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World Capitalist System Drifting Towards Global Recession

The depth and dimension of the crisis bedeviling the world capitalist system can no longer be wished away merely as a financial crisis of a temporary nature. That it is a recession afflicting not merely the economies of South-East Asia hitherto trumpeted as 'Asian Tigers', the 'emerging markets' including Japan but the contagion has spread to Europe, the USA, Latin America, Africa and other parts of the globe, including the Indian Sub-continent, no longer remains a secret. It has also been accepted by all the knowledgeable circles that the crisis is of the worst kind, the characteristic features of which can only be compared with those that led to two world wars. The Uruguay round of talks continuing for eight years that led to the last round of GATT and formation of the WTO only in 1994 proves to be ineffective and urgency is being felt for a new agreement on international trade with the growing tendencies of protectionist measures being adopted by the advanced capitalist-imperialist states just to avoid the repetition of

Global Depression of the '30s preceded by the same tendencies. We will try to measure the magnitude as also the causes leading to the crisis and show the vindication of our party's different analysis in this regard.

The Magnitude

As regards the magnitude of the crisis and what it means to the working people the world over, it can be stated in a single line : the global unemployment rate now goes beyond 40% and 90% of the people of the world are afflicted by poverty. That this is not an overstatement can be verified by the utterance of no less a bourgeois bigwig than the Chairman of the World Bank.

In his speech in the Annual Meetings of the IMF/World Bank this year, Mr. James D. Wolfensohn the President World Bank Group had this admission : "...I have spoken in the past about images of hope of the people... but today I have other memories. Dark, scaring images of desperation, hopelessness and decline of people

who once had hope but have it no more...

"Today while we talk of financial crisis, 17 million Indonesians have fallen back on poverty and across the region a million children will now not return to school. Today while we talk of financial crisis, an estimated 40% Russian population now lives in poverty. Today while we talk of financial crisis across the world, 1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 a day; 3 billion live under \$2 a day; 1.3 billion have no access to clean sanitation ; 2 billion have no access to power.

"We talk of financial crisis while in Jakarta, in Moscow, in Sub-Saharan Africa, in the slums of India and in Latin America, the human pain of poverty is around us." (*Monthly Economic Review*, Small Industries Development Bank of India, November '98) Though somewhat mellowed down and not thorough-going, yet what a picture it reveals so far as peoples' miseries are concerned ! But there is the other side of the coin. How much capital the capitalist-imperialists

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Anti-Christian Campaign in Gujarat Part of A Wider Strategy

The goons of the Hindutva brigade are now targeting the Christian community. Since Christmas Day the Hindu Jan Jagaran Manch, a politico-religious outfit of the ruling BJP has been burning churches, attacking chapels and Christian missionary schools in Surat and Dangs districts of Gujarat. As a result of this barbaric attacks many people were injured. The houses of the Christian community were ransacked at Subir, Gadhvi, Divankhedi and Nada Khade villages near Ahwa in Gujarat. And the latest to fall victim to this attack are the Christians of Nashik district in Maharashtra. It is a premeditated strategy of the Sangh Parivar to subjugate the minorities. The Sangh Parivar is sending signal to all minority communities that they have no place in India unless they conform to 'Hindu ethos' of life.

As a matter of fact the recent attacks in Gujarat and Nasik are the latest in the series of attempts to target the Christian community since early 1998. The "Forum of Christian community for human rights" reported 108 instances of attacks throughout India up to August '98, and in Gujarat alone the instances of attacks were 58 up to June last. The rape of nuns in MP, the intrigues hatched by the Sangh Parivar in the North East and the recent attacks in Gujarat and Nasik are all

part of a grand design. The most dangerous aspect of this anti-Christian terror campaign is the attitude of the Vajpayee Government towards this. Sensing the general wave of revulsion that swept throughout the country Mr. Vajpayee condemned the incidents in Gujarat. But the condemnation would have been believable, had he taken prompt and strong action against the culprits. But we are constrained to observe that no such action was taken even after so many days of the occurrence of vandalism against the Christian community. On the contrary, within 48 hours of Mr. Vajpayee's visit to the affected areas the Hindu zealots have burnt down two more churches and it is noticed that senior BJP leaders of the party and the government were issuing statements that the attacks on Christians were being blown out of proportion, and they were even trying to shield the culprits by justifying their misdeeds. After the attacks on Christmas day Mr. Keshu Bhai Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat harped on 'forced conversion' by the Christian missionaries and thus sent positive signal to the district administration. The district administration took no immediate action and the goons went on rampaging with impunity. Mr. Promode Mahajan, the I&B Minister of the Central Government, too accused

the Christian community of indulging in conversion under the garb of service to the poor. Thus behind the show of condemnation against the attacks on Christians the BJP leaders went on subtle rationalisation of these attacks.

Mr. Vajpayee issued statement that urgent steps were being taken to bring the situation under control. The Union Home Ministry sent a fact-find mission in Gujarat. But this team curiously did not meet any Christian or human rights organisations, and only accepted the version of the Gujarat Government. The Gujarat Government contended that the violent incidents on Christmas day were only the backlash of the 4th December National Protest Day organized by the Christian community. Thus those who are victims of attacks are accused of inciting the violence ! The central team must have prior brief from Mr. Advani and so their task was easy. This shamelessness of the Government at the Centre and the state deserves strongest condemnation.

Mr. Vajpayee also visited Dangs district on 10th January and commented that he was shaken. But he at the same time motivatedly wanted a national debate on conversion issue. Mr. Vajpayee also advised the Hindu Jan Jagaran

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Crisis of World Capitalist System Not of a Temporary Nature

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fritter away in their speculative spree. Since last year two big waves of stock market collapses have occurred on a global scale. "Indeed tumbling share prices have wiped almost \$4 trillion off the world's financial wealth over the past two months — the equivalent of Japan's GDP" (*The Economist*, September 5-11, 1998). What a colossal wastage of money extracted from the people hard put to have their existence anyhow! They say capitalism is the last word in human civilization. Yes, capitalism should not be spoken of, let alone giving any defence to it, if civilization is to have a real worth, a real connotation.

The Causes

Long back, Lenin in his book of great historical importance, "*Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*," laid bare the parasitic character of imperialism which is moribund capitalism. The prognostication based on the basic characteristics being revealed then has been fully vindicated by the debacles in the emergent markets of South-East Asia. We must realize that by pointing to 'parasitic' nature of capital at this stage of imperialism, Lenin wanted to make us understand that there would be less and less of capital investments, commensurate with investible funds of capitals and not in absolute terms, in industries or other innovative products and projects. But more and more for speculative purposes. It means quick profits by shifting of usually called 'money'. Now that under the bogey of 'globalization' the natural barriers or restrictions are no longer there not only for the benefit of multinationals — which according to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh are nothing but the "modern variants of international trusts and cartels as defined by Lenin in his book on *Imperialism*" — but also for the global finance capital to move anywhere to mint speculative profit and then flow out as soon as the situation there seems no more conducive. The latter is the principal cause of trouble. Every day trillions of dollars, the so-called excess capital — capital not engaged in productive purposes, the volume of which increases in every part of capitalist world because of "excess products related to the global demand, and more around the globe in search of speculative profit." A few words to explain 'excess products'. It is not that the overwhelming majority of the people of the world after being fed properly and their wants satisfied there remain excess products to be disposed of. No, just the reverse. More and more people are sinking into dire poverty because of loss of employment, unemployment, or earnings are not matching the ever-increasing prices of essential goods and services. Therefore, the market — meaning their demand being backed up by purchasing power to be 'effective' in bourgeois world — gets more and more squeezed. Whereas the productive capacity goes on increasing in geometric progression. Therefore, the capitalists guided by their sole motive of minting maximum profit find no reason to invest in fields already overcrowded products found to be in excess of the demand level prevailing in the world. Therefore, the problems

of 'excess products' and 'excess capital' for export in the period of imperialism explained by Lenin.

What does this flow of speculative capital do really? It may come in financial transactions among multinational firms and banks as was done in 'emerging markets' of South-East Asia. It may also come in currency trading and stock purchases. But the bubbles burst (showing excessively overvalued real estates and stocks); currency and stock markets collapsed. Foreign speculative finance capital took flight because of the benefits now open to it, thanks to the so-called 'globalization' as the foreign exchange holdings in the East Asian economies became depleted by the foreign trade deficits and debt burdens. This fact has been given importance most, not only by Malaysia but also by Japan, a giant in the capitalist-imperialist world now fallen victim because of its maximum holdings in the companies of this region and naturally of the stake. Japanese companies have gone bankrupt, its banks have drawn shutters because of bad loans for the operations of Japanese companies in South-East Asia.

The multinational companies of both US and European origins could not escape the effects of crisis. Both the US and the European imperialist countries are increasingly hard-hit by loan defaults and market contraction in East Asia. Besides, these 'emerging' South East Asian countries were the biggest market for US and European exports. The slums in this region has seriously affected the industries as well as exports of the imperialist countries.

Let us hear from the Finance Minister of Japan, the worst-hit, about the state of affairs in his own country as well as in the South East region as also the cause, underscored in his speech at the same Annual Meeting of the IMF/World Bank, this year. Here is what he says, "At home, the steep downturn of the Japanese economy became obvious last fall. Despite steady implementation of the latest economic policy package, the largest ever, and other measures, our economic situation is still extremely severe."

Pointing out the change come over the world economic scenario the Finance Minister said: "The world today is vastly different from what its leaders, who gathered at Bretton Woods in 1944, anticipated. The whole idea of free trade and foreign exchange transaction under the fixed exchange rate regime was indeed instrumental in post-war restoration and progress in world economy. What confronts us today, however, is a different reality. A reality in which markets fall prey to large scale capital movements that are abrupt and flowing across national boundaries."

And, therefore, "it is essential that the authorities fully recognize that their corporate as well as financial sectors are faced with risks that accompany foreign capital inflows such as foreign exchange risks and the risk associated with maturity." (Kichi Miyazawa, Japan's Finance Minister at the World Bank/IMF Annual meeting, 1998).

Inter-imperialists contention intensifies

In East Asia one can find very well the conflicting economic strategies of the US and Japan, both giant imperialist powers. The hot-bed of contention between the two giants is the emerging markets of South-East Asia.

The US wishes to take over the key ailing technological and financial firms and the rest to be declared bankrupt. That is why one can hear harping again and again on the need to change the bankruptcy law in the joint meeting of the IMF/World Bank.

But Japan has a different view. Japan is prepared to spend huge amount, we will quote the figure from its Finance Minister's speech, to bail out the Japanese multinational firms and banks by public works 'pump-priming'. It thus wants to retain the largest chunk of the market of this region. This will be obvious from the following declaration made by Japan's Finance Minister: "In this context, I would like to present a new scheme of financial assistance, totalling some 30 billion US dollar to be provided as Japan's bilateral support under the scheme. 15 billion US dollar will be provided as mid to long term financial assistance for the recovery of the real economy of these Asian countries; another 15 billion US dollar will be reserved as provision against short term capital needs that might emerge in the course of promoting economic reform". Besides, there is further assurance: "For its part, Japan stands ready to provide technical assistance" and should a need arise for short term capital in the Asian countries to facilitate trade financing... Japan will have short term capital ready for the need." (*ibid*)

Motive of IMF-World Bank Bailout Fund

This is in the backdrop of the IMF's role as the chief debt collector for the foreign banks. We will separately deal with the usurious character of global finance capital, but must mention in passing the bare facts. The IMF has come out with so-called 'rescue-package' of several billions of dollars each for these beleaguered economies of the South-East. But the so-called bail-out funds will be transferred from the IMF to these Governments on condition of rechanneling to the international banks to service mostly soft private sector loans. The implication will be obvious from the following: "This is tantamount to a massive subsidy to the foreign debts (South Korea US \$200 billion and over \$100 billion each for Thailand and Indonesia) which were contracted by private companies and financial institutions ... unable to pay back due to the slowdown of exports and business, the currency depreciation and the stock market crash in these countries. It would appear that the IMF and the creditor countries that are contributing rescue packages want to ensure that the international banks and institutions that lent heavily to troubled Asia countries are paid back in full." (emphasis added, *Journal - Institute of Political Economy*, Manila, January '98).

What is to be noted is that the market principle of profit or loss in business is not

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Lenin's Prognostication of Imperialism Fully Vindicated in South Asian Crisis

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applicable for the International Banks and Financial Institutions lending private capitals recipient countries. The Governments of these countries are to pay back the international creditors in full no matter how much cut in social welfare schemes is effected for this. Those who have to pay the price are the people involved with the ailing local banks, finance companies and corporations. Worst affected are the innocent members of the public that deposited their life savings in these institutions. Thus thousands of depositors of their savings do not know when they will get back their savings despite their respective Government's assurances when 56 finance companies closed in Thailand, 16 banks in Indonesia, 14 merchant banks suspended in South Korea.

The rapacity of neo-colonial exploitation by means of usurious character of global finance capital and its parasitic nature, extracting life blood of the dependent economies is quite obvious.

We were discussing the inter-imperialist rivalries over their share of global markets.

In Europe, the US imperial capital demands further lowering of interest rates when the US keeps its interest rate higher than what prevails in all other imperialist countries to attract foreign capital and avert dumping of huge amounts of US bonds and stocks at their hand.

It is further noted that 75 per cent of direct investments of global centres of capitalism — the United States, Japan and the European Union — to the US dollar, the Japanese Yen and the Euro is sure to ensue. Japan's Finance Minister alluded to this reality by making an apparently innocuous comment; "overdependence on the US dollar was obviously one of the causes of the currency crisis that erupted in Asia." And he concludes his speech with a clear hint for mutual accommodation by the three main centres within the global camp of finance capital thus: "A greater role for the Japanese Yen, as an international currency together with the US dollar and the euro, should contribute to the stability of the international monetary system." The declaration of euro and its conversion rate as well was announced at the stroke of midnight on December 31, 1998. It has been demanded to be "one of the greatest dates" in 20th Century.

This reminds us of the brilliant piece of dialectical materialist analysis of Stalin in 1952 with firm grip over the law of motion in the world capitalist system. Stalin showed: "outwardly, everything would seem to be 'going well'; the USA has put West Europe, Japan and other capitalist countries on rations; Germany (Western) Britain, France, Italy and Japan have fallen into the clutches of the USA and are meekly obeying its command. But it would be mistaken to think that things can continue to 'go well' for 'all eternity' that these countries will tolerate the domination and oppression of the United States endlessly, that they will not endeavour to tear loose from American bondage and take the path of independent development". (Stalin: *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, p.33)

Today, this is vindicated in clear terms when Japanese Yen and the European euro clearly under the dominance of German capital appear as the challengers to the hegemony of US dollar in the economic field. The politico-military strength to be added waits for the time being. Let us recall in this connection the Leninist teaching: "The capitalists divide the world not out of any particular malice, but because of the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method, in order to get profits. And they divide it in proportion to 'capital' in proportion to 'strength' because there cannot be any other system of division under commodity production and circulation." (quoted in our publication — "*On Latest Design of Imperialism*").

Few words to sum up

In our publication we wrote: "Huge excess capital facing the prospect of less opportunity for investment in production, is being sought to be invested in stock markets, debt instruments. Therefore, usurious feature of finance capital is much more pronounced today, it becoming most volatile in nature as a result. This volatility of usurious finance capital has become one of the main causes behind the instability of the economy, particularly of the developing countries" (p.29)

This analysis is amply verified by concrete experiences discussed above, more so after the debacle of the emerging markets in South East Asia. The cry raised in the affected countries for control of inflow and outflow of global finance capital, supported by Japan which suffered most for its bulk investments in the region challenges in effect the so-called slogan of globalisation, 'free market' 'free trade' et al under the tutelage of a single imperialist power the US.

The collapse of the 'emerging markets' completely discredits not only the so-called liberalisation of economies and their 'opening up' to foreign finance capital trumpeted to be the salvation for the developing economies but actually debunk the entire world capitalist system searching desperately for one economic prescription to the other so that capital accumulation, the inexorable law of capitalism, can work. As capital would die a natural death the day it stops expanding. To quote Marx in *Grundrisse* "Capital as such is absolutely incapable of limiting itself irrespective of the consequences even for the total destruction of humanity. For capital is endless and limitless driven to go beyond its limiting barriers. Every boundary is and has to be a barrier for it. Else it would cease to be Capital money as self-reproductive."

Further, the parasitic nature of moribund capitalism obstructs investments for productive purposes and is destroying productive forces. The social-democratic philistines, those learned professors and ideologues who now preach Keynesian welfarism are spreading the illusion of rejuvenating moribund capitalism to life by some reform measures. They talk of removing poverty and income disparities, increasing social amenities and social securities, education, women's upliftment, health care, public hygiene so on and

so forth.

The rebuff to these social pacifists was given by Lenin in his book on Imperialism in such telling words:

"...if capitalism could develop agriculture, which today frightfully lags behind industry, if it could raise the standard of living of the masses who are everywhere, still half-starved and poverty stricken, in spite of the amazing technological progress, there could be no talk of a surplus of capital... But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism" (Lenin: *Imperialism — The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Selected Works, Vol.1, p.759).

Marx too had a bitter banter at them — they are for capitalism — bourgeois democracy whatever it may mean minus crisis, minus poverty, minus backwardness. And indeed it is "trying for the impossible" to borrow Marx's expression.

The shadow of Great Depression, world wide becoming darker rightly apprehended to be surpassing many times the havoc created by the one during the 30s to be borne by the millions upon millions of working people over the globe calls for their preparedness both ways. They must get rid of the petty-bourgeois social democratic illusion about the so-called 'progressive role' of capitalism still now and as such their alliance within the country with the principal political defenders of capitalist order. People are to gear up their mass and class struggle for the ultimate goal of overthrow of bourgeoisie from the state power through anti-capitalist socialist revolution. They will have to interlink their anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle with anti-imperialist struggles along with the exploited and oppressed working people of the globe. As our party has pointed out, verified by the concrete facts about the murderous nature of neo-colonial exploitation more and more the crisis of market deepens. It has shown that among the major contradictions defined by Lenin, contradiction between the imperialist powers headed by the US and the oppressed people and countries has assumed the greatest importance.

Our party has reiterated in the publication mentioned earlier that at this stage of historical development of capitalism there has been 'cosmopolitanisation' of national capital when the national market is being considered as a part and parcel of world capitalist market. The protectionist policies increasingly being resorted to by the advanced capitalist-imperialist countries comes not from so-called 'national' outlook but from apprehension to protect the reserve area for their finance capital to operate.

And finally, our party showed 'globalization' is nothing but 'internationalisation' of finance capital to demand a global economy 'free' for exploitation, removing all the national barriers and controls.

The natural conclusion from all these is to get free from any fanciful idea of national bourgeoisie or any part of it becoming an ally in any peoples' revolution. The anti-imperialist struggle invariably today merges with the task of anti-capitalist Socialist Revolution in respective countries.

United Democratic Movement Alone can Isolate Communal Forces

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Manch that it was they who would bring peace ! But no action has been taken against them or he did not order any arrest of the culprits. So it is not understood how peace can be restored there by reposing faith on the perpetrators of crime.

Attempts are being made to project Mr. Vajpayee as a clean man who does not like all these nasty tricks and barbarous acts of the armed wing of the Sangh Parivar. But is it the reality ? Is Mr. Vajpayee against saffronisation of education ? Does he not subscribe to the view of the Sangh Parivar that the minorities in India must conform to 'Hindu ethos' of life ? The reality is that Mr. Vajpayee very much belongs to the saffron political establishment. But the BJP has the pragmatic necessity of projecting Mr. Vajpayee as above board of all these misdeeds of the Hindutva brigade as the governance of this vast country requires the acceptability of a broad cross-section of the people. So while Mr. Vajpayee goes on issuing fine statements, the Sangh Parivar at the same time resorts to implementing its own agenda with least obstruction from the government. The BJP is pursuing this fascist design very skillfully.

After the recent debacle in the Assembly polls in the four states the BJP and the Sangh Parivar are trying to revive the vote bank by falling back on religion. This is why they are desperately trying to fan up communal passion among the people. Their profession is to trade in people's faith and use them as pawns in their game of power. So they are now targeting the Christian community.

What has happened in Gujarat has not only hurt the Christian community alone but caused a deep wound on democratic norms, principles, values and ethos of Indian life. The natural bond of love, respect and fraternity between people professing different religion has been severely undermined. It has sowed the seeds of mistrust, disunity and mutual hatred and thus it, at the same time, created the ground for thriving of the dark forces of religious fundamentalism and fascism. Every well-meaning person of the country who has concern for the country and its people cannot but be dismayed at the menacing manner by which the BJP is appearing to foist fascism in the country to serve the crisis ridden ruling capitalist class. The BJP led government at the Centre has failed on all fronts and as a result the people's discontent is mounting. The crisis of the capitalist economy is shaking the very foundation of the system. In the given situation the fascist design of creating disunity among the people through fratricidal strife will help in thwarting the united struggle of the people against this exploitative capitalist system, besides the attempts at creating necessary vote bank for the BJP.

The absence of countrywide powerful democratic mass movement no doubt has provided the necessary opportunity to the BJP to fan up communal politics in our country. The CPI(M) is now talking about containing communalism. It is true that the BJP is appearing as a menacingly dark and rabid force of communalism. But it is also true that the Congress is not at all a secular party. Then how can the CPI(M) fight communalism by branding the Congress as

secular and joining hands with it ? It is trying so from the angle of parliamentary politics. It is solely from consideration of parliamentary politics that it is aligning either with the Congress at one time or with the BJP at another time. But it never tries to bring left politics in the forefront by unleashing a countrywide democratic mass movement on all burning issues in the life of the people.

In the present situation when the BJP is rapidly appearing as a menacingly dark fascist force trying to wreck havoc in the life of the people by sowing the seeds of disunity, mistrust and mutual hatred, it is the duty of all right thinking and democratic minded people and all left democratic forces to rise to the occasion and

unleash a powerful countercurrent of united democratic mass movement on all burning issues in the life of the people on the edifice of higher proletarian culture with a view to restoring, protecting and extending democratic norms and values by uniting and organising all sections of the toiling people. Apart from realising the specific demands of the people, these mass movements would create a congenial atmosphere to the development of democratic and secular values and logical bent of mind and unite the different communities of the country professing different religions and speaking different languages in a firm bond while isolating fundamentalist, communal, divisive and parochial forces. This is the urgent task of the hour.

UTUC-LS Demonstrates in Calcutta against Patent Bill

The West Bengal State Committee of UTUC-Lenin Sarani held a demonstration meeting in protest against BJP government's proposed Patent Bill seeking retrograde amendments to the Indian Patent Act 1970, at B. B. D. Bagh area Calcutta on 21 December 1998. In an unanimously adopted resolution, the meeting firmly held that the changed and amended Patent Act in line with provisions of 'GATT '94' as has been proposed in the Bill would not only adversely affect the level of self-reliance achieved so far in drug, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers and agriculture but also could help establish absolute control of domestic and foreign monopolies in these areas. These would further make thousands jobless, aggravate the unemployment problem and push the prices of medicines beyond the reach of vast majority of our population. The resolution while demanding of the government to withdraw the Bill unconditionally called upon the working people to come forward unitedly to force the government to retreat. The resolution was moved by Comrade Achintya Sinha, All India Secretary, UTUC-LS.

The main speaker of the meeting Comrade Shankar Saha, Secretary, UTUC-LS West Bengal State Committee, while discussing various adverse consequences of the Bill appealed to the working people to sharpen the movement against BJP government's dangerous move.

A symbolic copy of this proposed Bill was burnt.

UTUC-LS Demonstration in Chennai

The Chennai-Chengai District Organising Committee of UTUC-LS, organised a demonstration in front of Chennai Kuralagam, near Central bus stand, placing the general demands of workers of unorganised sectors attached to it.

The affiliated unions were : Chennai Stainless Steel Workers' Union, Chennai-Chengai Private Vehicle Drivers' Union, Chennai-Chengai Auto Drivers' Union, Chennai-Chengai General Workers' Union, and unions in Government sector like Tompcol and Handicapped Rehabilitation Modern Training-cum-Production Workshop.

The demonstration was held on 16-11-98. The demonstration was led by Comrade V. Sivakumar, member, Chennai-Chengai District Organising Committee of UTUC-LS. Over 200 workers participated with placards, banners and red flags. They raised slogans based on the genuine demands of unorganized sector in a very disciplined way. Participation of women workers was significant.

Comrade G. Purushothamman, Legal advisor of UTUC-LS affiliated unions in Chennai-Chengai District addressed the gathering. He reminded the workers not to confine their movement to the legal frame but to develop democratic movement consistently.

Comrade S. Jawahar, Secretary, DOC of UTUC-LS addressed the demonstration.



Demonstration by UTUC-LS in Chennai on 16.11.98 in support of the demands of the workers of the unorganised sectors

SUCI's Letter to All India Minority and Weaker Sections Council

[The All India Minority and Weaker Sections Council in a letter invited the Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of our party to join the Sit-in-Demonstration on 6.1.99 in Calcutta to protest against violence against Christians. Our party joined the programme and Comrade Debaprasad Sarker, MLA of West Bengal read a letter written by Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of SUCI, to the President and General Secretary of All India Minority and Weaker Sections Council before the participants of the Sit-in-Demonstration. The said letter is given here.]

Thank you for your letter of invitation to join the Sit-in Demonstration to protest against the fresh spurt of violence against Christians which is a part of a planned, organised and frequent attacks going on in different forms upon all religious minorities in our country. It is an indisputable fact that onslaughts on minorities and communal riots are problems of long standing in India, but in recent times these have assumed a more menacing dimension engineered by the BJP and its outfits.

Distortion of history, pampering of majority religion, spreading of venom against minority religion, destruction of religious and other institutions, killing of innocent people and even raping of women are some of the 'sacred' forms indulged in by the Hindutva zealots to keep up their avowed mission of strengthening 'cultural nationalism', which not only threatens the minorities but also the democratic and human values, secular concept of life, democratic unity of the people and all the rich heritage acquired through the hard battle of the pioneers of Indian Renaissance and freedom struggle. This barbarism continues and intensifies unabated

inspite of the 'stern stance' of the Prime Minister and his repeated assurances to check the violence.

It bears recall that in 1938 when personalities like Rabindranath, Romain Rolland, Einstein, Bernard Shaw and others had condemned fascism in Germany. Hitler got a 'valuable' admirer in India in RSS Sanghachalak M. S. Golwalker. In his book *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, with much enthusiasm he declared, "To keep up the purity of the nation and its' culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic races — the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by. ... From this standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu nation ... in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in

the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights." Needless to mention that the fanatic disciples of Guru Golwalkar like those in Nazi Germany are out today in fulfilling the design of their Guru.

So, not only to distract the attention of the people from the burning problems of their life, to disrupt the unity of democratic movement and extract mileage from religions vote banks at the hustings as well, but also to whip up religious jingoism and national chauvinism has become a common ploy in the hands of ruling class and BJP government in its conspiracy to bring fascism which survives by dehumanising the human beings. This looming danger in our country, overcasting all other aspects of life — philosophical, ideological, cultural, political, economic and social — is causing much agony and concern among all the right thinking people. It is a lesson of history that one form of fundamentalism cannot be fought out by another form of fundamentalism. The present danger can be defeated not by replacing one party by another in elections but only by developing a very powerful, sustained, well organised, truly secular, democratic movement embracing all sections of the people.

Keeping these in mind we join your programme with all eagerness as a part of developing this much needed movement at this critical hour of our country.

Movements in Haryana

In the darkness of night on 28-29 December 1998 some miscreants broke the statue of Saheed-e-Ajam Bhagat Singh at Pilani, in Rajasthan which has created great public commotion in the town and the surroundings. AIDYO, AIDSO and our party SUCI sharply condemned this heinous act. It may be mentioned that in February '82, too, an attempt was made to demolish this statue of the great Indian revolutionary and patriot. That time the statue, erected by Saheed Bhagat Singh Smaran Samiti in March '80, was reinstated by the public in presence of Bibi Amar Kaur, sister of the great martyr. In their protest statement, our party, AIDSO, AIDYO, all have stressed that this nefarious act is an attempt to dishonour the great memory of one of the greatest martyrs and revolutionaries of Indian freedom movement. Bhagat Singh is the living embodiment of struggle and sacrifice against all sorts of oppression, exploitation and for freedom, equality and secularism in the true sense of the term in Indian society. By dishonouring Saheed-e-Ajam Bhagat Singh the agents of vested class, the rulers and the religious fanatics are trying, though in vain, to wipe out the memory of this great revolutionary from the minds of the young generation of the country. Such type of cowardly attack on the statue constitutes a fascist attack against all sense of values in the country. Both the State unit of the SUCI and AIDYO has demanded of the Central Government and the State Government of providing proper protection to the statue, arrest of and exemplary punishment to the culprits immediately. The Haryana State Committee of AIDYO also has

vehemently deplored this ugly incident. During the last statewide protest demonstrations against the anti-people policies and acts of the HVP-BJP State Government and the Central Government in Haryana, organised by the SUCI and other mass organisations of the party, strong protest against this vandalism was lodged in different places of Haryana also.

The Haryana State Organising Committee of the SUCI has launched a statewide movement against the misrule of the HVP-BJP government in Haryana and as a part of this movement the party organised protest demonstration and dharna in front of the Deputy Commissioners' Offices in different districts of the state on 30 December last.

Massive demonstrations were held at Rohtak, Rewari, Kaithal, Gurgaon, Sonapat, Kurukshetra, Ismailabad and at other district headquarters of the state against spiraling prices of essential commodities, hike in electricity tariff, atrocities on women as also deteriorating law and order situation reflected through rising dacoity, looting, oppression on women and callous attitude of the police towards all these unlawful activities in the state and on the other hand mounting oppression of the police on the activists of mass movement and peasants' and workers' protests.

With the rising prices, poor people are starving while in the name of inspecting ration cards the government is conducting family survey and is motivatedly showing poor families as rich and the rich ones as needy and thus the survey has proved to be completely a farce. The demonstrators everywhere demanded stoppage of such spurious

survey and provision of proper ration cards to the poor. Demand for enforcing Essential Commodities Act in the state was also made for checking blackmarketeering and hoarding of food articles and other essential commodities.

Torture on women in the state is taking alarming proportion. Recently a school girl was gangraped at Kilo village. The demonstrators including women under the banner of AIMSS vehemently protested against such rising menaces.

At Sonapat a number of protests and demonstrations took place. In addition to the SUCI's protest demonstration before the DC's office and the mini-secretariat a large number of workers and government employees took out procession, under the banner of National Platform of Mass Organisations, against the misrule and oppression of the HVP-BJP government, where the UTUC-LS, Sarv Karmachari Sangh, Haryana Government PWD Mechanical Karmachari Union, the CITU and others also participated.

At Ismailabad the AIKMS and other mass organisations of the party demonstrated before the DM's office and demanded, among others release of the arrested demonstrators on the day of All India strike on 11th December and withdrawal of the false cases lodged against them.

Everywhere memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister of India was submitted to the respective DCs in district headquarters. Comrades Anup Singh, Bijoy Kumar, Hari Prakash, Zile Singh, Sujata and others took active role in leading demonstrations in different places of the state. Everywhere hundreds of party workers, supporters, sympathisers and common people enthusiastically took part in the protest demonstrations and took pledge to build up mightier movement in the state on the burning problems of the people's life.

How Democratic Are Western Democracies !

The advanced imperialist countries never tire of projecting themselves as defenders of human rights and democracy. Yet — not to speak of their economic exploitation that has and is draining the wealth of the poorer countries — through their intrigues, intervention and naked aggression they are engineering conflicts, upheavals and wars that often engender hundreds of thousands and even millions of refugees as happened in former Yugoslavia. But when the people displaced by such upheavals, wars or conflicts, or pushed by other problems, with their very existence and life under threat, knock at the doors of these imperialist countries, whose democratic rights and freedom were projected so alluringly, what kind of welcome awaits them at the hands of these champions of democracy especially now, after the need for competition with the socialist countries has ceased? The door is shut in their face. The overwhelming majority of the refugees who manage to get in are detained and treated like criminals, and then deported in the most ruthless way. In their case there is no bourgeois media to highlight their plight. The media is silent : it is the same media that tried to create public outrage through an unprecedented misinformation campaign in case of Iraq and Yugoslavia. Memories of concocted stories like babies being thrown out of incubators by Iraqi soldiers, to justify US led aggression on Iraq, are still vivid. It turned out to be a myth, and even admitted as such later on. It was spread by the same media that magnified 4 eyewitness accounts of rape in Bosnia by Serbian soldiers, into the systematic rape of 20,000, and 50,000 Muslim women in Bosnia by Serbian soldiers in what the media called 'ethnic cleansing'.¹ It was done with one and the same end in view: to create public sanction and support for large-scale imperialist intervention that plunged a whole country into a bloodbath. But having achieved their purpose, the same media that projected itself as champion of human rights, is absolutely silent on the abuse of human rights and inhuman treatment meted out to refugees engendered precisely by capitalism-imperialism. The pathetic plight of these people does not concern them. While PTB, the Workers' Party of Belgium has been organising a movement for the last ten years demanding the opening up of the frontiers for them — *Solidaire*, its organ has repeatedly highlighted their plight in its pages. Those without valid papers are hounded and brought to closed detention centres where they have to live in suffocating conditions in small unhealthy rooms, their dignity and rights trampled in a way that is reminiscent of concentration camps. The isolation cells, for the 'recalcitrants' in these centres were found to be even worse than the worst in regular prisons. And yet these people are not criminals, they came begging for help with belief in Western democracy.

And the great majority is expelled, barbarically. If they dare protest or resist there is provision for their being handcuffed hands and feet, their mouth closed with tape, or stifled with the help of pillows, or for tranquilizer injections or even for their being packed up like sausages. In the Netherlands cotton sacks may be put over their heads, and masks made of synthetic material covering their whole head reportedly have been commissioned secretly recently. In this connection the recent murder during such a forced

expulsion, of Semira, a young Nigerian girl of 20 who had sought political asylum in Belgium and resisted and protested, has come to light. She was accompanied by 11 gendarmes and her hands and feet not only handcuffed like a criminal, but she was suffocated to death in the aeroplane, her face pressed down into a pillow. The whole was videotaped. The incident created public revulsion.

But for one reported case how many go unreported. Maltreatment and racial murders by police of immigrants and people without valid documents goes on in silence, as the undertaker of Semira confirmed : many die quietly, unknown, unwept for, without friends or relatives. The spokesman of the law ministry (parquet) Brussels, Jos Colpin, on the day of this incident declared that "the procedure foreseen in case of rebellion is to suffocate the person concerned with a pillow"² *Le Martin* reported : "end of May, quite some time before the murder of Semira, Ben Peters, one of the policemen who participated in the expulsions at Zaventem has strangely disappeared. For, he disapproved of the methods utilised, he felt ashamed. His friend reports today: "It was known that if necessary they struck. Ben had compassion. Especially of the African expulsion accompanied by children. The policemen used for the expulsion of Semira were his colleagues."³

It may be remembered that Belgium is a small imperialist country with some stakes in Yugoslavia and having some former colonies in Africa. But there is nothing singular about the way it treats the refugees, whose conditions in other imperialist countries, including the USA, are no better. In 1997 there were 11,762 applications in Belgium for political asylum, of which more than half came from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. There were 11,194 orders to leave the territory of which 4,245 were forced repatriations.⁴

While rightist and fascist forces carry on a vile propaganda that immigrants are the source of unemployment to stir up racial hatred and division among people in different countries of the European Union, there are not only increasingly resorting to almost complete closure of their frontiers, and taking recourse to ever greater repressive and inhuman measures, but even plan to intervene in the concerned countries to stem the inflow of refugees at its source, as an extract of a document of the EU Council, of 1 July 98 clearly shows. There it says : ... " 5.3 On the question of the reduction of migratory pressure

exerted from the European periphery itself, it is before everything necessary that the European Union acts where ethnic crises risk getting aggravated.

5.4(...) These last years have shown that the various conflicts which have broken out have had, on the plane of migration, considerable consequences for Europe.(...) She has therefore a perfect right to intervene on her own initiative when such crises risk breaking out."⁵

But there is another side to this most sinister design and growing fascistic attack of capitalism imperialism. It is the growth of people's protest. With public revulsion against the assassination of Semira, the young Nigerian girl, the movement for opening up of frontiers, the movement of solidarity for all people without valid documents and without jobs has taken a new turn. There have been a series of protest demonstrations of thousands of people throughout Belgium against closed detention centres, and demanding the right to political asylum and right to work for everybody. Each time more and more workers, students, immigrants and people are participating in the movement. Countering the defensive propaganda of bourgeois and social democratic parliamentary parties that it is not possible to accommodate all the misery of the entire world, this movement is carrying the debate deep into the ranks of the workers and students in particular and the people in general, and highlights : the question is not: how much misery can we accommodate but: how can we put an end to capitalism that breeds all this misery. It highlights at the same time the need to support liberation movements in the third world.

It is heartening to know that there are solidarity movements organised by leftist forces in neighbouring countries too. Thus on 10 December torch-lit marches were planned in all the big European cities, asking for regularisation of all those without documents. All the anti-imperialist forces everywhere should come forward against these growing barbaric and inhuman attacks by capitalism-imperialism.

1. *NATO in the Balkans, Voices of Opposition*, Ramsay Clark, Sean Gervasi, Sara Flounders and others. 2. RTBT Radio, 23 Sept. cited in *Solidaire*, Sept. 30, 98. 3. *Le Matin*, 30 Sept. cited in *Solidaire* 21 Oct. 98. 4. *Ibid.* 5. *Strategic Document on the politics of the European Union regarding immigration and asylum*, note of the Presidency to Committee K4, Doc. 9809/98 p. 18. cited in *Solidaire*, 7 Oct. 98. 6. *Le Matin*, 5 Oct. 98, cited in *ibid.* All translations from French ours.



A section of gathering of State level rally by National Platform of Mass Organisations on 29.11.98 at Bhiwani, Haryana. The gathering was addressed by Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Central Committee member of SUCI

Women's Convention in Gulbarga, Karnataka

District level women's convention against dowry, obscenity and atrocity on women was held on December 2nd 1998 at Public Garden at Gulbarga in Karnataka.

Hundreds of women from all walks of life came in procession from different corners of the city, including high schools, colleges, localities and mahila mandals.

The convention was inaugurated by Dr Swamy Rao Kulkarni, Principal, N. V. College. Comrade Pramila, Secretary, AIMSS Andhra Pradesh, Sri Eshwarayya Math and Smt. Rekha Patil, Announcer in AIR were the Guest Speakers on the occasion. Comrade K. Radhakrishna, Secretary, SUCI, Karnataka, was the main speaker. In his speech he said that women's emancipation would be achieved only after the elimination of private property. The convention was presided over by Comrade V. Nagamal, President, AIMSS, Gulbarga District Committee.

The programme ended with a drama on dowry.



A section of gathering of women's convention at Gulbarga

Women's Convention at Anantapur, AP

Hundreds of women with thunderous slogans marched against dowry system and atrocities on women. On 18.12.1998 under the auspices of All India Mahila Samskruthika Sangam (AIMSS), with reverberating slogans women paraded the streets of Anantapur (AP). People enthusiastically came out to see a different type of demonstration. This demonstration was a new phase in the protracted movement of the AIMSS from June '98 against the burning problems of women. On August 21st a convention was organised on these problems in which All India General Secretary, AIMSS, spoke. In that convention a resolution was passed to realise five demands. To realise these demands protracted struggle was released. As a part of it number of meetings were organised in women colleges, localities and villages. 'Maha Pradarshana' on December 18th was culmination.

Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, AP State Organising Committee of the SUCI, who attended as Chief Guest, while inaugurating the programme congratulated the organisers for taking up a protracted movement against atrocities on women

and dowry system to achieve important demands.

After the inauguration, women who came from different places of the district started 'Maha Pradarshana' from Lalithakala Parishath. AIMSS State Presidents and Secretary, Comrade G. Lalitha and Comrade Ch. Prameela respectively led the procession. Anantapur town Secretary Comrades Jyothirmai, Saileela and others were also in the front.

While speaking at the gathering AIMSS State President Com G. Lalitha cautioned the women not to remain silent towards atrocities, but to be bold enough to come forward to build up mighty movement.

State Secretary of the AIMSS, Comrade Ch. Prameela called upon women to form AIMSS committees in every street, village, college etc. The problems of dowry is not only the problem of women but a problem to the whole society. It is a social problem. To fight it out women have to follow the foot steps of the great men like Raja Rammohan Ray, Vidyasagar, Sarat Chandra, Kandukuri Veersha Lingam. Gurajada Apparao who fought cruelties against women throughout

their life.

Comrade Jyothirmai who presided over the meeting called women to join as volunteers to continue the movement to higher phases, with renewed vigour to achieve the demands.

Smt. Saileela, asked the women to be bold and try to mobilise women into movement.

Smt. Sarada, Lecturer at K.S.N. Degree College, said that dowry system would be vanished, when new consciousness dawned upon women.

A 20-member delegation met the District Collector, Anantapur, who assured the delegation to recommend the first four demands for the consideration of the state government. He accepted the fifth demand and assured to implement the demand as soon as possible.

Women Convention in Tripura

Under the auspices of Tripura Organising Committee of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan a convention was held on 20 December, 1998 at Agartala Press Club focusing a seven-point charter of demand. Attended by women delegates from various parts of Tripura the convention adopted a proposal to safeguard the interests of women. Ms Shefali Chowdhury, Chhaya Das, Shefali Bhowmic of Progressive Womens' Council, Kalyani Bhattacharya, teacher, Prof. Kalyani Bhattacharya, Prof. Anjali Chakrabarty and Shibani Das spoke in support of the proposal. The main speaker in the convention was Comrade Sadhana Chowdhury, member, All India Committee and Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan. She explained that the problems of the women were in fact the problems of the whole society. In order to solve their problems, the causes behind the problems of the whole society must be found out and their character realised. At the same time a strong organisation must be built up to release powerful movements to protect the women's interest and dignity as also for the cause of the whole society.

The Convention was conducted by Rajlakshi Devebarman.



Women's parading the streets of Anantapur, AP against dowry and atrocities on women on 18.12.98

Resist Communalisation, Commercialisation and Privatisation of Education by BJP-led Government

Amidst all pervading crisis, may be surpassing others, the spectre of communalisation of education is looming large before the country as a menacing threat from the BJP led union government, the party and its companions and organisations like RSS, VHP, Bajrangdal, Shiv Sena and others. On the pretext of a value oriented education, a slogan really initiated by Rajiv Gandhi to uphold traditional heritage, the BJP and its likes have moved up further to introduce 'Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation' — under the garb of which they actually play with and fan up religious sentiments, the Hindu sentiment in particular and others in reaction. Knowing well that religious sentiments still exist in the mind of a larger section of the people, they intend, by this move of theirs, to cash in on them to earn dividend in elections and to serve the ruling class by breaking people's unity with communalism, religious fanaticism, even a national jingoism equating nationalism with so called Hinduism. At the same time, they are out to destroy the scientific bent of mind in people and to turn them into robots controlled by fanaticism and blind faith with a view to keeping them in ignorance and darkness, the best way to prevent them from rising against injustice and oppression.

Of course this communalisation of education comes over and above commercialisation and privatisation which, too, the BJP led government is implementing with a new zeal; here again they present no difference from governments of the recent past, barring renewed vigour in action and intent.

It is true that the cherished goals of stalwarts of the Indian Renaissance remain largely unfulfilled: their realization that 'education is the backbone of the nation' is ridiculed by the plain fact that education has always been pushed to a backseat even in independent India. But whatsoever semblance of a secular, democratic and scientific education was there in the country, even that is in serious jeopardy from the plans-policies-measures of these champions of the Hindu religion such as the BJP and its likes! How much imbibed and guided by religious values these champions are in person; how sincerely do they observe religious austerity in their personal lives — the less said the better. But in public and for the masses what they perpetrate with arrogance and in utter disregard of any civility is nothing short of fanatic acts. Thus they tried to make by a Government order the prayer of Saraswati, a Hindu goddess, compulsory in schools of UP including Madrashes; but this order has lately been withdrawn. Further they attempt to inaugurate education ministers' conference with rituals and prayers; they mark anti-Muslim characters in history, and them only, as patriots: they throw copies of the Bible into fire as in Gujarat: they introduce history textbooks in schools run by 'Vidyabharati' — an appendage of RSS, showing in maps all the countries around the border, even 'Tibet' included in Indian territory; and so on and so forth.

Any one of these is enough to raise questions in rational, humanitarian people of the country and abroad, about the sanity of the perpetrators. But even these are not all! They suggest to isolate womenfolk from the mainstream of education,

beyond the level of Class VIII in schools, prescribing for them an education for household work and child upbringing! Unpretentious, they resound the Hitlerite slogan of 'go back to kitchen and be a good mother' and disown the arduous struggle of makers of Indian history, like Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Saratchandra, Phule, Subramaniam Bharati and others for emancipation of women folk from the yolk of religious and patriarchal oppressions.

The BJP Government tried to introduce teaching of the Vedas and Upanishads as compulsory subjects in schools, avowedly to inculcate value-based education, posing it synonymous with Hindu religion-based education, and to acquire knowledge of the same religious heritage. In addition, ostensibly for this purpose, they also wanted to make teaching of Sanskrit compulsory. This advocacy for Sanskrit or the Vedas was then entirely different in motive from desiring teaching of Sanskrit as a language or the Vedas as ancient literature. Stiff opposition could thwart the move for the time being. But the plans and talks remain to serve as a camouflaged move to handle or cash upon the craving for value and for heritage that arises in mass-mind amidst total decadence, which the Indian capitalist society breeds today. But concept of values has changed through ages; the Indian Renaissance too, bears the evidence of religious concepts being fought against, and democratic humanist values making their way. Luminaries like Vidyasagar unambiguously expressed that 'Sankhya and Vedanta are false systems of philosophy', instead the students should learn logic and chemistry. Still earlier, Rammohan had said — Sanskrit education system as in *toles* is a planned step to keep the country in darkness. Hence the religion oriented education as advocated by BJP and its likes can only turn us back in thoughts and bring in a Hindu religious revivalism; here too, when we find how respectful the advocates are to religion and to values in their personal life, it leaves no doubt that the end is not religion itself.

In fact, BJP wants to demolish the secular, democratic and scientific education, whatever semblance of it we have. It preaches vocationalisation of education, an outlook and approach to education, just enough to earn bread but without anything to do with education in real sense. But again vocational education is a means only, whereas vocationalisation of education sets the entire purpose of education on a wrong footing. All the more, with acute economic and industrial crisis can even a vocational training ensure people of their bread? The masses thus lose both ways — neither real education nor bread.

On the other hand, the BJP is all for technology even at its highest form, for a handful, privileged though, to man the hi-tech industries and economy with a view to gaining foothold in the highly competitive globalized capitalist market.

But above all it tends to dish out an education based on religion with fanatic distortions of history, society and humanity; a brand of education that will promote blind faith, destroying man's power to reason; that will degenerate generations into dehumanised robots, ethically, morally, culturally crippled; unable to stand on

their own feet, to keep head high, to raise voice in protest of injustice and oppression. This way, the BJP wants to ensure the ruling class of its service, to ensure the end of progressive movement of the oppressed. Rulers, particularly under crisis, develop fear-complex of oppressed people getting conscious and rising against oppression and injustice. Spread of scientific education developing a scientific bent of mind can only help people earn consciousness. The best way to check this spread is to keep them ignorant, unconscious, plunged in darkness and fanaticism. The BJP and its associates set their moves to this end only.

The Government at the Centre also contribute increasingly to commercialise education, to make it expensive to the extent that it goes beyond the reach of common people and serves only a handful of privileged and moneyed section. They are also continuously taking to privatisation, thus shaking off the minimum responsibility, the state was bearing to educate its people. Thereby they push the entire human resources of the country into the hands of monopolists, the corporates, to the market economy; this is, however, a measure that has already been coming under fire even in lands considered as citadels of market economy.

We must realize one more point. Education has been the victim since independence, though it took a major turn with the National Policy of Education of Congress Government led by Rajiv Gandhi. Commercialisation, privatisation, 'value-based' education — all remain the brain-child of that episode. The BJP is treading upon the same path, with the same purpose, towards the same goal. They can only claim the distinction of bringing communalisation to the fore, threatening the social and cultural life of the country, even the very future. On the other hand, at this period of globalisation, BJP's thrust is privatisation and commercialisation of education. It was initiated by the previous Congress government. This attack on the universal education has only aggravated during the present BJP rule. For instance, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) funded by World Bank, is continued to be implemented to the detriment of children's education, since it dictates the syllabus, system of teaching, etc. towards that goal. Till now DPEP is being implemented in 13 states in selected districts. Rs 40 crore is being spent per district. The investors will extract full return of their money while destroying the process of man-making education. Also, as reported in the media, Murli Manohar Joshi is planning to wave Rs 10 crore deposit necessary for the big houses to open private universities, a move originally made by Narasimha Rao. Mr Joshi is also contemplating to do away with government control on determining fees, structuring syllabus etc. regarding private universities.

This all-out attack on education will further restrict education and will draw millions into blindness and fanaticism. Already mass movements are being developed by our mass organisations in different parts of our country against these moves. This movement needs to be made mightier and protracted to compel the BJP government to withdraw these utterly anti-people steps. This is the call of the hour.

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