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Thousands Die and Millions Ruined in West Bengal Floods

Words fail to describe the terrible devastation brought on by mad floodwaters in nine districts of West Bengal, nor the tragedy and misery of millions upon millions of people, totally ruined, spending their days under the open sky amid the all-pervading stench of rotting carcasses and bodies, facing danger of epidemic. And staggering is the number of those whose vain hopes for relief have turned into anger or despair, as state government and army contingents pleaded helplessness in carrying out rescue and relief in the worst affected areas, for 5, 10 and in some places even 15 days after disaster struck.

According to official figures 21 million people have been affected in the floods, 1.5 million hectares of farmland submerged, crop loss amounts to Rs. 3.868 crore, and 73,994 cattle have perished while 1200 people died. These figures may give a glimpse of the magnitude of floods, they cannot convey the extent, intensity and effect of the disaster. Moreover government figures have minimized the number of people who died. Actually thousands lost their lives. This year too, different dams and barrages resorted to sudden and repeated discharge of water, running into hundreds of thousands of cusecs, when a few days of excessive rains had already caused floods. It will perhaps never be known how many thousand people died or disappeared, caught in the

sudden onrush of raging torrents that at places reached heights of 10, 15 and even 21 feet, breaching dykes and embankments, washing away bridges, twisting rail lines, tearing apart highways and sweeping away houses like pack of cards.

On the other hand, this year too, in Purulia and Bankura district drought has baked dry countless fields, spelling ruin for thousands of peasant families. Are we to believe that in this era of all-out advancement of science such calamity is unavoidable? Is it caused by the play of ineluctable forces and vagaries of nature or is it the painful result of cruel indifference of central and state governments, of criminal neglect in implementing flood-drought control measures?

(Contd. on page 4)

Build up country-wide democratic mass movements against pricehike of petro-products

— Nihar Mukherjee

Strongly condemning the BJP-led Central Government's hiking of the prices of petro-products, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement said on 30.9.2000 :

“The atrocious decision of BJP-led Central Government of hiking at one stroke the prices of petrol, diesel, LPG, kerosene etc. — under the spacious plea of oil pool deficit while global price level is now decreasing — sought to be softened by shrewd gesture — shall surely push up all transport costs and thereby the prices of all essential commodities. This will increase still more the already intolerable burden of the anti-people policies of all preceding and also the present governments at the Centre.

“While condemning this brazenly anti-people decision, we urge all left and democratic parties and forces and the toiling people at large to thwart it by organising a countrywide powerful democratic mass movement”.

PETRO-PRICE HIKE

SUCI launches countrywide movement

Following the announcement of the BJP-led NDA government to hike petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG on 29th September, our party immediately launched protest programmes all over the country. Reports received so far are given below :

Trivandrum (Kerala)

On 29th September, the very day the hike was declared, the SUCI held a demonstration in Trivandrum city. In different district towns and localities also, protests were held. On 30th September evening SUCI activists held protest demonstration in Calicut city. In Ernakulam, comrades demonstrated at Trippunithura, Arayanakavu and Thodupujha. Torch-lit demonstrations were held in Kottayam district at Kurichi, Thenganal, Kuravilangadu etc. In Thuruthi CITU and AITUC activists also joined the protest demonstration. Apart from this, on 4th October Trade Union Sponsoring

Committee led a state-wide general strike in protest, and the SUCI, a constituent of it, took active part in the strike as well as joint demonstration in the state headquarters.



Protest march against petro price hike in Patna on 1.10.2000

Delhi

The Delhi State Organising Committee of the SUCI held a protest demonstration against the price hike of petroleum products at Shaheed Bhagat Singh Terminal today. Despite prior intimation, Delhi police prevented the protestors from marching to ITO Junction. A meeting was held at the terminal and was addressed by Comrades Harish Tyagi, Pratap Samal, R. Rajesh and Girvar Singh. The speakers condemned the price hike and said that the direct and indirect effects of this price hike will impose an unbearable burden on all sections of the ordinary people and the poor in particular, at a time when poverty and unemployment are spiralling.

Bangalore (Karnataka)

The Bangalore District Committee of the SUCI organised a protest dharna against the

(Contd. on page 5)

The millennium Summit and Vajpayee's Visit to USA

[Our view on Millennium Summit was ready for publication in 1st October issue. But as that issue did not come out for unavoidable circumstances, we publish it in this issue in view of the importance of the subject matter. — Editor, P Era]

The millennium summit of the UN joined by all but 4 of 189 member states between September 5-9 has been hailed by the bourgeois media as a great event. The Declaration, at the end, pledges to remove poverty and inequality, banish war, contain dreaded diseases, spread education et al. The world people are familiar with occasional announcements of such promises and assurances from the bourgeois statesmen.

The myth of harmony and order in a world of disorder was exposed from the strident opposition voiced against discrimination and injustice of the imperialist powers in the speeches of leaders of developing countries. The contradictions between the developing and developed imperialist-capitalist countries thus came into sharp focus.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's return visit to the USA on this occasion to utilise the opportunity for consolidating the Indo-US relationship that got a fillip since the US President Clinton's visit, gets a relevance.

Promise of removal of poverty, inequality and end of war

The Summit Declaration promises that the attending representatives of the member states would "spare no efforts" to free mankind from war, extreme poverty inequality and threat of environmental disorder. Is it not a pet theme in the mouths of bourgeois ideologues and politicians that the people are familiar with? Are not their experiences just the opposite?

Poverty inequality and war are not generated from the whims of individual leaders nor can be removed by pious wishes but stem from the very law of capitalist economy that still now works in society. The scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, the bourgeoisie want the people believe dead or utopia, can alone explain the reasons as also how to be freed from those. This truth gets reflected in facts and concrete events.

Is it not a fact that wealth of capitalist class today has soared to a height unimaginable in Smith's time? Is it not a fact also that to make it possible poverty, of working people has become appalling and disparity in incomes widened as never before? Did not the productive method go through revolutionary changes? Did not this revolutionary change in production immensely increase productive capacity? Has it meant anything better, appreciably, for the common people? Have all those brought about proportionate increase in employment and incomes, uplift in living standard, civic amenities essential for civilized life? Or have workers' conditions deteriorated from bad to worse, to something denying human existence?

If proof is required at all a mere reference to World Development Report (WDR-2000) of the World Bank is enough. Out of 6 billion of world population 2.8 billion are poor living on \$2 and 1.2 billion somehow maintain their existence on less than \$1 a day. Out of the total population 44 p.c. of those deprived live in South Asia that has become the bone of contention for domination and exploitation between the US imperialism and other powers.

The false propaganda of the bourgeois media and politicians that increased productivity brings increased benefits for common people is exposed by concrete facts. Is it not a fact, supported by all available sources including the WDR-2000, that consequent on recession downturn of economy globally has been the cause of declining industrial production? The result cannot be other than increase in unemployment at an accelerated pace and disparity in income widening. India's example is quite revealing. India's world ranking in terms of per capita income is 162 measured by standard dollar conversion and if it is changed to purchasing power parity, it becomes slightly better at 153. But the ranking becomes surprisingly high in terms of total incomes and GNP, the figures being 4 and 11 respectively. It speaks unmistakably of increase in poverty at an alarming rate for the masses and accumulation of profit and wealth at the hands of a tiny section of population. The report admits that 44.2 per cent of Indians are poor and inequality has aggravated further.

People are faced today with increase in job and income insecurity, health insecurity and personal insecurity due to large scale criminalisation of society through illicit trade in drugs, women, weapons, laundered money and political community insecurity, thanks to globalisation. The facts are admitted by the World Bank, an imperialist agency. So, by declaration or pledge those scourges in social life cannot be removed. For their removal is needed removal of capitalism, now at its moribund stage issuing all those evils.

The same is true in regard to banishing war. War, as we know, is the forcible method of redivision of world market in capitalist economy. It becomes inevitable when the peaceful means of trade war fail to redivide it in proportion to strength of capital. Historical evidences of the last two great wars corroborate this fact.

Today while the squeezing of world market takes place severely because of sharp decline in people's purchasing power, rivalry for extension of the market between the major imperialist powers gets intensified. Militarisation of economy has been going on at a feverish pitch all over the globe. Militarisation at the cost of fabulous spending of people's money provides artificial market to the capitalists in the midst of acute market crisis. This too fails to arrest let alone resolving crisis. But in order to off-load piled up armaments to save the armament industry from stagnation local and partial wars take place as we witness.

Lenin showed in his great work - *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* : "Imperialism wars are absolutely inevitable under such (monopoly capitalism - ed.P.Era) an economic system as long as private property in the means of production exists." Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the eminent Marxist thinker of the era, pointed out that existence of powerful world socialist camp, peace movement and anti-imperialist movement in non-aligned countries were providing a deterrent to war by thrusting peace on war monger

imperialist powers. At that situation, in the words of Comrade Ghosh "danger of outbreak of war and possibility of preservation of peace" were equally real.

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and collapse of the socialist bloc, our party has shown how the world situation has been drastically changed. The military bases builds-up round the globe, by the US imperialists which still goes on, its bellicose activities joined by the NATO powers in Europe, its insolent doctrine of brigandage bypassing UNO, buildup of huge nuclear arsenals along with long range delivery systems speak not of peaceable intentions but just the opposite.

In the concrete context of absence of effective deterrent to global war by the imperialists, our party came to the conclusion : "...danger of war, today is more pronounced. And this is "to establish absolute domination of one imperialist country or combination of imperialist countries over world market at the expense of others." (*On Latest Design of Imperialism*)

Globalisation-discrimination Sharpening contradictions

The highly discriminatory policy formulations in globalised economic order have given rise to the outcry of protest and opposition from the developing countries. These countries are to accept financial policies and reform programmes from the IMF and World Bank on pain of being denied much needed loans and assistance. These policy prescriptions affect their economies and are profitable to the developed imperialist-capitalist countries. Faced with unprecedented all-out and overall crises, the US and other imperialist countries try to save themselves in vain by passing the buck on to the third world countries. That is why these policies are bringing crushing burdens on the people of these countries. The world is divided today between privileged few and worldwide underprivileged.

Throwing to the winds the claim of multi-lateralism in trade and commerce of the GATT 1994, regional economic blocs under the leadership of the US and other regional economic powers have been formed to pursue protectionist policy in the regions. Compatibility with WTO's rules are being thrust upon these countries when that organisation serves the interest of the US imperialism in the main. The US opposes entry of products of developing countries to protect its home market. It however demands free entry of its capital and products in developing countries' markets.

Fidel Castro said in his speech at the summit "Three dozen developed and wealthy nations that monopolize the economic political and technological power have joined us in this gathering to offer more of the same recipes that have only served to make us poorer, more exploited and more dependent." The contradictions between the developing and developed have come into bold relief. Demand has been raised for democratisation and reform. Pleading is there for making the UN Security Council extended by inclusion as permanent members economic powers like Germany and

(Contd. on page 3)

US Arrogated to itself Super UN Authority

(Contd. from page 2)

Japan and regional powers like India and Brazil to make UNO more representative as also abolition of veto power of permanent members. Globalisation has not only brought about economic onslaughts at an unprecedented scale but grave offensive against morals and culture. These are calculated to emasculate the people, particularly the youth to prevent possible resistance which may come from them against the moribund capitalist order.

The relevance of UNO

The millennium summit cannot conceal the question about the irrelevance of the UN in the perspective of concrete events. This body for long reduced itself to a mere rubber stamp of the US imperialism. This even is considered no longer necessary. Mr. Anthony Lake, then US national security adviser, made it amply clear in his speech at Harvard University in October 1993. First, he listed nine circumstances when the US would use force without caring for the UN. Second, he blandly declared that the US was not subservient to the UN and that it would work with it where possible and without it when considered unnecessary. Does it not indicate that the US has arrogated to itself a super UN authority? What remains of the UN as a world body whose millennium summit takes place with so much fanfare? Has the UN any relevance today so far as the promises and assurances enshrined in its charter are concerned?

Recent events prove this to the hilt. The renewed bombings on Iraq repeatedly from 1993 to December 1998 by the US and UK could not obtain mandate asked from Security Council. Russia and France notably had expressed objections. The former opposed any suggestion of withdrawing economic sanctions on Iraq no matter how murderous those are for Iraqi people.

In case of Kosovo the UNO was bypassed when the brigandage of US-NATO combine inflicted unspeakable brutalities and genocide. The infamous NATO doctrine insolently warned of committing those 'in defence of human rights'. And now there is the talk of permanent army for peace-keeping under UN banner with the motive of intervention in civil war in a state, evidently a domestic affair. The promise and assurance of freedom of nations their sovereignty, inviolability of their territory, democratic norms, human rights, equality of status and rights of all the member states may appear as cruel joke or standing insult to world conscience. To think of reforming and democratising the UN to achieve these goals is day dream. Those noble ideals can achieve real fulfillment only when the world is freed from imperialism-capitalism.

Vajpayee's visit

Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to the US came in this perspective. The euphoria in bourgeois media on the gala reception Vajpayee received has been explained as proof of a definite tilt of the US towards India in Asian equation. Do they mean the US has turned its face against Pakistan? Can it be corroborated by facts? Have not the US spokesmen told in so many words that their stand on Kashmir has not changed and called

it disputed territory? Are they not telling that the Kashmir question is to be resolved by the two states through bilateral discussions? They only tell Pakistan to see terrorist activities in Kashmir reduced to help resumption of talks and ask India also to apply its mind how to resume bilateral talks. Are not these well-known facts? But one thing needs our closer attention.

The US administration keeps the innocent posture of not having any intention to interfere in Kashmir. Is it not however a fact that behind such innocent posturing the US actually wants both India and Pakistan to remain embroiled in bitter strife over Kashmir and dependent on its help and assistance? In the joint communique, both Clinton and Vajpayee announced the partnership of both the countries in the containment of Taliban terrorism in Afghanistan as a part of their combined move against 'world terrorism'. Both the countries have commonness as also difference in interests and objects. Both have the common interest to bring a rule in that country helpful in harnessing oil and other mineral resources there as also of central Asian countries. They have also the desire to put further pressure on Pakistan by controlling or disarming Taliban forces particularly of Osama bin Laden, stationed there. India had a particular interest to curb Taliban trained and exported terrorists in Kashmir.

Again any assessment of the US intention to choose India in preference to Pakistan to be its partner in South Asia must be on reasons supported by facts. India, the developed among the developing countries, already a regional power of importance, provides some things Pakistan cannot. What are those?

Politically a rabid anti-communist right reactionary pro-American party like BJP is in power. It shows enthusiastic support to globalisation by complying with the WTO rules and requirements. Consequent on this, vast Indian market including the most lucrative fields like Telecom, Power, bank, insurance etc. have been provided for access of US capital and products. Besides, India has a nuclear arsenal, big military budget, a sophisticated space programme, booming hi-tech sector. All these are in calculation of the US to choose India in preference to Pakistan as its ally in South Asia to contain an

economically resurgent China.

On the question of signing the CTBT the Vajpayee government was not opposed to it. It has been playing for time to improve upon its nuclear might including long-range delivery system. Is it not a fact that for this reason, Advani's visit to Israel was to reach an agreement for cooperation between the two on nuclear programme? Has not India opened its armament market to France, Russia, Great Britain, USA etc. to procure sophisticated nuclear devices and armaments. Is it not proved by Vajpayee's announcement in Washington that his government would not come in the way of the treaty coming into force? Is not Vajpayee aware that he has caught the US on its wrong foot as US Congress refused to ratify CTBT and that ratification must come before it can be enforced? His favourite line of having a national consensus by way of a parliamentary approval can wait till withdrawal of remaining parts of sanctions imposed after Vajpayee's explanation given during his visit.

Can it escape our notice that there has been a marked shift in India government's foreign policy? Is it not true that foreign policy of a government reflects the policy it practises at home? Can it be not factually proved that India which once talked loud from nonalignment platform for world peace and showed affinity with anti-imperialist struggles has long shifted its position? More the imperialist characteristic features were pronounced in the Indian state, more closer was its affinity with the US imperialists and other imperialist powers.

It will be therefore certainly wrong to read subservience of India in the Indo-US relationships getting stronger. Is it not true that whatever the Indian bourgeois government does is for furtherance of the interests of the aspirant bourgeoisie? It has nothing to do with people's benefits however much the concerted efforts to befool the masses by spread of illusion. What comes in bold relief is the government's efforts for the ascendancy of Indian finance capital as important player in world market. And Indian working people will be forced to bear the crushing burden to pay the price. It is not the time therefore to rejoice on false hope but to get prepared for a determined fight back.

Massive students demonstration in Bhubaneswar

Students of Orissa are in the midst of a struggle against anti-people education policies pursued by the BJD-led state government. They protested against unprecedented hike of students' fees, freezing of grant-in-aid in schools and colleges, privatisation and commercialisation of education, proposed imposition of education cess, ban of students' union election etc., and spread of liquor, drugs and obscenity. They demanded reconstruction of schools and college buildings destroyed by last year's super cyclone, opening of branch office of Sambalpur University at Rourkela.

On the above demands students in a massive scale demonstrated in the capital on 8th September. From all the districts they came in thousands, gathered near the railway station,

marched through the main thoroughfare in a beautifully decorated procession, reached before the state secretariat and held a demonstration. A six-member delegation led by comrades Rajendra Barma, Secretary AIDS, State Committee, Nirakar Panda, Subhas Swain, Kaustav Manna, Niranjan Mohanty and Bijayananda Mallick met the Chief Minister, submitted a memorandum and demanded immediate solution of the burning educational problems.

Before that a protest meeting was held there which was presided by Comrade Chhabi Mohanty, President of AIDS, Orissa State Committee. The main speaker was Comrade Dhurjati Das, a member of the Orissa State Committee of SUCI.

Adopt Scientific Measures To Control Flood

(Contd. from page 1)

Had the silted rivers been dredged, the canals and outlets dug deeper, dams properly maintained and their capacity increased, the discharge of water controlled and embankments or dykes been regularly maintained and strengthened, and had more small dams, canals and ponds been constructed and arrangements made for speedy drainage of the accumulated water then despite excessive rainfall not only would flood management have been possible, but by storing the extra water agriculture could also be saved from the effects of drought.

But who will undertake this task in our country? Today the politics of the parties in seat of government have been reduced to the tussle and fight for power and pelf, devoid of ethics and ideology, devoid of all sympathy or compassion for people or even minimum sense of obligation. Hence everywhere, be it in BJP-ruled Gujarat or UP, or Congress-ruled Rajasthan or MP, or in whatever state under whatever party rule — everywhere we get this same pathetic picture in flood, drought or cyclone. If any question is raised, the same answer is given by the central and state governments — paucity of fund, deficit of budget, the necessity of raising the taxes and the prices of commodities. Yet they can manufacture nuclear arms by spending crores of rupees, raise the police and military budgets, take initiative for establishing more nuclear power plants, spend huge amount on frequent elections, they can spend unlimited money for maintaining criminals and for the lavish life style of the bureaucrats and ministers. But curiously they cannot save people from the devastation of flood-drought-cyclone or arsenic poisoning on the plea of paucity of fund. And the most cruel joke is that in such a situation the West Bengal state government failed to utilize even the funds allotted for some flood relief projects, according to press reports.

Moreover, when it was the foremost duty to rescue and save the people by any means and on a war footing, the governments are busy politicking and apportioning blame on each other, to get dividends for their election-oriented politics, while evading their own responsibility.

For many years floods have become practically an annual feature. So when it is known that there would be floods, still, this time too, no precaution was taken to prevent excess storing of water in dams or regulate discharge of water, even timely warning was not given. There is no prior preparation for rescue or relief operation in the flood prone areas, no stock of relief materials, no flood shelter, no speed boat or country boat, no other water transport. In most places the administration had collapsed. As rail and road transport got snapped the only thing available was the assurance of the state and the central governments. And this is called relief operations on a war footing! As many areas were declared to be inaccessible for 10, 15 days, who knows how many people who could somehow survive the flood, perched on a tree or a patch of high land, yet remained without food, drinking water and medical treatment, had to die a slow and painful death. It seems we are still living in the dark ages, deprived from the benefits of civilization.

There are instances of army contingents

shrinking back on seeing the flood waters and professing helplessness! Had it had been a question of war and of rescuing marooned soldiers, would there have been any want of army helicopters, speed boats, naval forces or other arrangements? When it comes to rescue and relief for the people, it seems no government exists in the country. What inhuman indifference!

Yet on the question of making capital out of people's distress for election gains, the CPI(M) and Trinamul-BJP combine etc., have jumped into the fray, shedding crocodile tears and carrying out show of relief with cameras clicking and amid much fanfare and promises galore. Besides, centring round whatever little government relief there is horrendous corruption and nasty petty-party politics. Thus, for example, instances of CPI(M), Trinamul and Congress fighting even at gunpoint over distribution of relief to their own supporters, have appeared in the press.

We have seen that afflicted people, having been let down again and again, do not expect much from any government. Whatever hopes and aspirations they still hold on to, is based on the conscience and humanity of all sections of common people, who, this time too, have extended a helping hand. In fact, it is the people who have really shouldered the task of rescue and relief, creating a historic example. Along with common people, the workers of our party, too, immediately jumped into rescue and relief, often at the risk of their lives, and even though many have lost their home and everything in the floods and themselves are worst sufferers. Wherever some administration was found to exist, party workers offered a helping hand. Where there was none, they searched out some administrative officer and pressurized him to run some administration. Whenever some administrator professed helplessness for want of staff, they offered to help out.

In Murshidabad alone — the worst affected district — party workers had organized 32 relief camps, among others, in the first five days. Relief and medical camps on a massive scale are being run in all the affected districts from the very beginning and are still continuing. Many students and youth have enrolled. At the same time the party is conducting movement, demanding implementation of flood relief and flood control projects, etc. In those districts that have not been affected by flood, the party has been collecting relief material where the people

have responded generously and expressed their deep trust that relief by our party will reach the affected people without discrimination.

While extending humanitarian aid the people will have to consider: can this kind of disaster be allowed to wreak havoc with people's life year after year, even though means of saving people exist, will people continue to perish helplessly because of the cruel attitude of the parties in power, lose everything and become beggars? Can this heart-breaking situation be allowed to continue?

The State Committee of our party has raised the following demands :

1. The central and state governments will have to jump into rescue and relief operation instead of blaming each other;
2. Medical team and drinking water are to be sent to every affected place;
3. A compensation of Rs. 2 lakh is to be paid to each family of the dead, and the unrealistic demand of post-mortem cannot be made in the matter of compensation;
4. Compensation and rehabilitation of affected people are to be arranged;
5. All loans of the flood-affected people are to be waived;
6. 'All party committees' at all levels are to be formed to supervise relief work;
7. Scientific measures to control flood in a permanent way is to be adopted on the basis of advice of experts;
8. An enquiry committee is to be constituted to investigate into the negligence of the persons for whom the flood took such a devastating form and into the failure in rescue and relief operation.

The party State Committee has decided to observe 24 October as condolence day in memory of painful death of thousands of people. Everywhere memorial columns will be set up and garlanded at 11 a.m. and 2 minutes silence observed. The party calls upon the people everywhere to observe 2 minutes silence wherever they be, in home, office, factories, on streets, etc. Appeals made to clubs and other organizations have met with tremendous response.

In the second week of November, a Citizens State Convention against flood, drought, erosion problems will be organized, where eminent scientists and experts will be present with a view to evolving a movement on these against the central and state governments demanding a permanent solution.

SUCI stands by flood victims in Bihar

The flood condition of Bihar worsened days owing to flooding by the rivers like the Ganga, Sone, Punpun and Gandak hundreds of villages in about thirty one districts and affecting over lakhs of people. Hundreds of people died. Many were declared untraced. Houses were destroyed, all belongings washed away. Agricultural produce suffered. People were rendered homeless, without food and potable water amidst every possibility of epidemics to follow without medicines and proper medical attention. Transport system including the railways is completely disrupted bringing life to a complete standstill in the entire region.

At this junction much before the state government the activists of SUCI jumped into action. Free kitchens were opened at several places. Relief fund collections were organised at many places including Bhagalpur, Jamalpur, Munghyr and Patna. Demonstrations were organised at block levels demanding relief measures. But the attitude of the government is apathetic and the situation is far from normal. The activists of the SUCI meanwhile are continuing their relief works and movements against the apathetic attitude of the state government.

Protest Rallies against Petro price hike

(Contd. from page 1)

rise in the prices of petroleum products and bus fare on 3rd October at 10.30 a.m. in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi. People from different walks of life participated in the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the State Secretary of the SUCI, Comrade K. Radhakrishna severely condemned the decision of the central government.

Comrade M. N. Sriram, District Secretariat Member of SUCI, who presided over the meeting said that this was only a token protest and in the future mighty movement against this problem would be built all over the state.

Patna (Bihar)

Against the heavy price hike of LPG, kerosene, diesel and petrol the Patna unit of the SUCI organised a 'protest march' in the state capital. The procession started from the Gandhi Maidan and traversed through important roads and localities of Patna before reaching the Patna Junction Golambar where the effigy of the Prime Minister was burnt.

The procession, as it marched through the streets of the state capital, attracted the attention of the people. The processionists shouted slogans against the anti-people policies of the central government and demanded immediate withdrawal of the price hike.

Later at the Patna Junction Golambar, Comrade Pramod Kumar and Comrade Sadhana Kumari addressed the rally.

Lucknow (UP)

At the call of the State Committee of SUCI the people from every corner of the state rallied at the Assembly House in Lucknow on 26th September against the anti-people policies of the government. People gathered at Charbagh Railway Station and marched towards Assembly House in a disciplined procession. The procession was well organised with red flags and banners. People were demanding the withdrawal of the hike in electricity charges, the hike in fees in educational institutions, the fees increased in government hospitals, the price hikes in diesel, petrol, kitchen gas, kerosene oil and sugar etc., and subsidy to capitalist class. People were raising slogans against police atrocities and hooliganism and black Acts. The procession reached the Assembly House without any obstacle. But after reaching the Assembly House the police blocked the rally and it turned into a mass meeting.

Comrades V. N. Singh, State Secretary of the SUCI, Bechan Ali, Dinesh Kant Dubey, Raghvendra, Comrade Darm Deo, all members of the State Committee and Surendra Nath Maurya addressed the meeting. Comrade Jagannath Verma, the State office secretary of the SUCI conducted the meeting. Comrade Phushpendra Vishwakarma read the memorandum and the charter of demands. Comrade V. N. Singh handed over the memorandum to ADM City. Before the rally at Assembly House on 26th Sept all the district committees of the SUCI organised rallies, processions and demonstrations at block, tahseel and district headquarters and handed over memoranda to the officers of respective

levels. On 5th September Pratapgarh District Committee organised a rally and demonstration on Patti Tehseel and handed over a memorandum to the SDM addressed to Governor of UP. On 15th September Jaunpur District Committee organised rally and demonstration at Jaunpur DM office and handed over a memorandum to the DM. On 16th September Sultanpur District Committee organised a rally and demonstration at DM office. Comrade Jagannath Verma handed over a memorandum to the DM.

The above programmes of rally and demonstration were taken in the meeting of UP State Committee of the SUCI. All the district committees worked according to the decision of the state committee and gave the call to people 'Lucknow Chalo'. From all corners of the state people marched to Lucknow and made the demonstration a massive success.

Bhopal (MP)

The MP State Organising Committee of the SUCI submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India through the Governor of MP demanding withdrawal of hike in prices of petroleum products, on 3rd October last. Comrade U. P. Biswas of MP State Organising Committee led the delegation comprising Comrades Ramavatar Sharma, J. C. Barai, Bhabani Shankar Ghosh and Anil Mohanty to the Governor.

Chennai (TN)

The Tamilnadu State Organising Committee of the SUCI organised a protest demonstration near Valluvarkottam on Tuesday, October 3, 2000 to protest against the steep hike in prices of petrol, diesel, kerosene and cooking gas announced by the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. This protest was a part of the countrywide protests being organised at the call of the Central Committee of SUCI.

The large number of demonstrators who had gathered raised slogans against the unwarranted hike in prices of petroleum products, which was

an attack on the lives of the poor toiling people and middle class who were already struggling for the bare necessities of life.

Comrade S. Elangovan, member of the Chennai-Chengai District Organising Committee of the SUCI, addressed the gathering. He reminded the people that this was the second time within a year that these prices had been hiked. He pointed out how, ever since the BJP-led NDA government had come to power it had very deliberately implemented one anti-people policy after another without caring a bit about how these decisions, like axing welfare schemes, affected the lives of the common people.

Calcutta (West Bengal)

The Calcutta District Committee of SUCI organised a mass protest demonstration at Esplanade on 30th September last, against price-hike of petroleum products. There the processionists burnt the effigy of Prime Minister. In a meeting the speakers pointed out that this price-hike, particularly when the state of West Bengal is reeling under flood, would have cascading effect on essential commodities. This is simply barbarity on the part of the BJP government.

Patiala (Punjab)

On 2nd October SUCI Punjab Unit organised a protest demonstration against petroleum price hike at Patiala. At the Patiala main bus terminal a protest meeting was held addressed by Comrades Avtar Singh, Rana Singh and Jagtar Singh.

Guwahati (Assam)

SUCI, in Assam organised a mass deputation against petro-products price-hike in Guwahati on 30. 9. 2000. There was no arrangement to receive the memorandum. Instead the police arrested Comrade Bimal Nandi, member of the State Committee and other comrades who were leading the deputation to the Governor in front of Raj Bhawan. Protest demonstrations were held in different districts also.



Youth rally organised by AIDYO against unemployment in Bangalore on 26th September, 2000
(News on page 7)

Save Education Day Observed in States

26th September, the birth anniversary of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, one of the greatest figures of the Indian Renaissance and the pioneer of modern education in our country, was observed by the country as an 'All India Save Education Day'. In view of the utter devastation of education in the country as a result of the BJP-led government's measures regarding country's education, the All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) in its last session in Chennai on 26 July 2000, resolved to observe the 'Day' throughout the country as step towards giving nationwide focus to the programme of 'Dharna' in front of Parliament House in New Delhi on November 24, 2000. The 'Day' was also observed to highlight before the people how the present government at the Centre is out to subvert, sabotage and destroy the ideals of universal, democratic, secular and scientific education in their zeal to privatise, commercialise and saffronise education in the country. We report here so far the news came from the states.

Bihar

The Bihar State Save Education Committee observed the 'Day' by organising a meeting at Patna on 26th September. The meeting was presided over by Prof. S.K. Bose, the former Principal of B.N. College and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Patna University. Luminaries in the field of education in the state like Prof. Ram Sharan Sharma, a noted historian and President of Bihar State Save Education Committee and Prof. Mohiuddin Ahmed, former Vice-Chancellor of Patna University graced the occasion as speakers. While recalling the role of the stalwarts of Indian Renaissance like Vidyasagar in championing the cause of secular and scientific education in the country, the speakers expressed their deep concern at the attempts of the ruling BJP at the Centre to saffronise the entire curriculum. Others who spoke in the meeting were Prof. Purnendu Mukherjee, Prof. Sumant Niyogi, Prof. S.K. Ganguly, Prof. Tarun Kumar, Dr. S.N. Mondal, Dr. Devendra Prasad Singh, Dr. Suresh Prasad and others. Sri Arun Kumar Singh, the Secretary of the State SEC, at the end placed before the house the future programme of the Committee that include signature campaign, publication of bulletins, organising district level conventions.

Madhya Pradesh

In this State the news from two districts reached us. In Sagar a meeting to observe the 'Day' was held at Saraswatibachanalaya. Prominent personalities like Prof. B.K. Roy of Sagar University, Sri Mahendra Fuskele, a veteran litterateur of the city, Dr. Ramavatar Sharma, a member of the AISEC, Dr. D.C. Sharma, Reader of Sagar University and President of Sagar District SEC were present. The meeting was presided over by Shri R.K. Pouranik, a veteran teacher. The meeting created much enthusiasm in the city.

In Bhopal the 'Save Education Day' was observed at Pillai School, Habibganj, BHEL, Bhopal. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Ramavatar Sharma, a member of the AISEC. As



Signature campaign on Save Education Day in Chennai

the main speaker was present Prof. Dr. Ashok Ganguli, a member of the Presidium of the AISEC. Both Dr. Sharma and Prof. Ganguli stressed the need of cultivating the character and ideals of Vidyasagar in thwarting the conspiracy of the Central Government in the field of education. Shri Pandri Nath Solanky, the Chief Guest and Shri J.C. Barai, Adviser, AISEC, Bhopal also spoke on the occasion.

West Bengal

Successful observance of 'Save Education Day' in the state was much significant in the background of devastating flood in twelve districts in which more than 1250 people died officially. Even the education loving people from the flood affected districts joined the programme. Amidst heavy shower people from all walks of life participated in the signature campaign and collection of fund throughout the state. The main programme was held near the Vidyasagar Statue, College Street, Calcutta. Those who spoke in the meeting were Prof. Pranab Dasgupta, a member of the AISEC, Shri Tapan Roychoudhury, a member of the Presidium of AISEC, Shri Kartick Saha, a state level leader of primary teachers and others. A well decorated procession of students and teachers of different schools and colleges joined the programme.

Mumbai

At the call of All India Save Education Committee, activists of the committee from

Bombay-Thane districts, Maharashtra organised a public meeting at Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Hall, Mogal House, N.M. Joshi Marg, Chinchpokali, Bombay (West). The meeting was presided over by Mr. Mahdu Shetye, an eminent journalist. The main speaker was Professor Sanjiveeno, Kelkar College, Mulund, Bombay. Other speakers were Mr. Y K Kulshrestha, Convenor of the programme and Mr. S. K. Dube, a taximan. Professor Sanjiveeni said that all the time ruling class designed the education pattern to serve their interest, not for the people. British imperialist also framed education system for its imperialist rule. Mr. Y K Kulshrestha told about the bad impact of privatisation, commercialisation and communalisation and particularly the dangerous impact of DPEP. Mr. Sharan Kumar Dube, an ordinary taximan stressed the need of revolutionary spirit and idea in education system. Mr. Shageer Ahmed Ansari, another speaker, stressed the need of progressive value based education. The president of the meeting, Mr. Madhu Shetye attacked the caste system and communalisation of education. Comrade Tyagi conducted the proceeding of the meeting.

Chennai

26th September, the birth day of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a pioneer of the great Renaissance movement and modern education in India was observed as the All India Save Education Day in Chennai. Prof. Krishnamurthi graced the occasion. The volunteers set up a big exhibition, highlighting the movement against commercialisation, privatisation and communalisation of education, donation and capitation system, soaring fee hike, propagation of obscenity, undermining English and mother tongue etc. Signature were collected in favour of education movement. The antisocials, deployed by the vested interest, suddenly attacked the exhibition site, destroyed it and injured 5 volunteers.

Education loving people expressed strong resentment against this cowardly attack.

AIDYO march against unemployment in Delhi

Under the auspices of Delhi State Committee of All India Democratic Youth Organisation (AIDYO) hundreds of youths from different corners of Delhi marched against unemployment from Mandi House to Parliament and submitted a memorandum with 13-point charter of demands, containing more than 12000 signatures to the Prime Minister. In the memorandum it was demanded to include right to employment as a fundamental right in the Constitution, to withdraw anti-employment new Industrial-Economic Policy and the VCPC recommendations and also to provide job or sufficient unemployment allowance to every unemployed. Reopening of all closed industries, ban on high-tech, filling of all the vacant posts, abolition of fee for competitive examinations, provision of free passes for attending exams/interviews, interest free loans for self-employment, etc., also were demanded.

The Prime Minister was also reminded of his

promise to provide one crore new jobs every year.

The protest march was led by Comrades Anurag Sharma, President of AIDYO, Delhi, Harish Tyagi, Secretary and P.K. Pawar, Central Convenor, Campaign Against Unemployment.

The leaders, in protest meeting held at Sansad Marg, while addressing the youths, criticised strongly the recent cabinet decision to reduce 10% central government staff strength, this year, to abolish all vacant posts and fresh ban on new recruitments for one year.

The speakers urged the government to withdraw such steps and to chalk out policies for providing jobs to all. The protestors pledged to intensify the movement against unemployment further.

A delegation under the leadership of Brajesh Kumar, Convenor of Campaign Against Unemployment submitted the memorandum containing more than 12000 sinatures to the PM's office.

Joint Students' Movement In Bihar

Bihar Intermediate Council of Education (BICE) has recently decided to increase its examination fees by Rs.150 at a stroke. The Vice-Chancellors of different universities in the state met and decided to propose abnormal hike in tuition fees at university level. These two anti-student decisions came in a situation when due to the total indifference of the State Government to the ongoing movement of college and university teachers, numbering at least 17000, from 1 August last on the just demands for implementation of 1996-UGC pay-scales, the education in the state has been largely affected. Even the students came out openly in support of their teachers and the left students' organisations closed their ranks to launch a joint movement against the lacadaisical attitude of the government, report of which were published earlier. So, the decision of fees hike surfaced at a time when the ground for movement was already prepared.

In such a situation a joint convention by AIDS0 and other left students' organisations was held at Patna University demanding immediate restoration of academic atmosphere in colleges and scrapping of decision of fees hike. A programme of action like gherao of the education minister followed by a Patna Bandh was drawn up. In the convention Comrade Suryakar Jitendra, Vice President, Patna District Committee of AIDS0 was elected as a member of the Presidium formed to conduct the movement.

On 30 August, the proposed day of gherao of

the minister, the students saw a large contingent of police approaching them to thwart the programme. They took up a different route to evade the police and organised a militant demonstration before the residence of the minister of higher education. The police after knowing that they were befooled closed in upon the demonstrating students from all directions with RAF vehicles, lathis and other weapons. They pounced upon them with brutality and arrested many of them including five DSO activists. In the custody they were held up for one day without getting any food on the pretext of questioning. One of the comrades Berijananda Singh was so mercilessly beaten up that his eardrum was punctured. Seemingly unsatisfied with their efforts, the custodians of law and order framed up false charges and sent the arrested AIDS0 activists to jail.

This, however, could in no way subdue the spirit of the students involved in the movement. The subsequent black day observance and Patna Bandh reflected the support of the people to the movement. Shops and other offices remained closed, few vehicles were seen on the streets. The police arrested hundreds of students who took out processions from various parts of Patna. The arrested included many activists of AIDS0.

Along with the joint programmes, AIDS0 took up its own set of programmes with a view to building up a massive statewide movement. On 6th August effigies of the minister for higher education

was burnt in various districts including Mujaffarpur, Bhagalpur and Jamshedpur while a demonstration was organised before the district magistrate in Jehanabad. Meetings and processions were taken out at various places. It was decided to stage a massive procession before the Chief Minister on 13th August. As planned earlier, a massive demonstration was staged before the Chief Minister of Bihar on 13th August. Large number of students from various universities of Bihar participated in the demonstration.

A well decorated procession started from the historic Gandhi Maidan. It traversed through important landmarks of Patna and finally reached the R.Block Square where the armed policemen obstructed the procession.

A three-point charter of demands was submitted before the magistrate to be subsequently handed over to the Chief Minister. The demands included the immediate implementation of all the justified demands of the teachers and resumption of academic activities and immediate withdrawal of all false charges clamped on the protesting students.

A meeting conducted by Comrade Indradev Roy, Vice President, AIDS0, Bihar State Committee, was organised on the spot. Comrade Rampriti Ray, President, Comrade Dipak Kumar, Secretary, Comrade Mohan Singh, Vice President, Comrades Rajan and Santosh Kumar, both members, AIDS0, Bihar State Committee, addressed the meeting.

Protest against arrack sale at Gulbarga

The authorities appear least concerned about addressing the burning issues of people's life, but seem much enthusiastic about promoting arrack business in every nook and corner of the country. The conspiracy behind this is not unknown to the people. That the parties in power consider intoxicating the people as a means to temporarily distract their mind from day to day problems of life is not a secret to them. The governments like that in the state of Karnataka have been pursuing this policy for long and the people have been organising resistance movement against this. Such a movement is now on in the villages of the district of Gulbarga, Karnataka.

On 18 August last under the auspices of AIDYO, Naganur Unit and Citizens' Committee more than thousand people marched in the villages of Naganur and Khanapur and forcibly closed the arrack shops. Before that a protest meeting presided over by Mr. B.S. Patil was held. Comrade B. Bhayawanreddy, Vice President, AIDYO, Karnataka State Committee, spoke on the state government's role in safeguarding the interest of arrack owners instead of people's interest. Others who spoke included Comrade V.G. Desai, Gulbarga District Secretary of AIDYO, Comrade S. Gugal, the local in-charge of AIDYO and Shri Hatliraya Desai, a gram panchayat member.

Convention against unemployment in Bangalore

The All India Democratic Youth Organisation (AIDYO) organised a Convention against unemployment at Town Hall at 11.00 on 26.9.2000. More than 2000 youths participated.

Comrade (Dr.) B.R. Manjunath, President, Karnataka State Committee presided.

Dr. G. Ramakrishnan, eminent educationist, dealt widely on the problem of unemployment. He called upon the youths to protest against the anti-people policies of the government.

The Chief Guest Comrade K. Radhakrishna, State Secretary, SUCI, condemned the Central Government for its false assurance of 1 crore jobs every year. He said that both BJP and Congress have followed the same Open Door policies.

The convention adopted resolutions against the ban on recruitment, petroleum price hikes and hikes in hospital charges.

In the convention "Anti-Unemployment Struggle Committee" was formed to guide and provide leadership to all movements against unemployment.

Memoranda containing the demands of the convention were submitted to the Governor and the Chief Minister.

In the meeting a struggle committee against alcohol addiction was formed under the leadership of Shri Ashok Gugal and Comrade V.G. Desai.

Significant Victory by IDBI Employees

Bank Employees' Unity Forum (BEUF) snatched 'regular employment' by undoing 'contract labour' at the newly built Bhubaneswar IDBI Office from the management-government combine.

The prolonged mass deputation of the employees under the leadership of Comrade J. Roy Mondal, Secretary, All India IDBI Employees Union, forced the Chairman to honour the commitment made earlier.

At Bhubaneswar employees of Reserve Bank Class IV organisation along with other sections of working people came in stout defence of the IDBI employees legitimate demand.

It is a historic lesson that jobs can be defended given the correct leaderships, determination and unity of the employees composed with solidarity of the working people with the cause.

AIMSS units formed in Mumbai

A women's meeting was held at Bhiwandi, district Thane on 1st October. In that meeting an AIMSS Committee was formed with Comrades Archana Kulshreshtha and Pravabati Mouriya as convenors.

At Goregaon another women's meeting was held on 2nd October. There also an AIMSS committee was formed with Comrade Nirmala as convenor and Comrades Ashoka Mourya, Sarala Devi and Menoka Devi as committee members.

School of Politics in Rajasthan

A three day School of Politics was organised by the SUCI Rajasthan State Organising Committee from 16th to 18th September at Pilani. The School was conducted by Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, member, Central Committee.

Comrade Banerji, inter alia, showed that dialectical materialist methodology alone can guide us in the quest for truth because it is the only comprehensive scientific world outlook which has developed through co-ordination, integration and generalisation of the particular knowledges and truths gathered by the different branches of science. Hence it is the first and the only philosophy in the history of mankind that provides us with comprehensive scientific knowledge to change the world. That is why it is a guide to action. It is the scientific philosophy and methodology of Marxism developed and propounded by Marx and Engels. But Marxism is not a dogma. It is science, growing and developing with growth and development of science and human knowledge. Lenin, the worthy disciple of Marx and Engels, developed and enriched Marxism in the light of growth of the national and social sciences since the time of Marx and Engels. Thus, Marxism has become Marxism-Leninism, Marxism in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Comrade Banerji lucidly explained how, in our country, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, following the teachings of his great forerunners Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong, concretized, elaborated, developed and enriched Marxism and brought its understanding to a new height in the light of modern scientific development and through correct and conscious practice by lifelong active participation in struggles in all spheres for liberation of society and ourselves, for liberation of all arts and sciences from the clutches of capitalism and from moral, ethical-cultural degradation, capitalist exploitation and enslavement. Today, Marxism-Leninism and Shibdas Ghosh thought illumine the path to emancipation from exploitation of all sorts.

Comrade Shambhu Nath Madi Shot Dead by PWG

On 12th October morning, armed men of the outfit known as PWG (People's War Group) shot Comrade Shambhu Nath Madi (50), AIKKMS organiser at point blank range when he was working in the field, close to his house. He died instantly. Poor people of Malkangiri district, Orissa lost a valiant leader.

Comrade Madi was under life threat for a long time. He was attacked at home last year when the criminals shot him. He was not killed, but his leg was severed. His wife and daughter were also injured. In June, 1999, PWG made another attack and failing to get him, burnt to ashes his house.

Undaunted, Comrade Madi refused police protection.

Comrade Madi joined SUCI 15 years back and dedicated himself to the cause of the poor people. He worked in Paria and Kalimela block of Malkangiri district.

He led many movements of the adivasis, harijans and poor people in general. Recently he organised movements with the demands to construct roads and bridges. He also was conducting mass movements against corruption in distribution of rice to people below poverty line.

Comrade Madi had been waging a consistent courageous movement against PWG's anti-people activities including extortion from the poor people.

All these movements strengthened our party while hampered the interest of the PWG. This enraged the PWG who annihilated Comrade Madi.

22nd October will be observed as the 'Condolence Day' throughout Orissa.

RED SALUTE COMRADE SHAMBHU NATH MADI

Demonstration in Jeypore, Orissa

A huge demonstration was held before Baipariguda Block office on 14th September against sky-rocketing price rise of essential commodities. Two thousand tribal peasants, agricultural workers youth and women under the banner of SUCI marched the Block office where armed forces obstructed it from entering through the gate. The strong demonstration continued for two hours. In a public meeting there speakers criticised the anti-people policies of the state BJD-BJP and the BJP-led NDA Government of the Centre. A 12-point charter of demands was submitted to the BDO by a delegation. After the discussion the BDO came out to discuss the demand-charter with the people. He assured to fulfill the demands according to his capacity and convey the rest to the DM. The demands include: issue BPL (below poverty level) card to all the poor families, land records to the

tribals who are cultivating since 25 years etc. The rally was led by Comrades Sadasiva Das, Surya Bisoi, Khagapati Mali, Dasarath Killo and S. Pradhani.

A.P.

Relief Work for flood victims by SUCI

The A.P. State Organizing Committee of the SUCI conducted Free Medical Camps for the flood victims in 16 different slums of Hyderabad on 23rd, 24th and 25th of September. During these camps a total number of above 2000 patients were treated and medicines worth Rs.70,000 were freely distributed. Two teams of doctors belonging to Medical Service Centre and A.P. Junior Doctors' Association rendered their free service for eight hours a day on these three days. In all 17 doctors and 40 volunteers worked in these camps. Dr. Ansuman Mitra of Medical Service Centre and Dr. Hari Krishna, President of A.P. Junior Doctors' Association led the medical teams.

On 1.10.2000 the SUCI distributed blankets to around 300 families whose mud houses had collapsed in the recent floods in Indira Nagar Colony in Khairatabad Mandalam.



Youth rally in Delhi against unemployment organised by AIDYO (News on page 6)



Medical Camp in Hyderabad

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