

Elections in three States

TASKS AHEAD OF THE OPPOSITION

21st January, 1989 decided the fate of the three Assemblies of Tamil Nadu, Nagaland and Mizoram. Though the last two in no way cast any significance in the national politics, the result of Tamil Nadu elections is very vital considering its repercussion on the national politics in view of the prospects of the Opposition in the coming parliamentary elections not far away and in view of the rejection by the people of Tamil Nadu of the Congress(I) which plunged into the election battle with all resources at its command. But all their manoeuvres proved futile and all their hopes were belied by the people who under the ruthless capitalist exploitation for over forty years gave it a crushing defeat.

It may be mentioned here that the Election Commission, claimed to be a neutral and sacrosanct body by the Congress(I), violating all democratic norms behaved in a partisan way to translate the wishes of the Congress(I), holding power at the Centre, into action by not declaring elections to other 11 parliamentary and 38 Assembly constituencies, elections to which were long overdue. The Congress(I) was determined to sweep in three states and thereby salvage the sagging image of the party and its leader Rajiv Gandhi. But the image instead of rising took a sharp nose-dive and gave a severe jolt to the Congress(I) after its defeat in Tamil Nadu. If we examine the roles the Congress(I) played in the three states we will find that they left no stone unturned to win the election by hook or by crook violating all norms and spirits of democracy and secularism. In this connection we want to remind our readers that in the 15th January issue of this organ we showed while discussing Electoral Reform Bill how in the name of free and fair election the framers of the law would themselves violate it. This is what exactly happened in Nagaland and Mizoram in particular and no less in Tamil Nadu also.

In Nagaland and Mizoram the Congress(I) won by influencing the voters with money, false promises and through total rigging, false voting and fanning up religious sentiment of the people throwing secularism to the winds. How low the Congress(I) can stoop can be gauged by the account in the 15th February issue of *India Today*. It says: "...But its passage to victory was generously lubricated with its formidable money power.... Jamir's own constituency of Mokokchung, in the heart of Ao Naga country, set the trend. There, from January 9 to 23, the Congressmen are believed to have spent more than Rs. 15,000 daily to buy 300 Kg of meat and 1000 Kg of rice to feed just around 4000 Mokokchung voters.... In Dimapur, Ram Swaroop, a rickshaw puller, was offered Rs. 100/- by the Congress(I). A 10-year-old boy who voted under fictitious

name of Bijoy Das for the fee of Rs. 18/- was just one among the long queues of children waiting to cast their ballot. And though the 1981 Census had recorded the town's (Dimapur—ours) population as 19,367, over 31,000 persons voted" etc. So this is the picture of the Nagaland election in which the Congress(I) came out victorious with a narrow majority with 35 seats followed by the Nagaland People's Council (NPC) which bagged 24 seats.

Let us now turn to Mizoram and see what role the Congress(I) played to capture power there. The Congress which claims to be the protagonist of secularism had nefariously indulged in communal and religious politics espousing Christianity and preparing a queer punch of Christianity and socialism to woo the predominantly (90 per cent) Christian population with the active help of the 10 denomina-

tions of churches. The Congress election posters and badges say: "Mizo Leh Kristian-te tan I vote ang u" which means that "for Mizos and Christianity let us vote for the Congress(I). *The Statesman* (Calcutta edition—16th January issue) writes: "...on the other hand the Congress(I) like any other regional party pledged not only to safeguard the rights and interests of the Mizos but also 90 per cent of the Government posts under Government of Mizoram for Mizos and even revived trading by non-tribals regulation, which prohibits non-Mizos from doing business in Mizoram.... However, according to the Mizoram Congress, the Congress(I) socialism is again 'Christian Socialism'... The Congress(I) policy of socialism is based on biblical teachings as well as traditional ethos of the Mizos through which alone justice can be established.... The Congress(I) knowing the importance of the church in the politics of Mizoram, has nominated four church-elders... in the Congress(I) election manifesto it is written as Christians it is our bounden responsibility to proclaim the gospel... it is but reasonable that the Christians should lend support to the Congress(I)." Over and above money played an important role in bringing the Congress(I) to power through total rigging. Alleging this charge of total rigging the 14 MLAs of Mizo National Front (MNF) under Mr. Laldenga totally boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the ministers.

In case of Tamil Nadu, too, the Congress(I) besides spending huge sum of money tried to tickle on the religious sentiments especially of Hinduism, through seeking the blessings of Joyendra Saraswati, the Adi Sankaracharya of Kanchi Perham. The leaders including Mr. Rajiv Gandhi went to the mosques to pray, to the churches for singing choirs

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Thousands rally against Left Front's education policy

Founded on the people's urge and response, a fresh surge of movement against the anti-people language and education policy of the 'Left Front' Government has started rolling across the State of West Bengal.

A few years back the people of the State had joined in a massive movement under the *Siksha Sankochan Birodhi O Swadhikar Raksha Committee* to protest and resist the CPI(M)-led Front Government's policy which eliminated English from primary education,

at all levels, to restrict thereby the common people's access to higher education and their right to comprehensive education, is now coming true.

Pursuant to the decision, of a State-level convention held on 8 January a sit-in demonstration was held on 3 February from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. at Sidho-Kanhu Dahar (Esp'anade East) in Calcutta in demand of reintroduction of English at primary level, abolition of 'no-detention' scheme and revocation of the unscientific syllabus for English at secondary level. People from different walks of life took part in this demonstration. More than 20 thousand had come in processions from different districts. Distinguished educationists, writers, scientists, journalists, teachers and professional people, including Dr. Pratul Chandra Gupta (ex-Vice-Chancellor, Visva Bharati and Rabindra Bharati University), Sri Sailesh De, Arabinda Nath Bose (ex-Vice-Chancellor Jadavpur University), Sri Haladhar Patal, Dr. Tarun Majumdar, Prof. Jyoti Bhattacharya (former Education Minister), Prof. Anandadev Mukherjee, and distinguished leader of cultural-educational movement of the State, Comrade Manik Mukherjee, participated in the demonstration.

Abject surrender to the US : Com. Mukherjee

Reacting sharply on the compensation to the Bhopal gas victims, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI described the paltry sum of US \$47 crores, in view of the extensive damage the people of Bhopal suffered, as an abject surrender of the Government of India to the US multinational and its government. The amount is so meagre that it will appear as a mockery to the families of the dead and affected and is an utter neglect and insult to human life.

downgrading language education in general, and introduced a 'no detention' scheme at this level. The people's apprehension that the Front Government was actually aiming at downgrading the teaching of English

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL

Will Reduce Our Country Virtually To A 'Police State'

Despite withdrawal of the mischievous Defamation Bill unconditionally under the impact of countrywide condemnations and protests particularly by the Press community, we, in the pages of this paper, sounded a note of caution inasmuch as the Bill was not the sole weapon sought by the Union Government to subvert civil rights in the country. Contrary to its liberal veneer lawless laws, draconian in content seeking to destroy the remnants of democratic rights and civil liberty, are galore in the armoury of its weapons. Then few people were in the know that Rajiv Government was waiting in the lurch with a piece of legislation with no less destructive potential than the just withdrawn infamous Defamation Bill. That was the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 1988. Besides, legislations pending in the Parliament vest with the Government to intercept mail; make trade unions imbecile by depriving the working class of its fundamental rights to strike, collective bargaining and freedom of association; prevent the medical and teaching fraternities from any major agitation in the future.

It goes without saying that both the Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure were the legacy of the British imperialist rulers of our country aiming at ruling India with an iron hand suppressing all democratic movements for national independence and other democratic demands. The motive was as clear as daylight: to perpetuate their imperialist rule over our country. This imperialist outlook and attitude towards the then freedom and democratic aspirations of our people could not but be reflected in the laws framed and the legal and judicial systems introduced in our country by them. The Indian Penal Code and for that matter the Code of Criminal Procedure Act is no exception to this general rule. The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, though enacted in the post-independence era, carries the same legacy of the colonial past and it is a shame that such law still reigns supreme as the 'Bible' to the so-called custodians of law and order even after forty years of gaining national independence.

The present amendment, coming as it does, under the garb of removing certain snags or lacunae, as if to reflect democratic aspirations of the people, seeks deletion and inclusion of quite a

number of Sections and even after that, vests the police with unlimited power to harass, punish and even kill the people and suppress their democratic rights on this or that plea. Some leading jurists have opined that when the Bill, 1988 is entered in the Statute Book, the police will be empowered to harass any individual they like. Not only that; they can implicate any innocent man in a criminal case in the name of investigation. As one analyst advocate held out that the authors of the Bill in question had put the independence of the judiciary in peril and intended not only "to manacle judicial discretion in respect of bail and trial but also to subjugate the judiciary to the executive as well as to the police control." (*The Statesman*—15.12.88). They have argued that if the fundamental rights to freedom, life and justice are gone, what else then remains and what would the people do with mere freedom of speech and expression? Actually, what they missed in their reading is that with the burial of fundamental rights to freedom, not only rights to freedom, life and justice are gone, alongwith it is also gone everything!

The proposed amendments relate to Section 9, 20, 46, 53, 54, 82, 167, 173, 190, 437, 438 be-

sides inserting Sections like 25A, 436A, 441A, 441B, 441C. Instead of loading this article with examination of each and every amended Section, we would, rather concentrate on some salient aspects of the amendments which portend a grave threat to civil rights in the country. Let us see, now, how ominous is the purport and object of this amendment. The most revealing insertion of the Section 25A turns prosecutor into persecutor. By the token of this Section the State Government is empowered to establish a Directorate of Prosecution consisting of a Director of Prosecution and as many Deputy Directors of Prosecution as it deems fit. The Head of the Directorate of Prosecution shall function under the administrative control of the head of the police administration in the state. And every Deputy Director of Prosecution shall be subordinate to the Director of Prosecution. As a bid to the creation of the Office of Directorate of Prosecution under the overall control of the police administration, appointments of Public Prosecutor | Special Public Prosecutor | Additional Public Prosecutor to conduct cases in district courts and Asst. Public Prosecutor subordinate to the Director of Public Prosecution and Deputy Director of Public Prosecution respectively, which, thus paves the way for police tyranny by demoting the Office of the Public Prosecutor.

Significantly, while citing the recommendations made by Law Commission and the National Police Commission the framers of this Bill have introduced the amendments in the Bill, the revealing recommendations contained in the 14th Report of the Law Commission with regard to appointment of Public Prosecutor has been given a silent burial. It specifically recommended that public prosecutors should be independent of Executive or police control and

that an independent official designated "Director of Public Prosecutions" should be appointed. Instead, turning the Law Commission's proposal upside down, they have subjugated the public prosecutors to Executive and Police control. A trial which, in a word, is a search for truth, cannot be done by a public prosecutor, "...securing convictions or with satisfying departments of the State Government with which he has to be in contact", the proposed statutory executive or police control, would only have undone this truth and cast a shadow of cloud on the fairness of trial.

After amendment of sub-Section (3) of Section 46, instead of restraining the police, it will continue to encourage "encounter deaths", the catchword for the police, as before. This apprehension gets inkling from the reading of the sub-Section which says: "Nothing in this Section gives a right to cause death of a person who is not accused of an offence punishable with death or with imprisonment for life" or "is not a proclaimed offender declared under sub-Section (4) of Sec. 82."

In the matter of arrest of female accused, time and again the voice of public conscience always demanded not to arrest female accused at night, that is during the period between sunset and sunrise. Instances of indignities to women have assumed such an alarming proportion that any right-thinking person cannot but be shocked. Police, said to be the custodian of law and order, are the worst offenders in these most heinous acts. With impunity they are outraging the modesty of helpless women here and there and even within police lock-ups all over the country. Apart from boundless savageries perpetrated by the police systematically in quick intervals in different parts of Bihar and U.P., after Arwal massa-

cre, countless instances of indignities to and molestation of women have come to light. Parasbigha, Dohiya, Arwal, Muzaffarpur etc., in Bihar or Narainpur in U.P., to mention a few, are not the only places where police ran berserk with loot, savagery and rape on the hapless women. These are incidents of a slur on any civilized society and put to shame the social system.

Alarmed at the instances of rape in the police custody in particular, the Parliament enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1983 by incorporating stringent measures with an ostensible purpose to debar the female accused from being detained at night in police custody. When, therefore, policing has become the "sources of oppression and torture on the innocent" and the perpetrator of indignities and molestation to women, the authors of this Bill, invoking the brunt of "exceptional circumstances" have perhaps deemed unwise to exempt the female accused from being arrested at night! By allowing the police the loophole of so-called "exceptional circumstances", the framers of this Bill, for all practical purposes, have invited them to plead "exceptional circumstances" in all cases. Thanks to invoking of "exceptional circumstances" either backed by mere written permission or a written record prepared by the police officer it is anybody's guess how it would guarantee the safety and dignity of a woman arrested at night!

Then again, the proposed amendments to existing laws relating to bail in the case of non-bailable and cognizable offences threaten both liberty and justice alike. Whereas at present the police can arrest a person without a warrant as also in cases of anticipatory bail, it rather seeks to debar a person from having any liberty to move the Court for justice.

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far less to speak of quicker delivery of justice and consequently minimising the detention without trial. Over and above, by imposing restrictive conditions under sub-Sec. (a), (b) and (c) to Sec. 437, it gives power in imprisoning people on flimsy grounds than in investigating crime. One can easily guess what an ordeal awaits such detenus! The proviso to Sec. 437 says that "no person shall, if the offence alleged to have been committed by him is punishable with death, imprisonment for life, or imprisonment for seven years or more, be released on bail by the court under this sub-Section (1) without giving an opportunity of hearing to the public prosecutor." To make things worst confounded this Section empowers the court to impose restrictive conditions spread over in three sub-Sections. Is it not ludicrous and preposterous too, to demand of a person seeking 'bail', inter alia, "...the accused shall not commit an offence similar to the offence of which he is accused, or be suspected of doing so?" The ominous outcome is a free-hand to the police to prolong detention by arresting newly released suspects on false charges of commission of similar offences. Not only does it place liberty at the mercy of the police but also in a word negates justice by delaying it. Thus, the search for delayed justice becomes at the same time both expensive and tortuous making the ordinary citizens to fall a prey to it. In fact, the Bill is bent on encouraging detention rather than quicker investigation inasmuch as whereas the existing laws allow the detention of an accused for a maximum period of 90 days when the investigation cannot be completed in 24 hours, the proposed amendment will allow further detention for a maximum period of 180 days.

Another dreaded aspect relates to conduction of investigation. Here we

find that in the name of effective investigation, the police would have the right permanently to infringe on the fundamental rights which even the black Emergency did not sanction under Art. 359, by virtue of Sec. 436A read with the proposed conditions that the Sec. 437 and 438 impose.

From an overview of some of the most important aspects that the amendments to existing provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) seek, no well-meaning and democratic minded person is in quandary as to see through what it portends. Clearly, it is designed to total concentration of power in one of the permanent wings of the State, negating the very basis of democracy and facilitating thereby a lever to an authoritarian force. Strangely enough, the framers of the Bill make us believe the other way round: as if to prevent any onslaught on our 'national integrity' and security by terrorists and secessionists, the Bill has been introduced. The questions emerging uppermost in this background are whether the existing hosts of draconian laws lying in readiness with the armoury of the Government has been proved to be ineffective in dealing with criminals or those conniving against the people's interest? We were told, enactments of NSA, the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Court) Act, Terrorism and Separatist Activities Act were intended to eliminate terrorism in Punjab in the main, although we had the bitter experience of it being widely enforced elsewhere in the country as well. The spate of draconian laws, one after another, has been framed providing special and extraordinary powers in the hands of the police. Ultimately, the state has been brought under President's Rule superseding an elected Government. Far from the Punjab problem being solved in the least, the daily killing of common people

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has been alarmingly risen plunging the state into a reign of terror and what not!

Despite the portentous design with which the proposed amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code are intended to, the most revealing aspect of this exercise is as clear as daylight which cannot go amiss. As we know, ostensibly to meet the Punjab situation, the Central Congress(I) government enacted series of draconian Acts including NSA, TADA, etc. With a view to equipping itself with wide range of application throughout the country, the Rajiv Government has now come up with the proposed amendments to the CrPC designed to serve the very purpose with which those draconian laws were enacted to deal with the Punjab situation. The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, in conjunction with the 59th Amendment to the Constitution, will provide the Rajiv government with free hand to deprive the people of the country, as a whole, of the fundamental democratic rights—even the vestiges of rights still clinging to the people after the host of black Acts of all these years have stripped them of.

Added to it, a manifest attempt is discernible for sometime past to create a 'committed' Judiciary subservient to the government with avowed objective of making the Judiciary committed to the ruling party and not to the people. Assiduous efforts are being made to keep the Media under total government control and subvert and browbeat the Press. The machinery of Election Commission at the Centre or the States is gradually being made to act according to the dictates of the ruling parties to influence and manipulate the results of the elections from Panchayats to Parliament and thereby reducing the election process to sheer mockery. The genuine aspirations

and demands of the people are being not only ignored but ruthlessly suppressed and the voice of the people is being muzzled by both the Central and the State Governments. The police instead of discharging their lawful duties of preventing, curbing and unearthing ever-increasing crimes in the society and guaranteeing security to the citizens and bringing real culprits to book, today themselves constitute the greatest threat to the people. People everywhere are experiencing unbound savagery of police atrocities. Carrying the colonial legacy and even surpassing the past events of black deeds, the police beat up, torture and maim people in police custody, burn villages, kill people, take the innocent into custody on concocted charges, murder opponents of the ruling parties in cold blood and spread stories of 'armed encounters' or stories like 'suicide' in lock-ups by persons killed while being tortured; they even molest and rape women in public places and even in custody. Ghastly crimes like forcible blinding of people in Bihar a few years back, reminiscent of the dark ages, have been committed by the police in custody.

Years back, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the departed great leader of the proletariat, gave a brilliant analysis of colonial legacy in police highhandedness, its further growth and erosion of whatever administrative neutrality that used to be there. In his words: "...The tradition of the British days when the police, being the protector of law, used to trample the laws themselves in consultation with the landlords and their agents (Naibs)-these traditions not only still persist but have grown... They are framing false charges against the people round the clock. The press and people know, the political leaders too know how work is done in police stations. First they arrest one, and then decide under which Section charges are to be framed against him so

that he will not get bail and come out. This is decided and fabricated at the police station by those who are the protectors of law! ... A simple thing: if there be no decency in the conduct of the administration of a country, especially in a major component of administration like the police, if there be no serious concern about the laws, if there be no outlook of neutrality even in the relative sense and if police administration is not guided by a democratic outlook with sympathy to the people—how then will democracy remain in the country?..." (Extract of Speech on 24th April, '73—free translation ours—Ed.)

This savage and lawless conduct of the police drew the comment of an eminent jurist of our country, Justice A. N. Mullah: "There is not a single lawless group in the whole country, whose record of crime anywhere nears the record of the organised unit which is known as the Indian police force." Mind it, this historic remark came from a personage having no affiliation with political trends in the country and who through his lifelong experience in juridical processes, could describe the police force with such a scathing but vivid manifestation of its real character on the anvil of jurisprudence. The tragedy is that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parliamentary parties never came forward in pursuit of a democratic norm and decency in the police system grasping the grave consequence of the observations made by Justice Mullah!

The Congress which ruled almost uninterruptedly since Independence could not feed the people, could not solve the economic crisis, we all know it. We also know, it is a party of the Indian bourgeoisie and it serves their aggregate interest. The savage rule perpetrated by the Congress in Bihar, UP, MP, etc. is a clear manifestation of what they stand for: it is not

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AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE

EVIL DESIGN BEHIND CENTRE'S POLICY

At a seminar organized by the West Bengal State Save Education Committee held on 20th December, 1988 in Calcutta, Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta discussed the issue of Autonomous Colleges. In view of importance of the issue and considering that the discussion will help form a correct and comprehensive attitude towards this new scheme which is an integral part of the Central Government's new National Policy on Education, we publish hereunder a slightly abridged text of the speech.

—Editorial Board, Proletarian Era.

Although I am a member of the Save Education Committee, I feel I should accord my heartfelt thanks to the organizers of this seminar, especially to the members of the AIDSO, who were the first to raise their voice and who had in fact built up a strong movement against the anti-people National Policy on Education, 1986. I would like to say here that teachers and educationists having concern for education should have come forward to oppose this disastrous policy at a very early stage, unfortunately no move in fact was made on their behalf. It should be remembered, three Regional Save Education Committees have been formed for organising movements against this policy and these Committees together drafted and published a 'Draft Alternative Education Policy', being an alternative to the NPE—the draft was placed at the Delhi Seminar on August 14 last. The draft has been put on circulation throughout the country for seeking opinions from teachers, students and educationists so that it may be given a final shape.

Today's topic is 'autonomous colleges'. In my thinking, education is so important a matter that if a wrong step is taken in regard to its policy formulation it can have disastrous consequences not only on this generation but on the nation as a whole for years to come. It needs serious examination and pondering over policy formulation and requires much tolerance to listen to an opponent's view in order that any element of truth in the opponent's view may be accepted.

Conceptually, autonomy of education has both a limited and a broader perspective. Going through the history of education, we find that the concept of autonomy had its origin at a definite stage of social development and a definite stage of development of education. It marked freedom of education in general, of educational institutions as well, and was hailed by people as something cherished and worthy of emulation. But with change in society, you can see again, this autonomy could not be preserved. It began to be curtailed by the rulers of the society at a particular stage. Why it could not be preserved is not the topic of discussion now. Because there is hardly any scope to this discussion for want of time here.

But it should be made clear at the outset that the concept of autonomy in educational institutions has got no connection with the present policy of autonomous colleges though the word 'autonomy' is common to either. Precisely for this reason I strongly oppose this new proposal for autonomous colleges, though I am wholly in favour of autonomy of educational institutions. It is a different matter, however, whether the idea reflected in the report of the Kothari Commission on autonomous colleges were feasible or not, or what would have been the outcome if it were implemented. But its very contention appears to me acceptable. The reports stated that autonomous colleges should be launched to ensure cultivation of knowledge

and search for truth free from regimentation of thoughts as well as pressure of the party in power or from power politics. I found I had nothing to differ from this object as stated in the Kothari Commission. The proposal of the present government is poles apart, drifting far from the contentions of the Kothari Commission. This will be clear more particularly from the propositions in the NPE '86. The earlier documents like the *Challenge of Education: a Policy Perspective* or the *Programme of Action* were indicative but going through UGC's guidelines on autonomous colleges and other related documents I am fortified in my belief that this concept of autonomous colleges has nothing to do with autonomy of educational institutions. Some may think that out of political bias we are opposing this policy but there is hardly any truth in this argument. Those who have found 'autonomy' in this system, try to argue that since, right from admission of students and recruitments of teachers to drafting courses of study, question paper setting, examining the answer-scripts and even conferring degrees—works which are generally associated with higher education—are to come within the purview of the authorities of the autonomous colleges then why this hue and cry that there will be no autonomy. These colleges will also have the right to remodel the present outmoded courses. All this, they argue, emphasises that there will be autonomy in the autonomous colleges. Let us examine how far this is true.

We should do well to remember that every college is not going to be made autonomous. According to UGC recommendations a council, namely 'Accreditation and Assessment Council' has been formed to ac-

credit colleges as autonomous step by step. Except those which will be recognized in the first place, others have to go through some rigorous stages—first they will be kept on 'probation' period and if they cannot satisfy the council within the stipulated period, they will be granted more time. But despite all this if any one fails still it will never be accredited the autonomous status. On the other side, the fortunate ones will be assessed from time to time and the Council has the discretionary right to withdraw recognition of any college if it considers that college unfit and this revocation means discontinuation of all earlier government aids, however meagre that may be which will ultimately lead to virtual closure of the institution. Then what sort of autonomy is it? Is it not giving autonomy with one hand and robbing it away with the other?

Secondly, the governing body of each such college will not be elected but will consist of nominated and ex-officio members. Thirdly, one single code of conduct for the teachers will be formulated which will debar the teachers from participating in any form of democratic movement. We all know that teachers have to join agitations, maybe to protest against any onslaught on the teaching community or to demand for the uplift of education because, this cannot be done by any individual teacher, and here arises the necessity of forming an association. Should necessity arise they have to build the organisation for launching movement—be it for educational issues or for the question of democratic rights of teachers, students and all connected with education, and not for any petty-political issue. But the proposed code of conduct of teachers will stand in the way clearly, thus the real design behind the code of conduct is to ul-

timately strip the teachers of their democratic rights. Similarly, students will also be debarred from staging agitations and this is the form of 'democracy' students and teachers will enjoy in the autonomous colleges!

Fourthly, under the prevailing condition the teacher's recruitment in these autonomous colleges will be inevitably 'market oriented', i.e., the teachers in those subjects will be appointed in large number which have a higher market value and this number may decrease as the demand may fall. That means, the appointment will be on contractual basis, which is, too, alarming and humiliating. This inhuman system of contract labour which is very much in vogue in the case of industrial labour and office employee and which the well meaning people have condemned and demanded for withdrawal was unheard of in the teaching profession. This contract system, I think, portends a grave danger. If there is any fault in my reasoning, please point it out.

There will be two categories of autonomous colleges. In the 7th Plan period the Central Government plans to accord autonomous status to 500 colleges, and during the next five-year period the remaining colleges will be converted into either autonomous or semi-autonomous one. Those which will be fully disaffiliated from the universities will be called autonomous and the others which will remain under some control of the universities will fall into the second category. Moreover, in mid-September, 1988, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) resolved to reduce the universities not only to non-affiliating but also to non-teaching bodies, and this they claimed as attempt to replace the century-old tradition with a new one. And what is that new idea? The universities will be stripped of the rights of tea-

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ching, and even Mr. Anil Bordia, the Union Education Secretary and Dr. Yaspal, the UGC, Chairman, recommended this. The consequences of the new idea will be that hereafter the universities will have only to bear some administrative responsibilities with no business to teach and disseminate knowledge. If this becomes the reality, what fate awaits the universities is not difficult to grasp.

In favour of this scheme, the policy-makers are advancing two 'arguments'. One, under the mounting pressure of holding examinations, examining answer papers and publishing results, the universities are overburdened and the government's drive is toward freeing them from this Administrative pressure. As if the present erosion of standard is caused due to the high pressure of administrative works! The queer thing is that they started with the pleas of removing excessive official works and ended with placing the universities to bear only administrative responsibilities.

Now, this argument of over-burden of work is nothing but a pretext since one will recall that the University of Calcutta once bore the entire burden of North Bengal, Burdwan, Midnapore, Assam and the present Bangladesh even and also conducted examinations at the matriculation and intermediate levels, but none could raise the question of fall in standard. Had there been an honest attempt on the part of the government it could have advised decentralization of the administration. But without doing that why they are out to take away the rights of teaching and to impose only administrative works and that with the plea of mounting pressure of official jobs? How can we name this an honest attempt?

The other high-sounding argument is the

'mediocrity' of the Indian universities for which the affiliation of colleges by universities is being held responsible. Calling this affiliation system a legacy of colonial rule, they argue that as soon as the colleges will be disaffiliated, the standard of education will improve. But the fact is that during the golden era of the Calcutta University a host of front-ranking and noted personalities emerged in the field of education and culture from the affiliated colleges. From these colleges with their rich tradition, this university could gain so much fame. In these colleges taught so many good teachers whose achievement was beyond question. Then where in the affiliation system lies the so-called stumbling block against progress of education?

True, the standard of education is fast declining and just an attitude of apathy to work is prevailing now a days. So it needs a deep probe into the matter to trace out the real cause behind it. But without taking this strain, if any reform or patchwork is attempted, will there be any real solution to the problem? Those who are pointing out the limitations are prescribing new therapy under the garb of dazzling theories but it is doubtful whether they will at all be able to break the ice.

Next, among the host of new propositions, there is clause like evaluation of teachers. Four modes of evaluation have been stipulated—the first one is self-evaluation. True, if those who are teachers in the real sense of the term and have willingly chosen this noble profession do not evaluate themselves and continuously upgrade their level of teaching they can not even maintain the present standard also. The second is evaluation by seniors and peers; the third by the head of the departments or institutions. And the fourth is evaluation by students. These proposals apparent-

ly sound good but how far they are applicable in our country and what serious consequences these will most likely have on education, if imposed from above is anybody's guess. I could only request you to ponder over the matter very seriously.

I intend to draw your attention to another feature. There will be no hard and fast rule for subject selection in autonomous colleges — no compulsory subject and only three subjects at the post graduate level. The funny thing is that any student may take any one subject from Humanities, another from Science and the third, say from Commerce—as if they are to become jack of all trades; but that will make them master of none. For, if this be the mode of subject selection, there will be no scope for acquiring comprehensive knowledge. In the previous system a student of Science had to select the subjects of science in a combination like Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics or Life Sciences and such was the case for other branches too. Though there exists a difference between the subjects of the same branch a close interlink is also there and for that only a well-knit and comprehensive knowledge developed in the learners. So the new system is nothing but a conspiracy to create a generation of fools in the name of education. I fail to understand how knowledge will be disseminated this way, how personality is to be fostered. I think, it is a dangerous scheme. At the same time we should note, too, that the ruling 'Left Front' in state has already introduced the same method of subject selection through its brain-child i.e., 'interdisciplinary' course of study at the degree-level and so they may rightly claim to be pioneers in this field.

From the message of Dr. S. K. Mukherjee you

came to know of the bitter experience of the 18 autonomous colleges in Tamil Nadu. The report of the Association of University and College Teachers, there, of which I had got a copy, says how the teachers' expectations for more freedom in the new system have been proved false and far from reality, and has rather become counter-offensive in regard to academic freedom. This bitter experience has forced them to demand for earlier system. The present system has all the potentiality to give birth to corruption and this happened in one of the colleges. The son of the principal of a college who got plucked twice earlier secured first position in two consecutive examinations after the college had become autonomous. For a bad student to become a good student is not an impossibility but, here you see there is something miraculous in the very system of autonomous colleges. So the system to my opinion will open the floodgate of nepotism and corruption and more such miracles are likely to recur in future. When the country's moral standard is in a shambles, the same casts its spell on the field of education and more corruption will vitiate the arena of education, let alone the private institutions.

Noticeably, those who are advocating the new system are much vociferous against the British legacy and are exploiting the anti-British popular sentiments among the people at large. But how are they doing away with the imperialist legacy? They are importing this system which is much in vogue in the USA for a long time and to some extent in Japan and Canada. Thus one imperialist 'machination' is being replaced by another! However, from where this scheme has been borrowed is not the point if only it were aimed at bringing good to our education. But the most im-

portant point is: When is this necessity being felt? When a total 'overhauling' of education is being felt necessary from the viewpoint of profit and loss of the owners.

Moreover the entire education will be managed and governed by bureaucratic apparatus from the top as it has been crystal clear from the proposed structure of the 'Accreditation' and 'Assessment Council'. This Council will comprise the representatives—may be the Principal or Vice-principal — of the twenty of the first lot of colleges to be recognised autonomous, who will in turn select its Chairman and Associate Chairman. The UGC will nominate the Director, the Associate Director and the Secretariat of the Council. The colleges to be recognised afterwards will be eligible for sending only observers to the Council. This it is clear that the entire system will virtually remain under the total control of bureaucracy.

But why is this all-out plan to curtail education? On one hand it seeks to keep the body-politic of the country illiterate and ignorant, and on the other to save itself from the discontent of the growing number of educated unemployed. Whatever employment potentiality was there, it is contracting owing to indiscriminate use of computers and modern technologies in offices and industry. I am not opposed to computers or modern technologies as such, because these are the contribution of modern science. But this should not be considered in isolation, without taking into cognizance the total perspective and the field of education. Modern technology is made for man for his welfare, but if it is so used as to put hundreds of thousands of people out of job what will be their future? No doubt the present economic system of the country is responsible for that and not the computers or modern technology. Had it been the case that with advancement

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ching, and even Mr. Anil Bordia, the Union Education Secretary and Dr. Yaspal, the UGC, Chairman, recommended this. The consequences of the new idea will be that hereafter the universities will have only to bear some administrative responsibilities with no business to teach and disseminate knowledge. If this becomes the reality, what fate awaits the universities is not difficult to grasp.

In favour of this scheme, the policy-makers are advancing two 'arguments'. One, under the mounting pressure of holding examinations, examining answer papers and publishing results, the universities are overburdened and the government's drive is toward freeing them from this Administrative pressure. As if the present erosion of standard is caused due to the high pressure of administrative works! The queer thing is that they started with the pleas of removing excessive official works and ended with placing the universities to bear only administrative responsibilities.

Now, this argument of over-burden of work is nothing but a pretext since one will recall that the University of Calcutta once bore the entire burden of North Bengal, Burdwan, Midnapore, Assam and the present Bangladesh even and also conducted examinations at the matriculation and intermediate levels, but none could raise the question of fall in standard. Had there been an honest attempt on the part of the government it could have advised decentralization of the administration. But without doing that why they are out to take away the rights of teaching and to impose only administrative works and that with the plea of mounting pressure of official jobs? How can we name this an honest attempt?

The other high-sounding argument is the

'mediocrity' of the Indian universities for which the affiliation of colleges by universities is being held responsible. Calling this affiliation system a legacy of colonial rule, they argue that as soon as the colleges will be disaffiliated, the standard of education will improve. But the fact is that during the golden era of the Calcutta University a host of front-ranking and noted personalities emerged in the field of education and culture from the affiliated colleges. From these colleges with their rich tradition, this university could gain so much fame. In these colleges taught so many good teachers whose achievement was beyond question. Then where in the affiliation system lies the so-called stumbling block against progress of education?

True, the standard of education is fast declining and just an attitude of apathy to work is prevailing now a days. So it needs a deep probe into the matter to trace out the real cause behind it. But without taking this strain, if any reform or patchwork is attempted, will there be any real solution to the problem? Those who are pointing out the limitations are prescribing new therapy under the garb of dazzling theories but it is doubtful whether they will at all be able to break the ice.

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AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE

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and allout utilisation of technology, employment potentiality was getting increased and nobody would be thrown out of job and there would be unrestricted scope of education for all, who would object to modernisation? If modernisation means swelling of the money-bags of the capitalists on the one hand and starvation and death for the common people on the other then in no way can it be supported.

The living soul of education, let us recall, is its commitment to the task of rousing social consciousness. Does it befit an educated person to remain content with his own self? Can we remain content with the autonomy of educational institutions without considering that if the socio-political condition of the country is vitiated and there is no proper concept and respect for democracy and freedom among the teaching community then the very autonomy in the academic field cannot be protected in isolation? Can we remain content with autonomy alone in a limited form when the Defamation Bill is out to curb the very right to express or when the amendment of Criminal Procedure Act is going to rob the people of their minimum democratic rights and reduce the country to a police-state? Can the educationists and teachers remain mute spectators to all this?

Whether one should participate in politics or not is a separate subject and it depends on one's individual taste and choice and is not a matter of imposition though, mind it, we are in no way beyond the orbit of politics. But it should be remembered that there are two kinds of politics—one which is practised by the dishonest lots and hated by all. But, side by side, if we would only clear our vision, we will definitely find out that there

are also honest and dedicated people involved in politics with higher cultural and ethical standard who are working for the sake of the country braving death, as we saw during the days of freedom movement. Those could produce such boys who plunged into the current of freedom movement — caring little of their brighter prospects in university examinations. They were the best sons of the soil, fondly called the 'flowers of Bengal'. Then we cannot say that politics is the last resort of scoundrels. This emphasises all the more why the problem of education is to be correctly analysed—why this degradation, why this curtailment or why this distortion of autonomy? We cannot turn a blind eye to the prevailing social and political setup of the country. After forty years of independence, the country is yet to be free from all sorts of exploitation and deprivation and it does still languish in crises in the field of education, health-care and other basic needs of life. Moral degradation is rampant, drug addiction, free spread of obscenity in the name of literature and art are eating into the moral backbone. Can we remain mute spectators to all this? The entire society is degenerated and combined with it is the government's design to protect anyhow this life of the rotten society by destroying the education, culture and morality. The Congress(I) government at the Centre and the 'Left Front' at this state—none wants to lag behind the other! I am constrained to say that education is faced with the most disastrous consequences since independence and the state of West Bengal is not far behind in this respect. Whatever standard and scope are still there will be eroded by National Policy on Education of the Centre and probably we will know how dangerous an education policy is being pursued by the state government—which

is not the subject matter of discussion today. The rapid spread of obscenity and vulgarity is a matter of concern to all well-meaning people. Can we treat problems of education ignoring all this?

The 'Left Front' government has declared that they are opposed to National Policy on Education and as such to the scheme of autonomous colleges. But its Chief Minister who is also a Polit Bureau Member of the CPI(M), Mr. Jyoti Basu, has said 'we oppose it ideologically, but we are not going to resist it'. I cannot follow what peculiar type of ideology it is!

I appeal to you to come forward and join hands with the movement against the NPE of the Centre and the anti-people education policy of the state as well. You may well remember that, after assuming power in 1977 what the Left Front Government very promptly did in the field of education was to snatch away the autonomy of four universities including that of Calcutta, formed nominated Councils and waited for election till the CPI(M) could consolidate its base there so that absolute party control could be established through election. And after conducting election they claimed themselves as democratic. What sort of democracy has been established is not unknown to anybody. It is clear that neither the State nor the Central Government thus at all feels concern for education—their only concern is to establish their own domination.

There may be difference of opinion regarding aims and objects of government's education policy. That needs exchange of opinion and threadbare discussion. My experience is, those who feel concern for education and are educationists in real sense are not satisfied with the government's education policy and are voicing their pro-

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possible for them to accomplish the minimum basic tenets of bourgeois democracy in the country. If they have even the minimum of concern for honest, democratic norms, they should have taken serious notice of how the police of the country, whom they have made guardian of law and order misuse their power day in day out by trampling upon laws. When the excesses of the police brutalities reach a stage that there are protests from the public, even then they do not side with the people but come up in support of the police. Such is the kind of administrative scruple of the Congress rulers!

People in West Bengal know it very well that the CPI(M) led many a militant struggles in the past specially against the police savageries in West Bengal and time and again put the Congress Government to the dock with its accusing finger. But now after assuming power it, far less to speak of acceding to the demands of the open enquiry into police high-handedness, more often than not, rejected these popular demands, relying on the report of the police. Naturally, the people genuinely expected that seated in the government the CPI(M) who so long fell victim to police highhandedness during the Congress regime, would behave in a democratic fashion and intro-

duce certain norms and code of decency for police. But that genuine expectation of the people has been belied. Not only did the CPI(M) leadership, in West Bengal, turned down our urgent democratic demand of bringing about a well-defined, civilized code for police ensuring exemplary and deterrent punishment for the criminal behaviours of police personnel, but what is more, demand for open enquiry into police brutalities had also been turned down by no less a personage than the Chief Minister Mr. Jyoti Basu himself. The spacious plea provided by the CPI(M) off and on was that open enquiry would create 'demoralising effect' on the police force!

Actually, what was needed of the CPI(M) leadership in this opportune situation after ascending governmental power, was to release an all-out effort rallying all Left and democratic parties in the state, to bring about a comprehensive democratic reform in the Police Code and Acts. And actually it falls under the total purview of the State—the Central government has nothing to interfere with it. They shed crocodile tears for the oppressed, and condemned police barbarities just to exploit popular sentiments to be of use in petty parliamentary politics. None of these parties claiming themselves 'Leftist' and 'Marxist' is the believer in the age-old proverb that 'example is better than precept.'

So, whatever demands may, however, be there to bring in changes, any right-thinking man will feel the necessity of restoration, preservation and extension of democratic rights and privileges with the guarantee of its enforcement, and rule of law as a guard against arbitrary and absolute power. And in a parliamentary democracy, nothing should be allowed to be done to erode, in any way, the relative independence of judiciary, test all over the country. In this state, too, distinguished writers, educationists, teachers and journalists are opposing the state government's language and education policy. From amongst them has been formed the Save Education Committee as the platform of action and you should adopt programmes from it. I hope, your movement will be victorious in the long run. Thanking again the organizers of the seminar I conclude my speech here.

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ELECTION

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must not ignore the role played by the bourgeoisie in this elections too. As the ruling bourgeoisie are attempting to bring about two-party democracy in our country on a national plane, they are experimenting this in state levels too. If we analyse the behaviour of the various Chambers of Commerce and the media from the very beginning of the elections, it will be crystal clear how right our assessment is. Thus it is beyond doubt that all the Opposition alliances in Tamil Nadu took shape on opportunistic consideration. In spite of this utter opportunism on the part of the Opposition the people out of their deep indignation towards the Congress(I) rallied behind the alliance which had the potentiality to defeat the Congress(I) and thus made them victorious. But it is to be remembered that a government can only remain pro-people if it encourages the legitimate democratic mass movements, if it controls the police and bureaucracy in regard to day-to-day functioning of the government and maintain non-interference of the police in the democratic mass movements, if it maintains administrative neutrality and tries seriously to free the administration from corruption. The Left must keep it in mind that if a government is not used as an instrument to pave the way for the destruction of capitalism, the source of all evil today, it will instead, crush the democratic movements and use the very anti-people Acts enacted by the Rajiv Government against the people and themselves will be reduced to the instrument of protecting capitalism which bourgeoisie want and for which they extended their support.

We again appeal to all the Left, democratic and Opposition parties to forge a broad-based united front as an instru-

Kerala Save Education Convention

Prof. K. A. Jaleel, former Vice-chancellor of Calicut University, while addressing the 'Save Education Convention' at V.J.T. Hall, Trivandrum on January 20, as the Chief Guest, remarked that the 'New Education Policy' formulated by the Central government is aimed at denying universal primary education and universal literacy. He pointed out that his basic

objection is against the fundamentals of the NEP itself and commented that the draft alternative education policy formulated by the 'All India Save Education Committee' is a document of high standard. Compared to other countries the budgetary allocations for education in India is very meagre and that too is being criminally cut short by the Central government. The NEP, aimed at complete control of education is to be resisted at all costs. He pointed out that, the policy of imparting education to children between the age of 5 and 10 years through non-formal means, while at the same time imparting formal education to a privileged few through Navodaya Schools with all modern facilities at the cost of people's exchequer, is direct treachery to the people.

Former Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University, Prof. Samuel Mathai who inaugurated the Convention, opined that the aim

ment of struggle on the people's various causes and not to look it from the angle of the parliamentary elections alone. If the results of the elections to the 3 states, despite Congress(I)'s total rigging in Nagaland and Mizoram, are any indication it is high time all the anti-Congress(I) forces of all political hues were brought under a common front to build up the countrywide movement against the Congress(I), the main enemy of the people against its various anti-people policies. They will have to understand that this is the most opportune moment when the Congress(I) already riddled with internal squabbles and factional feuds, as evidenced from the incidents, especially of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, will be further disintegrated and weakened after such a severe jolt like the defeat in the Tamil Nadu elections and will not be able to show a united face any further. The nationwide democratic movement can on the one hand accelerate the disintegration of the enemy camp and on the other raise new hope in the minds of the people of our country who cherish the hope of giving a crushing defeat to the Congress(I) which through its 42 years of misrule has pushed the people on the brink of pauperisation and is trying to bring about fascism to perpetuate the rule of the bourgeoisie. History devolves on us this very onerous responsibility.

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of a real education policy should be to impart education to all sections of the common people. By mere teaching of some vocation true education would not be imparted, he added.

Prof. G. Kumara Pillai renowned Malayalam writer in his speech told that the NEP was to be resisted by all means. He lauded the activities of the 'Save Education Committee' whose aim was to formulate a genuinely pro-people alternative education policy through democratic debates and discussions. He pointed out that the right to primary education was a fundamental right of every citizen and it should be held aloft. The main thrust in our policy should be universalisation of primary education. He demanded withdrawal of the Navodaya System. Prof. N. K. Rajagopal, Sri A. K. Ramakrishnan, Sri E. G. Gopalkrishna Panicker and Dr. V. Venugopal also spoke in the convention.

Police State

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its traditional status and powers and the pattern of relative separation of power between the different organs of the state with suitable arrangement of check and balance. Because, this curtailment of status and power of the judiciary, coupled with any move to vest unchallengeable absolute power in the state organ will sound the death-knell of whatever little democratic rights and political liberty of the people now existent in the setup of moribund capitalism and thereby only help accelerate the rise of fascism.

Finally, we would like to appeal to the rank and file, the workers and cadres of all Left, democratic and Opposition parties as well as all Left

and democratic-minded people, all patriotic and peace-loving people to realise the gravity of the situation. We must not lose sight of the fact that attempts to concentrate and centralise unchallengeable absolute powers, knowingly or unknowingly, is being aided by the move or moves undertaken by the parties claiming 'Leftist', 'Marxist' or 'Socialist' to the great detriment of the people's fundamental interests. So no one with even an iota of concern for peril of democracy can stay behind at this critical juncture. All democratic and freedom-loving people and all sections of the masses must now come forward to forge the broadest possible unity against this drift towards the darkest future of our society.

Movement in Muzaffarpur

Anjarul Haque, was shot dead and many injured in Muzaffarpur on 28th January last when the police resorted to firing at Pakari Chatti after the people forced the police to release a truck driver illegally detained by the DSP. Our party took up the issue and demanded adequate compensation to the family of the dead, exemplary punishment to the policeman and a formation of all-party probe committee.

An All-Party Struggle Committee, formed under our initiative, held a mass meeting on 4th Feb. at Muzaffarpur with Com. Shiv Shankar, District Secretary of the party on the chair. Leaders of the CPI, CPI(M) Janata Dal, ISP, MCPI, LD, IPF also spoke. The meeting declared to hold a massive demonstration on 9th Feb. regarding the police atrocity.

Under the pressure of the movement the authority paid some compensation to the victims of police firing and suspended the policemen involved in Kolhna-Paigambarpur gang-rape.

Jabalpur Convention

The Kala Kancon Birodhi Sangharsh Samity formed at the initiative of UTUC(LS) and comprising various central trade unions and mass organisations held a joint TU convention on 28 January at Jabalpur, MP. Com. Bhabani Ghosh UTUC(LS) presided. Com. Prithish Chanda, All India President, UTUC(LS), was the main speaker. Other speakers were Comrades K. D. Sharma (NFPTA), Advocate Bibhuti Datta Jha (CPDRS), D. R. Tiwari (MP-EB Janata Union) and S. N. Pathak (AIDEF). The next day a school of politics was held conducted by Com. Prithish Chanda, veteran C.C. member. Com. Badsah Khan, a Secretary, UTUC(LS), presided.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF—COMRADE NIHAR MUKHERJEE

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