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India

# Resist the Sangh Parivar-BJP and their allies, build a working class alternative

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**As India moves to the general elections of 2014, we are facing an apparently unstoppable march to the extreme Right. The bourgeoisie has clearly made up its mind to push the BJP led NDA to power, with Narendra Modi as Prime Minister, so that they can provide a “stable government” with “good governance” in accordance with the Gujarat Model. And so, they are busy predicting and insisting that the triumph of the BJP is a foregone conclusion.**

## The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar

We call the Sangh Parivar fascist for serious reasons and not just as a term of abuse, and we argue that certain definite tasks follow from this analysis. They are an ideologically based formation, for whom an ultra-chauvinist Indian nationalism is to be built by presenting Muslims (and people of other religions) as enemies of the nation. They have created hostility to democracy within their cadres and followers as well, pushing a casteist, hierarchical social order as the best form, and creating an autocratic system within their own organisations. At the same time, they have consistently held out to the ruling class the offer of support for breaking down all working class powers, and the creation of a powerful bourgeois India. None of this is mere rhetoric. The consistency with which the Sangh Parivar has treated minorities needs to be understood and always remembered. In 1947-8, after having stood aside from the freedom struggle, the RSS launched a bid to turn the newly independent India into a sectarian Hindu state to parallel the sectarian Islamic state of Pakistan. It was only the backlash of the murder of Gandhi that stopped them. In 1989, Advani's campaign over the Babri Masjid led to riots in 43 cities and towns. In 1992-3, the destruction of the Babri Masjid, in flagrant violation of laws saying ancient historical/archaeological monuments are to be protected, was followed by frenzied rioting in many parts of India, attacks on minorities. In 2002, there was a massive pogrom in Gujarat, which was a key to the consolidation of the BJP electorally in certain parts of Gujarat.

And these are not aberrations but the tip of the iceberg. The BJP, wherever in power, has sought to marginalise all minorities. In Gujarat, where it has had a sustained stint, it has communalised education, it has extended deep roots in different levels of society over a very long period.

For example, it is well known by now that Gujarat has provided the greatest number of kar sevaks [\[1\]](#) over the years. It is well known that the VHP network is possibly the strongest component of all the arms of the Sangh Parivar in Gujarat. VHP activists are no longer in the category of “lumpens” or extreme fringes of the petty bourgeoisie. Rather, they include considerable numbers of people all the way to the upper middle ages. It is of course a case that communalism is a wider phenomenon and the RSS one organisation. The Gujarat riots of 1969, an entire generation back, had led to the deaths of some 2500 people, and it had been the proud boast then that more Muslims than Hindus had been killed. But the RSS has used riots in a consistent way, to mobilise people as Hindus, and to define the Hindu in a right wing militant manner, for a goal that involves the fascist seizure of power. This sets it apart from any other reactionary organisation, be it a party, a social organisation, which uses communalism as a possible tactic for short term gains.

Gujarat's transformation has had an effect on how the elite have manipulated and mobilised the lower caste and class Hindus. The nature of agrarian change in Gujarat after independence had led to the steady rise of the Patel category. These were the people who benefited most by the Green Revolution and the White Revolution. The Patel-dominated rich peasantry developed close links with the Gujarati diaspora beyond India. A new axis, between politicians, bureaucrats and businesspersons, with no seeming stake in the preservation of civil society, increasingly became dominant. Also, a very narrow layer of dalit and *adivasi* [indigenous people] middle class, the sole result of

over half a century of reservations, seems to have been enfolded by the embrace of this nexus. At the same time, the nature of industrialisation and its limits also needs clearer examination. In Ahmedabad, the rise of new production firms have meant the closing down of 50 and more mills employing some 100,000 workers. To this we should add the fact that much of Gujarat's industrialisation in recent years has been through sectors with no social security, such as the chemicals industry, where radical trade unions had to wage a two-pronged fight (agitation and court battle) just to get a formal declaration of minimum wages. Ankleswar, one of the fast growing areas, has very little civic rights. These frustrations, irregular jobs, lack of social solidarity among people surviving in the informal sector, all made those lower down also turn to alternative for solace. For different reasons, the new elite which was emerging also had no integral world view, and it, too, was seeking alternative moorings. In both cases, the Sangh Parivar provided alternatives. One could cite a Gujarati leaflet of 2002 calling for a boycott of Muslim owned shops and establishments, which claimed that if Muslim shops were boycotted 4 crore rupees would be saved in Kalol town alone, with which Hindu schools could provide free education. Of course, the **Reality** would have been simply a boycott of Muslim shops, as people would have bought the same goods from other shops, owned presumably by Hindus. But the RSS agenda could also be seen in the list, which included mutton shops, and carts selling omelettes.

Violence against the minority, portrayed as enemies, represents the core agenda of the Sangh Parivar. This core agenda has been pursued systematically in Gujarat for many years. At one level it has been pursued by government action aimed at putting minorities to jeopardy. At another level it has been pursued by intensifying hate campaigns within common people. And this long term planning puts paid to all claims, whether by hidden advocates of the Sangh Parivar, or by intellectuals who try to do a balancing act, to the effect that it was Godhra that sparked off the violence, or that without Godhra it would not have happened. The fact that leaflets in tens of thousands, printed in old fashioned treadle machines, were distributed calling on Hindus to kill Muslims within 24 hours, suggests that such leaflets had been printed in advance. The fact that vast stocks of liquefied petroleum gas cylinders had been hoarded and were used for the carnage, or that voter's lists and other official documents were used to identify Muslim houses, Muslim owned shops, and so on, likewise indicates long planning, not a sudden anger due to the Godhra incident.

Another aspect that has been remarked upon in connection with the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 is the adivasi-dalit involvement. There are several ramifications of the dalit-advasi involvement, and we need to begin by stressing the need to avoid wishful thinking. To stress the troublesome side first: several reports pointed out that dalits, including dalit women, were aligned with the upper castes in the 2002 violence. The, chapter on women's perspective of the PUCL report, says: "Dalit women have, more or less, allied with the upper castes during the violence. This has been seen in areas like Baranpura, Navidharti, Navayard and Fatehpura. This has resulted in the Hinduization of Dalit women on a scale never before witnessed in Vadodara." Since the formation of the RSS was as much a reaction to dalit assertion as it was due to anti-Muslim views. So when in Gujarat, dalits and advasis do the dirty work for upper caste, upper class political agenda, it is certainly a gain for the RSS.

But there is the other side. The PUCL report quotes a dalit woman as saying how she has been coerced into not helping Muslims, because the police called her a traitor. Money was also used. But apart from money, there have been other issues. The Baxi Commission recommendations of the 1980s resulted in massive violence targeting not only OBCs but also dalits. Through these agitations, the Brahmin-Bania-Patidar combine came to have a distinct Savarna identity. But the VHP and the RSS were then able to penetrate this bloc and put forward the message that the Savarna identity was inadequate. With rising dalit assertiveness – expressed in many ways, including the revival of the Republican Party, the spread of the BSP through much of India, etc, there was a social threat which had to be neutralised. This was done through an apparently inclusionist, but in fact actually aggressively exclusivist strategy. At one level, as reservations created a small dalit and adivasi middle class, this stratum could be sought to be integrated into the Hindutva fold, made easier by a relatively similar lifestyle in the cities. For the dalit and adivasi middle class, indeed, Hindutva seemed to offer a route to cast off their inferior identity and appear as the equals of the Savarnas. Meanwhile, however, the collapse of Ahmedabad's older industries, commented upon earlier, meant the collapse of local class solidarities between dalits and Muslims even at lower levels. The result was, that even if half-hearted, there was dalit participation.

Finally, however, we need to point to yet another aspect – insecurity faced by dalits and adivasis, and support given by them to Muslims. That dalits and adivasis were not major gainers in the looting that accompanied the attacks has been confirmed by various people. In *The Survivors Speak*, it is recorded that: “The fact-finding team spoke on the phone with Anil Joshiara, an Adivasi leader (mentioned in Samad’s testimony above). He confirmed that he had demanded police combing operations to prove that Adivasis have gained little from the looting except a bad name. He claimed that the Adivasis who were involved in the violence were only misguided youth.” The picture that emerges is thus one where the RSS has made inroads, communalised sections of the dalits and the adivasis, but where the battle is far from lost.

With all its complexities, therefore, a picture can be seen, of the systematic communalisation of both state and civil society by the BJP-RSS-VHP-BD for several years. At the level of the state apparatus, there has been gross and blatant interference and a profound communalisation of the apparatus. RSS and VHP figures dominate the entire administration. Police Officers of Muslim origin have been given the type of posting that moves them away from law and order maintenance. Many Muslim police officers are so insecure that they do not wear their nametags. When criminals are Muslims, they are asked specific questions, such as their attitude to Pakistan, their position during partition, etc. And tens of thousands of VHP cadres have been recruited into the Home Guard.

Penetration of civil society has been even more insidious. Since 1998, there has been a systematic development of hate literature. Using the print media as well as the electronic, including massive use of the Internet, cadres of the Sangh Parivar have been whipping up anti-Minority hatred. Circulars sent out by the DG intelligence asked the police to gather information about Christians and Muslims. It was later issued pertaining to Muslims only. This kind of state support emboldened the activists. One year before the mob violence, the Gujarati newspaper *Sandesh* prepared and published a list of names of Muslim hotel and shop-owners. There has been a considerable communalisation of health professionals. *Issues in Medical Ethics*, a journal concerned with ethical medical practice, wrote in its editorial : “The fact that the medical associations did not galvanise themselves for relief work indicates how deeply the medical profession has been affected by the sharp communal divides being promoted by political interests....Indeed, the medical community is becoming polarised, both in Gujarat and elsewhere in the country. We hear doctors confide that the minorities "needed to be taught a lesson".

At the same time, Gujarat also shows the Sangh and its underlying gender vision. This requires addressing, because the BJP has not been averse to using rhetoric that makes it seem modern and progressive. It has talked about a Uniform Civil Code, and it has talked about supporting the demand for one-third representation of women in Parliament. But behind this polish lies a highly retrograde politics. The Gujarat pogroms of 2002 showed brutally that for the Sanghis, women who are Muslims are fit to be abused and then killed. The conviction of Maya Kodnanai shows that women cadres were also trained in the same kind of politics.

The image of women created, and the politics behind it, needs to be understood clearly. Hindu women are shown, first, as victims of Muslim lust and eternal projects of rape. Even in Gujarat 2002, this was clearly present, when communal and totally false reports were published, to the effect that Hindu women had been taken off the train at Godhra and raped inside a Madrasa. This became the false plea for a so-called tit for tat attack, whereby women in numerous cases were raped, and then , in many cases, mutilated or murdered.

This gendered politics went back to the pre-2002 period. In July 1998, the Gujarat government set up a Police Cell for Monitoring Inter-Religious Marriages. Haren Pandya, then the minister of state for home, announced this in the assembly, and justified it on the ground that such marriages were not made of free choice but were forced on Hindu women for ulterior motives. *Communalism Combat* published a confidential document circulated by the Hindutva forces in February 2000. It said, among other things: “The main attack on Hindu Samaj is that our sisters of tender age are being abducted by offering them inducements and allurements and then they are made to sign the marriage register after getting converted by force. Hundreds of Hindu girls are being (converted to Islam) made Muslims like this in Gujarat state.”

So if Hindu women were weak victims, what was to be done? On one hand, Hindu men were exhorted to avenge the women. They were told that raping and killing Muslim women was nothing more than what Islamism deserved. And on the other hand, Hindu women were exhorted to train themselves, to become warriors in defence of community –cum-nation. This had led, already in the past, to the formation of the Rashtra Sevika samiti, and in more recent times, to other organisations like the Durga Vahini etc, and role models like Uma Bharati, Saddhvi Rithambhara etc. Women have been massively inducted in the Hindu Right and pushed towards violence from the period of the Ram mandir agitation. But it was only this time, in Gujarat, that this bore fruit fully. The fullest report on the role of Hindu women has come from the PUCL, reporting on Baroda. The final version mentions a number of points, summarised below.

The years of hate campaign and propaganda about Muslims overtaking Hindus numerically, have resulted in women sanctioning and taking part in violence. They defended the violence saying that "they had it coming" etc. "They have 4 wives and 20 children, they will overrun us, they don't use contraception etc. They are taking away all our business, we are becoming poor." Taught from birth that Muslim men are all rapists and that Muslim women are their collaborators, they turned in increasing numbers to violent, with ample social sanctions. The line between hating Muslims to condoning their killing and encouraging it has been crossed, at least partly on account of the fear psychosis that centres around the notion of the 'dangerous Other.' Violence had targeted the Muslim female body in ways not seen previously. There was also terrible and sadistic violence directed towards children, including unborn children, in front of their mothers, before the mothers themselves were abused, tortured and killed and burnt. This says something about the Sangh's world view. It would be foolish to ignore this as acts of barbarism by a lunatic fringe, just as it would be generally self-defeating to reduce the politics of the Sangh to mere economic forces and their hidden pressure. The rape and destruction of the Muslim female body, the orgy of violence on the children, show that the Sangh is serious in implementing Golwalkar's utterance about how the "foreign races" must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, "and must lose their separate existence", or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving ...not even citizen's rights." In the outlook of the Sangh and its cothinkers, women are breeders. The destruction of an "alien" race/religion/community is best brought about by destroying its breeders and its future – the women and the children. So it is silly to display any chivalry in times of war. And of course, in the Sangh world-view, the "Hindu Nation" is perpetually at war with the enemy.

Moving beyond the Gujarat 2002 pogroms, too, the Sanghi view on gender is retrograde. Their call for a Uniform Civil code is a play on words. For them, the key issue is uniformity, and gender justice. These forces had opposed tooth and nail the Hindu Code Bill when it had been pushed. So when the demand the UCC, what they mean is the imposition of a Hindu code on Muslims, not a gender just code for all, regardless of religion.

How far state organs, including the judiciary, too, could fall under the spell of this force was brought out by the Gujarat High Court stance during the Best Bakery Case. Best Bakery in Hanuman Tekri area of Vadodara had been one of the worst sites of violence, where, on 1st March 2002, a mob had looted and burnt the bakery and had killed fourteen people in a period of twelve hours. But this was also one case that was well-documented. When the occupants of the attacked building called the police for help a police van arrived about an hour and a half later, drive past the bakery without trying to stop the mob, and then a policeman got off and even incited the mob. The attack intensified thereafter. On 2nd March, Zahira Sheikh, then aged 18, recorded a statement at the site of the incident. She filed an FIR before the police thereafter. But when the trial began, in court witnesses, including Zahira, the star witness, turned hostile. On the day of Zahira's court appearance the local BJP Member of Legislative Assembly, Madhu Shrivastava, accompanied her to court in a clear gesture of intimidation. The accused were found not guilty. Then came the drama, as Zahira alleged that her testimony had been consciously falsified because she felt threatened. The matter went to the Supreme Court, where the revelations about the nefarious role of the police and the state apparatus came out. A day before the Supreme Court was to hear the matter through a petition filed by the National Human Rights Commission, the Gujarat state government, prodded by the Supreme Court, filed an appeal before the Gujarat High Court challenging the acquittal of the accused, but without asking for a retrial. On 26th December 2003 the Gujarat High Court dismissed the appeal, and a 90 page judgement justifying the acquittal

showed that retrial could not be ordered because the prosecution had failed to produce proper evidence. The judges also passed remarks against anti-communal and human rights activists like Mihir Desai and Teesta Setalvad, and against progressive social movements. Thus, the court stated "This very witness [i.e., Zahira] when examined before the court seems to have stated the truth before the court, but unfortunately, it seems that for some reasons, after the pronouncement of the judgement, they fell in the hands of some, who prefer to remain behind the curtain." And again, the radical activists who had been fighting since the beginning of 2002 to halt the fascists were attacked in no uncertain terms by bringing in a reference to their past roles: "Certain elements failed everywhere, at all levels, and to obstruct the development and progress of the state and trying to misuse the process of law, so far they have not fully succeeded. Sometime back in the name of environment, (a) matter was filed before the apex court in (the) Narmada matter, which was dismissed by the apex court. However, because of the ex parte ad interim order, they were successful in causing huge loss, running into thousands of crores of rupees to the state.... Once again, almost similar attempt is made not only to cause indirect financial loss to the state, but to create rift between the two communities and spread hatred in the people of the state." Going beyond the specific case in hand, the judge also stated that: "It is most unfortunate that attempt is made to create a false impression not only in the other states but also in the world that Gujarat is a terrorist state, which is factually wrong." Eventually, on April 12, 2004, the Supreme Court ordered the re-trial of the Best Bakery case in Maharashtra, outside the control of Gujarat, and also directed that remarks against Desai, Setalvad etc should be expunged. The language used by the Supreme Court, though restrained as it should be, makes it clear that the SC found the High Court observations to be thoroughly partisan in favour of the Hindutva forces. "Observations should not be made by courts against persons and authorities unless they are essential or necessary for decision of the case. ... Courts are not expected to play to the gallery or for any applause from anyone or even need to take cudgels as well against any one, either to please their own or any one's fantasies." The main judgement was also a clear indictment of the Gujarat state. The Supreme Court held that "When a large number of witnesses have turned hostile it should have raised a reasonable suspicion that the witnesses were being threatened or coerced. The public prosecutor did not take any step to protect the star witness who was to be examined on 17.5.2003 especially when four out of seven injured witnesses had on 9.5.2003 resiled from the statements made during investigation.... The public prosecutor was not acting in a manner befitting the position held by him.... The trial court should have exercised power under Section 311 of the Code and recalled and re-examined witnesses as their evidence was essential to arrive at the truth and a just decision in the case." This is enough to show that the judicial apparatus as well as the executive in Gujarat had become sufficiently soft on the Hindutva forces, to put it in an understatement.

So the Gujarat Model that Modi boasts of contains in equal measure capitalist development unchecked by the least concern for the toilers, and a criminal degree of communalization of society and state. This pattern, to lesser extents, has also been followed in other provinces, as RSS instigated violence in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, etc show.

We have characterised the Sangh Parivar as a fascist force. However, this requires certain clarifications. Classical fascism arose in a period of revolutions and counter-revolutions. While the major ingredients of the Sangh Parivar have structural similarity, the fact that for over six decades, India has had a functioning bourgeois democracy has meant that the Sangh Parivar has functioned in ways distinct from the Nazis or the Italian fascists. Secondly, in Italy and in Germany, there was the very real threat of proletarian revolution. In India, the working class is not organised, and there is no significant revolutionary party capable of leading a proletarian revolution. This is a major reason why the ideology and organisation of the Sangh Parivar has not often been attractive to large sections of the Indian capitalist class. There have however been potentials for the RSS to use bourgeois democracy to force itself onto the bourgeoisie. Its long term strategy of penetrating civil society, and the fact that a good part of the Indian capitalist class has shared its upper caste and Hindutva ideology to a certain extent, has meant that there have been points of contact. As a result, from the 1980s, when it was clear that the Congress was in decline and there was a need to look for an alternative, stable bourgeois force, it could project itself in opposition to the motley crew of the Janata Party and the Janata Dal. The drawback lay in the RSS insistence on aggressively carrying out its communal policies, much as for the Nazis anti-semitism was not mere rhetoric to garner votes but a core part of their agenda. But what has been called the "soft hindutva" of the Congress meant that there was no major resistance within the mainstream of bourgeois politics. And from the bourgeoisie, whose appetite has grown with the successes of globalisation, the

balancing acts of the Congress, which, under pressure from allies, from its own many-hued constituency, temporises, draws back from the extreme measures demanded by the leaders of the capitalist class, the BJP, and the prospects of a clear cut victory of the BJP, appears a better bet.

Since the Sangh Parivar has been consigned by fate to operate within ‘bourgeois democracy’ for a far longer time than it had originally envisaged (in 1947-48 it had clearly planned for a fairly swift grab for power, creating a ‘Hindu Rashtra’ analogous to Jinnah’s plan for a ‘Islamic State’), it has been compelled to split its operations. The BJP, as the electoral arm, has to look “moderate”. Of course, it is “moderate” only if one argues that a hyena is moderate compared to a wolf-pack. One should remember that the Mr. L. K. Advani, hailed these days as a “Statesman”, was seen as aggressive as against the “moderate” Mr. Vajpayee back in 1989-1992.

So the issue is not as if there is a “fascist tendency” in the Sangh Parivar, but also a “developmental discourse”. The issue is, how is the fascism of the Sangh Parivar going to be utilised for capital? This is where the ‘Modi model’ is crucial. It is Gujarat, a rapidly industrialising province that is showing, in a small way, what the Sangh Parivar is willing to do for capital.

## The Gujarat Model of “Development”

This is the point to understand. Indian capitalism wants Modi, because Modi has shown in a small scale what the fascists want to deliver. In exchange, they are willing to accept the communal violence, the curtailment of rights of minorities, the war on dalits, on women, that may be generated. As for the destruction of democracy, that hardly bothers them, since their definition of democracy is one that does not involve people actually controlling governments. Over the years, the Congress, as well as various provincial governments, have reduced democracy. Now, they are willing to reduce it to even poorer levels, as shown by the entire orientation of bourgeois politics, which we need to also discuss.

The so-called Gujarat Model is based on some “Myths” and some realities.

**Myth 1:** Modi has made Gujarat such a hospitable place, that auto industries are rushing in.

**Reality:** The Tata’s relocated from Singur, where agitation was going on, to Sanand, because Modi offered massive financing and sterner policing. The policing component should be understood easily from the fact that toiling people find it so much more difficult to agitate in Gujarat. But the other component is equally important. The total sops to the Tatas have been estimated at around Rs. 30,000 crores. This included 1100 acres land, and against a Tata investment of 2000 crore rupees, an interest free loan from the Gujarat Government worth 9570 crore rupees. By contrast, the CPI(M) led government of West Bengal had offered to take away peasants’ land but give it to the Tatas at a subsidised rate, and give subsidy on power, tax paybacks, and some 200 crore rupees soft loan.

**Myth 2** – Gujarat under Modi has had exceptional growth.

**Reality** – Gujarat has been an industrially growing state for a long time. A look at Gujarat’s growth over time, and a comparison with other industrial provinces over time, shows that this is not where Modi really shines. What makes Modi an attractive model is not simply Gujarat’s growth, but the blunt way in which Modi has been willing to violate laws. In fact, there are conflicting data, some of which show that the rate of Growth in Gujarat had been higher under Madhavsinh Solanki. But Modi has shown his resistance to the Lokayukta, his willingness to flout environment related laws, and his willingness to take on labour and peasant rights head on. Ever since the crisis of 2008, which hit the

developed world so hard, the Indian capitalist class has seen its own growth get curtailed. While the slowdown in growth in India is not as huge as in the advanced countries (indeed India and China remain the hopes for the capitalist world, with their large markets), the capitalists are unhappy at the decline. What the capitalists want is a strong state, which will ensure that there is a sharper shift of wealth from labour to capital, that it will be the relatively small sized well-to-do middle class that gets a hike in its purchasing power while the toiling masses are exploited.

**Myth 3** – 2002 was bad, true, but it was an aberration. Since 2003 Modi has kept Gujarat riot free for a decade. Charges of communalism are made with purely electoral motives and are not true.

**Reality** – There have been recurrent cases of communal violence in Gujarat. In 2006, with the UPA in power in Delhi, Modi was forced to accept military deployment when riots broke out in Vadodara. There have been recurrent communal violence. And more to the point, under Modi, there has been a systematic marginalisation of Muslims. The RSS goal, that if Muslims live in India they must live subordinated to Hindus, is being implemented as far as power in one province can manage.

**Myth 4** – Gujarat is only state in the whole India to provide, under Modi, 24x7 and 365 days electricity to almost all of its 18000 villages.

**Reality** – 100% of Gujarat's villages were electrified by 1996. But there is still a good part of the population which does not get electricity. For 8 % of the population kerosene is still the primary means of lighting.

## Why the Capitalists want the BJP

What we are arguing is not that Modi and Gujarat have no capitalist development. What we do argue, is that the Indian capitalist class in its search for a strong right-wing government, has chosen Modi and the BJP. Its historical choice has been the Congress, which was ruling at the head of a coalition for the last one decade too. The economic policies of the congress are often portrayed as centrist, or even centre-left. In fact, it is a deeply rightwing party. Between 1991 and 2014, after all, the Congress has ruled for 15 years, which is about double that of the BJP, or a bit more. In this period, India's economy has grown, and has done so at the cost of the toiling people, with the levels of inequality growing. But given the type of coalition on which the Congress had to rely in the last decade, as well as its own compulsions, it had to put forward certain measures. These included the NREGA, the Food Security Act, and so on. Since the crisis of 2008, however, the bourgeois institutions have been predicting a slowing down of the economy, the need to cut "subsidies" ( a word which in the bourgeois lexicon only means assistance for the poor, while subsidies to the rich, like the massive amount given to Adani, or to Tata, by Modi, are not subsidies).

The effect of calling upon the Sangh Parivar will be two fold. From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, the necessary component will be the use of force, without any hesitations, to push the economy to the right.

But at the same time, by pushing Modi, for indeed this time, unlike in 1989 or the 1990s, it has been the Indian capitalist class and not the RSS that took the initiative, the bourgeoisie has indicated its willingness to accept the fascist game plan as well. It was in Vibrant Gujarat summits that the high ranking figures of the ruling class called for making Modi the Prime Minister. It has been the bourgeois media that has portrayed the elections in the manner of a US presidential election, as a contest between Modi and Rahul Gandhi, rather than as voting by crores upon crores of people, constituency by constituency, looking at parties, candidates, past performances, and all that.

The so-called 'secular' or 'non-Hindutva' allies of the BJP, whether the Akali Dal, or Ram Bilas Paswan's LJP,

the MDMK, or potentially the TDP in Andhra, by agreeing to form alliances with the BJP, have shown that for them, such changes in front are not major problems, and all rhetoric of resisting fascism can be dropped overnight.

There are, therefore, two aspects of any programme the BJP will promise to carry out. The first part will be a sharpened capitalist offensive involving:

â€¢ Destruction of protective labour legislation

â€¢ Overthrow of environmental protection laws

â€¢ Full support to agribusiness, whether Indian or foreign, in cornering markets, introducing genetically modified products

â€¢ Privatisation of public utilities like electricity and water

â€¢ Removal of control on banks

In all these areas, the Congress regime has taken strides. Between 2011 and 2013, collusions between the public sector bank managements and corporate have resulted in over 3 lakh crore rupees being transferred to corporate that have then been shown in bank balance sheets as non-performing assets. Equally, the Congress has changed two Ministers of Environment before finding in Moily a man who understands that in capitalism, especially in its current neoliberal phase, the task of an environment Ministry is to plan the destruction of the environment at the highest profits for capital, rather than for taking the environment seriously. The point is, Modi has shown that he understands all this so much better, and is willing to tackle directly any resistance from any quarters over these matters. The bourgeoisie wants an end to the least concession to the toiling poor, an abolition if possible of NREGA, an end to periodic declaration of pay scale revisions for the government and Public Sector employees, since that becomes a benchmark for the others to aspire to, an end to Dearness Allowance, reasonable rates of EPF interest, and the imposition of higher working hours at low wages in all sectors.

## Bourgeois agencies and the campaign for Modi

In many ways, it is the bourgeois agencies that have been trying their best to prepare the country for Modi, to an extent even greater than what the RSS has been doing. We can mention, briefly, three or four modes.

First, there have been the opinion polls. These have been consistently showing that the BJP is ahead. And it is significant that one question constantly asked to people has been, would you prefer Modi as Prime Minister, or would you prefer Rahul Gandhi. As we have already said, this is a parliamentary election, not a Presidential style campaign as in the USA. Moreover, there have been serious doubts about the value of the opinion polls. It has been revealed that results are being tampered to show the BJP in better light than the raw data really suggests.

In addition, there is the simple thing, that all talks about a “wave” for Modi, is false. Ananda Bazar group, who own ABP News and other TV channels as well as numerous newspapers and periodicals, has in recent times been an enthusiastic convert to the Modi cause. But its ABP-Nielsen opinion poll suggested the NDA would get 236 seats (out of 543), and the BJP alone would get 217. If true, this would of course be a big rise for the BJP. Let us remember,

that in 2004 also, the ruling class had opted to support the BJP. That was one election when it was more flush with funds than the Congress. And at that time the NDTV-Indian Express opinion poll, carried out by AC Nielsen, predicted 287-300 seats for the NDA, while in **Reality** the NDA received 181 seats. In 2009, predictions had mostly favoured the Congress, but by a very small lead. In fact, the UPA got 262 seats, and enough outside support to ensure that even the TMC pulling out did not upset a full five year term. When a sting operation revealed in February this year how opinion polls are being manipulated, the ABP group's newspapers did not even report the news.

Second, the media has been used in ways beyond the opinion polls. So called national newspapers are upset at the electoral success of the Aam Admi Party, not for any particular stance of the AAP or Kejriwal, but simply because it threatens to upset the simple bipolarity and the consequent irreversibility of Modi's march to power that they have been "predicting" (actually, trying to prepare). Kejriwal's attacks on the Congress had been welcomed by this section of the media, for it thought the AAP would only eat into the Congress votes. But the Delhi elections showed that in some urban seats, the AAP had the potential to halt the march of the BJP. Then, during his Gujarat tour, Kejriwal started attacking Modi aggressively. And he pointed out, without being too polite about it, that sections of the media were helping Modi by projecting the false claims about Gujarat's phenomenal development. Immediately, there was a violent reaction. News reports about the AAP are coming with a totally negative slant, while certain TV channels are allowing BJP, Congress, and other party spokespersons to use even abusive language against AAP. This is not about the precise nature of AAP's politics. This is about the media baring its fangs because the spuriousness of its neutrality has been bluntly called into question by Kejriwal. The media is either owned by major corporate players, or it is dependent on them for advertisements. The big capitalist houses have a symbiotic relationship with the major bourgeois parties (secular, communal, all of them). Parties need bourgeois funding. Capitalists need governments who will do their bidding – and that includes the things like the Modi-Adani or the Modi-Tata linkage, not merely the Congress links with various corporate groups, or the Sahara-SP links. The media takes charges of being linked to parties or bourgeois groups, in its stride, when small revolutionary groups bring these charges. For after all, they can ignore such groups, and if necessary, talk about censorship in the former USSR etc. But they had expected the AAP to be a tame bourgeois player, and a minor one at that, and that is why they are showing their hand so plainly.

Regarding promoting the BJP and Modi, another way the media has been used (has used itself) is to create a focus on corruption and governance in a twisted way, as if it is not the bourgeois system that promotes corruption and it is not all the parties who rule in the interests of a narrow class and the party itself. Instead, they project the Congress alone as corrupt and lacking in ability to govern. What does ability to govern mean? The Congress has of course governed the country in the interests of the ruling class. But it has been unable, due to electoral constraints, to do as much as the more aggressive figures of the ruling class want. Its lack of governance means in effect, that it has not been able to stop the payment of Dearness Allowance to government employees, or it has only reduced public spending on health and education instead of 100% privatization. The bourgeois media has consistently played down the corrupt linkages between the BJP and capitalist bosses, and the corrupt cases in which BJP leaders have been implicated. Let us remember: Modi amended the Lokayukta Act to bring it as an institution under the very government it is supposed to be monitoring. BJP governments have been as implicated in corrupt practices as any other bourgeois government. But they have been far less reported. All this is not surprising. The bourgeoisie wants to present the voters with a "choice" – in some years they highlight communalism to push the Congress. Now, with a need for a strongman tactics and a prime Minister who will promise to deliver that, they want to project "lack of governance" by the Congress so that people vote for the BJP and its allies.

The stress on "better governance" as opposed to "too much government" is a purely bourgeois stance. The traditional RSS stance is for tight government in certain social domains. But as of now, there is an alliance between the bourgeoisie and the RSS. The RSS knows it cannot simply overturn the Constitution. So it will settle for an NDA government headed by Modi. This is after all a signal that the pogroms of 2002 have been whitewashed by the bourgeoisie. The media are constantly blaring that nothing has happened since 2002 (a lie, as we have shown). So the aggressive face of Hindutva will be made acceptable, sold as the face of young India. And liberals on the right will set themselves the task of squaring the circle. For example, Ramchandra Guha, a supposed Gandhi admirer, who never loses the opportunity to attack communists, or Arundhati Roy, has written in The Telegraph that the victory of

Modi will not mean any victory of fascism. Indian democracy is too strong. Thus are the liberals “fighting” the right. By throwing in the towel and by arguing that you do not need to fight, since “democracy” is an abstract entity that is so strong. The **Reality** is of course that the move to the right is affecting all bourgeois parties. Kashmiri students are arrested for applauding the Pakistani cricket team, and the bourgeois parties keep silent. Some actually insist this should be done. Soni Sori is arrested, tortured, and Ankit Garg gets decorated. Democracy is being already restricted every day. The long struggle of Irom Sharmila against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which enables criminals in uniform to rape and murder at will, is applauded by the bourgeois parties, who refuse to even dilute it, let alone abolish it, as any really democratic society would have done.

Finally, after the recent Cobrapost Sting operation, which showed that BJP leaders had given consciously false assurances to the Supreme Court and had planned the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the “national” media has played down the issue. Instead, it has reported the BJP's demand that the EC must block the sting operation and called it a Congress conspiracy. So it is not the BJP leaders who are criminal conspirators, but the Cobrapost journalists? The failure of bourgeois media in the main to stand by Cobrapost shows that when the bosses demand, the media forgets all talk of freedom of the press and displays a willingness to support the fascists.

## What is the Alternative?

Many people are worried about the rise of Modi. But what alternatives do they offer? Both for the hypocritical leaders of the Congress, and for many well intentioned people, and also people who fall in between these two categories, the only answer is to vote Congress. We challenge this argument. Why do we want to oppose fascism? And what do we mean, stop fascism?

We, the working people, have suffered consistently under capitalism. We were exploited before globalisation began, and we were exploited after it, as well. But globalisation and the rise of Indian capitalism has in fact meant an intensification of exploitation. If costs are adjusted, India claims to be the world's third largest economy. But this has come about by increasing the exploitation of the working classes. Globalisation has not come nicely. It has been made possible by breaking unions, by weakening unions, by creating union free areas. It has seen the widening of disparity between rich and poor. If we do not want to challenge this, if our definition of fascism is such that we are concerned only with keeping Modi anyhow out of power, we will be compelled to surrender repeatedly to the Congress, which, whether alone or in alliance with other so called secular and democratic bourgeois parties, can form an alternative government. But that will mean, they will carry out, even if a little flabbily, the agenda of the bourgeoisie. For the last fifteen years, that is exactly the choice the Indian people have been presented with – 1999, 2004, 2009. The experience of these years re-confirm the historic experience of the working classes everywhere – if in the name of stopping fascism, we accept the leadership of a so-called democratic bourgeoisie, with or without the cover provided by Communist party participation, the interests of the working class suffer. Equally, it is the experience of anti-racist, anti-communal struggles, that inly when we take to the streets and confront the communalists and fascists, only when we mobilise working class and other mass forces to resist their thugs, will the state take any positive step. If instead we simply run to the state, shouting, “help, communalist”, the state bureaucrats and the police conclude that we are weak, the communalists are strong, so they are better off ignoring the laws and helping the communalists. Moreover, in any bourgeois state, excessive reliance on law and the state machinery in the name of fighting fascism will more often hurt the working people. We do not deny the need to use law and the legal processes, and indeed we do so, but only within limits. This law, this legal process, after all says that to call for a general strike is illegal. Every time a law is passed to prevent violence, it is systematically used mainly against the powerless. It is well known, that as long as the POTA was in existence, its single biggest victims were Muslims. It was automatically assumed that Muslims are terrorists, and whenever one talks about Hindutva terror, there is a hue and cry that Hinduism cannot be terrorism in any way. The unity among all bourgeois parties in how to use these laws is shown by the fact that over the use of violence in Kashmir and North-East India, the Congress, the BJP, all are in total agreement.

Above all, the Congress has been responsible for an economic policy whose contours are today absolutely clear. Since 1991, the Indian state has looked after Big Business through massive tax breaks and excise/import duty concessions. Indian companies pay an average of 17 per cent tax on their profits, less than one-half the rate in the west. Thanks to reduced taxes, cars and air conditioners cost less in absolute rupees than they did 10 years ago -â€¢ inflation notwithstanding.

The single-minded devotion with which capitalist policies have helped business is starkly evident in the growth of India's high net-worth individuals, whose disposable income exceeds \$ 1 million. Their number grew from 61,000 to 83,000 between 2003 and 2005.

Even more shamefully, India has, according to Forbes magazine, the world's fourth highest number of billionaires. India (with 36 billionaires) has just overtaken Japan (24). Their total wealth equals one-fourth of India's GDP! India has three of the world's top 20 billionaires, a number exceeded only in the US (five).

At the other pole, there is steady accumulation of poverty and destitution, aggravated by dispossession and displacement. The neoliberal years have seen the slowest reduction in poverty. But the true extent of deprivation is probably growing faster than before. India's global human development rank is a miserable 126. The cost of basic education and basic medical expenses have shot through the roof, with government withdrawing more and more from these. Only the rich can afford to take medical insurance, without which certain types of ailments cannot be treated, so expensive are they.

Yet, by pushing the Myth of the anti-fascist role of the Congress, the Myth that it is centrist, rather than a deeply rightwing party, its managers have sought to get electoral support from Muslims, Dalits, Adivasis, toiling people. The last one decade has actually witnessed a rightwing economic policy with sops for the poor, and for marginal groups, thrown in contemptuously. Now, using the corruption issue, the Congress is sought to be dislodged. And the bourgeois solution to corruption is very clearly an undemocratic one. This solution consists of bureaucratic forces (institutions and persons, not elected, not accountable to the people, such as Lokpals and Lokayuktas, various Commissions with formal duties but which are effectively tied to parties and/or do not have effective powers, such as the Human rights Commissions, the Womens' Commissions, etc), law courts (without the jury system which alone can make courts really democratic) and so on. This is why the bourgeoisie has no objections to the BJP.

Only a determined struggle with clear social and political goals fit for toiling people can in the long run resist fascism and improve our lives. And that is why, not just the Congress, but also the other pretenders to the seats, like the Third Front and the Fourth Front, have little to offer to us. We need to look briefly at some of them.

## The Bourgeois Oppositions to BJP and Congress

Several regional parties are currently in this position. In Bihar, obviously, the Congress cannot form a pre-poll alliance with both the RJD and the JD (U). so whoever is not in alliance with the Congress will project themselves as an independent option. In Andhra, too, not all the forces can form an alliance with the BJP, and some will not go along with the Congress. But above all, it is the Trinamul Congress, which is now developing hopes of becoming a not merely regional but an all-India party, that is trying to project this. Having decimated the Congress in West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee is aware that her main headache remains the CPI(M), much weakened though it is. And so, she continues to steal its thunder, by taking aggressive postures against the BJP. Yet, one has only to look at her social and economic policies. She has taken on trade unions. Her government has declared that while it will go on spending sprees for all sorts of outlandish projects it will not give regular Dearness Allowance to government employees and

others who get it from the government on the ground that she does not have the necessary funds. Her government, along with Modi's Gujarat government, has objected to the setting up of the Seventh Pay Commission, since when the Centre raises pay of employees, state government employees also demand the same, and this even raises expectations among private sector employees. TMC goons in West Bengal have repeatedly attacked the CPI(M) and other left parties. One does not have to be a CPI(M) supporter to understand the dangers this poses. In recent times, the Education Minister of her government declared that those college and university teacher who did not join the TMC sponsored WBCUPA were "harmaads", in other words, from a ministerial position, branded the overwhelming majority of College and University teachers of West Bengal as hooligan elements. Any independent unionism outside the TMC control is being attacked, while the police keep silent.

Mamata Banerjee's anger at the BJP has moreover been increased because the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha once again decided to repose faith in the BJP. They have announced, in opposition to the TMC candidate, footballer Baichung Bhutia, their support for the BJP candidate S. S. Ahluwalia. So the TMC attacks on the BJP are taking the form of : they want to pit Hindus against Muslims, they want to break up West Bengal. For toiling people, support to the TMC in opposition to the BJP is not an expression of any protest. These are both rightwing parties with projects that for the working class and poor peasants make little difference. In a different category are the Left parties and the AAP, and so we will have to discuss them separately.

## The Left Front and the Third Front

The real Third Front, as opposed to the beautiful front imagined by the leaders of the CPI(M) and CPI, is a front consisting of lesser bourgeois parties, whose aspirations are little different from the bigger parties. Some of them tie "secularism" on their masthead, while others push forward frankly regional identities. Still others highlight particular caste identities. They have no vision of an alternative economic policy for toiling people. At most, they throw out sops, such as low price for rice in some provinces. But this is charity linked to the assumption that only the "poorest" should get it, not a policy aimed to abolish poverty. This is proved by the fact that the most successful case of a "Third Front" government was the United Front headed by first Deve Gowda and then Gujral, with P. Chidambaram as the finance minister. This spokesperson of Indian big capital, was hailed by the UF, including the Left parties. And his budget was hailed as a "dream budget" by capitalists. Need we say more about what the real "Third Front" looks like?

The apparently progressive ideology of the Third Front is created by documents produced with left participation and encouragement. Only the Left parties believe in the **Reality** of these promises. What that means is, while the bourgeois parties simply wave these to entice the left and get left support during elections, it is the Left which constantly proclaims that now is not the time for a full working class programme. The parties of the Left Front, on paper, have more radical credentials, since they show a past as working class parties and even now have mass fronts like trade unions, peasant organisations, women's organisations, and so on to prove their radical moorings.

In **Reality**, they have long lost their radical, or even plain working class links, by and large. Hobbled by the ideology of class collaborationism, increasingly wedded to the practice of neoliberal globalisation through participation in deeply class collaborationist provincial governments and de-facto power sharing at times even in the central Government, the leftism of these parties is now mostly washed out. Just as the SP will trot out "secular" rhetoric during elections, just as the BSP will put up statues of Ambedkar, similarly these parties will put in a lot of Marxist sounding rhetoric in their election manifestoes. They still have once Marxism trained professors in their ranks, who will do the necessary intellectual jugglery. The point is not what they will promise, but what they did when in or near power. In the Parliament of 2004 the Left had 61 MPs, the highest ever in Indian history. Yet it effectively bolstered the UPA. The Left Front did not present any principled opposition to neo-liberalism when in power. In West Bengal, it offered considerable breaks to Tata (Singur) and also to the Salim group (Nandigram).

The Left Front, especially its major component, the CPI(M), is politically unprincipled in a basic way. It does not use parliamentary institutions in the interests of the working class. In the outgoing Parliament, it has sipped with both the Congress and the BJP, an unusually outrageous feat. It has supported the Congress on issues. For example, over the question of the election of the President, the Left chose not to put up a candidate. That a purely left candidate was bound to lose is not at all the issue. This was an occasion when the left ought to have expressed its independent stance. Pranab Mukherjee is not an abstract academic figure put up as a token candidate. He had been a major player in the Congress party, and had been Finance Minister in the UPA before putting in his papers for the post of President. His closeness with the Ambanis has been widely known. Yet, in the name of fighting fascism (what else?) the CPI(M) leadership decided to vote for him. If they had remembered precedent, they would not have done so. In Germany's last presidential election, the Social Democrats had supported Hindenburg supposedly because he would obey the constitution and would be a better bet than Hitler, instead of running an independent working class candidate. Then of course, Hindenburg did call in Hitler and even accepted the Enabling decree. We do not argue that an exact parallel will happen in India. But we do argue that lessons from both Indian and international history are there to show that in these cases one cannot trust bourgeois leaders. Not only did the CPIM do so, but the party was ruthless in taking action against internal critics who questioned this class collaborationism.

And, to top that, the CPI(M) also allied with the BJP. In bourgeois terms, they merely carried out "floor coordination". But such purely bourgeois terms can only be used by people on the left when they have become utterly politically bankrupt. Floor coordination means, one forms blocs with the BJP to stall voting, or to ensure the passage or non-passage of particular bills. Since the effect, upon the working class, is that the workers see "their" party voting with the party it has been calling fascist, they are confused. The fascists, by contrast are not. It was perfectly possible for the Left in Parliament to simply declare their opposition to the Congress government and to vote against many measures. It was politically an act of utmost craven class collaboration, and one that went in the direction of legitimising the fascists, to go for floor coordination. The class struggle is not like a gentlemen's cricket match, where an impartial umpire rules on who is out, and at the end of the match the defeated and the victorious retire to the club house for tea. This kind of parliamentary behaviour depoliticises the workers who support such parties.

## **The Aam Aadmi Party and its Clean Capitalism**

The AAP is a very different, and still evolving process. In origin it was to grow out of an urban, primarily middle class, "civil society" sentiment – opposing corruption, opposing political high handedness, fighting rape in Delhi. The Anna Hazare Movement, the struggle after 16 December 2012, years of suffering under corrupt governments, something made particularly foul in the capital where without connections not a file moves, all came together. Having won, Kejriwal went on to show that he was willing to keep some of his key promises, and to risk resigning over this.

The Aam Aadmi Party does not have a rounded programme. It represents a very specific segment of the population (the urban Delhi-ite) in its origin. Yet, precisely because of its formlessness, many radicals have felt it possible to join it, in the hope that it can be given a positive, progressive direction. Whether Medha Patkar, or S. P. Udaykumar, or Soni Sori, some of the names closely linked with resistance, human rights, state violence, have gathered under the AAP banner. We do not believe that they have done so for personal gain. Far from it. They have done so, because they hope that AAP will indeed be the vehicle to clean up India. Leading activists of many radical forces, have joined AAP.

We however disagree respectfully with them. It is not that we are arguing, a priori, that AAP is bound to become corrupt in turn. But AAP's "anti-ideology" ideology means it does not take even a weak anti-capitalist line. Its talk of crony capitalism makes people assume that there is, or can be some kind of truly clean capitalism. In **Reality**, capitalism and the state are constantly in each other's pockets. The ruling class in capitalism has a division of labour.

The people who are in the business of actually being in charge of capital and making money cannot spare time to carry on government. That is however given to people whose wealth, social status, all place them solidly in the camp of the bourgeoisie, or close enough so that they aspire to climb higher.

The Delhi elections showed AAP has tapped into genuine anger. And its role since then shows it is willing to challenge both BJP and Congress. Yet, as long as it lacks a clear social programme of anti-capitalism, its protests will serve only to create popular faith in a “true” bourgeois democracy, and nothing more. It is because a section of AAPs leaders/candidates are known to be honest and believe in this illusion that they can make the masses believe it. And that is why, we must explain, that we are not in favour of AAP. We call upon its leaders, as well as its members, to rethink their social programme.

## What about the Practical Tasks

Those who disagree will say, “but elections demand practical tasks. A government must be formed”. We do not want this bourgeois “practicality”, which tells us to vote between one bourgeois party and another. We need to understand that we have to fight for a programme of working class independence, and support only those candidates, voting for whom can have a positive effect on that goal. The Election Commission has fixed 70 lakh as the maximum a candidate may spend in an election campaign. We know that in **Reality** the figure goes up to crores. [2] But even 70 lakh, spread over 542 constituencies all over India, is evidence how difficult it would be, even if there was a united, multi-tendency working class party, for the working class to imagine it could simply contest elections and form a working class government.

Under the circumstances, we are often told to vote for the “lesser evil”. But none of the evils we fight against can help us in our struggle for emancipation. Only by building revolutionary democratic parties and trade unions and other mass organisations that are accountable to us can we fight for our own emancipation. For this, we do not need election manifestoes promising honeyed lies. We want a programme that will sketch out the basic needs of the masses of people. Out of the struggles of the people for the last decade to two decades, we can propose some of the basic issues such a party/parties, such a campaign, must put forward. That is the truly practical task. Of course, a full programme can be developed only when masses of militant fighters from different sectors come together to really build a radical party committed to the overthrow of capital. But we have here a rough programme, which can be the starting point. It is by fighting for such programmes, by campaigning for them, and by building organisations stressing these issues, that a real alternative will be built.

## A Charter of Demands

### Political and legal issues

• Repeal the Armed Forces Special Powers Act

• Abolish all sedition laws.

• Repeal the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2008

• Stop all private armies and stop the repressions on adivasis.

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## **Resist the Sangh Parivar-BJP and their allies, build a working class alternative**

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â€¢ Make the NOTA a positive vote, so if NOTA gets higher votes than any candidate the EC will declare “no one is elected”.

â€¢ Ensure state funding of all parties on an equal footing and stop all corporate funding.

â€¢ Change the Representation of the People Act to establish proportional representation in place of the current unrepresentative system.

â€¢ Bring all public servants, elected representatives, office holders under the constitution and members of the judiciary under the ambit of anti-corruption legislation.

â€¢ Reform the judicial system to ensure time bound disposal of all cases.

â€¢ Abolish the death penalty.

### **Rights of the Working Class**

â€¢ Raise the minimum wages for every person working in India to a need based minimum determined on the basis of the 15th ILC norms for setting the minimum wage along with subsequent Supreme Court orders for all employments.

â€¢ Non payment of minimum wages must be made a criminal offence

â€¢ Establish a 40 hour working week, without exception.

â€¢ Link minimum wages to Dearness Allowance with total neutralisation and half yearly revision of minimum wages keeping in accordance to the revision of Dearness Allowance.

â€¢ NREGA Wage must be above the minimum wage, with 100% inflation neutralisation raises every six months

â€¢ Take steps to progressively eliminate contract labour, first of all in the public sector and government jobs, with the absorption of contract workers into tenured workforce.

â€¢ For full employment of all adult persons.

â€¢ Repeal the Essential Services Maintenance Act.

â€¢ Compulsory recognition of all trade unions by employers.

â€¢ Compulsory secret ballot in all cases where there are multiple unions. Scrap all laws like the Bombay Industrial Relations Act 1946, which favour government sponsored unions.

### **Social Security, Health, Education**

## **Resist the Sangh Parivar-BJP and their allies, build a working class alternative**

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â€¢ All workers who are not covered by any PF scheme must be directly covered by the EPFO with no lower limit of number of employees.

â€¢ In cases of contract work, the principal employer must maintain an account for the PF of the contract workers

â€¢ Tax the corporate and the wealthy to ensure state funding of PF for the workers in unorganised sectors

â€¢ National Food Security Act to be universal

â€¢ No dilution of Supreme Court Orders on Right to Food

â€¢ Extend ESI model to all workers, including rural workers

â€¢ Legislate a national Healthcare Act to ensure a countrywide public healthcare system that will provide quality and affordable healthcare for all

â€¢ Enact a National Drug Policy that promotes generics and limits patents

â€¢ Restore PDS for every person

â€¢ Raise budget allocation for education to 10 per cent of GDP by 2019 to actualise the provisions under the Right to Education Act, 2009.

â€¢ Regularise all para-teachers under the SSA in the pay and grade as regular teachers based on their experience and qualification.

â€¢ Halt privatisation of education.

â€¢ Impose higher corporate taxes and higher levels of income and wealth tax on the rich. Restore the inheritance tax. Use these funds to subsidise the social needs of the 90%.

### **Development Policies**

â€¢ Impose a progressive income tax, higher wealth tax, and bring back the inheritance tax on the rich.

â€¢ End subsidies on the rich and impose higher rates of company taxes on corporate profits, whether Indian or foreign concerns.

### **Women/Gender issues**

â€¢ Equal pay for women workers.

â€¢ Toilets for women in all workplaces

## **Resist the Sangh Parivar-BJP and their allies, build a working class alternative**

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â€¢ Ensure dissemination of information on and proper implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

â€¢ Ensure women's right over community land and other natural resources

â€¢ Decriminalise sex work and recognition and legal protection of their right to work

â€¢ Decriminalise all adult consensual sex, scrap laws that impose compulsory heterosexuality

â€¢ Legislate a Domestic Workers Act to ensure a maximum working time, minimum wage, including a day off, for all domestic workers.

â€¢ Take action against all so-called honour killing and other violence on women, and take stern legal action against organisations like Khap panchayats that promote such actions.

â€¢ Not selective hanging of rapists but systematic punishment of perpetrators of sexual and other violence on women, including where it is the police or the armed forces.

â€¢ Apply Maternity Benefit Act for women of all sectors.

â€¢ Create a country where women can go out in safety for work or for leisure

### **Environment and Development**

â€¢ Free, quality drinking water for all, not subsidized water for soft drinks companies and bottled water for profit

â€¢ Ensure livelihood security of the potentially displaced and a moratorium on land acquisition until livelihood security is addressed

â€¢ Heavy fine on all industries for first time violation of pollution laws and halt to production and confiscation of assets for repeat case of pollution

â€¢ Stop nuclear projects. Switch to renewable.

â€¢ Oppose Genetically Modified crops under monopoly control.

â€¢ Stop subsidies to corporate in agriculture.

â€¢ Ensure the implementation of all existing environmental laws and expand environmental laws to protect health and safety of workers, local communities and protect the global ecology

### **Oppressed Social and National Groups**

â€¢ No destruction of local/regional culture and identity in the name of homogenized Indianisation

â€¢ Immediately clear all backlogs in recruitment in the reserved category

â€¢ Implement the recommendations of the Ranganath Mishra Report to include Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Caste origin for constitutional guarantees. The eligibility for membership of the Scheduled Castes should not be linked to religious status.

â€¢ Implement the recommendations of the Sachar Committee report to improve access to education, to increase employment share and participation in public bodies of Muslims.

â€¢ Repeal Freedom of Religion Act in the states where it exists that restricts freedom to choose religion

â€¢ Protect religious freedom using constitutional protection of freedom of conscience

This is not a programme for the Arnab Goswamis and the Barkha Duttis. But it reflects and concretises the struggles of toiling masses. And such a programme, to be implemented, needs first, a working class party committed to class interests above all. Class interest does not imply ignoring other interests of the oppressed. But just as capitalism underwrites every kind of exploitation and oppression, be it caste oppression, be it gender oppression, similarly, unless the struggles against such oppressions are linked through the logic of anti-capitalism, they will end up short of their goals. We will therefore be accused of utopianism by the bourgeoisie and the reformists. We reply, if to be a realist is to choose between two exploiting masters, and decide whether we will be slaves in saffron or slaves in tri-colour, we prefer to be utopian. We agree to fighting unity in the struggle against fascism.

If the fascists come out on the streets and attack trade unions, we will not question whether the person resisting them, alongside us, votes for the TMC, BSP, SP, JD(U), RJD, or the DMK, or whoever. But we ask workers to have no trust that in parliament any of these parties will look after our interests. We therefore call for votes for only those candidates, supporting whom makes sense, at least even partially from the perspective of building a radical anti-capitalist party. In all other cases, we call for use of the None Of The Above button, so that our mass rejection of the system becomes the real wave, not the fake wave of Modi, which is so unreal that he has to file from two constituencies in the hope that one at least will be a guaranteed seat.

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[1] A Kar Sevak is someone who offers services for free (that is, a volunteer) to a religious cause. It originates from the Sanskrit words kar (hand) and sevak (servant) (Wikipedia).

[2] In the South Asian numbering system a lakh is a unit equal to one hundred thousand (100,000), a crore is ten million (10,000).