis, defending bourgeois democratic rights in the face of rising fascist threats may become an urgent task. The communists of these countries can take inspiration and lessons from the international communist movement's past struggles against fascism, and their appropriate application to the different conditions prevailing there today. In oppressed nations, where autocracy prevails under the veil of parliamentary democracy, fascistic politics essentially means the intensification of ruling class repression combined with the mobilisation of a mass base for reaction. This requires specific propaganda tasks, building special fronts, and self-defence. However, the basic task in the oppressed nations is not building the anti-fascist united front, but remains the anti-imperialist united front (with the added dimension of fighting internal reaction, of feudal or other retrogres-

sive forces). It is only with such an approach that the anti-fascist activities will be firmly based among the basic masses.

The communist revolutionaries must oppose all aggression and interference by imperialism, project solidarity against imperialism, and project solidarity with all struggles of the proletariat. Greater international contact, and the greater tendency for movements in one country to spark off or influence developments in another – increase the scope for such solidarity and promotion of proletarian internationalism. While coordinating with or participating in regional or international fronts or actions, they must be clear that the best way in which they can promote the international cause of the proletariat is to advance the revolution in their own countries. However, in imperialist countries, the communist revolutionaries have a special responsibility to oppose imperialist oppression and exploitation, and to build solidarity with the storm centres of the Third World.

Statement on the National Situation

Grasp the Gravity of the Situation, Steadfastly Implement Our Line Centered on the A.R.M.

(Adopted November 2023)

The seven-decade-long delay of the PDR has cast its shadow over Indian society. Due to this failure, every aspect of India's social, economic and political life has become increasingly distorted, corrupted and diseased.

Now this distortion has taken its most grotesque and reactionary form, in the rule of the Hindutva fascistic forces. This is not a passing phenomenon, but a systematic attempt to draw on all the retrogressive features of Indian society, reshape the consciousness of the masses of Indian people along fascistic lines, and thereby consolidate the hegemony of the ruling classes for intensified exploitation. While the direct targets of this drive may be Muslims, Dalits, and other minorities, the indirect targets are the vast exploited masses of Hindus, over whom the ruling classes wish to exercise hegemony.

Therefore the resistance to this fascistic drive must also be grounded in the basic masses – who are the real fighting forces around which other social sections can gather, and whose conditions of life and work demand class struggle. The core of this resistance must be the agrarian revolutionary movement, which attacks the very sources of retrogressive and semi-feudal culture, including caste. The agrarian revolutionary movement thus enables the people to see through the false unity of different classes of a single caste or religious community, and replaces that with the real unity of the exploited classes against the ruling classes. Whatever the

present weakness of organisations and movements of basic classes, experience has proved that fascistic forces remain vulnerable in the face of such movements. All forces wishing to wage resistance to the Hindutva fascists must thus prepare themselves for a long, bitter struggle.

The demand problem arises from the basic structure of India's semi-feudal, semi-colonial economy

From the time of transfer of power, the Indian economy has been plagued by the problem of lack of demand. The ruling classes have adopted different remedies, one after the other, to overcome this problem, starting with 5-year Plans and public sector investment (used to subsidise the Indian big bourgeoisie); then liberalisation and foreign debt; followed by globalisation and foreign investment; and bubbles created by inflows of capital from imperialist speculators. All of these provided brief bouts of growth, but on each occasion they finally collapsed or petered out in the face of the persisting poverty of the vast masses, and their consequent lack of purchasing power.

The resolution of this demand problem requires a thoroughgoing agrarian revolution and real national development. Without this, the masses cannot have income with which to buy goods, the vast numbers of small producers catering to mass demand themselves are mired in poverty, and countless potential producers are kept out of work.

Of those who are employed, half are self-employed as peasants, household producers, small vendors, and so on, with incomes barely enough for survival. The next largest section are sweated casual labour, either in agriculture, construction or other industries, whose purchasing power is even lower. Next come contract workers, even these with no job security or benefits. Finally, just 7-8 per cent of employed have job security with a wage that covers a fam-

ily's costs of living. The bulk of these too do not form a privileged section. They are largely part of the working masses or the middle classes. The ruling classes and their hangers-on account for a tiny fraction of the population.

The larger army is of the unemployed. Nearly three out of five people of working age, including most women, cannot obtain employment. This giant squandering of people's capacity to labour, which could create investment and produce goods that people direly need, is the most damning verdict on the bankruptcy of India's social and economic order.

Over 9 out of 10 businesses are in the household sector. They account for most of the employment in manufacturing, retail trade and services. These are merely attempts to eke out a living, however pitiful, for lack of any other employment. The more their customers are poverty-stricken, the further these crores of micro producers are pushed down.

Then there are the small and medium units, which have some investment and hired workers, and were by and large catering to mass demand for cheap items of ordinary consumption, such as processed foods, textiles, garments, household implements, and toys, in competition with large units. Now these units, which were even earlier on the knife's edge, are facing extermination by the big units – in the wake of Demonetisation, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the Covid lockdowns. The small and medium units that have survived are the ones doing contract work for the large industries, but even these are finding their incomes more and more squeezed by the large firms, who are extracting advantages from the prevailing crisis.

India's industry overall has thus become even further skewed to cater to a narrow elite. The single largest industry (in value terms) now is for automobiles, which are consumed by the top 5 per cent of the population. Overall, the elite market is heavily influenced by foreign tastes, without letting go of artificial feudal tastes. To

expand the market beyond this narrow elite, the ruling classes and their media apply cultural pressure on the remaining population to adopt consumerism. Apart from cars, other elite industries include air travel, air conditioners, hotels, consumer electronics (including in particular mobile phones), jewellery, gyms, and beauty parlours. All these industries create scant employment, and hence their rise does not in turn lead to the creation of a significant market of worker purchasers.

The rulers are expanding the market for the corporate sector by special means. They are boosting demand for two-wheelers by cutting down on public transport, and boosting demand for the corporate healthcare and education industries by cutting spending on public hospitals and schools. They are compelling the people to use various private financial services. Despite all this pressure, and despite the vast numbers of the population of India, the market remains narrow, and hence the demand problem keeps resurfacing. **The demand problem is in fact the expression of the fundamental class contradictions of Indian society. Feudalism and imperialism prevent the growth of the market, and distort that market. The market question can be only resolved by resolving those fundamental contradictions.**

As a result of the lack of demand, for the last 10 years, the corporate sector has stopped investing in expanding production. To revive growth, the rulers have rolled out one scheme after another to entice the corporate sector to invest, but without success. Each scheme has involved huge subsidies -- subsidised loans, subsidised land, tax cuts, and subsidised investment. However, the big bourgeoisie and foreign capital have pocketed these subsidies without investing.

The narrowness of the national market has made the Indian rulers even more desperate to get access to the international market. Under the slogan of 'Atmanirbhar', they are trying to tie India into global supply chains of multinational corporations. For that they are accelerating all types of subsidies and gifts to investors. How-

ever, all these will do is benefit giant foreign and domestic corporations to increase their profits, and tie India even more dependent on imperialism.

Ruling classes seek way out of demand problem through accumulation-by-expropriation

Under capitalism, the purpose of production is not to satisfy human needs, but to accumulate capital for capitalists. Under 'normal' conditions of capitalism, the capitalists carry out accumulation of capital through three stages: (1) purchasing the means of production and labour power (their initial outlay of capital), (2) producing commodities by employing labour (in the process creating surplus value), and then (3) *realising* the surplus value through sale of the commodity. But when there is a lack of demand, the last stage, the stage of realisation of surplus value, gets stalled, halting the process of accumulation of capital by capitalists. Then the rulers are faced with the task of reviving the accumulation-process of capital by the big bourgeoisie and foreign capitalists in the absence of demand. Under socialism, a demand problem is easily resolved either by lowering the price of the commodity or by raising the wages of the workers. But in a capitalist economy (including under comprador capitalism as in India), doing this would reduce the profit of the capitalist, so it is ruled out.

To overcome the hurdle of inadequate demand and consequent stalling of accumulation, the ruling class is taking various measures. One way is to bypass the production and realisation process, and simply transfer vast assets to foreign and domestic investors at low prices through privatisations, 'National Monetisation Plan', land acquisitions, various outright subsidies and the like. This is the manifestation in India of the growing global trend of vulture-like capture of assets, i.e., outright *expropriation*, as the method of sustaining

capital accumulation during a depression. Such accumulation-by-expropriation thrusts people into militant struggles against dispossession.

Unprecedented imperialist penetration of the Indian economy under Modi regime

Imperialism has achieved unprecedented penetration of India's economy, education, culture, political life, and military. It thereby exercises wide-ranging control in order to drain out the surplus from our country.

Despite the rhetoric of 'self-reliance' ('Atmanirbhar') of the rulers, in fact India has sunk deeper into foreign debt and other liabilities in the period of Modi. The country's total external liabilities are now double what it can repay through its foreign exchange reserves. In these conditions the Modi regime is making every effort to bring more foreign capital into the country in every sector, including finance and arms production. At any time the country's economy can be thrown into crisis by the exit of foreign capital, and so the rulers are doing their best to please foreign capitalists so as to prevent this.

By handing over more and more assets to foreign capital and the domestic corporate sector, and by further opening up more and more sectors, including agriculture, to them, the Modi regime, which claims to be strong and nationalistic, has shown itself to be even more of a servant of imperialism than the earlier Manmohan regime.

1. Foreign debt has climbed to \$ 620 billion, foreign direct investment to well over \$500 billion, foreign investment in the sharemarkets to \$580 billion, totalling nearly \$1.7 trillion, well over half the size of India's GDP. None of these liabilities has been incurred by the people of India, or benefited the people of India. All of this

capital has been ushered in by the anti-national ruling classes. The actual capital brought in by foreign investors was much smaller than these amounts, but the value of their investments has multiplied in India because of the profits they have made in India. The returns in India on this foreign capital are very high, many multiples of what the same investment can earn in the imperialist countries.

2. After the Indian promoters themselves, foreign investors are the major shareholders in the Indian corporate sector. They are concentrated in the most profitable corporations in India's corporate sector. Their buying and selling drives the whole Indian sharemarket up and down. The value of their investments has multiplied in value many times over. They have the major shareholding (two-thirds to three-fourths) in the major private banks such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, etc, which are rapidly growing to dominate the financial sector. Foreign investors are substantial shareholders in the most profitable firms (apart from banks) in India, such as Reliance, Infosys, Airtel, TCS, and others.

3. Major Indian business houses have borrowed heavily from foreign banks, and some have sold substantial stakes to foreign investors, so foreign capital benefits from the flourishing of the top Indian big bourgeois groups. The Adani group owes more than Rs 1 lakh crore to foreign banks. The Tata house bought foreign steel and automobile firms with giant loans from foreign banks. The Indian corporate sector owes more than Rs 18 lakh crore to foreign lenders, which is comparable to the Rs 24 lakh crore it owes to Indian banks. A quarter of Reliance Industries is owned by foreign investors in the sharemarket. The Reliance firm Jio is one-third owned by foreign investors such as Facebook, Google, and others. Adani has joint ventures with foreign firms such as Total in energy and Wilmar in edible oil. The Vedanta group is now London-based in order to get foreign investments. There is no section of the Indian big bourgeoisie that is opposing foreign capital, all of them are engaged

in borrowing from it, inviting it, and collaborating with it. Besides this, the Indian big bourgeoisie provides foreign capital the invaluable local services of locating profitable investment opportunities, managing government clearances, bribing politicians and judges, managing the media, repressing workers, grabbing land, and so on.

4. Foreign investors have bought a large number of roads, power plants, and other critical infrastructure of the country at dirt-cheap prices during India's periodic crises. The Modi regime is now on a special country-selling drive with the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP). The NMP has already sold off over Rs 1.6 lakh crore infrastructure to private investors, including giant foreign funds, and is planning to sell them more than Rs 6 lakh crore of mining, roads, power, civil aviation, ports, railways, and warehousing assets in all.

5. Foreign firms Amazon and Walmart (Flipkart) have invaded India's retail market, and foreign investors are substantial shareholders in Reliance, too, which owns Reliance Retail and Jio Platforms. Foreign firms such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Google, and Microsoft completely dominate the internet and software markets in India. Foreign investors are the major funders of the 'start-ups', from which major firms will emerge in the Indian corporate sector in coming years. Already the US firm Uber and the foreign-investor-controlled 'Indian' firm Ola control the ride-hailing market, displacing lakhs of Indian taxi drivers and fleecing their own Indian gig drivers.

6. Foreign grain traders like Cargill, ITC, Australian Wheat Board, and Indian traders like Adani have invaded the grain trade in India. Monsanto now dominates the corporate sector in seeds. The Modi regime's farm laws were intended to serve both foreign capital and the Indian big bourgeoisie. In coming years foreign capital will further penetrate India's agricultural sector in multiple ways.

7. The Modi regime has opened up to 100 per cent foreign in-

vestment in the healthcare sector. In the past 20 years, nearly \$30 billion of foreign capital has flowed into the pharma sector, healthcare, and medical appliances. In order to make this sector more profitable the government is slashing public spending and privatising district hospitals.

8. The Modi regime has opened up to 100 per cent foreign investment in the education sector too. It is deliberately destroying the public schools system and government universities in order to benefit the private sector and to push students to digital learning from the ed-tech sector. Poor and middle class students will be forced to increasingly rely on the third-rate education over the internet, for which foreign investors are providing major funding.

9. Despite the fact that the Indian upper class are a small percentage of the population, three decades of neoliberal policies have concentrated income and wealth in their hands, making them an attractive market for the imperialist countries. The Indian upper class is a sizeable and rapidly growing consumer of imported luxury goods (\$8.5 billion a year), as well as locally assembled luxury goods of foreign firms. The rapid growth of domestic air travel by the upper class has created a massive market for the American Boeing and the European Airbus to sell planes to airlines in India. The Indian upper class spends over \$10 billion a year in foreign tourism. It is sending its children abroad for education in larger and larger numbers (it is spending \$28 billion/year for this, and this sum will soon rise to \$80 billion/year). All these expenditures, and many more, by the upper class are a drain of the country's wealth.

10. The Indian comprador rulers have signed a long series of agreements with the US imperialists. Under the cover of 'mutual assistance and exchange' these agreements actually subordinate India to the global military strategy of the US imperialists. The Vajpayee government signed the GSOMIA to protect the military information of the US. The Manmohan government signed the 'de-

fence cooperation framework' and nuclear agreements with the US in 2005, and an agreement to allow the US to check the 'end use' of all equipment purchased from it. The Modi government signed the LEMOA in 2016, which allows the US to use Indian military facilities for its logistics, COMCASA in 2018, which is for US-Indian military communication, and BECA in 2020, which is for geospatial information to enable the US to guide Indian long-range missiles at targets.¹ With these 'foundational agreements', India has been designated a 'major defence partner' of US imperialism. The US has directly connected India to its plans to encircle and provoke China. During the period of greatest tension and provocations by the US in Taiwan in August 2022, Indian and US troops jointly conducted Yudh Abhyas (War Practice) high altitude exercises 50 km from the Chinese border in Uttarakhand.

Modi regime foreign policy not independent, but thoroughly aligned with imperialism

The Modi regime claims that it has an independent foreign policy, which is solely concerned with advancing India's interests. As evidence it flaunts the fact that, instead of going along with the US demands for sanctions against Russia, it increased purchases of Russian oil, and it is buying the Russian anti-ballistic missile system S-400 despite US pressure. It boastfully claims that the world now gives respect and weight to the new India.

But this claim of non-alignment is nothing new: The same claim was made by Indira Gandhi. Then and now, far from being non-aligned, India is fully aligned with imperialism. With shifts in the respective strengths of leading imperialist powers/superpowers,

¹ The full forms of these agreements are: GSOMIA – General Security of Military Information Act (2002); LEMOA – Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (2016); COMCASA – Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (2018); BECA – Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (2020).

the Indian ruling classes make adjustments in one direction or the other, but their shifts are devoid of any national interests. After the collapse of the USSR, the Indian ruling classes tied themselves closer with the US. Now they are shifting partially as US hegemony declines. What is being peddled as 'non-alignment' is merely the peculiar situation of compradors amid heightened inter-imperialist contradictions.

The second consideration for the Indian ruling classes' foreign policy is their longstanding reactionary ambition to be acknowledged as the chief bully of Asia, and be given some glorified status on the global stage. For this status they need the backing of a superpower, since they lack the strength on their own. But at the same time, from the same consideration of regional status, they need to prevent the emergence of a powerful alignment of imperialist powers and neighbouring countries in opposition to India.

Since the US imperialist superpower, even in decline, remains the world's only superpower, the only power capable of contending for global hegemony, it is the dominant imperialist power with relation to India. Moreover, since the Indian ruling classes harbour dreams of contending with the much more powerful capitalist China for dominance in Asia, they look to the US imperialists for support, and the US imperialists look to India as a useful subordinate in their attempt to defeat China as a rival. But the Indian ruling classes are also worried that the emergence of a Russia-China-Pakistan axis would be too strong. Hence they try to appease Russian imperialism (which also continues to be a large supplier of weapons to India). The Modi regime, like earlier regimes of the Indian ruling classes, is juggling these conflicting pathetic calculations and trying to pass off this exercise as independence. (By contrast, the Manmohan and Modi regimes repeatedly betrayed Iran, a Third World country which was a major oil supplier to India, and has been facing vicious US imperialist sanctions and direct/indirect interven-

tion. They voted against Iran in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and, on US instruction, steadily decreased their purchases from Iran. That they did this to Iran, but changed their tune with imperialist Russia, proves that their claims to independent foreign policy are a sham.)

The nuclear deal signed by the Manmohan regime with George Bush was only superficially a deal for expanding nuclear power. It was actually a closer strategic alignment with US imperialism, and was followed by a series of agreements tying India to US military aims. The Modi regime took this further by signing a series of military agreements with the US. With these, the US military has the right to use India's military installations, it has a secure system of communication with the Indian military to jointly fight wars, and it has ensured that it can securely transfer military technology to India. In 2022, at the height of US-China tensions, a US warship docked in Chennai for repairs, and the US military carried out joint exercises with the Indian military in Uttarakhand, close to the border with China. India is a member of the 'Quad', which is nothing but an anti-China military arrangement between the US, Australia, Japan and India. All these are similar to US ties with Ukraine before the present war.

The Indian ruling classes' foreign policy is thoroughly anti-people and anti-national. The Indian ruling classes' regional ambitions, as well as any steps to tie India to the war-designs of US imperialism (or in future any imperialist bloc) endanger the Indian people. The Indian people gain nothing from the Indian ruling classes' attempt to contend with China for regional supremacy, and to dominate other countries of the region which are similarly oppressed and exploited by imperialism. True independence in foreign policy requires defining and defending the real interests of the Indian people, which are for peace, regionally and globally; for collective defence of the world environment from imperialist plunder and

damage; for India's liberation from exploitation, bullying and oppression by imperialism; and for mutual assistance and exchange with other Third World countries in the interests of welfare and development.

The other ruling class political forces, such as the opposition parties as well as the liberal critics of the present regime, display their reactionary class nature when they try to outdo the Modi regime in *national chauvinism*. For example, they try to embarrass the Modi regime by claiming that it has surrendered territory to China. They provoke it to fight a war with China to grab it back. In fact it is well established that the boundary with China has never been demarcated, and that India has been staking inflated claims on the basis of unjustifiable and unilateral British colonial claims.

In the past, communist revolutionary and progressive peace-loving people of India had a special duty to oppose war with socialist China, which was acting in self-defence, while the Indian rulers were acting at the behest of US imperialism and, later, Soviet social-imperialism. Today China is no longer socialist, but is instead a capitalist state, with reactionary ambitions. It has recently advanced its troops to forward positions in the undemarcated border region with Indian-held territory. This is China's response to its being encircled by the US imperialist superpower, and to the Indian ruling classes' participation in that encirclement. China is not an imperialist country. Hence, despite the reactionary character of the Chinese state, it is still incumbent on communist revolutionaries to oppose all war-mongering against China, debunk the bloated claims of the Indian ruling class to the disputed territory, expose the Indian rulers' conspiring with US imperialism's war designs, and call for settlement of the border issue in line with real mutual interests of the Indian and Chinese peoples.

Modi regime industrial policy: Tying India further to imperialist supply chains, and further lining the pockets of the comprador big bourgeoisie

The Modi regime is also trying to parade its industrial policy as "Atmanirbhar", or self-reliant. But the stated aim of the policy is to make India into a part of global supply chains of multinationals. For this purpose the government here must subsidise land and infrastructure for the multinationals. It must also give them giant monetary subsidies of lakhs of crores in the form of Production Linked Incentives and other such. It must suppress wages of workers directly and indirectly; for this it is destroying whatever little remains of labour laws, doing away with the concept of permanency, and also destroying employment of workers, peasants and petty producers on a large scale to ensure a large reserve army of labour. The Atmanirbhar policy will in fact make India even more dependent on imperialist investments and imperialist-controlled markets. It will empty the government's treasury and shrink the incomes of the people in the effort to attract foreign investors.

The Indian big bourgeoisie too will reap fat purses in the name of self-reliance. The earlier version of this scheme was "Make in India", which culminated in the French firm Dassault selling India aircraft and setting up assembly production here under the shell of the Anil Ambani group. The largest project of the present version, the PLI, is for Foxconn to manufacture computer chips with mammoth government subsidies, under the shell of the firm Vedanta. The Mukesh Ambani Reliance Jio announced with much fanfare that it would introduce an indigenous 5G in telecom, but its 5G is being built with Samsung, Ericsson, Nokia, and other foreign equipment, and after Jio took giant investments from Google, Facebook and other foreign investors. 'Make in India', 'Atmanirbhar', and other such schemes are outstanding examples of the continuing comprador nature of the Indian big bourgeoisie and their political

representatives.

The steep rise of Adani and Ambani in the last 8 years has been glaring. Adani has rocketed to become the 4th richest man on the planet. It has been criticised as 'crony capitalism', since both industrialists are close to the Modi regime. It is obvious that since these industrialists are funding the BJP with unprecedented funds, they are reaping unprecedented rewards from the BJP government. They are being awarded project after project from the government, they are getting specially carved out favours in different sectors, their closeness to the government ensures that foreign banks and others supply them unlimited capital to fund their take-overs and investments, etc.

However such lopsided development of select tycoons is a characteristic feature of comprador, feudal, state monopoly capitalism in the colonies and semi-colonies.² In pre-revolutionary China there were "four big families" who controlled the major industries. Similar is the story of Mexico, Indonesia and other Third World countries. In the first decades of semi-colonial India a handful of firms monopolised the industrial licenses and prevented competition. Hence it is not the Modi regime but the basic character of semi-feudal, semi-colonial India that determines the growth of so-called crony capitalism here.

Secondly, while Adani and Ambani have got the biggest gains, *all* the top business houses have profited richly from the present regime, all have received favours to one extent or another, and they

2 Com. Mao said: "During their twenty-year rule, the four big families, Chiang, Soong, Kung and Chen, have piled up enormous fortunes valued at ten to twenty thousand million U.S. dollars and monopolized the economic lifelines of the whole country. This monopoly capital, combined with state power, has become state-monopoly capitalism. This monopoly capitalism, closely tied up with foreign imperialism, the domestic landlord class and the old-type rich peasants, has become comprador, feudal, state-monopoly capitalism.... This capital is popularly known in China as bureaucrat-capital. This capitalist class, known as the bureaucrat-capitalist class, is the big bourgeoisie of China." – "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," December 25, 1947.

are united in their support for it. Even where special favours have been given to one firm over competing firms, as in telecom, the other corporate groups have been partly compensated at the cost of public revenues, such as by reducing the dues to be paid by them, to the government. The lopsided growth of Adani-Ambani vis-à-vis the rest of the comprador big bourgeoisie, though striking, is a secondary feature, and a natural outgrowth of the *basic* feature, which is the lopsided growth of the comprador class vis-à-vis the rest of India's economy, including its small industry.

All this underlines the continuing heavy reliance of the Indian big bourgeoisie on the crutch of bureaucrat capital. Despite the reduction of the "public sector" over the last three decades, and despite the big bourgeoisie's boast that it is now world-class, its reliance on bureaucrat capital has not diminished at all, in fact it has increased further. As the Indian state's pretensions to socialism and even to planning have been discarded completely, the state machinery has become even more focussed on transferring massive wealth to the big bourgeoisie. This role is executed by the ruling parties at the central, state and municipal levels, and by the bureaucracy, which includes government officials, police, armed forces, judiciary, officials of public sector firms, banks and financial institutions. (As part of this process, the top echelons of the bureaucracy, after retirement, regularly join the private corporate sector or the ruling parties.) Unprecedented sums have been looted by the big bourgeoisie by defaulting on loans from public sector banks. State-funded contracts for infrastructure projects have been inflated by 100 per cent and more. Public sector firms and natural resources have been handed over to the big bourgeoisie at throwaway prices. Without such continuing state support, which is actually extracted from the Indian people, the Indian big bourgeoisie would be a shadow of itself. (Bureaucrat capital plays an equally critical role in fattening the feudal classes in the rural areas, through systematic siphoning off from a plethora of government "welfare" schemes. The rates of

diversion from these schemes is frequently 50 per cent or more. These sums are cornered by the local feudal interests, through one means or the other.)

Finally, to conclude, the growth of the biggest compradors is fueled by massive quantities of foreign capital as loans and investment. Imperialist finance sees them as the most reliable destinations for its capital since the biggest compradors can win special favours from the regime, and obtain high rates of return. Even though these compradors are purchasing firms overseas, and are listed among the world's richest men, they are no challenge to imperialism. Rather, they are an integral part of the operation of imperialism in India.

Since corporate growth is facing lack of demand, due to the poverty of the masses, the government is compensating by providing the corporate sector various other opportunities to reap rich profits, such as slashing corporate tax, privatising public sector firms, selling public sector assets at throwaway prices, and so on. The demonetisation of 2016, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) of 2018, and the lockdown of 2020 crushed the small units nationwide, pushing many of them to closure, thereby benefiting big firms who were competing with them. All this has enabled the Indian big bourgeoisie to make its highest-ever profits when the Indian economy is in a deep crisis, underlining its anti-national character.

The small industrialists were even earlier in a shaky condition, but under repeated blows many of them are being destroyed. However, they have not yet shown serious signs of independent political organisation or assertion, even when directly attacked. They continue to tail the big bourgeoisie politically, even though they are directly oppressed by the same big bourgeoisie. Moreover, many of them have feudal ties and are imbued in reactionary culture. It is only when a powerful revolutionary movement of the basic classes and political force of the working class emerge that any political polarisation can develop among this section, and a national section can emerge. Till then the main form of united front tactics by the

working class in relation to the small industrialists will be in the form of propaganda.

Character and features of Hindutva fascism, and tactical approach to combatting it

Today, how to confront and fight the communal fascist Modi regime has become a pressing tactical problem for all CRs and democratic forces. It cannot be avoided or postponed. The oppressions it is placing on the people and the concrete hurdles it is creating for class struggle in every sphere are immediate and serious. At the same time, without the correct perspective in the fight against the Modi regime, the CRs and democrats will get diverted into mere liberal opposition, which is ineffectual and toothless even for this specific task.

It should be noted that the Modi regime has grown directly out of India's parliamentary politics, which parliament is a facade covering up an autocratic State and semi-feudal, semi-colonial society. The Modi regime takes advantage of the fact that there is no real substance to the parliamentary institutions and the legal framework, and the people do not have bourgeois democratic consciousness, unlike the people of the bourgeois democratic countries, and hence there is only weak opposition to the regime's attack on the parliamentary institutions and the laws.³ The Modi regime takes advantage of the autocratic Constitution of India and the various autocratic laws, institutions, infrastructures and practices which have been created and entrenched over all the previous governments of various parties. At the same time the Modi regime marks a grave intensification of the oppressive, repressive, and divisive features of Indian society.

3 Dimitrov pointed out in 1935 that, taking advantage of "the profound disillusionment of the masses in bourgeois-democratic governments, fascism hypocritically denounces corruption" (Report to the 7th Congress of the Comintern). This disillusionment is all the greater in the case of India, where bourgeois democracy as such does not exist.

The essential agenda of the Modi regime is a *class* agenda, which it has been entrusted by the domestic ruling classes and imperialism. In that respect it is no different from its predecessors, except that the ruling classes have high hopes that the Modi regime will be able to advance this agenda where its predecessors fell short. However, the specific features of this regime are its relative strength (i.e., as against the present state of other ruling class political forces, and as against the immediately preceding governments of the ruling classes) and the method that it is using to complete that agenda, which has longer-term implications.

The western imperialist powers do periodically make some noises of criticism regarding atrocities by the Hindutva fascists. Some ruling class political rivals of the BJP, and some liberals, seize on these utterances, with the hope that the imperialists will somehow do the job of removing Modi for them. However, in practice all the imperialist powers endorse the Modi regime as a reliable comprador which can deliver the goods for them, in the form of creating profitable opportunities for imperialist capital in India.⁴

4 The western imperialists' occasional criticisms of the Modi regime's communal atrocities have nothing to do with opposition to Hindutva fascism as such. Rather, the western imperialists wish to maintain the fig-leaf of being crusaders for human rights (the height of hypocrisy, as they are mass murderers without parallel) and hence publicly distance themselves from the more brazen and outrageous actions of the Hindutva fascists. To date they have never taken a single material step against the Modi regime for such actions. The second reason for the western imperialist regimes to make such noises is that they, particularly the US, like to keep a cane at hand to discipline even the regimes that are aligned with them, lest they stray closer to other imperialists or otherwise not submit to US dictates. (For example, the Sri Lankan regime's atrocities on the Tamils are conveniently pulled out of the hat by the US when it wants to block its ties with China, but otherwise it has backed some of the worst culprits of those atrocities.) Thus the US State Department, Human Rights Watch, and other such entities document human rights violations by the Indian rulers with a view to keeping them in line. The Russian imperialists neither feel the need of posing as human rights defenders, nor can they afford to raise such issues with the Indian rulers, as US imperialism is still in a stronger position with regard to India.

The BJP under Modi is backed by an unprecedented concentration of financial power from the comprador class. No other ruling class political party even approaches it at the central level. The BJP in turn directly benefits the whole comprador class, as well as specific business houses closest to it. This close relationship allows it to wield massive clout in parliamentary politics, purchasing parliamentary politicians at various levels at will, spending vast sums for election campaigns, and flooding the media. Compared to earlier governments, corruption is far more centralised, and in more organised forms, preventing the exposure of individual scandals. Just one example of this systematisation is the electoral bonds scheme. This helps protect the image of incorruptibility of Modi, Yogi and the regime as a whole. The cult of an incorruptible strongman is an important element of fascist ideology.

The ideology of the Modi regime is more openly reactionary and fascistic than that of the other parliamentary parties. Unlike the other major parties, who claim to abide by secularism, the Modi regime openly promotes Hindutva. Drawing on existing reactionary cultural elements in Indian society, it harks back to a mythical golden age of Hindu Rashtra, and propagates that religious minorities can exist only if they submit to the Hindus. It tries to sway the downtrodden Hindus by giving them a sense of power over the Muslims. In doing so, it draws upon the *caste* psyche of Indian society, whereby each layer of the hierarchy submits to subjugation by higher layers, drawing satisfaction from participating in the subjugation of a yet lower layer. It tries accordingly to shift the attention of the oppressed castes from their own social oppression, and recruit them for oppression of others. This method underscores for us the importance of the agrarian anti-feudal movement, which is the most effective means of attacking the institution of caste hierarchy.

Hindutva draws strength from multiple chauvinisms: Hindu, upper caste, male, Hindi-speaking, and national chauvinisms. But

Hindutva does *not* represent Hindus, upper castes, males, Hindi-speakers or 'Indians' (or any dominant nationality in India). The bulk of these sections also number among the exploited people of India. Rather, the Hindutva fascist forces are best placed to use these existing chauvinisms (which have been nurtured by reactionary forces in Indian society over a long period, and which were already the implicit norm in public life) in order to consolidate their support base among certain sections, and to instil fear and submission among other sections.

The BJP has a relatively large and organised cadre force. The core of this force is its parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), but the force extends to the various front organisations of the RSS as well, which systematically cover every section of society. However, it is mistaken to assume that the agenda of the Modi regime flows from the RSS project of creating Hindu Rashtra. **The Modi regime's agenda remains essentially a ruling class agenda, for which the present instrument is the ideology of Hindu Rashtra.** (At the same time, it is reductionist to see the ideology as a mere instrument. The entrenchment of the fascist ideology has its own consequences, which may conflict at times, though only to a limited extent, with the ruling class agenda.)

The Hindutva fascists pay careful attention to strengthening their ideological hold. They have created a squadron of intellectual hacks, who are given the task of fleshing out the Hindutva ideology to address various questions, in particular the re-writing of history (which has a key role in ideological shaping). They have systematically attacked and in many cases destroyed intellectual institutions (such as universities) which resist or which simply do not fit their objectives, and re-staffed them with thugs, racketeers and mediocrities who toe their line. They have captured the bulk of the media with little resistance from the media. Their paid armies dominate the social media too and terrorise all those who resist. The Hindutva-fascists have systematically infiltrated or taken over all cultural

institutions, giving particular attention to Bollywood, and are using them to shape the thinking of the masses along fascist lines.

Unlike the other parliamentary forces, the Sangh Parivar (and its various informally related Hindutva fanatic forces) do not limit their propaganda activities to the election period, or to specific electoral objectives. Rather, they keep up the tempo of their propaganda and mobilisation throughout, using various manufactured communal issues, with the aim of permanently changing the psyche of the vast mass of people. This serves both to consolidate their electoral gains and to deepen their social hegemony. In this drive they mimic and distort the forms and methods that the communist forces have used in the past to raise people's consciousness in a progressive direction.⁵

The Hindutva fascists have not stopped at capturing parliament but have systematically captured and blatantly used every institution of the Indian State: the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the Election Commission, the police, the armed forces, the Reserve Bank, and the various semi-government bodies (such as cultural and academic institutions). They have put to maximum use the infrastructure of repression and persecution erected by earlier governments. The entire network of Aadhaar, set up by the Congress government, has been supplemented with numerous other technology-based identification and data-gathering networks. The use of drones, CCTV

5 . In their propaganda, the Hindutva fascist forces attempt to appropriate the legacy of all the nationalist, progressive and revolutionary movements and personalities of India, for example, revolutionaries such as Bhagat Singh and his comrades; the heroic Adivasi revolts led by Birsa Munda, Tantya Bhil, Govind Guru, and others; nationalists such as Subhas Chandra Bose; and social reformers and outstanding personalities such as Ambedkar and Rabindranath Tagore. By doing so, and in addition by revising the history of Savarkar, they attempt to gloss over the miserable record of collaboration with British imperialism by the Hindutva forces. And they seek, like the European fascists of the 1920s and 1930s, to "play on the better sentiments of the masses, on their sense of justice, and sometimes even on their revolutionary traditions" (Dimitrov, Report to the 7th Congress of the Comintern).

cameras, facial recognition software, and other methods are being stepped up. The surveillance and hacking of mobile phones and other devices has become more systematised and widespread. The bureaucratic agencies created under the earlier regimes, such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the National Investigative Agency (NIA), the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), and others have created a repressive network that can enter any state at will, casting off the fig-leaf of federalism.

Nationwide, it is not only parliamentary politicians at various levels, from the panchayat level upward, who are migrating to the BJP in search of greater wealth and power (thus exposing once more the sham nature of parliamentary democracy). Serving judges, bureaucrats, police officials, and officers of the armed forces are openly aligning with the Hindutva agenda, which they see as permanent. As they retire from service, or even before retirement, they are rewarded suitably. Correspondingly, those from the judiciary or bureaucracy who maintain any modicum of independence are severely punished. In this way, the entire State machinery is being refurbished along openly fascistic lines.

Far from doing away with populism, the BJP has most effectively used populist measures (such as free gas connections, free toilets, free grain, cash transfers) to make inroads among the poorest sections and to channel the political benefit to the Modi regime. In this way it has expanded its support base among the poorest sections, including among OBCs, Dalits and Adivasis. It has systematically tried to associate itself with socially oppressed sections (for example, Modi promotes himself as an OBC; and the BJP has elevated, in turn, a Dalit and an Adivasi to the status of Presidential figureheads of the country).

All these features have by now resulted in the communalisation of a substantial section of the masses. Over a long period, the Muslim and Hindu communities have been physically separated, and to a large extent their economic interaction and intertwin-

ing have been reduced or removed, and so the natural bonds that would be formed in the course of a collective existence are weak. Whereas earlier communal sentiments were brought to the fore with a specific threat perception (even if manufactured by communal forces), now communal sentiments are constantly maintained in a state of high stimulation. What this means is that propaganda for communal harmony, humanity and secularism, even if it strikes a chord with some sections, will have little effect. **Fascism can only be fought in the course of building class struggles, and concretely showing the need to replace fratricidal hatred with hatred of the class enemy.**

The other ruling class political forces are incapable of fighting Hindutva fascism. Their class agenda is essentially the same as that of the present regime. In the existing state of ruling class economic crisis, and in the existing state of degeneration of 'parliamentary democracy' in India, they are themselves using fascistic means to one extent or another wherever they are in power at the state level, and they are pandering to the communal forces in one way or another, rather than fighting them. In this the BJP is simply more effective, at least at the national level.

There is no split in the ruling classes along fascist and anti-fascist lines. A striking example is that in Chhattisgarh the drive of paramilitary forces to suppress the adivasi masses, and the drive of corporate barons to capture the mineral and forest wealth, have only intensified under the Congress state government, in close collaboration with the Central government. The Aam Aadmi Party has systematically copied not only the leader-adulation and populist measures of the BJP, but also its Hindutva politics. The Trinamool Congress exercises a reign of terror through its criminalised cadre. The softer image cultivated by Naveen Patnaik in Orissa is merely a cover for the large-scale, brutal dispossession of the peasantry, particularly tribal peasantry but also others, in favour of foreign and domestic corporate giants. There is no class basis for any open

or tacit alliance with any section of the ruling classes or any party of the ruling classes. Any implicit alliance with any opposition ruling class political force will soften the class struggle against them, and thereby will undermine the only real base for the struggle against Hindutva fascism, namely, the self-organisation of the basic classes. At the same time, the edge of the overall political struggle must be aimed against the Hindutva fascists, and in no sphere should they be excluded from the target.

Despite the considerable power of the Modi regime and the broader force of Hindutva fascists, they can be defeated. Since their basic class agenda is anti-people, and is aimed at intensifying the exploitation of workers and peasants, including landless peasants and adivasi peasants, they are already facing resistance and they will face intensified resistance. **To the extent that the revolutionary forces make their base among the basic masses and attend to the complex questions of their class struggle, they have ample scope to build resistance against the Hindutva fascists.**

Even within ruling class politics, the Hindutva fascists have not been able to overcome resistance from other ruling class political forces. Note that the Hindutva fascists still garner a minority of votes cast, which is again a smaller minority of eligible voters. A sizeable number of state governments, 12 at present – Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and West Bengal – are ruled by other parties. The continuing existence of contradictions among ruling class political forces could provide some favourable factors for a consistent communist revolutionary force to build the revolutionary movement. However, how far a revolutionary force is able to utilise any such favourable factors would depend on its own strength and consolidation.

Hindutva fascism has several similarities with the fascism of Germany, Italy and Japan in the 1930s and 1940s, but it has certain important distinguishing features.

Fascism in imperialist countries was able to provide significant economic benefits to its working class through all-round militarisation of the domestic economy and through imperialist invasion and plunder of other lands. Hence it was able to consolidate its political hold among the working masses and the petty-bourgeoisie, albeit temporarily.

However, India is a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, without an integrated and articulated capitalist economy. The hegemony of the ruling classes is uneven even within the country. In the given correlation of world powers, India does not have the capability to conquer even its smaller neighbouring countries, and definitely not to plunder them. Far from providing substantial economic dividends to the working people, the agenda of the Hindutva regime is to carry out multiple measures which intensify their exploitation and even devastate them. Hence the present regime itself is further sharpening the contradictions and thereby creating the conditions for class struggle.

Secondly, in capitalist countries which came under fascism, there earlier prevailed bourgeois democracy. Bourgeois democracy is a form of dictatorship of the capitalist class, but it has to concede certain democratic rights to the masses, won historically by bourgeois democratic revolutions. These democratic rights facilitate the organising of the masses by the revolutionaries. Fascism in such countries represents the replacement of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois democratic rights by the open terroristic dictatorship of capital.

However, India being semi-feudal and semi-colonial, there is no bourgeois democracy, but autocracy. Hindutva fascism is not a change of regime as such, but a great intensification of the autocratic features of the existing regime, strengthened by the mobilisation of a reactionary, ideologically charged, mass base. It is the latter feature that distinguishes it from the earlier existing autocracy. The task consequently is not defence of constitutional and

parliamentary institutions, but the task of continuing to advance the people's democratic revolutionary movement under changed conditions, and with special tasks. (It is true that the present fascist conditions pose greater challenges to the communist revolutionaries. But it is mere wishful thinking that these can somehow be overcome by a return to the earlier regime, through parliamentary elections. The Hindutva fascist forces have deepened and consolidated their social hold in a manner that would survive even a hypothetical electoral loss.)

In working out the concrete tactics for struggle against Hindutva fascism, we must keep in view the above account.

The communist revolutionaries must strike roots among the basic masses, particularly the poor and landless peasantry and the lower layers of the urban proletariat, where there is greater scope to expose the class agenda of Hindutva fascism, and build for the longer run. It has been seen that the BJP rulers have greater difficulty in slandering and isolating such movements. Moreover, these classes will be more consistent in their struggle. While all democratic struggles, such as of intellectuals, students, and others, deserve support, in the existing situation of scarce forces it is generally necessary to concentrate among the basic classes and extend solidarity to the struggles of other sections. The form of expression of solidarity should be such as not to deviate from the main focus.

Similarly, it is not necessary for the communist revolutionaries to take up each and every issue for direct intervention. They should work with a longer-term perspective, immediately taking up those questions on which the Hindutva fascist forces can be put on the defensive, in particular class issues.

This does not mean that the other political and ideological work related to fascism should be sidelined. Rather, the exposure of fascism and which class interests it is serving should be integrated into the conduct of the specific class struggles taken up. For instance, when conducting an agitation of workers, or of peasants dispos-

possessed of land, it should be shown how the Hindutva fascists, who claim to represent Hindus, actually suppress the vast masses of toiling Hindus and serve the big capitalists, of whatever community. It should also be shown how Muslim workers and Muslim peasants suffer commonly with their Hindu fellow workers and peasants, and hence the two need to make common cause. Homework is required to provide concrete substantiation through local facts, not general formulations.⁶

Given that there is no material basis for bourgeois democracy in India, and that the masses do not have any deep-seated attachment to the parliamentary institutions, the exposure of the Hindutva fascist forces and regime should not focus on how those institutions, e.g. the Constitution, are being undermined. Rather, it should focus on how the Hindutva fascists are actually servants of the ruling classes and imperialist interests. In the light of Hindutva fascism's attempt to pose itself as nationalist, it is important to substantiate how the imperialist exploitation and oppression of India has intensified under its rule.

In the fight against Hindutva fascism, the communist revolutionaries, and the mass organisations under their influence, should not form any explicit or implicit front with parliamentary political forces. While joint actions or joint struggles with mass forces or mass organisations under the leadership of parliamentary forces are inevitable, care must be taken to ensure that the parliamentary leaderships do not misuse such forums for promotion of their politics. If there is no scope to insist on these demarcations, it is preferable to organise and act independently, coordinating with the actions of other forces to the extent it is useful.

As all the parliamentary parties are united in serving the interests of the ruling classes, they will be the targets of class struggle

⁶ As part of their ideological work, communist revolutionaries must also actively reclaim the positive historical legacy of earlier struggles and outstanding historical personalities, and expose the real antagonism between that legacy and Hindutva fascism.

led by communist revolutionaries wherever they are in power. Thus the Congress in Rajasthan or Chhattisgarh, the CPI(M) in Kerala, the DMK in Tamil Nadu, the BJD in Orissa, AAP in Punjab and Delhi, and TMC in Bengal are all targets of the class struggle. At the same time, even in such cases the BJP (both as Central government and as a local political force) must also be included in the target of exposure and struggle along with the ruling party in that state.

It is a wrong tendency among some communist revolutionary forces to form or join non-class fronts based on caste and community, such as fronts of Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, Sikhs, etc, in the name of building a wide opposition to Hindutva fascism. All such fronts inevitably rely, implicitly or explicitly, on community leaderships or networks from within the existing parliamentary politics. Moreover, their underlying basis is bourgeois liberalism, not democratic politics. These fronts do not pose a challenge to the Hindutva fascists, since the core Hindutva support base is unaffected or even further consolidated.

At the same time, in cases of attacks on minorities and oppressed sections, communist revolutionaries should take up activities and, where necessary, join hands with other forces on those questions. Due to the inadequate practice by the communists on questions of social oppression in India, the progressive elements from the oppressed castes and communities have gravitated to caste/community organisations, which give them some voice and protection. How to relate to these organisations in the interests of the revolutionary movement needs to be explored concretely.

Implications of the objectively revolutionary character of the situation

Contrary to the revisionists, the communist revolutionaries have always asserted that the situation of Indian society is objectively revolutionary. This does not mean that the ruling class is on the

verge of collapse. Nor does it mean that there is any magic wand to bring about its collapse.

To say that the situation of Indian society is objectively revolutionary means, rather, that the class contradictions are acute, and that there is no scope in the existing system to soften them. By contrast, with the emergence of imperialism, the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries was able to use a portion of its imperialist loot to bribe a significant section of its own working class, and thereby win it over to class collaboration. Whereas in the semi-colonial countries, the ruling classes do not have the scope to do this, and the class contradictions cannot be softened for any significant section of the toiling masses. This is the reason that, since the latter half of the 20th century, the revolutionary storms have been concentrated in the Third World, not in the imperialist countries.

However, this only means that there is objective *basis* to advance the revolution in the countries oppressed by imperialism. The key element that is needed in order to take advantage of this situation is the people's democratic revolutionary movement, centred on the agrarian revolutionary movement, and led by the communist revolutionaries. It is in the challenging and tortuous course of building such a movement that the communist revolutionaries will be able to establish their credentials with the masses, and channel the objectively revolutionary situation into an actual revolutionary upsurge and people's war. The relevance of the objectively revolutionary character of the situation is to spur the communist revolutionaries to apply to these tasks in a targeted way, and materialise the minimum requirements to take advantage of the favourable situation. However, this key element is missing today.

The unformed yearnings of people for an alternative, the periodic explosions of discontent in one form or the other, the heroic battles of oppressed nationalities for self-determination, all these things are expressions of the objective situation. But they should not mislead the communist revolutionaries to re-orient themselves

away from their key tasks, and instead to give undue weight to the task of general propaganda of the revolutionary alternative. Such propaganda is at all times necessary, but it is subordinate to the task of *materialising* the revolutionary alternative.

While the Indian economy has faced periodic crises, the ruling classes are not in crisis, and are not unduly worried about the stability of their rule. Even amid large-scale suffering and turmoil among the people, the ruling classes have not faced a serious political threat, such as they faced in periods of revolutionary upsurge during the late 1940s and in the wake of Naxalbari.

At the same time, the ruling classes are aware of the general discontent of the masses regarding their actual condition, and their consequent apathy about parliamentary democracy and various slogans of the ruling classes. This apathy arises from their actual experience over the past 75 years. Hence the new slogans of the ruling class parties do not peddle illusions about democracy, socialism, and social uplift, as they did in earlier times. Instead, the new slogans are that the people will be protected from dark forces by a strong and aggressive leader, that the leader will also personally take care of their economic hardship with benevolent gifts (or schemes), and that their problems will ultimately be overcome by the nation becoming rich through development. This is seen not only in Modi and Yogi but in the opposition leaders as well, such as Mamata, KCR, Stalin, Kejriwal, and company. On the one hand this is a feature of fascist politics, but it also relies on the base of feudal mentality.

The rapidly expanding number of populist schemes of the central and state governments keep people on a constant treadmill of applying for various benefits, verifying their identities, and recovering the amounts. They reinforce the mentality of asking for doles and feeling grateful to the rulers for these paltry sums. As in the past, the doles also provide a steady stream of revenues from corruption for the rural feudal forces, who control the local adminis-

tration in the villages. The hold of feudal forces over the masses is also strengthened by their ability to ensure the provision of benefits to their supporters, and to deny benefits to any persons who cross their path.

Through a plethora of populist schemes, the ruling class parties are not only trying to lull the people who are facing hardship at present, and divert them from the path of class struggle. They are also laying the ground for a coming period in which employment is going to be devastated on a much larger scale, with increased corporate control of different sectors of the economy, and increased automation. To pacify the people in such conditions of mass unemployment, the ruling classes worldwide are discussing the introduction of Universal Basic Income, whereby some dole will be given to every citizen.

Communist revolutionaries cannot ignore questions regarding the implementation of various government schemes. However, in the manner of their taking up these questions, (1) they must establish a collective struggle-orientation; (2) they must make people conscious that these are not a benevolence from the rulers, but their right; and (3) they must concretely show how in fact these amounts amount to merely a tiny fraction of the surplus extracted by the ruling classes from the labour of the people, and a tiny fraction the people's natural wealth that is captured by the ruling classes. Most importantly, the communist revolutionaries must ensure that their main efforts are shifted the basic class issues, revolving around the means of production.

The various ruling class institutions – the parliaments and assemblies, state governors, Election Commission, panchayats, judiciary, police and investigative agencies like the NIA and ED, administration, military, media – are brazenly functioning as puppets of the ruling party. In that sense it seems they are exposing themselves politically. However, since this self-exposure has not been accompanied by rising political consciousness of the masses, it has merely served to reinforce the image of the strong leader, who is

able to bend all institutions to his will.

On the one hand, the once-leading party of the Indian ruling classes, the Indian National Congress, has been on a long downward path, and is now struggling to maintain its existence. The underlying reason for the decline of the Congress over a long period was the growing disillusion of the people with the existing system, of which the Congress had been the main steward over decades. This disillusion intensified with the post-1991 neoliberal policies, and the resulting harm to traditional support bases of the Congress.

For a considerable period, this decline of the Congress, without a replacement, gave rise to continuous instability in ruling class politics. This was *relatively* favourable for the exposure of the parliamentary system and for the advance of revolutionary forces, to the extent these forces effectively made use of this scope. But the ruling classes have now found a replacement for the Congress, in the form of the BJP, with similar national presence, parliamentary majority, and ability to push through ruling class policies. As such the political hegemony of the ruling classes has not lessened with the decline of its once-leading party. That political hegemony will not crack until the materialised revolutionary alternative emerges to challenge it.

Rising fighting spirit among specific sections, and our tasks

Three sections of the people, namely, Dalits, women, and students and youth, have in the recent past shown the spirit of resistance against the rulers, in the form of different movements, spontaneous or organised.

The struggle of Dalit students against discrimination by the Hindutva forces, the protests against the casteist Supreme Court judgement on reservations, and the protests in Gujarat against upper-caste atrocities, all displayed sparks of fight and defiance. Ir-

respective of any Ambedkarite politics, and any illusions regarding the Constitution, among the organisers of these movements, these struggles are against caste oppression and must be supported. At the same time, it is difficult to sustain these struggles for long. The base of caste oppression is in the rural areas, where it continues to be strong, and hence the major field of struggle against caste will be as part of the agrarian revolutionary movement. Communist revolutionaries must consciously and concretely address themselves to the question of caste oppression and divisions in the course of building the agrarian revolutionary movement. It is only through conscious practice on this question, and its periodic summing-up, that they will be able to make headway. Any such headway will in turn help orient the diverse progressive forces fighting against caste oppression.

Women's labour of reproduction encompasses not only the bearing and rearing of children (the next generation of workers), but equally it includes the *daily* reproduction of the labour power of the workers through domestic work. The actual labour hours of women are longer than the menfolk of the family. In this way the ruling class indirectly exploits toiling women even when the latter are not directly employed by the ruling class. As the economic distress and hardship have placed greater burdens on the backs of working families, and as the fascistic forces have intensified their oppression of targeted sections of the masses, the burdens on women have increased, and they have been driven to fight back.

There is a marked increase in the participation and assertion of women in struggle-activity on various fronts, as peasants, landless labourers, anganwadi workers, garment workers, tea pickers, students, housewives, in struggles against displacement, CAA-NRC, farm laws, anti-worker laws, exploitation by capitalists and governments, university administrations and fascistic forces. Women activists are emerging in different arenas. This is a significant positive development. Taking note of it, communist revolutionaries

must make special efforts to create separate spaces and forums for women to participate in the struggles, promote women as activists and leaders of these struggles, and develop party members from among them. In this they should focus on the women coming from the basic masses, who will have greater staying power than the women from middle sections. The women from the basic masses are also less influenced by bourgeois feminist trends, and they know how to carry on struggle against patriarchal oppression as part of the overall class struggle.

Among the communist revolutionaries themselves, there needs to be greater consciousness and inner-organisational examination of their personal attitudes and conduct in relation to the caste question and the status of women. Ignoring these matters in the name of the pressing needs of the work would not only amount to a type of opportunism, but would deter the entry and development of cadre from those oppressed sections.

The youth and students are a politically significant section, as they are capable of great aspirations and intense activity. Hence the ruling class political forces are trying to influence them and draw them to its side.

The unprecedented levels of unemployment among youth makes them prey to lumpenisation, especially at the hands of political parties who can pay them. Their minds are being filled with imperialist and pseudo-feudal culture through the internet, and the rampant consumerism affects them the most. All these negative trends partly explain why there is no organised youth movement in the country. At the same time, the soaring unemployment has created simmering unrest and explosions of spontaneous protest, flaring up in Patna over railway recruitment, in Rajasthan for jobs, and in several northern states over the Agnipath military recruitment scheme. In these protests the strength of their anger against the rulers, who have condemned them to worthless life, is starkly visible. Such protests are short-lived, since they are mainly venting

anger at the rulers, and there is no organised force.

College students have been facing, on the one hand, a systematic drive by the rulers to commercialise college education and to create a market for domestic and foreign corporates, and on the other fascistic attacks by Hindutva forces to exercise hegemony over the student masses. The students have responded to these attacks by repeated and brave movements of resistance, even in the face of stiff repression. Among the important struggles are in the University of Hyderabad, JNU, Delhi University, Jadavpur University, TISS, IIT Mumbai, and Panjab University Chandigarh.

However, the present student movements are taking place in different conditions from the past student movements under the influence of communist revolutionaries. On the one hand, there is no longer a world socialist base to influence them positively with the vision of a new society (as there was in the form of Socialist China during the earlier student upsurge in the late 1960s-1970s). On the other, in the face of the fascistic attack, the present movement is a defensive one, in which the lines between the revolutionary, revisionist and reformist politics are blurred. The leadership is under pressure to prove its credentials by swearing adherence to the Constitution, even as the fascist attacks throw the Constitution in the rubbish bin. (Given the limitations/weakness of the broader revolutionary movement, many of the prominent student leaders have inevitably been sucked into parliamentary politics.) The revolutionary stream within the student movement must find ways in which to distinguish itself from other trends while avoiding adventurism, and keeping the target of struggle aimed at the twin fascistic and corporate attack.

The youth and students need to be drawn into a sustained, militant struggle against the rulers. This need and potential can be addressed by communist revolutionaries principally by giving special attention to youth and student organisations in their areas of work, as an integral part of the overall movement there.

Vast increase in repressive machinery

Compared to the past, the repressive machinery has vastly increased. While laws such as UAPA are successors to earlier Acts such as TADA, there are new legislations and agencies, such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Enforcement Directorate, and the National Investigative Agency. The actual legal provisions and institutions, however, are secondary, since the State is increasingly brazen, drawing its authority not from legislations but from its fascist strength. The physical infrastructure of repression has enormously increased in the last 20 years, under successive UPA and NDA governments. Technology has enabled unprecedented levels of surveillance. The Aadhar and other identifications have made it much more simple to track the movements of individuals. Mobile phones, CCTVs in all public places, facial recognition software and data analytics will make it possible to track the movements and activities of those struggling against the State. In the regions of struggle, particularly in the tribal regions where communist revolutionaries are active, the police and security forces have been multiplied, an informer network has been set up in the villages, drone surveillance is being set up, and a systematic campaign of harassment and killings has created an atmosphere of terror.

If the masses are passive spectators in this situation, this terror cannot be fought, no matter what heroism is displayed or sacrifices made. At the same time, as the heroic people of Vietnam and other liberation struggles demonstrated, no infrastructure or campaign of terror can ultimately defeat the people if they are organised on a mass revolutionary line. The communist revolutionaries must find appropriate tactics to tap the revolutionary potential of the masses for resistance.

Situation of working class and required orientation of work

The traditional trade union movement among the organised

sector workers is semi-defunct and is restricted to some annual ritual programmes. It has not carried out any actual resistance to the anti-worker policies of the ruling classes for the last three decades of attack on the working class. The established trade unions treacherously neglected to organise the contract workers, weakening their own bargaining position to the point where the ruling class can afford to ignore these organisations, and is doing so.

What the ruling class fears is not the established trade unions, but the spontaneous emergence of working class organisation from place to place, under whatever banner. Whether in Maruti Suzuki and the auto ancillary units in Gurgaon, or among women garment workers of Bangalore, or women tea pickers in Kerala, or road transport workers in Maharashtra, the workers have organised themselves and waged significant battles. These instances show the scope for fighting forces of the working class to emerge in organised industries. They also show the difficulty for sustaining the organisation in present conditions. The approach of the communist revolutionaries must be to not prematurely expose the revolutionary political elements, and not allow the fighting strength to be finished off by overreaching the actual strength of the base. Instead it should be to build circles of militants in such industries with a long-term perspective, and take advantage of periodic struggle opportunities to consolidate the organisation and consciousness.

Meanwhile there is a larger section of the working class working in severely oppressive conditions in construction, sanitation, brick kilns, security guards, hamaals, creches, public health, sugarcane cutting, etc. Here it is even more difficult to form stable organisations, but there is greater scope to propagate revolutionary politics. There is greater scope for such organisations when they are in, or adjacent to, areas of agrarian struggle.

A vast section of the working class in India is part-peasant and part-worker. They carry out key agricultural operations on their fields but also work in other months at nearby or distant places as

workers. The worker-peasant alliance perspective can be built by taking up the struggles of these workers in their lives both as workers and as peasants.

In practice, economism, legalism and sectarian divisions such as caste and community are the biggest obstacles in the trade union movement. The communist revolutionaries must apply themselves seriously until they make headway on the working class front, specifically in forging class consciousness and in transforming the economic struggles into political struggles.

Given the present situation of communist revolutionary forces, they need to give priority to building the working class movement in areas where it can be coordinated with the democratic peasant movement or the agrarian revolutionary movement. In these areas the workers are able to see more directly that by allying with the peasantry they can form a political force in opposition to the ruling class. Workers' own life-experiences as part-peasants, and their direct interaction with the peasant movement, create greater scope for the party to influence the political consciousness of the working class in a revolutionary direction.

In other areas, such as major cities, even when communist revolutionaries come into the leadership of trade unions and other working class mass organisations, they should beware of harbouring illusions about the extent of their actual political influence. Instead they should work with a low-key and long-term approach to establish democratic, participatory and struggle-oriented culture in the working class mass organisations, step by step fight economism and introduce political consciousness, find ways to introduce the agrarian revolutionary orientation in appropriate forms (including by paying attention to the rural connections of workers), create an advanced section within the mass organisation, and selectively recruit to the party only those political elements who will be able to stay the long course.

A new form of work is the so-called 'gig work' in taxis, deliv-

ery, and other services provided by new capitalist firms, backed by large foreign finance. These firms maintain an elaborate legal shell in order to promote the illusion among the workers that they are independent entrepreneurs, and thereby exploit them even more rapaciously. However that illusion is rapidly diminishing with the intensification of exploitation, and the workers are from place to place getting organised against these new capitalist firms. In the case of large layers of these workers, their work and life conditions are those of the working class. These sections are bound to try to get organised in large numbers in the near future, but the lack of collective forms of interaction (except over the internet) are a hurdle to class consciousness. To develop their movement in a class direction, there needs to be a correctly oriented working class movement among other working class sections as well.

A common problem among the trade unions (and other mass organisations) in which communist revolutionary forces are active is the tendency of the leadership to bifurcate their duties. On the one hand, they actually focus mainly on economic questions. On the other, the leaderships periodically join hands with various forces on a range of political issues, while mobilising just a token presence of leading activists for such programmes.

As a general principle it is better for mass organisation leaderships to avoid purely token participation in joint activities (leaving aside the important question of whether there is adequate clarity and unity among the different organisations about the political issues involved). Rather, they can modestly focus on raising the political consciousness and participation of members step by step, and participate in joint political activities only when at least the advanced section of the membership can be convinced of the need to do so. (Other forms too may be useful, such as independently organising activity while coordinating with the dates of the joint activity. Special forums or platforms can be created for politically conscious elements in the mass organisation to play a more ac-

tive political role, both within and outside the mass organisation.) Among the political activities, it is particularly important to mobilise workers in solidarity with concrete struggles. The experience of struggles in Gurgaon and elsewhere shows the importance of occasions/periods when a broad belt of the working class can get mobilised in solidarity with a struggling section.

Both in order to keep the trade unions continuously active, and in order to make the workers politically conscious, it is necessary for the trade unions to take up all the questions pertaining to the lives of workers and their families, such as issues relating to their residences, electricity and water supply, public transport, schooling, health care, democratic rights and caste oppression/communal discrimination. On the one hand, the workers can immediately relate to these issues. At the same time, any struggle by the union on these issues goes beyond the employer-employee relation. It is an assertion, however small or embryonic, of working class's organised strength in society, and against the State. Hence it helps raise the political consciousness of the workers, which is the ultimate aim of all our activity.

A specific political task in the present conditions is creating consciousness among workers about the need to fight communal fascism, for which there needs to be systematic exposure, with necessary homework, of how the anti-worker policies of the rulers and the communal policies are closely related. In this too, special circles, forums or platforms may be needed, separate from the trade union structure.

Distinct from the small industrialists are the many times more numerous micro producers in manufacturing, trade and other services. These are largely household-based (home industries, small shopkeepers, cobblers, tailors, barbers, etc.). These producers are petty bourgeois in material base, like the peasantry, and are thus an objectively revolutionary class. Unable to find other employment, they mainly produce necessary goods and services for mass

consumption by working people. Because the working people who make up their market are exploited by the ruling classes, these consumers lack money to spend even on such bare necessities. Thus the micro-producers in turn are forced to keep their own margins, to the bare minimum needed for their own subsistence. In this way they face indirect exploitation by the ruling class. Further, during economic crises, the petty producers cannot afford to close down their businesses; instead their income shrinks.

Their life conditions are similar to those of the working class, and large numbers of them work as wage workers from time to time, and also as peasants. Thus there is no hard division between them and the workers and peasants, and they may identify with the struggles of those two classes. However, their material base necessarily shapes their consciousness. Unlike the workers, they are only *indirectly* exploited by capital. What is directly manifested is 'self-exploitation'. Hence it is more difficult for them to acquire class consciousness, except in a vulgar form (e.g., 'rich vs poor'). Again, a movement of the workers and peasants, particularly the latter, can sharpen their class consciousness. Hence in terms of priorities, priority should be given to organising the workers and peasants, while mobilising solidarity from the petty producers.

Situation of different agrarian classes and the required orientation of struggle

In the rural areas, landlords have extended their activities to other spheres, as contractors, traders, rice mill owners, brick kiln owners, promoters of educational institutes, suppliers of water/water pumps, and other capitalist businesses. However, the basis of their social power is still basically the control of land.

In the rural areas, there is a proliferation of parasitic elements drawing like leeches on the blood of the peasantry – usurers (and

usurious financial agencies), middlemen, traders of various types (both as suppliers and purchasers), criminals, village/forest officialdom, and politicians. These suck out the surplus and even the necessary labour (the means of survival) that is generated by the peasants working on the land. The imperialist and comprador corporations operate through these parasitic forces at the ground level. These ground level forces are indispensable for imperialist and comprador extractions. Any imperialist re-structuring of the agrarian economy will not abolish these intermediaries and create direct links between the peasantry and the corporations. Rather, these intermediaries, with their political-economic hold in the rural areas, are essential for the corporations to make maximum extractions from the multitudinous peasant masses. Without targeting and ousting the structure of oppression and exploitation at the village level, the peasantry cannot throw off the burden of imperialist-comprador exploitation.

In the period of globalisation, sections of the rich peasantry, drawn from the dominant castes, have found various opportunities to enrich themselves, often by semi-feudal means, at the expense of the poor peasants. A new generation of rich peasant households have urban middle class jobs and connections. However, a section of rich peasantry too is to be affected by the neoliberal farm reforms, as evidenced by their participation in the recent farmers' agitation. While the crisis of a section of rich peasants is a favourable development for developing the agrarian revolutionary movement, this is an unreliable section, with caste/cultural ties to landlords, and entrenched in caste and parliamentary politics. Its periodic stances against corporate/imperialist attacks do not reflect a polarisation of class forces as long as the pole of the anti-feudal peasant movement is weak or absent.

The middle and poor peasantry are facing an acute crisis. This crisis is one of increasing commercial penetration of agriculture without release of productive forces through agrarian revolution. In these conditions, usury and mercantile capital can flourish and

carry out parasitic extractions from the peasantry, driving many to suicide or loss of land. At the same time, capitalism in agriculture is not developing in the form of concentration of land in the hands of capitalist farmers, employing wage labour and achieving higher productivity. The reason is that in conditions of vast unemployment and under-employment, the scope for the exploiting classes to carry out semi-feudal extraction continues to be greater than their uncertain prospects in capitalist agriculture. For example, it remains, by and large, more profitable for a trader to procure from a large number of agricultural producer families, and in the process squeeze them, than for him to directly cultivate on capitalist lines with wage labour.

The poor peasantry must consciously target the semi-feudal parasitic forces which are directly sucking their blood, and join hands with the landless peasantry across caste barriers to forge the core of the revolutionary class alliance and carry forward the anti-feudal tasks. Until it does so it will remain trapped in the agrarian crisis. **The main weakness of peasant struggles in settled peasant areas (i.e. in non-tribal areas), both in backward regions such as Bihar and relatively developed regions such as Punjab, has been the absence or weakness of a landless-poor peasant alliance based on an agrarian revolutionary programme.**

The landless and near-landless peasantry now form half of the peasantry. This class urgently requires land for survival, as the other opportunities for livelihood have shrunk. In caste terms, a large section of this class are Dalits and other socially stigmatised and oppressed sections, for whom the possession of land is a prerequisite to basic social dignity. The organisation of the landless must be geared to the demand for land. Also the question of semi-feudal oppression and atrocities is of vital importance, since it colours their entire social existence, reinforces extra-economic coercion, and prevents them from raising their heads to play their due leading role in the agrarian revolutionary movement.

When taking up the question of agricultural wages, the agricul-

tural labour organisations should differentiate between landlords/ rich peasants and middle/poor peasants. Other questions such as implementation of various government schemes for the landless/ Dalits may offer a means of entry by communist revolutionary forces into these sections, but they should not remain the main content of the movement of the landless.

When the Dalits begin organising, the feudal/rich peasant sections try to mobilise the middle and poor land-owning peasantry against the Dalits, on a caste basis. While making every effort to win over the toiling landowning sections or at least to neutralise them, and while objectively assessing the tactical possibilities and hurdles in each situation, the communist revolutionaries need not restrain or postpone the struggle of the landless peasants till a majority of the landowning peasants are won over. Such a restraint or precondition may act as a dampener on the class struggle of the most revolutionary contingent of the peasantry, the landless peasantry. There is scope for them to initiate the struggle, and, in the course of their struggle, try to win over the poor and middle peasants on the basis of their political conduct of the struggle, even if there is no pre-existing organisation of landowning peasants. At the same time, the landless peasants need to make serious preparations for their self-defence and defence of the movement. The unity between the landless and poor peasantry cannot be reliably forged on the basis of general solidarity efforts, but only in the course of common struggle on the basis of an agrarian revolutionary programme.

The work of the CRs among the peasantry requires that they apply the agrarian revolutionary programme to the concrete conditions of each region, and translate it into slogans, demands, forms of organisation and forms of struggle. For this they are also expected to concretely identify the class enemy in the rural areas, and the methods of exploitation they employ. Accordingly, the immediate plan of work should link with the long term plan of work, and

the party forces and masses must grasp the connection between the two.

The adivasi peasantry continue to face traditional forms of exploitation by usurers, traders, landlords and officialdom. Their liberation continues to hinge on their conscious assertion of their collective right over their lands, their forests, the water resources and other resources of their regions. These struggles are anti-feudal in the sense that they are against the parasitic forces who carry out extractions from the peasantry tied to the land; and these struggles are for the establishment of the political power of the peasantry on the basis of the seizure of land, forest, water and other resources, on an area-wise basis. At the same time, these struggles are not only anti-feudal, but are people's democratic revolutionary struggles, insofar as they are under the leadership of the working class and in alliance with other revolutionary classes.

At present the proletarian leadership in the struggles of the peasantry, particularly the adivasi peasantry, is mainly represented by the communist revolutionary forces organising and leading these struggles. There is no need to restrain or postpone these struggles till such time as the working class and other revolutionary classes become prepared, and till the communist revolutionary forces themselves unify and form the Party. Rather, with a dialectical perspective, (1) the advance of the anti-feudal struggles of the peasantry would give a fillip to the struggles of other revolutionary classes, including the working class (especially given the semi-feudal ties of India's working class); and (2) the experiences of implementing the revolutionary line in leading the agrarian revolutionary movement, and drawing lessons from these experiences, will contribute to the process of unifying the communist revolutionaries and forging the proletarian Party on the basis of the correct line.

In the present phase of the revolutionary movement, till the raising of the revolutionary movement to the next phase, the requirements of building the agrarian revolutionary movement must

be made the central reference point of the Party's plan of tasks and policies. Throughout the People's Democratic Revolution, the axis remains the Agrarian Revolution.

In the present phase of imperialism worldwide and comprador capital in India, there is a ferocious drive by the ruling classes to grab peasants' land. Lands closer to the urban or relatively developed areas are being grabbed as real estate or as sites of infrastructure projects. Lands in interior areas are being grabbed for mineral wealth or for transport infrastructure. The peasants, including adivasi peasants, are being dispossessed without any alternative employment. Hence for them it is a life-and-death struggle. These struggles against dispossession have become major flashpoints of peasant struggle throughout the country. Most of the heroic peasant struggles of the last 20 years have been against these dispossessions. At several places communist revolutionaries and other democratic forces have played a leading or important role. Resistance to these land grabs is a necessary and significant part of the peasant struggle against feudalism and imperialism.

However, it is important to keep in mind that both the struggles against dispossession and against pro-imperialist, pro-corporate 'Farm Reforms' are struggles against attacks on the *existing* peasant livelihoods and economy. They do not challenge the prevailing structure of class relations in the countryside, let alone pose a revolutionary alternative to that structure. Insofar as communist revolutionary forces are present in these struggles, they can strive to bring the poor peasantry and landless to prominence in these struggles, but there are inherent limitations to the political range of the struggle. Hence, for these struggles to achieve their full potential, they need to be integrated into an overall agrarian revolutionary movement with anti-feudal tasks. This underlines the urgency of practically initiating the anti-feudal struggles in all areas of peasant work. At the same time, if the struggles of tribal peasants against dispossession are waged with the perspective of establishing the control and sovereignty of the tribals over the forests and associated re-

sources, there is scope for these struggles of tribals to be turned into a step forward, toward agrarian revolutionary movement.

Since the axis of the People's Democratic Revolution is the agrarian revolution, it is essential that all the revolutionary classes identify with the revolutionary struggles of the peasantry, and support them. Hence it is important that the existing peasant struggles, whatever their limitations, be projected with an agrarian revolutionary perspective among other classes, that the other classes identify with and support these struggles. In this respect communist revolutionaries need to beware of certain populist or idealist tendencies which undermine this aim.

With respect to adivasi struggles, there is a tendency to frame them as struggles for protecting an age-old and unique way of life against the intrusion by the 'outside world', the 'city-dwellers', or some such non-class entity. In fact, adivasi society has been in a continuous relation with the non-adivasi society for centuries, and since the 19th century it has been penetrated and subjugated by colonial and then neo-colonial exploitation. As part of this, various types of semi-feudal exploiters have entered all the adivasi areas; and among adivasis, too, a small stratum of exploiters and touts has developed. State control over the forests since British times has facilitated the entry of various types of looters as well.

The adivasis are a part of the peasantry of India, and the liberation of the adivasis thus hinges not just on the preservation of their existing way of life. It hinges on their fight against the exploiters, a fight to get control of the means of production and establish their sovereignty over the forest, land, water and associated resources of their region, as an integral part of the liberation struggle of all of India's toiling masses.

Similarly, there is a tendency to frame the struggle of the peasantry against the pro-imperialist, pro-comprador 'Farm Acts' as the struggle of 'farmers' (a non-class term comprising poor, middle and rich peasants, as well as landlords) against corporates. Several farmer organisations solicit sympathy for the struggle on the basis

that farmers are 'annadaatas', givers of food, whereas in fact the peasants who sell grain are doing so to meet their own survival needs.

This type of populist or romantic projection serves to attract middle-class sympathy, but does not build the needed class consciousness and solidarity. In fact, the peasants of the surplus regions are trapped in a *system* of exploitation. They are exploited at the hands of not only the corporate capital, but also usury and merchant capital (such as the *arhatiyas*, the middlemen-money-lenders). In the midst of this the peasants have been facing a further, direct, attack by imperialism and comprador capital. As such the liberation of the peasantry of these regions, too, hinges on a struggle against the entire system of exploitation.

The proper, class-based, projection of the struggles of these sections of the peasantry will help other sections of toiling masses to identify with them on class terms.

Urgency of applying to the task of building the agrarian revolutionary movement

The principal contradiction in India today remains the contradiction between feudalism and the broad masses of people, as feudalism serves as the main social base of imperialism. The axis of the People's Democratic Revolution is the agrarian revolution. The entire orientation of the work of the communist revolutionaries must be imbued with this perspective.

The need for agrarian revolution in India is no less today than at any time in the past. India's agrarian economy is very diverse. Capitalist elements have penetrated agriculture to various extents in various regions, but without changing the production relations qualitatively, so that the basic frame remains semi-feudal.

The inequality of land holdings is acute. Half of rural households do not own any land for cultivation, but there is no stable livelihood

outside agriculture. They need land for survival. Sizeable numbers are forced to take land on rent from larger landholders. The majority of agricultural labour households are indebted to moneylenders, of old and new types.

At the same time, even according to official statistics, 2 per cent of the ownership holdings contain 27 per cent of the land, and 5 per cent of the ownership holdings contain 44 per cent of the land. Official statistics under-report the real extent of larger holdings, since larger holders evade land reform laws. Moreover, the landlords own the best land.

Even among peasant households operating some land, 87 per cent of such households are small and marginal, i.e., with less than 2 hectares. They too do not have real control over their own agricultural activity, but have to submit to the dictates of traders, banks, or government agencies. The net income of the peasantry from crop cultivation is falling in real terms. They are forced to take loans from banks, moneylenders, and traders in order to cultivate. Squeezed by the narrowing gap between input costs and the price they get for their crop, they are falling deeper into debt at usurious interest rates of up to 48 per cent per year, and many are committing suicide. The outstanding debt of the peasantry, according to official data, is almost two-thirds of their income, and this is only a fraction of the real figure. Usurer capital extracts many times more than the peasants can invest in agriculture, and stands as one of the major hurdles to the increase of productive forces.

Nearly one-third of the country's land is common land in one form or the other, including village common lands, community forests, and government forests. The peasantry, including substantially the tribal peasantry, depend heavily on these lands for fodder, fuel, various foods, medicines and saleable produce. Yet these resources are being captured for various purposes by the exploiting classes, and the peasantry are being driven out. The Dalits are predominantly dependent on agriculture, yet they have little or no land. The Adivasis are almost wholly dependent on agriculture and

forestry, yet they have little or no control over their land and forests. All these facts make clear the urgency of agrarian revolution. By agrarian revolution we mean the revolutionary seizure of landlords' land and other assets, cancellation of rural debts, and democratic redistribution of land among the toiling peasantry. (This lays the basis for the transition to socialist forms.) Given the hunger of the peasants for land, their need for liberation from usurers, their need for control over common lands, forest, and water, the peasantry will respond if given the correct lead.

Despite this reality, and despite their formal positions, communist revolutionaries in the last few decades have not given the building of the agrarian revolutionary movement the primacy and urgency it demands. Consciously or unconsciously, they have slowly shifted the focus of their work away from the agrarian revolutionary movement, and toward general democratic movements against the government or against the comprador class. As a result the anti-feudal tasks have been sidelined.

The past 20 years have witnessed important struggles of the peasantry of different types – anti-displacement (a large number throughout the country); objectively anti-autocratic (Lalgarh); objectively anti-feudal (Narayanpatna and forest struggles); anti-corporate (farmers' movement). However, for different reasons, these movements have not in turn given rise to a sustained agrarian revolutionary movement. All these movements call for a serious review by the communist revolutionaries, to draw out the positive and negative lessons for the building of the agrarian revolutionary movement.

The principal reason for the receding of the agrarian revolutionary movement is the failure of communist revolutionary forces to apply themselves to this task, analyse the various new forms of exploitation and oppression being faced, and draw the people into struggles on this basis. There is a widespread tendency of pragmatism, legalism and economism, which grows spontaneously from the existing society and ruling class politics. The real difficulty is that

practice of communist revolutionary forces is still largely economic, whether with forces claiming to pursue the mass revolutionary line, or with the forces claiming to be waging armed struggle. People's revolutionary democratic authority is not being established through mass struggle.

The failure to build the agrarian revolutionary movement is further complicated by the theoretical alibis advanced by the communist revolutionary leaderships for this. One such alibi is that the proper building of the agrarian revolutionary movement cannot take place without the reorganisation of the communist party, the development of work among all the revolutionary classes, and the initiation of a united front. By placing such preconditions, these trends postpone the actual building of the agrarian revolutionary movement indefinitely, and objectively change the orientation of practice. Whereas in fact the building of the agrarian revolutionary movement under the leadership of the communist revolutionaries will contribute to all these tasks.

For building the agrarian revolutionary movement, party building is mandatory: no serious movement can be built without building the party at the local level. In turn, the local cadres have a major role to play in enriching the party's understanding and practice. Their participation is essential in order to work out the specific agrarian revolutionary programme for the region. Their direct contact with the revolutionary practice of the masses enriches the party's tactics (forms of organisation, forms of struggle, slogans).

In the course of the building of the people's democratic revolutionary movement centred on the agrarian revolutionary movement, and implementing the mass revolutionary line, the authority of the correct line and trend will get established, and create scope for unification of communist revolutionaries. The principal task of the communist revolutionaries today is line-implementation and party building for line-implementation; and on the basis of establishing the line, taking forward the task of unification of communist revolutionaries.

Task of unification of communist revolutionaries

At present, to take forward the process of the unification, it is not useful to categorise the different organisations of communist revolutionaries on the basis of formalistic criteria. Since the correct trend has not been able to establish the practice of its line, there is no polarisation among the communist revolutionary forces on that basis. It is necessary for the correct trend to first make a breakthrough in the implementation of its line, rather than sit in judgement on other groups. It must defend its line, both by practising it and by countering the wrong trends theoretically. At the same time, the communist revolutionaries must have a modest attitude towards each other, exchange experiences and views, and study each other's positions, in order to learn from each other.

Joint actions by mass organisations is a process independent of the unification process of communist revolutionaries. The mass struggle against the class enemy does *indirectly* advance the process of unification, but it does so (as earlier noted) to the extent the correct line gets established in practice. Joint actions should be based on a properly defined common understanding about the specific question of mass struggle. They should be decided according to the interests of the section of people organised by the mass organisation, irrespective of the political leadership of the mass organisation.

Joint action as such does not further the process of unification of communist revolutionaries. Unification relates to the ideological-political sphere (including the political understanding of practice), whereas joint action relates to the sphere of struggling against the class enemy. It may be that groups already on the course of unification may find it useful to form joint actions or joint fronts, but that is a transient stage.

Joint action may help in establishing familiarity and fraternal relations among communist revolutionary groups, but such con-

siderations are not important in unification; they do nothing to remove the basic differences that characterise the communist revolutionary camp today. Rather, there is a danger that joint actions by communist revolutionary-led mass organisations are used as a palliative by communist revolutionary leaderships to assuage their memberships who yearn for unification, without creating the basis for unification.

Unity of communist revolutionary forces against the class enemy is an essential element of our revolutionary practice, irrespective of the seriousness of differences among the forces. This unity should be displayed by solidarity with the movements led by different communist revolutionary forces, and by opposing repression on them unconditionally. At the same time it is mandatory for the communist revolutionaries to demarcate from, criticise, and struggle against the major wrong trends that are harming the revolutionary movement, while the form of such criticism and struggle should take into account the specific situation.

Recent State Assembly Elections

(December 2023)

The results of several state assembly elections were announced on December 3. BJP won in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, and the Congress won in Telangana.

We know that the present State is autocratic, and that elections under this State are a means whereby the ruling classes deceive the people. These elections are intended to make the people think that they have a real vote, and that the rulers thus get a mandate through elections to rule over them. Through such elections, however, only representatives of the ruling classes can come to power to help make policies to better exploit and control the people.

Then why do we, as CRs, keep track of developments in parliamentary politics? We keep track of parliamentary politics to understand the methods by which the ruling classes are ruling and maintaining their hegemony over the people. We do this in order to better understand how to fight them at various levels, including fighting the influence they have over the minds of the people.

Propaganda regarding election results

After these latest results, for example, all the media have been even more full of propaganda than usual. Modi claimed the three BJP victories were a 'hat-trick', and that the coming general elections too would be a 'hat-trick', i.e., that he would win the general elections for a third time in a row. The television 'news' channels and 'news' papers celebrated the BJP wins openly and made this so-called hat-trick their headline. Various analysts wrote long articles about how this revealed the people's mood, the capability of Modi and the BJP, the failure of the Congress, and so on.

This propaganda is partly aimed at putting down the BJP's par-

liamentary rivals, but it is not aimed *only* at the parliamentary rivals. It is also intended to put down the *people*. This propaganda is intended to *hammer into people's minds* the impression that the winner of the election is backed by vast numbers of *people*, and so all those who resist the rulers' dictates are merely isolated groups or individuals, who now *must submit*. In this way, the ruling classes use election results to reinforce their class hegemony and to enforce their class objectives.

But, even by the rulers' view of parliamentary politics, a simple examination of the results exposes the propaganda. In Rajasthan, the BJP won by a margin of 2 per cent of the total votes polled, and in Chhattisgarh by 4 per cent; a shift of 1-2 per cent in these states would have changed the outcome. Only in M.P. did the BJP win by a sizeable margin, 8 per cent. In Telangana there was a wide margin between the Congress and the BJP, in fact the BJP came third.

In *none* of the four states did either BJP or Congress get a majority of the votes polled, let alone of the total eligible voters. The total votes cast for Congress in all four elections together were higher than the total votes cast for BJP. Nevertheless the media went on to portray this as a huge victory for the BJP. This shows how the ruling classes (especially the biggest compradors, who own the media) have lined up behind the BJP, having assessed the BJP as the most capable representatives of their interests.

A large section of the toiling masses themselves vote for the BJP, and are under the influence of its ideology. The mass of people can gain democratic consciousness only in the course of class struggle imbued with revolutionary politics. Imbuing their struggles with revolutionary politics is our objective and work. It is only in the course of such class struggle that various sections (including those at present under the influence of Hindutva fascists) become aware of the need to fight ruling class hegemony. Till then, the votes do not reflect anything more than the helplessness and lack of consciousness of the people, in the given conditions of absence or weakness of the revolutionary movement.

Prominence of 'schemes' and hand-outs

The actual conduct of the election campaign itself reflected, in another way, the extent of helplessness and desperation of the people. The labouring masses, especially the lower rungs, have experienced enough of so-called Development to know that they will get nothing out of this process. So they aim to grab any small benefits from specific doles and schemes, hoping to alleviate their distress partially. Hence the ruling class political parties have shifted their main message to promising such specific doles and schemes, explicitly linking the delivery of the scheme to a particular party leader. Conscious of how little the people trust them to fulfill their promises, the ruling class parties now emphasise that these are not just promises, but are iron-clad 'guarantees' which will be delivered within a specific number of days of assuming office. Every state, including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha, West Bengal and Punjab, has thus resorted to similar methods. During the recent Karnataka assembly elections, the Congress activists went house to house giving voters written 'guarantees' that the Congress would carry out specific welfare schemes and doles. The Congress won in Karnataka. So in the latest assembly elections in northern states, Modi promptly gave similar 'guarantees' – and did it more effectively than the Congress.

While this practice reflects the bankruptcy of parliamentary politics, such schemes might have an impact on the thinking of politically backward sections of the people, making them feel beholden to the 'benevolence' of particular political leaders and thereby corrupting their consciousness. This is a reflection of the present feudal consciousness among the masses. We, therefore, need to make thorough, concrete exposure of these schemes, showing not only how insignificant they are in comparison to people's basic needs, but how such schemes go hand in hand with the rulers' policies of wholesale destruction of livelihoods, privatisation of Government services like health and education, and reduction of real wages. At

the same time, the grip of feudal consciousness can be loosened, or released, only in the course of class struggle on the *basic* questions.

Caste manipulations

Some political forces claim that BJP can be defeated by effective use of caste-based politics. Recently, in order to counter the consolidation of Hindu votes behind the BJP's Hindutva ideology, the Congress and its allies hit upon the slogan of a caste census, followed by reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) according to their share of the population. (This takes forward the line adopted by V.P. Singh, when he announced the implementation of the Mandal report at the end of the 1980s. Later this was adopted by what are called the 'social justice' parties, such as the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).) However, this gambit seems to have failed in M.P., Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan. Instead, there, the fear of increased OBC reservations may have helped shift some tribal votes in favour of BJP and may have further consolidated the upper-caste vote with BJP.

In any case, the parliamentary opposition parties' exercises in caste politics merely attempt to manipulate people's votes on caste lines, and have nothing to do with fighting caste oppression or discrimination. Besides, in this caste and communal manipulation, the BJP trumps the Congress. After the 1990s, and even more since the rise of Modi, the BJP has systematically made inroads into the OBCs and even the SCs, by promoting leaders from specific *jatis* within those categories, promoting cultural events and myths regarding these *jatis*, and counterposing them to the Yadavs (who are dominant among the OBCs in UP-Bihar) and Jatavs (who are dominant among the SCs in UP). In this way, rather than BJP's 'Hindu' support base getting split, the BJP has split the 'social justice' parties' support base. The BJP made a dalit the President of India, now followed by a tribal. And now, after the elections, the BJP has made a

tribal the chief minister of Chhattisgarh; an OBC the chief minister of M.P.; and a Brahmin the CM of Rajasthan.

The BJP support base, drawn from a range of 'Hindu' castes, is not only a problem for its rival ruling class parties; it is also a problem for the CRs. This 'Hindu unity', based on false consciousness, is diverting these sections from class struggle. This false consciousness about Hindu unity cannot be broken through the manipulations of ruling class politics.

In other words, the struggle for the destruction of caste oppression and discrimination cannot be based *within* the caste system itself. It has to be based *outside* the caste system. There are contradictions not only between upper castes and the 'Bahujan' castes (OBCs, SCs, and STs), but between OBCs and SCs, and within each of those categories, and they can be inflamed by the ruling class parties. Only on the basis of class can people see that these contradictions, while real, are *non-antagonistic*, and that ultimately the *antagonistic* contradiction is between all the labouring people (drawn largely from the oppressed castes and communities) and the ruling classes (drawn largely from the upper castes). Each manifestation of caste oppression and discrimination must thus be fought by *toiling* people of *all* castes.

We need to grasp that any serious attack on the institution of caste is impossible without *revolutionary land redistribution*. Look at the record of the Bihar government which carried out a caste census. In Bihar, 90 per cent of the people live in villages, where overwhelmingly the main means of production is land. Not only the SCs, but large numbers of OBCs (Other Backward Classes) and EBCs (Extremely Backward Classes) are effectively landless, keeping them economically destitute and thus socially oppressed. In 2006 the Nitish Kumar government had set up the Bandopadhyay committee in 2006 to chalk out land reforms. This step came after many decades of the refusal by the rulers to carry out land reforms in the state. The committee found that there was huge land concentration

on the one hand and crippling landlessness on the other. It submitted its report in 2008 with mild reformist recommendations, such as allotment of 0.66-1.00 acres of surplus land to the poorest one-fifth, allotment of house plots to the shelterless, and protection of tenants/sharecroppers. Once these recommendations became known, the Nitish Kumar government openly declared it would not implement them. Since then different governments in the state have come and gone, but they are all united on not implementing the Bandopadhyay committee recommendations. Instead of doing so, they are trying to deceive people with talk of more OBC-EBC reservations, which will hardly scratch the surface of the problem.

What the Chhattisgarh results reveal

The election result in Chhattisgarh is a striking example of the helplessness of the people in the parliamentary system. The Congress had won the state election in 2018 with a large share of adivasi votes. Adivasi votes in Chhattisgarh are one-third of total. But once in power, the Congress government carried on the same anti-*adivasi* policies of land acquisition and destruction of forests that the earlier BJP government carried on, and did so in cooperation with the BJP-ruled Central government. As a result of their anger at the Congress betrayal, the *adivasis* this time switched their votes to the BJP. Of course, now, the BJP is pursuing the same anti-*adivasi* policies with even more vigour. Immediately after forming a government, the BJP has started cutting forests in Hasdeo Arand for Adani's coal mining operations, ignoring the protests of the tribal people. It is clear that, whatever the vote, the actual policies implemented thereafter show that the people are unable to bring about any change through their votes. This underlines the need for the labouring people to persist in their revolutionary struggle on the ground. This also spells the tasks for the CRs.

Whatever the details of each state, the BJP's electoral wins in its

main support base, the Hindi heartland, highlight its overall political dominance among the ruling class parties. It has consolidated a large section of the ruling classes behind it. During the elections, the BJP was overall the party with the most funds, multiples of the amounts with other parties overall. These funds are not limited to the figures officially revealed. Huge sums are also distributed in cash to voters. The BJP also has the strongest organisation overall. The share market immediately soared on the news of the BJP's wins, on the expectation that there will be a 'strong' BJP government at the Centre in 2024, which will not have to retreat in the face of people's movements.

The significance of this for the people and the CR forces is that they need to shed any illusion that the ruling classes' fascistic drive will diminish or go away on its own, through the shifting tides of ruling class politics. The CR forces need to gear themselves for a long, bitter struggle. In particular, only through striking roots among the basic masses of people, and particularly the lower layers among them, can they sustain long-drawn resistance against this drive. As part of that, they will need to carry out systematic and concrete exposure of the rulers' claims; and show, in practice, the alternative path of struggle. They can draw strength from the fact that, while the present rulers are highly capable in the arenas of parliamentary rivalry and communal diversion, they are vulnerable in the face of determined, bitter class struggle of the basic masses.

Comrade Nitai Das

Comrade Nitai Das, secretary of the Debra unit of CCRI, expired around 8 p.m. on February 9, 2024, in Medinipur District hospital. He was admitted to the hospital with an acute condition of pneumonia and heart failure. For the last four to five years, he had been suffering from hypertension and diabetes.

Nitai Das was born into a poor peasant family of Gunadhar Das and Raimoni Das in Baulasini village of Debra 2nd Anchal of erst-while Midnapore District (West Bengal).

He stopped going to school at a young age in 1957/58, while he was in class 8, and joined the CPI. He was politically nourished and guided by CPI leader Geeta Mukherjee and a teacher. He would participate in the movements organised by the CPI. In 1964 he joined the CPI(M) when it was formed. He then gradually focussed on the agrarian movement. He became acquainted with com. Bhabadeb Mondal, Nikunja Chaudhary and Gunadhar Murmu. In 1967, he actively took part in building an organisation named 'Naxalbari Krisok Sangaram Sahayog Samitee' (Naxalbari Peasants' Struggle Assistance Association) in the Debra region and tried to spread it into many areas of Midnapore District.

In 1969 he joined CPI(ML). He got arrested and spent 7 years in the jail. While in the jail Nitai Das, along with comrade Gunadhar Murmu and others, differed with the annihilation line of Charu Majumder. These differences were articulated in the Debra Report. All those who agreed with this Report came to be known as the Debra Group. This Debra Group agreed with the mass revolutionary line of Devulapalli Venkateshwar Rao and Nagi Reddy and joined UCCRI(ML) in 1978-79.

Due to some tactical differences, Nitai Das kept away from the UCCRI(ML) during 1981-87 and worked with others like Asim Chatterji. However, because of his conviction in the basic line of the UC-CRI and later the CCRI, he renewed his contact with the comrades

of CCRI and since 1988 strove for unification with the CCRI. As a part of this process, after attending the Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh conference and seeing how the mass revolutionary line was being implemented there, he finally joined the CPRCI(ML) in 1997-98.

Since 2010 he was the secretary of the Debra unit of CPRCI(ML). During this period he actively participated in the debate over the importance of building the agrarian revolutionary movement as an immediate task rather than waiting to first reorganise the all India Party. He consistently advocated the primacy of building agrarian revolutionary movement for bringing about any further unification and even for Party reorganisation.

Thus he was actively involved in the recent developments following that debate even during his years of long illness which constrained his physical movements. He firmly stood by the line of building agrarian revolutionary movement and was a part of the newly-formed CCRI at the time of his death. Hail the memory of comrade Nitaī Das!!

