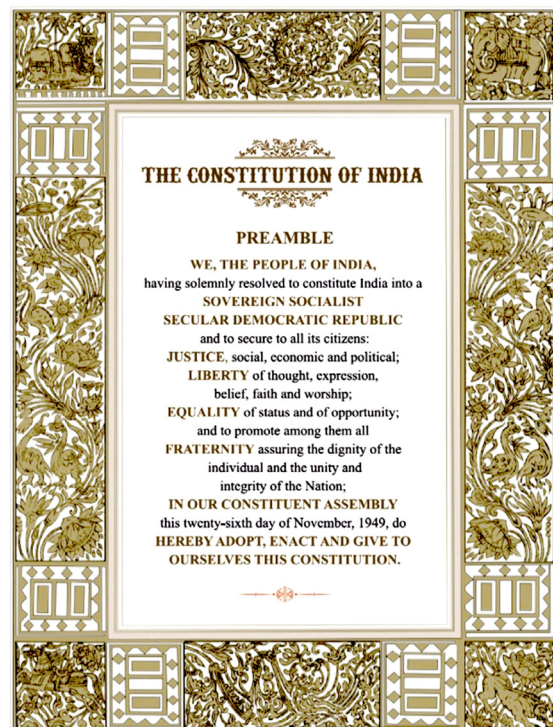




A Humble Appeal to 'We, the People of India'

Dear Friends,

This year our Republic enters the 75th year of its existence. As we begin the new year, we are aware that we are only a few weeks away from the decisive 2024 elections. Ten years ago Narendra Modi had come to power with the promise of ushering in Achhe Din or better days, bringing back all black money and creating two crore jobs every year. Many Indians gave him a second chance in 2019 when he promised to double farmers' income and ensure a pucca house for every family by 2022. Now ahead of the 2024 elections, when every promise made to the people has turned into a brazen mockery, a cruel insult to the people, the BJP and RSS are busy showcasing the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya as their biggest achievement and



seeking your votes yet again in the name of Ram.

The Ramayana has been close to the hearts of millions of Indians across generations. Ramrajya has often been invoked as a popular Indian metaphor for a reign of truth, justice and universal well-being. Is the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya the gateway to a modern 21st Century Ramrajya premised on divisiveness, hate and violence? Let the dazzling spectacle of the Ram Mandir inauguration not blind us to the reality of the all-round crisis that ten years of Modi government have pushed us into. Let us not ignore the growing signs of daily mockery of the constitutional promises of a modern secular democracy for the world's most populous country.

The Supreme Court verdict of 2019 had termed the 6 December 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid an egregious violation of the Constitution. Yet the apex court awarded the title suit to the Ram Mandir trust hoping it would end all disputes over places of worship and usher in a period of peace and harmony. But the Sangh brigade now wants to expand such conflicts across the country and repeal the 1991 Places of Worship Act that guaranteed the permanence of the nature of all places of worship as on 15 August 1947. And the Supreme Court certainly did not ask the Modi government to make the Ayodhya temple a priority agenda of the state the way it is being done.

The Modi government is privatising, whether wholesale or bit by bit, everything that should be essentially public - be it public transport, public sector industries, or essential public services like education and health-care. And something like

religion, religious faith or sentiment, which is entirely a citizen's private domain has been completely taken over by the government. The Prime Minister of an elected government now behaves like a priest and presents himself as a divinely chosen representative not answerable to the people and their Parliament. This is a complete negation of the very idea of a modern republic that free India had proclaimed itself on 26 January 1950.

From universities to railway stations, everywhere we now see Modi selfie points at public expense. Propaganda of the government is the only permanent theme while everything else works on contract basis. The idea of permanent jobs has been taken away from India's youth - the former chief of the Indian Army now tells us how the Agniveer scheme was imposed without the Army's knowledge. Exactly the same way as 500 and 1000 rupee notes, and subsequently even the 2,000-rupee notes launched after demonetisation were banned, without any consultation even with India's bankers and economists.

All these years the government told us about foreigners trying to illegally migrate to India. Now frequently we hear about Indians being identified as illegal immigrants and sent back from foreign countries. The other day an entire plane carrying Indian passengers, many of them from Gujarat, was grounded in France and passengers sent back to India. Rich Indians are giving up Indian citizenship to become citizens of USA, UK, Australia and many western countries. Several Indian capitalists have fled the country after taking huge loans from Indian banks. Meanwhile, the government keeps writing off the loans of the rich while increasingly

exporting Indian workers abroad. BJP governments are eager to send Indian workers even to risk their lives and go and work in Israel.

Life for large sections of India's citizens is becoming increasingly insecure. Incidents of Muslims facing lynch mobs and bulldozers have become routine. The poor are facing large scale eviction from cities. Perpetrators of atrocities on Dalits and Adivasis are hardly ever punished even as the incidence of such cases has increased remarkably. Perpetrators of anti-women violence are promoted and protected by the BJP at all levels from IT cells to state Assemblies and Parliament.

The Constitution promised us justice - social, economic and political. Yet people demanding justice are today being implicated in false cases and dumped in jails. After using farm laws and labour codes to deprive farmers and workers of their rights, the Modi government is now changing the entire set of criminal laws to turn India into a veritable police state. Every dissent and agitation against the government is now liable to be treated as an act of terror and subjected to brutal repression under draconian anti-terror laws.

These are not signs of India becoming a developed country and a robust democracy. These are signs of fascism, a permanent and institutionalised reign of terror and repression. When we read the Preamble to our Constitution and look at our own conditions of life as individual citizens and collectively as a Republic, we can see how the country is daily being pushed in a direction opposite to the constitutional goals and commitments.

Ten years of Modi government have already pushed us into a state of opposition-free parliament where members of parliament are being expelled and suspended at the will of the government. Instead of the Union of states described in the Constitution, India increasingly looks like an extended Delhi Darbar where governors prevail over elected governments, where Jammu and Kashmir is stripped of its constitutional rights and bifurcated into two Union Territories, where Manipur continues to burn for months on end with the Prime Minister hardly bothering to mention a word about the state in Parliament let alone visit the state for a day.

The whole world is today concerned about the daily massacre of Palestinian children in Gaza by Israel. In this war on humanity, Israel has the fullest backing of the United States, the biggest imperialist power of the world, and the UK, the former colonial ruler of India. As a country which experienced a series of Jallianwala Bagh type massacres during colonial rule, India should have stood by the beleaguered Palestinians demanding not just immediate ceasefire in Gaza but action against the war crimes of Israel. We can see South Africa, the country from where Gandhi had launched his historic battle against racism and colonialism and which eventually defeated the cruel reign of apartheid towards the end of the 20th Century, today demanding action against Israel in the International Court of Justice. But under the Modi government, India stands isolated from the global voice of justice, freedom and peace, closely allied with the US-Israel war machine.

India cannot afford to have another five

years of the disastrous Modi regime. Bhagat Singh had warned us against brown sahibs usurping power in free India. Ambedkar had told us that bhakti in politics, which necessarily happens if religion and governance are amalgamated, can only pave the way for dictatorship. As we observe the 74th anniversary of our Republic, these warnings ring truer than ever.

It is therefore time we resolved to reclaim the Republic. The real producers of India - the workers and peasants - must get their due. Young India must have a secure future. India's women and oppressed and deprived bahujans must get full freedom, justice and dignity. The minorities, religious or linguistic, must get equal rights and opportunities to prosper and India's rich diversity must not be bulldozed in the name of uniformity.

We still have the Constitution which came out of our freedom movement and proclaimed India as a sovereign democratic republic with universal adult franchise. Today many in the Modi regime have openly started describing the Constitution drafted under the leadership of Ambedkar as a colonial constitution. Like the laws being rewritten, there is a clamour in the Sangh brigade and Modi camp for a new

constitution to turn India's Parliamentary Democracy into a presidential tyranny. We must not forget the age-old RSS design of having Manusmriti, the code of slavery for India's oppressed people and women, as the Constitution of modern India.

Let every vote of ours therefore ensure the defeat of the disastrous Modi regime in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. CPI(ML) has all along championed the cause of broadest opposition unity against the fascist Modi government. As a constituent of the INDIA alliance we will perhaps be contesting very few seats in the coming elections, but we will work everywhere for the victory of our INDIA allies. Let freedom and justice prevail over the forces of corporate loot, communal hate and social slavery.

The people of India who have historically defeated all forces of injustice and oppression, from the British colonial rule to the zamindari system and Brahminical-feudal domination, must emerge victorious in the battle for democracy against fascism. Most recently the successful farmers' movement showed us the power of united and determined struggle of the people. Unitedly we can surely also defeat the Sanghi fascists.

We shall fight, we shall win!



Central Committee

Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Liberation

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