

NEPAL

# People's Struggle Scored Initial Victory

The people of Nepal under the leadership of the banned Nepali Congress and the United Front of seven leftist and communist parties launched a movement against the palace rule of King Birendra. The major demand of the movement was the introduction of multiparty parliamentary democracy in Nepal and the scrapping of the present Constitution. As against absolutism and monarchy these demands were no doubt supportable. But the irony is that the people of Nepal had been fighting against the system of monarchy which had been overthrown in major parts of the world a few centuries ago. In the western world bourgeois democracies were first established by overthrowing monarchy and absolutism. This parliamentary form of bourgeois democracy has been in vogue in our country as well and the people of this country can witness for themselves the limitations and the savage capitalist exploitation in this country. The ruthless exploitation of the people by the ruling capitalist class has been bringing about destitution, pauperisation, penury, child mortality and what not. The rule of monopoly capital is the essence of any bourgeois democracy today including our country. The democratic rights of the people of our country are being curtailed and more and more fascistic acts are being enacted to serve the monopoly interest. This is the real face of the Indian democracy which is boastfully claimed as the 'biggest democracy' of the world. Now the task before the people of the so-called biggest democracy is to overthrow the capitalist system and thus free the people from the grips and tentacles of capitalist exploitation.

Despite the serious limitations and shortcomings of the bourgeois democratic system, the victory of the Nepalese people against the autocratic rule of King Birendra has got to be hailed as a step forward and as

against absolutism and palace rule the multiparty parliamentary system is likely to provide the people with a fresh opportunity to carry forward their struggle on a new plane.

In this connection a

note of caution must be sounded to the Nepalese people as to the palace ploy and manoeuvring to rob the people of their gains. The King conceded the major demands of the movement not out of good gesture but he had no other alternative than to concede those demands because of the growing pressure of the movement, which was mounting to dethrone him. This movement though seemed innocuous at the initial stage turned into a mass movement embracing all sections of the people. The police and the army units cracked down on this snowballing surge with unprecedented brutality and gunned several hundred demonstrators in Durbar Square of Kathmandu. These incidents sent signals of the palace for the brutal suppression of the so-called prodemocracy movement. The King was eager to keep intact the iron jacket of monarchy over Nepal. But for a brief spell of parliamentary democracy 30 years ago, which was given a goodbye after the dissolution of Koirala

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# Proletarian Era

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## Central Committee on Three Vital Issues

The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India which concluded its 7-day session on 29th June, 1990, held at the Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts, Ghat-sila, in a statement issued to the Press strongly criticised "The Participation of workers in Management Bill, 1990" introduced — in the Rajya Sabha recently. Describing the Bill as a deceptive move and a dangerous attack on the militant trade union movement and the hard-won rights of the working class, the statement called upon the working people not to fall a prey to this class-collaborationist scheme of the Central Government, and to develop mighty movement for its immediate withdrawal.

Expressing grave concern over the latest decision of the V.H.P. to go ahead with its programme of construction of the Ramjanmabhoomi Temple at Ayodhya from 30th October, '90, the statement opined that besides creating deep anxiety and anguish in the minds of the democratic minded people of the country this provoca-

tive decision of the V.H.P. has deeply hurt the sentiments and feelings of the minorities and vitiated the democratic atmosphere of the country. The statement said that the construction of the Temple, however noble and pious may be to its sponsors, cannot be above the interest of

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## Calcutta Corporation Election Testified

# Violence & rigging only course for CPI(M) to win polls

On the heels of the West Bengal civic bodies election on May 27, the elections to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation on June 17 last once again proved beyond doubt how nefarious and sordid game the CPI(M) could play in order to stick to power trampling underfoot all norms of democratic process of elections.

As in the case of municipal elections, this time too, it all started with the manipulation in the electoral rolls. The names of the genuine voters of other Opposition parties were deleted, ghost voters in huge numbers in each ward were enrolled in favour of the CPI(M), duplication and repetition of names of the same voters in a few ad-

jacent wards were made, a powerful machinery of casting false votes of genuine voters was given shape to with the help of the outstation CPI(M) workers who flocked to different wards of the metropolises in the previous night and queued up in front of the polling stations and jammed the booths since 5-30 in the morning.

After all these the CPI(M) planned to scare away the genuine voters with the help of the anti-socials, under the protection of the police, by bursting bombs and brandishing revolvers and daggers and captured the polling booths and started stamping the ballots in their favour. The CPI(M) leadership was not satisfied with these arrangements. To make their win doubly sure arrangement for manipulating counting in favour of the CPI(M) was made and the Opponents' counting agents were driven out forcibly.

This was the picture the citizens of Calcutta witnessed almost all over the metropolis. Anybody living outside West Bengal may deem it a fabricated story in order to malign the CPI(M). But this was the reality experienced by thousands on the 17th of June last. It is the CPI(M) which maligned not only itself but Leftism and Marxism too, because it is not only known as a Leftist party, but also still believed by many people, though the number is fast eroding, as a communist party or a Marxist party. And as

a result of all these the people of this Left-oriented state are turning anti-Left and anti-communist taking all these activities of the CPI(M) as the part and parcel of Leftist politics. If we consider these in this critical international situation, our concern and apprehension that these sordid deeds of the CPI(M) will strengthen the hands of the reactionary forces and pave the way for the rise of fascism in our country, may come true. It cannot but give us much pain that the CPI(M), which still en-

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# INDO-NEPALESE TREATY MUST UPHOLD EQUALITY OF BOTH PEOPLES

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Ministry in 1960, the partyless Panchayat system, which was the brain-child of the King was introduced under the garb of a referendum. Anybody could be formally elected to the 140 member Panchayat; but what was practised in reality was totally different from what was stated in the Constitution. A prospective Panchayat member must be sponsored by any of the government controlled organisations and he was required to renounce all party affiliations. Moreover it was decreed by the Constitution that the Panchayat could not discuss any act of the royal family and all members of the upper house were to be nominated by the King himself. In a word, Nepal was in an iron jacket of monarchy in the name of this partyless Panchayat Raj system and the writ of King Birendra was absolute and supreme. All political activities in Nepal having radical, socialist or communist outlook were practically banned and many political prisoners were languishing in jail. There was discontent all around and the people were gasping under the jackboot of monarchical autocracy. The internal situation in Nepal further worsened with the expiry of the trade and transit treaty with India when 15 out of 17 exit points were closed by India during Rajiv Gandhi regime and trade between India and Nepal came to a sudden halt.

All essential commodities were in short supply. At first taking advantage of the sentiment of the Nepalese people against the most unjust move of the Government of India the palace ruling clique tried to divert the attention of the Nepalese people by whipping anti-Indian sentiments through official and other pro-royalist media. But this ploy did not succeed for long as the Nepalese peo-

ple who had been denied all democratic rights and ruthlessly exploited by the royalist elite did not miss to identify the main enemy and started movement against the monarchical rule.

This movement elicited wide support from a broad spectrum of the people. Work in government offices came to a halt and the staff of the Electricity Board resorted to a pen down strike. The pilot of the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation struck work and demonstrated on the tarmac of Tribhuvan International Airport. Other professionals like doctors, lawyers, teachers and eminent intellectuals of Nepal lent support to this movement. Despite severe repression resorted to by King Birendra's autocratic monarchy the movement attained victory and the King was compelled to dismiss Marich Man Singh Shrestha and K. P. Bhattarai of the previously banned Nepali Congress was made the interim Prime Minister. But despite this initial victory the next move of the King was ominous. After the installation of the new ministry headed by K. P. Bhattarai, the King constituted a committee for constitutional reform without consulting the new Prime Minister or any other constituent parties of the United Front of the Left and communist parties. The leaders of the major political parties felt that this was a palace ploy and the mood of the people was clear when a country-wide protest was launched against this autocratic decision of the King. The King was, however, compelled to back out and dissolve this committee after sensing the hostile mood of the people.

Though the people have achieved victory they must remain alert of the palace ploy and must continue their struggle against the capitalist exploitation. Necessary

preparation is now being made for framing the new Constitution of the country and the questions like Nepal as a Hindu state or the constitutional monarchy are being raised and debated in some quarters. The prevailing mood of the leadership of the movement might be that they must first of all consolidate their power and everything will be all right later on. This mood is very dangerous and unless these thorny questions are thrashed out the people are likely to lose what they have gained. It must be remembered that the concept of secularism is of fundamental importance in the concept of bourgeois democracy. So any talk of Nepal as a Hindu state is incompatible with the concept of bourgeois humanism and democracy. The argument that as the majority people of Nepal are Hindu and so if Nepal remains a Hindu state it will not be against the principle of democracy, is absolutely preposterous and goes against the principle of democratisation of society and building a modern Nepal. So the principle of secularism is of fundamental importance and no compromise on this question should be made.

On the question of constitutional monarchy the example of Great Britain is being cited by some quarters. According to this section the King will remain as a titular head of the state as in Great Britain. It must be noted that the King of Nepal has conceded some of the demands of the movement only to buy some time for further manoeuvring. As a matter of fact the King wields sufficient power still now and royalist lobby might be mooting the idea of titular head theory only for this purpose. The example of Great Britain has no relevance in Nepal and the constitution framers of Nepal must seriously ponder over the

question and take such guarded measures as will ensure preservation and extension of the gains of the struggle of the Nepalese people.

One of the redeeming features after the installation of the interim Bhattarai government is the India-Nepal agreement which helps a lot to remove the bitterness created between these two countries during Rajiv Gandhi regime. The Indian ruling class has, no doubt, an expansionist urge; but the way Rajiv Gandhi pursued a nakedly domineering foreign policy was not wholly approved by a section of the Indian monopolists.

It was due to this foreign policy that relations with India's neighbours were soured. After the "relief aggression" in Sri Lanka, India's neighbours, particularly the smaller ones, were apprehensive of the Indian intention. Nepal has been trying to lessen her dependence on India and with this aim in view diversifying her trade with other countries. This action and particularly the arms purchase from China along with the restriction imposed by the Nepalese authority on Indian nationals in Nepal with work permit scheme infuriated the Indian government and the Rajiv Gandhi Government used the transit as the trump card to settle the score. Nepal, being a landlocked country is totally dependent on India in the matter of transit of her goods to a third country. The transit treaty was to expire on March 1989 and India insisted on a combined trade and transit treaty while Nepal was for delinking transit with trade for obvious reasons. After the expiry of the treaty India closed down all the transit points excepting two. India maintained that according to the GATT norms one transit point was required to be provided for whereas India provided Nepal with two transit points.

One can well imagine how the people will suffer because of the sudden and drastic action by the Rajiv Government. After the installation of the National Front Government the people expected that the Government would discontinue the past harmful foreign policy and mark a break with the past and a new cordial relationship will develop with the neighbours. But it is indeed regrettable to note that the NF Government has so far failed to pursue such a foreign policy by which the relations with its neighbours are improved. But in case of Nepal this case was something different. The NF Government felt the political necessity of improving relations with Nepal in the background of its failure in Kashmir, Punjab and in the price front among others. The agreement with Nepal was an image booster and the political message was that while the Rajiv regime fouled up relations with Nepal the NF Government restored the age-old relations within a very short time.

Again Mr. K P Bhattarai had his own compulsion for an immediate settlement with India. His interim government is still susceptible to various pulls and other political forces are trying to gain ground vis-a-vis the Nepali Congress. With India agreeing to restore status quo as prevailed before the expiry of the trade and transit treaty the ailing Nepalese economy is likely to recover and the fall-out from this agreement will be fully made use of by the Nepali Congress in consolidating its position; but in this Indo-Nepalese parley one point should not escape anybody's attention. And, i.e., about the statement of Mr. K P Bhattarai about deferring the Chinese arms consignments prior to his departure to New Delhi for the talks with the Indian Prime Minister. It is known that Nepal incurred displeasure of the Rajiv Government because of its decision to purchase arms from China—it was one

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## United mass resistance alone can stop rigging & violence

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joys support and confidence of a large section of honest and Left-minded people, can stoop so low only to remain in power with the help of the anti-socials, who are virtually guiding this party's activities under the protective umbrella of the police.

If we deeply analyse the activities of the CPI(M) in rigging the elections through widespread violence, it will be proved that it was neither accidental nor a spur-of-the-moment. It was neatly pre-planned by the CPI(M) leadership in order to retain power by hook or by crook. Never before the people witnessed such scenes in Calcutta Corporation elections as was seen on the 17th June last. The people of the localities saw hundreds of unknown faces roaming in a band since 16th evening. On the 17th June at 5-30 a.m. the people who came out of their home saw unknown people jammed the election booths by queuing up. We want to remind the readers here that genuine voters could never turn up so early when the scheduled time was 7-30 a.m. After 7 a.m. the genuine voters usually came to cast their votes and when they entered the booth either they saw to their utter dismay that their votes had already been cast or they were asked by the CPI(M) rowdies inside the booths to leave the polling booths forthwith. Meanwhile the Opponents' polling agents were driven out of the polling booths by these hoodlums. In spite of it the voters continued pouring in and at this stage the CPI(M) had no option but to scare away the voters through largescale violence. The CPI(M) anti-socials started bursting bombs, destroying Opponents' booth camps and beating their volunteers. Even the candidates were not spared.

These hoodlums started roaming the streets

brandishing fire arms and daggers and continuously bursting bombs. In the meantime other CPI(M) antisocials started snatching balloons from the presiding officers and stamping them in their favour. The metropolis on that fateful day did not witness the similar scene everywhere. Somewhere without making a fuss the antisocials did the same thing by only showing the weapons and somewhere the rigging machinery was so strong that silent rigging was complete without any trouble. In a ward in Mominpur the people became so restless and furious to see this 'democratic election of the CPI(M)' that the police had to resort to fire 40 rounds to silence them.

The rigging and violence were done in such an unprecedented dimension in the Calcutta civic poll that it reminded us of the 1972 State Assembly election in which the Congress(I) did the same thing, and that it got the banner headlines in the city dailies the next day. Even The Statesman which mostly supports the CPI(M) made it a lead story with banner headline saying: "Violence, rigging mar civic polls". The newspapers also published several pictures which itself speak of the degree of violence and terror perpetrated by the CPI(M) hooligans in presence of the police. Even the newsmen and photographers were assaulted, bolted inside and threatened with dire consequences if they did not leave the place forthwith. Thus the professional immunity of the journalists as guaranteed in a democratic setup was grossly violated by the CPI(M). And this is not for the first time. We experienced the same thing in the past when the Pressmen took news and photographs of the misdeeds of the CPI(M). The CPI(M) leaders and ministers described it a peaceful election in which people exercised their franchise without fear

and the Chief Minister Jyoti Basu thanked the people for their participation. When the newsmen asked if it was peaceful, why the police resorted to firing in Ekbalpur, Mr. Basu quipped: "The police made only two shots of blank firing." It may be mentioned here that the police confessed before the newsmen that they had fired 40 rounds. When Mr. Basu on his return from Delhi was questioned about his wrong statement he said: "The police informed me of only 2 rounds."

On 18th June when asked by the newsmen about the scale of violence as published by the newspapers the CPI(M) leaders said: "It was the Congress(I) hoodlums who are seen in the pictures brandishing revolvers and daggers and carrying bombs." Is it believable? Can the police remain silent spectators when the Congress(I) goondas unleashed a reign of terror in a state which is run consecutively for long 13 years by the CPI(M)? If it is so then how can the CPI(M) win with utterly unbelievable thumping majority in those wards? It may not be out of place to mention that during the period of continuous bombing when a newsmen asked a top brass of the police about the sound of the exploding bombs, he simply said he could not hear anything. To substantiate his claim he asked a police officer nearby if he could hear anything, the officer said, 'No, a bit sound merely, it's nothing.' These utterances of the police as reported in the press the following day bear enough testimony as to how neutrally the police of this state behave and how administrative neutrality is being maintained by the state government run by the CPI(M). The Mayor of Calcutta gave a ludicrous reply by saying 'rigging is a part and parcel of bourgeois system.'

After all these what

the CPI(M) daily Ganashakti wrote is as abominable as heinous and tantamount to yellow journalism. In the 18th June issue it described the election as very peaceful and on the 19th it described the news in the city dailies were lies and slander campaign let loose against the CPI(M) and the 'Left Front'. We know that the newspapers and periodicals do not always reflect true picture of the reality and sometimes write motivated stories. And it needs protest as we always do. But here the newspapers give the picture of the reality. About the photos of the anti-socials it said that they are of Cong.(I) anti-socials and it even published with photographs the names of the persons shown in other dailies. The funny side of the thing is that the next day the dailies said that the names and photographs published in Ganashakti are not the same and the description of the antisocials as given by the CPI(M) daily does not corroborate with fact. And the very next day the city newspapers published the names and identities of the persons shown in Ganashakti. They were all CPI(M) cadres.

The question then comes if the Congress(I) let loose a reign of terror on election day why the 'Ganashakti' remained mum in this respect and only when the city dailies published news and photographs of largescale violence and rigging by the CPI(M), the 'Ganashakti' opened its mouth with utter falsehood violating all ethics of journalism. By this deed whom the CPI(M) helped? The people or the reactionary and fascist forces? The people through their experience on 17th June knew that being a Leftist organ the 'Ganashakti' indulged in utter falsehood to paint the reality in a different way to serve their petty party interest which had nothing to do with people's interest and the CPI(M) leaders

maligned not only their party more but also maligned democracy and Leftism most.

All these facts taken together give us a general truth that all these rigging, terror and violence were pre-planned and hatched at a high level of the CPI(M) leadership in order to anyhow win the elections. And the CPI(M) had no other alternative. They knew that due to their long 13 years' rule they had lost confidence of the people who voted them to power and discarded the Congress(I), the most reliable political mouthpiece of the Indian bourgeoisie. Being a parliamentary election party in its proper sense, the CPI(M) understands election politics better than any other party, Left or Right and understood much earlier that they were gradually alienating from the people. In the meantime the term of municipality elections came. In spite of taking all measures, stated in the previous issue of this paper, the CPI(M) lost in a good number of municipalities previously held by them. This gave them a warning and made them scared because after 20 days elections to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation were going to be held. Meanwhile another incident of a very serious nature occurred in the municipal jurisdiction of Calcutta which created widespread commotion and condemnation among all section of the people all over the state — that was the Bantala-massacre — in which alleged CPM anti-socials assaulted three lady health officers, belonging to the Health Dept., West Bengal Govt. and the UNICEF and the driver of the car in which they were travelling. As a result, Mrs. Anita Dewan, one of the three assaulted ladies and the driver of the car Mr. Abani Naiya died. The CPI(M) anti-socials as reported in the Press with an ulterior motive

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of the major reasons though not only one for the souring of relations between the two countries. According to India, this purchase of arms from China is against the Indo-Nepalese treaty of 1950 as India considers Nepal belongs to the same defence zone as India's. Neutrality in a conflict involving India and a third country is a thing which India would not allow Nepal to practise. And this was the attitude of the previous Rajiv Gandhi government though it was nothing but a blatant interference in the sovereignty of a country. How can India arrogate to itself the right to dictate Nepal as to the source from which to purchase arms for its defence? Is not Nepal a sovereign state—be it a monarchy or a bourgeois democratic state? Has it not the right to purchase arms from the country of its choice? This is the moot question and if Mr. Bhattarai felt the compulsion of issuing a statement about deferring the arms consignments from China in order to have a smooth-sailing in negotiation with his Indian counterpart it is to be understood that Nepal still harbours misgiving about Indian intention. That this apprehension was somewhat correct found expression in this stumbling of the negotiation on the question of the date for the restoration of the status quo. While Nepal insisted on the restoration from March 1989 when India allowed the trade and transit treaties to expire, India insisted on April 1987 as it believed that from April 1987 Nepal took a number of provocative steps including purchase of Chinese arms. On this point India, has been able to prevail upon Nepal which agreed to remove Indian nationals from the ambit of work permit scheme. Mr. Bhattarai however stressed

in the joint press conference with Mr. V. P. Singh in New Delhi that the aspects relating to security had not been compromised and there must not be any question of infringement on Nepal's status as an independent and sovereign nation. Mr. Bhattarai also confirmed that the arms consignment from China was only deferred and not cancelled and the same would be brought to Nepal as soon as required. This statement was made to assuage the wounded feeling of the Nepali nationalists who might have felt perturbed over Mr. Bhattarai's statement about deferment of the arms consignment prior to his departure for New Delhi. Whatever might be his rhetoric at the press conference this is clear that he was apprehensive of the Indian hegemonistic design and this prompted him to defer the arms consignment from China.

Another question that seems to have not been thrashed out is the matter relating to the delinking of the trade and transit. It is so reported that one of the reasons while Nepal sought arms from China was that the same was much cheaper than Indian price tag. The disadvantage of a land-locked country like Nepal should not under any circumstance be exploited by India and so we are of the firm opinion that trade and transit must be delinked.

The reason is quite clear. What might have been the nature of trade between two countries from time to time in future—the question of keeping open all the transit points should not be guided by any other factor in case of a land-locked country for humanitarian reasons.

The people of India and Nepal have friendship from time immemorial. It is the duty of both the people to ensure that this bond of friendship is not disturbed by the

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chased the car, dragged out the lady health officers and the driver, stripped them naked among the public and beat them mercilessly. This incident found its emotional outbursts among all section of the people, particularly the women, through meetings, demonstrations and dharnas and the incident and its repercussion got wide publicity in the city dailies. This emotional outburst reached so much its peak that the 'Left Front' government became unnerved and announced a Judicial Enquiry into the dastardly incident in quick haste. This single ugly incident worked as the second danger signal for the CPI(M) leadership who, realising the danger that this time they were definitely going to lose the Calcutta civic election in a big way, decided to take the path of violence and terror without which it was quite impossible for them to turn the table in their favour. The incidents of terror and violence, false voting, booth capturing and the subsequent denial of all these by the CPI(M) leaders

design of the ruling clique of any of these countries. The Indo-Nepalese treaty which is awaiting fresh appraisal should be so designed as to uphold the sense of dignity of the people of both the countries on firm basis of the principle of equality free from any hegemonistic design.

Indian people have the added responsibility to remain alert against any hegemonistic design of the ruling class of India and for further cementing a bond of friendship between the people of two countries by exerting pressure on the government to remove the impediments that stand in the way of the friendship between the two peoples.

and above all the role of the CPI(M) mouthpiece, 'Ganashakti', bear enough testimony to the fact that all these steps by the CPI(M) were pre-planned.

So it is crystal clear that with a view to sticking to power the CPI(M) now cannot at all rely on the people who have already developed deep wrath and hatred against the CPI(M) for all sorts of its misdeeds. So it had to rely on the police and antisocials in the absence of powerful mass protest. Thus with every passing day the CPI(M) will have to resort to more and more violence and reliance on the police-administration and antisocials and with every passing day newer and newer methods of rigging and violence would have to be invented by the CPI(M).

Has the Congress(I), which is rending the sky about the rigging and violence by the CPI(M), any moral right to protest? Did not they commit the same thing in the 1972 State Assembly elections? The memory of that incident is still fresh in the minds of the people who could not exercise their franchise for unprecedented violence and terror tactics let loose by the Congress(I) hoodlums all over the state. The post-Calcutta Corporation election statements of the CPI(M) leaders and ministers remind us of the statements by the Congress(I) leaders including its chief minister Siddhartha Sankar Ray after the 1972 Assembly polls. People's memory is not so short as to forget the incidents in Amethi during the last Lok Sabha polls.

Under the circumstances we urge upon the people to rise in revolt against the misdeeds of the CPI(M) and the Congress(I) both of whom indulged in all sorts of undemocratic means to win the elections. Would not people

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unity and solidarity of the people of the whole country. Strongly criticising the Congress(I) and the B.J.P. which competed each other to make the Ramjanmabhoomi issue an instrument in their narrow interest of drawing maximum political advantage by exploiting people's religious sentiments, the statement called upon the people to maintain communal harmony and unity of the people at any cost. The statement also urged the Central Government to immediately give up its willy-nilly attitude and take firm stand against the communal forces much before they totally vitiate the secular-democratic fabric of the country.

Expressing deep anxiety and anguish over the fast deteriorating situation in Kashmir the statement urged the Central Government to immediately stop the ruthless repression let loose by the police and the paramilitary forces on the Kashmir people, withdraw the Disturbed Areas Act from the bordering districts; bring back normalcy in the whole valley; ensure full play of the Article 370 of the Constitution to instil confidence in the Kashmir people and to sincerely initiate political process to find a correct solution giving due honour to the aspiration of the Kashmir people for which it is urgent to replace the present Governor by a democratic minded eminent person of wisdom.

rise when they experience that all means of their expression of opinion have been closed? Would they allow these things to go on? Or would they create surges of movement against the butchers of democracy, its norms and values?

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