

# Proletarian Era

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Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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## Remembering Mao Zedong

[On the occasion of the 24th death anniversary of Comrade Mao Zedong on 9th September, we are recalling some of his valuable teachings]



## Methods of Work of Party Committees

March 13, 1949

[This was part of Comrade Mao Zedong's concluding speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China]

1. The secretary of a Party committee must be good at being a "squad leader". A Party committee has ten to twenty members; it is like a squad in the army, and the secretary is like the "squad leader". It is indeed not easy to lead this squad well. Each bureau or sub-bureau of the Central Committee now leads a vast area and shoulders very heavy responsibilities. To lead means not only to decide general and specific policies but also to devise correct methods of work. Even with correct general and specific policies, troubles may still arise if methods of work are neglected. To fulfil its task of exercising leadership, a Party committee must rely on its "squad members" and enable them to play their parts to the full. To be a good "squad leader", the secretary should study hard and investigate thoroughly. A secretary or deputy secretary will

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## BRUTAL POLICE REPRESSION AGAINST ANTI-POWER TARIFF HIKE MOVEMENT IN A.P.

### Police Firing, teargas shelling and lathicharge on peaceful demonstration Four killed and hundreds injured

Police resorted to indiscriminate firing, teargas shelling and most brutal lathicharge on more than 20,000 peaceful demonstrators who were participating in "Chalo Assembly" programme on 28.8.2000 in Hyderabad, spearheaded by nine left parties comprising SUCI, CPI, CPI(M), MCPI, CPI(ML)-New Democracy, CPI(ML)-Liberation, CPI(ML)-Unity Initiative, CPI(ML)-Jana Shakti and M.L. Committee. As a result, 4 people died and hundreds were injured. Six people with bullet injuries were hospitalised in precarious condition. Among those killed was Comrade Satyanarayan Murthy, an activist of CPI(ML)-New Democracy. Four activists of our party were seriously injured in lathicharge, and the CPI(M) State Secretary was also hurt. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of

our party most strongly condemned this dastardly act of the TDP Government. A statewide bandh was observed on 29th August in protest against the police atrocities. The bandh was spontaneous and total.

The present TDP government in Andhra Pradesh has hiked the power tariff in an unprecedented way. As soon as this hike was announced nine left parties mentioned above took up the issue and gave a call to the people for a united movement against this abnormal hike in power tariff. The people of Andhra Pradesh responded to this call and participated in various programmes. The movement has been going on for the last 3 months.

The TDP government threw to the wind all its election promises after coming to power. The bus

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## SUCI urges the central government to treat Andhra devastation as National Calamity SUCI calls upon the people to observe 3rd September as 'Save Andhra Day'

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a press statement on 26th August, 2000 expressed deep bereavement for those hundreds of common people of Andhra Pradesh, who lost their lives in the devastating rain affecting public life severely, causing massacre of livestock and extensive damage to crops, cultivation and property.

Comrade Mukherjee demanded of both the state and the central governments to come in rescue of the helpless victims on war-footing and rehabilitate them economically — providing them with adequate livelihood and permanent shelter. He specially urged the central government to treat Andhra devastation as national calamity and take full responsibility of rescue and rehabilitation.

Comrade Mukherjee also urged all the units of

the state party, its workers and supporters to intensify their rescue work and supply of relief materials to the suffering people. He also urged party units all over the country to collect relief materials, medicine, babyfood, money etc. and send those to the following address :

Comrade K. Shridhar  
SUCI Office

Kushal Towers, Flat No. 804B  
Khairatabad, Hyderabad 500004  
Phone : (040) 3317522

SUCI will observe 3rd September, 2000 as 'Save Andhra Day' and all party units will collect relief materials from the members of the public and raise the voice of the people all over the country so that the central government is compelled to declare Andhra devastation as national calamity.

# Teachings of Comrade Mao Zedong

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find it difficult to direct his "squad" well if he does not take care to do propaganda and organizational work among his own "squad members", is not good at handling his relations with committee members or does not study how to run meetings successfully. If the "squad members" do not march in step, they can never expect to lead tens of millions of people in fighting and construction. Of course, the relation between the secretary and the committee members is one in which the minority must obey the majority, so it is different from the relation between a squad leader and his men. Here we speak only by way of analogy.

2. Place problems on the table. This should be done not only by the "squad leader" but by the committee members too. Do not talk behind people's backs. Whenever problems arise, call a meeting, place the problems on the table for discussion, take some decisions and the problems will be solved. If problems exist and are not placed on the table, they will remain unsolved for a long time and even drag on for years. The "squad leader" and the committee members should be tolerant and understanding in their relations with each other. Nothing is more important than mutual tolerance, understanding, support and friendship between the secretary and the committee members, between the Central Committee and its bureaus and between the bureaus and area Party committees. In the past this point received little attention, but since the Seventh Party Congress much progress has been made in this respect and the ties of friendship and unity have been greatly strengthened. We should continue to pay constant attention to this point in the future.

3. "Exchange information." This means that members of a Party committee should keep each other informed and exchange views on matters that have come to their attention. This is of great importance in achieving a common language. Some fail to do so and, like the people described by Lao Tzu, "do not visit each other all their lives, though the crowing of their cocks and the barking of their dogs are within hearing of each other". The result is that they lack in common language. In the past some of our high-ranking cadres did not have a common language even on basic theoretical problems of Marxism-Leninism, because they had not studied enough. There is more of a common language in the Party today, but the problem has not yet been fully solved. For instance, in the land reform there is still some difference in the understanding of what is meant by "middle peasants" and "rich peasants".

4. Ask your subordinates about matters you don't understand or don't know, and do not lightly express your approval or disapproval. Some documents, after having been drafted, are withheld from circulation for a time because certain questions in them need to be clarified and it is necessary to consult the lower levels first. We should never pretend to know what we don't know, we should "not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below" and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lower levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders. In handling problems, this should be the practice of all bureaus of the Central

Committee and Party committees of the fronts, except in military emergencies or when the facts of the matter are already clear. To do this will not lower one's prestige, but can only raise it. Since our decisions incorporate the correct views of the cadres at the lower levels, the latter will naturally support them. What the cadres at the lower levels say may or may not be correct; we must analyse it. We must heed the correct views and act upon them. The reason why the leadership of the Central Committee is correct is chiefly that it synthesizes the material, reports and correct views coming from different localities. It would be difficult for the Central Committee to issue correct orders if the localities did not provide material and put forward opinions. Listen also to the mistaken views from below; it is wrong not to listen to them at all. Such views, however, are not to be acted upon but to be criticized.

5. Learn to "play the piano". In playing the piano all ten fingers are in motion; it won't do to move some fingers only and not others. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythmically and in coordination. A Party committee should keep a firm grasp on its central task and at the same time, around the central task, it should unfold the work in other fields. At present, we have to take care of many fields; we must look after the work in all the areas, armed units and departments, and not give all our attention to a few problems, to the exclusion of others. Wherever there is a problem, we must put our finger on it, and this is a method we must master. Some play the piano well and some badly, and there is a great difference in the melodies they produce. Members of Party committees must learn to "play the piano" well.

6. "Grasp firmly". That is to say, the Party committee must not merely "grasp", but must "grasp firmly", its main tasks. One can get a grip on something only when it is grasped firmly, without the slightest slackening. Not to grasp firmly is not to grasp at all. Naturally, one cannot get a grip on something with an open hand. When the hand is clenched as if grasping something but is not clenched tightly, there is still no grip. Some of our comrades do grasp the main tasks, but their grasp is not firm and so they cannot make a success of their work. It will not do to have no grasp at all, nor will it do if the grasp is not firm.

7. "Have a head for figures." That is to say, we must attend to the quantitative aspect of a situation or problem and make a basic quantitative analysis. Every quality manifests itself in a certain quantity, and without quantity there can be no quality. To this day any of our comrades still do not understand that they must attend to the quantitative aspect of things — the basic statistics, the main percentages and the quantitative limits that determine the qualities of things. They have no "figures" in their heads and as a result cannot help making mistakes. For instance, in carrying out the land reform it is essential to have such figures as the percentages of landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants among the population and the amount of land owned by each group, because only on this basis can we formulate correct policies. Whom to call a rich peasant, whom a well-to-do middle peasant — in all these cases too,

the quantitative limits must be ascertained. In all mass movements we must make a basic investigation and analysis of the number of active supporters, opponents and neutrals and must not decide problems subjectively and without basis.

8. "Notice to Reassure the Public." Notice of meetings should be given beforehand; this is like issuing a "Notice to Reassure the Public", so that everybody will know what is going to be discussed and what problems are to be solved and can make timely preparations. In some places, meetings of cadres are called without first preparing reports and draft resolutions, and only when people have arrived for the meeting are makeshifts improvised; this is just like the saying, "Troops and horses have arrived, but food and fodder are not ready", and that is no good. Don't call a meeting in a hurry if the preparations are not completed.

9. "Fewer and better troops and simpler administration." Talks, speeches, articles and resolutions should all be concise and to the point. Meetings also should not go on too long.

10. Pay attention to uniting and working with comrades who differ with you. This should be borne in mind both in the localities and in the army. It also applies to relations with people outside the Party. We have come together from every corner of the country and should be good at uniting in our work not only with comrades who hold the same views as we but also with those who hold different views. There are some among us who have made very serious mistakes; we should not be prejudiced against them but should be ready to work with them.

11. Guard against arrogance. For anyone in a leading position, this is a matter of principle and an important condition for maintaining unity. Even those who have made no serious mistakes and have achieved very great success in their work should not be arrogant. Celebration of the birthdays of Party leaders is forbidden. Naming places, streets and enterprises after Party leaders is likewise forbidden. We must keep to our style of plain living and hard work and put a stop to flattery and exaggerated praise.

12. Draw two lines of distinction. First, between revolution and counter-revolution, between Yen-an and Sian.\* Some do not understand that they must draw this line of distinction. For example, when they combat bureaucracy, they speak of Yen-an as though "nothing is right" there and fail to make a comparison and distinguish between the bureaucracy in Yen-an and the bureaucracy in Sian. This is fundamentally wrong. Secondly, within the revolutionary ranks, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between right and wrong, between achievements and shortcomings and to make clear which of the two is primary and which secondary. For instance, do the achievements amount to 30 per cent or to 70 per cent of the whole? It will not do either to understate or to

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\* Yen-an was the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from January 1937 to March 1947. Sian was the centre of reactionary rulers of the Kuomintang in northwestern China. Comrade Mao Zedong cited the two cities as symbols of revolution and counter-revolution.

# 5th August Observed in States

5th August, the memorial day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat and the founder General Secretary of our party was observed in the most befitting manner in different parts of the country. We covered the news as received in the last issue of the Proletarian Era. We have received more news on the observance of 5th August and they are given below.

## MP

### Bhopal

The 24th death anniversary of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader, teacher and guide, was observed with great emotion at the state party office, Bhopal. On this occasion Comrade U.P. Biswas hoisted the Red Flag and garlanded the portraits of the great leaders Marx, Engels, Lenin Stalin, Mao Zedong and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in the morning. It was followed by the song on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

In the evening a meeting was held at the party office presided by Comrade U.P. Biswas. In this meeting Sanskritik Sankat aur Fascibad by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was read and discussions were made on the danger of fascism.

### Jabalpur

The 24th memorial day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was observed by the Jabalpur unit of the SUCI through a study circle on 6th August at the party office near Kanch Ghar. At the study circle Sanskritik Sankat aur Fascibad by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was read and discussed. There Comrade Bhobani Ghosh, inter alia, called upon the people to build up democratic movements on the edifice of higher culture.

## UP

### Jaunpur

Jaunpur District Committee of the SUCI observed the memorial day of Comrade Frederick

Engels and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on 6th August at the auditorium of S.B. Inter College, Badlapur, at 3 P.M. It was presided by Comrade Jagadish Chandra Astahna, District Secretary. The main speaker was Comrade V.N. Singh, U.P. State Secretary. The meeting was also addressed by Comrade Jagannath Verma, Office Secretary, U.P. State Committee, Comrade Ram Yash Mauriya, Comrade Moti Lal and Comrade Dinesh Kant Dubey, members, Jaunpur District Committee. All the speakers highlighted the life struggles and contributions of the great teacher of the proletariat.

Before the meeting the workers and leaders of the party garlanded the portraits of the great Marxist leaders.

Comrade Asthana appealed to work intensively for making the protest demonstration before State Assembly on 26th September 2000 against the anti-people policies of the BJP-led governments successful.

### Sultanpur

The Sultanpur District Committee observed the memorial day of Comrade Frederick Engels and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on 5th August at Kalikagunge Primary School at 3 P.M. The meeting was presided by Comrade Jagannath Verma, District Secretary. Comrade V. N. Singh, Secretary, U. P. State Committee, was the main speaker. The meeting was

also addressed by Comrades Triloki Nath Upadhyay, Jai Prakash Maurya and Ram Murti Maurya. All the speakers stressed the life struggle and contributions of the great leaders.

### Sagar

The Sagar District Organising Committee observed Frederick Engels and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh memorial day on 5th August. A meeting was held at Chetna Study Centre (Yadav Colony). Comrade Ramavatar Sharma, Secretary, Sagar District Organising Committee addressed the gathering as the main speaker. The meeting was conducted by Comrade S.K. Sahu.

## Maharashtra

### Nagpur

5th August, the memorial day of Frederick Engels and Shibdas Ghosh, the greater teachers and leaders of the world proletariat, was observed by the Nagpur unit of the SUCI on 9th August at Rashtra Bhasa Prachar Samity Hall at 12.30 p.m. The meeting was presided over by Comrade Madhab Bhonde, in-charge, Nagpur SUCI. The main speaker was Comrade Dipankar Roy, Member, West Bengal State Committee, who urged everybody to mould life with the teachings of the great leaders. Comrade Rabindra Sakhare, a DYU member also spoke. The meeting was conducted by Comrade Gowardhan Amvedkar and Comrade Ashoke Pawar. Revolutionary songs were presented by Comrade Sailesh Janbandhu.

The meeting was attended by large number of students, youths and workers.

## Teachings of Mao Zedong

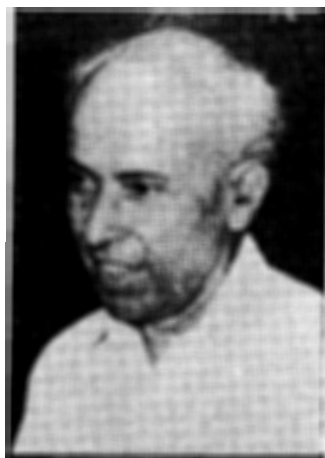
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overstate. We must have a fundamental evaluation of a person's work and establish whether his achievements amount to 30 per cent and his mistakes to 70 per cent, or vice versa. If his achievements amount to 70 per cent of the whole, then his work should in the main be approved. It would be entirely wrong to describe work in which the achievements are primary as work in which the mistakes are primary. In our approach to problems we must not forget to draw these two lines of distinction, between revolution and counter-revolution and between achievements and shortcomings. We shall be able to handle things well if we bear these two distinctions in mind; otherwise we shall confuse the nature of the problems. To draw these distinctions well, careful study and analysis are of course necessary. Our attitude towards every person and every matter should be one of analysis and study.

The members of the Political Bureau and I personally feel that only by using the above methods can Party committees do their work well. In addition to conducting Party congresses well, it is most important for the Party committees at all levels to perform their work of leadership well. We must make efforts to study and perfect the methods of work so as to raise further the Party committees' level of leadership.

## Dr. H. N. Prasad Passes Away

Eminent educationist Dr. H. N. Prasad passed away on 12th July last at Ranchi. He was a septuagenarian. The former head of the



department of economics, Ranchi College, Dr. Prasad had his name inscribed on countless hearts owing to his unwavering stand for the cause of education movement in India. For almost two decades, in the last part of his life, after coming in contact with our party and All India Save Education Committee he was thick in movement against imperialist onslaught, danger of communalism and against the policy of restricting education for the elites only keeping it far away from the teeming millions, against communalising education, to fight the ruling class' design of foisting fascism, and against privatisation and commercialisation of education. Despite his frail constitution, Dr. Prasad did never say no to attend programmes of education movement at any part of our country.

His ethical stand in life, indomitable fighting spirit and quiet simplicity inspired everybody whoever came in contact with him.

Dr. Prasad was deeply anguished at the gap between the dream of the freedom fighters and the harsh social reality of today. His strong urge for real economic freedom of the people attracted him to the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great Marxist philosopher.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, our General Secretary, sent a condolence letter to Dr. Prasad's son Sri Sudhakar Prasad. In the letter Comrade Mukherjee wrote, inter alia, "This remarkable humanist, born and grown in the period of our nationalist freedom struggle, came in contact with us at the most ripe age of his life and, with his mind always searching for truth, was drawn to the ideology of our party and the activities and movements led by it. He gradually became very close and intimate with us. He was always to be found in the vanguard of the struggles against imperialist warmongers, fundamentalist and communal forces and against all attacks on education. Whenever called upon, he rushed to participate in all such occasions throughout the country paying no regard to his age, ailment and all."

Recalling his memorial meetings were held at different parts of our country.

# **Resist CPI(M)-Trinamul policies of dragging people in violence**

The spate of violence that rocks wide areas of West Bengal countryside cannot but cause grave concern to all. We in this country are familiar with the parliamentary parties' bid to anyhow win elections through use of money and muscle power. We also know how armed bands intimidate voters, capture polling booths and even forcibly cordon off areas preventing the people there from voting. But the sustained and organised violence that began in large areas of Medinipur district during the run up to the by-election in the Panskura Lok Sabha constituency earlier this year and continues even now, long after the election has been over, spreading to newer areas of not only Medinipur but some other districts including Birbhum, Bankura and Hooghly as well — is unprecedented. New incidents of violence in the districts hit the headlines almost daily.

The pattern is like this : Workers of either the CPI(M) or the TMC (Trinamul Congress), spearheaded by organised criminals, attack villages considered to be strongholds of the other side killing or driving out the inmates, looting, raping women, razing homesteads in village after village to the ground or burning them to ashes. The party that is thus dislodged, comes back after some days with its own bands of criminals to recapture the villages in the same barbarous way. Both the sides think nothing of murdering the opponents. And this goes on and on. In Keshpur, Garbeta, Sabong, Pingla and Chandrakona of Medinipur district, in Suchpur village, Birbhum district and in Goghat, Hooghly district, it is the same story.

The tussle between the CPI(M) and the TMC is for gaining supremacy in rural West Bengal at any cost before the state Assembly poll early next year so that the election can be won and the government formed. The TMC has declared that it would dislodge the CPI(M)-led Left Front government in the coming polls. The Left Front, in its turn, has declared that come what may, its rule will continue in West Bengal. And for both the sides, no nefarious means is too low to achieve the end. The gravity of the situation can be understood when we find that the state DGP had to admit that the situation would remain explosive till the coming state Assembly elections as both the sides were trying to "increase their area of influence" and the clashes were the result of a tussle between the two to capture territory before the coming polls. He had to concede that a section of the police force was acting in a partisan manner (Reports in *The Statesman*, 13-07 & 15-07-2000). Gurudas Dasgupta, the CPI leader who had been the CPI(M)-led Left Front candidate in the Panskura by-poll, has had to admit that the policemen are directly supporting political parties in unleashing terror in the respective bastions (Report in *The Statesman*, 12-08-2000). Thus, the politician-criminal nexus has now become politician-criminal-police nexus. Further, the CPI(M), leading the Left Front, has made use of its position in government over the years to secure the partisan loyalty of a section of the administration in its favour. And now Mamata Banerjee, the TMC leader, aided by her retinue of retired bureaucrats and police officers and by misusing her position as a central minister has influenced a part of the state administration to act in favour of her party. And if we remember the fact that the land owners-rich peasants constitute the nucleus of the rural social power base of both the CPI(M) and the TMC as indeed of all bourgeois-petty bourgeois parties vying with one

another for governmental power in the country, we perceive the two opposing unholy axes of rural bourgeoisie-politician-criminal-police-administration that operate on behalf of the CPI(M) and the TMC with the potential to drown West Bengal in a blood bath as the Assembly poll approaches.

In these clashes, it is the poor who suffer and die. In the countryside, the common man today feels insecure, is terror-stricken, living in fear of death. Not only have even the last vestiges of administrative neutrality disappeared with the police and administration split on partisan lines but even the common people are being criminalized by both the sides. Arms are being provided to the villagers on a mass scale, they are being trained to use them and incited to engage in the killing spree. The atmosphere of political reasoning, discussion-dialogue and debate is being destroyed fast by the two sides with brute force becoming the only logic. Mamata Banerjee speaks of the CPI(M)-led government's misrule, but instead of tackling the issues politically or organising a movement, has straightaway plunged her party in the politics of violence and murder. All these indicate a strengthening of the foundations of fascism.

Through over twenty years' long misrule, pursuit of anti-people policies, ruthless crushing of democratic mass movements and attempts to exterminate the political opponents by police, armed cadres and criminal gangs, the CPI(M)-led Left Front Government has become very unpopular. In the name of land reforms, they have resorted to rank favouritism, indulged in naked petty party politics and encouraged corruption of all sorts. Under their rule, the village panchayats have become hotbeds of corruption. All this has embittered the people about the Left Front government and especially its principal party, the CPI(M). Now, sensing an air of change, they are moving towards the TMC. Further, a section of landowners and jotedars, scared at the prospect of the CPI(M) being dislodged from power, are shifting allegiance from the CPI(M) to the TMC. The election rigging machinery built up over the years by the CPI(M) involving the police, administration and criminals, has virtually split in two with one portion tilted towards the TMC. Mamata Banerjee is trying to capitalise on these.

The big press and electronic media are projecting Mamata Banerjee as a messiah and hailing the emergence of the TMC in the state politics as a positive development beneficial to the people, an alternative to the CPI(M). Although there is nothing to choose between the CPI(M) and the TMC as regards the brutality of the atrocities committed by them in the current

hostilities, the media tend to tone down or underplay those committed by the TMC. Why is this so ?

This is because the big newspapers are owned by monopoly capital and the other media are also controlled by the ruling class which now views TMC as the next alternative to the CPI(M). A party wielding governmental power in the bourgeois parliamentary system, serving the ruling class, cannot solve the people's problems but has to crush the mass movements and popular discontent. As the mass disaffection grows, a government becomes unpopular and this may affect the prospect of a ruling party in the next election. This is the incumbency factor that the bourgeois columnists and psephologists talk about. Continued disaffection of the people may goad them towards militant mass movement, to search out the path to their own political power. This is a risk the ruling class can ill afford to take. So, it must prop up another party or combination subservient to it and project it as the new hope before the people, backing it and helping it to sweep the next polls so that the people can be kept confined within the capitalist system. In the present West Bengal scenario, only the TMC can provide a credible alternative faithful to the ruling class.

The ruling class may have its own reasons for projecting Mamata Banerjee's TMC as a new alternative and creating illusions about her, but the people have to consider the matter dispassionately. Is there any basic difference on policy between the TMC and the CPIM) despite their different flags and vocabularies? Both are wedded to the capitalist class policy of speedy globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation as otherwise, no party can enjoy the backing of the ruling class. And without this, none of them can win election to form a government today. The CPI(M) waves the red flag and utters "revolutionary" verbiage but in the states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, where it is in government, it implements the new economic policies of the Centre faithfully. Occasional "revolutionary" talks are for keeping its leftist image in tact before the people which comes handy at election times to catch votes. Take the TMC. Is it not an offshoot of the Congress, the very same Congress that, being in government at the Centre and in the states as the trusted agent of the Indian capitalist class, was responsible for causing untold misery and hardship to the people over many years? Did not the TMC split out from West Bengal Congress only the other day not because of any policy difference but because of Mamata Banerjee's ambition to gain power and position? Despite Ms Banerjee's populist gestures and sayings, is not her TMC, as a constituent of the NDA coalition headed by the BJP in Delhi, a party to all the anti-people measures adopted by that government in pursuance of globalisation policies, which have resulted in sharp increase of unemployment, prices and hardship of the people? In Ms Banerjee's own Rly. department, 50,000 posts are being abolished and privatisation is on, including selling of railway land to private owners.

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# Build up Movement against Criminalisation of Politics

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So, what good will be achieved by a change over from the CPI(M) to the TMC in West Bengal? No principle is involved in the present tussle between the two. The barbarous and corrupt method used by the CPI(M) to remain entrenched in power in West Bengal for the past 23 years are all being fast mastered by the TMC, although a new entrant in the politics. In fact, the TMC has become more expert in these than the CPI(M) in some respects and now bids to dislodge the Left Front government from power by employing the same nefarious methods.

How is it that a new outfit like the TMC without the pretension of any ideology has so quickly come to the position of challenging the CPI(M) in the state politics in this left citadel of West Bengal, opening the doors for entry of the Hindu communal force, BJP, holding its hands? Could this have happened if the CPI(M), as the biggest party calling itself "Left", had consistently pursued leftist politics? The sad fact is that through years of shunning the path of democratic mass movements, rather crushing the movements from the seat of the government, the CPI(M) has hit at the root of democratic movements and destroyed the atmosphere and mental make-up conducive to it in West Bengal, and is through its misconduct lowering leftism and communist ideology in people's eyes — thus paving the way for entry of forces like the TMC and the BJP in the state politics in strength. The monopoly press is projecting the CPI(M)'s misrule as "Communism" with the ulterior motive of maligning the noble ideology of Communism.

The media are highlighting the CPI(M)-TMC clashes in such a way as if the only problem before the people is whether the CPI(M) or the TMC will wrest supremacy and form the next government. This is a bourgeois ploy to divert the attention of the people from their real problems and destroy their unity against capitalism. What has the present CPI(M)-TMC tussle got to do with the people's interest? The people's interest demands united movement by the widest sections of the masses on their burning problems to resist the capitalistic onslaughts on their lives and livelihood. But the present fight between the CPI(M) and the TMC is between two alternatives of the ruling class to decide which one will rule the people on its behalf. But in the process, each of the two warring sides is misleading and attaching to it sections of the people, embroiling them in senseless, fratricidal strife, spree of looting, murder and arson and vendetta. Like communal frenzy, this sort of partisan frenzy whipped up by parliamentary parties for electoral gain also blinds the people's and destroys their unity, safeguarding capitalism.

As the CPI(M)'s election machinery has been eroded to TMC's advantage, it is feeling insecure and its fascistic features of intolerance of adverse press reporting and desire to suppress unpleasant truths have grown even more. We shall cite only two recent instances. On August 10 last, members of the CPI(M)-controlled Coordination Committee attacked and beat up 12 journalists on duty right inside the Writers' Buildings, Calcutta, the seat of power of the West Bengal Government, smashing the camera of a TV crew and forcibly exposing the film shot by another. (*The Statesman*,

11.08.2000 and 12.08.2000). Again, at Uttarpara near Calcutta on 14th August, the day of municipal election there, infuriated CPI(M) workers reportedly beat up a TV journalist after they had learnt that the CPI(M)-led Left Front had fared poorly at the poll. Earlier, amidst reports of poll booth jamming by CPI(M) workers in an attempt to rig the polls, journalists were beaten up, repeatedly by CPI(M) workers when they had gone to a local school on receiving information about booth jamming at that centre (*The Statesman*, 15.08.2000). We know that the mass media in the country present news and views to suit the interest of the ruling class and its subservient parties. It is also common knowledge how reporters and photographers covering mass movements are mercilessly attacked by the police. Despite all this, whatever truth creeps into the press, is found intolerable by the party in government! The TMC and the state BJP have condemned these CPI(M) attacks on journalists, but there is no doubt that if they come to power in West Bengal tomorrow, they will act in the same way as the CPI(M).

Such fascistic tendencies are common to all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties all over the country. These point to the danger of fascism that looms large, which can be ignored by the people only at their peril.

Let the people of West Bengal ponder : whither are the two parties, CPI(M) and the TMC, taking the state and the people, by involving the police and the administration, to what abysmal depth of degraded politics when

nobody holding different views can be tolerated to even exist in one's stronghold but must be physically annihilated? Will the people remain silent spectators as the state sinks deep into the morass ?

The ruling class is trying to divert people's discontent into the electoral channel so that militant mass movements do not gain momentum. There is news blackout of the force of movement in the media. At the same time, the media is trying to divert the mass wrath at the CPI(M)'s misrule in favour of the TMC, by creating an illusion about Mamata Banerjee. Some, feeling stifled under the oppressive CPI(M) misrule, pine for a change, any change, for the emergence of a new force, any force. But is Mamata Banerjee's TMC that force which can provide deliverance? If the people, from a negative reaction to CPI(M) misrule and being misled by propaganda fanfare in favour of the TMC, instal a TMC-led combination in power — will that not be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire? Have not they experienced again and again that no improvement follows by replacing one parliamentary party by another?

Unless the people think for themselves, recognize the force of mass movement, their own party, the correct revolutionary party and rally round it, they will be continued to be duped from election to election and kept confined within the bounds of this exploitative, corrupt and decadent capitalist order.

Will they take things lying down or will they rise up and act?

## UTUC-LS tells the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister of India invited the leaders of the central trade union, for an exchange of views on different aspects of labour problems on 12th August 2000. There was no fixed agenda. The background of this meeting constitutes non-implementation of recommendation of Indian Labour Conferences and Standing Labour Committees. The defaulters include finance, industries, commerce and all other ministries connected with labour related production and trading activities. And the labour ministry was always pleading its helplessness in the face of non-cooperation of the concerned ministries. Consequently, demands arose for meeting with the Prime Minister, along with concerned ministers to get the recommendations implemented.

The President of UTUC-LS, Ashutosh Banerji, made the following points in the meeting :

1. Problems of labour are essentially related to the economic, industrial and trading policies, being followed since the early nineties. So, every aspect of the whole gamut of these policies requires examination. As the canvas is very big, periodical exchange with the Prime Minister, along with the labour and concerned ministers is necessary.

2. Problems of employment is the central focal point of labour problem. But the government does not have any employment policy. Rather, the government has a definite policy of retrenchment of employees through various means like VRS, retrenchment without compensation, etc. The government is also following a policy of

no fresh recruitment', abolition of departments, and contractorisation of jobs. The policy is being followed by the private sector also.

As a result, the rate of growth of unemployment is a few times higher than the rate of growth of employment. Indiscriminate use of high-tech is also having a tapering effect on employment. This trend has to be reversed.

3. There exists a phenomenon of dichotomy, regarding the government's policy towards the existing labour laws. On the one hand, the government constituted, though undemocratically, the second National Commission on Labour (NCOL) to examine the existing labour laws, but on the other, the government is preparing to take departmental action to abolish certain labour laws. The Contractor Labour (Abolition and Regulation) Act, and Section 66 of Factories Act prohibiting employment of women labour at night shifts in factories are being sought to be eliminated, without even awaiting the findings of the second NCOL. These activities must be stopped.

4. The policy of disinvestment of central and state public sector undertakings to say the least, is sterile and unproductive. In the wake of adoption of this policy the government has stopped investment in existing PSUs and fresh investment to install new productive capacity in new stream of industries. But the private sector is also not coming forward to invest and fill up the void created by the government. This is a stark reality in the sphere of electric power generation industry

(Contd. on page 8)

**ATTACK ON PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES****Urgent Need of United Resistance**

In pursuance of the policy of globalisation-liberalisation-privatisation, with much more vigour by the BJP now in government than the Congress who initiated the move in 1991 and the UF supporting it, severe attacks have come down on the life and living of the workers and employees of the PSUs (public sector undertakings). As a result of the offensives, unprecedented in depth and dimension, thousands have lost their jobs and lakhs are counting the days to meet the same fate. To mislead the employees as also the people this forced untimely retirement scheme has been mischievously given the name 'Voluntary Retirement Scheme' (VRS).

The policy of privatisation of the PSUs and so-called 'restructuring' and 'downsizing' of staff are the integral parts of globalisation. Not only the employees but also the common people must have genuine concern because of this disastrous move. They must bear in mind that facts are different from the propaganda about efficiency of private ownership and management over the public sector bodies by the bourgeois press and media or those having vested interest.

Privatisation of the PSUs with lakhs of crores of capital resources built up with people's money and labour of workers and employees are being handed over to the monopolists for loot and plunder.

**The hoax of comparative efficiency**

The people have been fed for long with tales of efficiency of private ownership and management. Further they have also sad experience about the indifferent attitude of a section of employees. This is undoubtedly a cause of grievance. The trade union leaderships have not taught their members the simple lesson that rights imply duty or obligation. Without this, right becomes a privilege.

People do not however know that this wrong attitude has been nursed by the management also. These public sector undertakings, built up and grown to strength were meant for catering to the needs of the people. But actually those were used to benefit the monopolists. Mismanagement both in administrative and financial matters, corruption, and nepotism because of the political influence of the party in power became the usual features. With how much disregard the government treats this sector will be obvious from the fact that vacancies even in the managerial stage remain so for years. MNCs are being invited with profit guaranteed by both the Union and the State governments in areas, which could easily be undertaken by the public sector giants.

There is another aspect. Take for instance the Telecom industry directly under the charge of a central minister. A regular scam was revealed when the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's name was involved in matter of giving concession to private operators causing loss of huge amount of government revenue. Now, this industry has been opened up to foreign finance capital. So, when the government shows least concern for the uplift of the undertakings, opens up the lucrative fields to the capitalists, willfully causes loss or allows the undertaking to go into red, it is no use accusing the employees. It is the government and the ruling capitalist class behind it that should be

held responsible for non-performance.

So, people must know that anything under private ownership, management or control cannot mean good performance, earning of profit, etc. If it were so, then why more than five lakhs industrial units or establishments, mostly privately owned, remain closed or sick?

**The real cause**

The real cause of sickness becoming endemic in industries lies in the all-out and overall crisis of world market created by capitalist economy. Under capitalism its economic law operates equally both in private and public sectors. The difference in form does not change the character or the problems.

The capitalist governments are trying in every possible way to help the crisis-ridden capitalist class. The menacing pace of militarisation is aimed at providing artificial market to the capitalists while millions upon million common people perish without employment, food, shelter, drinking water, primary education and health care. The doors of military production have been opened wide to the capitalists. But this is considered not enough to channelise the 'excess capital' accumulated. World finance capital, including Indian partner faced with unprecedented crisis in world market — its instability and uncertainty knowing no bounds — seeks opening up of public sector undertaking to it. Not only the importance of these undertakings in the economy but also the relative safety of investment in the same with assured profit are considered by monopoly finance capital as a welcome relief, at least for the present.

**Government's plea — strike call — parley and after**

The BJP government outbidding its parliamentary opponents is presently busy in converting the PSUs into private units for the benefit of the monopolists. This it does by both selling out or disinvestments of shares. The misleading argument of the government is that it cannot bear the loss of these loss-making undertakings. Not that all the undertakings run in loss. The government is disinvesting even the most prestigious and profit-making PSUs like Indian Oil, ONGC, VSNL, etc. But the fundamental question is why this loss? Further, who purchases these loss-making units? Surely the private capitalists? What for? To sustain loss or for profit making? The government remains silent on this vital aspect.

The government's so-called argument becomes stranger still when it says that it is not selling out all the undertakings. It is also disinvesting its shares in PSUs. What for? The ostensible plea is for collecting Rs 10,000 crore to reduce fiscal deficit. It must be known that the total amount of fiscal deficit, as it stands now, is one lakh twenty-five thousand crore of rupees in modest estimate. The government spends one lakh crore of rupees towards payment of interest on debt (internal and external both) or for debt redemption. Still, in the current year's budget, the government has expressed its intention to borrow more than one lakh crore of money from the market.

By the by, it can be recalled that the BJP so

much eager to reduce fiscal deficit has shown least concern for recovery of public sector bank loans of Rs. 58000 crore, principal money and the interest accrued on it standing as NPA (Non Performing Asset) because of willful non-payment by monopoly controlled corporate houses. Instead, it gives the so-called assurance, from time to time, to increase the toothless tribunals, being exploited by these squanderers of public money. Just necessary change of law would have enabled the government to recover one lakh crore of money or so. So, its so-called argument in support of privatization is hypocrisy per excellence.

This sets the background for the sudden three-day strike call from 17th August by the central trade unions led by CPI(M), CPI, Congress. A strike call, that too for three consecutive days must be preceded by long drawn programme both for the consolidation of the employees as well as for people's awareness and mobilizing their support. Nothing of the sort was seen. The obvious intention was to pray for a sitting with the government functionary to show to the employees how much earnest these leaders were for the employee's interest.

A sitting of the leaders with the Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee took place on 12 August. Various aspects of worker's problems were discussed. Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, all-India President of UTUC (LS) was present. The points he placed and discussed with the Prime Minister are given in this issue, separately.

We quote from press report about this meeting. "The meeting was convened primarily to persuade unions to call off their planned three-day strike against the government's disinvestments policy. The Prime Minister, while explaining them the need to sell off in public sector units won a breather when these leaders agreed to defer the proposed strike. The unions want disinvestments to be limited to 40 p.c. The Prime Minister assured, while his government did not want confrontation with workers and protect their interests it would be pursuing its disinvestments strategy." (*The Telegraph*, 13 August 2000)

From the reporting it is also obvious from Intuc leader Mr. Sanjeeva Reddy's press briefing that they agreed to the deviation of the undertakings into loss-making and profit-making while privatising or disinvesting them. They never challenge the very mode of privatization. To do so is to challenge the policy of globalisation. Moreover, workers cooperative was suggested as a means to safeguard workers' interest and the government was asked to give it a chance before selling off.

We can warn the workers that this is misleading. The workers' cooperatives will be subject to the same law of capitalism and the attendant crisis of market as other forms of management face.

We call upon the employees to concentrate their whole attention on the government's attacks, mobilize people's support by awareness campaign, get themselves prepared for a protracted movement with anti-capitalist anti-globalisation orientation and disarm those who only make a show of movement while backstabbing real movement.

# LAHORE PEACE FORUM FORMALLY LAUNCHED

A seminar on the theme of "No More Horishimas" was organised jointly by Lahore Peace Forum and Joint Action Committee For Peoples Rights on 6th of August at Lahore Press Club. Despite severe rain at the time of seminar, over 200 turned up to hear known human right activists and trade union leaders.

Several peasants organisations and trade union leaders were among the audience. One peasant organisation presented their "Tarana" reminding the well receptive audience that if we do not change the system, wars would continue. A Punjabi poet Arif Shah Prohnaa was given tremendous applause when he spoke against the price hike and linking it to building the unwanted atomic bomb.

Speaking on the occasion, Asma Jehangir, a well known human right activists and former chairperson of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan said that people of Pakistan and India are not in favour of war and ongoing conflicts. They want a peaceful solution of Kashmir issue. She opposed the nuclear madness of the rulers of India and Pakistan. Asma Jehangir criticized the military rulers of Pakistan and suggested to link the Peace movement to the struggle for restoration of democracy in Pakistan. She said we do not want any child of Lahore, Delhi or Peshawar to be victims of nuclear holocaust like Hiroshima.

Farooq Tariq (Labour Party Pakistan) said by formally launching the Lahore Peace Forum today, we will make every effort to build a real mass peace movement in Pakistan. "an isolated peace movement from the rest of the fights will be not very much effective to achieve the goals." He severely criticized the American imperialism for its role in building the nuclear arsenal internationally. "Do not believe the fine words of American president, they are only an eye wash, real intentions are to keep the role of international gangsterism" Farooq Tariq said.

Comrade Riuzwan Atta, Moeen Nawaz Punnu, Tahira Mazhar Ali, Shahtaj Qazalbash and Roshan Dhunjibhoy spoke of building the peace movement and linking it other organizations. Moeen Nawaz assured the audience of trade unions support for the peace movement.

The seminar left a very positive mark and was well taken up by the national and international media. A demonstration was held after the seminar outside the Lahore Press Club building.

A well-attended meeting of doctors, lawyers, trade unionists, writers, academics and social activists was held on 6th August 2000 to observe 55th anniversary of the atom bombing of Hiroshima. The meeting was jointly organized by Action Committee Against Arms Race (ACAAR), Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace & Democracy (PIPFPD), Association of Peoples of Asia (APA), Pakistan Doctors for Peace & Development (PDPD), and International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) Pakistan Chapter.

The meeting was addressed by a host of eminent personalities highlighting the significance of Hiroshima in present situation and the tasks it entails. Among others, B.M.Kutty of PIPFPD traced the formation of ACAAR in May 1998 following the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. He recalled the contribution of Mr. Yusuf Mustikhan as the convenor of ACAAR in the

formative stages of ACAAR and of Dr. Haroon Ahmed for his contribution as its first elected president in developing ACAAR into an active anti-nuclear, anti-arms race citizens' organisation, leading to the subsequent formation of Pakistan Peace Coalition — a coalition of several other anti-nuclear and peace committees in different cities and the national Peace Conference it organised in Karachi in February 1999, attended by over 500 Pakistani and foreign peace activists.

Dr. Tipu Sultan representing IPPNW Pakistan Chapter told the gathering about the horrible medical and social consequences of a possible nuclear attack. He exhorted the members of the medical profession to spread the message of the anti-nuclear movement and disseminate the knowledge about the devastating medical effects of nuclear weapons to the largest number of people, to mobilize public opinion against nuclear weapons.

Dr. Haroon Ahmed attributed the apparent apathy of the people towards the peace movement, to lack of education and the jingoistic atmosphere created by religious extremists who want to promote their vested interests by misleading the innocent public with extremist slogans inciting violence.

Dr. Jaffar Ahmed stressed the need for including in our syllabus peace education as an important component. He called for a revision of the curriculum particularly concerning history, to remove such components which poison the minds of the students and incite them to violence and intolerance. In this context, he cited the example of the ongoing violence in Kashmir, in which hundreds of young men are dying in the name of Jihad sponsored by extremist religious groups.

Manzoor Razi of Railways workers Inqilabi

Union highlighted the impact of militarisation and arms race on the working people who are the worst hit by the diversion of national resources towards arms race and militarisation of society. He condemned the religious extremist groups for spreading war hysteria in the name of Kashmir Jihad. To divert the attention of the working people, the state machinery is encouraging these religious groups. He condemned the induction of military personnel in civilian institutions.

Ms. Sheen Farrukh said that women are the hardest hit victims of all kinds of arms race and war-mongering. She called for wider participation of the people in larger numbers in expressing public protest at all forms of arms race and war-mongering.

Maulana Ubaidullah Bhutto of Jamiatul Ulemai Sindh refuted the claims of some religious parties that the activities of the Jehadi groups in Kashmir are in accordance with Islamic principles. He said that Islam attaches the highest value to the life of the human being, irrespective of his faith. According to Islam, the murder of one human being is tantamount to the murder of the whole humanity. He quoted from Holy Quran to support his viewpoint that Islam only permits modest measures in self-defence but causing indiscriminate destruction or making weapons of mass murder is inimical to Islamic teachings.

At the end of the meeting, it was announced that a peaceful demonstration shall be held outside the Karachi Press Club on 9th August (the 55th anniversary of the atom-bombing of Nagasaki at 4:30 P.M.). An anti-nuclear leaflet with Fahmida Riaz's poem "Pokhran aur Chaghi" was distributed. Several banners with anti-war slogans were signed by the participants, which will be displayed in the 9th August demonstration.

## Victory of students movement in Haryana

Once again it is proved by the students of Haryana that under correct leadership they can fight against all problems of present educational system. It is due to the pressure of the students movement that the Vice-Chancellor of the Rohtak University accepted some demands and promised to seriously consider all other demands of the students. The accepted demands include, admissions without late fee which was Rs. 500/- earlier, cancellation of the rule to oust failed and compartmental students and giving admission to vocational stream students in regular colleges. The other demands include holding of students union election, providing admission to all and withdrawing the fee hike fully etc. Actually, in the beginning of this educational session the university had increased the fees by 500%. Not only this, the university had imposed several anti-student rules regarding admissions.

The AIDS0, Haryana State Committee gave a statewide call to students to organise and fight. On 6th July 2000, the AIDS0 organised students demonstration at Rewari Regional Centre of Rohtak University. Large number of students from Rewari, Mahendragarh, Gurgaon and from other districts participated. Through the Regional Director of Rewari, a memorandum was submitted to Vice-Chancellor of Rohtak

University.

After that state level demonstration was organised on 13th July at Rohtak Varsity V.C. office and this turned into a day-long Dharna. A memorandum was submitted to the V.C. by a delegation of students led by Comrade Ramesh Chander. In the course of this submission of charter of demands the V.C. accepted the above mentioned demands. The President, AIDS0, Comrade Pratap Samal and Comrade Om Prakash, President, Haryana, AIDS0, gave a clarion call to organise a more powerful students' movement against all other problems of educational system.

## Premchand Birthday observed at Sagar

Under the auspices of the AIMSS, Sagar district unit, a meeting was organised at Chetna Study Centre to observe the birth anniversary of the great humanist litterateur Premchand. Smt. M. Sharma was among the speakers on the occasion which was presided over by Smt Swarna Vajpai. The President as well as the speakers highlighted the role of Premchand's literature in Indian renaissance movement and pointed out the necessity of its proper evaluation in the present era.

At the outset the portrait of the great litterateur was garlanded by the President.

## UTUC-LS

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particularly, and other infrastructure industries in general.

Consequently, this is affecting not only employment generation but also existing employment negatively.

Moreover, the government is not taking into account that the 'built up public sector' acts as a relatively regulatory mechanism of the very volatile and anarchic market. At the same time, it is a compulsive phenomenon today that in every country in the world including imperialist countries, governments have to invest in order to revive the economy from deep recession. This is the case in Japan, the third largest economy, where the government is planning to invest 3 trillion dollars.

The lesson is this, with the dismantling of public sector the government will also lose the regulatory instrument of the market as a whole. Consequently, this will have a negative effect on the growth of employment as a whole. So, this policy of disinvestment should be stopped.

5. The government is encouraging the monopoly sector to downsize its manpower by allowing it the right to hire and fire. On the other, the government is assigning the unorganised sector to generate employment. This is economically not tenable. The reservation of branches of industries for the SSIs and unorganised sector as a whole has been given a go by. This sector is now not only to contend with big capital but also with liberal imports. This has already made this sector's survival precarious, leave alone growth of employment. Here also the government has to amend its policy to create growth of employment.

## Brutal police repression in A.P.

(Contd. from page 1)

fare was hiked by 40 per cent. Prices of all essential commodities were skyrocketing. Many industries are closed, throwing thousands of employees on to the road. Agricultural workers are continuously migrating to towns and cities in search of jobs. Health and education are denied not only to the poor but even to the middle class people. In such a situation the recent abnormal hike in power tariff has further added huge burden on the people who are left with no other alternative than to fight back.

The nine left parties have been developing the movement in a phased manner. In all the districts rallies and dharnas were organised. Hunger strikes were conducted in front of almost all the Mandal Revenue Offices for four continuous days and picketing before the district Collectorates and Transco offices were organised. The government let loose severe repressive measures on the agitators. In the last two months the police brutally lathicharged at least 40 times injuring more than 1000 people. The police instituted false cases against more than 2000 people. All the leading intellectuals, civil liberties organisations and journalist unions condemned the police atrocities. During this period bandhs and processions were organised in many districts against these police atrocities. The movement gained such a momentum that even the Congress participated in it.

In this background a round table conference was held on 2.8.2000 at the initiative of some of the leading intellectuals of the state. This round table conference resolved to appeal to the people not to pay the electricity bills until the hike is withdrawn. A call was given also to form people's

committees from the grassroots level to organise this non-co-operation movement and to resist any harassment from the government officials and police personnel.

During the recent Assembly session the opposition parties raised the issue on the floor of the Assembly. Three MLAs from the main opposition party the Congress (I) questioned the government on its stand and insisted that the Assembly should not take up any other matter for discussion until the government makes its stand on the roll back of power tariff hike clear. Instead of paying heed to this demand the state government suspended the questioning MLAs and used the marshals to push them out. The suspended MLAs en masse sat in an indefinite hunger strike from 19.8.2000 condemning the attitude of the government.

As a higher phase of the movement the nine left parties and the Congress (I) gave a call for statewide Bijli (Electricity) Bandh on 24.8.2000 for one hour in the night which was successful. These parties had finally given a call for "Chalo Assembly" on 28.8.2000.

Our party the SUCI has been participating with its full strength in all the programmes organised by the nine left parties. Our party has appealed to the people through various leaflets, bulletins, meetings and campaigns that they should step up their organised action in order to overcome the resistance from the government. People's resentment and moral support alone will not do. They will have to organise themselves under the banner of the genuine forces of movement for real redressal of the grievances.

## THE BATTLE OF BOLIVIA

Let Them Sip Champagne: The Battle Of Bolivia Water is the essence of life, making up 70% of the human body. Mankind can't live long without it.

Such is the background behind a failed swindle, masterminded by the forces of globalization. The backlash nearly led to a revolution, the first of hopefully many to follow in the New World Order of economics. Oddly, there wasn't too much about it in the news.

In 1999, the Bolivian government "privatized" the public water system in the city of Cochabamba, based on the "advice" (i.e. demands) of the World Bank. They only considered one bid, by a conglomerate led by Bechtel, the giant Francisco-based engineering

monolith. Bechtel and its pals were given a 40-year- lease. More than half a million people depend on the water to survive.

What is important to understand is that there's nothing unusual behind such plans: it's modus operandi for both the IMF and World Bank. "Privatization" means selling public enterprises and natural resources to private corporations. The corporations are unsurprisingly almost always Western military-industrial titans. In exchange, the countries are infused with more cash. The sales job is that the corporations will run things more efficiently than a bungling government industry.

It didn't work that way in Bolivia. Big surprise why would an amoral money machine not abuse a granted private monopoly and the license to gouge? The conglomerate doubled and tripled prices. They claimed it was to recover the cost of a huge dam project in Misicuni, yet to be built. Many impoverished people suddenly couldn't afford the essence of life. The response from Bechtel, the Bolivian government, and the World Bank was a collective shrug. Get used to the new economic realities. Or, as Marie Antoinette would put it, "Let them sip champagne."

The people of Bolivia responded to the economic rape and thievery with protests led by workers, environmentalists, and citizen's groups.

A strike and transportation stoppage brought the city to a standstill. They were met with tear gas and bullets. Six were killed and 175 injured, including two children blinded from the chemical warfare.

In April 2000, Hugo Banzer, the former Bolivian dictator and now the President, declared martial law. World Bank Director James Wolfensohn commented to reporters that, "The riots in Bolivia, I'm happy to say, are now quieting down." Bechtel issued a statement denying the upheaval in Bolivia had anything to do with its plundering, and suggested the revolt was the work of those opposed to a "crackdown on coca-leaf production."

But the tide had turned. This time, the opponents of Corporatism (under the banner of "free trade globalization") ended in victory against the evil empire. While Bechtel and the Bolivian government tried to shift blame to the other, the industrial giant fled its offices and tried to extract a US\$12 million exit payment. The leader of the water protests, Oscar Olivera became a national hero.

More than even Seattle or D.C., the Battle of Bolivia is a global wakeup call against economic oppression in the world.

[Source : Robert Sterling, Editor, Konformist, from Internet]

## AIDSO observes Janamukti Sankalp Diwas at Bhopal

The All India DSO Bhopal unit observed Janamukti Sankalp Diwas on 15th August at their state office. The programme was conducted by Comrade Asit Mohanty. Main speaker was Comrade U.P. Biswas of M.P. Organising State Committee, SUCI. Comrades Subhadra Biswas, Sarjeet Sikdar, Argat and Subhas also placed their viewpoints.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF NIHAR MUKHERJEE