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New Economic Policy and Globalization in Agricultural Economy Poor Peasants and Rural Poor to Face More Starvation

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in July 1991. GATT was signed, also by India, in 1994. After introducing the NEP, the Prime Minister Sri Narasimha Rao declared that one of the main objectives of the new policy was to encourage direct foreign capital investment in India. It was also said that it was impossible to remain isolated in this age of globalisation of economy. For that free market economy should be introduced. The Congress leaders also said that all these projects were taken in people's interest, to free the national industrial scenario from stagnation and to accomplish the second industrial revolution.

During that time our party warned that this policy was introduced keeping in view the new necessities of the Indian capital, it had nothing to do with people's interest.

Indian capital, through stages of development, has long acquired imperialist features. This imperialist capital is trying to enter newer arena in world market. This induces it to join the traditional imperialist countries in joint ventures in domestic as well as overseas market. The necessity to protect national market in the interest of national capital has largely diminished. National market, to the Indian capital is now just a segment of world capitalist market. For this reason the Indian financial oligarchy have been praising this policy towards economic globalisation.

But another newly emerging feature is that side by side the industrial houses, the rural capitalists of the country, too, are demanding globalisation of Indian agriculture and agricultural produce. They demand of the government to withdraw all barriers on import-export of agricultural inputs and output. They have estimated that had all the barriers been withdrawn on export, the kulaks by now could have profited by 31% more. So, they ask to integrate Indian agriculture with the international market. This is why they are vociferous for rapid implementation of the New Economic Policy and the GATT.

It is a historical fact that in post-independence period, agriculture in our country developed on the capitalist path. In this connection Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the eminent Marxist thinker and our founder General Secretary, said, "Why is it that on the one hand most of the land of the country is being concentrated among a handful of men, while on the other the majority of the inhabitants of the countryside, i.e. 85% of the rural population have come down to the proletarian and semi-proletarian level - what is the reason? Anybody having the basic knowledge of economics knows that it is so because of the inexorable law of capitalism." (Agricultural problem of India and on peasants movement — free translation)

Besides the other important features of

capitalism arising in agriculture, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, following Lenin's teachings, particularly mentioned this capitalist process of concentration of land and other assets in the hands of a few. Reality proves that today that very process, in course of getting strengthened, has given rise to a very powerful lobby of agricultural capital.

At present the big and middle size landholdings which constitute only 24.33 per cent of all land holdings in our country have under them 71 per

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SUCI Stands by Quake-hit People at Jabalpore

A devastating earthquake rocked Jabalpore on 22nd May last. About 150 people lost their lives. The loss of life would have been greater if most people had not gone to sleep in the open air in the hot summer night. But buildings and houses suffered heavy damages. Those people whose houses still stand are spending sleepless nights in mortal fear of the damaged building collapsing in one of the innumerable after shocks. Government relief is conspicuously inadequate. Remote villages are not being attended either by government or voluntary organisations.

The SUCI activists visited many of the affected areas immediately after the fateful earthquake, and took stock of the situation. Relief work was immediately started in villages like Birner, Sarswai etc. In association with some voluntary organisations, the SUCI activists started distributing food, clothes, utensils plastics and polythene sheets for temporary shelters. SUCI comrades including women comrades collected relief materials and money through street and door to door collections in Bhopal, Jabalpore and Sagar. Volunteers from Bhopal and Indore worked at Jabalpore. The Medical Service Centre with a team of doctors, health workers and huge relief materials rushed to Jabalpore from Calcutta. They held medical camp from 4th to 8th June at Ghanna, Birner, Narayan Gaon of Sarswai, Kanchghar, Mujibar Mahalla of Garha. Medicines worth Rs. 40,000 were distributed. Along with other organisations a committee, "Bhoo Kamp Peedit Sangharsh Samanvay Samiti" has been formed to carry forward the relief work and the struggle of the affected people.



SUCI activists are seen distributing relief materials to the quake-hit victims at Jabalpore

Ouster of Mobutu

A Review of Present Development in Zaire

The recent ouster of President Mobutu Sese Seko, the ruthless dictator of Zaire, proves once again that no amount of oppression or tyranny and for that matter, no oppressor or tyrant, however powerful and wild he might be, can keep the freedom-loving people chained and smothered for all time to come. After immense loss and suffering both in terms of life and economic plight people of Zaire had at last got rid of the tyrannical rule of Mobutu after long 32 years. The forces, led by Laurent Kabila seized Kinsasha, the capital of Zaire, with other parts of the country after a long and arduous fight for last seven months. One of the fiercest dictators of Africa, the imperialist stooge Mobutu, though not relinquishing the presidency of the country, fled to Morocco.

Present-day Zaire, named so by Mobutu since 1971, was formerly known as Congo. Congo was the colony of Belgium. In the background of general awakening of Africa the people of this central African country also had risen up to end the colonial rule and establish their own independent nationalist state. After a glorious battle against the US backed Belgian imperialists under the leadership of Patrice Lumumba, a fire-brand nationalist leader, people of Congo while fighting valiantly and sacrificing blood to an immeasurable extent had liberated the country in 1960.

In this context it is worth mentioning that Patrice Lumumba did not only represent the Congolese nationalist awakening but became the symbolic expression of African awakening as a whole. He was the source of inspiration of struggling people against colonial repression and exploitation in entire Africa. Not only this, as no nationalist movement in the present era of imperialism and proletarian revolution can keep the anti-imperialist fervour ablaze and even become successful going against communism, Patrice Lumumba also while conducting the anti-imperialist movement came closer to the communist movement. His proximity with the socialist camp speaks eloquently of this.

However, although the Belgian imperialists were forced to give in to the people of Congo's nationalist movement they still fostered hope and were engaged in conspiracy to get back their hold over the country known for its rich mineral wealth with cobalt, zinc, uranium, manganese, oil and mainly the industrial diamonds. Not only this, they even colluded with the US imperialists in their common interests of plundering the country as well as to stave off the spread of communism, then making strides in different countries of the world, particularly in Africa. These two imperialist interests having combined together started to create disturbance in this newly resurgent nationalist state of Congo. With the help of the stooges there these imperialists plunged the country into anarchy in their ulterior design to destabilise the nationalist government, led by Lumumba, by fomenting rebellion. With a view to saving this newly independent government and the state against onslaught of this imperialist-conspiracy Patrice Lumumba sought ardent help from the UNO. But instead of saving this

nationalist state the UNO not only remained idle but heinously played into the hands of these imperialists, led by the US imperialists. In fact UNO's stand on this issue reflected exactly that of the US and other imperialists, proving once again that UNO was nothing but a rubber stamp of the US imperialists. But what was pathetic and shameful was that the Soviet Union as the leader of the then powerful socialist camp, capable of disciplining the imperialists militarily, failed to stand by the newly independent Congo in utter disrespect to its socialist international commitment to protect any independent state against the imperialist conspiracy. It was due to the revisionist policy gripping the state and the Communist Party leadership of the Soviet Russia that this country could remain amazingly silent and inactive, thereby helping the imperialists to continue with their subversive activities in Congo. This revisionist role of the USSR encouraged the imperialists to persist in conspiracy to bring the country under their direct control. As a result of such combined imperialist aggression of Belgium and the USA, Patrice Lumumba was assassinated in 1961. This dastardly murder by the imperialists was vehemently protested all over the world. People of different countries, including India, condemned it in such a way that the imperialists, especially the US imperialists were found extremely cornered. The ground was so prepared that there could have been a vigorous movement against imperialism throughout the world centring round this despicable act, but because of Soviet revisionism it was not possible. Still the heat generated from this people's spontaneous and uniform protest the US-led imperialists were put to dock at least.

This annihilation of the leader notwithstanding, their ultimate design of bringing the mineral-rich country under their direct control through their own agent still left to be fulfilled. Its groundwork, of course, was under way since the late fifties with the imminent end of the Belgian colonial rule. The US imperialists in their frantic attempt to search such an agent found Mobutu Sese Seko through CIA in the late fifties, who joined the US imperialist clique as a promising henchman in the sub-Saharan state. Since then he was carefully reared up and finally encouraged to join the Congolese army. Gradually occupying the highest position 'Marshall' in the army after independence, backed by the imperialists in the general atmosphere of anarchy created by those imperialists themselves, especially the US imperialists, this Mobutu with the plea of stopping the violence in the country captured the state power in a coup in 1965 and became its self-appointed President proclaiming himself as the "father of the nation".

Immediately after coming to power Mobutu assumed the role of a formidable military dictator and as the first sign of his despotic rule banned party politics excepting his own newly formed 'Movement of the Revolution' party and annihilated thousands of his opponent politicians or drove them out into exile.

Mobutu put his grip on this central African

state throughout his 32 years of rule and turned Zaire into as the hunting ground of his personal plunder and loot, allowing however, full play to the country's capitalists as well as to his imperialist masters to exploit the country to their fullest desire and necessity.

For his personal sake Mobutu's whim became the law of the land and the national treasury of the country his own bank. He pumped out billions of dollars from the Zairean economy either in cash or kind to become one of the world's richest men. His deposit of \$4 billion in a Swiss bank account and palatial buildings, worth million dollars in Zaire, France, Morocco and Switzerland speak of this eloquently. Corrupt to the core Mobutu not only practised himself this corruption and depravity but plunged the country as a whole into these vices during his long rule. His soldiers who were marked as robbers and rapists, as well as the government officials without exception in liaison with barons of the country, were openly indulged in robbing the people so systematically, that Mobutu's rule was characterized as Kleptocratic (pertaining to a government which indulges in stealing despite the absence of economic motives). This not only helped decline the economy steadily (we shall discuss it later) but pushed the moral standard of the country to abysmal depth. With this heinous attempt of making people morally impotent Mobutu at the same time stoked communal and ethnic strifes in Zaire to perpetuate his misrule. It is fact that Zaire consists of innumerable ethnic groups. Mobutu's ethnic policy has destroyed unity among 200 ethnic groups. The glaring reflection of this was found in the riots flared up throughout the south-east provinces. Shaba and Kasai, the two ethnic groups in the two mineral-rich provinces declared themselves as autonomous and were trying to secede from Zaire as a result of this destructive ethnic policy.

On the one hand, he perpetrated all these to his personal end, on the other, he allowed freely all rights to his colonial masters, the Belgian, French and the US imperialists to bleed the people white and deplete the country of its vast and richest mineral resources in the name of export to the countries of their own choice at a throw away price. More than half of its industrial diamonds were smuggled out into those imperialist countries every year. The US imperialists, however, were not regaled with this only. They wanted much more. So they hatched a scheme known as "Pentagon Paper" that worked out a division of the country and conspired in collusion with the country's elites, the proteges and pillars of the Mobutu regime in the capital Kinsasha, in a meeting in a luxurious hill mansion in the Binza district just on the eve of Mobutu's fall to dole out the whole mineral-rich east and south of Zaire to the American firms. [The Economist, March 22, 1997]. Of course, this heinous design of the US imperialist was foiled with Mobutu's ouster.

Now we come to the question how these plunders and extortions both by Mobutu and his imperialist props over the long 32 years of their

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People's Alternative Political Power only Guarantee against Imperialist Machinations

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reign bled the country's economy dry. Firstly, in their vain attempt to raise the totally fallen purchasing power of the people the Mobutu government increased the issuance of currency that rose to more than 25 times by 1992-93. This resulted in inflation of already more than 3,800 per cent in 1992-93 reaching even a staggering 9,800 per cent in 1994. [Trends in Developing Economics, World Bank Book 1995, p.564]. The situation worsened with currency depreciation that caused increase of domestic currency by 230,000 times in 1989. Z 455 per dollar at the end of 1989 stood at Z 105 million per dollar (in old zaires, the currency of zaire) at the end of 1993. [Ibid]. The fiscal change in the same year introducing new zaires to stave off this hideous inflationary trend and depreciation failed miserably. [Ibid] The impact of all this was reflected in the domestic consumer prices that increased to 23,773.1% in 1994 from 23.8% in 1985. (Ibid, p.565). Owing to this regressive fiscal situation the government further attacked the people. They stopped wages and salaries to the employees and staff of not only the public sector but even to government's own civil servants, teachers and the soldiers for months. By September 1993 arrears on wages and salaries to public sector employees reached up to 12 months. [Ibid].

By African standard Zaire, with the third largest population (41 million) and the second largest area (2.35 million sq. km.) containing the largest and richest mineral resources with the second largest rain forest in the world, fertile soils and ample rainfall which until 1990 accounted for about one-fifth of gross domestic product (GDP) and bulk of export earnings in sub-Saharan Africa, was a country which was more or less economically self-reliant. [Ibid., p.562]. But the people of this country turned pauper with constant fall of the economy under Mobutu's rule.

Under this grim economic situation the state of poverty and destitution of the Zairean people is less said the better. Its backlash was worst among the hapless children and pregnant woman of the country. Hundreds of thousands of them suffer from severe malnourishment [Ibid., p.562]. Owing to meagre expenditure on health people's health was a worst casualty there. Infant mortality and under-five child mortality were the cases in point. People got least attention from the government's medical facilities. (Ibid). From drugs to rubber gloves everything was to be supplied by the patients family. The scene is more pathetic when considering that there is only one doctor for every 15,150 patients; one nurse for every 1355 patients, and one hospital bed for every 702 patients. [World Bank Indicators, 1997, p.76]

Actually despite being the possessor of such a vast and rich mineral and forest resources the vast majority of people of Zaire lived a life in sub-human conditions under economic duress during Mobutu's rule. Unable to find any way to get rid of this situation they were just groaning distressingly with tremendous discontent and resentment among them. Outbursts of movements were surfacing also now and then. Two such successive outbursts in 1977 and 1978 which

were brutally crushed by Mobutu with the help of Belgian, French and Moroccan mercenaries, reflected that people of Zaire were steadily and gradually forging ahead against the despotic rule. In fact overcoming the torrents of repression of Mobutu's initial years of dictatorship, people gradually took to the path of movement in tradition with their freedom struggle, though in a low profile. Notably, Laurent Kabila who, popularly known as an associate of Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the present movement, emerged through the impact of these people's movements in Zaire. In this context it should be noted that this people's upsurge against Mobutu was not merely an outburst against his ruthless dictatorship. It is oversimplified to think so. No movement in any class-divided society can be without any class character. Taking this into account the current movement in Zaire also has definitely some class backing or support. In fact, since Mobutu was the protege of imperialism, providing full scope to the imperialists for exploiting almost the whole of Zaire's economy and market the national bourgeoisie of the country was majorly deprived there, despite the fact that a small portion of them popularly known as the 'elites' enjoyed a share of the market in collaboration with the imperialists. So the people and even the national bourgeoisie were tremendously discontent against the rule. They were just finding the opportunity to launch a blow against the rule. Kabila's movement provided this opportunity. Evidently they stood behind this movement with their full support. The imperialists, particularly the US imperialists, observed this keenly. They could foresee that Mobutu's rule was sure to meet the end with the growing intensity of such movements in near future.

The revolt that erupted in eastern Zaire turned rapidly into a national resistance of all the Zaireans, of all the communities of Zaire under the banner of Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) with Laurent Kabila at the helm. Unlike 1977 and 1978 crack down, this time the Zairean soldiers and the mercenaries failed to contain the uprising and began to retreat gradually. At this point the US imperialists were found dissociating themselves from Mobutu and posing to support Kabila. Both these events were, however, not surprising nor were the projection of their devotion to democracy, let alone showing respect to the people's will. It was evidently, in fact, their shrewd manoeuvre to grip Zaire fully elbowing out even the other imperialists and particularly to rope in Kabila to their interest. Hence, with England's support the US imperialists opposed Belgium and France which supported Mobutu to continue with his rule.

Kabila with his 70,000 strong army finally dislodged Mobutu regime and assumed in a self-declaration the Presidency of Zaire and at the same time changed the country's name to previous Democratic Republic of Congo. As emerged from impact of the people's movement the people of Zaire had undeniably reposed full faith on Kabila so much so that they even hailed him as 'liberator' instead of 'rebel' for leading them to get rid of the

suffocating repressive reign of the military dictator Mobutu. Kabila pledged in consonance with the people's aspiration to reestablish the democratic republic as founded after its independence in 1960. The imperialists, especially the US imperialists also did not waste time. They immediately kicked off their rope-in game. They came up with the offer of \$10 million in the name of elections in Zaire to the leader of the movement, Laurent Kabila, with even added assurance of European help to him. Not only this, many a business firm controlled by the imperialists has been swarming around Kabila with their sops. One such mining firm is eager to give Kabila's ADFL \$50 million. In this context we like to emphasize that imperialism does not always resort to violence in all cases. That is, it does not always intervene into a country, in order to grip it under its clutches, through violent aggression or repression. Every time, to make its design successful, it assumes two faces — one of violence, the other of cash or sops which is known as carrot and stick policy. When the oppressive manoeuvre fails or does not benefit, it adopts the bribing device in their attempt to woo the country's leaders. US imperialists have taken the latter stand at the Mobutu's collapse in Zaire. Besides this 'aid politics' in their bid to woo Kabila these imperialist vultures appeared with their worn out commodities of 'peace' also. Those who have for long 32 years destroyed peace of innumerable families of Zaire, as in many other countries, bleeding them white either through direct intervention or through their stooge, whether a despot, or a so-called democrat, are now the champions of peace! US envoy to UN Bill Richardson has been shuttling between South Africa, Kinsasha and Lubumbashi, the stronghold of Kabila, to broker the 'peaceful transition' to persuade Kabila to cease his movement and form a transitional coalition government, comprising even the Mobutu regime's corrupt politicians. Who had given them this, as though, parental responsibility to broker this 'peace' in a country of an altogether different continent, far away from their states of governance? Was it not their subtle motive of clutching the new regime into their claws?

So, Zaire or Congo is still not free from the threat of further grip of imperialist intervention. Their tentacles are ready to fall on the country. It remains to be seen if Kabila while representing the nationalist aspiration can withstand this conspiracy. At the same time people are to remain on the highest alert against this imperialist conspiracy. They must realise that to thwart any imperialist intrigue people's power is the only guarantee. For this the instruments of people's struggle by way of forging people's committees with the communists at the core are to be developed. For, the communists are the only force to foil the present-day imperialist-capitalist onslaught. If such people's power can emerge in Zaire, even in case of any straying away of their nationalist leader from the declared objective, people themselves can stand straight against imperialism, giving birth of new leadership. This is the surest way to get out of the imperialist jaws.

SO CALLED GREEN REVOLUTION HELPED

Rural Capitalists to Increase Capital and Profit

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cent of the total arable land. These holdings use 61.15 per cent of the irrigation facilities, 66.06 per cent of the fertilizers, 57.35 per cent of short term loans, 64.70 per cent of electric pump sets. (All India Report on Agricultural Census, 1985-86, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi). This concentration of land and assets is giving rise to another trend. The proportion of actual farmers is decreasing in relation to the total rural population. It declined from 41.45 per cent in 1981 to 38.43 per cent in 1991. (Census of India, 1991, Series - 1, p.31)

This has not come in a day. Behind the growth of agricultural capital, there has been the sustained encouragement of the government. NCAER (National Council of Agriculture) in a report says. "Following green revolution in matters of fertilizer, high yielding seeds, irrigation, etc., it is the rich farmers who got the most advantage. As a result ... by this time they reaped much more profit." The same is said in ILO report - "The Green Revolution did not benefit the rural poor. The Green Revolution helped those 5 % people, who own 40% of the land." As a result of capitalist exploitation a handful of people in rural areas has concentrated among them land and wealth, who with direct and indirect government help are now ambitious to advance still further. Thus during 1990-91, their amount of capital formation which was Rs. 9214 crores in 1990-91 rose to Rs. 10861 crores in 1991-92/ (National Accounts Statistics). These powerful rural capitalists are no longer interested in keeping themselves confined only to crop cultivation. They are investing huge capital in food processing business, agro-based industry, transport, rice mill etc. This powerful rural capitalist class has now been ceaselessly demanding of the State to remove all obstructions from the development of rural capital.

Big monopoly houses also have made significant changes in their attitude towards agriculture. Land to them now is a "Great Strategic Asset". To them importance of land is so great that they have demanded of the government to lease out the entire uncultivated and barren land of the country to the corporate Sector for the next 50 years. So, agriculture today is not viewed just as an ancillary to industry. Agriculture is now fast emerging as a new area of hunting huge profits. So big monopoly capital also now show growing interest in investing extensively in agriculture.

These changes are leading to a new form of collusion of interests despite some contradictions between the industrial and the rural capitalists. Thus we observe that not only the different organisations of the industrialists (like FICCI, ASSOCHAM, etc. but also the Khatkari Sangathan of Sharad Joshi or Kulak lobby of Punjab and Haryana extend support to GATT or the NEP with equal force. Both are eager to enjoy a so-called free market, an outcome of the GATT. Even Ashoke Mitra a CPI(M) theoretician, in contradiction to his party line on the character of agrarian economy in India, had to confess, "The developing shift in the terms of trade in favour of the farm sector is the major price paid by industrial bourgeoisie to cement their political coalition with the rural bourgeoisie". (Terms of Trade, Ashoke Mitra). Thus it is evident that at present, comparatively, agricultural produce has become

many times more important in capitalist market and to reap profit in this sphere the big monopolists have struck a political deal with the rural bourgeoisie. They intend to use Indian agriculture in a different way now and are wanting to remove forcefully such laws and regulations, which may obstruct this very purpose.

With this combination of the urban and rural bourgeoisie is added the interest of the foreign multinational companies. Their mouthpiece World Bank sent a set of proposals to the government of India as far back as in 1991 to bring 'reforms' in agricultural arena. It was proposed, "The removal of trade restriction on agricultural commodities, 2) A drastic curtailment of food subsidy 3) The removal of all restriction on the choice of what to produce and where to sell, 4) Freedom of operation for Agro business corporations, 5) Abolition of land ceiling laws." (Agriculture challenges and opportunities, World Bank's Economic Memorandum for India, 1993)"

A little thinking will make it clear that despite clashes of interest these proposals are akin to the interest of the monopolists and the rural bourgeoisie of India. As a result these proposals are being gradually translated in the agricultural economy of our country. But what has been the condition of the common millions after this policy is implemented for six years in agriculture?

The trend of cash crop production is not new in our country. As capitalism has developed this trend has got hold further. Modernisation of agriculture started particularly in 1961, first in seven districts through the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP). With this programme was added High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP). As a result of this programme instead of conventional seeds, high yielding seeds led to manifold production. The land area with high yielding seeds increased in 1970-71 with 1 and 1/2 crore hectare, to 6 crore 40 lakh hectares in 1989-90. But cultivation of high yielding seeds is made mainly in respect of wheat. Cultivators of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, West Uttar Pradesh and adjacent areas started to cultivate with the new Mexican strains of wheat (Larma Roza, Sonara-64, Kalyan, PD180). At a certain time demand for this seed rose so high that the concerned companies even failed to supply it. At that time it did not succeed much in rice. Only IR8 was somewhat popular. Thus, whatever be the modernisation in agriculture and improved seeds used, all led mainly to the increase of food production. Although use of HYV seeds in cash crops (like oil seeds, cotton, jute etc.) remained limited, proportion of food production vis a vis cash crop production has not varied much. In 1980-81 the proportion was 80:20, in 1990-91 it changed a little to 77: 23. (Indian Economy, Datt-Sundaram p.404). That means as food production has increased much, so also cash crops have been produced in higher rate. This increase in food production, however, was not of much use for the common man. Still now, 34 crores of the population are condemned to chronic starvation.

A damaging trend arose out of making the agricultural market a part of international agromarket by means of NEP. Due to the present trend of turning agriculture export-oriented, stress is

given on producing and exporting those agricultural goods, which have the highest demand. As a result food production is hampered and cash crops are encouraged. Of course it is not true that foodgrains are not exported or do not have demand abroad. The last year saw export of 56 lakh tons of rice and 5.5 crore tons of wheat from India to the world market - although mainly as cattle fodder. (D. Sharma - On the Famine Trap) These export market is however already saturated and the USA as well as the European Union have a much larger export basket of food grains which they are trying to compel the third world countries to purchase. For example India had to yield to this pressure to purchase this year 20 lakhs of tons of wheat from them. So those who are trying to get quick and substantial return from investment in agriculture are shifting from food grains to cash crop cultivation which have immediate foreign market.

One point should be mentioned in this context. Though agriculture under capitalism is like an industry so far as the profit motive and production relations are concerned, there are many differences between agriculture and manufacturing industries. For agricultural production what is necessary is a favourable climate, proper soil etc. besides technical knowledge and equipment. Though by the application of science natural inputs can be manipulated to a certain extent, but the changes are not always viable. By making use of the different climatic of this vast country, the Indian capitalists are choosing different suitable agricultural commodities for international market and laying more stress on the production of these commodities. It is seen that the land use for production of rapeseed, soyabean, and sunflower has increased by 63 per cent, 173 per cent and 163 per cent respectively and for oilseeds and sugarcane by 34 per cent and 19 per cent respectively in the period from 1991-92 to 1995-96. And this development has taken place mainly in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, M.P. Gurjarat and Rajasthan. In all these states land use has been changed on a large scale from food production to the production of oil seeds and sugarcane. It is observed that emphasis is being laid on production of tomato in place of wheat and flower in place of paddy. A large part of forest and paddyfield in Kerala has been converted into rubber, coffee and coconut plantations. In this way every year in Kerala alone 25000 hectare of fertile paddy field is being transformed for production of various cash crops. The situation in the entire country is still graver. In the last five years the land for the production of coarse grain has been drastically reduced. This reduction amounted to 30 lakh hectare in the last five years. During this period the area of land for the production of Dal has been reduced by 40 lakh hectare (Economic and Political Weekly, Special issue '96). The situation in W.Bengal is no different. In South and North 24 Parganas large areas of paddy fields are converted into prawn and crab hatcheries, in north Bengal into tea plantations, in Nadia into tomato and floriculture. And this process of transformation is gaining strength day by day. In this way the limited fertile land for production of food grains is being converted in a large scale into commercial farms. This propensity has reduced even the total quantity

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Monopolists Now Investing More and More in Agriculture

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of food grain production in our country. It is seen from statistics that where as the total production of foodgrains in 1990-91 was 3 crore 20 lakhs tons it was reduced to 3 crore tons in 1995-96. It means that the production of foodgrains has come down by 20 lakh tons after five years. (ibid). It is stated in a recent survey: "There is the emerging inverse relation between Agro-exports and domestic food supply. This emerging inverse relation is indeed the single most important outcome of the liberalisation of agriculture, carrying very serious implication for food security for the poor." (ibid) So it is seen that the export of agricultural commodities has brought down the production of foodgrains, portending a danger signal in the life of the poor.

It is stated in the report (48th round) of the National Sample Survey: "Within a year of the initiation of reforms per capita monthly consumption of cereals had come down for rural and urban areas from 14.1 kg and 10.8 kg respectively in 1990-91 to 13.5 kg and 10.7 kg respectively in 1992". There is no doubt that the quantum of per capita food intake has been further reduced during the last five years.

Is it only due to the shift of emphasis on food production within the country? No. It is necessary to point out another important thing in this context. In the already mentioned report of the World Bank submitted to the government of India in 1991, the withdrawal of all subsidies on foodgrains was recommended. The Indian capitalists are also demanding the same. In tune with the report of the World Bank, they also are saying, "The price of food grains should be higher. It would be wrong to subsidise food grains." (DHP Panandikar, Director General, PRG Group, Times of India, 19.5.97) Thus both of them are advocating for withdrawal of foodgrain subsidy, entrusting the foodgrain business in the hands of private business and allowing the market force to fully determine the price of foodgrains in the country.

The architects of the New Economic Policy have practically accepted this demand. Whatever little opportunity the people of the country were enjoying through the public distribution system are being gradually withdrawn. Whereas in 1991-92 the people bought 87 lakh 80 thousand ton of wheat through the rationing system, in 1994-95 this amount has come down to 32 lakh tons. The same is true in the case of rice also. The amount of rice bought through the PDS was 99 lakh 40 thousand tons in 1991-92, and 58 lakh 60 thousand tons in 1994-95. What is this due to? This is due to abnormal rise in prices. The central government itself stated, "The main reason for this appears to be the narrowing of price differentials between the PDS price and open market price". (Economic Survey, 1994-95) The W. Bengal government has also followed the same line. Recently this government has increased the prices of rice and wheat, and at the same time reduced the quota as well. In this way both the central and the state governments are jointly working to concede to the demand of the national and foreign capitalists, thereby delivering a deadly blow on the life of the people.

So it is seen that the central and the state

governments are withdrawing subsidies on foodgrains, obediently following the dictates of the national and foreign capitalists and on the other hand offering plentiful of benefits to the Kulaks of the rural areas. The declaration of support price to wheat by the central government is meant in reality to satisfy and assure the Kulak lobby of Punjab, Haryana and UP. The Kulak lobby of the country is also assured that the commodity in its possession would be purchased at a profitable price. After the declaration of the New Economic Policy the support price of wheat has increased by leaps and bounds. While the support price of wheat was Rs. 225.- per quintal in 1990-91, it now stands at Rs. 475.- per quintal in 1996-97. It means that the increase is Rs 250.- per quintal in five years, i.e. 111 per cent. The Kulaks of the country are not however satisfied even with such increases, and are demanding further hike in prices.

So by withdrawing subsidies on foodgrains and thereby virtually handing over the foodgrain trade to the profiteers, by declaration of higher support price for wheat to satisfy the Kulaks and such other measures, the people below the poverty line in the rural areas have been gradually increasing and now constitute 48.1 per cent. Chandra Sekhar and Sen, the economists have shown that whereas the number of the people below the poverty line in the rural areas in 1990-91 was 216.5 million, it stood at 279 million in 1992. It means that within two years after the declaration of the New Economic Policy the number of people below the poverty line has jumped to more than 63 million. Pro people policy, no doubt! Along with this, the restrictions on export and import of the agricultural commodities are more and more liberalised.

We know that one of the main cash crop of the country is cotton. So long export of cotton was strictly controlled. The cotton lobby of our country many times demanded the withdrawal of this restriction. By conceding to this demand all restrictions on export of cotton have been withdrawn in the last five years. As a result the quantum of cotton export has increased by 420 per cent. But the production of cotton has not appreciably increased in the country. So it can be easily understood why the price of cotton fibre has increased manifold within the country. But there is no reason to think that small cotton cultivators have gained as a result of the increase in cotton export. They have not gained anything. The rich peasants and the cotton exporting companies of Gujarat and Maharashtra have gained.

But the abnormal price increase of cotton fibre has rendered 60 lakh weavers beggars. Equally grave is the consequence because of the liberal import policy. Because of the liberal import policy silk is imported from foreign countries at a cheaper rate. As a result the owners of the silk industry in Karnataka are getting benefit, whereas 40 lakh marginal farmers of Karnataka, engaged in sericulture have become destitutes. The fate of the sericulture farmers of W. Bengal is no different. In this way, as a result of liberalisation of import and export policy for integrating the agricultural commodities in the international market, the Kulaks and the business houses dealing in agricultural

commodities are earning massive profit - on the one hand, and on the other innumerable small and marginal farmers are being ruined.

Again with a view to further maximizing profit giant joint ventures with national and foreign capital are coming in agricultural field. From August 1991 to December 1996 469 joint ventures have come up only in the field of food processing industry. (See Table)

Item	No. of Joint Venture	Capital (Rs in Crore)
1. Food processing	469	5625.00
2. Marine Fishing	84	82.89
3. Fruits, floriculture and vegetables	308	410.46
4. Edible oil	27	47.79
5. Fertiliser	42	245.69

(Source : Economic & Political Weekly, dt. 10.5.97)

Besides these there are 163 other joint ventures in which an amount of Rs. 2455.05 crore of foreign capital is directly invested.

It shows what a massive amount of foreign capital is being invested in agro-based industries in India. And the possibility of investment of both national and foreign capital in this field is increasing day by day. Recently a report titled "Plan Integrated Development for Food and Agriculture in India", has been published under the joint auspices of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Mackinze Consultancy. It points out that by 2005 the demand for processed food in this country would reach an amount of Rs. 2 lakhs 25 thousand crore, and the total investment would be Rs. 1 lakh 40 thousand crore. According to this report the food processing industry would have much greater impact on the economy than electrical or telecom industries.

With the view to realise this big possibility in agriculture, particularly in food processing industry, i.e. to widen the scope of looting, the ruling class is after introducing big farm holdings by abolishing the small ones. Because big farms are ideal for investment of massive capital for modernisation and so it is being argued: "The small farm holdings are a handicap" (Dr Ronnalld Watkins, Specialist in Agriculture, England). This is why in order to develop big farm by abolishing smaller land holdings the demand for modification and if possible total abolition of the land ceiling Act is being raised. The World Bank had stated 4 years ago. "The land ceiling Act will have to be amended to encourage large land holding by the corporate sector." (Business India, December 1993) The ASSOCHAM, one of the big organisations of the foreign capital in India has said in the same tune, "Our agricultural land reform policies need to be adequately amended". Is there any doubt that the amendment demanded is for facilitating the corporate sector to develop big farms?

The government is most promptly conceding to this demand of the national and foreign capital.

The land ceiling Act has been virtually nullified in Karnataka. The land reforms Act was never implemented in Bihar, Orissa and Rajasthan. Owing to the pressure of mass movement land reforms were somewhat implemented in West

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AIKKMS Attends International Peasants' Meet in Philippines

The Asian Workshop on Landlessness, Imperialist Globalisation and Peasants' Movement for Liberation, organised by KMP, was held on 6th and 7th June, 1997 in Manila, Philippines.

The workshop was attended by 10 countries of Asia and Pacific islands. Two individuals from USA, one from South Africa and one from Norway also participated in it.

In the workshop, the AIKKMS was represented by Comrade Satyawan from India.

The KMP organised a peasants rally on 10th June '97 which was addressed by the leaders of different peasants organisations. Comrade Satyawan also addressed the peasants' rally.

The paper placed by Comrade Satyawan is given below :

I, on behalf of All India Krishak Khet Majdoor Sangathan congratulate Kilusang Magbubukid ng Philippines (KMP) for organising this workshop to be continued here for two days. This workshop on 'Asian Landlessness, Imperialist Globalisation and Peasant's Struggle for Liberation' bears an immense importance at this juncture when the toiling millions need the right direction to advance their movement on correct lines.

While expressing the voice of resistance to the imperialist pressures and attacks, taking into account special peculiarities of our respective countries, I am sure that we shall make our sincere endeavour to understand and grasp the mutual experiences on the basic issues in these two days.

In India, about 75% to 80% of the total population live in rural areas. Out of them 50% to 55% are landless and agricultural workers. About 35% are poor peasants and lower middle peasants. The size of their operational holding is from one acre to 5 acres maximum. This 85% people of our rural population have almost no purchasing power and have been reduced to proletariat or semiproletariat. They have either lost the land or are just losing it very fast. If the 10% middle class prosperous peasants having a size of up to 15 acres of land are included with them then the remaining about 5% peasants own near about 55% to 60% of the total land. Thus on one side most of the land is concentrated in the hands of a few people and on the other side the vast majority of nearly 85% of the rural population has been pushed to the level of proletariat or semiproletariat.

How has it happened? This is the inevitable result of the capitalist economy. Still there are persons and organisations who are confused that the Indian agriculture is in feudal or semifeudal stage. But the objective reality prevailing in India speaks about a different truth. The agriculture in India since long had been converted to capitalist agriculture. Here, be it industries or the lands, the production is based on capitalist production relation. The character of production relation in rural economy is mainly employer-employee relation. Though, India being a backward country, the employer-employee relation in rural areas differs in form from place to place, in different provinces. Some agricultural labourers work on monthly wages whereas others work on daily

wages basis. At some places, these agricultural labourers own small patches of land too, but still he is a worker. Some workers get their wages partly in cash and partly in kind in form of food grain or crops. And there are other workers who get their whole wages in the form of grain or crop instead of cash and such agricultural workers are called as share-croppers in our country. They may own a small patch of land also. But in spite of all these differences in form of wages these are types of employer-employee relation. Because they work as labourers in others' land and in the sphere of production, this employer-employee relation is called capitalist production relation. These workers engaged in agriculture are free wage-earners which is distinctly different from bonded slaves as was the case in feudal social order.

Another important feature is that the major part of agricultural produce, if not the whole, has been converted to commodities for sale in bourgeois national market which again is quite different from the articles of consumption of the direct producer or of simple exchange in the localised village market. The landowners produce in their lands as per the demand and supply law of the national market. This has nothing in common with feudalism since here the sale and purchase of crops is controlled by the share market, wholesale market and stock exchanges etc. Banks have spread out in all the rural areas; by way of advancing loans and other assistance to the agriculturists and traders on agricultural products they have played and are playing a very vital role in giving a capitalist orientation to a decisive extent.

Moreover, today land has become a means of production in which capital can be invested just like in industries. A shift of choice to produce what is called "cash crop" is very much in evidence and is continually on the increase, which is bound to convert eventually all crops to cash crops, i.e. the commodities for sale to earn profit in cash. Centralised regulation market prices of agricultural products on a national scale by daily announcements through radio and other mass-media undoubtedly speak of conversion of agricultural products to commodities of centralised capitalist national market.

All these go to prove beyond doubt that Indian agricultural economy has been converted to capitalist economy. In spite of the relative backwardness and underdevelopment of Indian capitalism, so far as the land relation and agricultural production relation is concerned, feudal relation is no more existent anywhere. Capitalist mode of production has taken over.

Because of the fact that Indian agriculture is not fully mechanised or due to the remnants of feudal old habits, mentality and customs in Indian cultural life, some people refuse to recognise this stark reality that Indian agricultural economy is a capitalist economy. They actually prove their ignorance about the penetration of capitalism into agricultural economy in a backward country in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Due to the third phase of general intense crisis, capitalism-imperialism has become out and out

reactionary and moribund ; it is incapable of taking steps necessary for all out industrialization and modernization of agriculture by introducing science and technology in a big scale and also freeing the people from the influence of narrow prejudices, blind faiths, i.e. the steps needed really to accomplish the unfinished tasks of democratic revolution in a backward country like India.

For this, agricultural workers and poor peasants shall have to conduct struggles in social and cultural life, but their main struggle is to abolish capitalism.

Our organisation, All India Krishak Khet Majdoor Sangathan fights for the interests of the toiling masses comprising rural agricultural workers, landless peasants, poor small peasants, lower middle peasants whose interests are diagonally opposite to those of 5% of rich peasants. The main conflict in rural areas is between rich peasants and these rural poor.

These rural poor are highly deprived. They have no job opportunity, no work throughout the year, no shelter for their families. They are deprived of drinking water, hygiene and health, medicines and treatment and basic health amenities. The agricultural workers do not get minimum wages.

Poor irrigation facilities, galloping price rise in agricultural inputs, increasing burden of loans and taxes, drought, flood and diseases etc. all have been causing impoverishment of the peasantry. Along with this the mischief played by traders, black marketeers and hoarders further worsen the situation. The poor peasants have no capacity to store their produce for getting even the support price. As a result, the overwhelming majority of the lower middle peasants are gradually losing their land and are reduced to landless peasants and pushed by compulsions join the rank of agricultural workers or add to the number of the army of rural and urban unemployed. How rapidly the number of agricultural workers is increasing in our country will be evident from the Census report. In 1981 the number of agricultural workers in India was 55.44 millions while in 1991 it has mounted to 73.75 millions. Side by side with this, concentration of land and wealth in the hands of rural bourgeoisie is taking place.

Now the question arises of land reforms. These are to be accomplished. The demand is to be raised — land to the landless. But at the same time we have to fight against the confusion that it is possible to give land to all and that poverty can be abolished in this way.

Once in the last phase of British regime, the serfs were given ownership of the land through tenancy laws. But due to ignorance among the peasants, lack of consciousness and organisation most of the tenants could not enjoy their rights. Big landlords become successful in reoccupying the land, by cheating them, by legal manoeuvring in connivance with Government officials. The same thing happened with the *Zamindari* (landlordism) Abolition Act enacted after the independence to abolish the big land holdings. Most of the surplus land was grabbed by the rich. Due to capitalist economic law the peasants could not retain the land which they got. It is one of the important issues of peasants' struggle to distribute

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International Peasants' Meet in Philippines

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the land on equitable basis to the agricultural workers, landless peasants and poor peasants by acquiring all the lands under *benami* or fraudulent possession of rural bourgeoisie along with the reclaimed fallow lands by making it cultivable.

But not much land is available. All cannot get it. Many of them will remain without land. On the other hand if each landless peasant is given such a small patch of land it would be agriculturally uneconomic and would inevitably go out of the hands of peasants in no time. Hence, as long as the capitalist economic system and capitalist state power remain in force the problems of peasants and agricultural labourers cannot be resolved through this course. The unaccomplished tasks of agrarian revolution are linked up with the task of anti-capitalist socialist revolution.

In India, ASSOCHAM, a leading organisation of the business community recently demanded, "our agricultural land reform policies need to be adequately amended". ASSOCHAM proposed leasing out of vast tracts of waste and fallow lands to the corporate sector for 50 years. Pressures are there to amend the Land Ceiling Act to encourage large land holding by the corporate sector. Some provincial governments, including the CPI(M)-led Left Front Government in the

province of West Bengal have taken some steps in this direction and the Central Government has such intentions too. This is the truth behind liberalization of agriculture.

Globalisation demands of the developing countries to drastically cut down the subsidies to the farmers which was already minimum and inadequate and making it impossible for the poor and middle class peasants to cultivate their lands and earn livelihood. The result of the elimination of subsidies will be that peasants will not be able to afford the agricultural inputs like fertilizers, electricity, seeds, water etc. They will be forced to surrender their land to the capitalist farmers.

Dismantling of the public distribution system (PDS) is also a threat. The vast majority of the rural and urban poor will be put completely at the mercy of hoarders. Not the producers, the small, marginal and middle class farmers but the non-farmers and the capitalistic landlords, will gain from the export and import arrangement. India is witnessing it this year. Patent Act is also under attack. In India, agriculture had been exempted from Patent Act 1970. The whole system of electric power generation and distribution etc. is under State public sector at present. But various provincial Governments under the dictates of the Central Government have taken steps to dismantle

the public sector in power and hand it over to monopolists and multinationals to satisfy the World Bank instructions. As such electricity is becoming more and more costly.

In tune with globalisation and in the interest of the monopoly houses the Government of India had adopted New Economic Policy in 1991. Its evil effects have started to appear in the sphere of agriculture too.

Monopolists and multinationals like Pepsi are gradually penetrating in our agriculture. They will force the peasantry to produce the commodities to their liking. It may be remembered that once Indigo planters forced our farmers to plant Indigo instead of paddy (rice) in the early days of tyrannical and oppressive British regime.

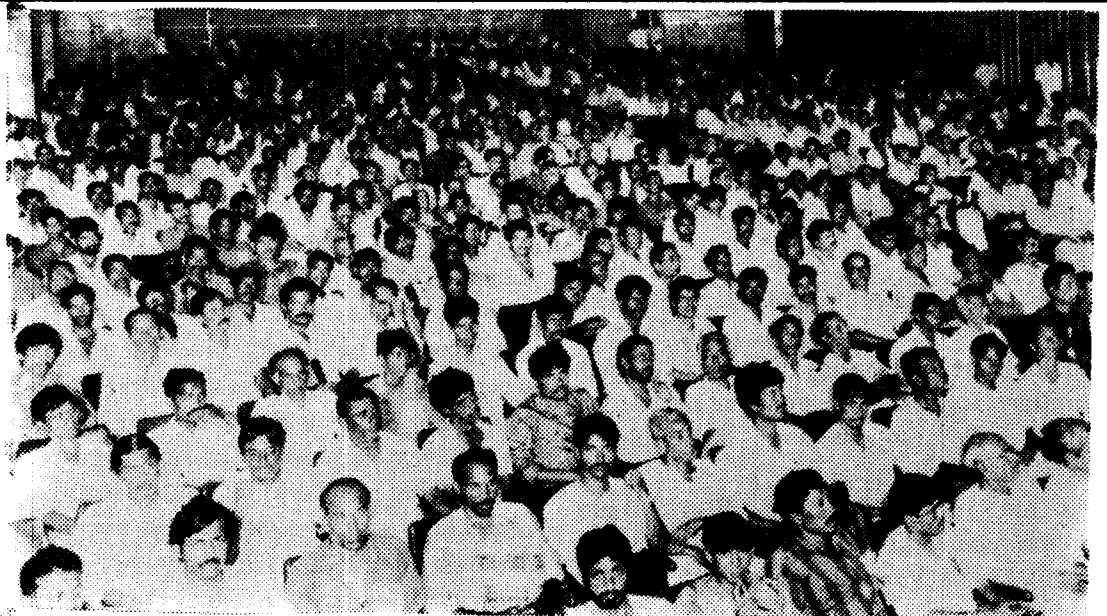
So, at this juncture it is incumbent on the agricultural workers, poor marginal peasants and lower middle and middle peasants to unite together to fight the rural bourgeois and at the same time fight against anti-people New Economic Policies of the Central Government. Without fighting tooth and nail against the Indian monopoly and finance capital the present attack of imperialistic globalisation cannot be resisted. We must come forward unitedly for global resistance against the global onslaught of World Finance Capital. This is the call of the hour.

Binny Mills Workers Movement

Binny Mills is one of the oldest textile factories in Asia. Once more than ten thousand workers were employed here. Now the number has been reduced to less than half. The management has changed and it is resorting to frequent lockouts and threatens the workers with permanent closure.

During 1996, on the plea of floods the factory was closed and the management did not show any intention to reopen the factory. Sensing the anger of workers, whose families were starving, the DMK government 'talked' with the management and announced with all fanfare that the factory would be opened. Months have passed by and though formally the factory is open large number of workers are yet to get work. It is to be noted that the production has not yet started in full swing. Taking up the workers' cause the West Madras Local Organising Committee of SUCI decided to organize protest meetings near the Binny Mills and the workers' colony. Because of the enforcement of the undemocratic City Police Act Sect. 41-A in Chennai, the party had to apply for police permission and having kept mum till the last moment the police came to the meeting-spot and announced that permission was denied to the meetings. The workers who gathered there became indignant about the undemocratic act of the police. As the workers' gathering was swelling to listen to the SUCI meeting the police made a hasty retreat.

In the meeting, Com. Jawapn, Secretary of Chennai District UTUC(LS), Com. Gnahavelu, member of UTUC(LS), Chennai District body Com. Ilayasumah, member West Madras local committee and Com. Sampath a senior worker of the Binny Mills spoke exposing the games of the opportunist trade union leaders and urged the workers to build up militant struggles to realize their demands.



A section of the gathering at the TU Convention held at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta by UTUC-LS on 27th June, 1997. (News at page 8)



SUCI activists are demonstrating against spread of deadly diseases in Bellary

Rally in Bellary

Bellary, June 4: The Bellary District Committee, SUCI, took out a protest rally here on Monday against the spread of Malaria, Gastroenteritis, Jaundice, Brain fever etc., in

Bellary. SUCI District Secretary, Comrade K Somashekhar led the rally. He said in 1996 there were 15,000 Malaria cases. This year the number has crossed 35,000 so far in Bellary.

After the demonstration a memorandum was submitted to the City Municipal Commissioner and the District Collector.

SUCI's Call of BANGLA BANDH

In a press statement Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary W.Bengal State Committee stated on 29.6.97:

The PL A/C scam has nakedly exposed that the left front government too like the other ruling bourgeois parties is immersed in rampant corruption.

In protest against this corruption of the left front government and with the demand for

- 1) publishing a white paper on this subject
- 2) constituting an all party enquiry committee from the floor of the assembly, and
- 3) for meting out stringent punishment to the culprits,

we have called Bangla Bandh on 4th July. Side by side we think that the Congress which is totally submerged in corruption has no moral right to protest against this. The Congress is helping in running the government at the centre with an understanding with the left front, and protesting against this in this state as an opposition party, not for people's interest, but for electoral interest.

Before this statement was issued Comrade Provash Ghosh also sent an open letter to Sri Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of W. Bengal on this subject. The said letter is given below.

The W. Bengal State Committee of our party also organised mass violation of law in Calcutta on 23.6.97 when thousands of party activists courted arrest.

Sri Jyoti Basu
Chief Minister
Government of West Bengal

Sir,

Without obtaining prior approval of the A.G. West Bengal, crores of rupees are being spent or squandered away by diverting the amount through P.L. Account, and you must admit that the charges of flouting the constitutional norms or the rules of the assemblies are quite grave. According to the charges crores of rupees of Jawhar Rojgar Yagna were spent under different heads and this has debarred lakhs of the rural unemployed from the opportunity of employment. As a result of all these the credibility of the state government has been further hampered among the people, and they find no difference between the Left Front Government from the corrupt Congress, the Janata or the B.J.P. ruled ones.

In this situation we demand: -

1. The Government must present a White Paper with all details about this.
2. An Enquiry Committee with representatives of all parties in the Assembly be constituted.
3. All the culprits are to be meted out exemplary punishment.

Thanking you,.

Yours faithfully
sd/- Provash Ghosh
Secretary, West Bengal State Committee
SUCI

The response to the Bangla Bandh was overwhelming despite threats, intimidation and violent suppression. On the day of Bandh on 4th July many of our activists were beaten and arrested by the police.

Trade Union Convention Organised by UTUC - LS

An All West Bengal Workers' Convention was held at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta on 27th June last. The Convention came as a culmination of a series of base-level preparatory programmes involving thousands of workers at grass root level throughout the length and breadth of the State. Long before the opening of the Convention the Hall was packed to the capacity with elected delegates of different sectors, industries and zones.

Comrade Sanat Dutta, President, West Bengal State Committee of UTUC-LS was in the chair. A minute's silence was observed in memory of departed Comrade Sheopujan Sonar, member of the State Committee. Comrade Sankar Saha, the State Secretary and Secretary, All India Committee rose to place the main resolution with 21 point charter of demands.

In his brief but vibrant speech expounding the resolution Comrade Sankar Saha called upon the delegates to rise to the occasion and engage themselves in a living struggle to assimilate the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, so that they can manly shoulder the responsibility reposed upon them.

Leading state level functionaries of the UTUC-LS namely Comrades Dilip Bhattacharjee, D. K. Mukherjee, Kamal Bhatteerjee, Madhu Sinha, Bimal Jana, Samar Sinha. Aloke Ghosh, Ajit Kundu, Dipak Deb, Sirajoddin, Animesh Bhattacharjee, Rehana Khatun and R. K. P. Singh spoke in support of the resolution.

Comrade Achintya Sinha, Secretary, All India Committee was penultimate speaker. Dwelling on how to break the stalemate he pointed out that it could be achieved by fulfilling three conditions — first, the workers must cultivate ability to study and grasp the problems correctly ; second, they must undertake initiative to build up the struggle and third they must wage a struggle to change themselves ideologically to emerge as the invincible force capable of countering the influence and onslaught of the hostile ideology.

The resolution was passed unanimously. In his concluding speech Comrade Sanat Dutta called upon the delegates to rise equal to the task that the resolution has made incumbent upon them and urged them to organise base level struggle committees so that the three phased programmes of action adopted in the Convention can be effectively implemented.

New Economic Policy and Globalization in Agricultural Economy

(Contd. from page 5)

Bengal. But here also the left front government is trying to amend section 14 (Z) of the Land Reforms Act, thereby nullifying, in effect this Act, to accommodate food processing industry and rubber plantation. Sri Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, has said, "Full advantage has to be taken of the possibility of capital investment in agriculture as a result of liberalised economy. So the West Bengal Land Reforms Act need to be amended". The Land Reforms minister of West Bengal has also recently said: "There is provision in the State Land Reforms Act for amalgamation of land and cooperative farming. Necessary amendment to the Act will be made as per necessity." (The Ananda Bazar Patrika, 11.5.97) Big land holding is a must. What a unique convergence of the ruling leftists and rightists to serve the national and foreign capital !

This convergence is helping the national and foreign capitalists to accumulate huge profits on the one hand and to wreck heavy disaster in the life of the common people on the other. It is not only pauperising the people in ever increasing number by robbing them of their last means of subsistence but also swelling the rank of the landless labourers. According to 1991 census the number of agricultural labourers was 746 lakh and it now numbers nearly 950 lakhs at present. It means that the number of agricultural labourers has increased by 2 crore within 6 years. Another point is also worth noting. During the 10 year period from 1981-91, the rate of increase of agricultural labourers was 1.4 per cent per

annum. But during the last 6 years this rate has jumped to 1.55 per cent. And in W. Bengal this rate is maximum about 2.17 per cent. It is thus clear that by integrating agriculture with the international market, the marginal farmers of the country are losing their land and becoming landless agricultural labourers at an accelerated pace. But curiously this rate is highest in West Bengal during the left front rule which claims Kudos for glorious success of land reforms.

But what is the condition of the agricultural labourers ? Are they getting increased wages in conformity with the rise in price index ? The reality is otherwise. Report from the National Commission of Labour, 1995 states, "During the period between 1988 and 1994 Consumer Price Index for agricultural labourers increased by 434 point whereas wage rate increased only by Rs 8.- to Rs 12.- i.e. 50 per cent." It means that the real wage has decreased, increasing poverty and hunger. The more rapid will be the commercialization and globalisation of agriculture of the country enabling the national and foreign capitalists to fill their coffers , more and more people will join the rank of the proletariat amidst plenty, and they are rendered proletariat in the process of creating this affluence for the few. The framers of the new economic policy have destined this future for the people of the country. So there is no other way than to build up resistance movement against this policy on the basis of correct political line if to defend their right to life and decent existence.

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