

The Presidential Election

The moves, counter moves and manoeuvres resorted to by the Congress (I) and the parliamentary opposition parties including the CPI and the CPI(M) on the issue of putting up candidates for the coming Presidential election have once more demonstrated the unprincipled, anti-people character of such parties.

It is worthwhile to recount the developments briefly. On May 31 last opposition leaders representing the ten parties Lok Dal, Congress (J), Congress (S), Janata, DSP, BJP, CPI, CPI(M), Akali Dal and the Forward Bloc, without consulting the other opposition parties in the different state legislatures and the country, appropriated to themselves the right of speaking on behalf of the entire opposition and wrote to the Prime Minister requesting her to call them for a discussion to find a "national consensus" on the issue of the Presidential election so that a candidate acceptable to the ruling Congress (I) as well as this self-appointed opposition could be put up. But Smt. Gandhi described this move as a "gimmick" in a statement made at Bhubaneswar and instead of meeting the opposition leaders in a body, she separately met Mr. Chandrasekhar, Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Mr. Charan Singh one by one and tried to read their minds individually without committing anything herself, thus keeping her options open. On 12th, June, Mr. Moopnar, the Congress (I) General Secretary, while briefing the reporters, pooh poohed the idea of a "consensus" candidate and urged these opposition parties to support the Congress (I) candidate since he was likely to win! Announcing that his party had decided to select its own candidate, Mr. Moopnar said, "this was necessary because the President would have to see eye to eye and work in harmony with the Prime Minister, if national administration were to function smoothly." By supporting the Congress (I) candidate, Mr. Moopnar said, "the opposition would pave the way for efficient management of national affairs, preventing any friction between the Prime Minister, who is the Executive Head, and the

President, who has no independent executive authority" (Statesman, 13.6.82).

The Congress (I) went ahead with its plan to nominate its own candidate but postponed announcement of their candidate till the last moment in order to keep the self-appointed opposition leaders guessing and in a fix.

These opposition parties so to say, danced to the tune of Smt. Gandhi and her party and addressed yet one more letter to her, suggesting the name of Mr. Hidayatullah, the Vice President, as the possible "consensus" candidate to succeed President Sanjiva Reddy. What is more, in the same letter they said that if the Prime Minister had some other name in her mind, they would be happy to discuss that too with her, and expressed "distress" at her Bhubaneswar statement distrusting the consensus proposal as a "gimmick" (Statesman, 18.6.82).

Smt. Gandhi replied saying she would place the "opposition" views before her party's Central Parliamentary Board (CPB). Mr. Hidayatullah reportedly declined to stand as the 'consensus' candidate suggested by the opposition while the Congress (I) delayed the CPB meeting till the eleventh hour and meanwhile went ahead with preparations for setting up its own candidate. Outmanoeuvred, the "opposition" cut a sorry figure. Some among them even favoured putting up no candidate at all! Ultimately, as a last resort, they nominated Mr. H.R. Khanna while the Congress (I) announced the candidature of Mr. Zail Singh.

We wish to caution the people that some sinister implications stand out from the conduct of the Congress (I) during these developments. The Congress (I), as the chief

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Com. Nihar Mukherjee, Genl. Secretary, SUCI Condemns: US-Zionist Conspiracy in the Middle East

Calcutta, 1st July, '82

It is a matter of grave concern that the just cause of the Palestinian people for which they have been carrying on heroic resistance struggle is going to meet an worst turn when the last military bastion of the PLO in Lebanon has been besieged by the Zionist military forces nakedly backed by the US imperialists. It is a tragedy of highest

dimension that the Soviet revisionist leadership, the so-called champion of anti-imperialist war and 'friend' of the Palestinian movement stands as a dumb spectator. Right-thinking and democratic minded people all over the world including those in U.S.A. must condemn in one voice the heinous U.S.—Zionist conspiracy in the middle East and stand by the

cause of the Palestinian people in this hour of grave crisis. We call upon our countrymen to mobilise public opinion to set up pressure against Indira Government to compel it to sever diplomatic and trade relations with the U.S.A. and mobilise the non-aligned countries against the Zionist conspiracy and betrayal of the Soviet revisionist clique.

British Piracy in Falklands

Calcutta, 23rd June, '82

Strongly condemning the reoccupation of Falklands and bloodshed of Argentine civilians and soldiers by the British imperialist armed forces, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the SUCI, has issued the following statement:

We strongly condemn the reoccupation of Falklands by the British task force, which consti-

political agent of the ruling bourgeoisie in the country, has been serving them faithfully and all its policies are aimed at strengthening and perpetuating the exploitative capitalist order which is the root cause of all miseries in the people's lives. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader and teacher of the proletariat, showed by brilliant analysis that in this phase of third intense general crisis of world capitalist economy, unable to solve the problems

tutes a clear case of piracy by imperialist aggression and exposes the British imperialist's heinous design to reimpose and extend colonial rule by naked use of military might, particularly in this era. Clearly, the open support of the US imperialist rulers helped the British imperialist Government carry out with success this crime. The role of the present Soviet

revisionist leadership is also particularly deplorable as it failed to come to foil all this naked attack and to take a firm stand against the heinous British imperialist design.

On behalf of the people of the country we demand of the Government of India that: 1) It take initiative to mobilise world opinion, especially opinion of the non-aligned countries, to bring effective pressure on the British Imperialist Government to withdraw its forces from Falklands immediately; 2) It set the example itself by leaving immediately the British Commonwealth of Nations.

We appeal to the peace loving and democratic minded people the world over, particularly to the working class and common people of Britain, to bring pressure on the British Government to withdraw immediately Military forces from the soil of Falklands and its neighbouring areas.

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Resist the Anti-people Language and Education Policies of the Central and State Governments

The latest measures in the field of education taken by the Central and some of the State Governments are not disconnected move anyway. There is, as our Party has been pointing out repeatedly in every analysis of relevant issues, a calculated design at work behind this systematic assault on education, language and culture in the country today. Critical examination reveals that all these measures, no matter the plea made by these Governments, aim at either curtailment of education, or bureaucratic encroachment on autonomy of educational institutions, or elimination of English from the several stages of education, its replacement by Hindi as the official and link language, or undermining the importance of language and literature study as such and, above all, crippling the thinking powers and humanist sense of values of the people. It has to be borne in mind that this is a bourgeois class design against the people. The ruling bourgeoisie, plunged in an all-out capitalist crisis, is shifting every burden of the crisis on to the toiling people in its bid to overcome the crisis and extend its lease of life. It is snatching away the people's democratic rights, stifling their voice of protest and resorting to calculated means to dehumanize them so that their moral fibre breaks down and they cannot rise to resist and foil this fascist design. The ruling parties at the Centre and at the States are taking measures to implement this bourgeois class design, as they have taken on to defend this crisis-ridden capitalism today. In a way this is an inescapable course for them. This is as much true in the sphere of education and culture as in any other sphere. And all the ruling parties, from the Congress (I) to the CPI (M), stand on the same plank. The signboard of the Government headed by them makes no difference. They are in competition rather, and their moves supple-

ment one another to serve the ends of the ruling class. The people must realize the anti-people, anti-democratic character of their policies, as also realize the basic identity in their attitude and approach to the people's problems.

Consider, for instance, the no-detention policy. The CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal made the first move, announcing 'no-detention' in examinations up to class IV. The Central Government has recently taken an even bigger step, announcing no detention up to class VIII. Now, who learns from whom? The plea made in either case is the same. Both 'argue' that its policy is intended to check drop-out, particularly among the rural children. Formerly, we heard both the Congress (I) and the CPI (M) hold English responsible for the high dropout rate at the elementary level and each insisting on elimination of English for its piece of villainy. Now examinations are sought to be made the scapegoat. Indeed, the devil does not want in alibi.

On several occasions earlier we analysed threadbare the root cause of the high drop-out rate especially among the downtrodden children. In our country where 30% of our people are literate and not educated and this is closely connected with the ratio 70% of the people who live under poverty line, this major section of the people are deprived of primary education and among the majority 30% cannot even afford to take care of their wards owing to low income.

The dire economic condition of the 70% of the people living below poverty line and of majority of the rest 30% people demands that the Government must take full responsibility of food, clothing and medical care—the essential requirements for keeping the body and soul together for the children of the above mentioned category of people

and if this is done then and only then these children can continue their study. This emphatically demonstrates that the dire economic distress of our masses and the problem of child labour in particular are responsible for this alarming phenomenon. We need not go again into details of this discussion here, but we should have a clear idea about the place of examination in education.

The 'no detention' policy, meaning automatic promotion, would make the system of examination virtually infructuous. Of course, none with genuine concern for education does consider the existing examination system a model one or one that is free from defects and drawbacks. The need of yearly examination does not arise in those countries where throughout the year intense care is taken to flourish the merits of the students. But it is one thing to seek scientific reorganization of the prevailing system to meet the genuine needs of education and an entirely different thing to make examinations virtually ineffectual. Could one deny that giving lessons and checking lessons are two inseparable parts of teaching? Checking or testing is necessary to ascertain whether and how much students have learnt, where their difficulties lie, and if the kind of teaching needs improvement. Examinations are but a developed form of checking lessons.

Virtual elimination of the examination system, instead of reorganizing the system scientifically, is, therefore, an ill-conceived move—to say the least. It would reduce education into a farce and it tantamounts to virtual negation of education for the vast multitude of our common people. And it also tantamounts to an open invitation to anarchy. One does not have to go far to seek why the 'Left Front' Government or the Centre is so keen today to implement a 'no detention' policy at the

lower levels of education. Students, especially in the rural areas where the vast millions of our people live will be ill-equipped, rather unequipped—when they will be coming out of the elementary level under this policy,—for pursuit of education at the high school level, not to speak of the still higher levels. Clearly, the design is to curtail education—to keep out the vast majority of students from the doors of higher or even middle stage education in order to reduce the pressure of the educated unemployed on the crisis-ridden capitalism.

The same motive can be seen to be at work behind the West Bengal 'Left Front's' another contemplated measure seeking change in the curricular pattern of the higher education. In the existing pattern, the Honours course runs through all the three years at the degree level and the pass course runs concurrently in the first two years. The proposed scheme seeks to eliminate Honours level study from the first three years, restricting the same to the third year only. The idea is to remove disparity between the rural students having little scope for Honours study and the urban students enjoying greater facility and allow only those to enter the Honours course who will have obtained qualifying marks.

Now, it hardly needs an elaboration to explain that an Honours course now covered in two years cannot be done in one year's time—neither in content nor in quality. So the change will turn out to be a built-in eliminator, disqualifying many aspirants for graduation with Honours and for entry to Post Graduate studies next. And how does this scheme remove the disparity between the rural and the urban students? Evidently by levelling the two down to a lower standard. So, this scheme, like the preceding policy of eliminating English, cannot be

adjudged as merely ill-conceived. It is part of a total and coolly calculated design of the ruling bourgeoisie. The design is sought to be implemented not by any overtly forcible means—as the Congress did in the fifties through its Seat Restriction Scheme—but by shrewd, deceptive and covert means.

The Gokak Panel's recommendations for high school language education in Karnataka serve as another instance of how the ruling parties in the country are devising means of one kind or another to eliminate English and foment linguistic chauvinism to disrupt the unity of the toiling masses. The class motive behind these recommendations and the tricks being played by the Congress (I), the BJP, or the CPI, CPI (M) on the issue have been exposed in the previous issue. What must not be missed, however, is that all these parties—their vocabulary and trickery apart—have been conducting themselves identically by shrewdly playing on the people's natural emotions for their mother tongues.

The bourgeoisie is mounting continuous onslaughts in every sphere—economic, political, social and cultural. The gravest danger, however, lies in its onslaught on language, education and culture. Because, as pointed out by our most beloved departed leader, teacher, guide and one of the outstanding Marxist thinkers of the era Comrade Shibdas Ghosh:

"The ruling class in India is engaged in a conspiracy to destroy totally the moral and ethical standards, the character of the nation. They are shrewd to the bone; they know that even by extreme oppression and repression, by keeping starved a nation, people cannot be kept underfoot for long with the help of coercive apparatus of the state, of police and military alone People's power asserts itself and stands up if the masses can keep their moral strength intact and find correct revolutionary ideology."

The CPI (M) - led 'Left Front' Government of
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Convention held on Demand of Railway Bridge Construction

On May 23, last at the Madrasa maidan of Goalpara town a historic Convention was organised in support of the demand on the construction of a Railway bridge on the Brahmaputra at Yagihopa-Pancharatna and also for laying of Railway line on the southern side of the Goalpara district. More than seven thousand delegates participated in this convention. As the authority did not give permission for the open session, a big pandal was erected on the maidan and this pandal was packed to the brim and so, many people listened to the deliberations from outside.

Comrade Benoy Krishna Ghosh presided over the Convention which was inaugurated by Dr. Ananda Charan Das. Comrade Munwar Hussain explained the aims and objectives of the convention. Those who addressed on behalf of the organisers were Principal Karunakanta Raj,

Probodh Chandra Pathak and Professor Bhupen Patgiri. Comrade Probodh Chandra Pathak moved the main resolution which was supported by Professor Chandra Lekha Das. In the said resolution it was resolved that protracted mass movement would be conducted until the demands were fulfilled and with this aim in view a struggle committee was constituted.

As a first phase of the movement the programmes of submitting a memorandum to the Prime Minister, observance of demand day on June 7 and setting up of people's committees in different localities were adopted and according to this decision June 7 was observed as Demand day through wearing of demand badges, holding of innumerable meetings and rallies. After the meetings a memorandum to the Prime Minister was sent through the local authorities.

Anti-people Language and Education Policy

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West Bengal had to retreat twice earlier in the face of massive protest of the people led by eminent educationists, writers and scholars. It had not changed its policy, however, and ordered stoppage of teaching English in primary schools from this year. The 'Left Front' has come to power again and has not withdrawn its disastrous policy. The Central and other State Governments are keenly watching how the CPI (M)-led Front in West Bengal implements the education policy serving the needs of the ruling bourgeoisie. If the 'Left Front' succeeds, the Congress (I) and other ruling parties will follow suit in their own way. So this Congress designed and now CPI (M) implemented anti-people language and education policy will

have to be resisted at all costs. The movement will have to be built and spread throughout the country and particularly in West Bengal now. Guardians, teachers and students in every part of West Bengal have come forward to participate actively in the resistance movement. So widespread and deep has been the impact of resistance that most of the primary schools in villages and towns, many Government schools even, are continuing teaching English defying the Government order. They have not bowed down to the Government's directive. This movement will have to be strengthened and spread further and deeper. Struggle committees will have to be built up from the grass root level in every nook and corner and in every educational institution. That is the

Criminal Apathy of the Orissa Government for Cyclone hit people of the State

Memory fails to recollect any precedent of the kind of devastating cyclone which, people of several districts of Orissa witnessed on 3rd June last. Millions of people were rendered homeless, thousands lost their lives and lakhs of hectares of land were submerged by saline water and rain. The unprecedented cyclone hit the backbone of the coastal people living mostly on the earnings of coconut, banana Jack fruit and the like which were totally destroyed.

But at this critical hour of calamity befalling the people of Orissa, the callous and irresponsible behaviour of the Government is visible everywhere, surpassing all records of the previous Governments. With the passage of more than a fortnight's time, it is shocking to note that relief materials have not yet reached many a place and where it has reached at all, the meagre amount, such as 100 gm or 150 gm of rice distributed per head can hardly touch the fringe of the requirement compared to the volumes of relief materials on war footing in gigantic scale

required to be set afoot right at the moment. Strangely enough, while the Government had announced to pay a meagre amount of Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per family for repairing and re-construction of the damaged houses, the circulars issued to this effect to different Blocks and Tahsils authorities speak of only Rs. 40 for the purpose. As a result, in many a case, not more than mere Rs. 50- was paid to the affected families for the purpose. Hypocrisy abounds in every sphere. But the criminal attitude and approach of the Orissa Government led by Congress(I) found its glaring example when Smt. Gandhi in her hurricane tour of the cyclone hit state, in her characteristic diabolic speech spoke eloquently of the State Government in the field of relief operation. She did not stop there; cunningly she held out a rosy picture of establishing the second steel plant in Orissa with a view to diverting the public mind charged with criminal negligency and irresponsibility in discharge of Government's duty to the ill-fated victims of the

cyclone. In the meantime cholera and other epidemics are spreading like wild fire to which Government is behaving like a silent spectator.

A Government worth the name, must have before it twin objectives—one the immediate task of relief operation and the other the long-term measures for rehabilitation of the surviving lakhs of affected people and to take preventive measures, if any. What is essential now is to combine all the collective efforts of the political parties and organisations as also gearing the entire Governmental machinery in discharge of the supreme task of the moment.

In the horrifying situation now obtaining in the state of Orissa, our party has plunged whole heartedly and chalked out phased programme including placing of Memorandum in mass deputation etc, in order to compel the Government to live up to the occasion so as not to exonerate the Government from the sin it is committing to the people, highlighting the 10 point demands.

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government at the Centre, is surreptitiously moving towards fascism again. By adopting draconian repressive measures, like the NSA and the ESMA, by curbing even relative independence of judiciary that was there, by trying to create a committed judiciary, by concentrating more and more power in the hands of the executive at the cost of the legislature and the judiciary, by forming cliques and coteries in the highest echelons of administration in an attempt to form a servile body of administrative cadres, by trying to reduce the Rajyapals in the different states into mere rubber stamps of the Central Government, Smt. Gandhi's government

has been moving step by step towards administrative fascism in a planned manner, the goal being constitutional dictatorship either by retaining the facade of parliamentary system or through switching over to the Presidential form of government.

This all out regimentation is now sought to be extended even up to the level of the President. In spite of the predominance of the Prime Minister as the Head of the executive, the framers of our Constitution intended and visualised the President to be the guarantor, upholder, and defender of the Constitution. A President, even if he belongs to the ruling party, may

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not always see eye to eye with the fascistic measures of the executive headed by the Prime Minister, and if he is an upright man of integrity and public nature, he may even prove to be a stumbling block to the executive's machination at the behest of the ruling class and play an important role at a crucial moment in safeguarding the meagre democratic rights that the people enjoy. Fakruddin Ali Ahmed or Sanjiva Reddy do not stand in comparison to their illustrious predecessors in terms of stature and public standing, but even then, the ruling class of India and their political agents remember well how it reportedly took a lot of persuasion to make Fakruddin Ali Ahmed agree to the measure of Emergency or the kind of situation that arose after the fall of Morarji Ministry when President Reddy appeared to have the power to make or unmake ministries. Although the 44th Amendment of the Constitution has seen to it that the President is bound by the "aid and advice" of his Council of Ministers, the ruling class and its trusted agent, the Congress (I), do not want to take any risk on this score that might prove an impediment in the path of administrative fascism and constitutional dictatorship. That is why, to be a partyman is not enough, incumbent should be a person who would see eye to eye with the Prime Minister on all issues as Mr. Moopanar said, a person with no integrity or independent stature, virtually becomes yes-man to the Prime Minister. It is no wonder, therefore, that Zail Singh has been nominated as the Congress (I) candidate.

In the scheme of constitution checks and balances designed to ensure proper functioning of the Indian bourgeois democracy,

the stature and relatively independent status of the President was one of the few main deterrents to unbridled exercise of power by the executive and the ruling party. By doing away with it, the Congress (I) now seeks to blot out the last vestiges of even the limited and truncated democratic norms that exist.

What did the self-styled opposition, including those who call themselves leftists and communists, do in this situation? Did they expose this nefarious game of the ruling class and its trusted agent, the Congress (I)? No, they went all out for having a consensus with the Congress (I). Was there ever any doubt that in the given circumstance, the view of Congress (I) would have been decisive even in arriving at a "consensus" and by offering to discuss with Smt. Gandhi any name she might have in mind as the Presidential candidate, had not these opposition parties committed themselves to support her candidate as the "consensus" candidate? Would it be wrong to conclude that these parties were ready to sacrifice the people's interest and come to an arrangement, an adjustment with the ruling Congress (I) Government at the Centre for securing concessions in parliamentary politics? It is to be noted that it was Smt. Gandhi who rejected this overture from these parties but there was no dearth of eagerness on the part of these "champions of the people" to come to terms with her and her party.

We understand if the bourgeois opposition parties conduct themselves in this fashion, but it is painful to note the participation of the CPI and the CPI (M) in this sordid exercise. The sad fact is that they are now leftists only in name and as pseudo-left parties practising social

democratism, they have become parties of the Establishment serving the ruling bourgeoisie even while waving red flags. They have become part and parcel of the bourgeois design to keep the masses embroiled in two-party parliamentary system so that their attention remains confined between this or that bourgeois, petty bourgeois or social democratic parties or combinations as the only possible alternatives and they cannot steer clear of the note of parliamentarianism and take to the revolutionary path which alone is the toiling masses' own alternative. The present exercise is an extension of this two-party concept into the realm of Presidential Election whereby the second alternative of the ruling class sought to come to terms with the ruling alternative, the Congress (I) in order to jointly work out what is "good" for the people, the bourgeois national consensus.

We appeal to the workers and supporters of parties like the CPI and CPI(M) to consider: can parties which call themselves leftists but have in fact become part of the bourgeois political design, act as deterrents to administrative fascism and authoritarianism? When the "Left Front" government in West Bengal crushes mass movements with the same ferocity as any Congress government and openly supports police highhandedness on the people, when they take away the autonomy of universities, schools, colleges and local administrative bodies by dissolving the elected councils and committees through administrative fiat and appoint party men as administrators for such bodies, are they too not guilty of authoritarianism just as the Congress (I)? When Mr. Moopanar asserts that the President should be fully committed to the ruling party, is it not reminiscent of the view

Com. Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary SUCI On The Ensuing Presidential Election

1st July, 1982

Observing the imminent danger of bringing about all out fascism in India by Indira Government through its attempt to concentrate more and more power by various means and introduce Constitutional dictatorship in the country, the Central Committee of our party urged upon the CPI and the CPI (M) to take the issue of presidential election as a political battle and set up such a candidate who is honest, man of integrity and tested in democratic movement.

Let alone giving a principled political fight the attempt for a consensus candidate, in which the opposition parties including

the CPI and CPI (M) were involved only showed apart from anything else, their typical apathy to contest even, which was changed later on forced by compulsion of the situation.

Be that as it may, in a situation when the left parties have miserably failed to field any such candidate and when the ruling Congress (I) following its antipeople design has set up such a candidate who can at best be called an appendage of the ruling party, we can not allow this design to go unopposed and have decided to vote in favour of the only other opposition candidate Mr. H. R. Khanna, an ex-justice of the Supreme Court.

aired by a spokesman of the "Left Front" Government during its first term at the time of appointing Public Prosecutors that for effective functioning of administration, the incumbents for such posts should be believers in the politics of the ruling party?

Had they been truly leftists and communists, the foremost task of the CPI and the CPI (M) would have been to take initiative in building up countrywide united mass movements against the anti-people policies of the Congress (I) Central Government, to resist tooth and nail its draconian repressive measures and to convert the Presidential election into a principled political battle by putting up a leftist candidate for the Presidency on the basis of the mass movements, thus projecting before the people a clear-cut alternative political line with working class angularity as distinct from the pro-capitalist policies pursued by the Congress (I) as well as the bourgeois parties in the

opposition.

What "consensus", what unanimity is conceivable with the trusted political agents of the ruling capitalist class, the Congress (I)? With even an iota of Marxist class approach, it can be perceived that in the class divided society of India where the toiling masses and the ruling bourgeoisie are locked in irreconcilable conflict, there cannot be any "national consensus" representing the aspirations of the whole people, it can only be the consensus of either the ruling bourgeoisie or the exploited toiling masses and there can be no meeting ground between the two. In this battle, an association with a discredited bourgeois force like the Janata, a rotten opportunist party like the Lok Dal, communal forces like the BJP and the Akali's serve the interest of the people? We request the workers and supporters of the CPI and the CPI(M) to ponder.

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