

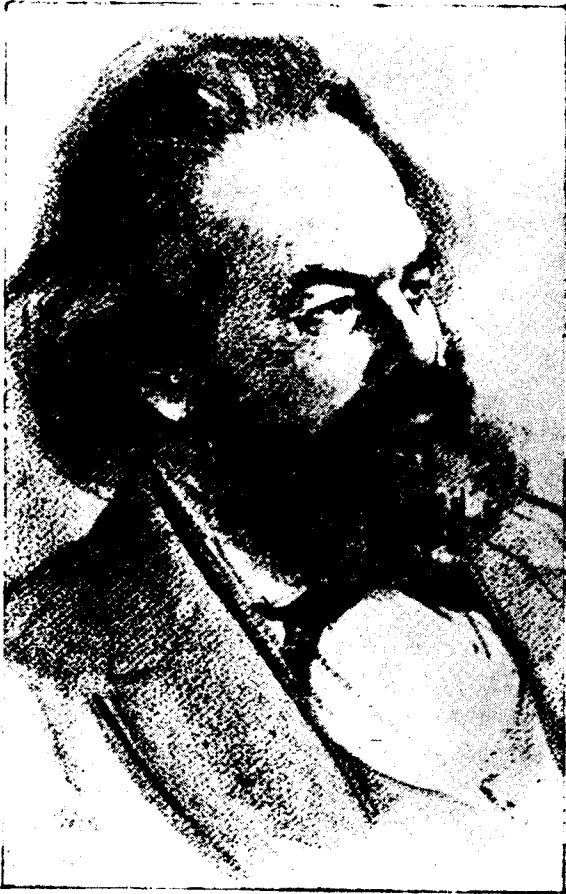
# Proletarian Era

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## Remembering Karl Marx on his 118th Death Anniversary



May 5, 1818 — March 14, 1883

*"In all countries of Europe it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only denied by those, whose interest it is to hedge other people in a fool's paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, nor all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses ; but that, on the present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labour must tend to deepen social contrasts and point social antagonisms."*

**Karl Marx**

(From : General Rules of the I.W.M.A., 1871)

## Corrupt Vajpayee Government Must Resign — Nihar Mukherjee

*Demanding immediate resignation of the corrupt Vajpayee Government, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement to the press on 14th March, 2001 :*

"Sensational revelation by Tehlka dot com. is a naked exposure of the most despicable corrupt face of BJP — the party which talks loud about religious value based politics in the garb of saffron.

"This again proves that all the ruling parties serving the bourgeoisie — whether at the Centre or in the states — while mouthing anti-corruption slogans, are themselves mired in neck-deep corruption. Taking bribes and cut-money from all government contracts and deals, including even defence purchases, has become the order of the day to the detriment of the interest of the people and the country.

"Undeniable evidence has compelled the BJP President to admit his own role in taking money for his party as well as the involvement of the principal secretary of Prime Minister and Prime Minister's son-in-law in these types of black deals which clearly shows how deeply Mr. Vajpayee and his entire government are involved in these vile acts. Hence the advocacy by Trinamul Congress and other allies of BJP for immediate institution of an enquiry commission is nothing but a clever attempt to bail out BJP from this crisis.

"We demand immediate resignation of the corrupt Vajpayee government.

"We appeal to the people not to get confused by the anti-corruption postures of other opposition parties who are out to exploit the situation in their petty parliamentary interests as was done by the BJP in its 'crusade' against Rajiv Gandhi, Narsimha Rao, Laloo Prasad Yadav and others only yesterday.

"We want to reiterate that class struggles and mass movements on the burning problems of people's life, based on noble revolutionary ideology and higher ethics, can alone play as a powerful deterrent against these immoral and corrupt deeds of the government, ruling parties and bureaucracy."

## Stand Up Unitedly Against "Killer" Budget !

The Finance Minister, of the BJP-led central government, Yashwant Sinha presented the budget for the year 2001-2002 on 28th February last. Never before in post independence period the budget has been so aggressive on the people for ensuring the interest of the capitalist class in the background of the grim economic situation as revealed in the pre-budget economic survey. The Finance Minister cannot maintain any pro-people pretension even, for ensuring maximum profit for the capitalist class in the given economic situation. And in absence of any effective resistance movement, thanks to the role of the compromising social democratic leadership, the Finance Minister has gone berserk in fleecing the people. For this simple reason the people from all walks of life despite their different adherence or views have taken to the streets to condemn this draconian budget. Everywhere there is protest, and voice of condemnation is being raised.

The policy of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation was initiated by Manmohan Singh, the Finance Minister of the Narasimha Rao government and it was carried forward by P. Chidambaram, the Finance Minister of the UF government supported by the CPI(M) and the Congress. The BJP-led government has been pursuing the same economic policy more vigorously. It was therefore the time for this government to answer the people on the 10th year of the implementation of this policy, regarding the benefits accrued to the common people. But let

alone answering the people the BJP led government declared war on them. The net result of this new economic policy has been revealed in the pre-budget economic survey presented by the government. It reveals that the economy is in deep crisis, because of acute demand crunch. It has been also revealed that there has been marked recession in the industrial and agricultural sectors. This recession has been continuing for the last two years. The rate of increase in agricultural production was only 0.7 per cent last year and this

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# Naked Attack On Workers' Right To Make Them Virtually Bonded Labour

(Contd. from page 1)

has increased by only 0.9 per cent this year. This marginal increase does not indicate end of recessionary pressure in agriculture. The increase in industrial production was 6.5 per cent last year and it has come down to 5.7 per cent this year. The GDP growth rate is 6 per cent, which is much below the target of 9 per cent. The revenue expenditure is more than 50 per cent of the revenue income. Nearly 70 per cent of the tax collection goes to meet the debt servicing burden.

The unemployment problem is mounting and the condition of the common people is dismal. The recession in economy is caused by the demand crunch owing to lack of purchasing power of the people. The government is claiming that 26 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. But this figure is a fudged one. Actually an upper layer of the population has the purchasing power to purchase consumer durables, and this budget has been framed to cater to this section of the society, by fleecing the rest of the population. Yet Mr. Sinha shamelessly called this budget as budget for growth, for democracy and budget for equity!

Economic onslaught on the common people both in dimension and intensity exceeded all previous records. But what is unique is that in this budget Mr. Sinha painted the workers as villains in the path of industrial growth and declared war on them by promising drastic amendment of the Industrial Dispute Act in favour of the industrialists. Mr. Sinha said that the Industrial Dispute Act would be so modified that the employers would not have to seek prior permission of the government for closure, lay off or retrenchment of workers in those industries or establishments where the number of workers is less than 1000. What is the compulsion of the Finance Minister to include this proposal which normally falls under the ambit of the labour ministry, in his budget proposal? He wants to convey positive signal to the capitalist class on the firm commitment of the government to the so-called second generation reforms. The industrial houses were complaining about the "archaic" labour laws and wanting changes in those laws in their favour. Mr. Sinha gave that assurance in his budget speech. In this period of technological advancement when the industries are shifting from labour intensive system to capital intensive one this amendment of the ID Act will provide the owners and employers with the statutory protection at the expense of job and livelihood of the workers. Earlier the BJP-led government has setup a 6 member consultative committee comprising members from the monopoly groups of Tatas, Ambanis, Birlas, Goenkas. The purpose of setting up of the committee was to direct the economic policy that is to be pursued by the government. This budget is the brainchild of this committee. The Finance Minister unabashedly followed the dictates of his mentors. The state of affairs clearly indicates that the real players behind the curtain are the monopolists and corporate sector giants.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that in most of the modern capital intensive industries the

number of workers is less than 1000 and so this clause of the Industrial Dispute Act will be used again and again against these workers. So whatever democratic rights have been acquired by the working class through long and protracted struggle and many sacrifices, will vanish and the workers will virtually be reduced to bonded labourers. The job security of the majority of the workers would be at stake and number of people without any purchasing power will swell. It is seen from report in *The Economic Times* dated 6.3.2001 that out of 99, 25, 810 workers employed in all the registered factories of the country 75.38 percent of workers i.e. 74,82,470 workers will lose their job security as a result of this blatantly anti-worker proposal of Mr. Sinha. Dimension of attack on workers is palpable and need no further corroboration.

In his budget speech Mr. Sinha stressed increased investment to tide over recessionary pressure. His concept of growth of economy, which is naturally a bourgeois concept, is no solution. It says the more the capitalists get fiscal and other economic concessions as incentive to investment of capital for production, the more will be investment and the more will be production. And the more the production, the more will be growth rate as well as employment and expansion of the market. This sort of argument confuses many because of chorus of propaganda in its favour by the ruling parties of all hues, including the CPI(M) and the bourgeois propaganda media. But what do the experiences of S.E. Asian countries, South Korea and Japan tell? Do not the experiences of these countries prove the utter falsity of this claim? The recession in economy cannot be reversed by this prescription. And the reality is that the recessionary pressure is fundamentally due to the lack of purchasing power of the people who are ruthlessly exploited by the capitalist class for maximum profit. So what is really necessary to tide over this recession is to take such measures which will increase the purchasing power of the common people. But the Finance Minister cannot do that as it will not ensure maximum profit to the capitalist, rather any pro people measure will decrease their profit. So let alone any pro-people measure the Finance Minister fleeced them and gave one concession after another to the capitalists besides assurance of amendment of the Industrial Dispute Act which means further demand crunch and more crisis in economy. The Finance Minister also assured the capitalists to amend the Contract Labour Act. By such amendment the government is out to scrap the Section 10 of the Contract Labour Act, by which the employers were debarred from employing any contract labour in any permanent nature of job. Now by amending this section the employers can do so in case of a permanent job and the labourers engaged by contract will not get the wage or any other benefit of the permanent worker in spite of discharging the duties of permanent worker, and may be retrenched at any moment without any notice. The anti-worker policy of "hire and fire" will have its sway. The labour organizations should take note of the fact that after the implementations of all the amendments in the ID Act and the Contract

Labour Act, it would be very difficult for the workers to get organized. All these amendments are necessary for the owners as the industrialists are required to reduce workforce for modernization for which the Finance Minister is offering rebate on the one hand and giving loan at a much low interest rate.

What the Finance Minister wanted to convey is that the industrial growth of the country has been halted because of all these labour laws, government control over capital and market, burden of taxes on capitalists and dearth of capital flow in the market. Mr. Sinha tried to remove all the 'hurdles' in his budget and so the different chambers of commerce and the industries and the foreign multinationals are full of praise of this budget.

In view of dismal economic condition, closure and complete privatisation of the PSUs have been recommended by the government in the pre-budget economic survey. Side by side the downsizing of the central government departments has been stressed. In pursuance of this recommendation a profit making PSU like BALCO (Bharat Aluminium Company) was sold for a song to Sterlite, a company with dubious credential, in hot haste. It is reported that the total asset value of BALCO is Rs. 5000 crore and the government sold 51% share at Rs. 551 crore! One can easily imagine the underhand deal involving crores of rupees behind the sale of the BALCO. Demand for enquiry against the Minister in charge, Mr Arun Shourie has been powerfully raised on this issue and the government is also trying to shield him in all possible ways. In a word, in the name of privatisation public money is being squandered away. It has to be remembered that all the PSUs have been built up with public money and these PSUs provide employment to a large number of people. These PSUs have been providing huge amount to the government every year in the form of dividend, taxes and duties. These PSUs provided Rs 46,925 crore in government exchequer in 1998-99 and this was 11% more than the previous year. Among the organised industrial sector these PSUs provided the maximum employment. But the Finance Minister announced closure of 8 PSUs and privatisation of another 27 PSUs in this fiscal year. The implementation of this proposal means further curtailment of employment and further retrenchment of thousands of workers. By privatisation of the PSUs the government expects to get Rs 12,000 crore.

In this process of privatisation the role of judiciary is worth noting. In the resistance movement of workers against the BALCO privatisation the apex court is reported to have given a verdict which completely goes against the interest of the workers. The question of legitimacy and social justice has been sacrificed at the altar of legalism, and the right of the workers trampled. The role of judiciary goes completely in favour of globalisation, and the expectation of the people from the judiciary is totally belied.

To meet the deficit widened by the liberal concessions to the capitalists the Finance Minister did not take any measure to realise the unpaid

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# Concession To Capitalists By Fleecing People Will Lead To Greater Crisis — Not To Growth Of Economy

(Contd from page 2)

taxes of Rs 62,392 crore, the NPA (non performing asset) of banks amounting to one lakh crore of rupees or the huge amount of black money circulating as a parallel economy in the country. Let alone taking these measures which will, according to official version, dampen the industrial climate of the country, the Finance Minister of BJP led government has given a bonanza of tax relief to the capitalists. The dividend tax has been halved. The surcharge of 15% on income tax leviable on the taxable income of Rs. 1,50,000/- and above has been waived while 2% surcharge has been imposed on all categories of income tax payers. This means persons with higher income will be taxed less while persons with less income will be taxed more. It is reported in *The Economics Times*, dated 1.3.01, that fifty big companies have been relieved of Rs. 791.24 crore as dividend tax due to reduction of dividend tax from 20% to 10%. Thus the total concession on dividend tax will amount to so many crores of rupees if all companies are taken into consideration. The Finance Minister also announced exemptions on capital gains tax on certain conditions. In customs duty, concession to the tune of Rs 2547 crore has been given to the capitalists. Side by side additional excise duty to the tune of Rs. 4675 crore has been imposed and this will be borne by the consumers.

Moreover, the Finance Minister announced the dereservation of the small sector. So as a result of liberal import and additional excise duty the small scale sector will face stiff competition with the cheap imports, and ultimately this sector will become extinct. It may be noted that the small sector provides employment to the largest number of workers in the unorganised industrial sector, and so because of all these measures in this year budget the jobs of lakhs of workers will be at stake.

While huge amount is spent on jumbo ministry and the allowances and the perks of ministers, MPs and top administrators are sky rocketing, the Finance Minister announced drastic reduction of government employees by 10% within a span of next five years. Besides, the VRS will also be introduced, the interest rate on PF will be reduced, LTC for two years will not be given and government accommodation provided to the employees will be costlier. After the implementation of VRS scheme in banks the government is now bringing heavy attack on the government employees. Thus not only the scope of employment will be further reduced, the purchasing power of these employees will reduce considerably.

Besides these heavy onslaughts on the workers and employees the peasants in the rural India have been attacked. Though the rich peasants or the rural capitalists enjoy most of the benefit of the official procurement price of grains, the ordinary and middle peasants also derived some benefit out of that arrangement. The government is practically withdrawing this arrangement. The BJP would use this arrangement for its gain in electoral politics. Moreover the price of fertiliser will be costlier. Because of increase cost of input and fertilisers the cost of production is increasing and the peasants cannot sell their produce though they have increased their production. When subsidy on fertiliser is removed, the peasants will

face a grim situation. When the quota system of import of agricultural products will be withdrawn from April this year, as per the norms of WTO, this situation will further deteriorate. Though the imperialist countries put pressure on other countries to reduce subsidy on agricultural products and foodgrains, these countries themselves provide huge subsidies on their agricultural produce and so the price of agricultural products of these countries remain very cheap in the market. So these cheap agricultural products of the foreign countries will flood the national market. If the market of the agricultural produce is totally decontrolled by amendment of Essential Commodities Act, one can well imagine the fate of the peasants of our country. As a result of all these retrograde measures a spectre of hunger and famine will be looming large over the entire countryside. The facilities of agricultural loan and tax relief provided in the budget will be enjoyed mostly by the rich peasants who have the power of capital, and political lobby in rural areas is controlled by them. So the ordinary middle and lower middle peasants will be completely annihilated. As the cumulative effect of all these, pauperisation of the peasant force will go on and the number of landless peasants and agricultural labourers will swell.

The Finance Minister has drastically curtailed the allocation on higher education. No importance has been given on primary education, and the Panchayat will take over the charge of the primary education. Privatisation of education has been stressed. By making provision for loan for study in this country and abroad the BJP led government has tried to project itself as champion for the cause of the students. But this benefit will accrue to the rich and not to the common students.

Again the control on the price of petro products will be withdrawn and so the prices of the petrol, diesel and LPG will be determined by market mechanism. The price of kerosene which was hiked was reduced marginally in consideration of electoral politics in West Bengal; but in this budget this marginal reduction has been done away with. The net result of all these measures will be spurt in prices of all these products. The control on sugar price is withdrawn and the sugar will be costlier. The postal services including the cost of envelopes and the postcards will be costlier. The users' charges will be imposed on electricity, telephone, transport and other services provided by the government.

The impact of this budget is a big blow to the senior citizens of the middle class and the lower middle class families. The government has lowered the interest rate on small savings from 11% to 9.5%. Last year the interest rate in small savings was lowered by 1%. The interest on bank deposit is also lowered. The government is also arguing that as the rate of inflation is going down so the interest rate is lowered. After the BJP led NDA government came to power, it has been proclaiming that the inflation rate has been coming down. But the people are finding that the prices of all essential commodities are soaring. As a matter of fact the inflation rate calculated on the basis of wholesale price index has been manipulated to hoax the people. Actually the government is trying to divert the savings and the

retirement benefits of the common people to the share market. If this is done the big player in the share market will gobble up these savings of the middle class and lower middle class people.

In the situation of natural calamities like cyclone, flood or earthquake the government pleads financial constraints for providing relief to the distressed people. But the government finds no problem in profligate military spending. There is window dressing as usual to conceal the actual expenditure on military. The budget shows only 13.8 per cent increase. But the total figure is Rs. 62000 crore. The increased allocation of the military budget this year over the previous year is equal to the total allocation on education in this budget. This increased military spending is necessary to give artificial stimulation to the recession hit capitalist economy. Today the economy of all the capitalist-imperialist countries is dependent not on the purchasing power of the people, which is dwindling because of ruthless capitalist exploitation, but on the militarisation of economy. Besides, the ruling class of India has the aspiration of becoming a global player. So the ruling class of our country is spending colossal amount on nuclear explosion, missile test firing and other defence oriented researches. All these are hidden expenses and not shown in the actual allocation on military expenditure. Thus the actual spending on military is much more than what is shown on the head of the military expenditure.

Just after the Gujarat earthquake, the government imposed 2 per cent surcharge on income tax on the plea of financial constraints. But after a few days a grand naval exercise was organized off Mumbai involving crores of rupees. Not only the neighbouring countries but all the littoral countries of the Indian ocean were struck with awe at the muscle flexing of the Indian navy. The people have the right to know the reason behind such a massive military build up. A country is defended not by the mercenary forces but by the patriotic people of the country. When nearly 50 per cent of the people cannot get two square meals a day, when even safe drinking water, health care or education are the dream to them, when they are languishing and perishing in hunger and diseases it is most criminal to spend a colossal amount for such a massive military build up. But it is the compulsion of the capitalist economy of the country and so the Finance Minister has to follow suit.

So it is seen that as a result of all these proposals in the budget the income of the major section of the people will come down. Let alone one crore of additional employment every year, as the Prime Minister promised, there will be drastic shrinkage of existing employment and the country will be flooded with the unemployed. This budget provided sops to the rich by reducing the price of cars from 10 to 40 thousand rupees, the two wheelers and cold drinks are now cheaper, while kerosene used by the poor is dearer and the PDS has been practically withdrawn. This budget is a curse to the people. But can the Finance Minister expect growth of the economy relying only on the higher purchasing power of the top creamy layer of the population? It is impossible. As a result of

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# Taliban Vandalism Danger to Civilisation

Mullah Muhammad Omar, the Taliban Chieftain of Afghanistan, has issued *fatwa* for the destruction of all pre-Islamic relics, including the priceless ancient Buddha statues as these are, according to them, idolatrous and against the tenets of Islam. After this *fatwa* the Taliban have started the destruction of all these priceless treasures of mankind. Thousands of historic statues in the Kabul museum and elsewhere in Kandahar, Ghazni, Herat, and Jalalabad, and particularly two of the world's largest Buddha statues at Bamiyan, 150 km west of Kabul at the foothill of the Hindukush range, are the targets of the Taliban. These two statues are situated at the famous silk route, i.e. the route through which commercial and cultural exchanges took place between Europe and Asia, and it is estimated that in engraving these statues in the hill it took nearly 30 years in the 2nd century. After these statues were damaged in earthquakes and rains the archaeologists of nine countries, including India, took steps for preservation of these, working for nine years in the sixties.

It is because of the geographical position of Afghanistan that it became a strategically important place for commercial and cultural exchanges. When Buddhism spread in different countries of the world, there occurred an efflorescence of art and culture in those places, and Central Asia was no exception. The beauty of Gandharba Buddha attracts the attention of the art loving people of the entire world. These great works are known as Greco Indian art because of a unique blending of Greek and Indian sculpture in these statues. They were created in the 3rd and 4th century. Such statues in different parts of Afghanistan are testimonies not only of the history of Afghanistan but of the history of the entire mankind. The destruction of all these priceless statues, including the grand statues of Buddha in Bamiyan region of Afghanistan by the Taliban is vandalism of the worst sort, perpetrated in the name of Islam. The official spokesmen of Afghanistan, including the foreign minister, described with much pride how the Taliban are mobilising troops and explosives to commit their dastardly act of obliterating priceless treasure of mankind. It is reported that anti-aircraft guns, rockets, tanks and explosives are being used, and the Taliban have been instructed to finish this dastardly act as quickly as possible. It is very much probable that the people of Afghanistan are not supporting this senseless act of vandalism of the Taliban, and that is why the people and the reporters too are debarred to go near the statues of Bamiyan, and even the museum of Kabul. If the Taliban are determined to go their way to undo history, the world will no doubt be culturally poorer with the loss of all these immense treasures.

In ancient times or in the middle ages such type of vandalism occurred many times when great cultural relics of the vanquished territories were destroyed. But are such acts of barbarity, such utter violation of cultural values conceivable in the present age of even bourgeois democratic set up? But the Taliban of Afghanistan in its bid to plunge the country into religious fanaticism is engaged in the same barbarous and insane acts despite world wide protests.

The well meaning people of the entire world

are benumbed by this vandalism of the Taliban. Most of the Islamic countries appealing to the Taliban, have said that there is absolutely nothing in the Qur'an which can incite Muslims to destroy idols, and thus the Taliban's vandalism is totally un-Islamic. All Islamic countries, be it Pakistan or Bangladesh or Muslim dominated countries like Malaysia or Indonesia have preserved their pre-Islamic heritage.

The Taliban are a product of the madrasas in the North West of Pakistan, which foster a narrow mindset with revivalist ideas. The teachings in these madrasas are far from spiritual and are politically motivated. Spurred on by their rabid anti-communism and hegemonistic designs the Anglo-US imperialists provided them all financial help and arms and ammunitions. The Taliban took control of most of Afghanistan with the active support of the imperialists. It was only after Osama bin Laden turned against the USA itself and was provided asylum in Afghanistan, that the US imperialists used the UN to enforce sanction against Afghanistan, for all of which the people are the worst sufferers. But the US imperialists cannot deny today that the Taliban was their own creation. So all well meaning people of the world must raise their voice of protest against the imperialists headed by the US imperialists who are behind the emergence of this fundamentalist and atavistic Taliban in particular, and who foster such fundamentalist and fascist forces in different parts of the world as a means to suppress the legitimate struggle of democratic and progressive people to safeguard their own imperialist interests.

Indian people too are condemning this vandalism of the Taliban. In the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha a resolution condemning the acts of the Taliban, and seeking the intervention of the UN and different other countries of the world was unanimously adopted. The BJP ministers while speaking in both the houses of the Parliament commented that these acts of the Taliban were barbaric ones similar to these of the medieval period. But have these BJP leaders not forfeited their right to say so? What is the role of the BJP in this country? Today the BJP is terming the vandalism of the Taliban as medieval barbarism and uncivilised and thus trying to project itself before the world as a champion and saviour of heritage of mankind. But eight years ago the Hindutva brigade of the Sangh Parivar destroyed

## SUCI Condemns Taliban Vandalism

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement to the press on 2.3.2001 :

"We strongly condemn the wanton destruction of invaluable ancient relics and monuments of the pre-Islamic period of Afghanistan by fanatic Taliban hoodlums, which is only comparable with the destruction of the historical monument Babri Masjid a few years back by rabid Hindu fundamentalists in India.

"We call upon all sane and well-meaning people of India and of the entire world to denounce medieval vandalism of the civilization's irreplaceable treasure house."

the Babri Masjid, an ancient Islamic monument. The leaders of the BJP, who are now ministers in the central government danced with joy and distributed sweets after its demolition. Where was their love for heritage on that day? Was not that act of theirs barbaric and uncivilised? The members of the Sangh Parivar resorted to this dastardly act in the name of religion without caring a whit about the world wide protests against it. It is indeed ludicrous to note that the BJP that was involved in the dastardly act of demolition of the Babri Masjid is now condemning the acts of the Taliban. The Taliban have introduced medieval customs and practices in the society, and so also the BJP is saffronising education, spreading revivalist ideas in society, and destroying even the remnants of democratic institutions in its bid to foist a fascist Hindu State on the Indian people. These fundamentalist forces everywhere try to destroy the logical faculty and scientific bent of mind by fomenting religious fanaticism and inculcating revivalist ideas and obscurantism. This heartrending event in Afghanistan reveals anew the stark reality that fundamentalism possesses the same character everywhere: there is no difference between Hindu fundamentalism and Muslim fundamentalism. In its madness religious fundamentalism knows no logic and does not hesitate to destroy the priceless treasure of mankind. Human civilisation is endangered unless fundamentalism, the enemy of mankind is resisted with all might.



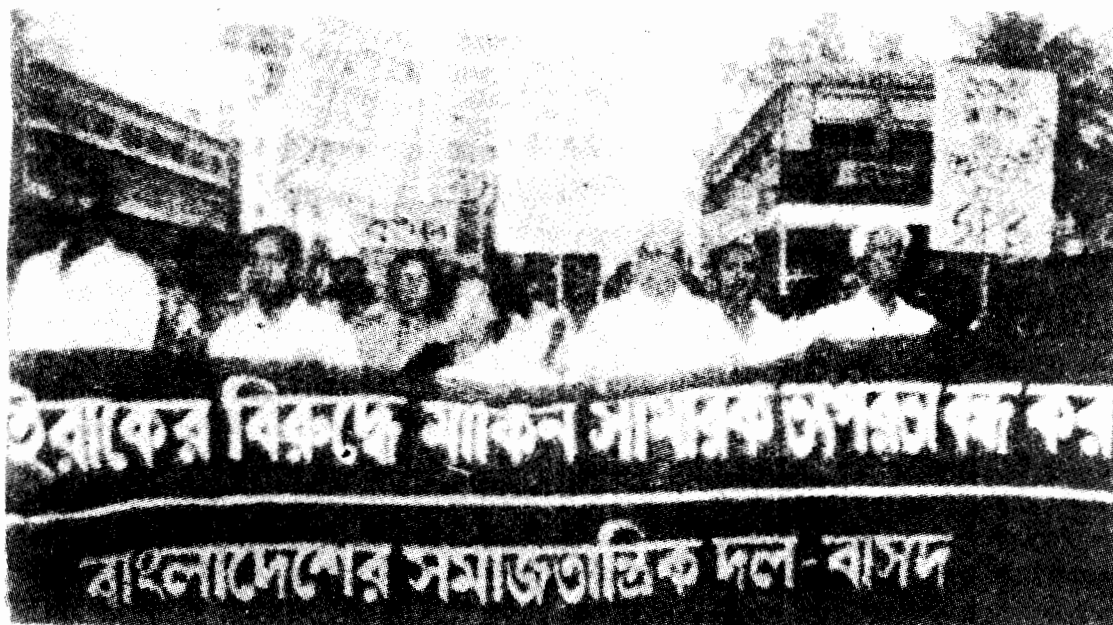
AIMSS Bihar protests vulgar posters and advertisements on International Women's Day 8th March, 2001 in Patna

## Protest against US-UK joint attack on Iraq in Bangladesh

On 27th February, 2001 a protest meeting was held in the central office of Socialist Party of Bangladesh to protest the US-UK bomb attack on Iraq. The meeting was addressed by Comrade Khalequzzaman, the Convener of Central Committee, Comrade Mubinu Hayder Choudhury, member of the Central Committee and Comrade Bazlur Rashid Firoz, the coordinator of the city unit. After the meeting a procession of protest marched through different corners of the city.

Comrade Khalequzzaman pledged solidarity with the demand raised worldwide to stop US-British attacks on Iraq and to withdraw illegitimate sanction on Iraq, and called for developing militant resistance against imperialist aggression-war-embargo in country after country by peace loving, anti-imperialist struggling people of the world.

At the same time, he strongly condemned the Bangladesh Government and B.N.P.-Jatiya Party-Jamat and other bourgeois parties, and even parties of Muslim fundamentalist ideology for their indifferent role.



*Dais of the meeting to protest imperialist attack against Iraq, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 27th February, 2001*

## People Protest Anti-People Budget

### Patna

On March 1, SUCI organised a protest march in Patna against the Union budget. At Patna Junction the march converged into a meeting where an effigy of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was burnt in protest. Addressing the meeting, Comrade Arun Kumar Singh, Bihar State Committee member, SUCI, told the budget had been framed in the interest of big capitalists and MNCs. Comrades Raghunath Gandhi, Jiauddin Ahmed and Surya Kar Jitendra also addressed the gathering. Comrade Siwalal Prasad conducted the meeting.

### Karnataka

The Bangalore District Committee of our party, organised a protest demonstration against the Central Budget near Mysore Bank Circle, attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life.

Speaking on the occasion as the main speaker Comrade B.R. Manjunath, Secretary of Bangalore District Committee, taking serious exception to the tax concessions extended to big industrial houses and multinational companies, said that the central government's pursuance of the anti-people globalisation and liberalisation policy has resulted in a huge loan of a whopping 10 lakh crores, the burden of which will have to be borne by the common man. Comrade M.N. Sriram, member of the District Secretariat also spoke.

The meeting was presided over by Comrade V. Gnanamurthy, member, District Secretariat. The meeting concluded with a firm resolve to leave no stone unturned in the efforts to intensify the movement against this anti-people budget.

### Hyderabad

Hyderabad district organizing committee of our party organised protest street corner meetings on 1.3.2001 at four places in the area of Koti, a busy centre of the city. The speakers addressing the gatherings in these meetings said that this budget placed in parliament by the finance minister has declared war against workers, employees and nakedly advocated for privatisation in all fields and industrial sector particularly.

They fervently appealed to the people to develop mighty democratic mass movement against this anti-people and anti-worker budget.

Hundreds of people listened to the speakers with apt attention in all these street corner meetings.

### Kerala

Against the Central Budget which is sure to spell doom in the nation's economy and is out and out anti-worker, anti-employee, SUCI activists took out protest demonstration in the state capital of Kerala, today the 1st March 2001. A protest meeting was also held in front of Trivandrum Central Railway Station which was addressed by Comrade B. Imamuddin, District Committee member and noted T.U. leader.

In Calicut, protest demonstration and the meeting converged at L.I.C. corner. Comrade V.K. Sadanandan presided and large number of public gathered was addressed by Comrade Sekhar, District Secretary. In Alleppy Town, the demonstration was led by Comrade S.Rajeevan, District Secretary. Comrades S.Radhamony and Seethilal, District Committee members. Comrades Rajeevan afterwards addressed a large gathering

and thoroughly exposed the anti-people character of the Central Budget. Various types of protest programmes were taken in different parts of the State including Pathanamthitta, Idukki, changanassery, Mavelikkara, Ernakulam, Angamali, etc.

Lathicharge on SUCI Demonstrators in Calcutta was condemned.

### Protest Meeting by UTUC-LS at Calcutta

UTUC-LS, West Bengal State Committee, held a protest meeting against the utterly anti-working class central budget on 2nd March, 2001. The meeting was held at Binay-Badal-Dinesh Bag. Before the meeting a procession condemning the capitalistic budget marched the city streets starting from Subodh Mullick Square. Comrade Sankar Saha, State Secretary, described the budget as the all-out attack of the capitalist class on workers and common people and called to build up protracted movement against this attack. The other speakers were Comrades Dipak Deb, Amal Sen, Bimal Jana, Alok Ghosh, Amal Kar Gupta and others.

The meeting was presided over by Comrade Dilip Bhattacharya.



*Anti-budget Protest in Bangalore (More photos in page 8)*



# AIMSS Observes International Women's Day

Every year the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangha (AIMSS) in solidarity with the toiling women all over the world observes the International Women's Day with utmost importance. This year the All India Committee of AIMSS called upon all units in the country to observe the day as a day in protest against attack of liberalisation and globalisation on women and culture through weeklong meetings, demonstrations, seminars etc. at all levels. Responding to this call of the All India Committee all state committees widely observed this occasion through various programmes and sent memoranda to the central minister of information and broadcasting.

## Calcutta

Along with other districts of West Bengal the Calcutta District Committee of AIMSS observed a weeklong programme. On 8th March, a seminar on 'Attack of Liberalisation and Globalisation on Women and Culture' was held at the Bharat Sabha Hall under the chairpersonship of Comrade Krishna Sen, member All India Committee. The main speaker in the meeting was Comrade Sadhana Chowdhury, West Bengal State Secretary, AIMSS. In her speech, Comrade Chowdhury penetratingly and elaborately showed how liberalisation and globalisation is creating crises in the lives of women and culture. As a concomitant effect of globalisation women are being transformed into a commodity in free market economy. Side by side vile culture is widely propagated through the electronic and other media which is bringing about rapid degeneration of values and cultural standard in the society and giving birth to multifarious and complex problems in social life. Women must come forward to thwart this sinister design and AIMSS calls upon the women on this Women's Day to rally round this cause, she observed.

Comrade Hasi Hore, Calcutta District Secretary also spoke in the meeting. Two resolutions — one on the devastating earthquake in Gujarat and the other against Taliban vandalism of ancient relics in Afghanistan — were adopted unanimously. The programme concluded with the portrayal of the legendary life of Pritilata Waddadar through songs.

## Bangalore

On the occasion of International Women's Day, AIMSS, Bangalore District Committee,

organised a protest Dharna near Mysore Bank Circle in the morning on 8th March, against all forms of obscenity, globalisation and liberalisation. The rousing slogans raised created an inspiring atmosphere.

Comrade H.G. Jayalakshmi, State Secretary, AIMSS addressing the gathering, among others, said: The beauty contests are an insult to women's dignity. The government's policy of tourism has paved the way for child prostitution. It is disheartening to note that child prostitution is increasing by 10 % every year. She severely criticised the fundamentalists and communal forces who are trying to push back women to the kitchen, and called upon women to strengthen AIMSS for organising women's movement against all these evils.

Comrade B. R. Manjunath, Secretary, Bangalore, SUCI, and President, Karnataka, AIDYO in his speech opposed the anti-women policies of the government. He observed, the Women's Day should not mean a mere ritualistic observation rather a politically conscious movement. Women's struggle ought to be a revolutionary struggle — a struggle that paves way for collective social struggle. He highlighted the fact that women's struggle gathered momentum because of the intensified movement of AIMSS.

Comrade Prathibha Kumari, Vice-President, Bangalore District Committee of AIMSS, one of the speakers, exposed the menacing effects of liberalisation and globalisation. In the same vein Comrade Shobha, Secretary, AIMSS, Bangalore, dwelt on the ill-effects of globalisation. Other members spoke on various issues of women. The Dharna concluded with revolutionary songs.

## Orissa

At the call of Orissa State Committee of AIMSS a massive convention was organised against obscenity and vile culture at Bhanja Kala Mandap, Bhubaneswar on 8th March, the International Women's Day. More than 700 women participated in the convention, which was chaired by Comrade Binapani Das. President AIMSS Orissa State Committee and initiated by Comrade Santilata Panda. Comrade Bidyut Mohanta moved the main resolution against obscenity and globalisation and Comrade Swayamprava Nayak, Secretary Orissa State Committee AIMSS and others spoke in support. Comrade Annapurna Sahoo also moved a resolution against setting up of the Beverage Corporation by the State government. Comrade Basanti Swain spoke in support of the resolution, both of which were accepted unanimously.

Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, All India General Secretary of the AIMSS and the main speaker of the convention in her address observed that the ruling capitalist class of the country and the imperialists are deliberately spreading vile culture to destroy the ethics and morality of the youths so as to continue their oppression unopposed. In the age of globalisation beauty contests, fashion shows, modelling and obscene advertisements are being organised to capture markets, resulting in spread of obscenity and vile consumerist culture and reducing women to mere commodity, due to all of which harassment and atrocities on women have increased manifold in recent years. Under such circumstances the women must organise themselves and unleash a powerful movement against the patriarchal society and the capitalist system, Comrade Mukherjee concluded.

After the presidential address by Comrade Binapani Das the convention came to a close with singing of revolutionary songs.

## RKS Camp in Bangalore — a unit of AIKKMS

The Karnataka State Organising Committee of Raitha Krishi Karmikara Sanghatana (RKS) a unit of AIKKMS organised a three-day camp at Raichur District from 26th to 28th February to discuss about the various problems faced by the peasants and agricultural labourers of the state.

Leaving aside their works, braving the scorching sun, people thronged at the Mahila Samaj grounds, the venue of the Inaugural Session. Representatives from Mysore, Bangalore, Tumkur, Bellary, Raichur and Gulbarga rural areas participated in the camp.

Speaking on the occasion, the main speaker of the programme, Comrade K. Radhakrishna, State Secretary of SUCI, observed the root cause of the untold miseries faced by the agricultural community lies in the GATT agreement signed by the then Congress (I) government and policies pursued by the BJP government in tune with it. Far from the promised development in leaps and bounds, tragedy is that let alone development, agricultural production has declined, the sale

prices of agricultural crops and products have fallen so drastically that it is pushing the helpless farmers towards committing suicide. While drum beating the slogan of swadeshi, the BJP, working as trustworthy slave of the capitalist class, is pursuing the policies of globalisation and liberalisation of the Congress more aggressively.

In the concluding session Comrade K. Radhakrishna urged upon the participants to build up mighty mass movements on their burning problems conducive to anti-capitalist socialist revolution and called upon them to rally round the RKS which is genuinely representing the interest of peasants and agricultural labourers of the state.

Comrade H. K. Diwakar, Secretary, RKS State Committee, urged the people to take to the path of struggle instead of committing suicide. Comrade Suneeth Kumar, T. S., President RKS Karnataka State Organising Committee, who presided over the meeting, thanked all those who helped in different ways to make this camp a success.

## General Budget

(Contd. from page 3)

lowering of the purchasing power of the masses the economy will plunge into greater and greater crisis. It is the inexorable law of capitalism.

But will the people remain mute spectators before this unprecedented economic onslaught? It is true that the voice of protests against this budget has been raised from different quarters after this budget was placed. The need of the hour is to organise united and protracted movement involving all sections of the common people and elevating it from the stage of protest to that of resistance movement. This onslaught can alone be resisted by protracted mass movement and not by manoeuvring in parliamentary politics. Intensive campaign pin-pointing the nature of attacks coming down should also be conducted.

We call upon workers, peasants, students and common people at large to raise their heads and resist this attack and not accept it simply lying down. This is a challenge thrown by the ruling capitalist class which should be rebuffed by the exploited people with firm resolve and determination.

# Save Education Convention in Punjab Demonstration at Bhuj

**Bathinda :** After a series of meetings of the Save Education Committee and large number of meetings organised by its members in schools, colleges, and other advanced institutions of higher education, a successful Save Education Convention was organised in District Bathinda on Feb 18, at the Teachers' Home Bathinda.

Prof. Narendra Sharma, member, Presidium, All India Save Education Committee, made a scathing attack on the BJP led central government, stressing that privatisation and communalisation of education is a disastrous step which will deprive the poor of any scope of education and divide the society on communal lines. He also attacked the DPEP which is going to destroy the education system totally. Prof. Sucha Singh Gill, renowned economist from Punjab University, while addressing the mammoth gathering of teachers, students and scholars, asserted that education plays a major role in social change and economic transformation of modern society. Taking a serious note of the government policies in the field of education, he criticised the government for commercialisation of education, especially higher education in the name of financial crunch. Dr. Surjeet Singh Dhillon was also of the view that

education was being misused by the ruling government to fulfil their hidden agenda. With the arrival of BJP government, the basic objective of education is going to be totally razed to the ground. He said that the educationists should be given a chance of forming the policies. Active participation of teachers and students was necessary while framing such policies. He also criticised vocalisation of the general education. Dr. Jaswinder Singh Brar from Punjab University, said that disinvestment policy of the government in the education sector was totally wrong as the rate of return from this sector was maximum. He emphasised that return from it might not be counted in terms of money alone, rather more significantly it should be considered from the point of view of society as a whole.

A resolution condemning the policies of central and state governments, leading to privatisation, commercialisation and communalisation of the education system was passed unanimously. In the end, Sri Sh. Jagmohan Kaushal, co-convenor, Save Education Committee, District Bathinda, thanked all those who made this convention successful.

## Legal Service Centre for Women in Bihar

To form an organisation to provide legal assistance to oppressed women, a huge number of advocates, intellectuals, social activists and women's representatives gathered at the Legal Aid For Women Convention, on 25 February at Gandhi Sangrahalaya, Patna, Bihar. The convention was organised by the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS).

Inaugurating the convention, Sm. Ansuiya Jaiswal, senior advocate of Patna High Court, stressed the need for women to take an active, responsible stand against the perpetuation of discrimination and violence against women. She said, out of 100 cases filed in the High Court, 30 are related to dowry. Women are the worst sufferers, but most of them do not have enough courage to take legal help or come out in the open. Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, General Secretary of AIMSS, pointing out that women were subjected to twofold exploitation — the exploitation of male domination and the present capitalist system, urged women to unite and intensify their struggle for solving their problems. Speaking on cultural and moral degradation in society, she said it was responsible for the increase in atrocities on women.

Sm. Mridula Mishra, Senior Advocate of

Patna High Court, in her presidential address said that laws were framed to help women legally, but women got little benefit from these. Emphasising the need for creating awareness among women, she said due to lack of awareness women could not benefit from their legal rights.

Others who spoke included Sm. Anjana Prakash, senior advocate and Sm. Anjana Bhagat also a senior lawyer, and advocates Sm. Rekha Prasad and Sm. Msdhuri Singh, Mr. P. N. Mahato, Ex Principal, T. K. Ghosh Academy. Mr. Chandra Ketu Narayan Sharma, Secretary, Vaishali Bar Council and Sm. Sangita Thakur, Sub-Editor, *The Hindusthan Times*.

At the end of the convention a committee, Legal Service Centre for Women, to provide free legal aid to the oppressed women, was formed, comprising senior advocates of Patna High Court Sm. Ansuiya Jaiswal, Sm. Anjana Prakash, Sri Rajib Ranjan as advisors, and Mrs. Mridula Mishra, senior advocate, Patna High Court as president and Comrade Sadhana Kumari as Secretary; besides number of advocates, doctors, intellectuals are on its panel. All the advocates present at the convention pledged to make the Centre fully functional by providing their services free to those who needed help.

For the last one month the quake affected people of Bhachau, Gujrat, instead of getting solace are being harassed because of administrative inefficiency, indifference and anti-people attitude on the part of government. After more than a month people are still waiting for tents and tarpaulin. Ration shops are not functioning regularly and supply is largely inadequate. Whatever relief distribution is being carried out is being done in a very chaotic manner. In our last issue we have reported about the relief work carried out by our party, SUCI, which has been standing at the site of quake affected people since January 31, and working in almost all affected areas at Kutchh with medical and general relief work. In Bhachau party volunteers helped illiterate affected people to get the basic facilities like tents, drinking water etc. by forwarding applications for them to the administration, etc. But instead of taking the help of party volunteers in a positive manner local administrators are threatening them with coercive measures if they did not stop their activities. Shocked at this shameless attitude of the administration at the time of such a crisis, which is harassing people and the relief workers trying to help them in a blatant violation of human rights, a memorandum was sent to the Governor of Gujrat by Comrade Dwarikanath Rath on behalf of the State Organising Committee, asking for prompt action, on 4.3.2001.

In this situation SUCI took initiative to form Bhachau People's Committee. On 8th March, Bhachau People's Committee held a demonstration at Bhuj against the mismanagement in distribution of relief and inefficient functioning of administration and a delegation of fifty along with Comrade Jayesh Patel, Comrade Tapan Dasgupta, Comrade Bharati Parmar among others, submitted a memorandum to the Bhuj District Collector demanding that the Administration must carry out relief operation in consultation with the Bhachau People's Committee. It also demanded that area wise systematic distribution should be arranged.

Thereafter a demonstration was held at Bhuj city near the statue of Shyamji Krishnavarma — a valiant uncompromising fighter of Indian freedom struggle.

## Stalin Day observed at Study Centre, Ghatsila

5th March, the 48th death anniversary of great Stalin was observed on the day at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought at Ghatsila. In the morning of 5th March the Red Flag was hoisted by Comrade Tapas Dutta, member, Central Committee. Comrade Dutta then garlanded the portraits of the Great leaders and teachers of the proletariat Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Shibdas Ghosh.

In the evening a meeting was held at the Assembly Hall. Comrade Tapas Dutta was the speaker who highlighted the great struggle and teachings of Comrade Stalin.

## Protest Demonstration against US -UK attack on Iraq in Kerala

SUCI Trivandrum District Committee organised a protest demonstration against the barbaric air strikes by the US and British warplanes on Iraq. The demonstration started with a procession from Palayans Martyrs column and ended at GPO Junction where a protest meeting was held. In the meeting Comrade B. Imamuddin, member, District Committee, denounced US

imperialists for their role in unleashing wars by violating all international laws and norms in pursuit of their vile imperialist interest, and demanded an end to its aggression on Iraq. The procession was led by members of the District Committee, Comrades R. Biju, Benney Joseph, G. R. Subhash, and Comrade Shajarkhan, AIDSO State President.



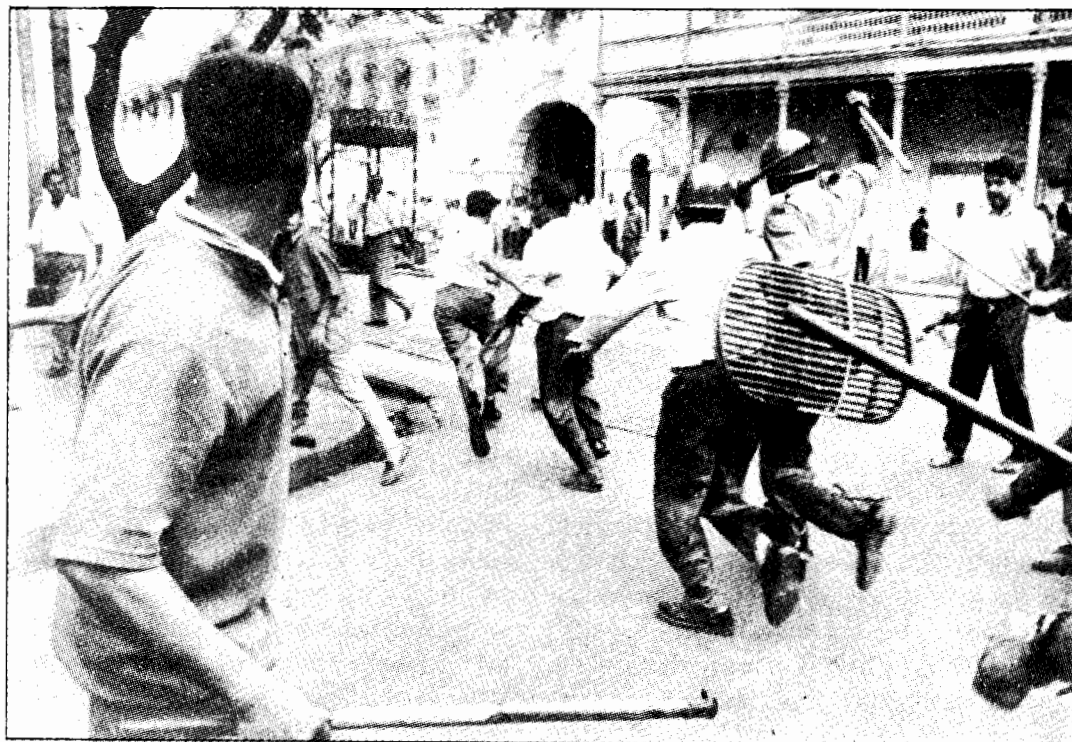
## SUCI Condemns Automatic Promotion

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement to the press on 13 March, 2001:

"The recent proposal of Murli Manohar Joshi, the HRD Minister of the BJP-led Central Government in the Rajya Sabha to abolish the system of annual class examinations at the secondary level and introduce automatic promotion upto class X is destined to doom the future of education and of millions of students all over the country, because abolition of class examinations will mean promoting even those students to higher classes who have not learnt anything.

"This is in line with earlier recommendation of the NCERT (National Council for Education Research and Training) and CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) which has been already protested by a good section of eminent educationists and men of letter across the country. There is no doubt that this attack is directed against the students belonging to poor and middle class families depriving them of the scope of attaining higher knowledge but will not touch the students from the rich families who are taught in expensive English medium schools.

"We vehemently protest against this sinister move and call upon the people in general and educationists, students and guardians in particular to launch protracted movement to thwart this dangerous decision of the BJP Government."



Anti-budget protest in Calcutta. Brutal police lathicharge on women comrades



Anti-budget protest in Hyderabad. (More photos and news on page 5)

## All India Bank Employees Unity Forum's Founding Conference at Ghaziabad

The Bank Employees' Unity Forum formed its All India body through its founding conference at Ghaziabad, UP on 24-25 February 2001. This All India Conference was held just after a year of its first statewide convention at Moradabad in UP and some months after similar statewide conventions in West Bengal. Organising committees in Orissa, Haryana, Karnataka etc, are moving steadily towards state conventions to form regular state bodies.

The venue of the conference was Nehru Public School, Shanti Nagar, Ghaziabad, UP. On the preceding day, 23 February, hundreds of bank employees came from different states to stage dharna in front of Parliament to register their protest in strongest terms against the Banking Companies Amendment Bill aimed at privatisation of banks, waiting for approval of Parliament. A

four member delegation comprising Comrades M.C.Tyagi, Amar Roy, Jagannath Roy Mondal and Purna Behera handed over memorandum addressed to the President of India to his office as also offices of the Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

The conference started at 11 A.M. A three member presidium composed of Comrades M.C.Tyagi, Amar Roy and Vaskar Jena conducted the proceedings. One minute silence was observed to pay deep-felt sorrow to those who lost their lives due to earthquake in Gujrat. Then a song on Saheedi-e-Ajam Bhagat Singh was presented by Comrade Sova Pal and another composed on the conference itself was sung by Comrades Susanta Patra, Tarun Das and Bablu Adhikari.

Dr. R.B.L.Goswami, Ex-vice chancellor, Meerut University inaugurated the conference. Sri R. D. Sharma, Guest-in-Chief and Special Guest spoke. Comrade Ashutosh Banerjee, All India President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani delivered his speech providing valuable guideline to bank-employees' movement in the context of broader perspective of the present all-out crisis of moribund capitalism. Comrade Jagannath Roy Mondal placed the main resolution.

The resolution was supported by Comrades M.C.Tyagi, Amar Roy, Purna Behera, Bijoy Pal

Singh, Balaram Jadav, B.J.Radhakrishnan and others.

Resolutions on Constitution, programme of action, Central Working Committee etc. were adopted.

A 35 member Central Working Committee with Comrade M.C.Tyagi as President, Comrades, Amar Roy, Vijay Pal Singh, Purna Behera, Vedram Singh, as Vice-President, Jagannath Roy Mondal as General Secretary, Comrades Rajinder Singh as Secretary, Debabrata Pal as Treasurer and Ashim Karar as Office Secretary.

The Central Working Committee, immediately after the conference adopted the resolution that despite all the democratic methods of protest adopted by the Forum including latest programme of Dharna on 23 February in the capital, if the Government proceeds with the Banking Bill aimed at privatisation, the General Secretary is authorised to announce programmes like wearing of black badge, demonstrations, burning of effigy and others, including strike action. It was further resolved to carry forward struggles against VRS, deployment, closure of branches, non recovery of NPA, non payment of arrears to the employees of UCO, UBI, Indian Bank.

### Corrigendum

In our last issue we mistakenly mentioned Jajpur as the venue of mass rally in the headline on the last page. But the rally, which was organised by the people of Jajpur, was held at the Orissa state capital, Bhubaneswar, mentioned in the news content.

Editor, Proletarian Era

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