

# Proletarian Era

Volume 36 No. 21  
JULY 1, 2003

Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA  
Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

Price : Rs. 2.00

## Supporting Congress against BJP in elections

# CPI(M)'s way of fighting communalism

At the end of its Central Committee Meeting in Calcutta on 9 June last, the CPI(M) declared that its aim in the ensuing polls in four states would be to ensure the defeat of the BJP because the BJP's "record at the Centre has been to strengthen the communal forces." Although the CPI(M) General Secretary Harkishen Singh Surjeet, during his press briefing, considered it imprudent to come public just now on the projected tie up with the Congress and instead talked of moving "independently", veteran leader Jyoti Basu and West Bengal State Secretary, Anil Biswas, within three days, spelt out clearly that the CPI(M) would ask people to vote for the Congress as "the Congress alone is in a position to defeat the BJP."

### The menace of communalism-fundamentalism

There is no doubt that the emergence of the BJP, with overt and strident Hindu fundamentalism as the main plank of its policy, poses a grave danger before the country. But would fighting the BJP in the elections or trying to defeat it in alliance with the Congress free the polity and society of the menace of communalism? Is communalism an exclusive preserve of the BJP? What is the root cause of religious fanaticism and exacerbated communal tension that are out to outrage the secular conscience of the country and undermine the people's unity? Unless we trace the socio-historical roots, it would not be possible for us to determine the correct course of eradicating this menace and in that perspective, it is to be seen if the CPI(M)'s prescription of an electoral alliance with the Congress to combat the BJP is in consonance with it. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader and

teacher and one of the outstanding Marxist thinkers of this age, had shown long back that the failure of the nationalist leaders to complete the process of democratization of the Indian society during

the phase of freedom struggle had made the country so vulnerable to religious intolerance, fundamentalist buccaneering and communal frenzy. "Antagonism with imperialism, on the one hand, and mortal fear of the revolutionary struggle by the people against imperialism on the other hand, made the nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie maintain a reformist oppositional role against the imperialism ... for failure on the part of the leadership of our national liberation movement to accomplish in the main, the tasks of social and cultural revolutions for democratization of the society against

feudalism, feudal disunity and religious bondage, the Indian people remained socially and culturally divided into different communities disunited by religion, caste, language, race etc... The Indian nationalist leadership not only did not try to free the Indian masses from the bondage of religion and democratize the society ... it took up, on the contrary, religion as a vehicle of propagating nationalistic ideas. Indian nationalism, therefore, was basically religion oriented. ...manifested itself in the form of Hindu religious revivalism. Keeping especially the Muslim masses away from the

national liberation movement. ...The present rulers of our country, in place of carrying out the task of social and cultural revolutions, are only aiding more enthusiastically, in the name of secularism, the anti-secular forces and tendencies by encouraging all sorts of religious customs, conventions and prejudices... in the circumstance the slogan of Hindu revivalism is finding a strong foothold now. ... capitalism tries ... in the imperialist stage, to disrupt the unity of the people for its own security against popular uprising. The more acute its crisis becomes ... the more fascist capitalism

*Contd. on page 2*

# Stop sending troops to Iraq

After the fall of socialism in the USSR and dismantling of the socialist bloc standing as a deterrent to the imperialist bloc led by the US, the US imperialists are on an unbridled rampage to establish its supremacy across the globe and all countries other than the imperialist ones are terror-stricken with the insecurity of their freedom and sovereignty, particularly after the colonial capture of Iraq by the US-UK brigands. In such a situation while all freedom loving and sovereign countries should actively come forward to the help of the Iraqi freedom fighters, Indian government led by the BJP is shamelessly hobnobbing with the US for sending troops to Iraq to help the US.

Since capturing Baghdad territory the US administration has been continuously urging India to send troops to Iraq for 'stabilization duties' and for the last three weeks the urging has assumed the character of regular

pressurization. It has been mentioned in our last issue that even violating all diplomatic protocol, the US defence secretary Rumsfeld met Advani in the hotel he was staying at Washington to pressurize him for troops deployment. Also, a

Pentagon team visited Delhi with the same purpose.

In consonance with the anti-imperialist tradition of the Indian people, the Government of India should have rejected outright this US proposal but instead, on the pretext of getting answers to some technical questions, it borrowed time. But the Bush-Blair-Rumsfeld did not fail to understand that the Vajpayee government would surely submit to the pressure and swallow the bait of share of Iraqi reconstruction pie and share in Iraqi oil trade once this government is able to manage the discontent or protest of the Opposition parties in Parliament.

Indian body politic is considerably agitated on the proposal and public opinion is squarely against it. Opinions opposing it are being expressed in the print media also. Some, who are even opposing the proposal, are of the opinion that had the UN proposed it then there would have been no objection as the Indian troops would then have to act under the UN command as a part of its peacekeeping force. This view also cannot be supported because the UN has long been reduced to a rubber stamp of the US and it has already accepted the imperialist occupation of Iraq by the US-UK duo by Resolution No. 1483. If

*Contd. on page 4*

# Congress never followed secular principles

*Contd. from page 1*

becomes, when it tries to fan up religious or racial sentiments of the people to misdirect popular struggles against capitalism. ... so long as capitalism will exist, there will remain the root cause of ... communalism, casteism, racialism etc., and consequently the ground of communal violence will also be there." (On Communal Problem, November 1964) After dwelling on the genesis of communalism in our country, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also touched upon the correct course of action to weed out the menace.

"Those who really intend to eliminate communalism and communal disturbances in our country for good cannot but work for the overthrow of capitalism ... Hence, only by constantly strengthening the democratic movement which is the anti-thesis of communalism, can we restrict communalism in our country ... the programme of democratic movement ... should include the tasks of social and cultural revolution in our country which remain unaccomplished even today." (*Ibid*)

When the toiling people unite on the platform of democratic mass movement, the common cause or issue of the movement overrides the caste, creed, religion or language of the struggling mass. During the course of conducting such democratic movement for a common cause and in the process of intensifying such movements to attain the character of a conscious political struggle under a genuine revolutionary leadership against the principal enemy capitalism, the unity of the struggling people gets further cemented and barriers separating them socially and culturally on the basis of regressive thoughts like religious intolerance, mutual distrust, communal disposition etc. get progressively demolished to transform them into a homogenous compact

community not only politically but also socially and culturally. This is the only way to do away with communalism.

To explain the significant role of democratic movement, we can refer in this connection to the history of our freedom struggle. Despite so many divisions centring around religion, caste and culture, the people of India could be united over the common cause of fighting British imperialism and freeing the motherland from the tentacles of alien rule. It is true that the freedom movement was led by the bourgeoisie and hence the task of performing the socio-cultural revolution to completely rid the society of religious fads, bigotry and other backward thinking remained unfulfilled. Yet to the extent secular principles and democratic values were practised in the uncompromising trend of the independence movement, it helped combining the various nationalities to emerge as an independent Indian nation, may not be a totally compact unit but definitely an integrated whole. The bond of unity was strong enough to keep at bay the influence of the RSS and the Jana Sangh.

But after independence, the Congress as the most trusted representative of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie suffering from the fear complex of anti-capitalist revolution, pursued the divide and rule policy to disrupt people's unity. Side by side, in order to stay in power, the Congress, instead of treading the secular path, indulged in all sorts of divisive politics, encouraged all religions and religious practices as well as rituals to such a deleterious extent as to, in effect, work in the direction of multi-theocratism. When they found that the Jana Sangh and the RSS, with Hindu fundamentalist slogan, are posing to be strong contenders in the parliamentary politics, they too, to safeguard their position, began to champion

of the majoritarian agenda in the majority-dominated areas almost in the RSS pattern to give fillip to Hindu fundamentalist. And, in a typical demonstration of double-standard politics, they played on the minority-sentiment in the constituencies of minority population.

While such has been the position of the Congress, equally despicable, if not more damaging, has been the politics of so-called lefts — first the united CPI and then the split factions like the CPI(M), CPI. In the initial phase of post-independence period, the CPI(M), CPI did take part in democratic mass movement. But their objective was limited — to gain seats in the election by riding on the credibility of such movements. But this limited participation also ceased after 1977 when the CPI(M) with CPI as its ally, assumed governmental power and entered into a competition with the Congress and the BJP for currying favour with the ruling class. Even during the phase of their lip-service to democratic movement, the CPI(M), CPI made no endeavour to launch any socio-cultural movement or ideological battle against the communal constructs and fundamentalist schooling and thereby totally neglected the unaccomplished task of democratization of the society. All these factors have contributed towards preparation of a fertile ground for the communal forces to grow without any formidable resistance. Through this route, the BJP, as political wing of the RSS and the Sangh Parivar, made headway in the area of national politics. Late Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of Jana Sangh, could not, despite all efforts, baptize the soil of West Bengal because of its rich inheritance and the fervour of freedom struggle and left democratic movement. But the 27 years of the CPI(M) rule in all deftness has cleared the roadblock for his disciples to have a foothold even in this state.

## The CPI(M)'s current politics

In the light of the brilliant analysis by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh based on the correct scientific approach to the problem of communalism-fundamentalism and the backdrop provided above, let us now delve into the essence of the CPI(M)'s way of fighting the BJP, and its communalism. The CPI(M) leaders have forsaken the line of building up democratic mass movement long ago. Instead they are now totally enmeshed in bourgeois parliamentary politics with the focus on making electoral gains and capturing power by serving the class interest of the ruling capitalist class. All these present policies and politics are in consonance with class design and approach of the ruling moribund bourgeoisie. Hence it is futile to expect that so long they continue pursuing such policies they would join the anti-capitalist struggle of the toiling people. So logically they cannot engage themselves in a real battle against the communal forces. Their aim, obviously, is to feign an anti-communal stand purported to exploit the popular sentiment to secure votes. And for that purpose, they have no problem in labelling whichever force they desire to tie up with as secular, democratic and progressive.

## How secular is the Congress

Let us see what are the secular credentials of the Congress. We have mentioned above that the mainstream of the freedom movement with the Congress leadership at the helm had a Hindu religion orientation. This alienated the Muslim people and other religious minorities and allowed fundamentalist elements to gain ground that ultimately led to the vivisection of the country. In keeping with the same tradition, the Congress leaders, after being saddled to power in the post-

independence period, made no attempt to steer clear of religion, age-old obsolete creeds, bigotry, and other backward thinkings. On the contrary, they overtly or covertly nurtured all these morbid thoughts to serve the class interest of the ruling moribund bourgeoisie whose objective has been to ride and thrive on the ignorance and muddled thinking of the people. Congress leaders, from Nehru to Sonia, have been meticulous in beginning their poll campaigns after offering puja in temples. But then to woo the voters from other religious groups, they also demonstratively performed rituals in masjids or churches. All along, this state and governmental encouragement to all religions have been upheld by them as religious liberalism or secularism. Thus they vulgarized the noble concept of secularism which neither encourages an individual to profess, practice and propagate his religious faith, nor does it presuppose state patronage to every religious faith to widen influence of religion over the masses. A true secular state considers religion a private affair of its citizens and refrains from interfering with their religious beliefs by either encouragement or opposition. But the inevitable result of the Congress way of "secular religionism" has been that the religion of the majority community received more encouragement and ultimately ended in fanning up majority communalism. This created a further cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims allowing the fundamentalists to widen even further the chasm between the two principal communities. Congress leaders, while making pulpit speeches denouncing communalism and extolling virtues of amity between religious communities, took every care to see that this divide on communal lines sustains so that the people,

*Contd. on page 3*

# CPI(M)'s opportunistic politics

*Contd. from page 2*

groaning under the yoke of capitalism, remain dissuaded from uniting and waging conscious political struggles against the severe problems afflicting their life. What is more disturbing is that in practising this dangerous politics, the Congress instead of containing communal flare-ups and lethal hostilities against the minorities, had been for obvious reasons a tacit approver of such heinous crimes. With the Congress rule both at the Centre and in the states, severe atrocities on as well as killing of minorities at the instance of the RSS were a regular phenomenon. The government machinery had been an indulgent onlooker to such savage acts. Not a single culprit of such hideous assaults and massacres has been punished till date. Thus the RSS hoodlums were allowed by the Congress to perpetrate such crimes without any resistance. Incidents are also known where the Congress leaders pulled the strings from behind to engineer communal clashes and fatal attacks on the minorities and then as experts of double-dealing acts, rushed to the victims to feign as their saviours or protectors so as to elicit support in the election. History has many such incidents on record. The reason for which the Congress made the majority community cultivate communal politics on the lines of the RSS, also worked behind their pretentious gesture to woo the minorities.

## The Congress sowed the seed of Mandir-Masjid feud

Even to trace the origin of the current Mandir-Masjid feud, one has to refer to late Rajiv Gandhi. It was Rajiv Gandhi who, in early eighties, got opened the gates of the disputed area within the Babari Masjid that had been kept locked as per Supreme Court order to please the Hindu fundamentalists. It was his

misfortune that the BJP, waiting to seize a suitable opportunity to stage a comeback by playing the Hindu card, jumped into the fray backed by the Sangh Parivar, worked up fundamentalist rancour to a high pitch and successfully triggered the chain of events that led to the destruction of a historic monument like Babari Masjid by Hindu zealots followed by gruesome Mumbai riots and such conflagration in many other parts of the country. By plunging the country into a gory parade, the BJP leadership succeeded in fetching enough votes to have a sizeable representation in Parliament where they had once only two members. So enchanting has been the experience to them that they did not hesitate to sponsor in Gujarat a worst pogrom to retain power. The Mandir-Masjid row is not over. The BJP and the Sangh Parivar are persistently keeping the issue alive to sustain an escalated tension. Can the Congress leadership dissociate themselves from the complicity to such heinous crimes?

## "Soft Hindutva" line of the Congress

Looking at the dividend the BJP earned by implementing this Hindutva agenda, the Congress, to improve their poll prospects, is softpedalling Hindu sentiment. Congress chief minister of Madhya Pradesh is on record to have been advocating for a ban on cow slaughter. So-called soft Hindutva line was followed by them in the Gujarat elections as well. It may be mentioned that recently a leader of the Sangh Parivar also sent a feeler to the Congress leadership about switching allegiance if need be. There is nothing surprising in it. Indira Gandhi's comeback with a thumping majority after 1977 election debacle was possible because of the backing of the RSS when the BJP was reduced to two seats in the Parliament. There are also reports that

the BJP and the Parivar elements are organizing riots in the Congress-ruled states without much opposition from the local administration. The recent communal flare-ups in Kerala and Rajasthan are cases in point.

## The CPI(M)'s periodic alternative switch

In such a "secular" Congress, the CPI(M) finds its ally in fighting the BJP's communalism. Of course there is nothing surprising in it. The undivided CPI, which had the present CPI(M) leadership within its fold, did not conduct a genuine fight against religious fundamentalism. Rather, they compromised with this communal politics and supported country's division on communal line. Even the task of democratization of the society, left unfulfilled by the Congress leaders, were not shouldered by the undivided CPI. The CPI(M) discovered progressive and radical cloak in the Congress led by Indira Gandhi and entered into a tacit understanding with her even during the Emergency time. It is because of this understanding that the CPI(M) did not join the legitimate mass movement led by Jaiprakash Narayan against the authoritarian rule of Indira Gandhi. Had this movement that swept the entire North India, been led by the Lefts, the course of events could have been different. But the CPI(M) traversed the other way. CPI was already in tow with Indira Gandhi. So the vacuum was filled up by the rightist Jana Sanghites. They usurped the entire credit of the movement, misdirected it to end in the vortex of electoral and thus gained the confidence of the ruling class then on the look out for an alternative to replace the discredited Congress. At the behest of the ruling class, all the rightist dispensations including communal Jana Sangh (later BJP) of Advani-Vajpayee merged into a single entity to form

the Janata Party. The CPI(M) leadership at that time could sense the ruling class backing of the Janata conglomerate in the Lok Sabha polls. They, overnight, became vociferous against Indira's autocracy and forged alliance with the rightist Janata Party in the elections. The Janata government installed at the Centre with Vajpayee-Advani as ministers, was hailed by the CPI(M) as a "friendly government". At that time, the CPI(M) took control of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation on the support of the BJP. The CPI(M)'s honeymoon with the BJP continued for a long period. When V. P. Singh deserted Rajiv Gandhi, both the BJP and the CPI(M) supported him to head a coalition government. Poor Calcuttans then could witness a rare sight of Jyoti Basu and Atal Behari holding aloft each others' hands in token of fraternity and friendship at a mass rally.

But then again occurred the 'compulsion' of changing gear. The CPI(M) regrouped with the Congress to oppose the BJP. Two anti-BJP coalitions, one headed by I. K. Gujaral and the other by Deve Gowda were in power because of the support from both the Congress and the CPI(M). When Jayalalitha withdrew support from the previous Vajpayee government, the CPI(M) General Secretary Harkishen Singh Surjeet took the lead to form a Congress led government with Sonia as the prime minister. But the initiative of the CPIM) leader fell through because Mulayam Singh Yadav was determined not to back Sonia Gandhi lest the Congress should infringe on Mulayam's vote-base in North India. But the CPI(M) leaders did not give up and continued maintaining cordial relation with Sonia. They fought both Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir elections combining with the Congress. The voters of

Bhavnagar constituency in Gujarat observed the CPI(M) candidate campaigning with Sonia's face embossed on their election material. Besides the Congress, the CPI(M)'s list of secularists included Mulayam, Laloo Prasad Yadav, Telugu Desham, Jayalalitha, Akali Dal and all sundry whomever the CPI(M) hoped of having a pact with in the vote politics. Unfortunately, many of its "secular" allies subsequently changed camp to join BJP-led NDA for pelf and power.

On the eve of the next parliamentary elections and some assembly polls, the Congress, who a couple of years back dubbed coalition politics as a 'passing phase' suddenly agreed to have a "working relationship" with other parties. Mulayam, too, shifted from anti-Sonia stance to discover in her "a true Indian who imbibed the spirit of our culture in totality". This is indicative of the fact that the ruling class desires them to combine. The CPI(M) leadership has taken note of this and to brighten their poll prospects and be nearer to the corridors of power, they are so keen to find a berth in this Congress-led combination.

## The CPI(M) maintains good relationship with the BJP government

But the CPI(M)'s politics of exigency has many other facets. Its anti-communal tirades do not mean a strained relationship with the BJP. Rather the relations between them is one of collusion and contention. The collusion springs from their common objective to stay in power by implementing the class-design of the ruling bourgeoisie, while the contention stems from the contradiction due to the competition for serving the ruling class better in the parliamentary politics. One would recollect that the CPI(M) government in West Bengal allowed Advani's Ratha Yatra, planned to foment communal passion, to pass through the district of Purulia and there was

*Contd. on page 7*

# USA India need each other in mutual interest

*Contd. from page 1*

approval of such an organization like the UN is to be given credence to then the aggression on Iraq in 1990, pushing lakhs of Iraqi children and people to death and unlimited sufferings in a most inhuman way subjecting them to 13 years of sanction and the barbarous attack on Afghanistan, killing thousands and destruction of that country by the US-UK imperialists et al should be supported. Even the present subjugation of Iraq under the jackboot of US-UK imperialists is to be supported! Because at the behest of US-UK occupiers, the UN Security Council has accepted the colonial occupation of Iraq by them.

After occupying Iraq, the US is now caught on a sticky wicket there. Contrary to their expectation that they would be able to install a puppet government there in no time with the help of anti-Saddam forces or elements, they have miserably failed to set up even any civil administration there at all not to speak of a government. Sunnis, Shias and Kurds out of their national spirit and patriotism are now unitedly up in arms against US-UK barbarity and killing of Iraqi nationals. Since the end of the war on May 1, US and British commands have been losing one soldier per day on the average at the hands of the Iraqi guerrillas. Such regular death of US and British soldiers is making the US and UK citizens restive casting shadow over the future election prospects of Bush and Blair. To manage the situation, the US is now frantically trying to get some big or powerful country beside them in Iraq to defend their interests. At the time of launching the attack, Spain and Portugal did not send troops although they supported it. Only Poland and Denmark deployed some force there. France, Russia and Germany, being the three major powers in Europe, openly opposed the war.

Even after the war US and UK had failed to involve them in 'stabilization' process in Iraq and it cannot be altogether ruled out that they secretly relish the present US-UK predicament in Iraq. Even Japan, being the most friendly ally in East Asia, did not effectively support the US aggression. It is clear, on the question of Iraq, contradiction among the imperialist camp has become more pronounced. Even Belgium has proposed to build up a power bloc within Europe parallel to NATO and the issue has also been discussed in the meeting of European Union. The more the crisis in US economy is being aggravated, the more the contradiction and rivalry between US dollar and Euro are getting sharpened. Outside Europe, Israel and India are the two major forces in South Asia and Middle East who can be considered viable allies to protect US interest in Arab world although they are not on the same footing. In the post-war critical Iraqi situation, Israel will not only not come to any use, on the contrary, its presence in Iraq would only deepen the US imbroglio. So, US needs such a state which has more or less acceptability in Arab world. In such a situation, the US is most eagerly looking to India. Washington knows Indian military presence in Iraq will help it earn legitimacy in invading Iraq to a great extent and of refurbishing its bloody image. US-UK occupiers think that Indian soldiers will be more acceptable to Iraqis. That is why, whereas the most reactionary Italy government is sending only 3000 soldiers and Poland and Spain will send 2300 troops each, USA asked India to send as many as 20,000 soldiers.

Though in the relation between USA and India, US pressure on India is dominant, there is also an element of counter pressure and bargaining. India is a powerful and well-organized bourgeois state and the ruling bourgeois

class is also sufficiently matured. And India does not want to meekly abide by US diktat always. Although its closeness is mainly with US imperialism, it also resorts to bargaining with the USA and try to extract more advantage from it creating counter pressure at the time of its needs. Even through attempts to establish good relation with the countries like China and Russia who have some sort of contradiction with the USA, India increases its power of bargaining. In the present context also India is following just this tactics.

On the Iraq issue, India is also trying to get another advantage from the US. The BJP now badly needs atleast a face-saving solution in Kashmir issue which they can use as a 'trump card' in the coming elections. USA is constantly trying to meddle in Kashmir issue which the Indian people and the rulers too do not like. But the US being the most powerful hegemonistic state in the world, the BJP government cannot altogether refuse to oblige it. Thus, however much the BJP leaders might cry hoarse that there is no place of third party intervention in Kashmir issue, the BJP government is actually seeking US help in working out a solution of Kashmir problem. But through such hobnobbing and appeasement, nasty hegemonistic interference of the US imperialists cannot be resisted. And such attempt by the government must be exposed and thwarted by the people of the country.

However, on the question of sending troops to Iraq, the BJP-led government is also facing some problems. Although the US is telling that the Indian troops will be used for 'stabilization duties' but actually they will be deployed for fighting the Iraqi freedom fighters and they will have to act under US command according to the Security Council resolution adopted on 22.5.2003. To say that the BJP leadership does not

know it is tantamount to belittling the intelligence and trickery of the BJP leaders. The inevitable result of troops sending will be that now the coffins of soldiers killed in action are being sent to US and Britain but later on coffins will be sent to India. But the BJP leaders will not be able to shed crocodile tears for them calling them martyrs. They will have to face intense protests and condemnation from the Indian masses which will adversely affect their poll prospects. The BJP leaders want to get also the assurance from the Congress that it will not capitalize the issue in the ensuing election. Here lies the significance of 'separate talk', 'consensus', etc. Earlier the Congress was found to be opposing any proposal of deployment of Indian troops in Iraq; but after the recent talk between Vajpayee and Sonia it is now asking for some clarifications and explanations from the government. The tone and tenor of its opposition are thus mellowed down. The question is, is the issue at all a matter of seeking explanations and clarification? Then why this somersault? The fact is that the Congress agrees with BJP on the issue but it does not want to take the first step to say whether it is for or against the deployment. It also does not want to take the risk of facing public wrath, particularly of the Muslim community before the ensuing elections. Moreover, like the BJP the Congress is also a trusted representative of the ruling bourgeoisie. As it serves the Indian monopoly capital, it also defends the interests of foreign imperialist capital in the interest of the Indian monopolists. Therefore, it cannot oppose outright the US proposal.

The BJP government cannot also overlook the possible reaction in the Arab world on this issue. For this reason, it sent out a team to feel the pulse and assess the situation in the Arab countries. Secondly, there is difference of opinion also

among the heads of administration and the military although such opposition has nothing to do with any principle or policy. They cannot forget the sordid experience gathered in the case of Sri Lanka and in other countries. For that matter, the BJP is waiting for an UN umbrella for face saving. But that too, will be merely a fig-leaf because the UN itself has most despicably accepted the occupation of Iraq by the US-UK invaders.

Our party has for long been analyzing to show that the Indian bourgeois state is aspiring to appear as a major regional power in South Asia. When the world was divided in two power blocs the main point of contradiction between the US and India was about according this recognition to the latter by the former. Now the Indian bourgeois state is trying its utmost to achieve this through more closeness with the US both economically and militarily. On the other hand, the US is trying to fulfil its interest by making India a junior partner in its imperialistic design in the international arena. The Indian monopolists through mutual understanding with the US are out to grab more share in international markets, share of booty from Iraq, that is, share in Iraqi oil trade and the reconstruction contracts. For increasing its military strength, India is trying to acquire the most modern and sophisticated weaponry with updated technology from the US and in return Pentagon is looking for access to Indian military bases.

Brojesh Mishra, the chief security adviser to the prime minister, who without being a cabinet member is more powerful than some minister, went, a few days back, on a visit to America. At that time, in a meeting of the most hawkist Zionists he said, it is most necessary for the three democracies of the world America, Israel and India to be united and it was hailed amidst wild applause. While visiting America,

*Contd. on page 6*

# WMD — criminal pretext to justify criminal act

It does not come as a surprise that the US-UK imperialists have been unable to unearth any weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq, still now. That WMD was just a pretext for waging war against Iraq — people throughout the world had expressed this long before. The real reasons behind the invasion and occupation have been the acute economic crisis the US is suffering from. Let us have a cursory glance at the bare facts.

The USA is running a staggering deficit economy accruing a debt of \$ 30 trillions — 3 times of GDP in 2002.

It has a trade deficit of \$ 500 billion, growing annually by 10 percent.

There has been drastic fall in federal revenues because of recession and huge tax cuts in a vain effort to fight recession.

Not to speak of crisis in civil industries and service sector in USA, even corporates such as Being, producing both civil and military planes, are scaling down production for lack of market.

The growing strength of Euro and relative stability of Euro-zone, despite crisis — vis-a-vis the dollar and US market — has started to challenge the dominance of dollar. Saddam's switch over to trade in oil in Euro, followed by some other countries, further threatened the predominance of US dollar.

These are some of the factors why the military-industrial complex desperately wanted a short war — the life support to keep the obsolete and rotting capitalist-imperialist system alive — to boost military production as well as to get US control over Iraqi oil — the lifeblood for modern industry and war machine. That leading persons in the Bush administration, including Bush, had moreover a personal interest in this war because of their close links with corporate interest, is well known.

How, in which way, the USA as the sole military superpower is taking advantage of its military clout, to go in for such a war and get an edge over its rivals for control of market and natural resources,

crushing any impediment to its interests under its military jackboot — has been demonstrated in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the former case, the Bush administration exploited to the hilt the 11 September attack, as a cover for its design in Afghanistan, while whipping up a wave of war phobia and national jingoism among the US people to get their sanction and divert people's attention from their growing problems.

After Afghanistan, when the Bush administration trained the gun on Iraq and raised a war cry against the 'threat' of Saddam's WMD, peace-loving and democratic-minded people all over the world fiercely opposed this warmongering, opining that Bush-Blair were out to grab Iraqi oil. Even years of most intrusive search for WMDs by different teams of UN weapons inspectors, had found nothing.

Faced with mounting criticism for the failure to produce even a shred of evidence even after the occupation of Iraq, all that Bush could do is to take recourse to most ludicrous and self-contradictory arguments. First he said that these could not be found in Iraq because Saddam had either destroyed them just on the eve of the war or given for safekeeping to another country. But later on in a more recent statement, he insists that WMDs will be found (even if they were not there, it seems!)

It is well known that the imperialists, especially the US imperialists, to justify and create a pretext for their hegemonist aggression, have resorted to interference into the internal affairs of other countries, manipulated problems and engineered

conflicts and wars, accompanied by an orchestrated misinformation campaign of the monopoly owned media, making it virtually impossible for the people to sift lies from truth, as happened in former Yugoslavia.

But in case of Iraq, the Bush administration didn't even have the flimsiest pretext for going to war. With nothing to substantiate their 'case' against Iraq the Bush-Blair took recourse to criminal fabrication of evidence as plea for a criminal war. Thus, a top State Department expert on chemical and biological weapons, for example, told congressional investigators how he had been pressured to change his analysis of intelligence on Iraq and other issues. He also specifically complained about being pressured on issues related to intelligence on Cuba, according to the *New York Times*, June 25 (quoted in *The Statesman*, 26.6.03). But pressure for fabrication of evidence was not only applied to the intelligence agencies, it extended to the UN Weapons Inspectors. The Chief UN Weapons Inspector, Hans Blix who himself had ignored a request by Condoleeza Rice, US National Security Advisor to hold Saddam in material breach of his obligations in the report to be placed before the UNSC, accused the USA of having bypassed him to lean on his inspectors, to produce more damning language in their reports. (*The Statesman* 15.6.03, and editorial on 2.6.03). These and a host of similar revelations have created such a storm of criticism, even in the USA, that more than one congressional committee were set up to launch investigations on this score there. In Britain where the overwhelming majority of the people had opposed a war against Iraq, so great was the furore created that the Blair administration was compelled to apologize for the infamous doctored dossier, with parts

plagiarized from a theses of an Iraqi student written 12 years ago, which Blair had flaunted as proof of the imminent threat of Saddam's WMD. As for Blair himself, driven into a corner, he found himself forced to making it an issue of faith saying he believed that the dossier was true. It has been commented in the press that this stand of his puts him on the same level as Osama bin Laden!

By waging war and ravaging a sovereign country on the basis of lies and fabricated evidence, ruining people's life and killing thousands to establish colonial rule, Bush-Blair have committed worst kind of war crimes and acts of terrorism! And Parliament both in USA and Britain surrendered its conscience by giving the stamp of approval for launching such an illegal and criminal war by trampling world opinion. What more glaring demonstration of the total bankruptcy of parliamentary democracy could there be? Are the MPs who now, like the Democrats in USA, are getting vocal and planning to raise the issue in the coming presidential elections, really doing so to uphold democratic norms and values and protect the interest of the people? The fact is they are merely out to reap parliamentary dividends in the coming parliamentary elections. For, had they not been motivated by naked subservience to the interest of capitalist-imperialist monopoly capital — rotten and anti-people to the core — they could never have given their approval for the war in the first place.

And it doesn't stop with Iraq: Iran, Syria, Korea are already under threat and Cuba under attack. A senior US official of the Bush administration has warned 'rogue states' of a similar fate as Iraq, saying "the USA will attempt to "roll back" proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the world — and may use force

to take away these deadly arsenals from rogue states." (*The Statesman*, June 6, 03). And making good their threat, the US imperialists have, among others, already created a stand off with Iran over its nuclear power plant, in an attempt to force their entry where the fundamentalist rulers had so long kept the USA out. Thus for the US imperialists, with British imperialists in tow, WMD or non-proliferation has become a convenient tool, to be used to establish their dictates and hegemony.

And the greatest irony is that actually the WMDs in the hands of the US imperialists constitute the greatest threat and endanger the world. The USA is the only country to actually use atomic bombs, and that too, when Japan was already defeated; that used the toxic chemical Agent Orange extensively in Vietnam leaving the environment horribly devastated and the affected people totally crippled for generations to come; again the USA has used depleted uranium in Iraq and former Yugoslavia, subjecting people and environment to deadly radiation damage which even its own forces are suffering from. It is not Iraq that has threatened the world with nuclear weapons, but the USA, which is already planning to make smaller nuclear bombs not as a deterrent but meant to be actually used. It is the USA that has put up and still threatens to put up those who defend their country against US fascist aggression and genocide as war criminals, as it has done with President of former Yugoslavia, for example. Truly, it is the Bush-Blair administration that stands today indicted before the world and poses a challenge before the peace-loving, democratic and progressive people of the world to actively campaign for putting Bush-Blair in the dock as war criminals. Otherwise they would else to remain helpless

*Contd. on page 6*

# Gujarat Earthquake Survey Report

Gujarat unit of SUCI had formed an 8-member survey team to ascertain the progress made during the last two years in reconstruction and rehabilitation of and developmental activities and infrastructure building in the districts of Bhuj, Bhachao, Anjar and Rapar devastated during the horrific earthquake of 26th January 2001. Releasing the survey report of the team, Comrade Dwarika Nath Rath, Secretary, Gujarat State Organizing Committee, SUCI, showed how criminally apathetic the Gujarat government has been towards the hapless earthquake victims. Although the government is

airing the hackneyed plea of paucity of fund, the facts speak otherwise. Out of 6000 crore of rupees allotted for rehabilitation in Kutch district alone, merely 228 crores have been spent so far. This urgent task was pushed back after the worst pogrom in 2002. The projects undertaken with the grants from Prime Minister's relief fund are yet to be completed. Only 17 out of 160 school buildings could so far be constructed from an allotment of Rs. 160 crore. While only 6% of the houses could be completed and mere patch work done in the rest 94%, the State Disaster Management Authority claims completion of 87%

of the job.

The Government announced tax holiday for any new industrial unit in Kutch and accordingly 400 proposals were received. The state government says to have approved 58 of such proposals while the survey report confirms the number to be merely 11. This obviously has triggered more unemployment in the region.

The Survey Report is a sad spectacle on the government's inaction and callousness in rehabilitating the hapless earthquake victims while the Modi government is unleashing a barrage of propaganda to cover its nasty face.

# Indian troops to Iraq

*Contd. from page 4*

Advani also said, it is these three 'democracies' which are the targets of terrorism. Thus India is strengthening military ties not only with the US but also with the out and out terrorist state of Israel. Indian military personnel are getting training in Israel for containing 'insurgency'. India has finalized to buy Falcon airborne radar system and is expecting to shortly acquire Arrow missile defence system from Israel.

But the question is, how could the BJP government proceed to this extent instead of summarily rejecting such a proposal insulting to the Indian people and their anti-imperialist heritage? The government has noticed that when people's protests against the US-UK invasion rocked the whole world the Left parties like the CPI(M), CPI, etc. did nothing against it except organizing some meetings and demonstrations. They did not even support the proposal of boycotting US and British

goods. Saddled in governmental power in West Bengal, these parties did not do it only in the interest of maintaining good relations with Indian and foreign capital, particularly of US capital and the ruling class of the Indian state did not fail to notice it. So even if Indian troops are deployed in Iraq, it goes without saying, these parties will do nothing meaningful except verbal protestations and taking up some formal agitational programmes to dupe the countrymen and their honest rank-and-file. In spite of it, it is clear that the BJP and the Indian state are stepping two steps forward and then one step back only out of fear of adverse public opinion inside and outside the country. But the possibility of ultimately accepting the US proposal by the BJP government still remains and for that matter we appeal to the people to remain sufficiently alert so that if the government sends troops to Iraq we can put up effective resistance against it.

# SUCI of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on Paragodu barrage dispute

Comrade K. Radhakrishna, Secretary, Karnataka State Committee and Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, Andhra Pradesh State Organizing Committee, SUCI, issued the following joint statement on June 6, 2003 over the issue of constructing a barrage across the river Chitravathi in Kolar District of Karnataka:

"We note with deep concern how both the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh state governments and the different political parties are issuing opposing statements in their respective states on the Paragodu barrage issue and creating confusions to incite regional sentiments and animosity among the people of both the states for petty political interests. This is adversely affecting the age-old friendly relations among the people of both the states.

One and all know that Chitravathi is a small tributary of Pennar River, which flows only during the rainy seasons. The meagre

water available in the river could be amicably distributed to cater to the drinking water and irrigation needs of a small section of the drought affected people of both the states.

It was not to be settled so. For both the S. M. Krishna led Congress government of Karnataka and the Chandrababu Naidu led Telugu Desam government of Andhra Pradesh are in frantic need of an issue to divert people's attention from their anti-people misrule in view of the assembly elections due in about a year's time. Therefore instead of resorting to a negotiated settlement of the dispute they are indulging in inciting passions on both sides of the border.

Otherwise who does not know that both the governments are vigorously pursuing the pro-monopoly, anti-people policies of globalization-liberalization-privatization bringing ruination to the lives of all

sections of working people? They have utterly neglected the drinking water as well as irrigation needs of the people for all these years of their rule. Is it very difficult to understand that their sole aim is not serving people's interests but earning rich electoral dividends by whipping up regional sentiments?

It is also to be noted that the other Parliamentary parties in both the states, BJP, JD, CPI, CPM, etc. are also indulging in the same design of their respective governments. The state units of these national parties too are practising regionalism and taking up mutually opposite stands.

The Karnataka State Committee and The Andhra Pradesh State Organizing Committee of SUCI hereby, with deep concern, caution the people of both the states against the conspiracy which will prove detrimental to their struggling unity, guarding which is of paramount importance in view of

# Criminal pretext

*Contd. from page 5*

onlookers when the US imperialists will move on to commit new war crimes with Britain in tow, and new criminals wars or acts of aggression.

And it is under these circumstances, that the US imperialists are calling on India to send troops to Iraq to do their dirty job of subjugating Iraqi people, whose fierce resistance to the oppressive US colonial rule is growing by the day.

building united movements against the attacks of both the central and the state governments. We further appeal to the people to cement their traditional unity to force both the governments to go for a negotiated settlement of the dispute to fulfil the drinking water and irrigation needs of people of both the states.

Their justified fight for liberty is causing growing casualties to the US occupying forces. By pressurizing India and dangling the carrot of postwar reconstruction the US imperialists are trying to induce India to send troops to collude in their criminal war and police a people that has always been India's friend. It is the duty of all well meaning and peace-loving people in our country to firmly oppose such a move and put pressure on the BJP-led government to desist from such disastrous course, on the one hand. On the other, the need of the hour is to develop a worldwide, well coordinated, organized, militant peace-movement with the demand to put Bush-Blair in the dock, to stem the growing onslaught of this imperialist aggression headed by USA.

## CPI(M)'s "fight" against Communalism

*Contd. from page 3*

immediately a savage attack on the minorities. Even Laloo had prevented Advani's Ratha from entering the state of Bihar. No wonder, that there is, of late, marked closeness and even unanimity between the Union Home Minister Mr Advani and West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee on many areas. They are appreciative of each others' position. The BJP is, of late, planfully bringing up the issues of infiltration of foreign nationals through the border and increasing espionage by the ISI of Pakistan to incite the Indian citizens against the minority community for fetching votes on crude Hindutva line. What is startling is that the CPI(M) leaders are also arguing essentially on the same line. Whatever may be the magnitude of such problems, the CPI(M) leadership, instead of working for scientific rational solutions, prefer to sing on the BJP chord to quietly peddle Hindutva sentiment in the border districts for brightening party's poll prospects there. To cite an example, chief minister Bhattacharjee has had no quarrels with Advani's rabid communal assessment that the Madrasas in West Bengal are hot beds of anti-national activities by the ISI of Pakistan.

### The CPI(M) leaders' non-secular public conduct

We also know that those desirous of taking on the communal and fundamental elements should reflect true secular character in their public conduct. Here also the CPI(M)'s record is dismal. In the last 26 years of uninterrupted CPI(M) rule in West Bengal, there is significant increase in the number of religious functions and institutions. The CPI(M) leaders including ministers are vying with the Congress, the BJP and other leaders in inaugurating religious festivals. Buddhadev Bhattacharjee, in a recent visit to a religious hermitage

impressed the priest by chanting gayatri mantra and referring in glowing terms the religious writings penned by his grandfather. These gestures are no doubt meant to satisfy the growing Hindu fanaticism with an eye on the elections.

And the biggest damage that the CPI(M) has done to the cause of the people is the policy of banishing democratic movement. Not only are they discouraging any kind of legitimate mass movement, they are, in the same tradition of the Congress and the BJP, ruthlessly crushing such movements so that the voice of dissent against the capitalist onslaughts is throttled much to the glee of the vested interest.

### Democratic mass movement — only way to fight communalism

The surreptitious policy of the Congress to use religion and its propagation of misconception about socialism, the vote-politics pursued by the CPI(M) and other pseudo-Lefts discarding the path of people's movement and long absence of left and democratic mass movement have helped the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to gain strength and rip asunder the very fabric of the nation.

From the above discussion, it is clear that in so far as inflicting a crushing decisive blow to the communalism of the RSS-BJP is concerned, it is futile to talk of an electoral defeat to the BJP, even if it is possible, through a hotch-potch combination in association with the Congress because the ideological base of communalism-fundamentalism remains in tact. Even if the BJP is ousted from power, it would have no difficulty to stage a comeback centring around the absence of any serious confrontation at the ideological plane.

The need of the hour is to develop genuine left and democratic movement on the edifice of higher ethics, morality and culture against the burning problems of life

begotten by the decadent exploitative capitalist system. Alongside there has to be a conducive fierce ideological-cultural struggle against the rotten doctrine of communalism-fundamentalism. Those who lead and organize these movements must also reflect true secular values in their social, political, personal and day to day conduct.

The CPI(M)'s anti-BJP rhetorics and current tilt towards the Congress are purely on account of election exigencies. Such mock-fight to communalism can not be secular either. We appeal to the rank and file of the CPI(M) to seriously ponder over these questions. Has not the time come for them to uphold true leftism by forcing their leadership shun the ruinous path of opportunistic election politics and build up democratic mass movement unitedly with the genuine left and democratic forces as the SUCI has been appealing for time and again ?

## Double Standard of the CPI(M) leadership

The CPI(M) led West Bengal government has increased the power tariff in the state to such an extent that it is now the highest in the country. Faced with massive public resentment, the CPI(M) leadership tried to absolve themselves saying that this hike is owing to the BJP-led central government's policy. The SUCI in the course of protracted movement involving the people against such unjust increase in electricity charges, showed that the so-called justification of the CPI(M) is totally economic with truth. Reportedly, it was with the approval of the CPI(M) leadership that the central government went ahead with its so-called "rationalization" of the power sector by imposing uniform tariff, privatization etc.

Even they are completely silent over the power of the state government under section 39 of the

Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998 to reject any recommendation of the Electricity Regulatory Commission .Not only this. The CPI(M) is ruthlessly crushing the legitimate democratic movement organized by the All Bengal Electricity Consumers' Association against this unjust power hike by letting loose armed police force including RAF and the CPI(M) stormtroopers on the peaceful agitators and protesting consumers. West Bengal State Secretary of the CPI(M) Anil Biswas, has recently said to the Press, "We can not tolerate vandalism. ....Such

movements are against the interests of the people. The state government will take stern action against the agitators". ( *Times of India*, 29 06 03). At the same time, he defended Goenka owned CESC Ltd. (erstwhile Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation) "The CESC has also increased the power tariff on the basis of the Central Act." (*ibid*) Though Biswas pretended opposition to the Central Act, his own ministerial colleague, the State Power Minister has said that the Act despite some positive features needs further amendments. In fact, the West Bengal government has passed a same kind of Bill in the State Assembly. The same CPI(M) has flayed the announcement of increase in electricity tariff by the Congress-led Delhi state government demanding rollback of the increase as well as the proposed privatisation of power distribution. This double-speak of the CPI(M) is nothing surprising. They feign opposition to anti-people policies in the states where they are not in power while following the same anti-people policies where they are in power. Their so-called opposition to the BJP or the Congress led governments is a sheer deception to exploit popular sentiment for making election gains.

## Murshidabad Bandh over tragic death of children

People of Murshidabad District, West Bengal observed a total 24 hour bandh on June 20 last. The District SUCI called the bandh as a culmination of a series of movements over the death of reportedly over 100 children, while countless other children have been affected in an unknown disease, spreading fast. One is reminded of a similar tragedy of children's death in a Calcutta children hospital, a few months back, which occurred due to lack of the minimum necessary medical infrastructure, totally inadequate number of doctors, nurse, health workers etc. proving the CPI(M) Front government's criminal callousness about people's health.

The Congress, after

reaching an understanding with the CPI(M) Chief Minister, withdrew its 12 hour bandh called earlier for the same day. But the SUCI, went on with the bandh as the discussion with the Chief Minister had not yielded anything positive towards fulfilling people's demands like removal of Chief Medical Officer of Health, introduction of Child Intensive Care Units in Subdivisional Hospitals, starting the subsidiary health centres, etc.

During the movement, preceding the bandh, police resorted to indiscriminate lathicharge and arrests. On the bandh day there, about 100 people including women were arrested.

The programme of the next phase of movement for health demands has been announced.

# Voice of justice wails in wilderness

Law is supposed to take its own course ! And it did indeed. But in the process, one could behold how the government and the state nakedly infringe on the judicial system to manipulate the justice. Best Bakery of Baroda was one of the five Gujarat carnage cases that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) wanted to be investigated. On the 1st March 2002, an irate mob led by the Sangh Parivar hoodlums, running amok to murder and maraud with gusto, stormed into the Bakery premises, looted everything and burnt alive twelve persons. Two others were missing and five grievously injured. All were reportedly staff of the Bakery owned by a person belonging to the minority community. This was the most gruesome of the hundreds of minority owned Bakery carnages in the state. Those hacked to death included three Hindus as well.

Based on the complaint of the owner's daughter, the lone survivor in the family, the Police, after much dilly dally, arrested 21 suspects and kept them in custody. But then the invisible hands swung into action to stage a legerdemain. Of the 120 witnesses listed by prosecution, 53 never made it to the witness box. 39 of the rest 73 witnesses turned hostile. Even the complainant backtracked by saying that she did

not know or could not recognize any of the suspects. In absence of evidence the court failed to book the culprits and had to exonerate them.

But while delivering the judgement, the honourable judge noted with visible consternation that the attack on the bakery and killing of twelve people by a violent mob, who also was involved in loot and arson, is proved beyond doubt. He squarely blamed the Police for dereliction of duty. The police, he said, arrived late, allowed the culprits to flee and then rounded up innocent people. The judge also accused the Police of fabricating evidence to "frame innocents". The police also came in for a severe rap over the knuckles from the judge for having failed to protect the witnesses who are allegedly intimidated by the Sangh Parivar to refrain from giving evidence to the Court. It may be added that such was apprehended by the NHRC who wanted specific assurance from the Police that the witnesses are not coerced to withdraw from testifying before the

court. A top police official ensured that the witnesses would depose before the court freely and fearlessly. But the strings were pulled from behind and all such assurances proved to be hoaxes.

According to the evidence gathered by a non-official enquiry commission, the Modi government deliberately allowed the rioters to rage. It is also alleged that the police was restrained by Modi to respond to the call for help and rescue by the victims. Hence it was but natural that after the court pronounced the verdict, the principal complainant was let out of the court by a BJP MLA, Madhu Srivastava, with a none so good record. She is not traceable since then. "Most of the minority members," said an analyst, "feel that testifying against the accused who are from the majority community will get them ill will and they would not be able to stay peacefully".

What a mockery of the judicial process in the much clamoured Indian democracy. The criminals

and anti-socials under the patronage of the ruling party would indulge in arson and killing. The Police would not intervene. The victims and the affected would receive no help from the Police. Eye-witnesses would be forced by the Police-ruling party leadership combine to retract. There would be evidence crunch and the judiciary would plead helplessness to book the culprits. A foolproof way of frustrating any legal attempt to unearth the truth. Most of such violences and ghastly acts are politically engineered by the ruling parties and shielding the guilty is very common in the post-incident "healing" process. Rightly observed one social scientist that Modi is a "textbook case of fascism".

Though the diabolic conspiracy to subvert the judicial system is far too naked in Modi's Gujarat, such is the experience of all in other states including the CPI(M) ruled West Bengal. Everywhere the voice of justice wails in the wilderness.

The Gujarat State Organizing Committee, SUCI, has strongly condemned the incident and called it a black chapter in the annals of the history of the Indian Penal system.

## Obscuring the Taj in Mayawati's Raj

Thank God the bell rang! And someone ensured that the pitch of the sound is powerful enough to pierce the otherwise dumb ears of the power that be. Otherwise, the pristine perfection of the

grieving Shah-jehan's love tribute, the exquisite "poetry in stone", the breathtaking spectacle of the 17th century marble mausoleum, and one of the seven wonders of the world, The Taj, would have been obscured and ruined. A marvel of India's sculptural brilliance, this historic monument has carved out a special space for the country in the world tourist map and in fact occupies the position of a mascot.

But for those crassly averacious flock who do not hesitate to barter away the country's sove-

reignty for a ransom, marring the beauty of a priceless art or obscuring it from the public view for a lucrative bout is just another act of minting money. Called the Taj Heritage, a 175 crore project complete with towering concrete blocks, amusement parks and shopping malls had been underway behind the fabled Tajmahal after diverting the entire Yamuna river through reclaiming device. Both Mayawati and the Central government initially pleaded ignorance about such a huge construction that was okayed way back in 1996 and that too at such a sensitive location. In fact, Mayawati pretended so big a surprise and anguish as to promptly order a probe into the matter. But now it is revealed that the project was discussed in detail in the presence of Mayawati who personally ensured its clearance. Accordingly, the Chief Secretary gave a nod to proceed. It does not require too much of brain material to understand that such a mega project could not have taken off without the clearance of and connivance with every official level. But for the UNESCO and the environmentalists raising a hue and cry, the Mayawati government would have quietly gone ahead. Incredible indeed! When poor people in the state are dying out of starvation,

cold wave and blistering heat; there is no electricity, no drinking water, non-availability of any health-care — the Chief Minister so unfazedly allows the government exchequer to be debited for such controversial and most uncalled for construction. The enthusiasts, expecting to harvest material benefit out of the project, tried to argue that such a multi-complex would enhance tourist attraction. Would anyone buy such a queer logic! May be, the Trinamool Congress Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation is encouraged as because he too is bent upon installing a 30-crore Kolkata-gate when the city has no system of garbage clearance, sewerage, prevention of waterlogging or any other civic amenities. No doubt, the BJP and its NDA partners are now on a construction-spree as because all these are "paying propositions" at the cost of the people. This once again unmasks the shameless face of the bourgeois politicians who speak of people's welfare and talk aloud of democracy but has no obligation or accountability to the people. But in Mayawati's case, there might have been a secret piece of advice from her master, the BJP to desecrate the Taj built by Babar's descendant Shahjehan and hence befitting to the Hindutva agenda of the Sangh Parivar.



*ABCEA volunteer grievously injured at ruthless attack by the police and CITU goons while protesting against hike in power tariff on 26.06.03 in Calcutta during bill boycott programme. A 24 hour total Bandh was observed in the area the following day.*

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE