

Proletarian Era

Volume 32 No. 8
December 15, 1998

Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
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Rs. 2.00
Air surcharge : 5 P.

Opening up Insurance

In Whose Interest

When parties in power change but the essence of their policies does not, it has only one explanation. It points to the fundamental that class-parties, despite superficial differences, are essentially and unshakably committed to their own class interest and this identity with class commitment or interest reflects an identity in their approaches too, which is why the economic and industrial policies adopted in 1991 by the Congress, the most trusted and proven class party of the bourgeoisie since independence, had found a zealous adherent in UF formed with the direct participation of the country's leading lefts with CPI(M) not in the ministry to disown the failure but with a decisive and vocal presence in a government that succeeded a discredited Congress in 1996 and now finds a more ardent advocate in BJP whose claim to distinction in character and content, kept many innocent people, for long, charmed. True to the target of complete privatisation and greater globalisation obviously

to secure the absolute control and command of the capitalist class over the country's economy the governments that have come to power in succession during the last seven years have, despite their show of sabre-rattling against one another, very faithfully, rather piously, taken over all the programmes of privatisation handed down to them by their predecessors and have addressed themselves avowedly to the task of their implementation, extension and intensification.

Of many such instances the Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill (IRA) is a case in hand. Initially the brain-child of the Congress, aimed at opening up the insurance sector, earlier demarcated as reserved area for public or government sector in favour of private sector using Malhotra Committee recommendations as launching pad the IRA was conceived of during Manmohan regime but before they could have it through, Congress faced defeat in 1996 election.

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Russia Today

Question : What is your evaluation of the widespread, active mass protest of the working people that erupted from the summer to the autumn 1998, especially the picketing by the miners that went on at the Gorbaty bridge in Moscow?

Answer : This widespread mass protest developed from a deep-seated social

crisis and spread over the whole country in waves, a social crisis, that is a part of the all-out general crisis, that has appeared in Russia as a result of the counter-revolution covering the spheres of economy, politics, finance, governmental power, morality and ethics, etc. The utter failure of the reform programme for going back from socialism to capitalism has once again prove as correct the conclusions of Marxism-Leninism in reality. Marxism-Leninism has showed that there may be a temporary retreat, an off-tide, and the history

NINA ANDREEVA

In the context of the widespread mass agitation that erupted in Russia in October last, a request was made on behalf of our party to Comrade Nina Andreeva, General Secretary of the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) asking for her opinion and analysis on the issue. The write-up that Comrade Nina Andreeva has sent in response to our request in a question-answer form for publishing in journals, is given here. Responsibility for any shortcomings and mistakes in translating from the original Russian is ours. —Editor, P. Era.

this, demands were raised for the minimum necessities of people's life that should be fulfilled by the government. Demands arose: We are not slaves, our wages must be paid; the government assistance, the pension that are due, must be disbursed; the poor must be provided with the minimum medical care, the children in all parts of the country must have the opportunity of studying in schools. Simply put, it is to be seen that sighs of hungry people no more exist. In our country

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee Congratulates the people

Congratulating the people of the country for making the General Strike to-day (11.12.98) called by 56 mass organisations a complete success, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI in course of a statement said :
"A well organised sustained movement is necessary to defeat the anti-people policies of the BJP-led central government. The crying need of the hour is that the Left and democratic parties along with the mass organisations forge unity to initiate this movement."

SUCI observes Anti-Communalism Day on 6th December

Calling upon the people of the country to observe the ensuing 6th December '98 as Anti-Communalism Day, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, issued the following statement on 2nd December 1998 :

"6th December is a day not only marked with the tragic demolition of the Babri Masjid, a historic mosque, which, having severely injured the feeling of the religious minorities and further fuelled the Hindutva passion resulted in the outbreak of a worst form of communal riot throughout the country claiming thousands of lives.

"People of our country are aware that communalism as a weapon, wielded by British imperialism to divide the Indian people in order to weaken the freedom struggle, and which was later used by the Congress rulers to disrupt people's unity and destroy people's democratic movements, is now being used by the BJP-led Saffron Brigade not only against class and mass struggles but also for playing the Hindu card at the hustings thus stirring up religious, fundamentalist and traditionalist jingoism throughout the country to foment a fascist mental make-up reminiscent of the Hitlerite conspiracy in Germany. No one can, therefore, deny that today it is a dangerous menace before the country which can be defeated only by sustained and powerful ideological, political, economic and cultural movements to be launched unitedly by left and democratic parties and forces drawing all sections of the common people. To initiate such a powerful mass movement which is the need of the hour, we call upon the people to observe 6th December as Anti-Communalism Day."

Assembly Elections in 4 States — A Review

The landslide victory of the Congress (I) over the BJP in three states out of the four where Assembly elections were held, has surpassed even the Congress' wildest dreams. Thus in Rajasthan the Congress totally routed the BJP government, securing 150 seats out of 197 while the BJP got a mere 33. The same holds true for Delhi, where Congress (I) got 51 seats out of 70 and the BJP only 15. Even in Madhya Pradesh where the Congress (I) itself had been in power, it retained it with an absolute majority of 173 seats in a house of 320 while the BJP got 120 and BSP 11. Moreover, in West Bengal, where the Congress (I) is in such a poor shape it has obtained all the seats in the Behrampur municipal elections and swept the polls in Krishnanagore municipal polls, while the Trinamul Congress-BJP combine, which had made so deep inroads in the recent Lok Sabha elections, was practically wiped out. Even in Howrah from where it had won the Lok Sabha seat, it was routed by the CPI(M) in the municipal elections. The same holds true for the three State Assembly by elections, all three of which went to the CPI(M).

On the other hand in Mizoram where the Congress (I) had ruled for a decade or more, it has been completely routed by the Mizo National Front and Mizo People's Congress combine.

These election demonstrate proves just how unpopular and discredited the BJP has become in the span of a few months after assuming power at the Centre. Many people had hoped that things would improve under BJP rule, under the rule of a party that, apart from all the promises made, claimed to pursue value-based politics and was projected as disciplined. But their experience has belied their hopes. Never before in the history of this land have prices of essential commodities jumped to such an extent. At a time when already soaring prices had confounded the misery and hardship of the common man, prices of basic foodstuff, such as onion, increased 10 to 15 times in the span of a few weeks from Rs. 5, and 6, to Rs. 60 and even 100 in some places. And even now, after they have at long last come down, they remain at a level that is still several times higher than the original price. Its effect on people's life has been absolutely devastating.

Since coming to power, the rabid Hindu communal politics of the BJP that is directed against not only Muslim community but also Christian minority community, has got a fillip. The increasing spate of violent attacks against the minority, notably the Christian minority in the recent past, is causing deep apprehension among them about their future. It is obvious, therefore, not out of any special sympathy for the Congress(I) but for their rage against BJP's anti-minority politics they gave it a sound drubbing. These polls reflect a total rejection of BJP by the people in general and the minorities in particular.

Realising that the minorities had stood united against the BJP in the elections, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister, out of pragmatic consideration, promised justice to the Christians and made it known that the Government was committed to protect the religious rights of the minority communities in a recent statement after the poll. He also spoke highly of 'communal harmony' in his bid to assuage their feelings.

Another factor is the terrible shape in which

that party finds itself after a mere 8 months in power at the Centre. It is steeped in corruption and crime and riven by rivalry, factionalism and infighting. Just to mention the constant tussle between the more moderate Vajpayee and the more hardline Hindu communal Advani faction that is rocking the boat of governance or the unseemly infighting between the two former BJP Delhi chief ministers, Madan Lal Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma. Little wonder that Susama Swaraj, former Union Minister and latest BJP chief minister in Delhi, while quitting her Assembly seat, and herself defying her party, said : "The BJP has defeated the BJP" (*The Statesman*, Dec. 6, 98) The BJP party president Khushabhai Thakre, blaming the results on price rise reportedly, quickly changed his stand and attributed it to 'lack of coordination' between party and government and 'factionalism', claiming that price rise was not a major issue. (*ibid* 1.12.98) But the scramble for power and pelf are not confined to the leaders only, discontent in this 'disciplined' party has reportedly spread to the cadres for being left out. Thus some BJP cadres reportedly expressed glee over their party's rout, saying that after having brought their leaders to power they had been neglected and not got anything, or at most a cup of tea. So in an attempt to salvage things the BJP is for example, planning a purge of cadres in Rajasthan, who directly or indirectly sabotaged poll (*Ibid*. 10.12.98) Vajpayee, on his part, from pragmatic parliamentary considerations, in order to contain some of the damage and bring about some stability, tried to gain the upper hand in the tussle with the more hardline communal Advani faction by inducting three new members into the Union Cabinet of his choosing, namely Pramod Mahajan, Jaswant Singh and Jagmohan, in a surprise move, without informing anybody beforehand.

Though there is no doubt about the fact that it is the growing resentment against the BJP which finds reflection in the polls, confounded by the party's internal problems, but if we conclude from all this that elections have been free and fair, we would fall victim to illusions. Free and fair elections is a phenomenon which has become non-existent. All parliamentary parties indulge in it in a variety of ways, part of which is public knowledge and part remains hidden, apart from the play of money, media and muscle. Besides, there is also the feature of administrative rigging that goes on silently behind the scene.

Be that as it may, many people think because the Congress (I) is more experienced its coming to power would result in a change for the better. But they must keep in mind that the policy of liberalisation that the BJP is implementing, and which has immensely increased their hardships, is precisely that policy of economic reform, of privatisation and liberalisation that was introduced by the Congress (I) under Narasimha Rao. Today every parliamentary party that comes to power and wants to stay in power in defense of this crisis ridden capitalist system and the interest of the bourgeois class, always being presented as 'national interest', has to implement that same policy of liberalisation. Just as we have found doing the Congress (I), followed by the UF and then the BJP. If the Congress (I) comes back at

the Centre it will also do the same. This party is also committed to follow the policy of liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation etc which is sure to bring more misery on people over and above the general burden of capitalist crisis. Whatever might have been the euphoria in the monopoly controlled media there is no way for the common people to get any benefit or relief. So whoever is in the government is bound to become unpopular and totally discredited. Hence in order to channelise people's discontent into the blind alley of parliamentary election politics, the ruling class wants to prop up and project an alternative parliamentary party before the people as an alternative, projecting it as the answer to their problems. Long time back our party cautioned about this design of the ruling class to introduce two-party parliamentary system. Its first attempt with the Janata Party in 1977, which was formed overnight from a motley crowd of parties and projected as alternative, failed, as it soon fell to pieces. And ever since, the ruling class has attempted to give shape to this design in one form or another, through coalitions and politics of consensus in order to attain a certain stability which the ruling capitalist class needs in its class interests. Today, with the landslide victory of Congress (I) and almost total disappearance of smaller and regional parties in these polls, except where a regional party combination has arisen as an alternative, this design to introduce two-party parliamentary system has successfully advanced. So we find today that the same persons and media that once decried Sonia Gandhi as a foreigner, a complete novice, cashing in on the Nehru Gandhi legacy, are now saluting her victory, discovering many virtues in her and building up her image in the public eye. Thus, the same Congress (I) party that was in complete disarray even a few months back, riven by factionalism, squabbles and infighting and steeped in crime and corruption, has not only tasted an overwhelming victory in the recent Assembly polls, but is being endowed with a halo. This proves to the hilt the correctness of our party's observation in the policy statement of ensuing mid-term poll by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, general secretary, before the last Lok Sabha poll when the Congress (I) was in such a poor shape, stating : "Although the Congress (I) was for long highly trusted by the bourgeoisie for serving its aggregate interest, today with its eroded strength and consequent inability to form a government of its own, it had to support the UF Government from outside. Even then the ruling class may not altogether reject this party, rather might provide support behind it just as one of the alternatives which, given convenient situation, may play its role in the formation of the government after the poll. Even before the poll, the Congress(I) is trying to regain its strength and rejuvenate the party by frantically projecting Sonia Gandhi only to utilise the legacy of the Nehru-Gandhi family as the last resort." (*P.Era*, Jan. 31, 98)

In this context let us briefly examine CPI(M)'s role. Just like on so many occasions in the past, so also at present the CPI(M) has helped to bail out the Congress (I) from its difficulties or crisis while creating illusion about this party in the process. It is known to all after the mid-term poll

(Contd. on page 8)

Students, workers in the street

INDONESIA MILITARY TRIES TO CRUSH PROTESTS

For the second time in six months, hundreds of thousands of students and workers have taken to the streets in cities across Indonesia, battling the military and riot police.

Last May, mass protests by students and workers forced the Indonesian ruling class and its imperialist backers to dump dictator Suharto, who had ruled the country with an iron fist for over 30 years. Now, broad sectors of Indonesia's 220 million people have their sights set on Suharto's heir and former ally, President B.J. Habibie.

The heart of the current struggle is the shape of the post-Suharto government in Indonesia. After Suharto was pushed aside, Habibie and his main military backer, Gen. Wiranto, set out to form a government based on the most glaringly corrupt and dictatorial aspects. They convoked a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) on Nov. 10 to set out a timetable for reform.

The MPR has a thousand members. Five hundred seventy-five of them are appointed by the President. Under the Suharto regime, the body met every five years to approve nominations for President and Vice-President.

While the MPR's special session promised reforms, few believed its promises were credible. Opposition leaders charged that the body had no representation from any of the popular forces that formed the social base of the anti-Suharto movement in May, and was filled instead with Suharto appointees.

The MPR session became a lightning rod for protests. Even before its opening meeting, students rallied across the country under the slogan "Reject the MPR special session."

Every day in Jakarta, thousands of students faced off against 50,000 soldiers and police and 125,000 paramilitary forces armed with bamboo spears.

The military issued stern warnings to at least 50 groups that planned to mobilize for the protests. "If there are still groups in the community who want to disrupt the session, they are not democratic," Wiranto warned on Nov. 5. "The ABRI (armed forces) will get tough with them".

On Nov. 12, the military acted on those threats. As a student demonstration wound through the streets of Jakarta toward parliament, the crowd swelled to 150,000 workers and other Jakarta residents.

When the mass march attempted to push through a police cordon around the parliament building, the military fired into the crowd with live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas. Tanks plowed into the crowd.

The military onslaught brought thousands more Jakarta residents into the streets. They battled the military with rocks and molotov cocktails. Troops killed at least six people and wounded hundreds in pitched battles.

The military shootings — at least three separate incidents — provoked an outpouring of popular hatred against the government. For two days, masses of people ransacked stores and wealthy homes.

Protests broke out in 16 cities on virtually every major island in the archipelago. Demonstrators demanded Wiranto's resignation.

Students in Medan, on the island of Sumatra, took over airports on Nov. 14 — one day after a similar action on the island of Sulawesi.

After a weekend of widespread looting and clashes with the armed forces, Habibie tightened his grip while he promised speedier elections. On Nov. 15 and 16, several opposition leaders were arrested on charges of "subversion".

Habibie publicly thanked Wiranto for the military's role in putting down the latest demonstrations. He said, "I have given him instructions to take firm action in line with existing laws."

ALL CLASSES IN MOTION

Beneath the surface of the mass protest against Habibie, a much broader struggle is shaping up over which class will lead the world's fourth most populous country out of 33 years of dictatorship — and out of the economic crisis that is ravaging Indonesia.

On the eve of the MPR special session, four main bourgeois opposition leaders — Megawati Sukarnoputri, Amien Rais, Abdurrahman Wahid and Sultan Hamengkubuwono — issued an eight point statement. They called for modest reforms including early elections, for removing the military from politics, and for investigation into Suharto's wealth.

Since the protests that ousted Suharto, these figures have postured as democratic forces while trying to restrain independent action by the workers and poor.

Rais, a leader of the second-biggest Muslim organization in Indonesia, has formed the National Mandate Party (PAN). He is widely believed to be vying for the presidency in 1999. He called on members of his party to stay away from the anti-MPR demonstrations.

"The dilemma of people like me is that supporting [the MPR] would only give legitimacy to Habibie," he said on Nov. 6. "If we join forces to foil the session, maybe the consequences will be even worse."

The Nov. 16 Australian Financial Review reported that a large group of former marines had joined Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). Some elements in the student movement view the marines, who are closer to the working class than the elite Strategic Reserve, sympathetically.

The leftist People's Democratic Party (PRD) blasted the moderate politicians. "The statement gives us nothing and is out of step with the people's demands," charged PRD Central Leadership Council Chair Faisal Reza. "Their statement legitimizes the MPR, which is made of Suharto appointees."

The main force propelling the drive against first Suharto and now Habibie are the students from state, private and religious universities. College students are relatively privileged in Indonesia. Many of those in the movement to oust Suharto were children of the military and economic elite.

Nevertheless, the student movement has become more radical. In May, most students groups voted not to appeal to workers. In the November protests, motions to appeal to the workers passed overwhelmingly.

Suharto's genocidal massacre of over 1 million communists and leftists in 1965 nearly annihilated working class parties. But groups like the PRD and the Workers Committee for Reformation Act (KOBAR) that orient toward the factories, neighborhoods and fields are growing and gaining experience in the current wave of mobilizations.

Peasant farmers in Lampung, South Sumatra have already formed a representative Peasants Council, according to a Nov. 11 Info-Pembebasan report. Similar committees have been formed in the village of Wonogiri, Central Java.

The economic crisis that began in Indonesia in 1977 continues to bite.

A Nov. 6 survey by the Indonesian government showed that one-third of electronics, machine and chemical concerns have been forced into temporary shutdown. Lay-offs are rampant. Prices of basic goods like rice have skyrocketed.

"We support the students from behind," one young worker told the Sydney Morning Herald on Nov. 16. "Habibie has failed to solve the economic crisis, many of us don't have jobs and our life is very difficult. Habibie is just a puppet of Suharto."

The political instability atop the economic crisis has caused great concern in the new Indonesian upper circles. "Reforms can turn into revolution," warned Gen. Wiranto on Nov. 6.

(Reprinted from *Workers' World*, November 28, 1998)

Movement against Price Hike at Surat

Surat Unit of SUCI, Gujarat, recently organised a cycle rally to protest against the galloping price hike. More than a hundred worker youth and student cyclists took part enthusiastically in the rally. The rally started from Udhna Darwaja at 10.30 a.m. Comrade Dwarikanath Rath, the Gujarat State in-charge of SUCI, flagged off the rally.

The well disciplined rally passed through thickly populated areas of Surat city. Many people with admiration observed the rallyist shouting slogans. The rally went on for 10 km and passed through the busiest areas of the city and then reached the collectorate office. A delegation comprising Comrades Rambharat Mourya,

Prahlad Nayak, Satyendra Singh, Tarun Dasgupta, Praful Sahu, Praveer Nayak submitted a memorandum to the collector, demanding steps for controlling price immediately, stringent action against blackmarketeers and hoarders and supply of necessary food grain and vegetable through fair price shops. At the end the rally was addressed by Comrade Dwarikanath Rath, who observed that this rally was an important beginning of a movement against price hike and urged the participants to escalate this movement to various areas of city as well as the state so that it would be possible to build up a state-wide broad-based mass movement against price hike.

Manila hosts two International Conferences

Manila, the capital of Philippines, hosted in the month of November, 1998, two international conferences which set in motion a process of launching and developing united mass action on global scale in two important areas — health and mining, and viewed such action as an integral part of overall struggle against imperialism-capitalism. The conferences are : 1. International Conference against privatisation of health care, 2. International Conference against Trans-national mining. The first was organised by an Organising Committee comprising four organisations, namely Health Alliance for Democracy (HEAD), Council for Health and Development (CHD), Alliance of Health Workers (AHW) and Community Medicine Development Foundation (COMMED) in collaboration with Network Opposed to Privatisation on 11-13 November, 1998. The second was organised by a united platform of pro-communist and anti-imperialist forces and mass organisations known as BAYAN (Patriotic People's Alliance) and was held on 14-16 November, 1998. In response to invitations extended to the All India Anti-Imperialist Forum, Comrade Achintya Sinha, a trade unionist and social activist, participated in both the conferences on behalf of the forum.

International Conference against Privatisation of Health Care :

“Therefore, the world's health problems are inextricably linked to fundamental economic, political and socio-cultural problems brought about by moribund capitalism. The struggle for the people's right to affordable and accessible health care should be tightly linked with the people's struggle against imperialism as well as with the struggle of workers and peasants for freedom and democracy” — asserts the Declaration adopted by the conference in its concluding session on 13th November after deliberating on the recommendations of 5 Workshops and summing up points that emerged through consensus. The Declaration which was signed by the representatives from 12 countries like Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Australia, Belgium, UK, etc. observed, ‘Privatisation of health care is aggravating the worldwide health crisis. Monopoly capital is taking over vital areas of public sector and social services to exploit people under the cover of state-sanctioned policies. At the same time, it is robbing millions of health workers of the income, pushing them into unemployment and forcing them to compromise their commitment to serve the people.’ The concluding para of the Declaration states as follows: “We forge our unity to continue defending people's right to health and life and to struggle against imperialist domination. We vow to launch anti-imperialist struggles in our countries and to support the struggle of all oppressed peoples of the world.”

A separate resolution on programme of actions inter alia, called for signature campaign in favour of Conference Declaration, strengthening organisations and organizing movements on the people's right to health and life.

The conference was held at Philippines Children's Medical Centre (PCMC) Auditorium situated at Quezon Boulevard in Quezon city of Metro Manila. It was opened on 11th morning with cultural presentation. Philippine's National Anthem followed by a parade of banners of participating organisations and countries which included the banner of All India Anti-Imperialist Forum. Welcome speech was delivered by Dr

Sonia Sarcia, Dy Director for Professional Services, Philippines Children's Medical Centre. Dr Ronaldo Lesaca, Chairperson of Health Alliance for Democracy, Dean Cecilia Laurence, R.N.M.S.N., Dr Joseph Carabeu, MD, Overall Coordinator of the Conference and Dr Eleanor Jara of CHD addressed the morning session on various aspects and issues.

The afternoon session was addressed, among others, by Comrade Achinta Sinha. He, inter alia, dwelt upon India's health care system, constitutional position on the question of right to health, the background of introduction of national health policy, its commitments and status of various indicators at the end of the 8th year Plan. Comrade Sinha also submitted a written paper captioned, ‘The Status of Health Care in India and Privatization’ which was circulated among the delegates.

The evening forum was made open to the delegates for questions on the speeches delivered by representatives from abroad.

On 12th November delegates from various countries read papers and workshops were held. On 13th, in the morning session, the Declaration and the resolution was adopted.

On 13th afternoon, the capital city witnessed a colourful procession of foreign delegates with their respective banners and hundreds of medical persons of Philippines marching towards the President's Palace. A demonstration-meeting was held in front of the President Estrada's Palace which Comrade Achinta Sinha addressed.

International Conference against Trans-national Mining :

Calls for a global protest day on 27th April, 1999.

This was held from 14-16 November, 1998. Hotel Palm Plaza in the city of Manila and was attended by various people's organisations, NGOs, Churches, Research Institutes attached to Mining, Environmental Groups and various groups opposed to Trans-national Corporations' entry in mining sector from 23 countries like USA, UK, Australia, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Japan, Taiwan, France, Germany,

Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, etc. The sessions on 14th were addressed by Rev. Zacharias C. Jimenez, a Bishop, Satur Ocampo, spokesperson, People's Campaign Against Imperialist Globalisation, Philippines, Doris Ronnen Berg, President, Native Council of Canada, Nathaniel Santiago, Secretary General, BAYAN, James Goonman, Ph.D., Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, and Roger Moody from Partisans, UK. The second day, i.e. 15th November was the day of workshops on various issues. The workshop on ‘Workers' situation and TNC Mining’ was attended by delegates from 7 countries including Comrade Achinta Sinha of All India Anti-Imperialist Forum. During his address to the workshop Comrade Sinha drew attention of the workshop to the title of the conference and suggested to include the adverse role of the domestic monopolies as well. The proposal was accepted unanimously.

In the evening workshop on ‘Asia-Pacific People's Resistance’, Comrade Sinha while speaking on how to develop resistance against TNC mining said : Privatisation does not include TNC mining alone, it also includes entry of domestic monopolies in the mining sector. We are to resist privatisation as a whole. The amendments were accepted and incorporated in the Declaration.

The Declaration, inter alia, called for observing global day of protest against entry of TNCs and monopoly capital on 27th April, 1999 ; 2. Holding an International Workers' Conference on Mining; 3. Lending Support to National and International campaign against neo-liberal economic policies like Liberalisation, Deregulation, Privatisation including governments and multilateral agencies promoting such policies.

Haryana DYO organises movement

DYO Haryana State Committee organised movement against steep price hike of all essential commodities, rising unemployment, commercialisation of health service, communalism, obscenity in TV and other issues. On 15 November last an impressive rally was organised at Bhiwani where youths from various districts came to participate. They raised slogans against privatisation of education, government's new economic policies, privatisation of state electricity board and demanded Indian Government's immediate withdrawal from the GATT. Comrade Arun Kumar Singh was present there as the main speaker. He spoke at length on the issues behind the present severe crisis in every sphere of life and called on the youth to launch protracted movement against it.

It was announced in the meeting that on 29 November a massive rally will be organised at Bhiwani at the call of the National Platform of the mass organisations. Others who spoke in the rally were Comrades Rajendra Singh, Rajkumar, Iswar Singh, Dharmavir, Bedpal Dangi, Ompal.

All India Bank Employees Convention in New Delhi

At the call of Bank Employees Unity Forum an all India Convention of Bank Employees was held on 6 Dec. 1998, at J.N.U City Centre New Delhi keeping in fore the demand of immediate industrywise settlement of 7th bipartite and scrapping of recommendation of Narasimham Committee which envisages amongst other the proposals of closure and merger of banks and branches, introduction of VRS (actually it would be Compulsory Retirement Scheme), introduction of highly sophisticated computer, bringing all branches under the orbit of computerisation, privatisation etc.

Main resolution was placed by Comrade J. Raymandal, Convenor of All India Committee. Apart from this the resolutions against shifting of

Foreign Exchange Deptt of SBI from Calcutta to Mumbai, on wages and parttime employees, development in UCO Bank, demanding implementation of 6 bipartite in rural banks were placed. Comrade Amar Roy (W.B.), Veteran leader of Bank Employees' movement, Comrade Vijaypal Singh (U.P.), Comrade Hariharan (Kerala), Comrade Purna Behra (Orissa), Comrade Vedpal Dangi (Haryana), Comrade Radhakrishna (Karnataka), Comrade Rajinder Singh (U.P.), Comrade Bharat Bhusan (Delhi) and Comrade Pratap Singh (Delhi) were amongst the speakers.

Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, President of UTUC-Lenin Sarani, All India Committee presided over the meeting. Comrade Achintya Sinha, Secretary, UTUC-LS, All India Committee

also addressed the house.

On 7 December, there was a massive demonstration by the delegates of Forum coming across from different states at Jantar Mantar. Later the delegates marched on to Parliament Street to meet the Finance Minister to hand over a written memorandum. On behalf of the delegates, a team comprising Comrade Amar Roy, Comrade J. Raymandal and Comrade Rajinder Singh went to the North Block and handed over the memorandum to the representative of the Finance Minister as he was not available because of the current session of Parliament. It was assured from their end that time, as requested, would be given for talks with the Finance Minister.

Movement in States

Andhra Pradesh

A public demonstration was organised by Andhra Pradesh State Organising Committee of the SUCI on 6th November, 1998 at Hyderabad to protest against price rise and Hospital Bill. The Hospital Bill stipulates that fees will be charged by the AP government hospitals on the people for different types of tests and operations which are free of cost. Participants in the rally raised slogans demanding the withdrawal of this anti-people Hospital Bill and effective measures to bring down the prices of essential commodities within the reach of the common masses.

Addressing the rally Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary of State Organising Committee, called upon the people to develop mighty democratic mass movement, the only path towards solution of all the maladies the people are suffering. He also appealed to carry this movement forward till the demands were achieved. Later a delegation led by Comrade K. Sridhar submitted a memorandum to the government addressed to the Chief Minister, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu.

Orissa

Puri

Puri District Committee of our party organised a demonstration rally on 20th October 1998 in protest against the severe drought, flood, price rise etc. The rally also demanded pollution free sea coast and setting up of fire brigade station at Sakshi Gopal of the District. The protest demonstration marched to the District Magistrate's Office where 400 people including 150 women were arrested for their allegedly violating the law.

Padia

On 27 November a mass demonstration against price rise, rampant corruption and black market was organised before Padia Block by the SUCI. More than a thousand tribal people, peasants, youth and women took part in it. Encircled by heavy armed forces the procession marched through the main Bazar and came to a halt before the Block office where a public meeting was held. District organiser Comrade Sadasiva Das addressed it and called upon the people to develop sustained mass movement against rampant corruption, black market, hoarding and unprecedented pricerise of essential commodities. A charter of demands was handed

over to the BDO demanding supply of essential commodities, check of price rise, to make available water for drinking and for irrigation, health care etc.

Kalimela

On 2nd November a massive demonstration was held in Kalimela Block in which about two thousand people, mostly tribal peasants, workers, youths and students took part. The procession went through the main streets and reached the Block office where a heavy contingent of armed forces obstructed the way. There a public meeting was held which was addressed by Comrades Sadasiva Das, District Organiser, Broja Majhi and Biswanath Madhi. Then BDO came to the meeting place and received the memorandum. The demands included checking pricerise, etc. waiving agricultural loans, distribution of seeds, fertilizer at cheap price, opening a college and setting up industry in the area, providing work to the agricultural workers, making health facilities available to all and providing drinking water etc.

Brutal Attack on SUCI Workers by PWG at Kalimela

On 1 November midnight, SUCI workers while sleeping in Tatiguda office after completing mobilisation work for 2nd November Kalimela Block Rally, a group of People's War Group persons with fire arms gheraod the office house with 50 of their supporters named the SANGHAM DAL. They broke open the office door, then chained 8 leading SUCI workers and took them to the nearby paddy fields. They severely assaulted the workers there with rods, lathis and chains, then left them unconscious. The villagers lifted them and took them to the village for treatment. Local organiser Comrade Bhupesh Karmakar worker Comrade Nada Madhi got grievous injury and were admitted in Kalimela PHC. Comrades Padia Sodi, Muka Padiamed and Bhima Madhi were also injured.

The assailants took away 30 Red flags, 2 banners and five hundred rupees in cash.

Protesting against this barbarous attack upon the workers a sit in demonstration was held before the Malkangiri Collectorate on 5.11.98, for 24hours. Two hundred SUCI workers took part in it. On the next day a delegation met the superintendent of police and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate arrest of the assailants. The S.P. assured the delegates to arrest the PWG persons within two days and send CRPF to the tense area. The delegation was led by

Comrades Sadasiva Das, Broja Majhi and Nanda Madkani.

Madhya Pradesh

Save Education Convention at Sagar

Under the auspices of the Sagar unit of All India Save Education Committee a largely attended education convention was held at the Motilal Nehru School at Sagar, Gujarat against privatisation, commercialization and communalization of education.

At the convention eminent educationist and Head of Department of Sanskrit of Sagar University Dr. Radhaballav Tripathi strongly criticised the education policy of the Central and State Governments and observed that such policy only aimed at depriving the poor and oppressed strata of the people of the blessings of education. He ridiculed commercialization of education, as pursued by the government, as 'shopping' education. Dr. Negi, Head of the Dept. of Philosophy stressed that cordial relationship between the teachers and the taught was seriously lacking in the present education system. Sri V.R.K. Pouranik, one of the renowned veteran teachers of the city, scathingly criticised the government's attempt to restrict education. Comrade Swapan Chatterjee, Secretary, AIDSOP opined that education based on religious values could not imbue man with higher values, ideals, morality in the present era. In this respect he cited the example of the great revolutionary Bhagat Singh who was an atheist. In the Convention, Dr. Ramabaton Sharma, All India Council member of All India Save Education Committee pointed out that half of the illiterates of the world lived in India and people would seriously think how dangerous it would be to make education business oriented and a subject matter of profit instead of considering it a welfare measure to the people.

Lastly, the veteran litterateur Shri Fuskele while vehemently flaying communalization of education observed that such type of education would make man other man's enemy and vitiate them with the poison of bigotry and inertia and this was what the BJP was conspiring, he cautioned.

Many other speakers, including Hemant Sharma, S.P. Nayak, P.B. Misra, P. Misra, S. Biswakarma, Khusbu Sharma, Arvind Jain, L. Mishra also addressed the convention.

Shri Sunil Sahoo conducted the whole proceedings.

Opening up of Insurance Sector

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During its stint the UF too with Chidambaram at the desk of finance went all out to convert the Bill into an Act and despite the initial resistance of some on the floor of Parliament, more for record's sake than for any real purpose, was all set for being passed had the demise of the government not come prematurely. So, the unfinished task of its two predecessors is now on the BJP led coalition incumbent. The present stand of the Congress to refer the Bill to the Select Committee is only a play to gain some political mileage.

Since day one of the introduction of New Industrial and Economic Policy we have warned that it was a grand design to hand down to the private capitalists the entire edifice of public sector — not just its sick units but even the soundest ones by continually undermining them attributing to them offences, if not available in reality by cooking them up. Insurance sector is such a sacrificial goat at the moment.

Launched in 1956 with government's initial investment of meagre Rs.5 crores, without any additional infusion thereafter during its 42 years of operation the LIC has built up a massive life fund of Rs.1,05,000 crores. The role of the insurance sector in providing fund for implementation of five year plans, claimed to be the blue-print of the country's overall growth, stands out in remarkable distinction. It is an index of the LIC's contribution to the country's development programme that it alone has provided Rs.56,000 crores for the 8th Five Year Plan. LIC and GIC, collectively are capable of providing Rs.1,00,000 crores for the 9th Plan. As a return on government's initial investment of mere Rs.5 crores, the LIC pays dividend (profit) many times more every year, the figure being Rs.199.87 crores for the year ending on 31.3.98. LIC's investment reached an all time high of Rs.68,067 crores on 31.3.97 with such spread as Rs.37,330 crores in Central Government securities, Rs.8906 crores in State Government securities, Rs.8214 crores in Electricity Boards, Rs.10,967 crores for Housing, Rs.2028 crores for drinking water, Rs.540 crores in state and road transport corporations, Rs.45 crores in different industries and Rs.37 crores in sugar cooperatives. It is, therefore, clear that the object with which the capitalist government of our country introduced LIC and GIC has been more than fulfilled satisfying the class objective in this sector. It is, of course, a different matter as to what the wretched and downtrodden multitude has to benefit from it. Besides, when the question of tax evasion comes it is a by-word in the corporate world that the LIC is the biggest tax payer among all the industries paying today above Rs.600 crores with GIC only being next to it. The list will be longer even if an average estimate of the multi-dimensional activities of this nationalised sector has to be made. Still the self-appointed saviours of the country prefer to wink at these inextinguishable realities and are too eager to open up the sector through IRA, to national and multinational private capital on the plea of mobilising resources to meet the cost of infrastructure and social development — the infrastructure itself demanding 700,000 crores in next five years. Mind you, the GIC and LIC together is poised for providing 100,000 crores of this amount. Still the sector is under fire the

obituary of which is being scripted with single minded determination, the first step being the hectic initiative in getting the IRA Bill through.

About the second part of the rationale, put forward in support of the move for IRA, that is, benefiting the customers by providing better and more products for their needs (both in life and non-life sectors) through competition - less said the better. Recall the notorious record of private insurance companies of this country before nationalisation and get a profile of the things to come. Bombay Life, the insurance company owned by Birlas, New India Company of Tatas and National Company of Singhanias, all Swadeshi companies are on record to have evaded claims to the tune respectively of 49.5%, 59.41%, and 74.7%. The profile with the international operators is no different. Prudential Insurance Company of the USA was subjected to a penalty of 500 million dollars for its dishonest deals. The 'First Executive' of "Fortune-500" group, went bankrupt owing to reckless - mostly speculative investment. Star operators of Insurance Sector namely, 'First Capital', 'Equitable Life', 'United Baldwin' 'Alliance life' etc. are blacklisted by the US Government for fraudulent activities. Similar track records of insurance operators in UK and elsewhere in the big West are enough to expose the emptiness of the eulogy being orchestrated by our politicians and media in unison in favour of privatisation. The reports of private finance companies which once had mushroom growth, evaporating ruining thousands of poor domestic investors, are the daily documentation of how the private sector in so-called competition can be available in service of our people. The LIC records a claims clearance of 97% barring a negligible 3% with technical and legal complications against the international experience of only 40% where the scene and sector is dominated by private insurers. It is, perhaps, the last word in absurdity that monopoly capital, both indigenous and international, whose only agenda is maximisation of profit, will be available for funding over infrastructure and social welfare as well as in service of our all too trusting public.

Of course, when we are opposed to the current over-zeal of the present government to introduce IRA, first to weaken and ultimately to liquidate this good-going nationalised sector we need nurse no illusion about the purpose of nationalisation of insurance sector for decades ago and the goods it has delivered till date. In those early years of independence, the prime concern before the so-called builders of nation was to mop up resources (capital) to build up infrastructure to provide the capitalist system a strong footing and formidable foundation. But then, our 'swadeshi' capitalists were neither so resourceful nor interested in burying capital in sectors where gestation period was long and return needed waiting. So, the people in power dedicated to providing the country's capitalist system a real muscle in briefest possible time found nationalisation of insurance — both life and general — handy and lucrative in mobilising resources from common people. So, when we argue against private encroachment we do not consider nationalised LIC or GIC to be anything like a sacred cow. In a country where more than 40% of population live below poverty line and another 20% just eke out an existence at poverty level, left to themselves

these hapless lot cannot even dream of insuring their lives. If 60% of our population are resigned to such a fate are not all talks on or of nationalisation of life insurance for the benefit of the people seem to be mere pretensions? In a society where the system itself does not provide opportunities for honourable living and optimum development of every individual Insurance - nationalised or otherwise - can have hardly any meaning unless the vast weaker multitude is brought under its fully subsidised coverage. It is beyond the comprehension of our nationalised LIC or GIC. Our understanding of insurance sector and service expected of it should suffer from no illusion on these fundamentals.

A word or two here is necessary to expose the hypocrisy of the much touted argument that opening up is necessary to mobilise capital - indigenous and foreign — to meet huge expenditure of infrastructure in immediate future. When the air is thick with these mouthful talks sounding quite weighty, may we ask a question straight : Is the real problem today dearth of capital? If it is so, why capital, whatever is created, becomes idle or bureaucratic and suffer from stagnation? None of the ruling parties in Parliament have ever attempted to go deep into the problem. That the crux of the problem lies in the crisis of the capitalist economic system suffering from severe stagnation has been hidden from the public life since long. The servitors of this system therefore always tried to make people believe that as if dearth of capital, and the not the crisis of the system, is the real problem. The need in the present system, is market, or to put it straight way, to add to the purchasing capacity of the people which again is dependent on creation or availability of job opportunities. But the capitalist system is condemned to be sterile in this respect. Those who serve the system are in full knowledge of it and so try to divert the attention of innocent people.

By introducing privatisation in insurance sector, the government as an initial step is giving the indigenous and foreign companies the right to open insurance companies in our country. Although it is not introducing disinvestment right now by selling shares of LIC and GIC, the government will certainly tread this path in future.

The question that naturally comes is, despite insurance business being highly profit making and the interest of the Indian monopoly capitalist class being well protected by it so long, why did the capitalist class and its caretaker government feel the necessity and compulsion of allowing entry of the national and foreign monopoly capital in insurance sector. Why are different monopolist groups so eager to enter this sector? Why are they so eager even to go for joint ventures with the foreign companies?

It is already said that in spite of the ostentatious slogans, it is in actuality a means to accumulate capital from the market, which, properly called, is nothing but capitalist business. Capitalism, all over the world, including in our country is suffering from intense market crisis, i.e. recession, which is appearing in the form of overproduction and surplus capital. Recession is continuing for quite a long time, and as a consequence capitalist world is deep in the crisis of surplus capital. This surplus capital in the name of globalisation,

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Nina Andreeva on Russian Situation

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where, numerically speaking, only 3% of the world population live but which possesses 35% of the total cheese of the world, where each citizen should get 17 times the cheese that a citizen of Europe gets and where there is an inexhaustible stock of animal protein food — people are dying of starvation in such a country ! Although unbelievable, this is happening and the present rulers are totally responsible for this.

The widespread, active mass protests that have developed at present in different regions of the country remain spontaneous in character as yet because of lack of programmatic unity, difference of opinion, isolated nature of the movements of the working people and the communists, and their development under local leaders under diverse demands. Zuganov's KPRF and Sinakoff's FNPR were behind the widespread resistance of 7th October that spread over 78 of the total of 89 regions of the country. The organisers who lead each of these resistance movements do so with the object of grinding their own axe. On the plea of defending the people's interest, Zuganov again and again talks about forming a government "enjoying the people's confidence" by dislodging the incompetent president Yeltsin. His real motive is to become the president himself. N. Smakov, on the other hand, stokes the fire of mass disaffection in a planned, organised manner. But the ruling clique is in no danger due to this because every moment, he pursues each activity with an understanding with the ruling clique, "taking the people along", as if in a drama. On the one hand, he styles himself as the "protector of the people" while on the other, he wants to adorn the post of leadership of the FNPR in the coming days, it being the hoax-resorting trade union blessed with unstinted help of the ruling clique, the strongest workers' organisation in Russia.

In August last, Yeltsin avoided a direct clash with the opposition in the Duma by removing Kiriienko from the premiership and by putting Chernomirdin, who enjoys the trust of the Duma, at the top of the Russia Federation government — which is virtually a mockery of the political demands of 7th October.

The first of mass protest that erupted on 7th October in all the regions of the country along with big cities like Moscow (population: 1 crore 20 lakhs, and St. Petersburg (population 48 lakhs), was not of the same intensity everywhere. Since the opportunity of procuring the means of livelihood is greater in these two capital cities than in the other cities, towns and the countryside, the revolutionary mentality is weak there and considerable allegiance to the ruling clique is always present. But here too, we must remember that strong enthusiasm that was observed at the meeting organised by the Russian Communist Workers' Party on the issue of the trial of Mayor Yakovlev for the "crime" of increasing the fund allocation under the head of people's welfare services. Besides, we have to remember also the stand taken by the Russian Communist Workers' Party at the law court centring round the incident of allowing the use of the vast Concert Hall at St. Petersburg free of charge for observing the 80th anniversary of the Great October Revolution.

The picketing by the mine workers at the Gorbati bridge in Moscow has shown that the

miners have totally lost faith in the ruling clique and especially in Yeltsin. It is to be remembered that the main demand of the mine workers was : "Yeltsin, vacate power !" This is particularly remarkable because, in the past, the support of the miners behind Yeltsin played a significant role in installing him as the president of the Russian Federation. This support helped Yeltsin not only in securing the presidential chair, but also in rising up in opposition to Gorbachev. The incident of some of the picketing miners leaving Moscow on 5th October, just on the eve of eruption of active mass resistance all over the country, prove that there was a understanding between the Independent Miners Union of Russia (NPG) and the ruling clique.

While Yeltsin as the Russian president is taking the country towards ruin, these leaders are declaring as if the picketing has achieved its goal. In this context, those miners engaged in picketing at the bridge who have disavowed allegiance to such trade union bosses who are cheats and continued to hold their ground in Moscow, and in reality half of them have done so — we Bolsheviks respect them and extend revolutionary greetings to them. We consider that it is from among them that the leadership of working class, imbued with sharp class consciousness, will merge in the coming days.

It is for this reason that it can be said: On the one hand, the strong resentment that had been accumulating in mass mind like hot steam inside a fiery boiler, has been let out and dissipated in an planned and organised manner through the mass resistance of 7th October — and this has helped the ruling clique to extend its lease of life in power; on the other hand, this movement is a rehearsal of the widespread mass uprising in future against the oppression and deceit of the plundering capitalist system.

Question : What is going to happen in the coming days ? Is it possible that fresh mass movement will burst out in November-December this year ?

Answer : Keeping in view the coming election for the Duma and the presidential election, all parties and forces are now engaged in the game of dissolving and forming a new combination on a large scale. New combinations develop everyday, and new parties and groups emerge. All such so-called "competitor" parties and combinations are jostling, elbowing one another to score over the others and make a place for itself, even if a narrow one, in the already complicated political situation. Such leaders of various hues, all representatives of vested political interests, are loudly proclaiming how concerned they are about the well-being of the people! In reality, it is just the opposite. None of them is worried about the people's interest. Rather, for the purpose of winning one or two lucrative seats in the Duma and being engaged in the race for winning the presidential chair on behalf of particular aspirant persons, these leaders are successfully playing the role of the "saviour of the people" in the drama of "struggle" being enacted at the direction of the ruling clique. Since none of them has any concern for the people's interest, the problems are not decreasing but intensifying. Because, 90% of the industrial units are closed down and the agricultural economy has collapsed, there is no basis for hoping that the crisis will be mitigated

in the coming days. The meteorological forecast says that the coming winter will be extremely cold. In such a situation, because of the scanty arrangements made for providing the things needed to combat winter and the necessary foodstuff to the administrative regions of the country, protests will burst out in various regions under the pressure of harsh reality of life. If this assessment is correct, then that agitation will strengthen the present non-stop teachers' movement going on spread over 29 of the administrative regions. Working people from the other social strata too, are coming out in support of this movement. But along with this, it is also true that there is no revolutionary situation in the country. Through the tide of movement during the summer, in October we had merely reached a revolutionary situation. But the ruling cliques have been able to tackle and confront the possibility of furious mass protests that was within the society. Here, the SME helped the ruling clique effectively. An incident like rushing towards the Kremlin with the slogan "Long Live the revolutionary fighters" in the absence of the revolutionary situation, can provide the excuse to the ruling class for declaring Emergency, the evil effect of which will affect the whole communist movement.

Question : How long do you think the Yeltsin ruler will last ?

Answer : There are two sides of this matter. First, there are now quite a few persons in Russia ready to sit on the presidential chair. The ruling aristocracy is providing money to them, or else they themselves have made arrangements for it. Secondly, there are a few who can compel Yeltsin to leave his post. About the first, it can be said: Even till a few days back, Chernomirdin was one such probable President, who collected the support of "democratic" voters in his favour. But the situation that obtained till mid-summer, is no longer there. The Popular Democratic Party in office then, is no longer in power and Chernomirdin, too, has spoiled his image. The "red" Zuganov will never be installed as the President. So, he is trying to flatter everybody — right or left, to no purpose. It is for his own good that he should clearly stake his political position.

The "rightists" have various apprehensions about General Lebed. So, it is better for him now to wait for that opportune moment when a blitzkrieg will have to be launched upon the Kremlin. The Mayor of Moscow is yet to attain the required status to be considered as a leader at the national level, he will need more time for it.

About the second aspect, that is, on the question of removing Yeltsin from the post of President, it can be said that he enjoys the protective cover of the autocratic bourgeois Constitution. He will leave the Presidentship only if and when his body is to be carried out on others' shoulders as a result of a mistake by his doctors who have kept him alive by constant doping. Yeltsin knows what hatred the majority of the countrymen bear for him and he is always in grave apprehension because of the misdeeds perpetrated by him against the country and the people. Despite this, he along with the body of followers attached to him will desperately cling to the presidential chair till his last breath. Through his every appearance on the TV screen, he is clearly underlining this point. So, we shall have to

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Assembly Elections — A Review

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of 1996 which ultimately saddled the UF government at the centre with the support of the Congress(I) from outside, how the CPI(M) gave the Congress(I) a 'secular' label knowing full well the communal past of the party, although it is true that the BJP is a rabid, diehard, and arrogant communal party, a party of the *Sangh Parivar* cashing in on *Hindutva* as a ladder to power but hoodwinking the common people by presenting it as a great ideology. For the last six months the CPI(M) has extended support to the Congress (I), saying that : If the BJP falls, and if the Congress (I) comes to power we shall extend support to it from outside to contain the communal BJP, thus sending out the signal that the Congress (I) was a safe bet. And by labeling the Congress (I) secular, whose communal past records directly helped the communal BJP to get a firm foothold and emerge as a national parliamentary force, the CPI(M) is creating illusions in the people. Yet only the other day, in January 1997, the late E M S Namboodiripad, former general secretary of the CPI(M) and polit bureau member, had proclaimed that the Congress (I) party was doomed, that there was no chance of it 'to ride back to power' because 'its leadership has been politically exposed as a gang of corrupt politicians' and its High command was faction-ridden (*People's Democracy*, Jan. 5, 1997, organ of the CPI(M)) while analysing the politics

Russia To-day

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continue with this president till the year 2000. The accusation that has been sounded against him for long that he is not fit for work — his friend Zhirinovsky is warding it off well by saying that the government, the assisting officials, the clerks and the Duma all work for him and so there is nothing left for the President to do on his own. So, according to Zhirinovsky, the President who will live outside the reach of anyone — neither will he do anything, nor will he have to answer for anything.

Is this not a reason why the leaders of the big parties of Russia with variegated hues, who are very eager to capture the presidential chair, can find out no alternative to letting the rule by a President suffering from mental aberration to go on? The "democrats" know that the people have found out their true character. But the communist leaders in the opposition who ought to have viewed the problem with a different outlook and taken up the responsibility of a different kind — what are they doing? If they truly are communist leaders, they should surely know the law that governs the development of economy and social system, the law of governing the progress of human civilization that has been held aloft by Marxism-Leninism and has been lucidly explained in classical Marxist literature. Do they know about that? Or have they been placed in the position of communist leaders of the opposition just by the turn of events?

My specific answer to your question is: Yeltsin's rule will last only so long as he himself will be in the seat of power.

of the 21st century. What kind of deep analysis the CPI(M) makes that in such a short period leads them to make a complete volte face, they know best. What is clear is the CPI(M)'s role of helping Bofors tainted Congress (I) which had been in complete disarray and rejected by the people because of their long misrule and many misdeeds, to attain its present position. The CPI(M) while posing as the party of the people is serving the ruling bourgeois class as trusted agent by trying to make the people submit to the design of two-party parliamentary system by its politics. And it is in line with this deceptive role that it protests against liberalization while implementing it in the States under its rule, like West Bengal.

Can the people afford to overlook this conspiracy and design of the ruling bourgeoisie? No parliamentary alternative can alleviate their burning problems of life, let alone solve them. Rather, more is in store for them as the insurance sector is going to be opened up and Amendment to the Indian Patent Act will take place in the coming months, which is bound to bring on an even more terrible attack on people. Hence the only way out for people is to take to the path of protracted movement for redressal of their sufferings in order to obtain immediate relief. It is alone out of this struggle that can grow the people's real alternative but not the parliamentary alternative sustained by the bourgeoisie. And it is this alternative born out of people's protracted movement while uniting against inhuman exploitation, against attempts to mislead them, divide them, demoralise and degrade them; while building up the instruments of struggle and ultimately giving rise to the political power of the people, this alternative alone can lead them on the path towards solution of their sufferings, towards real emancipation through the transformation of the system.

Homage to Comrade Pritish Chanda by UTUC-LS

Comrade Ashutosh Banerjee elected new President

The All India Working Committee of UTUC-LS in its emergency meeting held in Calcutta on 27.11.98 paid homage to the memory of its recently departed President Comrade Pritish Chanda, an outstanding leader of the Indian Trade Union movement, and unanimously elected the seniormost Vice-President Comrade Ashutosh Banerji to the post of President of the organisation.

The Working Committee expressed its grave concern over fast deteriorating industrial situation of the country, unabated loss of employment, continued erosion of employment opportunities, ongoing move of the government to dismantle public sector and disorganise the organised sector, introduction of deliberate scheme to close down coal mines, opening up of insurance sector to domestic and foreign monopolies, unprecedented price hike of essential commodities. The Committee also flayed BJP-led government for pursuing and accelerating policies of anti-people economic reforms, liberalisation and globalisation initiated by erstwhile Congress Government and carried ahead by its predecessor United Front

Insurance

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according to its character of constant accumulation, is trying to enter whatever countries with the hope to reap super profit. Finance capital today is not at all eager to go for industrial investment; it is only eager to reap quick profit by investing capital in capital market. This is the very reason for which opening up of bank-insurance business to private capital has been one of the main conditions of the free market regulation. The interest of the monopoly groups of India has been the same.

So the Indian capitalists, who now have least interest in building up new industries, are striving for a long time to enter into insurance business. So, as the BJP-led central government took steps towards opening up insurance sector for private owners, the Indian corporate houses are overjoyed. Here have been wedded the interests of the Indian monopolists with the GATT regulation. Although it should be kept in mind that Indian monopolists would have been more happy had they not to make room for the foreign companies following GATT conditions. For this, the government is keeping provisions for joint ventures.

Whatever slogans like 'arranging capital for infrastructure', 'better service for policy holders' etc. are raised in connection with privatisation of insurance, — all are in reality bunkum. The sole motive is to help the monopolists and multinationals, steeped in crisis of surplus capital, to earn superprofit stage — which is possible only by exploiting the policy holders, and the common millions in particular. In course of time these private companies will try and will be successful to destroy LIC and GIC to grip the entire insurance sector, with dire consequences for lakhs of people in insurance service in particular and people in general.

For all these reasons, it is people who are to stand up against privatisation of insurance sector.

Government at the Centre. The meeting felt that right to form trade unions were increasingly obstructed and the UTUC-LS affiliated trade unions were being denied registration by various state governments even in gross violation of existing laws.

During their address to the house while Comrade Tapas Dutta, General Secretary, stressed on building up trade union movement on the edifice of higher ethics, culture and social obligation, Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, newly elected President, called upon it to improve the style of functioning at all levels of organisation and make it capable to meet the challenge of the situation.

CORRIGENDUM

In the lead article "Repulse This Attack" published in our issue vol.32, No.6, November 15, 1998, it was mistakenly stated "INBEC led State Bank employees.." which should be actually "NCBE led State Bank employees.." The error is regretted. — Editor, P.Era

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE