

# Orissa reels even now under cyclone ravage

## SUCI stands by the distressed

The ravage of that worst ever cyclone disaster in living memory, uprooting hundreds of thousands of people, raising to ground forests, hutments, bridges, transmission towers with tidal wave sweeping whole 12 coastal districts of Orissa — the aftershock of that wave nightmarish supercyclone of 29th October, '99 — is still not overcome. Even now our comrades in Orissa are continuing relief work among the victims with the money and material being collected by party comrades in 16 States of India, even a month and half after it. Comrades in Orissa rushed into relief work at once after the calamity struck — even before the Central Committee's appeal reached them. Responding to the appeal, comrades all over India immediately swung into action, collecting from the people relief material and monetary contribution — which was abundantly and wholeheartedly donated everywhere. This was done in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Tripura, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal. Already our comrades have collected a total of foodstuff, garments, medicines etc. worth about Rs 1 crore 30 lakh 41 thousand including

*(Contd. on page 5)*

### Observe 20th December as "Save Orissa Day"

#### Call of Central Committee, SUCI

*Calling upon the people to observe 20th December as 'Save Orissa Day' all over India. SUCI General Secretary, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee said in a statement on 10.12.99:*

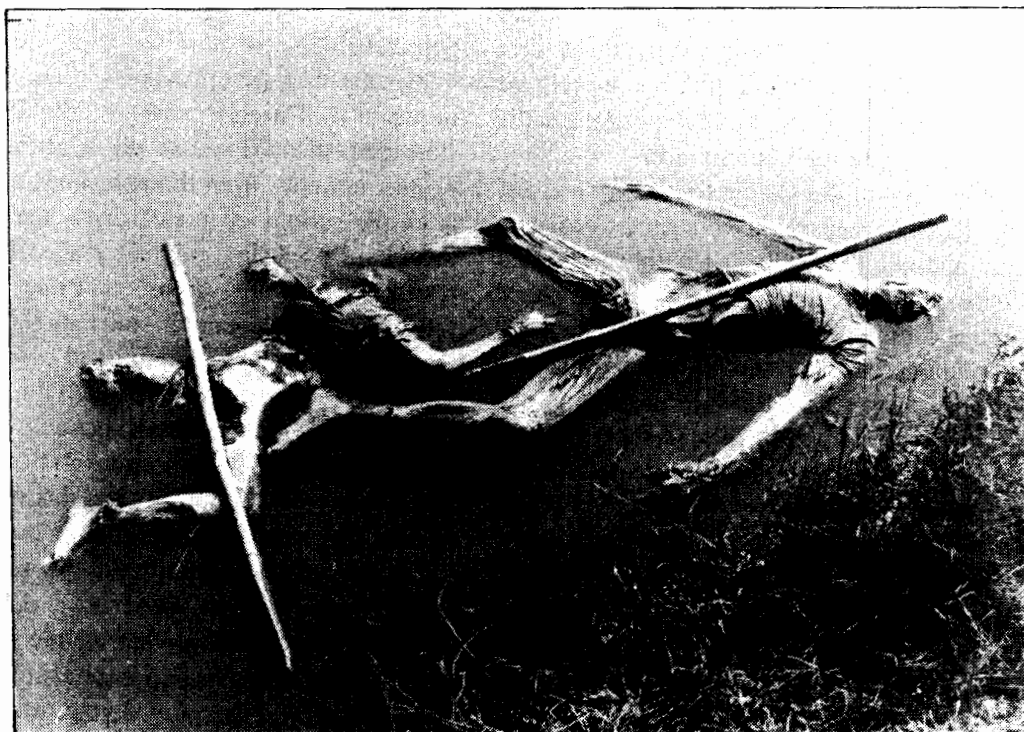
"We call upon all sections of people, irrespective of faith and affiliations, to make 'Save Orissa Day' on 20th December, called by our party, a resounding success to condemn the criminal neglect in providing adequate relief and rehabilitation to millions of cyclone hit Orissa by the Central and Orissa governments and to compel the utterly irresponsible Central government immediately to declare this disaster a 'national calamity' and face it on a war-footing by all means.

We also appeal to all political parties and organisations to rise above every other consideration for standing beside the affected people of Orissa at this grave hour.

We have the firm faith that acting with the best of human values, people from all walks of life will make this occasion a grand success, compelling the patently anti-people, unconcerned Central BJP government to take heed and act to save Orissa.



MOTHER ORISSA CRYING



Such gruesome sight of decomposed bodies till floating shocks the viewers in many places of Orissa even now

# Proletarian Era

Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA

Founder Editor-in-Chief :

COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

Volume 33 No. 9

December 15, 1999

Rs. 2.00

Air surcharge : 5 P.

# Perilous War in Chechnya

Once again Russia, under President Boris Yeltsin, is waging war against Chechnya, a small, break-away republic in the north Caucasus. That is how Yeltsin, the servitor of Russian capitalism, is handling the threat of terrorist attacks and insurgency intrusions by Chechen rebels, in a macabre demonstration of his despotic, anti-people rule that is inflicting inhuman sufferings and hardship on the common people of Chechnya while providing even greater scope for intervention of the imperialist powers, especially the USA, to carry out their heinous neo-colonial designs.

The immediate provocation for the brutal war against Chechnya is the rise of insurgency intrusions and a series of terrorist bombing attacks on apartment blocks and markets in Moscow and other cities of Russia that killed almost 300 people and maimed and injured many more. The Yeltsin regime has blamed these on the Chechen warlords or rebels, who started insurgency operations in neighbouring Dagestan, a republic of the Russian Federation, around the same time. Early in August the Chechen rebel commander or warlord, Shamil Basayev and others crossed over into Dagestan with a 2000-strong force, proclaiming an 'independent Islamic Dagestan'. According to press reports, in several settlements of Dagestan including Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi villages, rebels had for some time enforced the Shariat law, defying the Dagestani capital, Makhachhala which sought Russian help.

In an operation that lasted a few weeks with Russian troops deployed and bombardments of alleged rebel hideouts, the rebels were flushed out from Dagestan. According to Russian officials among these were found foreign nationals from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, among others (*The Hindu*, 19.9.99). Press reports abound about international aid in terms of money and arms for the rebels coming not only from Islamic organisations and individuals, including Osama bin Laden, in neighbouring countries but from groups even within the USA.

While the Yeltsin regime at first threatened with air attacks against rebel hideouts in Chechnya, later, with Russian troops massed at Chechnya's borders, it put an ultimatum to the Chechen President, Aslan Maskhadov, to hand over all the rebel warlords and militants or face war. Maskhadov on his part, after his appeals for talks were arrogantly turned down enlisted the rebel warlords into the Chechen army.

In the name of liquidating terrorism once and for all, Russian aircrafts have been bombarding villages and cities throughout Chechnya on what the Yeltsin regime claims are rebel bases, illegal arms depots, drug centres and oil storage facilities since mid-September. And after sealing the borders of Chechnya the Russian troops launched a ground war in the beginning of October. Only a corridor was left open for people to flee to neighbouring Ingushetia. So far more than 2 lakh of the 13 lakh population have fled the country, not to speak of those displaced within as fighting becomes more and more fierce. The Russian troops have advanced and practically encircled the Chechen capital, Grozny, partly negotiating their advance and partly fighting their way through. Yeltsin has announced that the troops will be deployed permanently in Chechnya. All approaches to the mountains where many

militants are supposed to have withdrawn are said to be or will be guarded by the troops. Civilians have been ordered to leave Grozny, which is soon going to face the brunt of air and ground attacks to finish off the rebels there.

According to Chechen officials in the first month of the war alone the Russian bombing killed more than 2000 civilians and injured another 8000 while some 20 per cent of all housing and 80 per cent of Chechen industry, primarily oil storage facilities and refineries have been destroyed. Admitting the 'tragic error' of bombarding the central market in Grozny and a Red Cross convoy, Russia on its part said that the Islamic militants now indulge in extermination of the local population to create a humanitarian catastrophe so as to mobilise aid and assistance from the European Union and humanitarian organisations which could be used to earn hard cash. (*The Statesman*, October, 15, 1999). Whatever the truth or otherwise of these accusations, the plight and the sufferings of the people is doubtlessly immense, and much of it will never be known. The only redeeming feature are examples, cited in the press on and off, of Russian soldiers working to restore cut gas and electricity lines, distributing food and humanitarian aid to the people, which contrasts with the behaviour of mercenary armies generally in occupied territory. It seems that the legacy of socialist mentality even today has not been completely wiped out.

But all this does not really explain why this second war against Chechnya and what's behind it. For one, the Yeltsin regime has started this war precisely at a time when allegations surfaced in the Russian and western media in a corruption scandal about Yeltsin and other high officials having received huge bribes from a Swiss businessman to secure some lucrative contracts to refurbish Kremlin buildings. At the same time IMF circulated reports that it was starting an investigation to determine whether Russia misused IMF loans. And to tighten the pressure on the Yeltsin regime, talks about withholding further loans are made from time to time. Thus, deputy managing director of the IMF, Stanley Fischer, said "Russia lied about its financial condition in 1996 and that if the IMF had known the truth, it would have suspended the loan". (*The Statesman*, September 8) So it seems quite obvious that Yeltsin grabbed the opportunity while fighting the intrusion by Chechen warlords into Dagestan to start a full-fledged war to divert attention of the people, not only from the impending scandal but from the serious economic crisis that is hitting them hard. Yeltsin's rule has landed Russia in a terrible economic crisis. Price rise and retrenchment, gigantic unemployment, etc. coupled with rise of inflation and corruption and crime have created a veritable hell for the people. They are plagued by extreme poverty, hunger and humiliation. And with elections to the Duma, the lower house of Parliament, due this month even, Yeltsin has used this opportunity to whip up a wave of national chauvinism to rally people behind him in support, blind to the cause of their miseries. He is doing what all the servitors of most rotten, crisis ridden capitalist system are doing: to prevent people's discontent from being drawn into movement they foster ethnic and national animosity and strife, national chauvinism and/or fundamentalism.

On the other hand, Yeltsin is using the opportunity to square off accounts with the tiny breakaway republic of Chechnya that inflicted a humiliating defeat on him in the 1994-96 war when he had tried to prevent its breaking away by brute force. That he is trying to reverse his earlier defeat is evident from the fact that Russia agreed to reconvene the earlier Parliament of Chechnya living in exile and which had been disbanded by the separatist regime. "This is the sole legitimate body of the Chechen Republic elected under the Russian laws", said Prime Minister Vladimir Putin recently. He also questioned the legitimacy of the Chechen President, Aslan Maskhadov and his government since they came into power "not in accordance with the Russian legislation". This is a complete turnabout because in 1997 Yeltsin had himself clinched a peace deal with the leader of breakaway Chechnya.

It may be recalled that Chechnya had declared independence from the Russian Federation as long back as in December 1991. That was shortly after General Dudayev in Chechnya supported the Yeltsin coup. Yeltsin in order to grab power from Gorbachev had fomented all-out secessionism. Hence it was only natural that the rise of separatist feelings encouraged different ethnic people to strive for independence. General Dudayev got elected as President on the basis of his promise of independence from Russia.

Yeltsin tried to defuse the situation through a series of manoeuvres that included the negotiations of a new Federal Treaty in 1992, and when that failed, separating Ingushetia from Chechnya, giving it the status of a republic to weaken Chechnya. Finally, when everything failed he sent troops to the tiny republic in 1994 to prevent its breakaway by brute force, unleashing an air and ground war that lasted for about two years and killed tens of thousands. Yeltsin did so in cynical disregard of the widespread criticism with which his aggressive action met, among others by army officers and the Duma which voted overwhelmingly against the war. But what else can be expected from a President who did not hesitate to train the guns even on the Russian Parliament, on elected parliamentarians and about 200 people in 1991? However, this war only fuelled Chechen resistance and in the end Yeltsin was forced to beat a retreat and come to the negotiation table, as mentioned above. Still then, despite all this the imperialists, especially the US imperialist praised Yeltsin as a democrat. But this is not to say that President General Dudayev of Chechnya was a democrat either and fought for protecting the democratic rights of the people. Rather he was out to protect the interest of Chechen capitalists, who like all capitalists everywhere needed a leader who appears as a hero in the eyes of the people while concentrating power in his hands to save them and help them exploit the people. Moreover, today when capitalism breeds corruption and crime — and it is an open secret that the mafias play a very prominent role in the former Soviet Union — it is not surprising that today Chechen Basayev and his rebel associates in Chechnya are also closely associated with crime. A report in *The Times*, London, October 14, 1999 pointing to Chechnya, says: crime funds its war efforts. It claims that figures from the Russian Interior Ministry and

(Contd. on page 3)

# Imperialism causes disintegration and war

(Contd. from page 2)

elsewhere show that small scale refineries have siphoned off an estimated \$20 million worth of crude oil last year alone from pipelines crossing Chechnya, while Chechen gangs have printed fake currency with a face value of up to \$10 billion, most of which is controlled not by President Maskhadov but by independent guerrilla leaders. Chechen fighters' wages and cost of weapons are being paid for at least partly through kidnappings, with ransom collected amounting to \$10 million, probably more, for hundreds of western and Russian hostages.

At the root of the war lies the conflict over economic and political control. Chechnya is economically important for its oil and mineral resources. But it is even more important because the pipeline that carries the crude oil – the life-line of modern economy – from the Caspian Sea, i.e. from Baku in Azerbaijan goes via Chechnya to Russia. For a long time Russia has been reportedly trying to build an alternative pipeline through Dagestan to the east. But ever since Basayev invaded Dagestan no single petroleum company still intends to invest in it. (*The New Worker*, November 12, '99)

Both the present and the earlier war in Chechnya is the outcome of conflict between exploiters, between Russian and Chechen capital, mafiose at that. This conflict or war over economic and political control has nothing to do with the interests of the people. Indeed it is a war that is extremely perilous for all the people, of all ethnicity and nationalities.

For the Caucasus region with its rich oil and natural gas resources has always been the object of intense greed of and rivalry among the imperialists to establish their control over the oil and transport network. And they have not been sitting idle all this time. The eastward expansion of NATO and the breakup of Yugoslavia and genocidal NATO war are but part of a grand strategy of the imperialists, with Germany and especially the USA in the lead, carrying out their heinous neo-colonial designs, both in collusion and contention. In view of the US imperialists' past records in engineering the most murderous local conflicts, both covertly through CIA and otherwise, and in manoeuvring local problems and conflicts into infernal and inextricable knots, and setting people at each others' throats, the Chechen war assumes a special significance. Today even China feels threatened by imperialist aggression that is relentlessly pursuing an eastward advance. No doubt that made it gave fullest support to Yeltsin in his war against insurgency.

Historically, too, the Chechen region in particular, has been repeatedly subjected to imperialist attacks in the both the world wars and civil war that followed November Revolution. In 1942 the German Nazis occupied part of Chechnya. As a section of Chechen people collaborated, Stalin, in order to prevent the second front in his back, relocated them to other parts of the Soviet Union. People returned in the 50s. In the 1994-96 war against Chechnya the imperialists supported Yeltsin as democrat and upholder of free market, despite the fact that tens of thousands got killed. Today the same imperialists are crying hoarse over violation of human rights against Chechen people and humanitarian catastrophe and threatening with all

sorts of sanctions. While the Chechen President Maskhadov had called for the intervention of the NATO to end the fighting, the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, already has had to concede and allow international observers. What role they can play has been glaringly illustrated in the case of Iraq and Yugoslavia.

In regard to the war in Chechnya some remarks by US Major Raymond C Finch are revealing. He said: "The future war is most likely not the son of Desert Storm (the war against Iraq), rather it will be the step child of Somalia and Chechnya... the methods Basayev has employed are cruel and vicious, and have often been in violation of recognised laws of warfare. At the same time, however, his actions when cast in the light of Chechen independence are courageous and praiseworthy." (*Ibid*) The fact that Chechen rebels are reportedly receiving aid not only from Saudi Arabia and some Islamic organisations as mentioned before, but from organisations in the USA even is significant. They are equipped with Stinger shoulder launched anti-aircraft missiles that had been secretly supplied to the Taliban by the CIA against pro-Russian forces in Afghanistan. Russian counter-intelligence also discovered several bases on Turkish territory where terrorists are being trained. The USA's close proximity to Turkey is well-known. Moreover, Clinton has recently announced a deal in Istanbul for building a new pipeline from Azerbaijan through Georgia and Turkey, with the latter two countries already under US control. Surely it is no accident that Azerbaijan has called for installing a US or NATO base on its territory, too.

While Yeltsin's brutal repression of Chechen demands for independence earlier has doubtlessly further fuelled ethnic and nationalist separatism and created the fertile ground or the conditions for the present insurgency operations, the role of the imperialists is most suspect, to say the least. Just consider the fact that in one of the southern

republics (Tajikistan) Islamic insurgents who had earlier been fought off by Kolkhoz farmers, reportedly returned later in thousands, all dressed in neat American uniforms. Besides, the timing of the IMF report about misappropriation of funds and threats of suspending further loans, another word for economic blackmail, all point to a definite scheme, all the more so as the mafiose goings on in Russia are an open secret.

The situation is indeed grim. Lenin's teachings that imperialism breeds war is day by day becoming more glaringly illustrated. Capitalism-imperialism needs war to survive, that holds true for the less developed countries, for Russia and most developed imperialist powers alike. In this they make use, among others, of the ideological tool of fundamentalism on the one hand and extreme nationalism and chauvinism to misguide the people.

It is time for the people to ponder whether they want to cling to the outworn ideology of narrow nationalism and chauvinism, thriving on the decadent, putrid culture born of crisis-ridden capitalism, and become mere pawns in the sordid conflicts between conflicting capitalist-imperialist interests that are pushing them into ever deeper abyss of war, destitution, and humiliation. What a far cry from the ideology of proletarian internationalism which Lenin and Stalin upheld, that proved to be the cementing force uniting all peoples with sense of solidarity and brotherhood, irrespective of caste, religion, nationality, language etc. on the solid foundation of recognition of equality to all in the great struggle to fulfil the necessity of entire society and bring about its glorious advancement. Still then Stalin is decried by the bourgeois press as a monster, and Yeltsin upheld as a democrat, that is, as long as it serves the interests of the imperialist powers, especially the USA. The moment it becomes expedient Yeltsin will be cast into the mould of the villain, like Saddam Hussain and Milosevic.

## Fresh Bout of Political Killings in Kannur, Kerala

A spate of political violence and killings have gripped the state of Kerala which got accentuated in the recent period with the ruling CPI(M) and BJP taking to dastardly premeditated organised attacks among themselves, killing innocent people also in most grotesque and horrid ways. CPI(M) with state police in its control and BJP with central power, have almost made the law and order establishment paralysed, with goons ruling the roost. The public are scared and normal life is threatened and sense of insecurity prevails in the society particularly in Kannur district.

Well-meaning and democratic minded people are greatly distressed and attempts to bring peace among the aggressive political forces have been initiated. Justice V R Krishna Iyer, the eminent jurist and fighter for Human Rights put in stupendous efforts in bringing representatives of warring political parties to discussion to restore a minimum sense of democracy and sanity. Just after one such peace talk when through his mediation an agreement was arrived at on 30th November '99, again a spate of murders started taking a toll of 7 lives up till 3rd December. In

fact, CPI(M) started the new series of killings the very next moment after signing the peace agreement in a most gruesome manner, shocking the entire state. A teacher, state vice-president of Yuva Morcha, the youth wing of BJP was attacked while he was taking classes in his school of 6th standard students and brutally assaulted with swords and knives. His head was broken and neck slashed and he succumbed to injuries in the class room in front of his students.

Justice Iyer was greatly shocked and was all in tears while expressing the sad conscience of society in a press interview. In spite of the distressing situation, he pledged and declared to continue the efforts for bringing peace. At the same time BJP lashed out at Krishna Iyer's peace efforts, branding it an 'eye-wash' and even calling Justice Iyer an opportunist.

Kerala State Committee of our party SUCI issued a statement appealing to the people to build up democratic mass movement to fight this dangerous trend of politics of murder which by destroying human values and reasoning create condition for the growth of reaction and ultimately fascism.

# Danger of BJP

The programme of the Hindu Jagaran Manch to build a temple in a church in Gujarat reminds us of the demolition of Babari Masjid to build Ram Mandir there. The ascent of BJP from a position of only 2 MPs to power at the Centre was mainly due to the whipping up of rabid Hindu jingoism, demolition of this historical Masjid, besides the Rathayatra and other hate campaigns by the BJP against the minorities, particularly the Muslims. The result : many bloody massacres, whose horrid memory as yet shocks all saner people. But the barbarity has not stopped yet.

The BJP has extended its hate campaign against the Christian community. Criminals backed by it have started destroying churches, beating up Christian people, burning the Bible. The criminals even do not spare the nuns. Nuns were raped, tortured, and in the most barbaric crime, Australian missionary Graham Steins and his two minor sons were killed.

What are all these minority baiting and Christian bashing leading our society to? Rabid fanatic communalism, religious frenzy of the majority community is being whipped up which, unless immediately and effectively countered, may push the country into a fratricidal blood bath. As a reaction to this, Muslim and Christian fundamentalism too will get a fillip.

Only some months back, the BJP ministry in UP attempted to introduce compulsory "Saraswati Vandana", chanting of "Vande Mataram", and such syllabus and practice in schools with clear communal tone which incite feeling of aversion among other community people.

Minister for culture, youth affairs and sports Ananth Kumar has thrown a month-long Vande Mataram programme, to be launched on December 11 by Home Minister L K Advani at Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, to coincide with poet Subramanian Bharati's birth anniversary, who himself was a great nationalist above communal feelings. To a question if the Vande Mataram programme would create controversy, Ananth Kumar said, "To say Vande Mataram is controversial, is anti-national."

What do all these and such other moves portend? This is a trend being steadily strengthened over the years by the BJP, Sangh Parivar and all their outfits. Majority and minority community people are thus being incited against one another more and more. But should people get involved in this imbroglio? Are the basic needs like education, food, shelter, drinking water, health care, etc. fulfilled? Don't people need jobs, decent wage, better living and working condition? Have torture on women, forced labour on children, barbarity on workers, savagery on peasants ceased?

The answer is too obvious to mention. Yet why does BJP incite fundamentalism? Surely to divert the people's attention from the reality that capitalism is the source of all crises, but more so to intoxicate people with the wine of Hindutva, and as a reaction, with the wine of other religious fanaticism, — precisely fundamentalism — so that the lease of life of moribund capitalism can be prolonged by creating division among the people.

This is what Hitler did in Germany, intoxicating the greater mass of population with

the wine of racial jingoism the doctrine of superiority of Aryan blood destined to rule the world. People were made to forget class division, class exploitation, and unity of working class against capitalist class. The result was that millions of Jews were annihilated, besides countless who died in war in different countries.

We hear now a similar voice in our country from BJP. In the name of Hindu superiority the BJP is inciting fanaticism, so that working people get divided on communal lines, mutual faith get totally destroyed, hatred deeply entrenched.

Saner section of the people clearly dislikes this communal tone. It injures a democratic conscience. To make it up the media assiduously campaigns to show off the BJP, the ruling party now, as a responsible parliamentary party, that has enhanced Indian prestige in the world with Pokhran II, saved the country from Pakistani aggression etc. But it is a false argument.

Did Hitler's Social Democratic party's ascension to power negate its fascist character?

## UTUC-LS's Letter to President against Insurance Authority Regulatory Bill

[ UTUC-Lenin Sarani sent the following letter on 27.11.99 to the President of India against the BJP move on Insurance Authority Regulatory Bill ]

Shri K. R. Narayanan  
Hon'ble President  
Union Government of India  
Rastrapati Bhawan  
New Delhi 110 001.

Dear Sir,

We strongly condemn the Government move to hastily pass the Insurance Authority Regulatory Bill in the present winter session of Parliament defying the opposition of the working, democratic minded, right thinking people of the country. The BJP now in power opposed this move when previous Congress Government decided to open up the insurance sector to private capital, National and Foreign, loaded with disastrous consequences for the people of this country and its economy.

We are of the considered opinion, the parliamentary parties contending for power at the Centre have before them no other consideration than to vie with each other to show allegiance to the finance capital both National and Foreign and to their policy of globalisation-liberalisation-privatisation to the utter detriment of country's interest.

We hope, you are well aware that the nationalised institutions like the LIC and the GIC have a good record in matters of mobilisation of capital. And as regards meeting claims of the policy holders, its record is much better than foreign companies. What can be the reason for opening up this sector, to private capital other than handing over an area of safe profit to it in a condition of global recession and severe contraction of market.

Besides, the arguments trumpeted out by the Government in favour of this harmful decision does not stand the test of scrutiny. First, the Government's plea that it is to utilise the vast

resources remaining untapped is untenable. If the nationalised insurance companies were allowed, particularly GIC are allowed to float varieties of non-life insurance schemes, then mobilisation of untapped resources could have easily been done and used for the development of economy.

Secondly, it is also a fact that LIC/GIC lent a huge sum to Corporate Sector which it used as working capital and reaped profit. Not being repaid the sum was converted into equity of the Companies. Now, some of those big companies, charged with mismanagement and other corrupt practices, will have the right to enter the field, reap enormous profit using this very capital held in the form of equity by LIC and GIC which get a very low return from these companies.

We demand the capital of LIC/GIC that remain blocked in the corporate houses should be withdrawn and used in building/improving the social and economic infrastructure, considered on all hands, to be of urgent necessity for development and progress, and for expanding business in varieties of non Life Insurance schemes.

We want to draw your attention to the fact that people of our country paid the price for building up the nationalised institutions. Now these are being weakened, subsequently to be handed over to private capital, national and foreign at tremendous price to be paid by the same people.

We urge you to pay heed to the voice of protest from the employees of LIC, GIC trade union bodies and other saner sections of people and prevent this ill-conceived bill from being enacted and safeguard the country's interest and its people.

Ashutosh Banerji

President, All India Committee

UTUC-Lenin Sarani

## **SUPER-CYCLONE**

# **SUCI stands by the distressed**

*(Contd. from page 1)*

7 lakh 25 thousand 6 hundred 60 Rupees in cash. Most of it has already been spent in relief work, but collections are still continuing all over India in order to provide for our relief and medical camps still operating in Orissa. And they must continue because the Central government and also the Orissa government are yet to wake up from their slumber.

It is now more than a month that Orissa crumbled under the deadly disaster. And yet those who visit the devastated regions are shocked by the sight of bloated corpses still lying in ponds, on the shores or in the jungles. The same holds true for animal carcasses. This is accompanied by a nauseating stench. The governments have washed their hands off these unpleasant duties! In Aulpur village of the worst hit Ersama block our comrades therefore dug earth to bury these carcasses. Also elsewhere. Similarly, several natural wells were dug up in different villages of Ersama by our comrades working there.

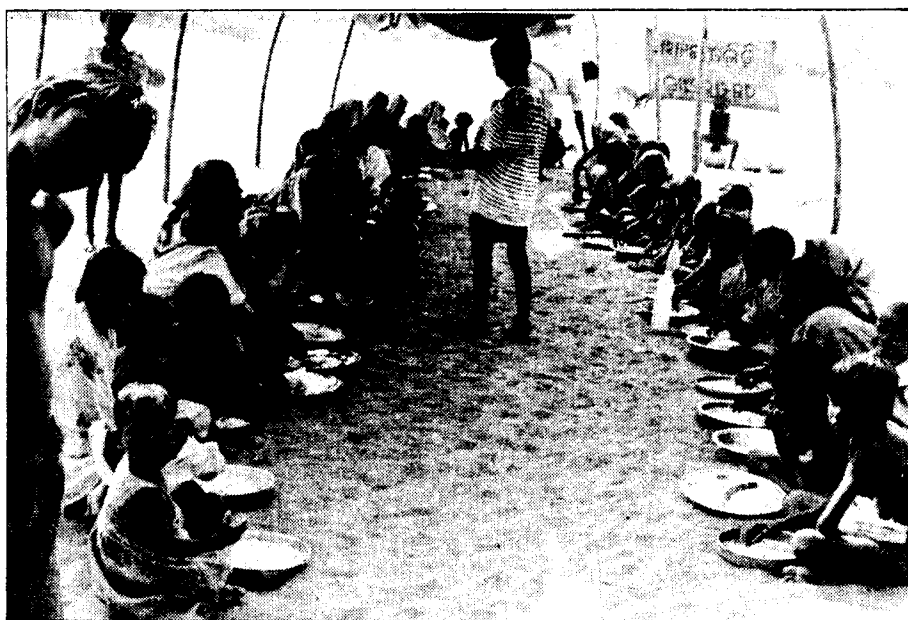
Our relief work is continuing mainly in the worst hit Jagatsinghpur district and also in the Jajpur, Kendrapara and Cuttack districts through 73 relief camps and 40 mobile medical camps and one field hospital in Padampur the worst affected of Ersama block of Jagat-Singhpur. Through these camps food, garments and medicine worth about Rs. 30,45,000 and Rs. 34,63,5000 and Rs. 23,00,2000 respectively have already been distributed to about 7 lakh 50 thousand (7,50,000) people. A commendable role was played by the Medical Service Centre which sent its first medical team to worst affected Ersama right on 7th November, i.e. within a week of the disaster. Since then it has dispatched 6 successive teams with

efficient and dedicated doctors, surgeons, nurses and other medical staff, totaling 80, and drawn from as far as Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra as also from Orissa and West Bengal. The MSC collected Rs. 30,50,000 and have already treated more than 50,000 patients through its mobile camps. Its first base camp in Ersama's Padampur village has now turned into a field hospital, daily treating over 250-300 patients. It has done a good deal to prevent outbreak of cholera and gastroenteric epidemics and treat skin infections, measles and respiratory infections and other diseases.

But evidently we can do but very little with even our utmost effort in the face of this unprecedented and immeasurable devastation. The government of the land must therefore be compelled to do its duty, more so because it alone possesses the means to do it. Along with relief work, our party has therefore already started organising the people in both the affected areas and elsewhere. In all the affected villages public meetings are being held to arouse them to fight for their rights, just as elsewhere, in the district towns, for example, street corner meetings are being held. In Cuttack and Rourkela, intensive campaign is being made. Rallies have been held. And a huge demonstration will be held soon.

There is no doubt that only this pressure of mass movement, not only by the distressed of Orissa, but by all democratic minded people of India standing beside them as one man, can finally force the heartless governments to do the needful and save Orissa. With this aim in view, the Central Committee of our party calls upon all to observe 20th December as "Save Orissa Day" all over India.

*(More Photos on page 7 & 8)*



1. (above) SUCI volunteers carrying relief material from Goda village to Anjora village.
2. (second) A mass kitchen organised by SUCI volunteers at Goda village
3. (third) Another mass kitchen by SUCI activists at Asia village.
4. (below) Rally organised by SUCI on the demand of relief and rehabilitation at Jajpur.

# USA, the "Paradise of Democracy" !

In our country, the capitalists, the businessmen, the bourgeois politicians, the section of the intelligentsia serving the establishment, the penpushers in the dailies and the media men all project the USA as the paradise on earth and long for such a paradise of democracy to descend upon this land of ours.

Let us look at some facets of the US paradise. The powerful capitalist barons who control every aspect of the US life, are antagonistic to any wage rise. In 1995, Pete Du Pont, owner of the vast wealth amassed by the fabulously rich Du Pont family, wrote : "... the minimum wage turns out to be one of our leading killers — a killer of economic growth and opportunity among the young, the poor, and the minority community. It's time to stop it before it kills again." Why this outburst against minimum wage ? Because the US government, under public pressure, had just been forced to raise minimum wage for the first time in over two decades, a marginal rise that did not even touch the fringe of the problems and tensions caused by the glaring inequities in the US society. The present hullabaloo that the US recession is over is no consolation for almost a third of the population who live under or near the poverty line. The official employment figure has risen. Many previously unemployed have 'work' now, but about their condition of 'work', about the number of part-time jobs they must do to maintain their families and their lack of medical insurance — the less said the better ! Columnist Molly Ivins wrote ruefully : "Economic segregation in this country is so rigid that we literally don't know one another anymore. If we did, perhaps the hoopla about the return to prosperity would not be made so cavalierly."

For those who look at the USA from a distance or during visits to or holidays in the USA, it is difficult to imagine the all pervasive poverty that permeates the US society and so also for those fed on Hollywood cinema and the glib talks of US politicians. Inside the USA however, there are few who have illusions about the US economic miracle. From 1983 to 1998, the US stock market had a cumulative growth of 1336 per cent. Corporate profits rose by 108 per cent during the 1990s alone. Who reaped the benefit of such prosperity ? Not the common people. The pay of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) rose by 481 per cent during this period ! The richest 1 per cent of the US population now enjoys 40 per cent of the nation's household wealth (1997), more than that enjoyed by the entire bottom 95 per cent ! This privileged 1 per cent lobbies is hard with the US government so that laws protecting its interest are passed, not laws catering to the democratic aspirations of the bottom 95 per cent. Lowering of interest rates by the Federal Reserve Bank, ostensibly to control inflation, and the government's tax codes and licence to speculation allowed the top 1 per cent to reap more profits from their wealth whereas the 95 per cent suffered loss. An analysis of the Wall Street figures shows that 84 per cent of the stocks and 90 per cent of the bonds are held by not more than 10 per cent of the US population. In the early 1990s, assets of the richest 10 per cent rose by 22 per cent and it was they who partly benefited from the steep rise in stock prices. The poor gained only in accumulation of debt which rose for the bottom 90 per cent by over 11 per cent while it fell for the

richest 1 per cent by 19 per cent ! In the eighties, tax rate in the top slab was 68 per cent but the revised tax law of 1988 reduced this to 28 per cent. Corporations paid 33 cents from every dollar as tax in the early 50s. They pay only 10 cents now. Thus the money that could have been pooled through taxation and used for socially useful work was more and more used in speculation spree, invested in real estate raising rents to take homes out of the reach of a large part of the population. The speculation fever heightened stock market activity and made for the top 1 per cent to gradually grab for itself the savings of the large majority.

The welfare legislations providing the so-called safety net had never cost the Federal exchequer more than 5 per cent of the budget, and even this amount was shown by arbitrarily inflating the figures by escalating medical costs from the 1980s for the Medicare programme that provided subsidised health care. Even the US Congress assessed the Federal assistance in this regard in the early 90s to be lower than that provided in 1970. But in 1995, the US government abolished the safety net on the ground that such welfare programme acted against work culture ! Thus, Clinton government let the unemployed fend for themselves in the labour market. The welfare programme was thus replaced with the "workfare" programme. We have already seen that this scheme has led to underemployment and hidden unemployment on a large scale. This has resulted in a rise in petty crimes and so in the prison population. Peter Edelman who resigned from Clinton administration in 1996 wrote : "The real issue isn't welfare. It's poverty. Should the state bear any responsibility for its citizens or should it simply act as the caretaker of business interests?"

In his book *The Global Gamble* published in 1999, Peter Gowan traces how the Dollar-Wall Street axis emerged in the 70s to preserve the power of the US big money and to direct the world economy in the interest of US monopoly capital embodied in the US transnational corporations. This necessitated structural adjustments in the US economy with harsh effect on the life and living of US workers. Beginning with his tax cut in 1981 which triggered a rise in unemployment and a further concentration of wealth, President Ronald Reagan presided over what has been described as "the opening salvo in the US state's structural adjustment policy against itself" (Lisa Armstrong, Trinity College, Professor of Women's Studies). In 1954, 35 per cent of US workers belonged to unions. By the end of Reagan's tenure this figure came down to 14 per cent, reflecting a drastic reduction in the workers' organised strength. With the workers' movement thus emasculated in the era of Reaganism, the US unions resorted to business unionism which comprised offering huge concessions to the capitalist owners in the 80s and avoiding antagonism with them. From the time of Reagan till now, income of the bottom 60 per cent of the US people dropped while the income of top 1 per cent jumped up, as we have seen hereinbefore. In 1965, the ratio of wages of the highest paid and the lowest paid workers was 44 to 1, but at present it stands at a staggering 200 to 1.

US monopoly capital, through imperialist agencies like the World Bank and the IMF is

engaged in forcing structural adjustments upon other countries, specially the developing ones, to ensure world-wide hegemony and domination by Dollar-Wall Street regime. At present, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffet and ex-Microsoft executive Paul Allen possess a total wealth of \$156 billion, more than the combined GNP of the poorest 43 countries on the globe ! Wealth of the 475 billionaires of the world total \$1.7 trillion, much higher than what the poorest 50 per cent of mankind possess !

While the handful comprising the rich upper crust wallow in wealth, the bulk of the US people suffer from want and privations. Truly, the state and the government of the USA are of, by and for the rich few. In the words of Rose Woolery, a US working mother, "This country (the USA) is still for those who have money. For the people who don't have it, you're not going to get it." While the bulk of the people suffer from job insecurity and lack of welfare programme, those who "have it", "get it" from the US State's corporate welfare programme disbursing \$85 billion per year to private business, \$200 billion to collapsed banks, over \$30 billion to the agricultural rich and \$440 billion on tax breaks to the wealthy despite the facts that such funds are not available for mitigating poverty and that the US economy is crisis-ridden and carrying the stupendous burden of \$2 trillion external debt which can lead to disastrous consequences any time.

Big money controls not only the economy and the people's life, but all spheres including the elections and legislation. Columnist William Frankel writes from Washington : Money ... certainly is the indispensable fuel for political success in the United States. ... Campaigns, the most expensive item of which is the extravagant cost of television advertising, call for millions of dollars and raising these funds is now the prime preoccupation of the hundreds of candidates who will be contesting seats in the Senate and House of Representatives. ... Campaign war chests of \$20 to 25 million for a Senate seat are substantial by any calculation but they pale before the funds essential for a serious stab at the Presidency. Easily setting a new standard in this area is the treasure of Mr. George W Bush, Governor of Texas and son of Mr. Clinton's predecessor in the White House... Mr. Bush has so far raised the unprecedented total of \$60 million and there is undoubtedly more to come. ...The all-powerful influence of money on elections was again demonstrated a few days ago when Mrs. Elizabeth Dole, wife of former Presidential candidate Mr. Robert Dole, dropped out of the race. She was the first woman to be a serious candidate for the Presidency... The reason for withdrawal, she told a press conference with tears in her eyes, was that she could not possibly have raised enough money to compete with Mr. Bush or another millionaire candidate Mr. Steve Forbes. ...The reason for Mrs. Dole's withdrawal has revived long standing demands for new legislation to regulate campaign spending. The Republican Party, closer to the big money than Democrats, has so far resisted this pressure and, presently controlling both Houses of Congress, have been able to block legislation on the subject."

Where from come such huge sums of money?

(Contd. on page 7)

# “Paradise of Democracy”

(Contd. from page 6)

Surely from the coffers of the US big capital. The non-partisan research group, Center for Responsive Politics, has reported that in 1997 and 1998 alone, the banking, insurance and securities industries paid \$58 million to Federal political candidates for their election expenses. Further, they paid \$87 million in “soft money” to the political parties and spent another \$163 million in lobbying expenses. At this disclosure, an analyst commented in the *Los Angeles Times*: “When it comes to serving the interests of the banks, insurance companies and stockbrokers that represent the most important source of campaign money for Republican and Democrats alike – \$145 million in the last two years – there is but one political party. That’s the bipartisan party of political greed representing corporate conglomerates.”

Such enormous corporate expenditure on funding election campaign and for lobbying is aimed at gaining control over the legislators. The study of the Center for Responsive Politics has shown that the number of lobbyists in Washington on the payroll of special interests working to influence the votes of members of Congress on legislation affecting these interests swelled to over 20,500 in 1998! These included 138 ex-legislators! In plain words, big capital in the USA maintains a very costly set up to purchase the legislators. The lobbying expenditure in 1998 is reported to have totalled \$1.42 billion. 261 organisations reported spending more than \$1 million each. The insurance industry (\$77.2 million) and the pharmaceutical industry (\$73.8 million) were among the chief spenders. This reflects the enormous stakes the US monopolists have in bending legislation to suit their super profit hunt.

Let us cite just a few recent instances. Bills that would have extended patients’ rights were blocked through lobbying by health insurance corporations. A bill to curb smoking by children was nipped in the bud by lobbying of the tobacco industry. The powerful Microsoft Corporation conducted lobbying in the Congress to reduce the budget allocation for the Justice Department’s anti-trust division. *The New York Times* editorially rebuked Microsoft by saying that this was “a step tantamount to punishing the department for pressing the anti-trust case” (against Microsoft).

The legislation on financial services deregulation enacted by the Congress in November last unfolds a dangerous portent. This legislation was the outcome of strong lobbying vigorously pursued over two decades by the powerful banking, insurance and securities corporations of the USA. Such deregulation makes it easy and inexpensive for the commercial banks, securities firms and insurance companies to enter one another’s businesses. In consumer advocate Ralph Nader’s view, the Congress through this legislation was creating “a financial system designed for the affluent customer in which low income and moderate income families and small businesses will face less access, fewer choices and higher fees”. Further, he cautions that “the affiliates of the conglomerates and their telemarketers will be free to share many intimate details of an individual’s buying habits, investing patterns, health records, entertainment choices,

employment data and other aspects of one’s existence.” By this, an analyst pointed out in the *Los Angeles Times*: “Your life will be an open book, to be plumbed and exploited for profit, thanks to financial industry deregulation.”

Such is the real face of the USA, the much-trumpeted paradise on earth, the acme of bourgeois democracy. People there are subjected to ruthless capitalist exploitation, the unfettered rule of capital. Democracy has been murdered there by organised plutocracy wielding state power.

Through rise in unemployment, soaring prices and dwindling real income, poverty, pauperisation and destitution, rampant corruption, and the spectacle of parliamentary parties virtually purchased by monopoly capital being subjected to open dictation by the chambers of commerce, we in India are already having a foretaste of the capitalist paradise on earth.

There is no remedy within the capitalist system, in India or in the USA. It is for the peoples to organise themselves and strive for putting an end to the rule of capital.

## Source

1. *Another America* by Vijay Prasad, Asst. Professor of International Studies, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, USA, published in *Frontline*, dated 19.11.99.
2. *Money in U.S. Election* by William Frankel, *The Statesman*, 30.10.99.
3. *Lobbying For Landmark Legislation, in Letter from America*, *The Statesman*, 24.11.99.

## Protest against price-hike of essential commodities in UP

### Sultanpur

A mass delegation under the auspices of SUCI submitted to the SDM of Lambhua Tehsil a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister, demanding immediate withdrawal of price-hike in diesel. The delegation started from Sarvodaya Inter College, Lambhua Square and marched in procession to Lambhua Tehsil office where a meeting was held. It was addressed by the Secretary, Sultanpur District Committee of SUCI, Comrade Jagannath Verma, senior journalist Dr Banesh Raj Tewari and General Secretary of AIDS Comrade Swapan Chatterjee. The speakers exposed the anti-people and pro-capitalist outlook of the BJP-led government. The programme of a state-level rally at the State Assembly was also announced here.

### Pratapgarh

Hike in diesel and other essential commodities sparked protest in Pratapgarh of UP. A mass delegation comprising hundreds of people walked through the market road to Patti Tehsil office and after a mass meeting, submitted a memorandum to the SDM, Patti under the leadership of SUCI. The memorandum demanded the immediate withdrawal of price hike in diesel and other essential commodities and supply of electricity for 24 hours, distribution of ration cards etc. The meeting addressed by Comrades V N Singh, State Secretary of SUCI and others, exposed the anti-people policies of BJP and appealed to the people to make the 10th December rally at the State Assembly a success. (See also page 8)



A protest demonstration organised by SUCI with the demand for rehabilitation and adequate relief to the affected people of Orissa



Carcasses strewn in a village — a common sight

## Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer Flags off Orissa Relief Mission from Kerala

On 24th November Justice V R Krishna Iyer flagged off the Orissa relief mission from Ernaculam South Railway Station through a public function presided over by Comrade G S Padmakumar, Secretary, Ernaculam District Committee, SUCI.

In a brief speech Justice Iyer condemned both the state and the central governments for prolonging the suffering of the victims of super-cyclone. As the President of Janakeeya Prathirodha Samity, he had appealed to the people through a statement to contribute liberally to the relief fund collected by the organisation.



## Asia-Pacific Regional Trade Union Seminars on Child Labour and Working Women

The Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) organised in Delhi, in the last week of November of 1999, two trade union seminars on two different issues most topical to our time. The first on 'Child Labour and Poverty Alleviation' was held on 23-24 November 1999 at Kerala House while the second was held at Banga Bhavan on 26-27 November on 'Working Women — employment opportunities, rights, role and position in trade unions'. Participating organisations from India and abroad were almost common in both the seminars. They were trade unions from China, Vietnam, Kazagstan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India. The central trade union organisations who participated from India were AITUC, UTUC-Lenin Sarani, UTUC and CITU. BMS and TUCC were present only in one session. Two trade union internationals namely, Trade Union International of Public Service Employees and World Federation of Teachers Unions also participated. From India women's organisations like National Federation of Indian Women and All India Mahila Sanskritic Sangathan (AIMSS) took active part in the seminars. The UTUC-LS delegation led by its all-India President Comrade Ashutosh Banerjee consisted besides him, Comrades Protiva Mukherjee (Vice-President), Achinta Sinha (All India Secretary) and Sanat Datta (member, Working Committee). Comrades Krishna Sen and Subodh Sharma represented the AIMSS.

### Observe 2nd June 2000 as the day for elimination of child labour

The seminar on child labour and poverty alleviation was held under the chairmanship of the WFTU President Comrade Indrajit Gupta. The seminar called for observance of UN day for children 2nd June, 2000 as the day for elimination of child labour in all countries of Asia.

## Mine Workers' Movement at Bellary

Under the banner of 'Samyuktha Gani Karmakara Sangha' (SGKS) affiliated to UTUC-LS, hundreds of mine workers undaunted even after 137 days of strike, took to the street in Bellary on 5th December last. They demanded reinstatement of dismissed workers, release of bonus, making their service permanent, etc.

A protest meeting was also held at Royal Circle where Comrade Somesekhar, President of the

## Save Education Day Observed

The country is facing an all-out affront on education and culture. The Vajpayee-led government in its second successive tenure at the Centre has come up with a fresh attack on it in a renewed vigour. Already in the last term the chiefs of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) have been replaced by RSS-friendly personalities. Books of history are proposed to be rewritten in the RSS-way and those of philosophy with RSS-flavour. Even the modern mathematics would not be spared. It would be replaced by Vedic-mathematics. Mr. Murli Monohar Joshi, the Minister of Human Resource Development, has a plan to make compulsory Sanskrit and 'Saraswati Bandana' for all in school education. While only 2.8% of the Central budget is allocated for education, Mr. Joshi is out to invite private and foreign investment in higher education, thereby, among others, extending the scope of further shirking the government's financial responsibility in education. These are in brief the BJP Government's policy of saffronisation, privatisation and commercialisation of education.

## Movement in Badlapur, UP against diesel price hike

More than thousand men, women and youth under the leadership of SUCI submitted a memorandum to the SDM, Badlapur demanding the withdrawal of the rise in the price of diesel and other commodities, and supply of sugar, kerosene oil and construction of roads. A mass meeting was held at Badlapur Tehsil before the submission of the memorandum, addressed to the President of India. The speakers in the meeting, Comrade V N Singh, Secretary, UP State Committee, SUCI, and others condemned the anti-people policies of the BJP government. In the meeting which was presided over by Jaunpur District Secretary, Comrade Jagadish Chandra Asthana, the people were called upon to join the state level rally at the State Assembly on 10th December and the demonstration at DM office of Jaunpur on 29th December.

SGKS, demanded of the DPC company to implement the just demands of the mine workers. Other leaders Sri Uma Nayak, Sri Thippendra, Sri Mahanta Nayak and Sri Gangu Nayak also addressed. The meeting was presided over by Sri Ganiya Nayak.

All India Save Education Committee in its last Delhi convention early this year resolved to launch a countrywide movement against this onslaught on education. 50 million signatures of the people from all walks of life would be collected on memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister which is to be submitted to him is a mass deputation next year. The Committee headed by the noted Justice Krishna Iyer and comprised of luminaries in the field of education, literature, culture and others also resolved to organise sit-in-demonstration in the states on 10 December '99.

### West Bengal

As a part of this all India programme of action of the save education movement, under the auspices of the All Bengal Save Education Committee leading intellectuals and educationists along with teachers, students, guardians and other sections of the people participated in a large Dharna near the Esplanade Metro Station, Calcutta. Prof. Sunanda Sanyal, a famous linguist, Dr. T M Das, a noted scientist, Prof. Atindra Mohan Guin, and Prof. Dhruvajyoti Mukerjee, noted educationists and Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Vice President, All India Save Education Committee addressed the gathering criticising the disastrous education policy of the Central government.

### Assam

On 10th December 'Save Education Day' was observed by the Assam unit of the All India Save Education Committee. A sit-in-demonstration was held at Dighulu Phukhuri Park in Huwahati. Eminent educationists, education loving people like Dr. Hiren Gohain, Dr. Manmohon Das, Sri Kantimoy Deb and many teachers from schools and colleges of different districts took part in it.

Prof. Hiren Gohain, Dr. Manmohon Das, Prof. Bhupendranath Kakati and Prof. Chandralekha Das discussed at length the disastrous education policy pursued by all the governments and by the BJP-led saffron brigade.

### Haryana

The Haryana Unit of the All India Save Education Committee staged the dharna programme outside the Maharishi Dayanand University. A good number of teachers and intellectuals attended the sit-in-demonstration. The speakers at the dharna criticised the government for not taking measures to upgrade the standard of education in government schools and ignoring the essential requirements of the education department. They also severely criticised the appointment of some Sangh Parivar affiliated people as the chiefs of the ICHR and ICSSR.

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