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On the eve of 51st Foundation Day of our Party

GLEANINGS FROM COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH



"Yet, I wish to tell you something. That is, can revolution be accomplished in comfort? In the midst of revolution, man has to starve for days on end. He has to bear with hardships in rain and in scorching heat of the sun. Can revolution wait due to rain and heat? Did not the revolutionaries in Vietnam accomplish revolution living in jungles with tigers and snakes? You are facing difficulties—that is known and expected. But what distinguishes a man from an animal? It is that animals roam about restlessly driven by natural instincts but a man determines his duty with a cool head by using his brains, whether there be natural calamities or devastation, amidst thousand difficulties, and keeps on working to discharge his duty." ...

"For long 42 years I am actively in the vortex of political movement. Out of these, for 30 years I have striven ceaselessly to build up the SUCI as a party of a new kind, as a genuine Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party. I am not very old. But due to unceasing hard work to develop the workers and to build up the party, my health is already impaired. But that is for the sake of building up revolution in our country. I have noticed that the moment there are difficulties, some among us lose their cool. But if we can work together, despite difficulties, with unruffled temperament and mutual understanding in a disciplined way then that not only develops our strength, capability and character, but also teaches the people many things. ..."

NATO Attack Condemned

Russia : Masked men armed with grenade launchers and an assault rifle attacked the US embassy in Moscow last Sunday. Several bullets hit the embassy before they were driven off by police guard gun-fire.

The attackers escaped unhurt in a stolen police jeep. Protesters have been demonstrating outside the embassy since the bombing began.

Many were arrested in the last week of March when they started hurling bottles and rocks at the building. Others are now volunteering to fight for Yugoslavia. Col-Gen Viktor Chechevatov, the army commander in the Russian Far East has offered to lead them.

Ukraine : Communist-led protests are continuing in Kiev while two government ministers went to Belgrade to offer mediation in possible peace talks.

Bulgaria : Ten thousand protesters marched through the capital, Sofia, demonstrating against the Nato air-strikes.

Poland : Anti-war protests took place in Warsaw on 30th March. Demonstrators chanted "Clinton - Murderer" and trampled on a US flag.

Romania : Over a thousand protesters burnt a US flag and shouted anti-Nato slogans in Timisoara, a town just an hour's drive from the Yugoslavia.

Macedonia : The US embassy in Skopje, capital of the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, was petrol-bombed by angry crowds. Flame bombs were fired at the German and British embassies in the city. German embassy guards fired two percussion grenades to quell the crowd after windows were broken and the ground floor

ransacked. Protests are continuing everyday. British army lorries, part of the Nato ground force in the Balkans, have been stoned.

Bosnian Serb Republic : Thousands of Serb students and teenagers shouted down Serb pro-Western politicians during a rally in Banja Luka. Police used tear-gas to break it up.

European Union : Green Party leaders in France, Germany and Italy have agreed to pull out of their
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Launching of Agni-II Condemned

Strongly condemning the firing of Agni-II on Sunday, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement on 13-4-99 said that in the name of country's defence, the beleaguered and cornered BJP government defeated on all fronts and sensing people's dejection, disillusionment and anger as a matter of diversionary tactics practically let loose a dangerous arms race in the subcontinent as a part of its military manoeuvres at the cost of crores of rupees of the poor taxpayers thereby providing an immediate provocation to the anti-people Pakistani rulers to fire Ghosri-II and indulge in the same politics of deception.

Expressing grave concern that all these warlike postures are whipping up war psychosis and further endangering peace and tranquility in the subcontinent, Comrade Mukherjee called upon all countrymen to rise up against this sinister design of the government and develop mighty movement so as to force the government stop this mad arms race.



Anti-NATO demonstration at US Consulate, Chennai on 29-3-99 by SUCI activists

Some aspects of Prof. Amartya Sen's economic theories and welfare prescription

Professor Amartya Sen, a noted economist and author of many books, was awarded Nobel Prize in economics last year. In recognition of this achievement, considered to be the most coveted one in the bourgeois world. Government of India conferred on him 'Bharat Ratna', the highest official honour. World media, the intellectuals including those who call themselves 'left', 'Marxist', 'progressive' have praised him in profusion for his theories and prescriptions. Those about people's welfare so far as removal of poverty and famine, entitlement or right of the common people to food, education, shelter, health care, in particular are concerned. Of course, this is within the present socio-economic framework. However, the euphoria generated has resulted in high hope and expectation among politically vocal sections. Coupled with this is the national pride for world recognition of the talent of an Indian. For the Bengalees especially the jubilant reaction was for the feat of a second son of Bengal after Rabindranath achieving this distinction. The state hospitality accorded to Sen, the Nobel laureate, by Left Front Government of West Bengal and the effusive receptions in his honour were all to catch up not only with public emotions but to heighten those. In this context we attempt from an unbiased and scientific approach an assessment of some aspects of Sen's works and prescriptions keeping in view the common man's understandability.

Sympathy for the poor and desire for their uplift – nothing new

We have no prejudice against those who had a dream for a well-ordered society and therefore espoused the cause of the downtrodden in the society and proposed measures for their uplift. Those enlightened minds filled with humanist moral values both in our country and abroad wanted that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy be banished, the poor be provided with opportunity of education, shelter, health-care. Further, they must not be discriminated against in the matter of good earnings in exchange of honest labour nor in the scope for participation in the governance.

Gandhiji, for example, wanted that "tears from every eye be wiped out". He called the capitalists the 'trustees of God' and enjoined on them to see that his wishes be fulfilled. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had the dream that the national reconstruction in post-independence India should be on socialist principles and that the amelioration of the 'have-nots' should be paid for by the 'haves'. The concrete experience of fifty years after independence has been just the opposite.

So also we find that Adam Smith who is called the father of economics in his *Wealth of Nations* of classical celebrity (1776) deplored the state of existence of the 'lowest class' pushed to accept reduction of wages which in his words was "the most miserable and scanty subsistence". They were not able to find employment "even upon these terms" and therefore "would either starve or driven to subsistence either by begging or by perpetration of greatest enormities". The picture is no doubt grim and pitiable but has it

changed a bit after centuries? Meanwhile production has increased manifold due to revolutionary changes in productive methods and profit touched a height simply unimaginable then. Only the conditions of working people have not only shown no matching improvement, rather worsened to the brink of pauperisation. But why? Bentham's utilitarianism gave the slogan of greatest good to the greatest number. This was no doubt a well-intended thought. But why it was reduced to "greatest evils to the greatest number" is a question that just cannot be wished away. And Alfred Marshall spoke against "unwholesome desire for wealth" and pleaded for "moderate and cooperative form of socialism". As to the former, the people of India in particular, experience the most filthy competition for wealth by corrupt practices by the politicians in parliamentary politics, bureaucracy and all those having slightest connection with the administrative system. Corruption has appeared as a great menace to civil society. Regarding the latter, people have heard about Nehruvian 'socialistic pattern of society'. Not only that, nationalization of banks, insurance, heavy industries, coal mines etc. were eulogized as "commanding height of economy coming under state control", to be a "big step forward to socialism" even by those who claim to be 'Marxists'. Today those 'commanding heights' under state control are in the process of being dismantled and doled out to private big capital, national and foreign, under slogan of 'globalization-privatization-liberalization of economy'. However, both before and after, that is to say, with the change of economic prescriptions as also change of governments, people's lot has changed only for the worse. What can be the reason? And the early thinkers of socialism like Robert Owen and others failed to show the scientific path of reaching the goal of socialism and remained 'utopian socialists' despite best of their intentions.

That is why, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, founder General Secretary of our party, SUCI, our revered leader and teacher pointed out the truth, summing up the lessons of history thus:

"India never lacked in sublime thoughts and lofty ideals. What was lacking is the correlation of those with social reality, law of social development and practice." That is why, as he showed, just as in the field of economics so also in politics, parties came not one or two but many who talked about socialism, about improvement in the condition of living of the exploited and deprived but all those ended as cruel irony to the deceived and dishonoured because the noble intentions were confined within the limits of capitalist state structure guarding and protecting the capitalist system, the root cause of all the evils that afflict mankind.

A brief recital of policy prescriptions

Capitalist economy plagued by crises sought the help of the economist. At the early stage the crises were diagnosed to be arising from cyclical fluctuations in economic activities. The capitalist market had not lost relative stability then. So monetarist policy meaning manipulation of supply of money and consequent change in bank interest

rate was deemed enough. But the monetarist policy failed at the time of the Great Depression in global capitalist economy. Keynes appeared with the policy prescription of welfare economics of public spendings to boost up sagging market. It failed to prevent the outbreak of World War II for redivision of global capitalist market. After the World War II, the imperialist states lost their colonies that had worked so long as shock-absorber. The world capitalist market, as Comrade Stalin showed, had lost relative stability of market. So, the monetarist policy and even a mixture of it with nationalization and public spendings failed to prevent accentuation of disorder. Rather, a peculiar phenomenon known as 'stagflation' i.e. stagnation despite inflationary measures, appeared.

During the 70s Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of England, followed by Reagan, the US President brought into practice so-called 'supply-side economy' or privatization, liberalization. It meant denationalization and removal of all controls and regulations by the state as far as possible. This 'Thatcherism-Reaganism' was the precursor of present prescription of 'globalization'. It was put into practice after the dismantling of the socialist camp. The hope was expressed that in absence of its challenger socialism, capitalism on a world scale, freed from any national barrier and control would usher in a new world of peace and prosperity. It has however been belied by concrete experience of recession sweeping over the global capitalist economy, threatening another Great Depression of immeasurable consequence on common people as also almost daily recurrence of military interventions by US and other imperialist powers in countries, trampling under foot their political sovereignty and tall promises recorded in the UN Charter. Prof. Sen is an ardent supporter of globalization-liberalization-privatization.

We write all this to give a concrete perspective in which Sen is to be judged for proper assessment.

Poverty and famine

One of his major works bearing the above title came out in 1981. He has elaborated his theory and prescriptions for the prevention of famine in his speech delivered at Malaga (Spain) on August 26, 1985 entitled 'Food-Economics and Entitlement'.

Sen, welfare economist as he is, never calls in question the very rationale of capitalist market economy on the basis of ethics although he seems to be eager to bring ethics into economics. He keeps himself confined to the parameters or limits of capitalist economy. His main thrust is on 'entitlement' or right of a human being in society to have food and other essentials and the problem of 'acquirement' or fulfillment of those entitlements or rights. It flows from the spirit behind the Charter of Human Rights which held that man by his own inherent quality has a right in society not dependent on divine mercy as was propagated in feudal society. It is a secular democratic concept of right of human being, a distinct advancement of thought that came into

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Prof. Amartya Sen Never Calls in Question Rationale of Capitalist Market Economy

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being with the rise and ascendancy of capitalism when the bourgeoisie as a class was playing the progressive role in social and human development. Today the situation is entirely different. The capitalist productive system is crisis-ridden and chaos-discredited, globally. The bourgeoisie is trampling under foot all the noble ideas, the democratic norms of governance it once espoused and throttling the very ethical basis of a civil society. The bourgeoisie as a ruling class and the capitalist economic system that subserves its interests stand as the stumbling blocks to social development and progress. Professor Sen's theory and prescriptions are to be judged against this concrete background.

Sen rightly points out that "Malthusian pessimism based on the expectation of falling food output per head has not been vindicated by history."¹ It means the assertion of Malthus that the rate of increase in production of food would lag behind the rate of growth of population has been proved false. In fact, all the authoritative studies including those by UN agencies have proved beyond doubt that there is enough food in the world to feed mankind. This proves also that temporary shortage caused somewhere by natural calamities can very well be taken care of by supply from places of surplus, given the political will. Should there be any reason for large sections of people to suffer deprivations or be denied of entitlements to be in hunger? Though it is a common experience for the people of our country, the very pertinent question is why does it happen at all?

Sen meets this vital question by admitting "markets being manipulated by organized traders are not hard to find" and further "cornering by few operators of goods may lead to massive accentuation of shortages and sufferings."² Is it not an admission that market distortion can be caused by 'organized traders' to engineer massive accentuation of shortages? Is it not a valid question that why should there be shortages artificially created? Can the people with this usual experience be asked to have trust in capitalist market mechanism and the government that defends this distortion? Is it not to suggest acceptance of large scale deprivation and loss of entitlement due to shortages created artificially? Whether the large-scale deprivation and consequent mass hunger can be called a famine? Or on the government's declaration to be so? Maybe, people's movement, press reportings or parties in parliamentary opposition utilizing this deliberate failure for gains in parliamentary politics may prompt the government in power to send some relief materials. How these relief materials turn into commodities for profit in local markets by the chain of unscrupulous businessmen aided by administration and parliamentary parties is a common experience, at least in our country. However, can it be said with assertion as Sen does, "It is hard to find evidence to suggest that active trade distortion has been a primary cause of famines in market economies."³ Then what causes famine when there is no appreciable shortfall in production or occurrence of natural

calamities? This question remains unanswered. Sen's defence of capitalist market mechanism becomes more clear when he divides famine into two categories — **boom famine** and **slump famine**. In the former when there is boom in economic activities only those sections of people can have entitlement or command over food, according to him, who are benefited by it; those deprived face hunger, starvation and death. He cites the example of Bengal Famine of 1943 in support. What he avoids in order to defend capitalist market laws, are the findings of the Flood Commission appointed by the then British rulers. The said Commission found that despite war efforts there was only 10 p.c. shortage of food. Was there any justification for such a heavy toll on human lives and the untold sufferings? The Commission accused the hoarders and black-marketeers to be guilty of this ghastly crime on humanity. Similarly slump famine may occur, according to Sen, because of recession causing loss of employment and therefore earnings. Is it not an admission that the problem of 'acquirement' of people's entitlement to food depends on their employment, earnings and the prices remaining within the reach of earnings? Does not Sen give admission to this truth when he says: "**Employment, wages prices etc.** all have very **direct bearing on the entitlements** of various groups"⁴ (*emphasis ours*). How this entitlement to food is disturbed then? Sen's reply is simple — apart from natural calamities like droughts and floods, **general inflationary pressure, sharp recessionary loss of employment** and so on are in their way **depriving large sections of populations.**"⁵ (*emphasis ours*). What determines inflationary pressure on prices and recession causing loss of employment? Is it not a very crucial question as the common people face those in their daily experience? What is Sen's answer to this?

Sen's answer to this very vital question reveals many things. He says: "**The most obvious failures of the market mechanism** lies in this context in the things that the market leaves **undone**"⁶ (*emphasis ours*). It means that capitalist market mechanism 'leaves undone' or does not solve the basic issues like employment, rate of real wages, the price level including its manipulation by collusive efforts of unscrupulous traders. It may be added that in the context of recession sweeping the global capitalist economy there has been a spurt in speculative activity of capital manipulating prices of food and other essential items of consumption. This has risen to an unprecedented height. The capitalists drawing blanks in other sectors are sure to mint quick fabulous profits in this field of consumption articles with relatively inelastic demand. It means people's consumption may fall but they cannot avoid spending on those for bare survival. Sen keeps silent on this harrowing experience in people's life. The 'acquirement' or realization of what he calls entitlement to food, freedom from deprivation, hunger and poverty depend on these vital questions.

Secondly, it is a truism in capitalist economy that no demand however essential, however urgent, becomes 'effective demand', to use the

term of bourgeois economy, unless backed by money or purchasing power. So the entitlement to food and other bare amenities in life of the people becomes formal, having no relevance to reality where the very base of those is denied by an economic system — the capitalist system that works in and through the market and its laws. The existing market law reflects the law of capitalism which is guided by profit as the very motive force of production. Marx therefore said "production in capitalism means production of profit". Therefore the market mechanism under capitalism connotes exploitation of market which is synonymous with exploitation of capital. Sen supports market mechanism of a capitalist economy, of course, with certain qualifications not affecting the market behavior as such. The paramount question remains: does it help the deprived and exploited to have their entitlement to food and other essentials acquired or realized? Sen defending capitalist market mechanism qualifies his defence by such words: "**market mechanism on its own may not take us very far in eliminating deprivation** in India's liberalization if it goes hand in hand with **continued neglect of other conditions of social progress.**"⁷ (*emphasis ours*).

His prescription, therefore, is for the market mechanism to be supplemented by supportive public intervention especially in fields such as education, health-care, social security etc.

It is to be remembered that Sen's theory carries the heritage of welfare economics of John Mynard Keynes. Modern welfare economy was brought to light by the principal work of Keynes *Employment, Interest and Money* in 1936.

It was at a time when the global capitalist economy was in the midst of Great Depression that started during 1929-30. Keynes by his welfare economics was not advocating a fundamental change in the socio-economic system but was instead trying to defend chaos-discredited capitalism in its dire strait. The immediate cause was growing working class movement in Europe in particular greatly inspired by Marxist ideology in general and the advance of peoples' and social progress through planned economy in the USSR under the concrete leadership of Stalin as a standing contrast. Keynes took upon himself the responsibility to restore people's faith in "reformed capitalism" or "capitalism with humane face" so that people may not be guided by the revolutionary spirit and take to the path of overthrowing capitalist economic system itself, the very root cause of all the evils tormenting their life. Besides, his objective was to provide some devices which could help the crisis-ridden capitalism to boost market demand to some extent by public spendings through government programme to generate employment and incomes even for a short while. Let us see, following the same line of welfare economics, what novelty is there in Sen's theories and policy devices when capitalist system is in serious disorder bearing striking similarity with the earlier one.

Sen, while supporting globalisation-privatisation-liberalisation, the latest economic policy prescription being tried in bourgeois world,

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Women's Day Observed at Hyderabad

On the occasion of International Women's Day the Hyderabad district organizing committee of AIMSS conducted a meeting at Ravindra Bharati Mini Hall. Smt. Y H Prameela Reddy, Magistrate of Mahila Court was the Chief Guest. The meeting was presided over by Smt. Sreevalli, President of Hyderabad District Organizing Committee of AIMSS ; Ch Prameela, Secretary, AP State Organising Committee of AIMSS was the main speaker. Smt. Chillara Bhavani Devi, Adviser, AIMSS and Smt. Ratna Mahidhar, writer also spoke on the occasion. Smt. Swarupa, the Secretary of AIMSS Hyderabad District Organizing Committee was also on the dais.

Smt. Ratna Mahidhar, a noted writer also spoke on the occasion.

At the end of the programme prizes were distributed to the winners of competitions conducted in sports, arts and literature in A.G. office. Telephone Bhavan, Secretariat and Panchayat Raj office.



Procession on 8th March, the Women's Day at Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Tribute to Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukdev in Bombay

Martyrs' day of Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev was observed at Bhiwandi Pre-Primary Sakina School Weavers School Hall under the banner of Tarakki Pansand Coordination Committee. The meeting was presided over by Md. Ashthaque Ahmed Ansari, teacher of Poddar English Medium High School, Bhiwandi and convener of the meeting was Comrade Shamim Ahmed, Advocate. Many speakers delivered their speeches. Comrade Dr. Anjaia Mamidal of CPI was the first speaker; other speakers were Comrade Saghir Ahmed of CPI, Shri R N Pinjar, teacher of Shri Anna Saheb Marathi Medium High School, Comrade Anil Tyagi, Comrade Y.K. Kulshreshtha and Comrade Om Prakash Maurya of SUCI. All the speakers highlighted the life struggle of Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries.

The main attraction of the programme was Mushaira and Kavi Sammelan. Many Urdu poets participated in this programme and sang patriotic songs, Ghazals and progressive Nazams. Bhashir Nazar, Fankar Allahabadi, Mohd. Haneef Kibla, Jane-Alam Rahber, Shakeel Ahmed Shakeel, Sultan Ahmed Sultan and others participated also.

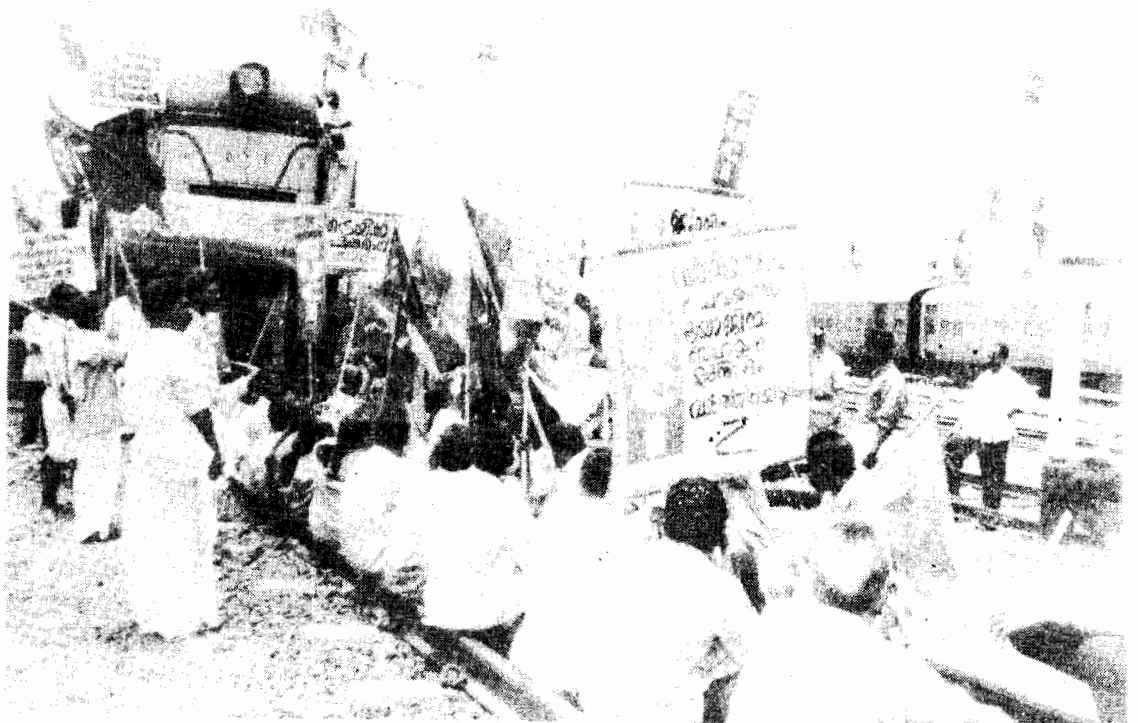
Movement in Agartala, Tripura against enhanced price of electricity

The Agartala District Organising Committee of the SUCI has initiated a movement against increase in the price of electricity. On 30.3.99 a well-decorated procession marched through the streets of Agartala, while deputation consisting of Comrades. Shibani Das, Subrata Chakraborty, Rajlakshmi Dev Burma, Divulal De, Sanjay Choudhury submitted a memorandum to the Chief Engineer as the permission to meet the Chief Minister was refused. When the procession reached Colonel Choumuhany a street corner meeting was held where the speakers urged the people to boycott the raised price and build up people's committees. Again, on 1.4.99 a Black Day was observed in protest against the rise and a deputation submitted a memorandum to the Power Minister Sri Badal Choudhury. To mark the Black Day street-corner meetings were held in Batila, Dauman Choumuhany and Udaypur. Protesting vehemently against the rise in the price of electricity which aggravates the suffering of the people already burdened by unnatural price-rise, insecurity and the rise in the price of milk, the speakers called upon the people to build up mighty mass movement and boycott the enhanced price of electricity.

Picketing on Railway Track at Quilon

SUCI Quilon district committee organised a train picketing on 31st March in protest against the anti-people central budgets and price-rise. Party activists came to the railway station at Quilon district headquarters in a procession through the main thoroughfares of the town and put up a blockade before the Trivandrum-New Delhi Kerala Express. Police arrested and removed the volunteers.

The demonstration and picketing was led by Comrades S. Radhakrishnan, Shyla K. Johu, Dhruva Kumar, Srejith and Jyothy Krishnan.



SUCI activists picketing before train at Quilon on 31-12-99

AIMSS Condemns Rape Insurance

Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, General Secretary, All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan issued the following statement to the press on 3.4.99 :

"We vehemently condemn the latest move of the Central government for introducing rape insurance. This will be an indirect encouragement to rape and will help the insurance companies to earn enormous profit at the cost of women's dignity. They are encouraging criminality and in the name of compensation the victims will be forced to pay the premium from their own purse which is nothing but a mockery.

"The changing of the name is nothing but an eyewash. So, we protest this move of the government also. The responsibility of the government is to protect dignity and honour of women but, instead what they are going to do is highly deplorable. It presupposes that rape and other types of physical assaults on women will go on and the government will do nothing to prevent those or give exemplary punishment to the culprits. On the contrary, they are going to introduce this insurance which is nothing but an insult to womanhood. Moreover, rape cannot be treated at par with other accidents. If the government had slightest respect for women then they would not have introduced such type of insurance.

We call upon all democratic-minded women and men as well to come forward and register strong protest."

Demonstration against NATO's war in Yugoslavia

On 1.4.99, the Bellary District Committee of SUCI held a demonstration at the Royal Circle, in the heart of the city, against NATO's war in Yugoslavia.

In slogans a new definition was given to NATO i.e. "New American Terrorists Organisation" and Clinton was called the clone of Hitler.

Later, the Replica of USA Flag and the NATO's US-Airforce Plane was burnt.

Before this Comrade H.V. Ganapathi presided over the demonstration meet. Comrade K. Somashekar, District Secretary, SUCI spoke before the demonstrators and strongly condemned the attack.

NATO attack condemned

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country's coalition governments if there is an escalation in the Nato attacks on Yugoslavia. The decision was taken at a meeting between Green Environmental ministers during an environmental conference in Schwerin, Germany.

Italy : Protesters gathered outside parliament on Saturday waving olive branches stained red for blood (the Olive Tree is the symbol of the ruling Democratic Left coalition). Bottles, fruit and rubbish was hurled at the police who used tear gas to disperse them.

In the south protests are taking place outside the Nato base in Apulia.

Over 1,00,000 demonstrators marched through Rome last weekend demanding an end to the Balkan war.

The mass action was organised by a wide alliance of workers' and progressive parties, Nino Pasti Foundation included.

Austria : Austria has closed its air-space to Nato warplanes involved in the conflict on the grounds that the war has not been sanctioned by the United Nations. Over four thousand took part in an anti-war protest in Vienna over the week-end.

France : Ten thousand demonstrators took part in a protest in Paris.

Right-wing deputies are calling for the resignation of the three Communist ministers in the Socialist-led coalition because they have spoken out against the war.

The Communist Party together with a faction of the Socialist Party and the unions are calling for the Nato bombing to cease. In Strassbourg, French and German protesters united to march to the European Parliament to demand an end to the bombing.

Belgium : Hundreds of demonstrators defied police, water-cannons, pepper-spray, tear-gas and a helicopter in the Belgian capital, Brussels, to protest against the Nato war in Yugoslavia last Saturday (3rd April).

The demonstration had been banned and many protesters were beaten up and arrested including well-known actors and members of the Belgian Workers' Party (PTB). Michel Collon, who writes for the PTB weekly *Solidaire* was pushed to ground, hit on the head with a truncheon and beaten.

In the police wagon he was hit another 21 times. He is now suffering from concussion and broken ribs. The organiser of the demonstration, the Anti-Imperialist League, is demanding the immediate release of all those arrested.

Norway : Some 300 demonstrators, many from the local Yugoslav community, threw firecrackers and eggs at the US embassy in Oslo last Saturday. They marched from the Norwegian parliament to the embassy carrying banners with slogans such as "Stop Bombing" and "Clinton equals Hitler".

Germany : Riot police clashed with thousands of anti-Nato demonstrators in Berlin. Other protests have taken place in Frankfurt, Munich, Schwerin, Rostock and Stuttgart.

Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in over 150 German cities against the war in Yugoslavia over the Easter holiday. Ten thousand took to the streets of Berlin under the slogan "No to War Politics". One poster compared Socialist Chancellor Schroeder to Hitler.

Six thousand protested in Frankfurt on Main and the US flag was burnt outside the American consulate. Opposition to the war becoming public

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MASS AGITATION IN USA

Millions For Mumia

Mumia-Abu-Jamal, an African-American human rights activist and a militant organiser of the movement against the apartheid is at this moment counting his days in the death row of a Pennsylvania jail in Philadelphia, USA, the so-called paradise of democracy, victimised by a police frame-up and condemned to death by an unjust, prejudicial court. The appeal for a new trial has been turned down. Protests are echoing across the globe demanding a new and fair trial. The protests will converge on ensuing 24th April, birthday of Abu Jamal, into the cities of Philadelphia and San Francisco which will see massive agitation by tens of thousands against police atrocity and racism demanding a new and fair trial of Mumia and right to information of the trial procedure. All the progressive political parties organisations and individuals have been urged by Pan Africa, International Family of Friends of Mumia Abu Jamal, Ramsay Clark, former US Attorney General, Ossie Davis, Actor and Civil Rights activist and Leonard Weinglass, the Attorney for Mumia to issue protest-letters on this demand to the Governor of Philadelphia and US Attorney General.

Back in 1981 on 9th December when in Philadelphia Mumia came out of his car to make sure that a police officer was violating the civil rights, both Mumia and the officer were shot at by an unknown assailant. While the officer succumbed, Mumia survived. When the police discovered that Mumia was an activist of anti-racist movement, they brought against him the false charge of the murder of the officer. Violating the norms of jurisprudence, he has been sentenced to death. He was refused the right to self-defence. Black jurors were kept off the jury. It was proved that the bullet that killed the officer did not fit Mumia's licensed gun. Even the eye-witness was intimidated. Naturally, the mockery of trial ended with such a verdict.

Under the pressure of mass agitation against this injustice by the US people, the Governor of

Pennsylvania has not yet dared to sign the death warrant.

Long is the history of the US people's battle against racism, policy of discrimination and hatred towards the blacks. After the Russian revolution it dawned upon the people that this battle was inseparably linked with the battle of emancipation of the US workers, which is class struggle. This anti-racist struggles for more than a century includes many glorious battles even humanist white fighters also laid down their lives. The flames of the struggle is still alive on the US soil. Only the 4th February last the New York police sprayed bullets on unarmed Amadou Diego, a young man from Guinea, flushing into his room. The people burst into protests on 22 February in New York and blocked the buses road at Broadway during office hour when police arrested the demonstrators. The murders of Taisa Miller, Donta Dowson also triggered mass agitation against the police adding an edge to this protracted struggle. In spite of strong opposition from the police concert for Mumia was organised in New Jersey on 28th January to collect the funds of the movement for a new trial, was attended by 20 thousand people. Another meeting in Town Hall in New York on 26th February was addressed by prominent individuals, artists, lawyers and intellectuals, who called upon a strong movement for Mumia.

For the better information of the protagonists of the US democracy, it should be mentioned that it has the highest number of people, in jails and in death rows. Most of the imprisoned are black people, thanks to the racist regime. In this context the movement for Mumia is not merely a demand for justice to an individual but has become a symbol of struggle against racist injustice, police brutality, death penalty and state terrorism. Democratic-minded people all over the world have raised, against the imperialist US administration, the slogan "Millions for Mumia".



Demonstration by SUCI activists at Mysore Circle, Bangalore on 30-3-99 to condemn bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO

Prof. Sen's Theory Carries Heritage of Keynes

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holds that India cannot take opportunity of the same if there is no expansion of social opportunities by supportive public intervention especially in fields such as education, health-care, social security etc.

Poverty is defined by Sen as “ultimately a matter of capability deprivation”⁸ and not caused by the very law of capitalist productive system. How can people's capability deprivation be removed? For Sen, the principal question is development of ‘human capital’. It flows not from his welfarism-humanism but from the very cold logic of ‘promotion of skill’ and therefore ‘improvement in productivity’. That is why it is “all the more essential to pay attention to the **close relation between sensible public action and economic progress**”.⁹ (*emphasis ours*). Examples make the position clearer.

He holds that a person's education and health can help him or her to do many things, other than just being educated and healthy. “Education and health”, he writes, “can for instance be important for getting a job and more generally for making use of economic opportunities”. Not only this, he continues, “the resulting expansion in incomes and economic means can in turn add to a person's freedom to achieve functioning that he or she values.”¹⁰ Though said in the context of India's problem, how very different it is from Indian people's real experience! If education could open up employment and economic opportunities then why should this country be one of those worst hit by unemployment? Is it not a fact that India has the biggest pool of unemployed technically trained personnel in the world? Then again, does an educated achieve freedom of functioning as he or she values? Why then a person sufficiently educated to be a professor is to remain content with the post of a part-timer, though doing the job of a full-timer, with a paltry sum of say Rs. 400 per month as remuneration? Why his or her political freedom and liberty remain so much restricted?

Besides, there must be some basic questions as to the real content or worth of education. The DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) sponsored by the Central Government and funded by the World Bank is not for learning but for unlearning, not to inculcate the spirit of reasoning but to inject faith in concepts of freedom and liberty within the narrow confine of the very unethical capitalist social order.

Is it not common knowledge today that the corporate sectors of our country and the MNCs abroad are finding education to be a lucrative field for investing money for minting hefty profit while robbing education of its liberal approach based on social consciousness and the man-making character-building content which was so fondly cherished during our freedom struggle? Not only that; the way education is being commercialised and privatised can hardly provide any enlightenment to the vast sections of the poor people. Rather it creates in the process two classes, a small affluent section getting all opportunities and facilities of education while the other, the vast poor section which is totally denied all these and left in the lurch. Admitting the important role education can play in a country – the ground reality in our country presents a grim picture.

As for the real worth of Sen's welfare programmes adopted with zest by the World Bank, its report brought out this year will speak for itself. It says that inequality is widening in countries under the World Bank aided programmes. It has warned that crisis afflicted countries (of Southeast Asia – *ed. P.Era*) are not the only ones experiencing increasing inequality. Data for the countries showed an overwhelming increase in inequality within the countries in the 1990's. The report noted that poverty had increased across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Life expectancy at birth had declined precipitously in several countries, most notably Russia where the average life expectancy for men in 1995 was three years below that in India and a stunning six years lower than that at the start of transition.¹¹ Surely bourgeois democracy can claim superiority over what remained of socialism in Russia!

In Sen's opinion, “incidence of child labour is ultimately connected with non-schooling.” Therefore, the ‘expansion of schooling can reduce the distressing phenomenon of child labour’.¹² What a pathetic indifference to facts! Let it be noted that two-thirds of the children who enrol in India's primary schools drop out by the sixth year.¹³ And this is because, according to World Bank's estimates, 55% or 420 million Indians were poor (i.e. they had an income of less than \$30 a month) and 250 million or 30% extremely poor (having less than \$23 a month). And the literacy rate could be raised from 24% to 36% between 1960 and 1980.¹⁴ So child labour, the **distressing phenomenon**, is not the cause of poverty but just the reverse.

That Sen has a political motivation behind his welfare programmes at people's cost is amply clear from his own words: “inequality can be the source of social tension and even violence.” That is why he has noted the “levels of violence are so high in Brazil, South Africa, United States and the state of Bihar in India.”¹⁵

One can find uniformity of Sen's thinking with that of Mr. James Wolfenshton, the Chairman of the World Bank as the latter spoke before the joint Annual Session of IMF/World Bank in 1998.

The Chairman said: “If we do not have **greater equity and social justice**, there will be no political stability and **without political stability no amount of money put together in financial packages** will give us political stability.”¹⁶ So “political stability” is a much sought after object for all the worried defenders of crisis-ridden, chaos-discredited capitalism. From CPI(M) to BJP all the bourgeois parliamentary parties in our country compete with one another to show eagerness to pursue Sen's welfare programmes.

Here we draw pointed attention to the fact that the social democratic parties in our country like the CPI(M) and the CPI, in defence of crisis-ridden capitalism have been working assiduously to spread the myth of so-called harmony of interests between the exploiting capitalist class and the exploited working class. This means standing in strong defence of status quo i.e. prolongation of exploitative capitalism. They are jubilant to find supporting theoretical works and programmes of Prof. Sen. Their elation goes to the extent of posing Sen's theorisations as if they are parallel to the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The branded bourgeois

parties also avidly follow this line. The BJP government has in fact declared certain yojanas in this year to get on to the lines of Sen's prescription. The CPI(M) declared its programme for expansion of primary education with the declared standard for recruitment of teachers that degrades the very meaning and purpose of education. They all know that by government spendings out of taxes and duties extorted from people there will not even be a scratch on the capitalist system, rather it would help the party in power and the capitalists it defends in more than one way.

Inequality — individual-social choice etc.

Sen admits that inequality of income is not an attribute of stagnant economy only. For having an eye on the ‘emerging markets’ of South East Asia, he gives admission that the “development experiences of some **fast-growing countries** during the last few decades” has resembled “**unaimed opulence**” causing “**high rates of economic growth with the persistence of widespread poverty, illiteracy, ill health, child labour, criminal violence and related social failures**”¹⁷ (*emphasis ours*). Has he questioned the real cause as to why the economic growth or prosperity is not being shared by the people? What is his answer to this specific question of the deprived and poor? He simply begs the questions by pointing out the failure to transform the quality of life by using the growth due to “high levels of economic and social inequality.” He cannot say it is because of the very law of capitalism. So “lack of public investment in protection of basic entitlement” becomes the scapegoat in the safe pasture for his welfare programming.

And in his book *Inequality Re-examined* he comes out of his welfarian shell by holding “**The characteristics of inequality in different spaces from each other because of heterogeneity of People**”.¹⁸ (*emphasis ours*). So, wide gap in entitlement to civic amenities is not due to capitalist system of production but due to personal characteristic features that vary from man to man! But he must explain why despite ‘human diversity’ the bourgeois ideologues enjoin ‘equality before law’ meaning equal treatment to individuals in both civic and criminal laws? Is not economics as law governed as its superstructure in legal administrative field? Why should there be one vote for each when there is wide disparity in intellectual attainments or physical aspects? The obvious answer will be: while equality in the legal political-administrative aspects is just formal even this formal recognition of equality cannot be accepted in economic aspect.

This brings us to his acclaimed contribution in freeing the individual and collective choice theorem from the ‘impossibility theorem’ of Prof. Arrow. What is all this about? Prof. Arrow dismissed the concept of individual and social choice being rational within the parameter or limitation of capitalist system having no regard to interpersonal comparability of utility. He opined that the methods of market bear similarity in methods of votes that connote amalgamating the facts of many individuals. So, social choice meeting wide ranging sets of individual orderings can be assumed to be rational if individual is also assumed to be rational in choice. He was of the

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CPI(M) & CPI in defence of crisis-ridden capitalism are jubilant in finding support in theoretical work of Prof. Amartya Sen

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opinion that "consistency cannot be attributed to collective modes of choice when wills of many people are involved". He concluded therefore "passing from individual tastes to social preferences must either be dictatorial or imposed."¹⁹

Interpersonal comparison of utility, if permitted, as Prof. Amalan Dutta has shown in his recent article, demands "radical redistribution of income in favour of the poor". This conforms to utilitarian grounds. But the counter-argument is that "unequal distribution of income helps savings and investment which promotes growth."²⁰ Sen brings in 'partial comparability' theorem to remove 'impossibility theorem'. What is it? It means a theory of **collective choice should only be concerned with the derivation of social preference** from a set of individual preferences and **need not go into the formation of individual preferences**. And finally, "social choice may be based on individual preferences, the latter in their turn will depend on the nature of the society". Further "appropriateness of alternative rules of collective choice will depend partially on precise structure of society."²¹ With this is to be incorporated welfare programmes as welfare indexing. (Ibid, *emphasis added*)

It is true, personal as also social preference depend on the structure of society. In India the poor have hardly any choice other than poverty and hunger despite preference for good living because of mass-scale deprivation. It was not so in Soviet Russia. There was 'long queue' as was the sly comments in western media for having provisions. But people were not starving en masse, begging and having nightmarish experiences seeing the price-list of variety of products on safe counters. Consumerism grown as a social evil from bourgeois device was not only one of the causes of debacle in Soviet Russia, but is also a cause of danger to capitalism according to Prof. Galbraith, a well-known bourgeois economist. This is due to wastage of capital. Capital is being used in production of variety of brands of the same consumption articles advertised on the TV, and other media. So preferences are now the handiwork of ad-men and the cost over advertisement (i.e. selling cost) goes on just to snatch a place in rapidly squeezing market. This is individual and social preference as these stand now.

Social choice : bourgeois democracy versus socialism

Sen does not conceal his preference for a social choice to be accepted by the people in political aspect. This is expressed in many of his observations and comments. For example in his book *India — Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Prof. Sen has commented that the famine in China between 1958-61 was 'due to lack of democracy.' And that in a democracy "... a policy as disruptive and drastic as the Great Leap Forward could not have been initiated". He has said in the same book that between 25-30 million Chinese people died because of that famine. Is it true? Edgar Snow, the celebrated American journalist-author gave the answer in his book *Red China Today : The other side of the*

river in such words : "Throughout 1959-62 many western press editorials and headlines referred to 'mass starvation' in China and continued to cite no supporting facts. As far as I know, no report by any non-Communist visitor to China provided an authenticated instance of starvation during the period. Here I am not speaking of food shortages or lack of surfeit... but of mass deaths from hunger which is what famine connotes to most of us... I assert that I saw no starving people in China..."²²

He cites a support, the report of Mr. Richard Sternes in the *New York World Telegram* of July 31, 1962 in the following words : "There is no shred of evidence known to the west that famine threatens Communist China." He concludes : "The hard simple truth is that American policy cannot prevail in Southeast Asia or anywhere else in the world as long as it is based on myth and wishful thinking."²³

Then again Lord Montgomery after his meeting with Mao Zedong in late 1961 came to the conclusion : "They had used up all their reserves of grain during the past three years to feed the nation; they now had to build up fresh reserves."²⁴ What for was the need to fall back on grain reserves? It was due to natural calamities and consequent crop failures in two consecutive years 1959 and '60. The leap forward in question was to construct heavy industries to give a solid foundation to socialist economy then in the process of construction. This is the truth Sen has no reason to deny. Of course, the capitalist roaders who gave leadership in post-reform China blessed with praises in profusion by Sen might have worked to sabotage supply line in order to denigrate the revolutionary line of Comrade Mao Zedong.

From another comment it is obvious that Sen is happy to find the 'ideological incentive pursued by the revolutionary leadership in pre-reform China has been abandoned to be replaced by material incentive.'²⁵

His attitude to bourgeois democracy is transparent when he says : "A democratic state makes it much harder for the ruling government to be unresponsive to the needs and values to the population at large."²⁶ But equally transparent is the untruth when he writes that so far as famines are concerned India has distinctly a better record than China because "no famine took place in post-Independence India."²⁷ How far this comes near the truth? Mass hunger and death are not unknown phenomenon to the common men in our country whether the government declared that famine or not. What happened in Kalahandi in the state of Orissa not once but several times? Was it not a fact that people's agitations, press reportings compelled the government to declare famine? Is it not also a fact that people defined by the World Bank as 'extremely poor' meaning at a starvation level in India constitutes 30% of the total population? Yet India should be praised to have better record than China on food front!

What about a government in democratic state? What is the real worth of change of government?

In our country the press, the people, even the leaders of parliamentary parties all agree that criminalisation of politics has made politics

vicious. There is agreement also and reporting in media too about the existence of an evil nexus between capitalists-politicians — bureaucracy and mafia that makes it possible for corruption to run rampant as also black money i.e. unaccounted for money to far outstrip white money i.e. money accounted for. Has there been any change with change of government regarding all these? In parliament, all the party leaders call these bad but people know they themselves are all involved in these.

As for election, a choice according to Sen to remove a government in a bourgeois democracy, the less said the better. The capitalist aided by powerful media and in league with bureaucracy including police force, musclemen and subservient political party leaders and workers have reduced election to a costly farce with the strength of their moneybags. There is hardly any scope for genuine people's representatives to enter legislative forum. The high costs even for contesting and the rigged elections are enough to prevent their entry. The bourgeoisie at this stage of dire crisis can hardly afford even the minimum democratic norms and rules of governance because of mortal fear of people's revolution. They know perfectly well that once the genuine revolutionary party gets the scope of utilising the legal fora, radicalisation of people's movements and revolutionary preparedness will not be far off.

Sen has praised post-reform China, that is to say China under the leadership of capitalist roaders.

Though a staunch supporter of bourgeois multi-party democracy, his praises for post-reform China are in profusion though under one party rule. But even such a scholar, winner of laurels in bourgeois world had to admit that pre-reform China, that is, China under revolutionary leadership abolished mass hunger, landlordism, brought about land reforms, initiated mass education, so on and so forth to give a solid economic foundation for the betterment of the people.

Here is what he says : "Because of its radical commitment to the elimination of poverty and to improving living conditions a commitment in which Maoist as well as Marxist ideas and ideals played an important part China did achieve many things that the Indian leadership failed to press for and pursue with any vigour. The elimination of widespread hunger, illiteracy and ill health falls solidly in this category."²⁸

Well said but for a small omission! The working class state in New China came into being out of a long revolutionary movement under the leadership of Chinese Communist Party with Comrade Mao Zedong as the great helmsman, marked by rare heroism in history. The bourgeois leadership of India, on the other hand founded a bourgeois state to consolidate bourgeois rule and did whatever suited bourgeois interest exploiting and oppressing ruthlessly the working people.

So the choice is clear before the people : either accept the status quo of crisis-ridden capitalism and languish in deprivation, inequality, poverty, hunger, ill health, illiteracy, high mortality and degradations all around or fight for socialism that

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150 years of Communist Manifesto, Great Karl Marx and Stalin Remembered in Bangalore

The Bangalore District Committee of the SUCI organised a public meeting on the occasion of completion of 150 years of Communist Manifesto and Memorial Day of Karl Marx and J.V. Stalin which fell on March 14th and March 5th respectively. The public meeting which was organised on 14.3.99 at 5.30 p.m. at Ken School of Arts, Seshadripuram, Bangalore was attended by youths, women, students, workers and other sections of people.

Comrade Krishna Chakrabarty, Central Committee member of SUCI and main speaker of the meeting said : The Manifesto, which explains the dialectical materialist methodology, which itself is the science of all sciences, is not only relevant today but is serving as a beacon light to the working people all over the world in their fight for emancipation from all kinds of exploitation.

Speaking on the occasion Comrade Chakrabarty said "Hitherto there were several philosophers who interpreted the world but it was for the first time in the history of mankind that Marx laid a scientific foundation for the development of philosophy and transformed it into a guide to action.

While speaking on J V Stalin Comrade Chakrabarty said that being one of the most worthy disciples of Karl Marx, Stalin not only correctly applied Marxism and consolidated socialism in USSR but transformed Russia, the sickest nation of Europe into a mighty superpower. The country under his leadership defeated the powerful fascist Hitlerite forces and became a bulwark of powerful peace movement helping liberation struggles throughout the world.

Today after Stalin's death, with the abandoning of great socialist thoughts counter-revolution has developed in Russia and East European countries, weakened the world peace movement and this has created a condition for the rise of reaction and unabated onslaught of imperialists and fundamentalists.

In our country, too, the BJP and Sangh Parivar are bringing reactionary fascist ideas to drag the country to medieval darkness.

Dr. B R Manjunath, District Secretary of SUCI, Bangalore, who presided over the meeting also spoke.

The meeting ended with the *Internationale*.

Victory of Movement at Bellary

The UTUC(L-S), Bellary district unit had been organising movement for opening sub-regional office of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation at Bellary for the benefits of the employees of the region. This movement gathered momentum and it at last was crowned with success when the authority ultimately approved the opening of sub-regional office at Bellary in Karnataka state on 5.3.99. The Regional Provident Fund Commissioner informed this decision to Comrade K. Somashekhar, President, UTUC(L-S) Bellary District Unit through a letter dated 2nd March, 1999.

Economic theories of Prof. Amartya Sen

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cures all the ills and provide higher proletarian moral values and ethics.

Let us conclude with what Engels said about this type of 'well-wishers' of the people :

"The second group (i.e. social democrats - *ed. P.Era*) is composed of adherents of present day society in whom the ills which are its inevitable outcome have awakened anxiety for the existence of the society. They are, therefore, endeavouring to keep the present day society intact while eliminating the ills linked with it. With this end in view, some of them propose various welfare measures while others advocate magnificent reform system which under pretext of reorganising society would retain the foundations of present day society and thereby present day society itself."²⁹

Our call to the people : However much efforts are made to give a 'humane face' to capitalism, it is inhuman, nasty and brutal. It deserves to be overthrown outright.

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NATO attack condemned

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within the ruling Socialist Party (SPD) and the left of the party is demanding to vote a call an end to the Nato attacks.

The Greens, junior partners in the coalition, are also split. Many want a recall conference to discuss the crisis.

Greece : The Greek government has called for an immediate end to the bombing. Over 15,000 protesters demonstrated outside the US and British embassies in Athens in the last week of March. Riot police fired tear-gas to break up the crowd. Cars and stores were wrecked in the fighting.

Greek communists and the Youth for Peace movement demonstrated in the port of Thessaloniki to protest at the use of the city as a transit point for Nato troops going to Macedonia.

Greek workers went on a 2 hour general strike against the Nato bombing of Yugoslavia. Greece's two largest union federations, representing both the public and private sector called the action in agreement with merchants and the craft industry unions.

Merchants supported the action because they fear the economic repercussions of an extended conflict in the Balkans. The strike affected banks, public utilities, transport and factories.

Federation of Rail Workers leader Epaminondas Koukas said his members would strike if they saw arms being transported on the Greek railway network for the Nato war.

The Greek government has ruled out any participation by their armed forces in Kosovo and they stressed that Nato troops heading for Yugoslavia would not be allowed to pass through Greek territory.

A container of medical supplies and food supplies for the victims of Nato air-raids has set off from Thessaloniki. The Thessaloniki Medical Association (TMA) is organising volunteer doctors and nurses to provide help if needed for the victims of the bombings. "We have an open line with

hospitals in Serbia and if there is a need we are ready to offer our help," TMA President Christos Papaconstantinou told the press.

Cyprus : Five hundred people burnt US flags outside the US embassy in Nicosia on Friday. Last Tuesday school students organised a protest outside the embassy. Over two thousand took part - some throwing oranges, eggs and lemons at the building.

Czech Republic : Last Saturday hundreds demonstrated against the bombing in Prague's Wenceslas Square chanting "Nato go home" and "We are united".

United States : Peace activists gathered along Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House on Tuesday to protest at the US bombing campaign. The protesters carried placards reading "Violence Begets Violence" and "Killing to Stop Killing is Bad Policy".

Milanka Bangich, a Serb who came to America in 1968, held a sign reading "My family is in a bomb shelter now. Where is yours?" She said her brothers and sisters and their children live two-hours ride from Kosovo. "Who knows if they are alive today?"

Anti-war protests have taken place in Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Detroit, Chicago, Sacramento and Santa Barbara.

Canada : Demonstrators in Toronto battled with police outside the US consulate. Some 2,000 people took part in a rally organised by the Serbian community calling for a halt to Nato aggression and Canada's participation in it.

Australia : Angry protests are sweeping Australia. Thousands have gathered outside US consulates in Australia to voice their opposition to the Nato war. 6,000 in Melbourne, 7,000 in Sydney, 1,500 in Perth and 400 in the federal capital, Canberra took part in the protests. Police were pelted in angry clashes with the demonstrators, who also burnt US flags and carried placards comparing Clinton to Adolf Hitler. (Source : Mainly from *The New Worker*, London)

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