

# Proletarian Era

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Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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## Stench Spreads

The present political situation of the country is extremely critical. All the parliamentary political parties are trying to come out of the impasse in vain. Notwithstanding differences in their political stance and vocabulary all these parties are frantically trying to protect anyhow the present political arrangement now ruling the country. But despite their best efforts they are finding no way out. After fifty years of attainment of Independence the country is witnessing today a situation as never before. What is typically new in the body politic of the country is the extreme disintegration tormenting all the political parties beyond any control. They are dividing and uniting only to be divided again. If Congress is fragmented and fractured, the Janata Dal is splintered and scattered. If BJP is facing trouble with its age-long ally Shiv Sena in Maharashtra having its impact felt inside the BJP itself — after what happened in Gujarat and Delhi in particular — the CPI(M) posing itself as a monolith is also not free from widening internal dissension in states like West Bengal and Kerala and Tripura where this party is in power.

It is known to all that after the last general elections no political party gained absolute majority to form a government at the Centre. After abortive attempt of the BJP failed in fiasco after 13 days' rule, the United Front was formed following frantic parleys among the 13 disparate parties

including the CPI(M) and the CPI and the UF was installed in power with the support of the Congress. But in order to get the support of the Congress, these parties suddenly discovered the secular and democratic credential for the Congress forgetting what they said to the people before elections. Thus, the Deve Gowda government was born out of sheer compulsion of the situation and opportunistic consideration. Evidently, lust for power and pelf of the leaders provided the bond of unity in the ruling clique having nothing to do with people's interest.

With the withdrawal of support by the Congress to the Deve Gowda Government, a deadlock was created which was averted later on thanks to the manipulative skill of the Congress President Mr Sitaram Kesri and the CPI(M) and the CPI leaders. The UF government continued and only Mr Deve Gowda was replaced by Mr I. K. Gujral. Since his assumption of office, Mr Gujral has been engrossed with managing with one crisis after another. Mr Gujral himself admitted that he was facing pulls and counter pulls. The Janata Dal, the main constituent of the UF has been pathetically divided. Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, who has been charged-sheeted by the CBI in respect of disappearance of Rs.950 crore in fodder scam has formed Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The gravity of the situation and the degree and dimension of the

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## SUCI abstains from Presidential Election

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI in course of a statement said on July 15, 1997 :

"When the country is rocked by an unprecedented all-out crisis, crying out for the left parties to develop a countrywide mighty united democratic mass movement on the burning problems of people's life, left parties like the CPI(M) and the CPI have abandoned that path for the purely parliamentary opportunist line. Consequently, in the forthcoming Presidential election, they are active participants in the Congress(I)-UF bandwagon, backed by the BJP, in the name of "national consensus" — a bourgeois deception — which pretends that the President's post is above class-position and class-politics and thus hoodwinks the people.

Our party, upholding the people's interest, can therefore neither support the candidate sponsored by Congress(I)-UF 'alliance', supported by the BJP nor the other sponsored by the Shiv Sena. Our MLAs will therefore abstain from this Presidential poll."

## Comrade Nihar Mukherjee Condemns US Nuclear Test

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI issued the following statement on 5.7.97.

"We strongly condemn the US imperialists' underground nuclear weapons related test, which is not only a threat to world peace but even violates their much trumpeted Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It once again exposes the war-monger character of the USA and how they are strengthening nuclear war preparedness.

Further, we protest against the decision of launching a satellite for espionage activities by the USA.

We call upon all democratic minded peace loving people to raise their voice against the US imperialists' war preparations." (News on page 4).

## P L Account Scam Exposes Real Face of CPI (M)

Now the multicore P L Account scam of the CPI(M) led Left Front government in West Bengal has joined the scam queue in the country, proving that the CPI(M) rulers do not lag behind other bourgeois parties in this respect. In the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)'s audit report for West Bengal, '95-'96 (Annual Review of the Workings of the Treasuries in West Bengal) it is alleged that the state government has siphoned off thousands of crores of rupees during the past several years from different state budgetary provisions and central allocations to innumerable unauthorised P L Accounts (Personal Ledger Accounts) to avoid audit and squander away public money freely. Side by side, reports of defalcation of government money through these dubious P L Accounts, particularly by the Zilla Parishads and Panchayet Samities, are pouring in daily in the papers. Judging the seriousness and

prima facie authenticity of the allegations against the state government the High Court at Calcutta has admitted a case on this issue.

Comrade Provas Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, SUCI, in a letter dt. 18.6.97 to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mr Jyoti Basu, demanded publication of a "White Paper" with all necessary facts on this issue, institution of an all-party enquiry committee for a thorough probe into the allegation and adequate punishment of the culprits responsible for the financial irregularities and corruption. On the same above demands the West Bengal State Committee of our party organised a mass violation of law on 23.6.97 in Calcutta at Rani Rasmoni Road, Esplanade where thousands of SUCI activists courted arrest. It was the first ever organised mass protest against this scam in the

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## SUCI Condemns Subversion of Judiciary

In another press release dated July 15.7.97, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee said :

"When Chief Justice of the apex court has to declare that, we are under persistent pressure to drop hawala case' it alarmingly manifests that much trumpeted judicial independence is how far horrifyingly subverted reducing rule of law into a mockery in a so-called democratic country like India.

We call upon all right thinking democratic-minded people to ponder over and rise up to the occasion."

# SUCI Demands All Party Enquiry Committee

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state. The SUCI also proclaimed 24 hours West Bengal bandh on July 4 which evoked spontaneous response and was a total success.

Even in bourgeois economic system public finance or income into and expenditure from public exchequer is governed or monitored by some checking process known as audit and by abiding by treasury rules etc. to guard against possible pilferage or squandering away of public money which, as revealed in the CAG's report, has been systematically violated by the CPI(M)-led government year after year for ulterior motives.

It is now revealed that the state government has been opening hundreds of P L Accounts since 1991-'92 in different treasuries of the state without any knowledge of the A.G. although it is mandatory for opening any P L Account in any treasury by any Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO) to get prior permission of the PAG. Taking advantage of the absence and impracticability of AG's audit and checking of the authenticity of spending money once deposited and mixed up in P L Account the state government has been siphoning off thousands of crores of rupees from different central allocations and state budgetary provisions year after year and then spending those money earmarked for one head of expenditure towards other heads, sometimes even fictitious. The best example is the diversion of central funds for different development projects like Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, IRDP, National Rural Employment Project (NREP), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, Indira Abas Yojana, etc. by the Zilla Parishads and other lower Panchayet bodies and squandering away those money amounting to hundreds of crores of rupees through unauthorised P L Accounts or Local Fund Accounts during the period 1985-'86 to '95-'96 as alleged in the CAG report. Besides, during the last eleven years the state government in the Assembly has not accounted for spending of extra-budgetary 5000 crore rupees. One of the conditions for getting central assistance for implementing different central projects is to deposit the unutilized money in banks or post offices to earn interest thereon. But violating this condition the state government directed the Zilla Parishads to carry on transactions in unauthorised P L Accounts outside the purview of checking and audit by the AG and thereby help the Panchayats to adopt rampant financial irregularities. Side by side, mysteriously for the last ten years accounts of the Panchayats in the state have not been audited by the Local Audit under the state government. All through these years stray reports of defalcation of government money by different Panchayat bodies, mostly controlled by the CPI(M) or other Left Front partners, were appearing in newspapers and now in the CAG's audit report, 1995-'96 the source of such plundering has at last come to light.

According to the CAG's report, during 1985-'86 to 1991-'92 six Zilla Parishads, three District Primary School Boards and four municipalities have illegally expended 21 crore 40 lakh rupees for purposes other than those allotted for. In March '97, in Murshidabad District alone 150 crore rupees have been smuggled out from relevant heads to unauthorised P L Accounts and

squandered away. That money was sanctioned for Poverty Eradication Programme, Widow Pension, Handicapped Allowance and other development projects. Now it is too difficult to ascertain how much of the money has been spent for what purpose. While auditing Calcutta Metropolitan Treasury it was revealed that during the period '94-'96 the state government diverted not less than Rs 77 crore from state sales tax account to unauthorised P L Accounts and the AG authority suspects the money has been paid out as subsidy to spurious or non-existing companies under small scale industry category. In circular No. 4888/F dt. 30.5.97 of the Joint Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of West Bengal 'financial irregularities on the part of the D.D.Os' have virtually been accepted and the D.D.Os have been cautioned about the AG's strictures. During a lightening audit in Sealdah GRP Office it has been found that they have drawn 8 crore 50 lakh rupees from the treasury in between 1.12.96 to 31.3.97 but there is no whereabouts of 6 crore 55 lakh rupees in the cash book. In Darjeeling District 10 lakh rupees have been withdrawn for 'pension' to retired armed forces personnel by fictitious bills through P L Account. On 28th March '92 Burdwan Zilla Parishad, violating all financial rules, 'donated' 1 crore rupees to the Zilla Saksharata Samity from the Zilla Parishad's development fund, leaving untouched at least 12 repairable roads in the district. Everybody knows that the Saksharata Samities in different districts are fully controlled by CPI(M) men and so also is the Burdwan Zilla Parishad. So, clear is the implication of the illegal benevolence. In the CAG's report submitted in the West Bengal Assembly serious discrepancy of 174 crore rupees for Social Forestry development has been pointed out. The West Bengal government has claimed to have spent 220 crore 51 lakh rupees for the above purpose but actually only 73 crore 50 lakh rupees' account they could produce. It is also reported that out of Rs.156 crore sanctioned to the state government under Jawahar Rojgar Yojna, the state finance department could account for only Rs.75 crore. What about the balance of Rs.81 crore ?

These are just a few of the instances reported in newspapers and the tip of the iceberg, for these are some of the revelations only from sample audit of AG. Moreover, the genuinity of spending money withdrawn from P L or L F Account by the DDOs can never be determined by any audit — be it AG audit or Local audit. This can only be done by a thorough probe at the base level. Thus if thorough probe into the spending from hundreds of dubious P L Accounts by the DDOs is made by any independent body then defalcation of hundreds of crores of public money by this CPI(M) led government is sure to be unearthed.

The Finance Minister and other CPI(M) ministers of the state are crying hoarse, calling these audit objections of the CAG as 'conspiracy' against their 'honest' government. They say, these are mere allegations and have no validity. They may be reminded in this respect that the Fodder Scam of Bihar was unearthed first from an audit objection regarding a P.L.A/c at Chaibasa treasury, the Ayurved Scam of UP was also detected from a P.L. A/c manipulation there and the Bofors and Hawala Scams were exposed first from reports of allegations in newspapers.

According to the state government, opening of P L or Local Fund Account is a normal practice, there is nothing wrong in it. But why did they open P L or Local Fund Accounts without mandatory permissions of the PAG, West Bengal ? Why so many unauthorised P L Accounts in treasuries after treasuries ? Why those accounts continued after the expiry of the financial year and year after year without the knowledge of the PAG ? What was the necessity of diverting thousands of crores of rupees from central allocations and from one head to the others ? Let alone the question of pilferage of public money after drawing them from PL/LF Account, whom did they serve by spending development funds meant for the rural poor, widows and unemployed for other purposes ? Are they not for interested quarters close to the CPI(M) party, their leaders and pet and corrupt officials? Why the state government failed to submit accounts of different departments for 1987-'88 and onwards to the Public Accounts Committee as admitted by the Finance Minister on the floor of the Assembly? Why did the Finance Minister mislead the Assembly by supplying misinformation as to the ways and means of budgetary provisions and financial position of the state years after years ? The AG has opined that 'the actual and revised estimates shown in the budget would not be trustworthy' and has claimed that all these acts on the part of the state government are nothing but deception to the Assembly and the Constitution.

Curiously enough, the CPI(M), on the pretext of the case being a subjudice one, is deliberately refusing to discuss on the issue within the Left Front Committee although on so many occasions they did it in the Front meetings. If there is transparency and honesty in handling the P L Accounts by their Finance Department, why the CPI(M) is so apprehensive to face their Front-partners and is playing hide and seek with them ?

The Finance Minister is on the one hand trying to totally deny the charges and in the same breath is whipping up the Treasury Officers and the DDOs to clarify every irregularity in accounts and for making them up-to-date immediately. Is it not a sly attempt to make the DDOs and the Treasury Officers (TOs) scapegoat? Secondly, would it be wrong if anybody apprehend that while dressing up the old accounts and cash books of several years back so hurriedly there is every possibility of manipulation of accounts by fake bills and vouchers by the interested quarters ?

For the last 15-20 years, elections in the country have almost completely been victim of money power, muscle power and media power and now these three factors decide everything. West Bengal is no exception and people have witnessed how the ruling parties, both at the Centre and in the states pour enormous money to influence voters' allegiance before and at the time of elections. Particularly, the panchayat and local bodies' elections have become openly the playground of distributing ill-gotten money and governmental privileges and everybody knows, the CPI(M) overwhelmingly ranks first in this respect in West Bengal. In lieu of money, anti-socials are widely engaged to rig the elections. Where from comes this huge sum of money ? It is alleged and apprehended that besides from other

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# Refusal to probe confirms their collusion

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sources, money organizedly looted from unauthorised P L Accounts might have played a great part in managing votes in elections year after year and to keep the Panchayats under the L.F.'s control huge amounts of money have been siphoned off under instructions of the Finance Department by the Panchayats by opening large number of un-authorised P L Accounts. Money collected by the Panchayats are not being deposited in government treasuries and misused for party purposes and being freely defaultated, even invested in usury business to earn unaccounted for interests by the Panchayat pradhans. In a word, all out economic lawlessness and corruption in public finance of the state has assumed an alarming proportion.

Now, it is reported, for hushing up the scam the state government is pulling political string to create pressure on the CAG through the Prime Minister, politically badly dependent on the Left Front and the CPI(M). It is also reported that in a letter dated 2.6.97, the Chief Secretary of the state requested the PAG to contradict newspaper reports on the scam ; and recently the PAG has been threatened by anonymous persons to lie low on this issue and the state government have been compelled to give

him police protection under High Court orders.

But one thing is also notable here that the Congress, which itself is enmeshed in deep corruption and openly in league with the CPI(M) supporting and steering the Central government from behind the screen, has come out in 'protest' against this P L Account scam of the CPI(M)-led government to stage a mock fight before the common people with the same petty parliamentary motive to reap election dividends. They have no moral right to show 'protest' and it is also a deception to the people. Same is the case with the BJP which was and is deeply involved in Sundarlal Patwa government's Kendu Leaf scam in M.P., Enron Power Plant scam of Maharashtra government and Mittal Mine scam in MP and so many others, and is trying to fish in the troubled water in West Bengal. So, it goes without saying that all their protests have no bearing with people's interest against this scam. In that sense, this gigantic P L Account scam of the Left Front government claiming itself as 'left' has no doubt greatly helped the rightist bourgeois parties and governments to justify their practice of corruption.

Actually during these 20 years' rule in West Bengal, the CPI(M) effectively pursuing the policy of frustrating people's movement,

particularly working class movement and ruthlessly suppressing their struggles in the state, and by all other means, has been serving the interest of the ruling bourgeoisie most successfully and has come out as the best servitor of the vested interests under 'left' nomenclature. So, it is no surprise that this party would be involved in such corruption for, it is the law of the history that whoever will try to serve the moribund bourgeoisie cannot but be the victim of corruption, nepotism and all that. It is a matter of great sorrow and concern that going by the name of Marxist and Communist, the CPI(M) and its government has helped corruption and nepotism permeate government administration and society in the state and has shattered the moral backbone particularly of the young generation of the society by continuous encouragement of opportunism and unethical means of livelihood for their petty party interest and governmental power. We fervently appeal to the people of the state and the well-meaning rank-and-file members, supporters and sympathisers of the CPI(M) to ponder seriously whether they should allow this government and the CPI(M) party leadership to malign the noble ideology of Marxism-Leninism and Communism and strengthen the hands of reaction in this way.

## Backlash in Latin America ?

[ *Aspects of Indian Economy*, April - June, 1997, a quarterly bulletin published by Research Unit for Political Economy quoted some excerpts from the Economist, 30-11-96 with the caption as above. We are reproducing the same hereunder alongwith the introduction given by the bulletin. —Editor, P. Era ]

*The 'structural adjustment' package India is suffering now has been implemented under IMF-World Bank tutelage in about 70 countries around the world. The Fund-Bank priesthood claim that these programmes are, overall, a success. What are the indicators they use to prove this ? That these countries' fiscal deficits have been reduced ; their economies are more open to imports; they have reduced state regulation in many areas of the economy; and they have made progress in privatising public sector firms/activities. This is a curious way to measure success: after all, these are the main measures of the structural adjustment programme itself. So all these data would tell us the extent of the implementation of the programme, not its success.*

*If we look at the effect of structural adjustment on the people, the story is quite different. Wherever this programme has been implemented, it has brought mass misery. At places, this misery has been channeled by various vested interests into fratricidal warfare. It is not a coincidence that Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda all underwent IMF-World Bank-designed structural adjustment programmes before they were convulsed with civil strife.*

*At other places, however, popular discontent is taking the form of upsurges against the economic policies and the foreign interests which have imposed these policies. In certain countries, the people's movement has even taken the form of guerrilla struggle. These developments are alarming for international capital (unlike the fratricidal wars going on in several places). A prominent right-wing magazine of the international financial establishment, the Economist, recently expressed alarm over the developments in Latin America in a lead editorial*

*and cover story (November 30, 1996). The editorial ("Latin America's backlash") begins: "A malaise is abroad in Latin America. In Mexico, guerrilla groups pop up in dirt-poor rural parts. Argentina's trade unionists take to the streets against plans to cut welfare and ease labour laws. Brazil's landless clash with its trigger-happy police. Peruvians lose faith in their tough and reforming president; Ecuadoreans elect a proclaimed populist as theirs. Almost everywhere both rich and poor feel less secure, as drugs, guns and violent crime take an ever-stronger hold on the shanty towns that ring so many cities... And little of such growth as there is finds its way to the poor. For many, the wrenching changes brought by privatisation, trade opening, and monetary and fiscal prudence have meant bankruptcy, unemployment or the loss of State handouts."*

*The cover story itself is full of clever distortions. For example, it talks of one of the achievements of the Washington-dictated 'reforms' as being the bringing down of inflation between 1991 to 1996; but the reason inflation soared to such heights by 1991 was the 'reforms' of the 1980's. Despite this propaganda in favour of IMF-led 'reforms', the Economist is compelled to note the effect they had on people, and their widespread unpopularity. And it is anxious over the possible consequences: mass struggles against the regimes implementing these policies. The following are excerpts from the cover story :*

### Gestures against Reform

*"Before Eastern Europe, Latin America was the region that first saw the ascendancy of free-market democrats over authoritarian protectionists. In just a decade, well-educated, market-minded civilians arrived in power everywhere (bar Cuba),*

*shoving aside the protectionists and brass-hats who had long run the place. In some countries radical free-marketeers have been in charge (Argentina, Mexico); others have been run by more gradualist reformers (Brazil, recently Chile). But everywhere, the direction of policy has been the same: to chop back the over-mighty state. And everywhere, the results have been similar: inflation is down; foreign investment is up; dictatorships are out.*

*Yet (as in much of Eastern Europe) the liberal ascendancy stopped short of triumph. And now a backlash is appearing. From the rugged sierras outside the Mexican resort of Acapulco, the People's Revolutionary Army (EPR) has been running a vicious bombing campaign in half a dozen states. Maximo Gomez, the priest of Atoyac de Alvarez, a scrubby town in rebel country, thinks that "90 per cent support the guerrillas in their heart... if the Government does not act soon, this place will explode."*

*The rise of the EPR is a small but worrying part of wider regional reaction against the new generation of free-market reformers. The great expectations that accompanied their bold reforms have come crashing down. Unemployed and angry voters have looked to populists — only to find the easy solutions they proffered also disappear. The resulting disgust with all politics is coinciding with rising violence of all kinds, from guerrilla action to crime...*

*Most impressive has been the embrace of freer trade. Protectionist barriers have tumbled unilaterally or as part of accords which doubled intra-regional exports to \$32 billion in the five years to 1994. NAFTA, the North American Free-Trade Agreement, has linked Mexico with the giants to its north. In South America, Mercosur is edging Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil the same way. In December 1994, Latin leaders pushed the United States and Canada to agree to negotiate a Free-Trade Area of the Americas by 2005. The opening of the region's economies has spurred exports; they grew six per cent a year*

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# Protest Demonstrations Against US Nuclear Test

## Calcutta

The Central Committee of our party in a memorandum to President Bill Clinton severely criticised the US government for conducting subcritical nuclear test and for making moves to launch spy satellite. The memorandum was sent through the US Consul in Calcutta.

A fervent well decorated procession led by the West Bengal State Committee of our party marched to the USIS on 11th July '97 condemning the nuclear test and the US decision to launch a spy satellite. It started from Raja Subodh Mullick Square, Calcutta and when reached the USIS, police blocked it where an effigy of Bill Clinton was burnt with anti-US slogans condemning nuclear tests and calls were raised there to build up militant peace movement against imperialism and US imperialism in particular.



*Effigy of Bill Clinton being burnt in Calcutta*

## Hyderabad

In condemnation of the nuclear test conducted by the USA, an effigy of Mr Bill Clinton was burnt at Kothi, Hyderabad on 7 July '97. Many people gathered there and joined enthusiastically in the programme. Addressing the gathering Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, AP State Organising Committee, explained the diabolic nature of the US imperialism, and said that mighty militant peace movement is the only anti-dote to check the US imperialists.



*Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, AP State Organising Committee addressing the demonstrators who were protesting against the US nuclear test.*

## Tamilnadu

The Tamilnadu State Organising Committee of the SUCI held a demonstration on Thursday, July 10, 1997, starting at 11.00 a.m. in front of the US Consulate in Chennai, to protest against the recent nuclear test by the USA.

The demonstrators raised slogans calling on the USA to desist completely from all nuclear tests, to dismantle its nuclear arsenal totally, to stop being a threat to world peace and to put a



*Effigy of Bill Clinton being burnt at Guwahati*



*Protest in Chennai against the US nuclear test*

## Assam

halt to its high-handed bullying tactics against smaller and weaker nations around the world.

The large number of participants who had gathered heard how the recent experiment of the USA was a further threat to world peace. It was part of the USA's war preparation attempts.

A call was given to all democratic-minded and peace-loving people in India and around the world to raise their voices strongly against this US war preparedness. People had no choice but to come together to build up a mighty movement against the attacks being mounted by the imperialist countries, led by the USA.

Under the auspices of the SUCI, Assam State Committee, the effigy of the president of the USA was burnt at Guwahati. In a Press release the SUCI said that while the US imperialism was forcing other countries to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, it is engaged in indulging in nuclear tests one after another, the latest being the underground nuclear test at Nevada desert. The State Committee of the party appealed to the people of Assam to be in unison with the peace loving people of the world and to raise their voice of protest against the threat of nuclear war preparation by the US imperialists.

## Karnataka SUCI Condemns Hike in Electricity Charges

In a statement on 1.7.97 the Karnataka State Committee, SUCI condemned the government's move in effecting steep hike in electricity tariff to the tune of 13%, as also the hike in charges on IP sets from Rs 100 to Rs 300 as outrageous, just one year after the 15% hike in tariff. Further the government has exposed its out and out pro-big business stand by restricting the hike at 10% to HT consumers on the plea of reducing unemployment problem.

Again all outright lies induced in by the government as arguments for KEB's losses and increased tariff have been nailed: That the government has not recovered dues amounting to over Rs 1000 crores from industrial houses, that the energy supplied to IP sets amounted to only 27% as against government's claim of over 50%, that salaries accounted for hardly 20% of the total expenditure of the KEB, that the T & D losses is as high as 30% and not 18% as claimed, apart from the other well known facts of colossal corruption, power theft, subsidies to the big business, have called the bluff of the government.

Thus by imposing enormous burden on the common people, the small and middle peasants in particular, and by going soft on the industrial houses, the government has established its pro-capitalist, anti-people credentials, by resorting to worst form of trickery on the already overburdened people. In this situation, the SUCI calls upon the entire common people to forge firm unity and build up mighty movement to pressurize the government

to withdraw the immoral, unjust tariff hike lock, stock and barrel.

### Demonstration in Bangalore

The Bangalore District Committee, SUCI held a protest demonstration on 10th July '97, in front of the Karnataka Electricity Board Office, against the state government's decision to increase electricity charges by 13%. This programme was organised as a culmination of the week-long campaign programmes held throughout the city. Hundreds of people from all walks of life participated in the protest demonstration.



An effigy symbolising corruption and maladministration of KEB being burnt in Bangalore

Speaking on the occasion, Comrade M. N. Sriram, Member of Bangalore District Committee of the SUCI exposed the unreasonableness of the argument placed by the government to defend the hike. Dr B. R. Manjunath, Secretary of Bangalore District Committee addressed as the main speaker.

The programme was presided over by Comrade Gnana Murthy, Member of the District Committee.

Later an effigy, symbolizing the corruption and maladministration in KEB, was burnt in front of the Office. After this a memorandum, demanding the immediate withdrawal of the unjust electricity hike, was submitted to the KEB authorities.

## Backlash in Latin America ?

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during the early 1990s, up from 1.8 per cent a year during the mid-1980s...

The fundamental economic outlook is favourable. But the poor cannot eat "fundamentals". What they see is that the region's traditionally wide gap between incomes is widening further... Real wages have fallen. Unemployment in most countries is now higher than in 1990..

In recent months, the golden boys of reform — Messrs Menem and Fujimori — have seen their popularity plummet. Everywhere, polls show citizens have an exceptionally low opinion of politicians and parties. What seems to be happening is that middle-class folk are joining the backlash of the poor. A remarkable revolt took place at a recent assembly of Mexico's ever-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Furious that unpopular market reforms had resulted in electoral defeats, hardliners rebelled. "Down with neo-liberalism!" rang the cries as they voted to stop privatisation and ban technocrats from high office. The public cheered the rebellion. Middle-class anger at cuts in utility and energy subsidies helped drive Venezuela's Carlos Andres Perez from office in 1993. And Nicaraguans were so disgusted with six years of IMF-encouraged reform that nearly 40 per cent (on the official count) voted for the ex-Marxist Sandinists in the recent election. The Sandinists did not win the election, but the warning was plain...

Guerrilla insurgencies, which many thought would subside with the Central American civil wars of the 1980s, are back. Colombia, where peace had seemed not far out of reach a year ago, has seen

guerrillas unleash attacks of such fury that some compare the past few months to the early days of *la violencia*, the terrible civil war of the 1950's which claimed dearly 300,000 lives.

Colombia is the worst case but not the only one. Peru's Shining Path has shown, through recent horrific attacks, that the capture of Abimael Guzman, its mastermind, has not dealt it a death blow.

Mexico has both the telegenic masked Zapatists and the EPR, the "cavemen of the left", as Denise Dresser, a Mexican political scientist calls them, roaming the countryside.

It is easy to dismiss this — as some officials do — as merely a tale of bandits in remote regions. Certainly, guerrilla violence is nothing like as bad as it was in the 1960s and 1970s. Nor are guerrillas any longer the proxy warriors of a cold war fought in Uncle Sam's backyard. Yet if their ideology does not amount to much, their willingness to resort to violence does. For guerrilla activity is just part of a much broader escalation of violence.

Nearly every city in Latin America is more dangerous today than it was ten years ago, before the reforms began. The region's murder rate, already six times the world average, is surging. Kidnappings are rife; half of all the world's abductions take place in Colombia, where rich and poor pay a combined total ransom of \$100 million to get their loved ones back.

The root causes of violence are complex, ranging from drug trafficking and consumption to income inequality, mega-cities without services, and corrupt police and courts. But, according to Luis Ratinoff of the IDB, discontent with the

political order has contributed to the recent spurt in violence. He thinks that the demise of traditional purveyors of hope— from radical clergymen to Utopian parties and trade unions— means that those frustrated by the reforms may be more willing to resort to violence. Even in Mexico, traditionally one of the region's more peaceful countries, a poll by a daily newspaper, *Reforma*, showed that nearly a third of the population believes armed violence is justified.

Contributing to this strain on the rule of law is the weakness of institutions. With few exceptions, courts are inefficient and corrupt; in many countries, policemen and former policemen engage in murder.

The spiral of violence has produced a spiral of spending on private security, which often contributes to more crime, as private armies turn into paramilitary squads. All told, the region spends an astonishing 13-15 per cent of GDP on security expenses (both private and public). That is more than total welfare spending. It represents a crippling burden on the economy.

The rich and the middle classes may be able to afford this for a while. But the poor cannot. They are turning to mob justice. In the past few months, there have been televised lynchings of suspected criminals by villagers in Ecuador, Mexico and Guatemala.

Frightened by the violence, governments are calling in the military. The army has been given special powers in chunks of Colombia. Several Mexican states have a heavy military presence. Over a dozen of Peru's departments have been under army rule for years. One of Mr Bucaram's first acts as president was to give the Ecuadorian army a role in public security..." (*Economist*, 30.11.96)

# Russia in Ferment

After withstanding the shock of counter-revolution and debacle in socialist countries, the working class and toiling people of Russia and the erstwhile Soviet Land have again started building up movements. Not only in Soviet Union, in all countries overtaken by counter-revolution in the recent past, the common people, crushed under the grinding wheel of the exploitative capitalist system and mafia rule, are bursting forth in protest and resistance struggles. The recent people's revolt in Albania is a bright example of such phenomena.

As a result of restoration of capitalism in the Soviet territories their economy is completely devastated. Public life is shattered with poverty, want and unemployment. Price of every commodity is rocketing. In socialist system, employment was the fundamental right of the individual, for the state and the government to provide employment was a compulsory obligation. People of the Soviet Union would get all the necessities of life including food, shelter, education and health-care without fail and today food and unemployment problem there has reached the extreme. Mills and factories are being closed. Working people of Russia are now on streets with beggar's bowl and they are now in search of food along with the street dogs in the garbage. Moreover, it is also true that such news are published in world press and in our country also now and then. But these news are published in such a fashion as if this extreme misery of the people of Russia is the result of past socialism — this is the concomitant effect of the experiment with the 'impractical' economy and social system known as socialism carried out till recently in these countries. They are arguing that market economy and capitalism have still not been well established in Russia. That is why the miseries of Russian people are being prolonged. The commercial newspapers are publishing news of Russian people's plight mainly to show that wretched and helpless toiling people of Russia are accepting this pitiable condition as something fatalistic. The purpose is to drown the working class in other countries in frustration. With this purpose, these papers are completely hiding the fact that the working class movement is growing anew in Russia. To keep abreast of the contemporary situation, toiling people's mouthpieces and periodicals are coming out to propagate news of workers' struggle from one corner of the country to the other with banner inscription of Marx-Engels' clarion call: 'Workers of all countries, unite!' One such newspaper 'Sierp-e-Molat' (Hammer and Sickle) in its February, '97 issue published a brief review of the labour movement in Russia in 1996.

## Russian industrial production on the wane

The imperialist and Russian monopolists' agent, counter-revolutionary Yeltsin clique is repeatedly assuring that through firmly establishing capitalism in Russia the present anarchy will come to an end and economic rejuvenation will start. But the falsity of this assurance has been exposed under stark reality. A new brand of New-Russian oligarchy has emerged by usurping, in the name of privatising, the entire socialized wealth which was once created by the toiling millions in Russia under the inspiring

leadership of great Lenin and Stalin. With regard to their luxury and extravaganza, these despots put to shame even the bourgeois high-ups of the traditional imperialist countries. Side by side, industrial growth in the country, even in the bourgeois sense, is fast declining.

### Industrial Production in Russia (As % of previous year's production)

Years		'92	'93	'94	'95	'96
Industrial Production	Statistical data	-18	-14	-21	-3	-5
	Indirect valuation	-9.9	-8.6	-11.3	-1.4	-2.9
Production of Electricity		-5.6	-5.1	-8.5	-1.8	-0.7

(Source : Ekonomika-E-Jhijon, No. 50, Dec '96)

From the above chart it is clear that both in terms of quantity and relative value every year production fell from that of the previous year. The Yeltsin government is pompously preaching that 'stability' is settling in economy — so progress is not far behind. All information fed by the capitalist Russian government in support of these deceptive propaganda is simply bogus and it is getting gradually clearer day by day to the people through practical experiences.

40% of the people are living below poverty line. Unemployment is all-pervading. Even the employed don't get any wage. According to official account the total amount of arrear wages of the workers and employees in government offices and enterprises upto 12th April, 1996, stood as much as 34,32,800 crore Rouble. 2-crore workers and employees of 1,00,000 factories did not get any wage at all during the whole summer of last year. Many of them are working without pay from the very beginning of the year.

Now in capitalist Russia anybody requires at least R:3,88,000 per month just to live on the verge of death. (Since after the counter-revolution value of Rouble in international market has disastrously fallen, everything is too dear to be purchased. One bottle of water costs a few thousand roubles there) With bare minimum requirements of livelihood, one needs, at least, 10,00,000 Roubles per month for a hand-to-mouth living. According to official statistics, average wage for a Russian worker and employee in 1995 was 6,15,700 Rouble per month. However these are figures on paper only : since as shown above payments are made in default for months together. As a result, large number of workers are victims of diseases and malnutrition. Even the diehard critics of socialism could not but admit that socialism in the Soviet built up the foundation of creating higher standard of life both economically and ethically by guaranteeing food, health-care education and shelter to the people. Today, out of starvation workers are even dying at the feet of mercenaries. People in socialist Soviet Land did never taste the pangs of unemployment. Now 64,00,000 people are totally unemployed there. They have no means to live fairly; they have before them only corruption, the scope of earning something by criminal and unethical means and drug addiction to temporarily escape agony and sorrow. The Yeltsin government did never falter to keep every arrangement ready for destroying the young generation in the midst of unending frustration. But still, destitution and uncertainty in life have pushed the toiling people there to take to the path of struggle. They have launched their

fight primarily through strike movement. Starting from the late-80's every year strikes are increasing both in number and in intensity reports of which are never ventilated in the commercial papers or electronic media.

### Surge of Workers' Movement in Russia

In 1993 the Yeltsin government adopted the draconian policy of ruthlessly suppressing people's movement and perpetrated the sordid act of bombarding the Parliament House. In the face of such tumultuous political situation, although the workers' strike movements backed out temporarily, next year, it again appeared in full scale. In 1994, strikes were organised in 514 factories. But in 1995, the figure jumped to 8856 — a 17-fold increase in one year!

Last year, workers' strikes were further intensified. In January 1996 alone, 2108 workers' movements were officially registered. Massive miners' strike started at the end of January in Russia and Ukraine. Accordingly to official reports, work came to a deadstop in as many as 72 mines. Supply of coal from 99 coal mines was totally suspended. During this period, according to the *Voice of America*, the number of strikes in the mines was more than 10 lakhs.

### Workers' Strike in Russia on the Rise

Year	No of Factories affected	No. of Striking Workers (in thousands)	No of Working days lost (in thousands)
1990	260	99.9	207.7
1995	8856	489.4	1367
1996 (first 3 months)	2862	NA	NA

Source : Trudovya Rossja, No. 3(33) '96

Apart from the miners' fierce struggles, two such struggles deserve special mention among those developed in the beginning of 1996. One, 'Promtractor' factory of Chuvasia, the other being the factory of Tutevsky. It is the largest tractor building factory in Russia catering to the needs of the industries. There are three such biggest factories in the world. While 22,000 tractors were produced in 1991 in this factory, production came to only 215 in 1995. This factory is now in liquidation with a debt-burden of 15,000 crore roubles, the cumulative arrear wages accounting for 1200 crore roubles. 35,000 workers are employed here. Since September 1995, wages of the workmen are totally suspended. In addition to it, strength of the workforce has been slashed to half at the start of 1995. Exasperated as they are in dire distress, they are pitted against the wall. They went on strike struggle indefinitely from February 12, 1996 last.

The struggling workers observed 116th Birth Anniversary of great Lenin through public meetings and demonstrations. International Day of Labour on 1st of May was also observed with equal dignity and enthusiasm through meetings and demonstrations.

During the summer of 1996 immediately after the presidential election, workers' movement sprang up with renewed strength led by workers of mines. In the beginning of July, miners of Donets stopped cutting and lifting coal from the mines. This movement worked as a great fillip to labour movement to spread throughout Russia subsequently. The movement engulfed the vast areas from seashore to Lvov. By mid-July, miners of far-east joined the movement. Work came to a halt at 'Partisan' mine on July 14. By July 29, almost all

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# Russia in Ferment

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the mines came to a halt. 13,000 labours joined the strike struggle of which 240 workers went on mass fasting. As the movement began gaining strength, miners of coal basin of suburb of Moscow, Rustov region, Vorkrut, Crasnayarsk, Shakhalin and Chilibinsk regions joined the movement with their entire strength. A snowballing effect could be seen: 25,000 miners of Kuzbash observed total strike on 26th August. Between July-August, 1996, about one lakh workers belonging to 200 enterprises joined the movement.

In the context of present situation now obtaining in Russia, these series of labour movements developed, in the main, based on economic demands. Principal, among them, relates to squaring up of arrear wages and regular payment of wages. Gradually, political demands are surfacing and being tagged up with it. The workers of Prometractor workshop raised the demand for resignation of the President and the government led by him together with their economic demands. The mine labourers, too, raised this demand.

During the autumn of 1996, the movement spread amidst the workers of atomic energy centre and the river transport system. By 22nd October, health care employees went on to protest movement throughout Russia. By the same time, workers of armament factories, teachers, students as well as the intellectuals engaged in creative activities, joined their ranks. Almost one-and-half crore workers throughout Russia participated in their struggle for realising outstanding wage bills. By the end of the year, Russia, yet again, witnessed surge of movements of coal-miners all through the month of December. By December 6, the striking coal miners' strength surpassed 3 lakhs. The year rolled to a close with their on-going strike struggle gaining momentum.

The surge of movement is on even this year, too. According to government statistics, by January 1997, strike struggles swept over 5716 enterprises. Compared to previous year, this is 2.7 times higher while the number of participating strikers (1,89,000) registered three-and-half times increase. By turn of events, teachers and employees of teaching institutions are in the vortex of movement in the current year. Going ahead with their economic demands, they raised the slogan of seeking referendum again by President Yeltsin. Meanwhile, the Fifth Congress of the Striking Committees comprising workers-peasants-service sector employees was held on 1-2 February 1997. Needless to say, this Congress took all-important decision of building up preparedness for joining into strike-struggles in a bigger way throughout Russia on class basis in the days to come.

## Characteristic Features of Labour Movement

Viewed statistically, both the number of strike struggles and striking workers are gradually on the increase. More importantly, the workers are more and more getting united in the wake of building up struggle committees and strike committees in which they are playing active uncompromising role. These struggle committees, in turn, are building up regional and industry-wise committees to achieve greater unity. From conferences based on regions to all-Russian Conference and Congress are being organised. Political demands are being raised from these conferences/congress. In the wake of election

of the President, almost all the struggle committees extended their support to Juganov, the leader of the so-called Socialist Communist party of Russian Federation. Everyone is aware, the CPI(M) in our country, supports Juganov. For, behind the facade of Marxism and socialism, both these two parties, following the social democratic politics, stand in solid defence of the owning class. The commercial media in our country term Mr Juganov as diehard communist and propagate, at the same time, in favour of him. But Mr Juganov's message of congratulation to winner Boris Yeltsin, after his defeat in the presidential election, totally exposed Juganov's real face of election oriented opposition to Yeltsin. Being enriched with experience, after the presidential election, these conferences and congress of workers' struggle committees, in right about turn of their former stand, are now very much vocal about developing closer unity among the working people and the communists to plunge into strike struggles for achieving political rights and socialism.

The other characteristic feature of last year's labour movement lies in its spontaneity and militancy. Besides holding demonstrations, meetings, gatherings, striking workers resorted to blockades of railways and roads by felling trees. The workers of aviation industries resorted to blockade of the important link road on the bridge over the river Volga. They went so far as to resort to incendiaries. The vivid militant character of the working class movement was apparent from the Pravda's report. Pravda's 3rd September issue carried the leader: "In Chernogorsk the Mayor was going to be hanged", "Chernogorsk is still tense". According to it the fact was 'the miners of the region were going without wages since November 1995. Whatever be the reason, they believe it was the Mayor responsible for this default in their wages. The workers started picketing before the main administrative building of the city. Spontaneously and without the knowledge of the organisers the peaceful picketing turned into an illegal mass meeting. Common citizens of the city came forward in support of the miners. Suddenly, the furious people gheraoed the administrative building and they raised political slogans like, 'Stop war in Chechnia', 'Stop unholy speculation in the city market', 'Down with the mafia rule', etc. In the mean time when the Mayor Vladimir Sorokin tried to pacify the people, a women voice rent the air with the slogan 'Hang the Mayor!' The police intervened to rescue the mayor from people fury and the mass meeting restrained itself from outbursts.'

## Capitulationist attitude of the pseudo-communists

Actually speaking, the workers in present Russia have surpassed the big trade unions in so far as their struggling spirit is concerned. Most of the big trade unions are American type professional unions. Just like the former unified Soviet Union after disintegration gave birth to small 'free states', the erstwhile central trade union also split into so many 'independent' unions. Most of them operate like the American trade unions. Some trade unions are directly serving the employers interest. Vacillation of the leadership of a good section of unions is most apparent. They resort to movement only under the pressure of the struggling common workers and sometimes are being compelled to

adopt left position even. But they are declining and also failing to fully protect the workers' interests. Such trade unions are developing mainly where they are getting the support of the administration. Although the biggest opposition party of Russia, the Communist Party of Russian Federation and its leader Gennadi Juganov primarily spoke of workers' interest, later on it gradually changed the position. In the name of opposing violence what they are actually denying is the class struggle and confining themselves to the narrow bounds of parliamentary power struggle. But this party also could not avoid the pressure of the workers' agitation and intensive working class movement throughout the entire 1996. It appears from this party's document of its December Plenum that they are now constrained to commit for workers' movement. albeit, outwardly. As against this, opportunist and power-seeking politics of the Communist Party of Russian Federation stands the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Side by side, within the big, compromising trade unions, small trade unions are growing with the intention to fight for the workers interest. The unions like 'Jasata', 'Idinstava', etc., are carrying on their struggles ignoring the attacks of the ruling class. Leaders of these unions are even exposed to murderous attacks of the rulers. Mr A. Ivanov of 'Idinstava' was fired upon on last 27 August and seriously injured.

The growing militant trade union movement in Russia is also showing that what the working class needs most is the correct political ideology and their own revolutionary party. Today there are various small political parties and groups who are really trying to emerge as genuine Marxist-Leninist working class organisation. They are also cooperating and trying to be united. At this moment, unity of all such fighting forces and parties is urgent necessity. And in such a situation what should be the task of the Russian communists? Comrade Nina Andreyva, General Secretary of the All Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) has categorically spelt out in her address in the 3rd Congress of the People of erstwhile Soviet Union at Minsk on March 16 last, "... the greatest task of the communists at present is to educate the workers with Marxist-Leninist ideology and to give concrete organisational shape to the trade union movements, to revive confidence among the workers and to help the working class realize their own strength — to give birth to the realization among the workers as a class that historically it is the working class which is the main revolutionary force to change the present day world." This party also called upon to coordinate the struggles for re-establishing Soviet Union and for that matter, accomplishing proletarian revolution with the ongoing struggle on the demand of employment, wage, food and shelter in the erstwhile Soviet region.

We, on the behalf of the Indian working class, whole-heartedly support the struggle of the Russian working class against re-establishment of capitalism there. We hope the Russian working class who once established the first socialist state in the world, will again, through their newer struggle, give birth to the worthy successors of great Lenin and Stalin and again accomplish proletarian revolution.

(Source: No.2(47) and 4(49) of 1997 of Sierp-e-Molat, Workers' & Peasants' Journal published from Krunaiarsk and No.7(135) of 1997 of a leftist journal Idinstava)

# Stench Spreads

(Contd from page 1)

crisis of the UF can be easily gauged from the fact that whereas the left and some Janata Dal leaders told the Press that RJD was not to be the member of the U.F., according to the decision of the 17th July meeting of the UF Steering Committee, although the three Central ministers with allegiance to Laloo would continue as ministers of the UF government, this claim was instantly opposed by some other leaders particularly by the convener of the UF Mr Naidu. It is to be seen where all these developments lead to also in the background of the threat of the DMK to withdraw support from the UF. Mr Gujral is maintaining close liaison with Mr Kesri conscious as he is, that the survival of his government depends largely on the Congress support. In the mean time, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav is adamantly refusing to resign from the post of Chief Minister in cynical disregard to even bourgeois democratic norms and his goons are let loose and encouraged to take to the streets to threaten anyone opposing him. Even the CBI officials are threatened. In an unprecedented move the CBI sought the Patna High Court's direction to the state administration for ensuring the security of the CBI staff. Mr Gujral is not, however, a silent spectator to all these activities of Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav. He does not want Bihar Chief Minister inconvenienced in any way, rather going whole hog to strengthen his hands. The way Mr Joginder

Singh, the CBI chief has been replaced by Mr R.C. Sharma confirm this contention quite nakedly. It is evident, therefore, how the Chief Investigative Agency of the country has been made to work at the dictate of the ruling party even under the present dispensation of the UF following the footprints of Rajiv Gandhi and Nara Simha Rao. Not only the highest investigative body, but the apex court even is under pressure as revealed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court the other day. Although the apex court of the country is supposed to act independently free from any interference from any quarter but the reality is otherwise. Today, when the credibility of all the institutions of the bourgeois parliamentary democracy is no more there, and orchestrated propaganda is being conducted to 'prove' that after all judiciary is acting neutrally and it is the Judiciary which will be defending democracy and there is nothing to lose heart. But it has been proved beyond any shade of doubt that during these years, particularly in recent months how committed has been the judiciary of our country.

Now be it the question of abysmal depth of corruption into which all the parliamentary parties of the Right or the Left have been plunged knee-deep, although there is difference in degree and depth of corruption, or be it the question of the unprecedented instability and acute crisis with which the Gujral Government has been afflicted so deeply, the question remains what all these are

due to and what is the way out.

Our party has shown again and again that capitalism is not only crisis-ridden and reactionary it is out and out corrupt at the same time. Any party or individual trying to sustain this utterly corrupt system cannot get rid of this malaise. The root-cause of this instability has also to be sought in the crisis of capitalism enmeshed in various kinds of fragmentation and even the ruling class is finding itself incapable of maintaining the semblance of stability. The internecine conflict and unhealthy competition are not confined to among different parties and forces it has spread even within a single party. The unbound lust for power and pelf of the leaders is also an indication and manifestation of how deep-seated has been the crisis of capitalism today. The Janata Dal imbroglio and the phenomenon of Laloo Prasad are typical examples of that acute crisis. But the tragedy is this that even those who are known as lefts like the CPI(M) and the CPI, the former an indirect and the latter a direct partner of the UF Government is not only hiding this truth from the people, they are engaged very much in inventing ways and means how to bale out the UF from the present crisis. This so-called Lefts are therefore doing a great disservice to the cause of the people so far as they are trying to create an illusion with their politics of social democracy at a time when they are so close to the seat of power of the Central government.

People must pause and ponder and understand gravity of the situation that nothing short of strengthening democratic mass movements worth the name can deliver the goods.

## An Emotional Appeal By A Sick Party Organiser

Comrade Netradas Mahapatra, member, Midnapore District Committee, SUCI in West Bengal is now on the deathbed owing to cancer. According to the doctors the disease has spread beyond control. On his request to Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of our party, a workers' meeting was convened on 15th March last at Bhagananpur. In that meeting Comrade Mahapatra made a moving speech. It is given below in brief.

"You have heard about my ailment from our District Secretary Comrade Soumen Bose. I know my death is near, but to us revolutionaries, those who have accepted the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh death is nothing.

Today or tomorrow, death is inevitable in everyday's life. So long as we live like revolutionaries and die also, how should we view death as has been taught by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

One day, with only a handful of comrades our departed leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our teacher and guide, the great Marxist thinker, set out to build up the SUCI for the emancipation of the millions of toiling people of our country. With his teachings as our guide we started to build up the party in this area when we were young. From that time we cherished a wish as to how to leave all what is old and dedicate ourselves to organize peasants, workers, students and youth for emancipation from exploitation. At that time only a few started work in this locality. All of you know, when we started work here in 1968, there were so many difficulties and obstruction. Then we had to face mainly the Congress. They controlled Panchayats, they reigned. We did not care anything. We started our work with the invaluable teachings of our party and with deep love for people. We tried to build up

movements on problems of the local people. We tried although we might not have been successful always. For the homeless people, against hospital irregularities, for sanitation and irrigation, for relief for the poor - on many such issues we organised many movements. At the same time we fought against police torture, against torture on women. Also, a number of times we took very strong and determined steps to stop communal riots. We took programmes to cultivate the life struggle of great men and revolutionaries as also cultural programmes to uplift the cultural standard of students and youth. For all these we got help, love and also respect from the people.

Here, I want to say something else something sorrowful and personal. While I was involved in party work I had some limitations and shortcomings in conducting my life's struggle. As a result much remained undone what I could do, what I wanted to do.

But I appeal to all of you present here, specially my young friends, fulfill as soon as possible the unfulfilled tasks here.

Friends, there are thousand and one family problems, many an obstruction - if you cannot remove them, if you cannot quicken the path of revolution, there is no second way of emancipation. We cite excuses for not doing party work. We talk of this or that difficulty. We lose our cool. I remember very well what Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in his speech in the Youth Conference, held in Suri, Birbhum District, in 1975. There Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave the call, "Comrades, turn your disadvantage into advantage." He said, "They are real revolutionaries who can work happily turning disadvantage into advantages." — Comrades at this fag end of life I appeal to you. I don't know whether I will be able to meet and talk with you

again, but I did really strive to do whatever I can do for this party, so that it can muster revolutionary strength. But many a thing remains unfulfilled. If I get assurance from comrades present that they will work with more responsibility to strengthen the party, then I will be able to accept death with happiness and pride. With this appeal I convey my revolutionary greetings to all. I end here.

Comrade Provash Ghosh said among others, "Comrade Netra here in this meeting mentioned with deep pain some of his shortcomings. What are these that pain him so much. It is that like many others he could not plunge in revolutionary activities leaving behind family and everything. And while recalling this he could not check tears. But I like to say from a different angularity that those who are working, coming out from family life, must also recognize with respect that despite leading family life Comrade Netradas Mahapatra discharged party responsibility for a long time, keeping steadfast faith in the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, with single minded devotion, higher emotional faculty, determination for uncompromising fight against injustice, higher values — he worked for a long time like an undying flame amidst ups and downs, wind and storms. This is a bright example not only before the comrades who are in family life, but also those who are out of family life. Those who think that revolutionary work cannot be done while living with the family will have to learn from Comrade Netra. Comrade Netra is struggling with cancer, which is extremely painful. Extreme pain of cancer, pain of its treatment and approach of death, in such a situation Comrade Netra is an embodiment of calm and stillness. Such a mind is really rare, no frustration, no nagging.

On my behalf and on behalf of everybody I convey revolutionary greetings to Comrade Netradas Mahapatra.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE