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Elections in four Assemblies and By-Elections in Lok Sabha

SUCI's Call

Assembly elections in Bihar, Orissa, Haryana and Manipur together with by-elections to Lok Sabha and Assembly seats are going to be held in February 2000.

Already people have experienced the anti-people rule of 13 month-old BJP-led coalition central Government and have also witnessed its deceptive character as the caretaker government when it brought steep hike in diesel and kerosene prices just before the formation of the new Parliament. Again the declaration of the present BJP-led NDA Government to take harsher economic measures immediately after being sworn in gave clear indication of how in its bid to serve the interest of the crisis-ridden capitalist class it will not hesitate to put any amount of financial burden on the already burdened toiling millions of our country. Its feverish haste in passing the utterly anti-people IRA and the Patent Bill immediately after assuming power leaves no room for doubt that to serve the interest of Indian monopoly it will not hesitate even to expose the country's people to the ruthless exploitation of the giant multinational companies. Even a lay man cannot fail to see that the so-called economic reforms like globalization, liberalization, privatization, etc. which were introduced by the Congress government against the anti-imperialist tradition of our country, are being pursued by the BJP-led NDA government more vigorously and effectively. Vajpayee government's talk of the necessity for harsher economic measures is

nothing but an attempt to prepare mind of the people for another budgetary attack and further stringent measures. But since such out and out anti-people policies cannot but develop grievances and ultimately movements of different sections of the toiling people, the BJP-led NDA government has already planned to bring back acts like the super TADA to ruthlessly throttle people's hard won democratic rights and all democratic mass movements and install a police raj.

The autocratic as also deceptive role of the NDA Government against the firm and bold stand of the country's striking Port and Dock employees and workers and the adamant stand of the BJP-led UP Government against the striking employees and workers of the UP State Electricity Board have exposed the BJP's real attitude towards the legitimate struggles of the people.

Not only this — the BJP-led NDA Government is conspiring to bring about an attack also on education and culture. If its attempt to communalise education and to distort the country's history becomes successful then this will create the fertile ground for growth of fascism plunging the country into total darkness. Not only the central government but also the state governments — whether run by the Congress, or by the BJP-combines or even by the CPI(M) led Left Fronts — are following anti-people policies in all fields. The most irresponsible and callous attitude of the corrupt Congress government of

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Events in Seattle And After

The ministerial conference of WTO ended in a fiasco in Seattle. There was confusion both within and outside the venue of the conference. This conference was marked by violent demonstrations by an odd combination of protesters with widely varying motives. But the protesters were all united against the WTO.

All ports in the USA were paralysed by strikes called by the dock workers in protest against the WTO. The protests spilled over to the other side of the Atlantic. A massive protest demonstration was organised in London against the privatisation of railways leading to a big accident in London suburb because of slackening of safety norms with profit motive. The protesters converged in Seattle with a rare show of solidarity. They included those with genuine anti-imperialist leanings and they stood by the people of the less developed countries in their struggle against WTO and the powerful multinational

corporations. There were groups among the protesters whose objective was to wrest concessions within the ambit of WTO and there were spokesmen from the protectionist "trade" unions of the USA like AFL (American Federation of Labour), COL (Congress of Labour) which wanted measures to protect the US industries from competition from the less developed countries.

The leadership of these trade unions is controlled by the agents of the US ruling class having still a big support from the workers. This leadership is trying to divert the attention of the workers by making use of their genuine sense of job insecurity and redundancy from the real cause i.e. the US capitalist system. This leadership is showing to them that the cause of their redundancy lies in cheap labour, child labour and women labour of the countries of Asia, Africa,

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee On Repression on Striking Workers of Port & Dock, UPSEB

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement on 19.1.2000 :

We strongly condemn deployment of armed forces to break down the morale of the striking dock & port workers of the country and power plant workers of UP, which again unmasks the fascist face of the BJP-led Government at the Centre and in the state.

We demand immediate withdrawal of armed forces and acceptance of the legitimate demands of the striking workers.

On Move for Constitutional Amendment towards Presidential Government

Strongly condemning the NDA government's moves to amend the Constitution, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on 31st January said :

"The Vajpayee government's hasty moves for amending the Constitution for introducing the presidential form of government, allegedly to ensure stability of government, even in the face of strong dissension of the President himself, is a most sinister portent. This can, however, mitigate in no way the irremediable economic crisis which has produced the present political instability.

"We urge all democratic minded people of the country to resist at all costs this ulterior BJP design of destroying even the modicum of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, sweepingly arming the bureaucracy against democratic movements, legitimising with 'Constitutional Sanction' anti-people power-greedy regimes and taking one more step towards administrative fascism."

Against Privatisation of Airports

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, issued the following statement on 14.1.2000 :

We strongly protest against the decision of the BJP-led government to lease out five major airports to the private sector. This perfectly is in correspondence with its avowed policy of privatisation. It will virtually make the public vulnerable at the hands of the corporate houses.

We call upon all sections of the public to raise voice of protest against such anti-people policy of the BJP-led government.

Sufferings in Iraq under US sanctions :

An Insider's View

On December 17th, the UN Security Council voted yet again to continue economic sanctions on Iraq in addition to sending back UN arms inspectors into Iraq.

In the face of mounting criticism of the imperialist onslaught on the Iraqi people, the United States and the United Kingdom made a face-saving offer to "consider suspension of sanctions" for 120-day period if the arms inspectors certify that Iraq has cooperated "in all respects". The Council Resolution 1284 moved by the US and UK also conceded removal of a ceiling of US \$5.26 billion on six-monthly Iraqi oil sales, the proceeds of which are used for humanitarian programmes. As in the Gulf War and thereafter, China abdicated from its internationalist obligations by not exercising its veto power against the imperialist move; instead it abstained. Russia, Malaysia, China and France abstained, asking for more relief from sanctions. The UK and US have been shaken by the unexpected abstention of France, their erstwhile Gulf War ally; a development indicative of the growing isolation of the American and British imperialists. Expectedly, Iraq rejected the Resolution as falling short of its demand for complete lifting of the UN sanctions. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz accused the Resolution of misleading public opinion as even the temporary suspension of sanctions was based on Iraq's compliance with "a series of complicated, long and vague conditions."

Background to imperialist-imposed sanctions

It may be recalled that in December 1998, the Anglo-American imperialist combine launched a desperate attack on Iraq in the face of desertion by their erstwhile allies and hostile international public opinion. As per the earlier Resolution of the Security Council, sanctions on Iraq would be lifted if the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) certified that Iraq had destroyed its entire stock of so-called 'weapons of mass destruction'. Reports of collusion between UNSCOM chief Richard Butler and the US imperialists began circulating in the international media even as UNSCOM precipitated artificial crisis with the Iraqi government by wanting to inspect prestigious national buildings and national security establishments. No self-respecting sovereign government would allow this on their soil. Unable to prove the existence of any weapons of mass destruction, UNSCOM came under increasing international pressure to give a positive report. The Anglo-American combine then launched their attack on spurious grounds of Iraqi non-cooperation. This led Iraq to block UNSCOM operations, thereby giving the US and UK the alibi to veto any proposal in the Security Council to lift sanctions. The present Resolution paves the way for more conflicts with Iraq as it has voted to send in arms inspectors once again. All along, low-intensity conflict has continued with Anglo-American aircraft enforcing a wholly illegal no-fly zone in the North and South of Iraq. Several thousand tons of bombs have been dropped in these sporadic attacks; just a few days ago, a village primary school was bombed.

Comprehensive economic sanctions were imposed by the United Nations on Iraq in 1990 after its invasion of Kuwait. Even after the Gulf War, the imperialists led by the US have repeatedly voted in the Security Council to keep sanctions in

place. The United Nations has thus been subverted to serve the imperialist policy of crippling the Iraqi people so that it will build internal political pressure for a change of regime. In order to ensure that the new regime is one friendly to US imperialist interests, the US has been openly funding opposition groups in Iraq through the Iraq Liberation Act passed by its Congress, but with little success so far.

The effect of sanctions: an insider's view

What has been the effect of the ten-year long economic sanctions on the Iraqi people? Iraqi government sources have been periodically giving out grim statistics, but the imperialists have always sought to discredit these as exaggerated and motivated. Recently, a highly placed UN official stationed in Iraq gave a very revealing talk on the effect of sanctions. The details we give below are drawn from this impeccable source which even the imperialists will be hard put to discredit.

Iraq has a population of 22 million and is divided into 18 governorates. In the northern region, the population is predominantly Kurdish. The area is under *de facto* control of two rival political groups — one aligned with Iran and the Kurdistan People's Party (PKK), the other aligned with Iraq and Turkey. In 1996, the imperialist powers agreed to the oil-for-food agreement in view of the steadily deteriorating human condition in Iraq. Under the agreement, the UN Security Council meets every six months to decide on the amount of oil that Iraq can sell. 13% of the revenue is allotted to the northern Kurdish area in proportion to the population. The UN is directly responsible for administration of social programmes out of oil revenue in the northern areas. From the remaining portion of the revenue, almost 37% go towards war reparations, UN overheads, escrow account management and financing UNSCOM operations. (The International Action Centre has reported that, last June, the UN awarded almost \$2.8 billion to several oil companies, including more than \$500 million to a subsidiary of Texaco Inc., for equipment and facilities that were damaged when the US led a 43-day war against Iraq in 1991. Many millions have gone to Kuwait, whose ruling royal family is one of the biggest customers of American weapons-manufacturing firms). Thus South Central Iraq starts with a handicap in the utilisation of oil revenues for humanitarian programmes. While the programmes are run by the Iraqi government, there is close supervision by the UN agencies. Special customs appointed by the UN certify that the oil revenues have been fully utilised to purchase goods from external suppliers and that these goods have entered Iraq. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) report to the Sanctions Committee of the Security Council whether the procured goods are reaching the populace. According to our UN source, the oil-for-food programme is based on mistrust and is therefore highly centralised and inefficient.

Prior to 1990, 70% of Iraq's national income was drawn from oil exports. Economic and social indicators were almost of the standard of a developed country due to systematic government

investment. However, there was heavy reliance on imports of sophisticated technology even for replacements of worn-out parts in the infrastructure sector. In the

health sector, the emphasis was on import-dependent curative medicine rather than on inculcating healthy and hygienic habits. Thus there was very little coping capacity to contend with external shocks. Coping mechanisms had to be learnt after the Gulf War. After the War, the gross domestic product fell by 80%. Under the sanctions conditions, the Iraqi government is forbidden from any domestic procurement. Thus, even though wheat has traditionally been produced by Iraqi farmers, it has to be perforce procured from outside. Hence there is minimal economic activity in the country and almost the entire population is on dole. In the Northern region, there are further complications due to conflicts between the two rival groups. These conflicts have generated 3,50,000 internal refugees.

UNICEF conducted a survey of a sample of 40,000 households in Iraq last August. Some of the findings are shattering. Under-5 mortality has increased from 56 per thousand in 1984-89 to 131 per thousand in 1994-99. In absolute numbers, half a million additional children have died as a consequence of the sanctions. In all, 1.7 million people are estimated to have died as a result of sanctions particularly the elderly and the chronically ill, apart from infants and children. The infant mortality rate has jumped from 47 per thousand in 1984-89 to 108 per thousand in 1994-99. In contrast, in the northern areas there has been a sharp decline in infant mortality after an initial sharp increase. It rose from 82 per thousand in 1984-89 to 88 per thousand in 1989-94 and then fell to 69 per thousand in 1994-99. The trend of initial sharp deterioration is also to be found in the data for South Central Iraq since the oil-for-food programme was allowed only in 1996. But after 1996 the dramatic improvement in the northern areas in spite of internal strife is because of the higher per capita allocation and direct UN implementation with no imperialist interference. In the South-Centre, a major chunk of the revenue goes towards reparations, UN overheads, UNSCOM expenditure etc. In addition, the imperialist-dictated sanctions have ridiculous conditions attached. For example, Iraqi professors of medicine are not permitted to subscribe to foreign medical journals, lest they should use the knowledge for preparation of biological weapons! Chlorine, used extensively for water purification is regarded as a dual-use item, capable of being used in the manufacture of chemical weapons. Hence UNICEF has a team of 25 persons to identify every cylinder of chlorine in the country with an identification number and to track its movement. This tight control of chlorine is taking place in a country that is forced to pump 40% of its untreated sewage right back into the rivers, which are the main drinking water sources. Though water is available in abundance, due to the predominantly flat terrain it has to be pumped. The debate within the UN is whether investment in electricity generation and transmission should be treated as economic development or humanitarian relief! According to the WHO, in 1989-90, 96 per cent of the population in Iraq had access to clean drinking water. By 1994, it had dropped to 45 per cent.

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Economic Sanctions On Iraq

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About 80% of diseases in Iraq originate in contaminated water. Water contaminated from the capital city of Baghdad with far under the required amount of chlorine must travel through pipes damaged heavily during the war and left unrepaired because the sanctions prohibit the import of the necessary parts and equipment. Again, after the imperialist attack last December, a number of procured items like batteries, tyres and even certain food items have been frozen as dual-use items. Thus the largest Resolution to lift the ceiling on oil exports can also be effectively undercut by the imperialists using the "dual use" label.

It is not surprising therefore that UNICEF survey shows a resurgence of polio and a steep increase in the incidence of typhoid, viral hepatitis and measles. In a country where education was once free up to any level, the enrolment rate today has dropped to 70% and dropout rate is climbing. Due to lack of infrastructure, many schools are now working three shifts. Our UN source said that beyond the issues of basic survival there was the total impact of the sanctions regime on an entire generation that has grown up under it. There is a sense of complete hopelessness and a 135% increase in the rate of child psychiatric disorders. While Iraq still remains a secular state with freedom of religion, more and more new mosques are springing up. More and more young persons are turning to religion for solace and are vulnerable to exploitation by fundamentalists, who are already at work.

Giving examples of how the imperialist powers were subverting the UN system, our UN source said that only 2 out of 7 Humanitarian Co-ordinators in Iraq had been allowed to complete their six-month terms. One had resigned in disgust and four had been forced to quit by either the US or the UK. The imperialist powers resisted the presentation of the results of the UNICEF survey and they were publicised only when Russia chaired the Security Council. The Rapporteur of the UN Special Commissioner for Human Rights has been repeatedly disallowed to visit Iraq. The WHO has been repeatedly prevented from carrying out investigations into the high incidence of congenital deformities and childhood cancers reported by the

Memorial Meeting of Valiant Uncompromising Freedom Fighter, Durga Devi Bohra at Jabalpur

A memorial meeting to pay homage to the valiant uncompromising freedom fighter Smt. Durga Devi Bohra, popularly known by the name Durga Vabi was organised by AIMSS, Jabalpur on 9.1.2000 at D.B. Club Hall, G.C.F. Estate, Jabalpur.

Prof. Smt. Veena Mehta, HOD of Political Science, Rani Durgavati University, Smt. Sadhana Upadhaya, a founder member of a very active woman organisation of the city, Triveni Parishad Smt. Ratra Ozha, President, Nava Shakti Nari Parishad, JBP and Shri U. P. Biswas, Convenor, Save Education Committee, Jabalpur addressed the meeting attended by a good number of women and men. The meeting was presided over by Comrade Neelima Roy and proceedings were conducted by Comrade Chandra Patra.

Iraqi Government. It is well known that the US extensively used radioactive depleted uranium shells on the South Centre of Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. Former US Attorney General Ramsay Clark quotes a figure of 900 tonnes of DU shells still present in the Iraqi environment.

Build up anti-imperialist public opinion

It is true that in the long run the US and UK will not be able to maintain the sanctions regime on Iraq. There is already a lot of resistance from their erstwhile Gulf War allies who have lost access both to Iraqi oil and the Iraqi market as a result of the sanctions regime. For its part, the Iraqi Government is doing its best to widen the contradictions among the imperialists and between the imperialists and others. With the oil revenue from the oil-for-food programme, Iraq is placing procurement orders only with countries it deems friendly and a number of imperialist allies of the US are rueing the loss of even this limited opportunity in a period of global recession. But in the short term, the economic and military hegemony of the US holds sway. There are rumbles of protest among the American public — for example, the Iraq Sanctions Challenge led by former US Attorney-General Ramsay Clark has collected two consignments of medicine from the American public and taken them to Iraq. Hope for an early end to the long tribulations of the Iraqi people hinges on a worldwide mobilization of public opinion against the murderous imperialist policy of sanctions. Anti-imperialist forces worldwide must pool their strength towards such a unified campaign.

The need for a worldwide anti-imperialist peace movement has never been greater. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, the forces of imperialism, reaction and war have temporarily gained the upper hand. The propaganda of prospects of peace in a world devoid of confrontation between the imperialist and socialist camps has been belied by the increasing instances of local and partial wars. Examples of direct and brazen armed intervention by the imperialists have also multiplied. The reasons for these are very clear. Despite all appearances, the unity among the imperialist nations is only a simulated one; vicious competition for markets underlies it. This has manifested itself in the failure of managed trade efforts attempted under the rubric of the WTO due to fierce competition between the US, the EU and Japan, not only for shares of each others' markets, but also for shares in developing country markets. In the absence of conventional markets, imperialists and capitalists worldwide have developed their military markets i.e. militarised their economies for a temporary and artificial respite from the crisis of market availability. Militarisation, vicious competition and a thirst for markets finds its natural outlet in war. The long war on Iraq since 1990 demonstrates two things: one, the imperialist countries *en bloc* will attack any sovereign developing country which does not open up its market sufficiently to imperialist control. It must be remembered that nationalist army officers in Iraq seized political power in 1958 and wrested control of oil-wells from American and British multinationals. Iraq then went on to build a modern economy based on oil revenues, that was relatively independent of imperialist control. In the late eighties Saddam Hussain also proposed the development of a pan-

Arabian banking system at a time when Middle East oil revenues were being invested mainly in imperialist controlled banks. Two, the war against Iraq is equally a manifestation of inter-imperialist rivalry. The capture of vital raw materials and denial of the same to their rivals are a necessity for the imperialists. Indeed, the basic thrust of US imperialist policy on Iraq has been to deny its rivals France and Russia's commercial access to high-quality Iraqi oil. If France has not openly and completely revolted so far, it is only because of the military and economic hegemony of the US imperialists. And Russia is in economic shambles, dependent on World Bank and imperialist bailouts. Also, if Iraq were to sell its full complement of oil, global oil prices would be depressed, adversely affecting the profits of Anglo-American oil MNCs. This too was an important factor in the continued embargo on Iraq's oil. The latest Security Council Resolution 1284 gives a deceptive appearance that the oil embargo has been removed. Iraq's petroleum infrastructure was severely damaged in the Gulf War. Till now, the UN had allowed only \$300 million from the \$5.26 billion of oil revenue every six months to be reinvested in the petroleum sector. Resolution 1284 promises lifting of this ceiling if the Security Council allows it after a comprehensive review of Iraq's oil sector. The simulated unity of the Gulf War allies has begun to fall apart as some of them have also begun to assert that they stand to lose more by way of loss of the Iraqi market due to the continued imposition of sanctions.

The same logic of capturing vital mineral resources and a strategic outpost in Southern Europe by the US to thwart its imperialist rivals like Russia and Germany, underlay the attack on Yugoslavia by US-dominated NATO. This has sown the seeds for a wider conflict; already the European imperialists have begun serious attempts of the organisation of a pan-European army to counter US military dominance in Europe.

All these developments point to the urgent necessity to develop co-ordinated, broad, anti-imperialist peace movements with genuine communists at their core. Even in Stalin's time, when a socialist camp existed, he had stressed on a peace movement that "confines itself to the democratic aim of preserving peace". Today, in the absence of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union, the forces of aggression and reaction have been strengthened. The need for a peace movement encompassing patriotic, peace-minded people with serious anti-imperialist feeling has only intensified. The situation obtaining in India today is that the national bourgeoisie under the ruling BJP is forging closer ties with the American imperialists even as it has begun a domestic campaign of militarisation of the economy, communalisation of politics and society, and intensification of liberalisation and privatisation. The unholy alliance of the domestic bourgeoisie with the US imperialists is a threat to the Indian working class as well as the people of neighbouring countries over whom the Indian bourgeoisie seeks to establish hegemony as a regional superpower. We will have to co-ordinate our campaign of resistance against the depredations of the domestic bourgeoisie with a campaign against the various forms of attack of the imperialists. A widely publicised campaign about the inhuman deeds of the US imperialists in Iraq is necessary to alert the Indian people about the vicious character of the US imperialism whose shadow has begun darkening over the subcontinent.

(Free translation of article in 'Sarbahara Dristikon', published in Delhi)

WTO : Economic Terrorism on Third World

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and Latin America. This leadership is trying to create a division between the workers of the developed and of the developing capitalist countries.

But despite this, one aspect was common among them all, and that is, an acute sense of job insecurity as a result of the implementation of the WTO measures. The attempts to create a rift between the workers of the developed and developing capitalist countries notwithstanding, the spirit of international solidarity was marked in the speeches of labour leaders of different countries. The Head of the US Longshoremen's Union said in his address : "There will be no business as usual today. (We are) demonstrating to the corporate CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) that the global economy will not run without the consent of the workers everywhere... The interest of the working people transcends international boundaries." This spirit of international solidarity was repeated by a South African labour leader when he said : "Freedom is under a new threat today, the threat of corporate greed... a new form of terrorism led by the WTO, a new form of colonialism led by globalisation...(They are) attempting to throw a new wedge between workers of the developed and workers of the developing countries." (Source : EPW, 17-24 Dec '99)

Militant protest by working people

More than 50,000 protesters marched, sang, shouted slogans and made speeches. The International was sung in three languages. The police of the Clinton administration pounced upon the protesters with ferocity. They used batons, bullets, grenades, tear gas shells, irritant chemical weapons and unconventional gases medically affecting the demonstrators. The arrested persons were beaten and tortured in jails by throwing all canons of human rights to the wind. Finally, emergency was clamped in Seattle.

Cause of collapse of Seattle talks

While this was the scene outside the venue of the conference, the picture inside was equally stormy. The Seattle Conference was convened to finalise the agenda for the next round of talk, euphemistically called the millennium round, to be held in Geneva. The Uruguay Round of talks, concluded in Marakash, had many unresolved issues, on which the Uruguay Round itself mandated further negotiation. These include critical issues like agriculture, financial services, maritime services and infotech services. Besides, some of the existing agreements need to be further reviewed in the light of the experience in implementing them during the last five years. The developed capitalist-imperialist countries have not opened up their markets to the extent they are required to though the less developed capitalist countries have opened up their markets to a large extent and fulfilled the commitment of WTO provisions to a large measure. Many developed capitalist-imperialist countries have failed to implement the Special and Differential (S&D) treatment clause as incorporated in the GATT agreement. The third world countries were opposing a new round of talk with new agenda, and insisting on discussions on the built-in agenda of the Uruguay Round as also on the issues like protectionist measures adopted by the developed capitalist countries and their failure to implement S&D treatment clause. These countries insisted that these questions should be addressed first

before venturing into a new round of negotiations with newer agenda. The developed capitalist-imperialist countries, on the other hand, insisted that the talks should go beyond the immediate agenda and venture into new pastures with agenda like labour and environment standards, multilateral agreement on investment(MAI), e-commerce, etc. Because, they wanted the programme of liberalisation to be carried further and force open fresh areas of the market of the developing countries. The developed and the developing capitalist countries took an unbending stand on their respective position, and thus there was a stalemate in Seattle.

Again, on the question of opening up of the agricultural sector, EU and Japan, having a highly protected agriculture which is given large export subsidies and extremely restricted import of agricultural goods, strongly resisted the pressure of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, joined by some other less developed capitalist countries, in opening up their market. The EU and Japan raised the question of hidden subsidies to the extent of 40% of the cost of agricultural products in the USA. This issue also caused an impasse in Seattle.

Again Japan, joined by countries like India, South Korea, Taiwan and others, raised the question of imposition of anti-dumping laws by the USA and the EU. This question also could not be resolved in Seattle. All these irreconcilable contradiction between the developed and the developing capitalist countries, the EU and Japan versus the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan versus the USA and the EU, created a complete deadlock in Seattle, and thus the conference which started without a formal opening, ended without a formal declaration. The US Trade Secretary, Charlene Barshefsky, called a press conference to reveal the collapse of the talks.

The collapse of the Seattle talks must be viewed in the background of the severe economic crisis confronting world capitalism today. After the fall of the socialist system the bourgeois ideologues cherished the fond hope that the crisis of capitalism can be contained by WTO arrangement. But the inexorable law of history asserts and reasserts itself. Every attempt to stave off the crisis leads to deeper crisis. WTO measures are nothing but an attempt to limit the internal conflict among the advanced capitalist countries to a manageable extent and to build up a single global capitalist market at the cost of the developing countries. But that this attempt is bound to fail in the background of the severe crisis of world capitalism was clearly analyzed at the Cuttack Plenum of our party in 1994 and it was conclusively stated: "...world capitalism-imperialism has plunged into an unprecedented economic crisis. It will be naive to hope that the present WTO arrangement will cure this cancerous disease." The breakdown of Seattle talks proves to the hilt the correctness of the analysis of our party at the Cuttack Plenum.

Severe economic crisis of world capitalism

Now let us have a glimpse into the nature of crisis of world capitalism. In the developed capitalist countries like the USA, EU and Japan, the aggressive use of hi-tech has rendered a huge workforce surplus. Moreover, because of the law of maximum profit operating in the capitalist economy, mass production is replaced by high

valued production in lesser volumes catering to the needs of the corporate sectors. This also renders a huge workforce surplus.

The introduction of hi-tech in production process means less manpower and production is based on capital intensive industries having dearer capital. Thus the more the introduction of hi-tech the more the capital cost. So the market for the finished product having high cost of production becomes more uncertain because of uncertainty in the rate of return. So the necessity of grabbing market anyhow becomes all the more intense. Moreover, surplus capital is, not invested in productive purpose but it is diverted to speculation. Again, the MNCs of these countries are investing in third world countries to exploit cheap labour and cheap raw material there. Thus the workers of the metropolitan capitalist countries are finding jobs elusive. The US MNCs are doing business by basing their productive units in other countries. 36% of the employees of these MNCs belong to the developing capitalist countries. It is largely because of the activities of these MNCs that the environment of the third world countries is getting polluted. The Bhopal Gas tragedy is a glaring example of this. So these MNCs are not raising the question of labour and environment standard. It is the non-MNC monopolists who, being squeezed out by the MNCs, are actually raising the issues of the labour and environment standard. The contradiction between the MNCs and non-MNC monopolists have sharpened to a great extent. Again the advanced capitalist countries have become scared by the future potential of the developing capitalist countries which are trying to storm the citadel of their hitherto protected market.

During the long period after the Second World War there has been a marked change in the pattern of merchandise exports of the developing capitalist countries. Traditional exports of these countries were agricultural products, minerals and raw materials for industries. But during the last 30 years there has been a marked change towards manufactured goods that increased the percentage of their total export from 4 percent to 24 percent from 1963 to 1997. The developed capitalist countries being scared by the potential of competition from countries like China, Hongkong, Taiwan and newly industrialized economies of South East Asia, are resorting to more and more protectionism in various forms to guard their domestic markets. The gospel of free trade on the basis of multilateralism trumpeted so much in GATT 1994 ended in such a paradox. It is not without reason that Mr Sutherland, the former Secretary General of GATT, said after the formation of the WTO that it was not the end but the beginning of trade war in the world capitalist market.

Thus today we find division between the US and EU and Japan almost on all issues barring their unity in protecting their domestic markets from the competition from developing countries. These developed capitalist countries are united in forcing open the market of the less developed countries. The USA and the EU are slapping anti-dumping duty on textiles, leather and steel from India. Thus iniquitous market access benefits flowed from Uruguay Round. The developing countries including India reduced tariff unilaterally and even way below promised ceiling as per the terms of the Uruguay Round, but the developed capitalist

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Growing Fiscal Attack on People

While analysing the Central Budget 1999-2000 we termed it a budget of deception and price rise. Deceptions abounded in accounting jugglery by showing small savings deposits of the public at the credit side etc., in empty promises devoid of requisite budgetary provision for poverty amelioration, distribution of food grains to the village poor at nominal price, primary school in every village, providing one crore jobs per year to the jobless, promises of bringing down budget deficit and debt burden. Let alone other routine development of roads, railways, hospitals, schools and colleges, public health system what has been the fate of the specific tall promises is quite apparent to the people from their practical experience but what is alarmingly noteworthy is the dismal picture of the fiscal position of the government and in its wake the darker days ahead for the common people.

The present scenario

Last year in his budget speech the Union Finance Minister had to admit that the country's economy was in a bad shape — high fiscal and revenue deficit, ever widening trade deficit, alarmingly high foreign and internal debt, drainage of revenue income towards debt servicing at an exorbitant proportion, intense unemployment, fall in GDP growth rate and industrial production, threatening the economy seriously. And in the same breath he declared 'Second Generation Reform' as a panacea to all these evils. Now, on the eve of his next budget for 2000-2001, it is time to see what paid his much vaunted intensified reform. In last year's budget the Finance Minister projected a fiscal deficit of Rs.79,955 crore and revenue deficit of Rs.54,147 crore estimated at 5.6 per cent of GDP. At that time the Finance Ministry in its budget proposal estimated the rate of growth of revenue income at about 20 per cent. But what is the position in mid-October 1999? According to the PNB Gilts, which deals in government utilities, "Expenditure growing at 17% compared with the targeted 12.2% and tax revenue rising by 13.3% with required rate of 18.9% the fiscal deficit can only go haywire ... According to high level Ministry officials, the revenue shortfall could be as high as Rs.18,000 crore with non-Plan expenditure going up to Rs.6000 crore in 1999-2000" (*The Statesman*, 14.10.99). The position is more clear according to the Managing Director of World Economic Forum's estimate that total deficit of the country will cross 9% of the GDP (*Ibid* 7.12.99) whereas the target was 4.4% of the GDP — the total amount of deficit, according to the Confederation of Indian Industries estimate being as much Rs.1,25,000 crore (if Rs.25,000 crore on account of small savings is included) (*Ibid*, 20.1.2000). Reflecting this huge expenditure over-run the Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha already raised supplementary demand for grant seeking approval of net cash outgo of Rs 14,323.29 crore, one of the highest in recent years, in the Lok Sabha on 8.12.99. Coupled with this unprecedented fiscal deficit is the awesome debt burden. Already the country is carrying a debt burden of at least Rs 10 lakh crore, internal and external combined. Over and above, there is this year's current gross borrowing of Rs 89,130 crore as on 15 January,

2000, and as per estimate by PNB Gilts. (*Ibid*, 20.1.2000). And the government is spending near about 50% of its total revenue on debt servicing — only the interest payment being around Rs 90,000 crore! What else is called a debt trap?

Pro-capitalist policies and activities

This debt trap is the net result of the dangerous New Economic and Industrial Policy pursued by the Congress, UF and BJP governments successively and particularly now the BJP government's Second Generation Reform. In pushing the economy to this sorry state contribution of top level corruption in the BJP-led government like Rs 50,000 telecom scam, Pakistani sugar import scam during Kargil conflict, GAIL share sale scam, etc., scandalous Rs 51,800 crore NPA position in the public sector banks and drainage of public money to feed the cost of the rulers' national chauvinism and warfare is no less noteworthy. All these activities have hit surely the public exchequer substantially.

If accumulated interest is added, the gross NPAs will come to Rs one lakh crore. And who, among the knowledgeable circle, does not know that loans taken by the corporate houses, big business men and ruling class political high-ups constitute the lion's share of the NPA? According to PNB Gilts Report '99 the Kargil conflict cost the nation to the tune of Rs 5000 crore (*The Economic Times*, 14.10.99) and now the BJP government is quite busy to hide that the Kargil episode could happen at all due to the deliberate negligence of the government with the intention to virtually allow the Pak intruders infiltrate into the Indian territory and build up strongholds across Kargil borders for at least three months so that a war-like situation could develop that would boost militarisation of economy, help divert people's attention from the crisis of their lives, create war-psychosis and religion oriented national jingoism in the country. And that was used to help the BJP in the then ensuing election. And now, Kargil war has been fought and BJP has won the election. The BJP government is now spending thousands of crore of rupees for most sophisticated military equipments, as well as nuclear weaponisation with the fascistic design of muscle flexing, establishing regional hegemony and creating national jingoism and crying for ever increasing military budget, neglecting basic needs of the common millions. Thus in every way the government is making the country's economy bankrupt. It is now also undeniable that the government is preparing for imposing Kargil Tax. Thus the cost of the war which has been fought for the interest of the monopolies is going to be thrust upon the common people who just strive for survival. As a part of their economic reform policy the successive governments at the Centre, particularly now the BJP government, in consonance with its second generation reform is more generously giving away bounty of subsidies, subventions and tax concessions to the industries and business houses, reducing import duties on consumer goods and luxury items, cutting export duties heavily in the name of encouraging competition of the indigenous industries with foreign products and enhancing export earnings. Whatever negligible might be the rise in export from or expansion of industry in the country, no doubt, growth in profit

to the corporate and export-import houses has been remarkable. This BJP government has opened up export of wheat to satisfy the greed of kulak lobbies although fifty percent of poor ration card holders cannot draw their quotas from the PDS due to their miserably low purchasing power and they starve. Similarly agricultural income of the vast rural bourgeoisie has been kept out of the purview of income tax. Pursuant to their policy of privatisation all the governments at the Centre — like the Congress, CPI(M)-CPI backed UF and the BJP — are selling out shares of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) but instead of investing them to revive sick units or building up the capital base of other prospective units are usurping the sale proceeds for making up fiscal deficit of the government. This year too, the government has taken decision to immediately disinvest PSU shares of Rs. 10,000 crore to meet the budget deficit. That is selling out capital asset to meet day to day revenue expenditure. What a bankruptcy of the economy! Again through privatisation and disinvestment of the huge profit earning PSUs including insurance and banking sectors the government is giving away the sources of revenue to the private owners including foreign MNCs and increasingly drifting into financial deficit and debt trap. All these they do mouthing the slogan of progress and development of the country. Development and progress have certainly been achieved during all these 53 years after independence and particularly during these years of liberalisation. But whose development? The corporate houses, the business community, the monopolists and MNCs, both Indian and foreign have not only amassed enormous wealth but have been benefited at a higher rate during the liberalisation period of the nineties. Whatever the government spokesmen and sycophant intellectuals say *The Economic Times*, one of the corporate houses' spokesman has admitted that liberalisation has greatly helped their profitability. It made a survey of 300 large private sector companies and according to the study they made "The rise in profitability ratio has largely been due to higher profit growth compared to growth in earnings. The aggregate net profit of the sample companies during the last decade ended in 1998-99 has grown at 21.7 percent annually compounded as against 18.1 percent growth of sales turnover ... Liberalisation has helped — lowering of government duties as also corporate taxes, for example, must have directly helped them to reduce expenditure." (*Ibid*, 3.1.2000) Another survey of the same daily on 276 companies reveals that net profit for the first three quarters in '99-2000 jumped by 36% over the same period's net profit last year whereas sales rose by only 20% (*Ibid*, 24.1.2000) What the study did not spell out is: Free scope of exploiting the workers and employees more and more with the help of modernisation drastically cutting labour strength and wider opportunity to manipulate and fix product prices, among other things, at the cost of labourers' and consumers' interest, have helped them to reap super profits. Thus development has been made, but development for the riches of the rich by the poor. This is evident from different steps taken by this government during the last one year.

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Monopolists amass wealth while 40% of world's poor are Indian

(Contd. from page 5)

Attack on the common people

One after another subsidies on goods and services essential for common men are being curtailed. Before the budget the government hiked the price of food articles in PDS so much so that the PDS system has practically been meaningless or abolished. After the hike in price on 28.1.99 food item prices went up by 16.41 per cent in open market as in the week ending on 14 August '99 (*The Economic Times* 31.8.99) Price of diesel has been hiked recently exorbitantly fuelling the inflation skyrocketing. Again price of kerosene and LPG is going to be hiked. Prices of 32 commonly used medicines including a good number of life saving drugs have been hiked since 15 January this year, even ranging upto 24.5%. On the plea of parity in sales tax in all states and union territories either fresh sale taxes have been imposed or the same increased, parity being made in a tricky way at the highest rate. Already in the budget for 99-2000 indirect tax has been increased to the tune of Rs.6434 crore. Thus indirect taxes are being increasingly enhanced which are extracted from the common people including the poorest of the poor while direct taxes on the corporate houses and moneyed men are being systematically curtailed. Last but not the least attack is on the interest rate on small savings. To bridge the ever widening fiscal gap the BJP led government has unabashedly chosen to slash the interest rate on the small savings of the middle and lower middle class people and even going to pounce upon the Provident Fund interest of the workers and employees. Secondly, the

government is going to restructure the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in the country where "Primary Commodities such as food items, which earlier had a 33 percent weightage in the WPI basket, will be down to 22 per cent" (*Times of India*, 31.12.99) This is simply a mischievous attempt of the government since by such curtailing of weightage by 11 per cent primary commodities including food items rate of inflation will be shown lesser than the actuals and subsequently it will be reflected much more dangerously in computing Working Class Consumer Price Index and Middle Class Consumer Price Index — the very basis of the workers' and employees' variable DA as in reality these items actually constitute much greater percentage of their living expenditure and prices of these essential items are soaring comparatively steeply. Thus it is a heinous ploy of the government to deprive the workers and employees of their due rise in DA with rising inflation. These are sinister attacks on the working class of the country which must be fought out at any cost. Thus the government is shifting the whole buck of capitalist crisis on to the shoulder of the common people comprising 40 percent of the world's poor. Under such a situation these rulers are boasting of missiles and nuclear weapon pushing the 80 % of the population to unemployment, poverty, destitution and illiteracy and all the evils. After 53 years of independence they are not ashamed to rule a country with highest number of blinds, tuberculosis and leprosy patients in the world. Out of a total population of 100 crore 20.4 crore are undernourished compared to 18 crore in all Sub-

Saharan Africa (FAO Report '99 — *The Statesman*, 18.10.99). According to UNICEF report '99 fifty percent children below five years suffer from malnutrition and under weight. Nearly 200 million i.e. 20 crore Indians do not have access to safe drinking water while 700 million i.e. 70 crore, mainly in rural areas, do without proper sanitation. About 67 million children in the country still do not have access to basic education and nearly 360 million Indians have entered the new millennium unable to read or write. (*The Times of India*, 14.12.99) Majority of the village population is half fed and halfclad. Thus the government has miserably failed to provide to the countrymen even the five irreducible minimum like health care, food, shelter, sanitation and clothings. In such a deplorable situation the government is clamouring for new economic policy and military might. In this regard the BJP government has surpassed all its predecessors. So, to sum up, people of the country are not only groaning under capitalist exploitation and oppression but fiscal attacks are also coming heavily on them from the governments subservient to monopoly capital's interest. The bankruptcy of the economy is to serve the bourgeoisie in their hour of crisis, the burden of which has been thrust on the common people denied of human dignity. And yet the people are being asked to be ready for 'hard decisions' i.e. more fearful fiscal attack for the benefit of the monopoly capital.

There is no iota of doubt that in the coming days the attack will be more virulent, particularly in the Budget for 2000-2001. And this onslaught can be thwarted under the pressure of people's movement alone. So, it is now for the oppressed masses to decide whether they should accept this fiscal savagery mutely or prepare themselves to take up the challenge consciously and unitedly.

Save Education Convention at Muzaffarpur

A Convention demanding 'Proper education, uniform education and education for all' was organised at the auditorium of Harishava Middle School, Muzaffarpur on 16 January last. Three member Presidium with Prof. Ramkishore Prasad, Former Head of the Dept. of Chemistry, L.S. College, Mr Nageswar Prasad Singh, President, Secondary Teachers' Association and Mr B Prasant, a poet and a cultural worker, conducted the proceedings of the convention.

At the outset Comrade Arun Kr Singh, Secretary, Bihar State Save Education Committee read out the resolution which highlighted the dismal picture of the present state of education and put forward a 18-point charter of demands to remove the maladies. The intellectuals, guardians and students took part in the discussion and gave valuable suggestions. Prof. Ramkishore Prasad Singh, Prof. Harish Chandra Satyarthi, Prof. Udaybabu, Prof. Nandakishore 'Nandan', Mr Kalimullah, Mr Prakash Karzi, Mr Sashikant Jha, Mr Hariballav Narayan Singh, Mr Nageswar Prasad Singh, Mr Nawal Kishore, Mr Anand-bhairav Shati were notable among the speakers. The convention elected a 25 member 'Save Education Committee - Muzaffarpur District' with Prof. Ramkishore Prasad as President and Prof. Nawal Kishore Prasad Singh, Nageswar Prasad Singh, Hariballav Narayan Singh as Vice

Lifting Ban on RSS another danger signal

The Gujarat government has lifted ban on the RSS. The government servants in the state will now be legally free to join that organisation and will not be barred from wearing Khaki shorts while on duty. The ban is lifted on the assumption that the RSS is patriotic.

Among over 100 organisations when the RSS is singled out to be blessed and that too by a BJP led state government, the matter becomes clear.

The RSS and the BJP are posed in the media as hardliner and softliner opposing each other. People are fed with such ideas in order to make them oblivious of the role of the ruling party in our class divided society.

Our party, from its very inception warned, that the crisis ridden Indian capitalist-class needs a people with fanatic bend of mind, sunk in obscurantist thoughts, nurturing hatred against other community people. This the ruling class needs so that people get or remain blind to its pro-capitalist anti-people role and fight among each other — a design of fascism in other words.

Presidents and B Prasant as Secretary.

On this occasion a well decorated poster and quotation exhibition was displayed outside the auditorium which became a centre of attraction of the delegates attending the Convention.

This is what the Sangh Parivar is doing. Whatever mask its many outfits may wear — may be apparently of different shades, its purpose is to communalise people's mind.

Had the BJP been really opposing the RSS moves, why did the BJP-led state government lift ban on RSS? Why does Dara Singh, the murderer of the Steins still remain at large? Why does the process of building Rammandir continue? Why does *The Organiser*, the organ of RSS, continue to spew hatred against minority community people?

Such questions cannot be avoided and the BJP government will prefer silence in order to encourage its so-called hidden agenda to work feigning its non-involvement.

In fact the BJP or any other member of the Sangh Parivar does not have a different objective from foisting fascism in our country under cover of religious fanaticism. The BJP at present lacks simple majority and so depends on NDA for its survival. Whenever they will get that cherished strength, it will not hesitate to show its heinous face. Fascism, if to be fought, must be fought before it strikes deep roots in social life. Democratic minded people should build up mass movements on burning problems of life for that will make clear that unity alone of exploited and oppressed people of different communities can help achieve not only urgent relief but acts as a bulwark against fascism. Disunity of the oppressed and exploited people goes against people's real interest and goal.

Irreconcilable contradictions among imperialists flare up

(Contd. from page 4)

countries failed to respond similarly in commercial areas such as textiles and leather where liberalization has been tardy and restricted to products where developing countries' competitive advantage is minimal.

New round of talks aimed at opening up more areas of trade to expand market

All sorts of economic prescriptions in the post-Second World War period like Keynesian Welfarism, Thatcherism or Reaganomics have failed to extricate capitalism from its inherent crisis. The developed capitalist countries wanted to open up the market of the third world countries not only with the traditional merchandise but in newer and newer areas like services, patents, trade related investment measures etc. With this view Uruguay Round of trade negotiations opened in 1986. This Uruguay Round of talks was marked by acrimonious debates and tussles mainly between the imperialist countries for long eight years. Ultimately at the stage of breakdown of the talks the imperialist countries combined together to shift the burden of their crises to the third world countries, and thus the Uruguay Round was somehow salvaged from collapse. The developed capitalist countries expected an expansion of world trade after the formation of the WTO, the succeeding organisation of the GATT. But this expectation was soon belied. This is the main reason for opening a new round of talks with newer agenda with a view to opening up more areas of trade. But all the imperialist countries are scared by demands surely to be raised forcefully by the less developed countries on the question of revocation of anti-dumping laws, dismantling of regional economic blocs provided in Article 24 of GATT and serious implementation of Special and Differential (S&D) treatment clause as provided in the GATT. To counter these offensives of the less developed capitalist countries and to have access to newer areas in compensation of the opening up of agriculture sector for EU and Japan more than hundred newer agenda were added for inclusion in the next round of talks. The imperialist countries contemplated old GATT way of doing business i.e. imposition of their decision in the name of consensus by steamrolling the views of the developing capitalist countries with a wide and damaging agenda. But this did not happen as unity between the imperialist countries could not be arrived at on the question of agriculture and bio-engineered food products. Because of this disunity among the imperialist countries on the one hand and the strong united resistance of the less developed capitalist countries on the question of inclusion of agenda like labour and environment standards the Seattle Conference collapsed.

Compulsion of Bill Clinton

The advocacy of Mr Bill Clinton, the US President, for improving the quality of lives of the people of third world countries is indeed an irony of history. Mr Clinton is now shedding crocodile tears for child labour in the third world countries for gaining mileage in the US trade. But it is now known to the entire people of the world that hundreds of thousands of children died in Iraq owing to the inhuman economic sanction imposed on Iraq at the behest of the US imperialists. Thousands of children were recently orphaned by the US-led NATO bombing on Yugoslavia. The root cause of hunger, poverty and destitution is the

ruthless economic exploitation by capitalism-imperialism headed by the USA. But today to blunt the competitive edge of the less developed capitalist countries Mr Clinton was seen as the champion for raising the quality of lives of third world countries. Recent demonstration in Washington by 20,000 immigrant workers who are discriminated against exposes the real face of the US administration and its attitude to the workers of the third world countries. But Mr Clinton has other compulsions for domestic politics. The US multinationals put pressure on the US administration to compel WTO members to open up markets. The recent demonstrations and hostile opposition to the Seattle talks from trade unions and environmentalists are from the fear that the MNCs would opt for low wage rate areas for installation of productive units, spelling doom to the local industries and loss of employment. The MNCs got secret support from Mr Clinton and his party because of dependence of their candidate for the post of President on them. The balancing trick between keeping the MNCs in good humour, to handle the contradiction between MNCs & non-MNC monopolists and at the same time meeting the electoral compulsion to rope in trade unions' support simply delayed the talks by a few months. It does never mean that they are retracing from new protectionist measures that they are contemplating against developing capitalist countries.

USA pursuing bilateral talks to destroy unity of less developed countries

The USA is now pursuing a surreptitious path of entering into bilateral talks with individual developing capitalist countries or smaller groups on the bait of some concessions on market access so as to obtain substantial following to push through its agenda. The strategy is clearly to divide the developing capitalist countries which are in overwhelming numbers and destroy their unity.

As a major power of South Asia, India has already been targeted. Already some agreement on market access has been arrived at on 10 January last between India and the USA. Because of this opening up of market India might get some advantage in textiles and leather exports but the small and medium industries in this country will surely face closure and the consumer goods would be costlier.

Mr Lawrence H Southern, the US Treasury Secretary, has arrived in New Delhi on 18 January last to open further talks. The US objective is to isolate India from G-15 countries as well as from China which is going to be a member of the WTO after the bilateral agreement between the US and China. The US fears formidable opposition if China, India and other G-15 countries combine against her. So while throwing gentle admonition on China on the question of human rights, the USA is lauding India as the greatest democracy.

While imperialist motive behind raising labour standard is condemnable, so also is exploitation of cheap labour

The developed capitalist countries are expressing concern over labour and environment standard with the imperialist motive of cutting the competitive edge of the less developed countries. This is clear and hence this must be condemned. But equally condemnable is the attempt of the capitalist class of these countries to exploit the workers by denying them their legitimate claims. So the claim of Mr. Rahul Bajaj, the spokesman of

the CII, that cheap labour is our advantage deserves equal condemnation.

Trickery of Indian ruling class

The role of the Indian ruling class at the Seattle talks is worth noting. India resisted the developed capitalist countries by uniting the less developed capitalist countries on the question of labour and environment standard. But at the same time it did not allow the relation with the US to be disturbed. India played between the contradictions of the advanced capitalist countries. It sided with the USA on the question of opening up agricultural sector in EU and Japan and again on the question of anti-dumping law it sided with Japan.

India played a tricky role in Seattle. India demonstrated that its support to the moves of the developed capitalist countries must not be taken for granted. Its motive is to extract concessions for the Indian capitalist class by using its bargaining leverage.

Conclusion

In fine, it is to be recalled that our party guided by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great Marxist thinker, analyzed the recent changes in the world situation and came to the conclusion at the Cuttack Plenum in 1994 that "among all the major contradictions — imperialist-imperialist contradiction and that between labour and capital have intensified greatly" and "after the collapse of the socialist camp, and the introduction of the so-called new liberalized and open market economy all over the capitalist-imperialist world, the significant contradiction between the developing countries and the major imperialist countries is becoming sharper and sharper with the passage of time." Events in Seattle fully vindicate this analysis of our party. Capitalism-imperialism is tottering on its last leg and continuing its existence on borrowed time. It is time to strike a deadly blow to this exploitative system and that can be done only by intensification of class and mass struggles by the working class against the ruling class of their respective countries.

Birsa Munda

Birsa Munda was the valiant leader of the legendary tribal revolt of the last quarter of 1899. He led battle against British rulers and local exploiters like zemindars, mahajans police officials, etc. He worked in Chhotonagpur region, mainly in Ranchi, Chaibasa and fought not only for the tribal people, but for all poor starving people to establish their right to live as human beings. Sensing great danger the British government deployed its sophisticated army on the backward people who perished but never gave in. Birsa Munda and his many comrades finally were thrown in prison in the beginning of 1900 where the young, valiant leader was tortured to death.

In the news of the WBAIDSO conference covered in the last issue of *Proletarian Era*, Birsa Munda was wrongly mentioned as "the great martyr of the national freedom movement." Although Birsa Munda was a martyr to the great cause of the exploited and oppressed the element of nationalism was not present at that time in that movement. This is a mistake for which our regret is profound. — Editor, *Proletarian Era*

SUCI's Call

(Contd. from page 1)

Orissa in carrying out rescue, relief and rehabilitation works on war footing to save the super-cyclone hit millions — is itself a sufficient proof of its anti-people attitude although the delayed and inadequate help of the Central government — which did not declare it to be a national calamity is no less responsible for the inhuman sufferings of people. In fact, the most criminal negligence of both the governments is responsible for this unprecedented loss of life and property as well as sufferings of the people. The apportioning of blames on each other of these two governments on the eve of the assembly poll is nothing but sheer election manoeuvres.

History will tell that it was none else than our party which provided relief and medical help in those grim days to the worst affected and in almost inaccessible parts of Orissa and organised the victims, along with the other people and developed movements against the state and the central governments. But regrettably, instead of strengthening the course of democratic mass movement CPI(M) and CPI entered into covert electoral understanding with this very Congress and Janata(S) just for a few seats.

In Bihar where the people are groaning under the utterly corrupt and oppressive rule of the casteist RJD government, the BJP-led combination of Samata Party and Janata(U) etc. is frantically trying to capitalise on peoples' disgust and grievances.

For long our party along with CPI(M), CPI, RSP, FB and other democratic forces has been unitedly organising democratic movements against the corruption of the RJD government as well as single handedly conducting struggles against the RJD government's corruption. But, for sheer parliamentary gains the CPI(M) has openly combined with this very RJD while the CPI and the CPI(ML)-Liberation, equally throwing away the banner of united democratic mass movement,

have combined with Mulayam Singh Yadav's SP and are trying to rope in also the RSP and the FB. Therefore, to carry forward the democratic mass movement, which is the only correct way for the toiling people to protect and advance their rights and interests, our party is contesting alone — considering election battle also as a part of the democratic mass movement.

No different is the situation in Haryana and Manipur where BJP-backed regional parties in power are bringing down heavy blows on the common people. In Haryana, the CPI(M) and the CPI are secretly running after seat adjustments with the Congress whereas our party has been engaged in organising one movement after another of all sections of the toiling people against the BJP-backed Chautala government and is contesting this election with a view to strengthening people's movement.

In West Bengal, by conducting hundreds of movements against the anti-people policies of both the central and the state governments, our party has created a history — in the language movement particularly, which our party led for 19 long years and which forced the CPI(M)-led adamant LF government to ultimately reintroduce English at the primary level of education, which will be forever remembered by the people.

In this grave situation when the all-out economic, political, social, cultural, educational attack by the BJP-led central government and also by the state governments of the other bourgeois and social-democratic parties has made the life of the common people miserable and suffocating, the Central Committee of the SUCI once again emphasises that nothing other than mighty democratic mass movements on burning issues of people's life can resist these attacks and mitigate their unbearable sufferings. So, the SUCI, being the only party fully dedicated to building up countrywide powerful mass movements, needs to be further strengthened to meet the need of the

hour. We, therefore, fervently appeal to the electorate to make SUCI candidates victorious so that the voice of democratic movement can be reflected in the parliamentary forum and the anti-people conspiracies of the ruling class can be exposed and resisted from within the legislature.

The names of states and the respective constituencies and candidates are given herewith.

List of candidates

ORISSA

District	Constitutency	Name
Mayurbanj	Jashipur (ST)	Comrade Shambhunath Naik
do	Udla (ST)	Comrade Sham Banra
do	Rairangpur (ST)	Comrade Dukhishyam Murmu
Jajpur	Binjharpur	Comrade Surendra Mullick

HARYANA

Rohtak	Kiloi	Comrade Zile Singh
Sonipat	Rai	Comrade Sham Sher Singh
Kaithal	Pundri	Comrade Roshan Lal
Mahendragarth	Ateli	Comrade Bal Bir Singh
Rewari	Jatusana	Comrade Gan Pat Ram
Bhiwani	Bhiwani	Comrade Rajkumar

BIHAR

Singhbhum	Ghatsila(ST)	Comrade Sitaram Tudu
Bokaro	Chandankeori(SC)	Comrade Mohindir Rajwar
Muzaffarpur	Kanti	Comrade Lakhichand Roy
do	Paru	Comrade Ramprit Roy
do	Minapur	Comrade Kishori Shah
Banka	Belhar	Comrade Rabindra Yadav
Munghyr	Tarapur	Comrade Kantesh Kumar
do	Haveli Kharagpur	Comrade Bhola Tanti

WEST BENGAL

Birbhum	Suri	Comrade Anita Mukherjee
Midnapur	Binpur(ST)	Comrade Samay Kisku

UTUC-LS Supports UP Powermen, Port and Dock Workers and Rajasthan State Government Employees

Comrade Ashutosh Banerjee, President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani, issued the following statement on 19.1.2000 in support of the ongoing strikes by U.P. Powermen, country's Port and Dock Workers and Rajasthan State Government employees — in defense of their respective demands.

The UTUC-Lenin Sarani supports fully and stands solidly beside 87,000 power-workers belonging to U.P. Power Corporation, U.P. Rajya Bidyut Nigam and UP Jal Bidyut Nigam, now on indefinite strike, against the heinous move of the Government to dissolve the U.P. State Electricity Board and constitute, in its place, 3 separate corporations, to pave finally the way for complete privatisation of the power sector. We also extend our whole-hearted support to over 1 lakh port and dock workers of the country who have been forced on to the path of indefinite strike, being denied their legitimate minimum wage negotiation and against intended privatisation. Our staunchest support also goes to the striking Rajasthan State

Government, employees, fighting under the banner of Joint Action Committee, for over a month, in demand of their wage revision, already overdue.

We condemn the act of invoking ESMA in each case by the respective Government to ban, first, the strike and to let, then, loose a reign of terror and tyranny in the shape of indiscriminate police-action, arrest of over 6000 powermen under the National Security Act as witnessed in U.P., sacking of 65 Grid Engineers, now on work-to-rule, in support of the strikers' cause and in opposition to the manhandling of the peaceful workers and threat of dismissal on all the 87,000 power-workers in case of their failure to resume duty by the deadline as part of the dastardly designs, to break the morale of the strikers; arrest of 123 leaders of Rajasthan State Government Employees at Jaipur alone, in addition to many others throughout the state and the brutal lathicharge by the police and CRPF upon the striking port and dock workers together with calling to action of Army and Navy to foil the

strike.

We hail the indomitable courage and high spirit, manfully demonstrated by the workers everywhere, in their respective struggle, scornfully defying the all-out attack brought down upon them.

We feel deeply concerned that the Judiciary which is supposed to render justice, is gradually getting transformed into a coercive organ of the state which is manifest in its pouncing illegality on strikes by workers, otherwise, solemnly enshrined as their avowed rights in the related Acts and constitution in protection of their interest.

We all call upon each of the concerned governments to adopt a rational approach to the issues and demands raised by the workers and settle them expeditiously in the best interest of the workers, industries concerned, administration and overall economy of the country. We also call upon all central trade union organizations to come forward with a joint action programme in their support.

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