

Severe Capitalist Crisis And Nasty Politics of Cong-BJP-JD-Lefts & Federal Front

The crisis into which parliamentary politics in this country has plunged in the aftermath of the just concluded eleventh Lok Sabha elections is unprecedented both in kind and in dimension. The debacle of the Congress and failure of any of the major contending parties and combines to reach anywhere near to absolute majority have brought in the present uncertainty and instability of government formation at the Centre. The role these parties are playing in the scramble for pelf and power in this situation — the greed and scheme which drove the BJP to sit in government even if for 13 days, the lust which has drawn together the motley crowd of the United Front in disregard of all principles, the crafty game which the Congress is playing with its sly motive to return to power — all this is exposing the ugly face of parliamentary politics and the naked treachery of these parties on the people. Doubtless, this crisis of parliamentary politics is a reflection of the still deeper and all-pervasive crisis in the capitalist economic base itself.

They Share a Common Plank

Strictly, no serious economic, political or social issue had been raised and debated by these parties at the polls. The disinterest towards the election campaign and electoral proceedings which was writ large on the electorate had no precedent either. The ruling

capitalist class, especially the monopoly houses, had a particular stake in these polls, because the entire class wanted the new economic and industrial policy of the Narasimha Rao government to be pursued unhindered and in full cry by the new government after the polls. On the other, it is the same policy which has further aggravated the misery of the common people, causing increased price rise, unemployment, poverty and degeneration of morals and values at every level. Immediately on assumption of power, Atal Behari Vajpayee's minority BJP government had declared without mincing words that the new economic and industrial policy of liberalisation and privatisation would continue to be pursued by it. The other contenders, the NF-LF combine, which has enlarged and renamed itself the United Front to replace the BJP at the Centre with support of the Congress, has strictly no different programmes in this regard. Its major constituent, the Janata Dal, is already pursuing the policy in Bihar and Karnataka where the party is in power. The CPI(M), of course in tune with its character, spits fire on this new economic and industrial policy, keeping in mind people's discontent arising from the disastrous effects of the policy on them. In the states ruled by the Left Front, especially in West Bengal, the CPI(M) and its

(Contd. on page 4)

How Free And Fair was this Election ?

The press and the other mass media are hailing the 11th Lok Sabha elections and elections in six state assemblies as relatively free and fair and crediting Mr Seshan, the Chief Election Commissioner for achieving the same. But how far does this picture projected by the media represent the reality ?

It is a fact that not only our party but almost all the parties at one time or another spoke of rigging in elections. After the 1972 elections, the CPI(M) along with our party alleged total rigging in West Bengal. After the elections in 1977 Mrs Indira Gandhi even spoke of rigging. But curiously when all these parties become victims of rigging, they are vociferous against it, but when these parties are beneficiaries through rigging, they remain mum. They do nothing to do away with rigging in elections. Thus rigging has been assuming an alarming dimension and it has reached such a stage that the credibility of the so-called 'largest democracy' has been at stake. It is from this compulsion that the ruling class has been feeling the necessity of somehow restoring the confidence of the people in this 'democratic process' and it ultimately found in Mr Seshan its messiah. The entire media have been projecting Mr Seshan as a bold and upright officer who can cleanse the election process and make it free and fair. But what do the recently concluded elections demonstrate ? The reality shows how true was our apprehension expressed in our policy statement just before the elections.

The reforms introduced by Mr Seshan were only cosmetic. The restrictions imposed by Mr Seshan in practice helped the parties enjoying the patronage of the ruling capitalist class. Because of the restrictions on the relatively inexpensive methods of propaganda like poster and graffiti, our party was hard hit and could not reach out to the masses in many places. But the big parliamentary parties and many others could flout this restriction with impunity. Apart from the facility of propagating through the radio, the TV and other channels through satellite enjoyed by these parties, they maintained large fleet of cars, carried out incessant propaganda through quite a good number of audio and audio-visual cassettes and employed costly cellular phones on a large-scale for electioneering, thus making a mockery of expense ceiling fixed by the Election Commission. A report published in *The Statesman* on 8th May '96 revealed the mockery of these restrictions on expenditure by the Election Commission. The report states : "Candidates submitted false bills of their election expense. They devised an ingenious way of advertising their candidature through newspapers without letting the Commission think they were spending too much on advertisements. They ensured newspaper patronage in return for hefty sums. While a daily published both from Jamshedpur and Dhanbad has been patronising the Dal nominee, another one published from Jamshedpur and Rourkela has been supporting the Congress nominee Mr K. P. Singh. A prominent Hindi daily from Patna, Ranchi and Jamshedpur, meanwhile

Proletarian Era

Organ of SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
Founder Editor-in-Chief :
COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

Volume 29 No. 13
Rs. 2.00

6th June, 1996
Air surcharge : 5 P.

Cancel Kashmir Elections : SUCI

Reacting sharply to the news of the military managed poll in Kashmir, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI in course of a statement said on 24th May 1996 :

"The unprecedented incident of Indian army personnel in Kashmir rounding up entire villages, forcing the people to go to the booths on penalty of dire consequences and of widespread stamping of ballot papers inside the polling booths by the army personnel themselves and accosting the journalists and seizing their rolls of films nakedly indicates the design of the Indian Government to somehow stage a show of an election in Kashmir, as a proof of the Kashmir people's acceptance of the electoral process, by once again suppressing by military might their genuine aspirations.

"We strongly demand that this army controlled farce of an election be cancelled and a thorough probe initiated by the human rights commission into all incidents of intimidation, coercion and violence before, during and after this election by the Indian army in Kashmir"

SUCI Condemns Israeli Aggression On Lebanon

Strongly condemning the barbaric act of aggression on Lebanon by Israel, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI had said on 19.4.96 :

"No word is adequate enough to express indignation against the wanton bombing of Lebanese people for six consecutive days killing innumerable civilians including children and women.

We urge the Government of India to use its diplomatic channel and ask the Government of Israel to stop this heinous act immediately.

If the Israel Government remains adamant in its posture, the Government of India should immediately snap all its relations with Israel.

We appeal to all democratic, good meaning and peace loving people of the world to raise their strong voice of protest and to demand of their respective Governments to set up pressure on the Government of Israel to stop all acts of aggression on Lebanon."

backs Mr Pradip Kumar Balamchu, the Congress nominee from Singhbhum (S.T.) constituency." Yet all these expenses are only the tip of the iceberg. Their main expenses are for hiring 'volunteers' and criminal gangs, for buying up votes enmasse and for bribing the police and the government staff to facilitate rigging in their favour. Needless to say, the form of expenditure account to be submitted to the E.C. does not have any columns for recording expenses under such heads !

(Contd. on page 2)

How Free And Fair was this Election ?

(Contd. from page 1)

The election itself was marked by large-scale rigging both violent and silent. One can have a glimpse of the magnitude of the partisan role of the bureaucrats in favour of the ruling party from a report published in *The Asian Age* dated 13th May '96. The report states : "Assam's Chief Secretary Arunodoy Bhattacharyya and Director General of police Ranju Das made an unannounced exit from the state on Sunday, leaving the civil and police administration stranded literally 72 hours before the new Asom Gana Parishad led government took over.

"State Finance Secretary Niranjan Ghosh and an Inspector General of police have also left the state from its Borjhaar Airport along with their families. But the authorities were not aware of their destination."

What does this report indicate ? Does it not indicate the partisan role of these bureaucrats to the ruling party ? Or does it indicate the involvement of the administration including the top brass in the administrative rigging ?

The daily newspapers reported of organised false voting, booth jamming, unleashing of terror by organised gangs of hoodlums, "peaceful" or violent booth capturing for stamping the whole lot of ballot papers in favour of the candidates supported by them, violence, looting of ballot boxes and ballot papers, manipulation with the ballots and ballot boxes between polling and counting taking advantage in many places of the extra time available due to the staggering of the poll dates, and manipulations and rigging during counting of the ballot papers spread out all over the country. Poll day malpractice and violence became so palpable in many places that repolling had to be ordered in many hundreds of

polling booths all over the country in Bihar, Assam, A.P., W. Bengal, Haryana, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and other states. Poll time violence took a toll of scores of lives in Bihar, A.P., U.P., W. Bengal and other places. Post poll violence has taken an alarming turn, particularly in Assam where 134 people died. *The Statesman* dated 3rd May '96 reported on Vaishali Lok Sabha Constituency under the caption "Murder of Democracy and the Sound of Silence" that "Bihar's rigging machine at its

best as guardians of law turn a blind eye". It further commented, "...it is peaceful polling that everyone wants. Democracy is being butchered silently but with precision."

In the rural Kultali Assembly Constituency in southern West Bengal, armed CPI(M) hoodlums spread terror over a widespread area much before the election, and on the polling day surrounded the polling booths so that, not to speak of the 14000 voters covered by these booths, even the polling agents of our party, the SUCI, could not enter the booths. Detailed fax reports which had been sent by our party to the

EC had been of no avail. But despite this, the SUCI candidate Comrade Probodh Purkait came out victorious and got elected for the fifth time in a row as an MLA to West Bengal Assembly with a margin of over 10,000 votes. When he was declared elected at the Alipur counting station, Calcutta, a group of CPI(M) cadres pounced upon him and the accompanying party comrades in the presence of a D.S.P. and other government staff and officials. A detailed report of the attempted rigging in this constituency by the CPI(M) hoodlums in league with the civil and police administration is given separately in this issue.

The EC had declared with fanfare that the photo identity cards would henceforth make false voting impossible. But just before election it was notified that photo identity cards were not compulsory, but it would be helpful if one carried his card. And on the poll date in many booths voters carrying such cards and wishing to show it were actually discouraged and scoffed at. Many voters, after they had to wait in queue for inordinately long time because of booth jamming, ultimately heard that their votes had already been cast !

In the report on first phase of voting *The Statesman* dated 29th April '96 writes

(Contd. on page 3)

Victory in Kultali Against CPI (M)-Police-Administration Onslaught

The election in the Kultali Assembly segment under Jaynagar Parliamentary Constituency of the South 24 Parganas of West Bengal remains one of the glaring examples of the failure of the Election Commission to ensure free and fair poll in the country. In the vast area of Maipith-Baikunthapur of Kultali the CPI(M) controlled hoodlums have unleashed a reign of terror with the help of the local police for the last seven years. Loot, arson, murder and rape have become virtually a daily affair. The activists of our party were forcibly driven out from that locality years ago. More than a month before the election on 4th April '96 our party in a fax letter to Mr. T. N. Seshan, the Chief Election Commissioner forewarned him of the grim situation prevailing in the area and demanded deployment of central police forces in place of the local police which was acting in collusion with the ruling CPI(M), arrest of the anti-socials the list of which was annexed with the letter mentioning the police cases pending against them operating there in order to restore normalcy in the region and arrangement of security escorts for our party's polling agents for the 17 polling booths of the locality on the day of the election. But this was all in vain and the administration preferred to sit idle on our letter. The law and order situation worsened day by day as the election was approaching. The armed hoodlums virtually sieged the locality and roamed freely threatening the common voters of dire consequences if they vote for the SUCI. At the point of gun they made the villagers vow to vote for the CPI(M). As one of these poor villagers expressed his desire to vote for the SUCI his wife, a pregnant woman and mother of a son of 3 years, was gang raped by these brutes named CPI(M) cadre in his absence. Following the incident the lady was virtually kept under house arrest by the CPI(M) hoodlums for 5 days so that she could not go out for informing the neighbours or lodging an FIR with the police.

In view of this deteriorating law and order situation, on 30th April again we submitted memorandum to the state chief Electoral Officer reiterating our earlier demands. On 4th of May Comrade Probodh Purkait, our candidate for the above Assembly seat, along with our nominee for the Jaynagar Parliamentary Constituency met the central observer at Joynagar and placed the demands and also requested him to visit the area. He accepted the request to visit Maipith-Baikunthapur but the district administration discouraged him to go there and reportedly tried to pursue him not to visit the place. At the face of stiff non-cooperation he probably realised the conspiracy and the partisan attitude of the administration and reportedly sent a message to the Election Commission stating that there was truth behind the complaints of the SUCI. However, at last after 2 days when he was escorted to Maipith-Baikunthapur, he was taken so late that he was forced to return practically without visiting the place.

On 7th May, the day of the poll, we were very astonished to see that in spite of our repeated demands, the security arrangement was very poor, provision of escort to our polling agents was virtually denied and those 17 polling booths were manned by unarmed homeguards only. The consequence was obvious; the CPI(M) hoodlums and anti-socials surrounded the entire area and wielding arms captured almost all the 17 booths to ensure 97-99% polling, all in favour of the ruling party. Those few common people who came to exercise their franchise, were forced to cast openly in front of the ruling party's anti-socials. Another striking feature of the election there was that all other parties, like the Congress, BJP, joined hands with the CPI(M) and ensured that their votes were cast in favour of the ruling party. Our party faced an united opposition from all corners including parties of all shades and colours. In spite of all these Comrade Probodh Purkait returned victorious with a margin of over 10,000 votes, 5th time in a row since 1977. The victory was indeed glorious when all these odds were considered.

When all these conspiracies could not defeat our candidate, the CPI(M) hoodlums pounced on Comrade Purkait and other accompanying comrades when they were coming out of the counting hall of Alipur in Calcutta after declared elected, and injured them seriously in the presence of senior police officers and the government officials.

Our party faced such odds in most places in West Bengal from the CPI(M).

At Joynagar also in spite of all odds our comrades fought brilliantly and Comrade Debaprasad Sarkar became victorious with a margin of over 25,000 votes, double of what he secured in the previous election.

Mockery of Democratic Process

(Contd from page 2)

under the caption "Contesting parties buy votes to win seat in Delhi": "Jamal, a resident of Ballimaran confessed nonchalantly that he had cast bogus votes eight times. When asked what was the incentive he said that he was paid Rs 50/- and a plate of *biryani* for each vote cast, and thus secured a day's good meal for the entire family of 3 brothers and 3 sisters."

This picture is valid not only for Delhi but for the entire country although the example may not be the same.

There were numerous instances of ballot papers being sneaked out or looted outright. Some of these were found strewn here and there even before the elections. Some ballot papers of a booth in Nadia district were found in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. On the respective polling dates peaceful or violent booth capturing and enmasse stamping of ballots in favour of the candidate of the party whose cadres and hoodlums held the sway in the particular area, were resorted to on a large scale all over the country, often in connivance with or participation by government election staff, police and the administration. In West Bengal a presiding officer was caught redhanded in Uluberia (North) Assembly Constituency near Calcutta while he was stamping ballots to 'cast' votes in favour of the ruling party candidates. One polling officer, Dipak Banerjee, an employee of Land and Land Revenue Department of Arambag and a CPI(M)-led Coordination Committee leader was also caught redhanded when he was stamping on a bunch of postal ballot in the room of the Executive Magistrate on the symbol of the CPI(M) and 100 such ballots were recovered from him. According to the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, a Bengali daily of 8th May, '96, Mr Kamal Dasgupta, the District Magistrate admitted this incident. Three Youth Congress workers were caught with 100 ballots when they snatched ballots from a homeguard.

In many places across the country booth jamming was resorted to and bombs and firearms were freely used to scare away the genuine voters and then polling agents, and even candidates of opponent party were beaten up to capture the booths. There were several incidents of booth capturing and violence in UP, for example, Mirzapur, Balia, Allahabad, Bagpat, Phulpur, Isapur, Saharanpur and Pratapgarh. (*The Statesman* 8th May '96) Hoodlums claiming to be Congressmen roughed up Mr Sanjiv Chakraborty, the presiding officer of a polling booth in Mahipalpur, Delhi in an attempt to scare away voters. Reports of violence came in from Sadar Constituency in Delhi.

Ananda Bazar Patrika dated 29th April '96 reports that Ajoy Chautala, son of Om Prakash Chautala, was arrested along with his 20 associates for their violent activities. Ajoy Chautala opened random fire at the constituency of his father, seriously injuring one CRPF

jawan. Surinder Singh, the son of Bansilal, the President of Haryana Vikash Party was involved in large-scale violence. He tried to murder one Sushil Kumar of the Adampur Assembly. In Tamil Nadu 3 persons died due to poll related violence and 3 persons sustained serious injuries. DMK and AIMDK clashed violently in Kumkum Assembly Constituency in Madurai district. One MDMK worker was hacked to death, 3 persons were seriously injured and 18 huts of the area were torched. One of our active supporters, Comrade Jatind Mondal was murdered at Kumargunj Assembly Constituency in West Bengal in a pre-poll violence and Comrade Gunadhar Nayek, an SUCI supporter of Bordai village under Belda P.S. in Midnapore district was murdered in the post poll violence engineered by the CPI(M).

Blasts rocked Laming in Assam. 4 persons were seriously injured in bombblast in Nasvapota Assembly Constituency in A.P. Ongal constituency in A.P. witnessed violent ballot snatching and large-scale rigging. Police opened fire 16 rounds at Doudupara in Guntur district. Police informed that one minister of A.P., Shihaprasad Rao, along with his associates snatched a ballot box.

Nandyal from where Mr P V Narasinha Rao contested witnessed large-scale violence. 27 booths were affected and rigging was widespread. But repolling was ordered only for 3 booths. There were large-scale violence and organised rigging in Guntur, Anantapur and Prakasam district of A.P.

In Assam in Silchar Lok Sabha Constituency from where Mr Santosh Mohan Dev contested reports of snatching of ballot boxes and ballot papers, obstruction to voting and such other incidents were published in the newspapers.

Violence in Bihar resulted in many deaths and many persons sustained serious injuries. Landmine blasts were reported from Chhatapur in Palamau, Rajung in Dhanbad and Khilari in the Bachra police station area. Jamshedpur witnessed booth capturing, false voting and snatching of ballot papers. In Ranchi Constituency reports of rigging and booth capturing came out from Chandmal Bal Mandir, Himpuri, Ralu Road and Chutiya.

Scaled ballot boxes were also found lying in the open. A ballot box from the Belgachia (West) Assembly Constituency was found in a gunny bag outside the strongroom of the West Bengal Assembly premises. The seal of the box was intact and its contents untampered. At the time of counting seals of 4 ballot boxes from Satgachia Assembly Constituency from where Mr Jyoti Basu contested were found broken.

The rigging started from the preparation of voters list and ended in manipulation in counting, thus making the entire process a mockery of democracy. *India Today*, a fortnightly magazine dated May 31, 1996 reports: "The entire Lucknow voters' list was

first computerized and copies were handed to field workers for door to door surveys, which showed that about 80,000 names were there of people either dead or missing. And it was this list that was to comprise the bogus voters".

This is true not only for Lucknow but in most of the constituencies particularly in urban areas.

The reports of manipulation in counting are coming from the various places of the country. In West Bengal leaders and roughs organised by the CPI(M) manipulated the counting process all over the state in conjunction with some of the government counting staff. Counting usually started after unaccountable delays, often after midnight, and were prolonged for 2 or even 3 days. Some times the lights would go off in the middle of counting. Many instances have been reported of sleepless and hungry rival counting agents being influenced to leave the counting station by threat or allurements.

Large-scale criminalisation of politics noted and analyzed by us after 1991 Lok Sabha polls went on unabated this time too. Only a few instances would suffice. In Siwan parliamentary constituency in Bihar Md Sahabuddin, already a sitting MLA was the Janata Dal candidate. He is charged with organising widespread booth capturing on the polling day and shooting down Harijan voters in his constituency. But he was not arrested and is absconding. In the same state Ananda Mohan Singh, a former MLA and the Samata Party candidate for parliament in the Schohar constituency has been in the Muzaffarpur jail for the last two months on charge of murdering a District Magistrate. His bail has been cancelled by the Supreme Court. But he had been elected MP! In Haryana Nirmal Singh has been elected MLA from the Naggal constituency as an independent candidate. Singh has been in jail for the last 18 months on a murder charge. After election he extended support to the Bansilal government that was formed in Haryana. Court had to grant him bail so that he could attend the legislative assembly and be administered the oath! Pappu Yadav was reelected from Purnea seat on a Samata Party ticket. Earlier he contested the 1991 polls as an independent candidate from Purnea, but the election was countermanded following complaints that the booths were captured by Yadav and his goons. This time he has won by a margin of 3.16 lakh votes which is the highest in Bihar. With the announcement of the date of election all the parliamentary parties were in competition in distributing tickets to the dreaded dacoits and criminals. 28 out of 85 members sent to Lok Sabha from UP have criminal records. In his address to the nation Mr Vajpayee promised a clean administration and clean public life. But is it not a rhetoric when out of these 28 criminals turned MPs from UP, 15 belong to the BJP?

The information given above and the examples cited, gleaned from the press reports, are sordid enough and represent only a fraction of the malpractice, violence and rigging that went on in the name of a free and fair election. Truly, the whole thing has been an utter negation of the democratic process.

Congress, BJP, NF-LF Utterly Lack Pro-People Approach – Only Vying to Defend Capitalism

(Contd from page 1)

allies are, however, openly inviting the MNCs in the name of industrialisation and capital investment. They are taking loans from the World Bank, that imperialist financial outpost, appeasing the corporate houses, resorting to privatisation, and opening whole sectors to private owners to allow them to plunder the people. So, the CPI(M) is not really opposed to the policy, only it pretends to oppose it to keep on its mask and deceive the masses as usual. These parliamentary contenders all share a common plank to serve the interest of the ruling bourgeoisie and hoodwink the people by whom they swear. The Central Committee of our party, in its policy statement on the eve of the elections, had reiterated that these parties, whatever their vocabulary, rhetorics and election promises, had no fundamental differences between them on the basic economic and political questions facing the people. Overtly, or covertly through deceit, they all serve the capitalist class interest and project the necessity of the ruling class as the interest of the people and the country. The role they played at the polls and are playing now in quest for power confirms our observation.

Evidently, finding itself in trouble in the hawala case, the BJP ultimately depended on its old issue of *hindutva* and Ram mandir in its poll campaign. The Janata Dal and other constituents and allies of the NF fought mostly on the caste and other parochial and regional issues. Even the CPI(M)'s election manifesto, very much styled after the Congress's, highlighted its so-called developmental achievements from government while asking for a mandate in favour of its policy of industrialisation. Naturally, whosoever of these parties or their permutations and combinations go to power — whether the Congress, the BJP, the NF-LF or its present enlarged version, or any possible groupings and regroupings in the future, cannot have and will not have any concern for the burning problems of the people and the sufferings, except that each will seek to exploit people's sufferings to grab power and retain power, each employing deceit to achieve this end in its own style.

Their Position in People's Eye

Taking them one by one, the Congress, vis-a-vis the question of people's confidence and trust, stands thoroughly discredited as an incorrigibly corrupt, inept and rabidly anti-people outfit. The party is torn by internal squabbles, weakened by splits and threatened with revolt from within. It has had the ignominy of being dislodged from power recently in several states. By constantly pursuing policies and measures against the people and for the ruling class it has created disaffection among the people and in the process has isolated itself from them. It is literally inured in corruption, especially during the tenure of Narasimha Rao as prime minister. Although yet the most trusted political agent of the ruling class, its position in people's eye is by no means opportune for a mandate to help it form the government, not to speak of an overwhelming mandate.

Next, the BJP, which in the last few years

has been credited in media projection with discipline and principles in its organization, much more than in the Congress and in other bourgeois parties, does not either command a conducive position vis-a-vis people's confidence and trust. Firstly, there is the attendant fact that the BJP is not organisationally present all through the country; it is weak in the south, except in Karnataka, and also weak in several states of the east. Secondly, the myth of discipline, principle and integrity created around it has suffered jolts in a series of recent incidents especially in the Vaghela-Keshubhai Patel internecine fight over *gandhi* in Gujarat. Its volte face over the Enron power project and the fact that its president, L.K. Advani, and a few other leaders have been implicated in the notorious hawala case have denigrated the party's image. Thirdly, there is nothing in the party's record of governance in the states it has ruled so far which can be projected to compensate for these negative facts and to bolster up its image in people's imagination. Circumstantially and materially, therefore, an absolute majority for the BJP could not be consistent with the reality of the party's position.

The NF-LF combine, on the other, did not figure much initially in the campaign. Later during the poll campaign, however, it began to figure in prominence in the media projection as it staked its claim as the third alternative in people's choice. People, however, have none-too-happy an experience with the conglomerate under the brand of Janata Dal. The CPI(M)'s singular weakness is its absence in most parts of the country, especially in the Hindi heartland which in a way dominates the bourgeois parliamentary politics. Otherwise, CPI(M)'s performance as the leader of the Left Front government of West Bengal in the last two decades has earned it credential from the foremost industrial houses in the country, namely the Tatas, Birlas and Goenkas, as both dependable and efficient conciliators between labour and capital. Not only did the CPI(M) successfully appease the MNCs and the corporate houses, it also emasculated the working class militancy and subverted the working class struggle. On that credit the party has earned confidence and trust of the bourgeoisie as capable defenders of its class interest in the present complex and critical phase of parliamentary democracy and capitalist crisis. In particular, Jyoti Basu, West Bengal's Chief Minister for almost two decades now and chief promoter of the party's social democratic service to the capitalist class, is profoundly welcome to the class as the 'consensus leader' at the national level. Even mouthpieces of certain foreign imperialist powers hailed the prospect, when it had arisen, of Jyoti Basu's assumption of the charge of prime minister of India.

The fact is, in the first place, the ruling class is not averse to any of these contenders coming to power. But, secondly, none of these parties and combines enjoys that minimum of confidence and trust of the people, on which count a victory in its favour at the polls with the

required margin for absolute majority can be facilitated and ensured by media-money-muscle power and allout administrative rigging, simultaneously ensuring acceptability of the manipulated poll outcome to the people. For the ruling class and its omnipotent instrument of the industrial-bureaucratic-military complex which today pulls the strings from behind, it is as much important and imperative to facilitate and ensure poll victory of the chosen party or combine through electoral manipulation by behind-the-scene administrative rigging as to make the voting results believable and look like a popular verdict. If the manipulated poll outcome are at total variance with the prevailing popular opinion, that entails the risk of exposing the game and consequently of attracting people's wrath and popular upsurge in its wake. That is one risk the ruling class cannot venture to take.

Rise of Regional Parties

Side by side of the failure of the national level parliamentary parties, a number of regional, caste and community based parties, and breakaway groups from the Congress have fared well at the polls which vests in them power to bargain at the national level in the present crisis and secure concessions. The Telugu Desam Party, DMK, Tamil Maanila Congress, Bahujana Samaj Party, AGP, Haryana Vikas Party, Akali Dal and Samata Party are chief among them. Except the latter three, who are with the BJP, others have joined the United Front. The rise of these parties in the present situation is not accidental, however, nor is it an isolated event. Uneven development of capitalism in the specific international and national background of its history of growth in this country has brought in its wake contradiction between national capital and regional capital together with features like contradiction between dominating nationality capital and dominated nationality capital, the former dominating over the latter. Centring round the caste, communal, regional, provincial, linguistic and such other sentiments which survive in the mental makeup of the people as hangovers from the feudal past, different peoples have their respective own urge and aspiration for development. In this period of crisis-ridden capitalism, both the national and regional bourgeois and their subserving national and regional parties are exploiting the sentiments and aspirations of the different peoples of different nationalities, different provinces, different regions, etc., aiding and abetting in the process the divisions in the people to keep them disunited and combinedly safeguard their aggregate interest to sustain the capitalist class rule. That is, they are in contention over the market and are in collusion against the people as a whole. When strife and fragmentation set in in the Congress owing to the inevitable repercussions of the deepening crisis in the capitalist base and the capitalist class, the party started entering into unholy alliances with regional, caste and community based parties in different states and backing them up against its contenders for its own electoral interest.

(Contd on page 6)

Former Janata Dal Minister Arrested for Murder of Comrade Shyamapada Rout

Prafulla Ghadai, ex-Orissa Minister and MLA, was arrested on 16th May, 1996 on charges of being the brain behind the slaying of Comrade Shyamapada Rout in 1993.

Comrade Shyamapada Rout, a prominent trade-union leader belonging to the Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers' Union affiliated to the UTUC-LS, was brutally assassinated about three years back in Orissa, on 25th July, 1993. News of his ghastly murder then hit the headlines of the newspapers and *Proletarian Era* carried reports from time to time how our party the SUCI, the UTUC-LS and Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers' Union conducted various movements and took legal steps to bring the Janata Dal backed culprits to book.

The Janata Dal, that was then in power in Orissa, allowed the Tatas to loot and plunder the state freely. The SUCI and the UTUC-LS built up strong resistance movements and thus incurred wrath of the monopolists. In Sukinda, the Sukinda Upatyaka Mines Workers' Union

was leading the movement against Messrs G.S.Atwal and Company, contractor of Tata's 90% mining workers. The movement enraged the Janata Dal government so much so that the then Chief Minister Mr Biju Patnaik declared on 12.11.92 flouting all democratic norms on Assembly floor that he would wipe out the SUCI. The government repression then intensified to a terrible extent alongside the torture by hired hoodlums.

Comrade Shyamapada Rout was killed when movement was at a peak. His dead body, officially, was not found. Comrade Rout, a valiant fighter of miners' cause in chromite mines' valley of Sukinda, was a heavy machine operator in Tisco-Atwal Company where the miners under his leadership had been fighting to achieve their lawful and legitimate demands. On 25th July, '93, at about 3 PM in Tisco Bazaar, near Kaliapani police outpost, 40/50 armed hardened criminals belonging to the private army of TISCO-ATWAL-Janata Dal leader

Prafulla Ghadai combine attacked Comrade Rout in presence of armed policemen, who remained only silent spectators. He was heavily injured and was dragged towards Kaliapani Township. He was never seen after that. Not surprisingly the state police said that Comrade Rout was not dead. When our party demanded of the police to produce him before the people, they could not do it. Police tried to hush up the entire matter. In the meantime, Panchu Nayak, an eyewitness to the gruesome murder, was killed, thus a vital clue was wiped out. The motivated inaction by state police compelled Comrade Archana Rout, widow of Comrade Shyamapada Rout to move the Supreme Court, which scathingly criticized the state police for its dilatory tactics and entrusted the CBI with the investigation. During CBI investigation, Gopal Behera, a key witness, who divulged many incriminating facts was found to have committed suicide.

Despite all risks, workers movement was on the rise and lastly the CBI, after investigation, arrested Prafulla Ghadai. With his arrest, truth has started to unearth.

SUCI Attends Anti-Imperialist Programmes in Brussels and Berlin

BRUSSELS

An international seminar was held at Brussels under the auspices of the Workers' Party of Belgium (PTB) from 2nd to 4th May last. This type of seminar is being held at Brussels since 1991 on the occasion of May Day. Our party took part in this seminar for the first time last year. At the invitation of the Workers' Party of Belgium our party sent representative this year too. Besides our party CPI-ML (Janashakti), CPI-ML (Liberation) and CPI-ML (People's war) participated in this seminar from India. From Indian sub-continent, two parties from Bangladesh viz. Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BASAD) and Workers' Party of Bangladesh, and the Communist Party of Nepal sent their representatives at this seminar. 71 parties and organisations in total from different parts of the world sent representatives at the Brussels seminar this year. The Communist Party of Cuba, the Communist Party of Korea and All Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks are among them.

Most of the representatives of the different countries reached Brussels at noon on 30th April, and they were accorded a welcome at a dinner in the same evening. Comrade Nadine Rosa-Rosso, the National Secretary of the PTB delivered the welcome address and Comrade Ludo Martens, the President of the PTB introduced the representatives with one another.

On 1st May a mammoth get together was organised at the Brussels University under the auspices of the PTB where thousands of people participated. Different parties opened book stalls there. Our Party also opened a stall with the party literature. Many took keen interest in our party literature and purchased many books from our stall. In the evening a meeting was held to observe May Day at the University Auditorium. Comrade Ludo Martens addressed the meeting. Before his address, the representatives of Senegal, Syria, Mexico, Cuba and CPI-ML (People's War) from India delivered short speeches at the invitation of the Workers' Party

of Belgium.

The main subject of discussion at the Brussels seminar this year was "The Anti-imperialist struggle under the 'New World Order'". The main subject was again subdivided into a) Legal and parliamentary struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle in the third World, b) Political mass work, armed struggle and anti-imperialist struggle in the third World, c) World strategies of the main centres of imperialism and reaction, d) The main letters of armed conflict in the present world, e) the defence of socialism and anti-imperialist struggle, etc.

Comrade Ranjit Dhar, the central staff of our party took part in the seminar on behalf of our party. Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, Andhra Pradesh State Organising Committee also took part in the seminar. After the inaugural speech of Comrade Ludo Martens our party was invited to present its views on the general theme of the subject. Comrade Ranjit Dhar delivered his speech at the seminar on behalf our party. Comrades Mubinul Hyder Chowdhury of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BASAD) and Narendar Singh of CPI-ML (Liberation) also spoke on the general theme of the subject.

The CPI-ML (Janashakti), CP of Nepal - Unified Marxist-Leninist and CP of Syria then spoke on 'legal and parliamentary struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle in the Third World'.

The CP of Philippines, FACMLN (Mexico), C.P of Kurdistan, CPI-ML (Peoples' War), FARC (Columbia) and Luis Añce Borja (Peru) then spoke on 'Political mass work, armed struggle and anti-imperialist struggle in the Third World'.

On 'World strategies of the main centres of imperialism and reaction' Comrade Michael Opperskalski spoke on the U.S., Prof Dr Eike Kopf, Rolf Vellay and Volker Veecer on Germany, CP of Japan (Rene) and CP of Philippines on Japan, Comrade Leue Lefort on France and Dr. Alexander P. Barychev on Russia.

On 'The main centres of armed conflict in the present world', the Workers Party of Bel-

gium, Democratic Front for the liberation of Palestine, CP of Syria, MLKP (Turkey) and W.P of Kurdistan deliberated.

The CP of Cuba and the Workers' Party of Korea deliberated on 'The defence of socialism and anti-imperialist struggle'.

Comrade Ludo Martens delivered his Concluding speech at the seminar.

Comrades Bert, Disk, Pol and Kilde of the PTB were incharge of conducting the 3 day seminar.

The countries of the world, which sent representatives at the seminar were Afganishtan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Corce, Cuba, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Ethiopia, France, Gambia, Great Britain, Greece, Haiti, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxemburg, Mali, Morocco, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, USA, Zaire, Zimbabwe.

BERLIN

In support of Anti-imperialist Convention, Calcutta initiative a meeting was held at a hall of Berlin Central on 9th May at 7 p.m. in Berlu, Germany. When the news of All India Anti-Imperialist Convention was published in different newspapers and magazine of Germany at the initiative of Comrade Michael Opperskalski, same influential political personalities of Berlin showed keen interest in this matter. They contacted us in Calcutta through Comrade Opperskalski and invited our party to send representative in this meeting in Berlin to place our viewpoints. Accordingly Comrade Ranjit Dhar was present in this meeting. Comrade Mubinul Hyder Chowdhury of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh was also present in this meeting. Along with him Herbert Fischer the former Ambassador of GDR, Counsellor Andre Reder, Dr Ilia Seifert, the Vice-President of All German Association for Disabled People, Chrisian Schroder, the poet, Dr Sepp Miller the Secretary of Association of writers of GDR, Helmut Diller, the Cultural scientist, Dieter Tack, ex-Dy. Director of the biggest Chemical Company of GDR, Dr. Kurt Gossweiler of the Institute of Marxism Leninism were among oth-

(Contd on page 8)

Regional parties though pretending as friends of local people are out to serve vested interests

(Contd from page 4)

The contending parliamentary parties, too, in their own petty and sectarian interest of election oriented politics and greed for power started aligning with the regional, caste and community based parties. The CPI(M) and its allies are no exception to it as evidenced by their electoral conduct in different states.

In this process the regional parties have availed themselves of the opportunity to bargain at the national political level and extract concessions in their respective favour. This has added further to the problem of the centre-state relations, giving an additional handle to either side in the contention between themselves and also in their collusion against the people. In the present crisis the Federal Front of four such parties in the newly installed United Front government has emerged as a pressure group of southern and eastern regional bourgeois interests to stake bigger claims at the national level. But whatever concessions may the regional parties extract in the name of regional development that benefit has been almost wholly appropriated only at the upper echelon of society in the respective regions and by the privileged sections of the respective castes and communities. The people have been deceived and deprived. This conspiracy goes apace, sentiments of people getting exploited and booty of the bargain appropriated. Not only that, this conspiracy is abetting divisions and conflicts between peoples to engender fratricidal strifes and consequential sufferings and insecurity of the people as a whole. It is helping bourgeois design to keep the people disunited by religion, caste, language, province, etc., undermining their unity and cohesion, diverting their attention from the basic problems of their life, and this way to sustain the bourgeois class rule. Both the national and the regional parties are guilty of this crime, and equally at that.

In their campaign at the just concluded polls all the regional and caste based parties and breakaway groups made use of regional, caste, communal, linguistic and other prevailing sentiments to augment their electoral prospect. Hardly they fought on the issues of economic uplift, employment, health, education and democratic rights, values and norms which all affect the entire spectrum of people in this country. In this game these parties are not denied support and sustenance from the monopoly houses and the MNCs who are increasingly resorting to exploiting the market, natural resources and labour power of the different regions with the help of the infrastructural facilities provided by the state governments and their agencies. The ITC, Hindustan Lever, for example, are engaging in agro-based industries. Powerful kulak lobbies have emerged side by side to protect interests of the rich farmers of wheat, sugar, cotton, etc., in different parts of the country. This is one more aspect of the mutual relation of contention and collusion between the monopoly houses, MNCs and regional capitalists. Under the new economic policy of liberalisation the state governments have entered into a competition for direct approach to foreign capitalist-imperialist countries for financial and technological aids to

their respective regions. Before globalisation under the GATT had started, the regional capitalists used to secure support and privileges from their respective state governments. In the present post-GATT phase they are entering into collaboration with the MNCs in mutual interest.

All this is increasing combined capitalist exploitation of all people and is aiding and abetting at the same time regionalism-parochialism-divisiveness. Behind the present rise of the regional parties work these factors of the contention and collusion between the monopoly houses, regional capitalists and MNCs on the one hand and the unprincipled and opportunistic politics of all these election oriented parliamentary parties on the other hand, especially in the present context when the national parties all stand discredited.

Basic position from which to judge

A basic fact central to the issue is that elections are also a political event round which exist two fundamentally different and mutually antagonistic class approaches. So long as the capitalist order will survive, especially in the present phase of crisis of capitalism and in the absence of countrywide strong united democratic mass movements the ruling class will systematically make use of elections to facilitate the ride to power of its chosen party or combine in order to safeguard its class interest and suppress people's discontent against its exploitative and oppressive class rule. To achieve its goal the ruling class will constantly seek to arrest people's democratic urge and aspirations in the blind alley of parliamentarism. The revolutionary party, genuine left parties and pro-people forces will constantly engage against this in building up legitimate democratic mass movements over the burning problems of people's life on the higher edifice of culture, morals and values to advance people's cause through to emancipation. In this pursuit the revolutionary party views elections as an issue incidental to or thrust upon democratic mass movements. They take part in elections on this pro-people and revolutionary approach with the object of echoing the voice of extra-parliamentary movement in the forum of assembly and parliament and exposing the design of the ruling class and deceit of its subserving parties. The ruling class will repeatedly try to draw the people and entangle them in parliamentarism. The revolutionary party will equally try to use the issue in furtherance of people's movement and to expose the class conspiracy of the bourgeoisie. This is the basic position from which all issues concerning polls, poll outcome and government formation have to be judged by the really pro-people forces.

Hoax of 'Principled Politics' and 'Secular and Democratic Front'

The BJP is trumpeting the poll outcome which has allowed it the status of the largest single party, though far short of absolute majority, as people's verdict in its favour to sit in government. The United Front constituents, the CPI(M) in particular, would have the people see in this poll outcome a mandate for the secular and democratic alliance, on the other, to sit in the government. The contention of either

side, therefore, boils down to a claim that only it, not the other, can solve people's problems from *gaddi*. Each of them has, however, sat in *gaddi* at the centre or at the state level, some for a shorter and some for a longer period, but none absolutely has a record of true concern for people's sufferings, let alone of ameliorating their sufferings. At least this much people understand today that the trading of charges and bandying of words between them, which is what the people witness now, has truly little to do with people's cause. It is naked exposure of the lust for power each nurtures.

Whether the BJP did try or not to horse-trade in MPs during its rule of 13 days is not the moot question. Its leaders argued that they wanted to rally other parties or groups behind the BJP on the parliament's floor in order for their government to last. They were willing to take into account demands of the regional and other lesser parties to gain their support. Would the supporting regional and caste based parties have used the concession in return in people's interest? Did the BJP consider the concessions in people's interest? Why was the party so eager to assure everyone that its government would continue to pursue the economic and foreign policies of the previous Congress government? It is the same policies which are against people's interest and have increased people's sufferings and insecurity. So, BJP's concessions in return for support from regional and caste based parties and breakaway groups did not arise from any sort of craving of the party to do something for the people by securing a lease extended beyond 13 days. It was a trick which if it worked would have allowed the party to serve the ruling class in return for pelf and power. It was then a deceit on the people and a hypocrisy to conceal the deceit and try to pass it as 'principled politics'. Now the party's tactic to put blame on its contenders for the downfall of its government only underscores its scheme to play martyr and abet people's sentiments which it plans to capitalize on in the next round of elections tomorrow or after. It is the other face of BJP's 'principled politics'.

The CPI(M) and its allies in the United Front projected the Congress and the BJP as the twin enemy of the people both before and during their poll campaign. When, however, the post-poll situation really proved conducive to sitting in the *masnad* of Delhi, they readily embraced one of the twin, the Congress to be specific, seeking benevolence of its support to help form government. Aware of how this prostration would look in people's eye, they have now the recourse to a talk of a 'secular and democratic' front to prevent the BJP from power. Curiously, all these parties, which are crying hoarse over the 'sacred' task of forming a 'democratic and secular' government to prevent BJP's sticking to power, have missed the moot point. There is no denying the BJP's rabid communal and anti-people politics, which looms menacingly over the political horizon. But the champions of 'secularism' have pathetically missed to notice that this stand of theirs indirectly certifies the Congress (I) as a 'secular and democratic' force, which is far

(Contd on page 7)

Build up People's Movement to Frustrate Bourgeois Class Design

(Contd from page 6)

from true. People's experience in the past and at present too, does not corroborate in the least this testimonial for the Congress in particular to be a secular force.

Different interpretations of secularism and allied matters which are hotly debated today may better be discussed in details in the coming days. But how can such distortion of truth be overlooked on the plea of unmasking terrible face of the BJP? Besides, although there is difference in degree and dimension but which among the constituent of the United Front have not exploited the communal-caste-regional-parochial-divisive sentiments to promote its parliamentary interest whenever

required? The CPI(M), too, is not above board. In its electoral interest this party, too, gives full consideration to caste, communal and regional factors in the matter of selection of candidates and campaign for the polls. Whether the CPI(M) did or did not participate in the United Front government is not the moot point again. Even if the CPI(M) decides ultimately to stay outside the government and lend the Front Government support from outside, its strong desire to join the government makes a mockery of its anti-Congress and secular stance. The naked scramble for ministerial *gaddi* which is rocking the United Front from before its inception is nothing unexpected or unanticipated. People are too familiar with it. But other than some reforms which cannot even touch the fringe of people's burning problems, can this government adopt and pursue any policy or measure to really ameliorate people's sufferings with support of the Congress? The history of all Congress governments is the history of anti-people policies and measures. That is why the Congress stands discredited and isolated. Essentially similar is the history of all the constituents of the United Front, including the Janata Dal, the Samajvadi Party, the TDP, the DMK, the AGP and the CPI(M). Anti-Congress stand does not, therefore, automatically mean anti-capitalist and pro-people democratic stand. Likewise, anti-BJP stand does not automatically mean anti-communal and pro-secular stand.

The question which is uppermost in the mind of the people is whether the politics of this intermediary third force can prevent the looming menace, the BJP, and the main enemy of the people, the Congress.

The history of the rise of the BJP to its present strength in the last few years only can throw light on the answer. The party began by

availing itself of the situation which Indira Gandhi had created in her bid to promote her petty personal and party interest in safeguarding the bourgeois class interest by aiding and

Assam State Committee Demands High Power Enquiry into Administrative Rigging

The Assam State Committee of the SUCI in its meeting held on 31st May, '96 under the conduction of Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member, Central Committee of the party, in course of review of the last general election in Assam noted with deep concern that large-scale administrative rigging of various forms, including booth capturing and insertion of duplicate ballot papers, resorted to by the ruling Congress(I) in collusion with the top ranks of police and bureaucracy, resulted in farcical election in large number of constituencies. Having examined the election results in Goalpara West and South Salmara constituencies from where Comrade Nazmul Hoque and Comrade Jaynal Abedin both of whom were sitting MLAs, were seeking election, from different angles the State Committee of our party was of the firm opinion that the ruling Congress(I) in their bid to defeat them by any means, resorted to worst forms of administrative rigging in those two constituencies taking advantage, of course, of certain organizational lapses of the party. The State Committee of the party, therefore, demands immediate constitution of a high powered enquiry commission headed by a Supreme Court Judge to reveal all aspects of this administrative rigging and to find out all persons involved in this heinous crime.

BJP was helped not only by the class backing of the bourgeoisie but by the fertile ground created in the moral-ethical-cultural sphere by the unprincipled and opportunist politics of all the parliamentary parties, including the CPI(M) and its allies. The crisis in the capitalist economic base has brought about an all-pervasive crisis in the superstructure — in the political, social, cultural, moral, ethical and every other sphere. Capitalism today is not only moribund, decadent and utterly reactionary, it is corrupt to the bone. Whichever party or individual political leader comes to support this corrupt capitalist system is bound to plunge in abyss corruption. All talk against corruption will be futile if this fundamental point is not understood. As an inevitable repercussion of the capitalist crisis, instability has set in in the parliamentary politics, resulting in continuous split and fragmentation of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, and all who serve the capitalist class interest. From its design to instal the two-party parliamentary system to protect its class rule in this period of crisis of parliamentary politics, the bourgeoisie started backing up the BJP, among others, as the projected alternative to the Congress, the most trusted political agent. On its part, the BJP has taken advantage of the vacuum created in the sphere of morals, principles and values due to erosion of people's hard won democratic rights, norms and practices and has staked its claim to be the alternative to the Congress. In a sense the contribution of the CPI(M) and its allies to the conditions which have facilitated the rise of the BJP is no less than that of the other parliamentary parties. Not only have they forsaken the course of democratic mass movement, they supported governments in which the Jana Sangh, now renamed as BJP, participated and also joined hands with it on

different occasions.

Whoever goes to defend the class interest of the out-and-out reactionary bourgeoisie of today will take a stand against the people and act against the people. So government formation to look after the bourgeois class interest or support to such a government from outside under whatsoever slogans or arguments can neither serve people's interest nor arrest the BJP and the Congress. On the contrary, this hoax of a secular and democratic front as stated earlier will only help the Congress to be painted as secular and democratic and help its return to power in a changed situation and also help the BJP to exploit this false portrayal of secularism and democracy ultimately paving the way for its ride to power. The only way to frustrate the bourgeois class design and prevent both the BJP and the Congress is to build up people's democratic mass movements on the higher edifice of culture and conducive to their struggle for emancipation. This vitiated atmosphere which breeds lust and opportunism can be fought only by releasing a counter current of powerful mass movement on the base political line of anti-capitalist socialist revolution and proletarian culture. By throwing away the banner of democracy, democratic norms, practices and values, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parliamentary parties are helping the ruling class to pave ground for fascist regimentation. It is the task of all who cherish democracy and freedom to rally under the banner of democratic mass movement on the burning problems of the people and for restoration, extension and protection of democratic rights, norms, values and practices.

TASK AHEAD

Democracy in India has been reduced to elections and electoral proceedings, democratic right reduced to casting votes. Even exercise of this right is largely prevented by money and muscle power of the parliamentary parties, by administrative rigging behind the scene. The crux of the present crisis is the inability of the ruling class to bring to power the party of its choice. That is the crisis of the class and its subservient parties, not of the people although it is they who will be forced to share its brunt. The choice may fall on the BJP in future, on the Congress again under conducive conditions, even on the CPI(M) and its allies in special circumstances. They are all pointing to it as the crisis of the country. All democratic minded people and the ranks of the CPI(M) and its allies who honestly still cherish the task of advancing people's cause must now address this question. Delay in this task is delay in ameliorating people's sufferings, delay in achieving their emancipation. We must all ponder and act now in the right course to advance our people's cause.

May Day massacre in Turkey

Turkish police and security forces opened fire on May Day demonstrators in Istanbul last week killing three and wounding scores more.

Over 150,000 Turkish workers had gathered to celebrate May Day including 30,000 supporters of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Front (DHKC) and other Turkish communist movements. Workers, peasants and the people from Istanbul's slums and shanty-towns poured in to voice their opposition to the regime in the eastern part of the city.

Police snipers opened fire on the crowd from high-rise buildings overlooking the demonstration as counter-guerrilla forces backed up by tanks moved in on them. (Courtesy : *The New Worker*, 10 May 1996, Britain)

The Principled (!) Politics of the BJP

(Some examples from Press clippings)

"The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hopes in Bansilal, one of the villains of the Emergency's excess, and ties the bond of friendship with his Haryana Vikas Party (HVP)" (*Outlook*, 10th April, '96)

"A large group of MPs entering the Lok Sabha from Uttar Pradesh have allegedly criminal records... The records reveal that the Bharatiya Janata Party has the maximum number (15 out of 28) of MPs with criminal background...."

"With 30 per cent of the MPs from UP coming from the underworld, the state police is heading for rough weather. A senior officer admitted that this would go a long way in lowering the morale of the force here. 'Most of these newly elected MPs have serious criminal charges pending against them, and now, instead of arresting them, we will be providing security to them', he said." (*The Asian Age*, 14.5.96)

"BJP managers have more than taken the caste factor into account while selecting candidates, especially in the Hindi belt. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, the party held back nominations in places such as Morena and Rewa In both cases, while the Cong(I) fielded Brahmins, the BJP decided to put up Thakurs. As for UP, with Hindutva still the party's main battle cry, the upper castes have garnered a majority of the seats."

In UP, though TADA-accused Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh has been denied a ticket, his wife has been fielded instead from his seat. And in Bihar the BJP is supporting Anand Mohan Singh, the main accused in the 1994 murder of Gopalganj district magistrate G. Krishnaiah." (*India Today*, April 30, 1996)

"The BJP has an alliance with the Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) in Haryana and with the

Samata Party in Bihar. In Haryana, ... in the hope of cashing in on the HVP's jat vote bank. Says HVP leader Bansilal: "Ideological differences do not matter at all. All we are interested in is coming to power. Issues like the Babari Masjid don't figure in Haryana." Ideology is of little consequence in Bihar too, where the BJP has tied up with the Samata Party. During last year's assembly elections, the Samata Party had lent its support to the extreme Left CPI-ML (Liberation). But this time, the BJP has an alliance with the Samata Party with an eye on the anti-sadav votes." (*Ibid*)

"Pramod Mahajan, Secretary of the election management committee, said loyalty to the party and a clean image mattered more than 'winnability', but the party's lists of candidates belie that reasoning. In UP, the ticket for Gonda, where sitting MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh was charged under TADA, and was later suspended from the party, has been given to his wife Ketki Singh. Several nominees in UP face allegations of criminal offences. the BJP's campaign machinery has geared itself on a hi-tech scale. The party has hired seven small aircraft for a total of 100 flying hours during peak campaign period. These will be used by the top leaders like Vajpayee, Advani and Joshi. Besides, the party is planning to make extensive use of private television channels and the Cable TV network. A tele-link facility to offer campaign messages over telephone has been inaugurated in Delhi. An advertising campaign ... is to be launched by an advertising agency in the capital. The party will accept 'cash donations from the industrialists and businessmen who are reluctant to donate through cheques, according to Pramod Mahajan." (*Frontline*, April 19, 1996)

Incident at Ekbalpur Condemned

Expressing agony at the painful incident at Ekbalpur, Calcutta and Midnapore, in connection with taking out of Muharram procession, Comrade Provash Ghosh, West Bengal State Secretary of the SUCI issued statements on 30.5.96 and 31.5.96. He blamed the state administration for its failure to take pre-emptive measures and pointed out that it was the result of shameless attempts of big parliamentary parties to occupy areas with the help of musclemen in the interest of votes. Comrade Ghosh alleged that despite the West Bengal State Government's prior knowledge of the possibility of violence in the sensitive zones, administration had not taken precautions to avoid untoward incidents. Even after the spread of violence, although police was deployed to bring the situation under control, it was then the violence on the part of police that pushed the entire situation out of gears. Police were reported to have looted shops and houses, besides torturing people. It was alleged that a Left Front minister was directly involved in it.

Comrade Ghosh said that since administrative measures were not enough to deal with violence, the State government should convene an all-party meeting to find out suitable ways to effectively tackle such situation. He appealed to all sections of the people not to be misled by any provocative propaganda, and to maintain peace and amity among them. He demanded judicial enquiry, exemplary punishment and adequate compensation.

Programmes in Brussels and Berlin

(Contd from page 5)

ers, present in this meeting.

Dr. Siegfried Scholar who took the main initiative for this meeting in Berlin at first spoke about the objective of the meeting and introduced comrades Ranjit Dhar and Mobinul Hyder Chowdhury. Then he asked Comrade Michael Opperskalski to speak. Comrade Opperskalski described his experience of the Anti-imperialist convention held in Calcutta. After him, Comrade Mobinul Hyder Chowdhury of the Socialist Party of Bangladesh addressed the meeting. At last Comrade Ranjit Dhar delivered his speech.

After the speech of Comrade Ranjit Dhar some of those present in the meeting clouted certain information and certain clarifications on anti-imperialist struggle. Comrade Ranjit Dhar showed to all present in the meeting the copies of the two programmes adopted by All India Anti-imperialist Forum against U.S. attack on Cuba and also the copies of the appeal to different political parties and to the people in the elections in India, and answered other questions.

Everybody in the meeting spoke highly of the All India Anti-imperialist Convention and admitted the necessity of such initiative at all place, though they opined that those were bound to have different forums in different countries according to the peculiarities of the situation obtaining in these countries.

Congress-CPI(M) at

loggerheads (!) Kerala style

Politically, it is known, that the LDF led by the CPI(M) and the UDF led by the Congress(I) in Kerala belong to the opposite poles. But an interesting development took place this time before the polls which eluded comprehension of the political observers and the journalists.

Both the Fronts, LDF and UDF, came out with separate manifestoes before the elections. On close scrutiny it was found to the astonishment of all concerned that whatever differences were there in the mode of presentation and lingual expression, these two manifestoes were basically the same in their approaches to all vital political-economic questions of the day.

Being puzzled and perturbed some press persons raised this questions to a LDF-cum-CPI(M) leader as to how could it happen at all? The leader replied that the UDF actually made a copy of LDF manifesto since they don't take manifesto seriously. When the press persons took up the same issue with UDF-cum-Cong(I) leader, the immediate reply came: "Look at the date of publication. UDF manifesto came out earlier than LDF's. How can then the theory of "copying" come true? The rest is crystal clear!

KARNATAKA

Movement in Malleswaram

Malleswaram Local Committee of the SUCI organised a demonstration demanding repair of the bridge and asphaltting of the main road joining Malleswaram, S.P. Extension, Guttahalli areas at 10.00 AM on 23.5.96. Hundreds of citizens of the area took part in the demonstration.

Speaking on the occasion Comrade B.R. Manjunath, District Secretary of SUCI severely condemned the callous attitude of the Corporation in dealing with the civic amenities. While taxes are increasing heavily burdening the people, the developmental programmes are at a standstill, he said. He flayed the Corporation for not maintaining the existing condition thus making the whole Bangalore City a garbage city. He demanded that the Corporation shall immediately repair the bridge and asphalt the road on a war-footing and cautioned of higher movement if the demands are not met.

Comrade Sumadevi, member, SUCI also spoke on the occasion. Comrade Aparna, member, Bangalore District SUCI read out the memorandum which was later submitted to the Commissioner, Bangalore City Corporation.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE

Edited & Published by Sukomal Dasgupta from 48 Lenin Sarani, Calcutta 700 013 and printed by him at Ganadabi Printers and Publishers Private Limited, 52B, Indian Mirror Street, Calcutta 700013