

Brutal Police Atrocity on Peaceful Demonstration on 5th April

On 5th April last, Delhi witnessed a mammoth rally against GATT accord. The rally was greeted with brutal police onslaught. But the onslaught, the lathicharge, the teargas shelling and use of water cannon jets could hardly destroy the spirit of resistance displayed by the protesters. Led by the left leaders the massive march of more than one lakh people will remain ingrained in memory as a source of inspiration.

The new economic and industrial policy and the GATT accord, measures to strengthen capitalism at the cost of people's blood and wellbeing have been strongly resented. And at the initiative of the Sponsoring Committee of Left Trade Unions this protest rally was organised by the National Platform of Mass Organizations.

Among the political parties that participated in it were SUCI, CPI, CPI(M), CPI-ML (Liberation), RSP, FB etc., and among the mass organizations were the UTUC(LS), AITUC, CITU, AIDS0, AIDYO, AIKMS, DYFI, AISF and so on.

blocked it. Just near Rajghat the police was ready with a huge iron barricade, high as a wall, which could neither be crossed nor broken. Right from Delhi gate covering Daryagunj the entire square-like huge area was put under armed barricade.

Before the demonstration started, the leaders, standing on a makeshift dais, read out the objective of the rally. Comrades A.B. Bardhan of CPI, Comrade Pritish Chanda of SUCI, Comrade M.K. Pandhey of CPI(M) and other leaders were on the dais. At the call of the leaders the demonstration started moving, in several dense columns rending the air with slogans. Contingents of UTUC(LS), AITUC, CITU, AIDS0, AIDYO, DYFI, and of others were moving unitedly. Several MPs too participated in the demonstration.

No sooner had the demonstration reached the wall-like barricade than every member of the huge demonstration squatted at once forming a counter-barricade. The leaders appealed to the demonstrators not to fall a prey to any provocation and to remain peaceful, and

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UNITE AND RESIST

For the teeming millions all over the world the 15th of April turned a black day. For, on this day the GATT agreement was ratified at Marrakesh, under strict Moroccan army security, by its one hundred odd member countries.

Now is a time when an all-pervading crisis has engulfed capitalism-imperialism, a crisis that is not by any means comparable in magnitude to the chronic crises of capitalism of the past. The final GATT treaty is the blueprint "to save" capitalism from it, though it will cost countless people their life and living as never before.

Defying all deceptions already protests have mounted and people in waves have come out on the streets all over the world.

Thus, by a strange turn of events, this has created conditions for the whole working class to become roused to a movement with a

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Message of Solidarity from WFTU

Prague, 5 April, 1994

WFTU EXPRESSES ITS INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE DAY OF PROTEST OBSERVED ALL OVER INDIA TODAY JOINTLY BY NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTRES AND INDUSTRIAL FEDERATIONS AGAINST SEVERE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF PRIVATISATION, RESTRUCTURING AND OTHER NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES WHICH DEEPLY HURT WORKING PEOPLE, DESTROYING IN PARTICULAR, JOB SECURITY AND DEPRESSING LIVING STANDARDS.

WE WISH YOU SUCCESS IN UNITED ACTION TO UPHOLD WORKERS' RIGHTS AND INTERESTS AND FOR DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS AND PEOPLE.

ALEXANDER ZHARIKOV
General Secretary,
WFTU



Leaders seen heading the mammoth demonstration on 5th April in New Delhi to protest against the GATT agreement

The central government was highly apprehensive of the rally and so created obstacles in its way. The Delhi police administration refused to give permission in time for erection of tents for the huge number of participants, although application for the same was made much earlier. Virtually an unofficial ban was imposed on holding the rally and demonstration within Delhi. Trampling all democratic norms, prohibitory order had been imposed long since so that no demonstration might proceed to the Boat Club and near Parliament. Although ultimately permission to construct tents was given, it came only in the last hour.

On the very day of 5th April also the police created disturbances. The procession was not allowed to proceed for long. Hardly had the well-decorated and disciplined demonstration proceeded one kilometre when the police

they remained so, continuing to raise slogans vigorously.

But all of a sudden lathi-wielding policemen pounced upon the demonstrators and simultaneously resorted to teargas shelling. The policemen burst altogether 750 rounds of teargas shells. And the mounted policemen trampled on the demonstrators. A large number of comrades were injured in this sudden brutal attack. Comrade Pritish Chanda was also hit by lathi charge. Again, a contingent of more than hundred activists, under the banner of the Delhi State AIDS0 and DYO, led by Comrade Pratap Samal, started from Krishi Bhavan and was heading towards Parliament. On the Red Cross road it was surrounded by the police and they were arrested and detained for 3 hours.

The leaders were not even allowed to submit mass petition to the Speaker.

It may be noted here that the next day the

BJP had a meeting for which it got permission in time to construct tents and also it was allowed to hold the meeting near Boat Club without any disturbance.

GATT Agreement

Spells Doom For Public Health Care

The central Congress (I) government in the aggregate interest of the ruling capitalist class has accepted the GATT agreement on the lines of the Dunkel proposals. The common people now are highly apprehensive about the fallout, that will come down on their lives, already made miserable by the policies of the ruling class governments all these years. The common man, in particular, is apprehensive about the already tottering (almost non-existent) health care system in the post-GATT era. Will the price of medicines go up further, making them out of reach? Can the common man avail any medical facility at all?

The profit-oriented approach of the central and state governments towards the health care system and the consequent rapid privatisation has already made it out of reach of eighty per cent of the Indian people. Even treatment in government hospitals has become dearer to most of the people. Above this the government by accepting the GATT, which now incorporates trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPs), will be compelled to revise the Indian Patent Act (IPA) 1970, which in turn will push the drug prices skyrocketing. Though the Congress(I) government has seen to it that public discussion and debate on the Dunkel Draft was kept to the bare minimum, still, from whatever has been discussed, it has become clear that drug prices will soar in the post-GATT era. The government cannot simply deny this cruel truth. Even the Union commerce minister, the chief spokesman of the government in favour of the GATT was forced to concede that the price of medicines would go up. However, to hoodwink the people the government is trying to show that the rate of increase will not be severe. It is mainly taking recourse to two arguments.

The Government is spreading lies

Firstly, they say, only 10-12% of the medicines are patented, the price of which will go up in the post-GATT era. As almost 90% of the medicines remain out of the purview of any patent, the price of medicines, in general, would largely remain unaffected by GATT.

Secondly, as there are alternative medicines in many fields the prices of patented medicines cannot be raised exorbitantly. Moreover, by applying the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO), the central government will regulate the price of medicines.

But fact reveals that the Congress(I) propaganda that there would not be a steep rise in medicine prices and the active advocacy of the same by pharmaceutical multinational corporations (MNCs) like Pfizer, Hoechst and pro-GATT bureaucrats are highly motivated and misleading.

Though the argument of the government that the proportion of patented drugs to non-patented drugs is a mere ten percent is true, it only holds good for the World Health Organisation (WHO) list of essential drugs. But again, not all those drugs which are popularly prescribed by doctors are listed by the WHO. If all the therapeutic categories which are prescribed are considered, then the proportion of patented drugs is much higher. In commonly

used categories the proportion of patented drugs are 40.23% for antibiotics; 98.80% for anti-bacterials; 69.96% for anti-leprotics; 65.92% for anti-peptic ulcer drugs; 47.53% for anti-asthmatics; 74.42% for tranquilizers etc. (Source : *Economic Times* 16.3.93)

Thus the most commonly used medicines are patented. The off-patent medicines are not only small in number, their use is also relatively restricted. Further, when a new medicine is introduced the pathogens (disease causing micro organisms) acquire resistance against it after a certain period of time making the use of such medicine ineffective. Therefore doctors use newer and newer medicines to fight these resistant pathogens and all these new medicines -- almost 100% of them are patented. From this it can be inferred that the government's propaganda that the price hike will be confined only to patented medicines which constitute a mere 10% of the total medicines is a white lie.

Recently, while answering a question whether introduction of product patent would lead to monopoly, resulting in rise in prices of medicines, the managing director of Pfizer Limited, a top pharmaceutical MNC said 'Patents allow only commercial exclusivity and not monopoly. A monopoly exists when there are no close substitutes'. In his opinion 'as many therapeutic equivalents exist which can be used for the cure of the same disease, doctors would not prescribe a medicine which is highly priced'. (*Economic Times*, 25.3.94) So price increase cannot be possible only on the basis of holding a patent. The line of argument of Congress(I) leaders is not much different from this. But the fact which remains, and which the apologists of GATT are not making public, is that the way the trade related intellectual property rights have been defined in the Dunkel proposals, it will not be possible to produce substitute drugs by concerns or companies not having patent rights of original medicines through alternative processes. TRIPs gives the patent holder companies not only the monopoly of production but also distribution rights of the patented medicines. Theoretically, substitutes can be produced through alternative processes but only after paying royalties as demanded by the patent holder, which make the prices of such substitutes very costly.

In the Indian Patent Act (IPA) 1970 only process patent (patent on only one of the processes through which a product can be produced) is granted. Product patent was not in vogue meaning the same product or substitutes of it could be obtained through processes other than the process on which patent had been granted. Therefore, after 1970, whenever an MNC introduced any new medicine, the Indian manufacturers could quickly produce the same product or its substitute by taking recourse to alternative processes and release them in the market at relatively cheaper prices. After product patent, as defined in the Dunkel proposals, comes into force, these alternative processes cannot be resorted to. Besides, independent research to invent new medicines is so costly, time consuming and difficult that most of the Indian manufacturers can hardly afford. Raw materials on which new research can be done like biochemical molecules and

compounds and genetic material might have already been patented by some or other MNC. Under product patent in TRIPs even to work on the primary raw materials, the patent holder MNC has to be paid hefty royalty fees. The MNCs, if they so desire, can also deny permission to work on the primary materials on which they have patents, thus scuttling any endeavour for alternative medicines. This may as well result in the absence of any effective alternative medicines in the market. There may, however, still remain some older generation off-patent medicines by which no effective treatment can be done

This situation in the post-GATT era will give an open field to pharmaceutical MNCs, who will have the freedom to fix the price to earn maximum profit. Under the IPA it was obligatory to produce the medicine within three years of obtaining a patent, otherwise the government had the power to grant licence to other interested companies to produce the same. The GATT will effectively remove such power from the government. As the Dunkel proposals have vested all power with the patent holder, the patent holding MNC may or may not decide to produce the medicines, that too now for long 20 years and at any point of time the patent holder can raise prices by creating artificial scarcity. In reality, the patent holder will have the monopoly of controlling the prices.

Considering the record of the government's sincerity in controlling prices of any commodity used by the common people, can one take its assurance of applying the drug price control order (DPCO) to control medicine prices seriously? Judging by its new proclivity, will the government deny the MNCs to raise prices? The DPCO may as well stay, however, as a cruel joke on the people, while the price of medicines will be stipulated, in reality, by the MNCs to squeeze the purchasing power of the minority middle class, who though constituting barely 10-15% of the Indian population, is in itself numerically quite substantial. The Indian manufacturers will earn their profit from the remaining 85% of the population, the poverty stricken lower strata, who have to content with ineffective, off-patent, old-generation medicines.

PATENT ACT IN INDIA.**PAST & PRESENT**

Before the IPA '70 was promulgated, patents and related subjects were under the purview of 'Patents and Designs Act' 1911 which was formulated in the interest of imperialism in general and British imperialism in particular. Both process and product patents were granted under it, that too for 16 years, which could be extended for another 10 years. Moreover, as the clauses of the act were not very specific and were loosely knit, the MNCs interpreted it in their own interest, which acted as a major impediment to the growth and prosperity of Indian manufacturers. Before 1970s almost 66% of the domestic pharmaceutical market share was held by the MNCs as the production of Indian manufacturers was low. India was a net importer of drugs -- imports being twice the

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GATT Agreement**Capitalist-imperialists plan to shift burden of their crisis on to the people**

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value of exports, and as the Kefauver Committee of US Senate in 1963 observed, the drug prices in India were the highest in the world.

In this background the Indian drug industry, slowly but steadily acquired its strength of capital and R&D expertise. Like in other sectors, the government set up public sector undertakings like Hindusthan Antibiotics Limited (HAL) and Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL) in 1954 & 1960 respectively to produce bulk drugs (utilised in the production of formulation drugs such as tablets, capsules, injections etc.) As the government took care of bulk drugs, the production of which is less profitable and more capital intensive, the indigenous private manufacturers concentrated on formulations, the production of which is more profitable and less capital intensive. The nationalist ideals, which were instrumental in the establishment of indigenous drug industry before independence around 1920 to produce medicines for malaria, kala-azar, and other infectious diseases have long been discarded. But in their greed for more and more profit the contradiction that existed between Indian manufacturers and the MNCs became more and more acute. Though the Indian manufacturers lacked the capacity for long term and capital intensive research and development effort of the MNCs, they had acquired the capital and R&D capability to manufacture substitutes of the original products of the MNCs through alternative processes. But as long as the Patents & Designs Act 1911 was in force it acted as a barrier for the Indian manufacturers as far as the use of alternative processes were concerned.

Taking advantage of the Patents & Designs Act which granted both product and process patent, the multinationals scuttled the efforts of Indian manufacturers for production of substitutes through alternative processes. The case of Hoechst, an MNC preventing Unichem Laboratories, an indigenous firm, from production of tolbutamide through an alternative process and the case of similar infringement by Pfizer through preventing HAL, a public sector undertaking, to produce oxytetracycline hydrochloride testify the predicament of the Indian manufacturers under the Patents & Designs Act 1911.

Acting at the behest of indigenous manufacturers, the Indian government removed this irritant in 1972 by promulgating the Indian Patent Act (IPA) 1970. The legal obstacle in producing substitutes by alternative processes was done away with when product patent was abolished. Even the longevity of process patent was reduced from the erstwhile long 16 years to only 7 years.

Strength and maturity of the Indian pharmaceutical capitalists

After the introduction of the new patent Act it was observed that within 3-4 years of introduction of a new medicine by an MNC the Indian manufacturers launched cheaper substitutes through alternative processes, thereby earning the lion's share of profit in the domestic market. When an anti-ulcer drug Ranitidine was introduced by MNC giant Glaxo

(under the brand name of Zantac) in 1981, Indian company Ranbaxy introduced the drug in Indian market in 1985, swiftly followed by Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Lyka, Albert David, etc., in quick succession through alternative processes. Other such examples, where Indian companies introduced substitutes within four years are salbutamol (anti-asthmatic), mebendazole (anti-helminthic), naproxen (anti-rheumatic), captopril (anti-hypertensive), norfloxacin (anti-bacterial) etc. (*Economic & Political Weekly* 4.9.93).

That the IPA-70 was drafted and implemented for the aggregate interest of Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers can be gauged from the words of the managing director of Cadila Laboratories, India's third largest pharmaceutical company.

'The real turn for Indian drug industry came when the Indian Patent Act was implemented. Until then we were prevented by the old British Patent Act from manufacturing a patented product. The government introduced a process patent instead ! The industry was allowed to market product with a different process.

'With our new-found freedom Cadila developed its own processes for any product introduced in the world market, launching them successfully in no time at all, at one-tenth the price. (*Economic Times* 15.5.93)

As a result of the IPA the situation changed substantially, prices of drug in India are among the lowest in the world. In countries like USA, UK, Brazil, Pakistan, etc., who have a product patent regime the prices of medicines is 5 to 30 times higher than in India. The business of drug industry catapulted from Rs. 300 crore to a staggering Rs. 4500 crore. There is a sharp rise in exports which has increased from a paltry Rs. 12 crores to over Rs. 1500 crore now. India now exports a large number of bulk drugs e.g. ampicillin, chlorpropamide, diazepam, ethambutol, nifedipine, pyrazinamide; trimethoprim, etc.

Indian companies have relegated the MNC affiliates as far as total capital employed, net worth, total income and net profits are concerned. In '92-'93 Ranbaxy Laboratories, an Indian Company, has pushed Glaxo from the number one position in all these above categories. (*Economic Times* 25.3.94)

The Indian manufacturers who prior to IPA-70 controlled only 33% of the market share now controls as much as 57% whereas the MNCs share has dwindled from 66% to 40%. The Indian companies envisage to increase this market share even further in another two years.

Though the profit of the owners has increased by leaps and bounds, the workers and scientists attached to the industry have only been marginally benefited. Moreover, in the highly automated capital intensive drug industry the increase in job opportunities is far less in comparison to the increase in overall business and profit of the industry.

Here, one more thing should be made clear. Why the Indian companies have kept the prices comparatively low ? It will be utterly wrong to think that the prices are kept low for the benefit of the Indian poor people. Had it been so, then after 1970 there would have been a marked improvement in the accessibility of the poor to medicines. But the poor people of the country

have no such experience. In fact, though the prices are lower than in many countries, they are still out of reach of eighty per cent of the people of India. The manufacturers have kept the price at such a level by which they can be accessible to the optimum number of Indian people — it is a fantastic example of economy of scale. And this is the way, through which the manufacturers can earn their optimum profit. As such the cost of manufacturing is much lower vis-a-vis the MNCs firstly because the domestic producers do not have to pay royalty to the patent holder under IPA; secondly the cost of wage of workers and scientists is much lower in India. By keeping the price lower vis-a-vis the MNCs the Indian manufacturers have a better competitive edge over their MNC rivals while exploiting the purchasing power of the numerically substantial upper stratum where is 10-15% of the Indian population. This has also given them an advantage in the international market.

The Indian manufacturers have used the provisions of IPA to the hilt for their profit motive. And precisely for similar reasons the MNCs and their Indian affiliates are exerting pressure on the government to change the patent Act much before the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations began. When intellectual property rights were incorporated in the Dunkel proposals the position of the MNCs had become stronger and from this position of strength they have renewed their pressure tactics on the government to honour both process and product patent.

Indian capitalists' quest for super-profit

The new GATT agreement on the lines of Dunkel proposals will effectively take away the advantage of IPA from the Indian drug manufacturers. Therefore they are crying hoarse over the GATT by saying that it would bring about a total ruination of indigenous industry. The national interest, it seems, is in imminent danger. If anybody brands this concern of Indian manufacturers as their concern for the nation well being and for the well being of the poor people, then either he is a fool or is misleading the people deliberately. Do the industrialists mean the interest of the people when they talk about national interest ? The national interest that they are talking about is the interest of the ruling capitalist class to further the level of profit by exploiting the people. Had the interest been otherwise, the Indian manufacturers while exerting pressure on the government not to accept GATT, simultaneously would have kept the medicine prices sufficiently low to make them accessible to the poor people. Far from doing this Indian manufacturers are joining hands with the MNCs to put pressure on the government to abolish whatever little power the government has for controlling drug prices, through the DPCO. The Indian manufacturers are more concerned about the ways and means by which they can transfer the rise in manufacturing cost on to the shoulder of the common people. All their big talks, their apprehension are for their level of profit which they are afraid, may go down in the face of competition from MNCs. To keep this level of

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Impact of GATT Agreement on Medicines

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profit intact and to further it they will feel no compunction to raise the prices of drug in the domestic market.

The Indian manufacturers have already begun the search for alternative ways to keep their level of profit intact besides raising the prices in the domestic market. Though collectively the Indian drug manufacturers association is against product patent, that some of the members are not averse to it has recently come out in the press. Even a 'national industry' like Ranbaxy, which has profited enormously from the days it introduced the substitute of Zantac, is talking in favour of product patent. Why this change of hearts of those who have all along advocated against a product patent regime? In fact, the Indian drug industry, the bigger manufacturers in particular, has gained sufficient strength to compete in the international market. The Indian manufacturers after capturing the lion's share of the Indian market are eyeing now on entering into the international market in a much bigger way. In fact 'the pharmaceutical industry today thinks globally — whether it is a small scale unit, a medium scale unit or a large scale unit like Cadila or Ranbaxy. It is hard to find an entrepreneur thinking only in terms of the local market'. (*Economic Times* 16.12.93)

As far as the international market is concerned the Indian manufacturers are concentrating on old off-patent drugs (like Ibuprofen, ampicillin, amoxycillin, trihydrate, etc.) which they will market mostly in less developed countries and even in some advanced capitalist countries. Indian drug producers have already have a market for medicines for such tropical diseases like malaria, cholera, typhoid, etc. in the less developed countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Many leading Indian manufacturers have already set up resident offices in these countries to exploit the poor people there. The Indian produces are looking for commercialisation of therapeutic applications of ayurvedic herbs which has a growing market in developed countries.

The Indian companies are also looking for strategic licence tie-ups with multinationals. That the domestic companies are not afraid of being gobbled up by MNCs and are collaborating with the latter as partners, albeit junior partners, speaks highly of the strength and maturity of Indian pharmaceutical capitalists. Through these tie-ups the Indian manufacturers in conjunction with MNCs will exploit the Indian people.

Thus in the post-GATT era, in all likelihood, the situation that will prevail is like this: the Indian affiliates of the MNCs will have no problem as their parent companies would have most of the drug patents. Moreover, the MNCs are actively thinking to transfer their R & D wings to India where they can exploit the cheap but highly skilled scientific manpower. This will also reduce their over-heads to a large extent.

The domestic manufacturers because of the GATT will lose the relative advantage of the Indian Patent Act. But they will definitely not oppose the GATT from a pro-people perspective. On the other hand, notwithstanding some murmur of protest, in the interest of earning profit, in addition to their search for

foreign market, they will try to raise the prices of medicines at the cost of Indian common people.

It should be kept in mind that the relative lower price of medicines in India was a residual result of the Indian Patent Act and the contradictions between Indian and MNC pharmaceutical capitalists. Whatever little benefit it gave to the Indian people will be lost after the introduction of TRIPs.

Even when the prices of medicines were relatively cheap, it was out of the reach of the overwhelming majority of the Indian people and as the prices continue to rise as a result of other economic policies of the central and state governments the access to health care is being progressively denied. If the existing prices are allowed to rise still higher then this access will be completely negated.

Resist this onslaught

This horrendous situation must be thwarted at all cost in the interest of the common Indian people. A militant movement has to be built-up against the sinister design of GATT agreement to safeguard the common people from the onslaught of both Indian and foreign capital.

In accordance with GATT agreement and its own new economic policies the central government is taking a more and more commercial and profit-oriented view on people's health and introducing rapid privatisation of the existing public health system.

This sinister design must not go unchallenged. It is time to build up a strong and militant democratic health movement to force the government to take on itself the full responsibility for public health, so that, even the poorest man in the country is not denied his human right of access to medical facilities.

Movement against rape and murder of Lachho Devi intensifies

The Haryana AIMSS and AIKKMS are continuing their concerted movement to bring to book the criminals, who perpetuated the heinous crime of rape and murder of Lachho Devi, a teenage girl of Lohar Majra village of Kurukshetra district of Haryana; and the unconditional release of her father from jail, who had been falsely implicated in the rape and murder of his own daughter.

It is a matter of shame that though almost 4 months have elapsed since the crime was perpetuated, far from finding out the culprits, the police have not yet released the 75-year-old innocent father of Lachho who is still behind the bars. The police at the dictate of the state assembly speaker, who has strong political and business links with the family of the suspected criminals, are trying to hush up the case.

In this backdrop the movement spearheaded by AIMSS and AIKKMS is intensifying day by day. On 29.3.94 more than one thousand people demonstrated before the office of the deputy commissioner, Kurukshetra, demanding immediate arrest of the criminals, unconditional release of the girl's father and transfer of the district superintendent of police who is also a relative of the suspected criminals.

The demonstrators submitted a memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister through the D.C. The demonstration was addressed by Comrade Sansar Chandra, president of Kurukshetra district AIKKMS, Comrade Sudesh Kumari, secretary, Kurukshetra district AIMSS and Comrade Shyamsunder, Kurukshetra district organizer of SUCI. Prominent citizens and leaders of other political parties and mass organizations also addressed the demonstrators. All the speakers exhorted the people to further intensify the movement till all the demands are met.



Front portion of the huge demonstration of women on 29th March at Kurukshetra, Haryana, under the auspices of Kurukshetra District unit of the MSS. Seen in front are Comrade Shyamsunder, Kurukshetra District Organiser of the SUCI, Sudesh Kumari and Chandrarekha of the MSS, Srimati Shakuntala Sakhun, District Secretary, Haryana Mahila Sabha and Comrade Satpal, Kurukshetra District Secretary of the CPI.

Unite And Resist

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common objective, a situation that echoes the great call of Karl Marx: Workers of all countries, unite!

Unity and united movement at this very juncture is the urgent necessity before the toiling multitude. It is this that will thrust defeat on the enemies of civilization and mankind -- capitalism-imperialism.

Whatever be the apparent might of this enemy let nobody overlook the fact that it is tottering on its last legs, frantically groping for a way-out through the GATT treaty.

And whatever be the promise of a rosy paradise by GATT protagonists, it needs to be deleted for otherwise that will be a blow to the toiling millions. But what happens to its protagonists if the GATT negotiations fail?

For an answer let us listen to Mr. Robert Hermates, Vice-chairman of a giant multinational, the Golden Sachs International, who said, "We are at a crucial stage. If the GATT negotiations fail this year, they have more than likely failed for good. You might not get a complete collapse of the system but there would be fragmentation. This is a major danger."

And Mr. Peter Sutherland, the successor of Arthur Dunkel as Director-General of the GATT, observed, "The bicycle theory applies to the GATT as to many other things; if you are not moving forward, you fall off. If we lose this ground, the whole existing fabric and structure will have been significantly, perhaps, irreparably damaged." Finally, Mr. Sutherland also said that the "signing of the historic GATT accord in Marrakesh marked the beginning, not the end, of the bitter trade disputes in the world".

So what an irreparable damage awaits the "whole existing fabric and structure" of the capitalist world system unless GATT comes to the rescue.

The preamble of the GATT text declares that "intellectual property rights are private rights" It means that although knowledge or for that matter, products of knowledge, which emerged in human society in all ages through collective struggle of mankind in pursuit of progress of society and social well-being, have now been converted into commodities in the capitalist market to meet the insatiable greed of the capitalist-imperialists on a global scale. These products are patented and as an impact of product patent as against process patent (as was the case in India) to mention only one from a total of seven heads under Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) conditionalities, the world of a scientist, a farmer, a student, a patient, a housewife, a blue-collar employee and everybody will be further subjugated to the rule of capital.

To be very brief, a few other aspects of the dangerous GATT agreement are those provisions that will lead to export-oriented agriculture which may bring fortune to a handful of rural bourgeoisie, by changing cropping patterns to boost up export, creating scarcity, resulting in further price hike of food and agricultural produce, and lifting all restrictions for free loot and plunder by foreign capital also by means of Trade Related Aspects of Investment Measures (TRIMs) and

towards monopolising services by GATS (General Agreement of Trade in Service) that consists of finance, including banking, insurance, etc., telecommunication, health services and so on. Of GATS, mention may be made particularly of the audio-visual issue, which is tantamount to 'cultural invasion', a term posed by an indignant GATT member, France.*

Yet, Rao-Singh-Mukherjee, the 'blessed trinity', claims high of the benefits of the Dunkel proposals.

But the people of our country have had the bitter experience as to how the ministers of our country make false claims to hoodwink the vast sections of the people when these men in authority increase the prices of essential commodities, more particularly of diesel, petrol, rice, wheat, etc., and offer fresh doses of concessions and subvention to the monopolists, they try to make people believe that these are for the benefit of the country and the people. So when the same persons in governmental authority are trying to paint a rosy picture about the outcome of the GATT treaty, it is not difficult to understand for whom this rosy picture is really meant.

At Marrakesh, Indian delegation has made some tough talk. It underlines once again the very fact that India has risen to the height of regional super power that has given her a quite remarkable edge in bargaining capacity.

Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the Union Commerce Minister, opposed the USA along with others and became successful in postponing the US proposal of linking the so-called 'social cause' regarding labour standards, at least for the time being. On the question of textile industry also Mr. Mukherjee could defeat the US proposal on 'quota'. Mr. Sutherland was all praise for this role of India. All this indicates that as the relatively developed among the under developed capitalist countries, India has attained a powerful position so much so that it is spearheading its attack against the new provisions. On the question of India's accepting the terms and conditionalities of the IMF, the World Bank, etc., since long, and even now through the GATT agreement, it should be understood that all this is aimed at strengthening the might of the Indian top-notch monopolists in the international market. The top industrial houses of India are dreaming to expand their sphere and grip in the world market as far as possible. The GATT agreement, if it has provided any 'opportunity', is for this handful or handpicked monopolists and to none else. The much trumpeted 'globalization of Indian economy' means globalization or internationalization of market for loot and plunder by the Indian monopolists in league with the foreign MNCs. They will share the booty whereas the common people will be subjected to more and more ruthless oppression, misery, destitution and deprivation. So when the spokesmen of the Indian government talk of 'national interest', 'country's freedom', etc., they mean in reality the interest and freedom of the microscopic minority and not the interest and freedom of the majority of the people.

* For more details, separate articles on Dunkel proposals were published in previous issues of P.E. of 18.5.92, 3.1.94 and 17.1.94. Also in this issue we present on this subject and will publish more in future. Editor, Proletarian Era.

Ever since independence the ruling class of India brought down heavily the economic political and cultural onslaughts on the people one after another. But this time the attack is more severe, all-out and unprecedented. Unless resisted in time this GATT agreement will rob the people of their economic, political and cultural rights and values and reduce them to mere human machines. This the ruling class of imperialist-capitalist world want very much. We must not forget this basic thing that it is the Indian monopolists who in order to enjoy the left-overs of their big brothers in the international market and to jointly share the internal market has removed all the barriers hitherto in force and has submitted to the most humiliating terms and conditionalities of the GATT proposal. And their most reliable agent the Congress(I) government has put its signature to the severe detriment of the people's interest. That is why we see them engaged in unleashing a false propaganda barrage through various media in order to befool and mislead the people with utter lie and false hope that it will usher in a new era where there will be prosperity all around. But prosperity for whom? Definitely not for the common man but the microscopic minority, the monopolists, to turn whose wishes into reality is the sacred duty of the government. But for people this prosperity will in no time turn into a nightmare. Shall we allow this to happen? Before it is too late all the left, democratic, patriotic parties and personalities should unite throughout the country to lay bare this sordid design of the monopolists and their trusted agent the Congress(I) and its government. The spearhead of this movement must be directed against none but those who opened the door to the foreign monopolists and multinationals for their loot and plunder of cheap labour, raw materials and the vast market of this great land of ours.

We have observed with hope that from the various platforms of movement against the GATT agreement a slogan is raised quite pertinently that the Government of India should be forced to withdraw from the agreement. The question that arises then is against whom the movement should be directed. When the object is to compel the India government to withdraw from the GATT treaty, obviously the thrust of attack should be directed against its diabolical design while exposing thoroughly the nature and intensity of the neo-colonial attack of the imperialists, led by the USA, which is coming down heavily, particularly upon the weaker sections of the world. Without this clear-cut direction the entire movement may turn into an exercise in sabre-rattling in the open air while allowing the government to go scot free.

The mammoth rally led by National Platform of Mass Organisations on 5th April last in Delhi braving police onslaught, is an encouraging step in building up movement. Similar movements are growing at state levels. Black Day was observed throughout India on 15th April last, the day of GATT ratification.

Though inspiring, may the movement not be limited to only such demonstrative programmes alone. The movement must spread beyond it, starting from the grassroots level and for this the leadership must consolidate itself politically and organisationally.

Politically it must be sound in the sense that no act, no approach must be made that

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Privatisation of Public Sector

It gives Indian monopolists and foreign multinationals a free hand for savage exploitation

The Central Government has floated for sale the shares of 7 public sector units. These are BHEL, BEL, BEML, Bongaigaon Refineries and Petrochemicals, NALCO, MTNL and Hindusthan Petroleum Corporation. Five to twelve per cent of the shares of these public sector units would be sold at 20% discount, and a sum of rupees two thousand five hundred crores would be mopped up. More shares are slated to be sold in this financial year as the target for 1994-95 is four thousand crores of rupees. This is the fourth time that the government has floated the shares of the public sector units for sale in the open market since the adoption of the new economic and industrial policy. Besides these public sector units the central government has decided to sell the share of seven nationalised banks.

But what is the stand of the central government in favour of this policy of privatization? Why does the central government hand over these public sector units, built by expending through the public exchequer, to the monopolists for looting and plundering the common people? It may be pointed out here that the share of only those public sector units which are earning quite handsome profits are being sold to the private individuals. These public sector units have a readymade infrastructure, assured supply system and a relatively guaranteed market developed through sustained efforts by spending crores of rupees obtained by taxing the half-starved and half-clad people of the country. It may be pointed out in this connection that though some public sector units are incurring losses, the public sector units taken together are earning handsome profit. Again, losses sustained by those public sector units are solely due to political interference for narrow selfish gain or corrupt manouevring at the top.

Again, who is responsible for the losses for the nationalised banks? Did not the nationalised banks advance huge amount of money mostly to the monopoly houses at the instance of the government? Again, did not these banks write off as bad debt the huge sums so advanced to the monopolists who manipulated to defraud the banks by not repaying the loans, by the order of the central government? Why did the government allow the monopoly houses to go scot free even after defrauding the banks? The loss suffered by the nationalised banks in the security scam is enormous. But what measure has been taken by the central government to recover the money from the culprits who defrauded the banks? Is it not a fact that the government instead of taking any positive measure to recover the money is actually trying to shield the culprits by its cover up of the scam?

It is however to be admitted that the government and the bourgeois publicity media have to a certain extent succeeded in creating confusion on the question of this policy of privatization, by taking advantage of the irritating experience of the people about the public sector units because of poor service, rampant corruption, mismanagement and administrative inefficiency. But herein lies the utter hypocrisy of the central government. How can the central government fight corruption

when the party leaders and the functionaries and even the persons at topmost level of the government are guilty of rank corruption, and are direct beneficiaries of corruption? Is it not corroborated by the Bofors, German Submarine deal or Harshad Mehta episode? But is it not utter hypocrisy that despite such track record for the leaders and the functionaries of the most trusted party of the ruling capitalist class, the central government is trying to take advantage of the popular resentment against corruption in its bid to privatise the public sector units in the interest of the ruling capitalist class?

In the post-Independence period the central government built up heavy and basic industries in the public sector as at that time the private entrepreneurs were shy in investing in basic and heavy industries requiring huge investments and having a long gestation period with low profitability. The building up of heavy and basic industries was then essential for consolidation and strengthening of Indian capitalism. So the giant public sector units were built up in the aggregate interest of the Indian capitalist class. But this Nehruvian policy of 'mixed economy' which was framed for the relatively freest, speediest and widest development of the Indian capitalist economy in the then condition was fraudulently termed as the policy for the founding of a 'socialistic pattern of society'. This slogan was a most hypocritical one as it was designed to make use of the patriotic feeling and pro-socialist sentiments of the Indian people in favour of those public sector units which were actually built up to consolidate and strengthen capitalism.

During the Fifties when the Nehruvian policy of 'socialistic pattern of society' was under process of formation and implementation there was much euphoria about this policy among the progressive circles in this country, and even among the parties like the undivided CPI. They even praised the five-year plans and similar other measures of the government and projected Pundit Nehru as progressive. But what benefit the people derived from those? Is it not a fact that while the common people have become poorer and poorer these measures of the government have made the base of capitalism stronger and stronger and thus gradually laid the foundation of fascism in our country? But the parties like the undivided CPI, and later the CPI(M) and the CPI extended support to these policies as they have also in later period hailed the nationalisation of banks by Sm. Gandhi. Engels long ago pointed out what was the real import of the nationalisation of industries by the bourgeois state. Engels wrote: "... nor conversion into state property deprives the productive forces of the character as capital ... The modern state, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine; it is the state of the capitalist, ideal aggregate capitalist. The more productive forces it takes over, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage earner proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished, it is rather pushed to an extreme." (*Anti Duhring*)

As already stated the Indian ruling capitalist class adopted the policy of 'mixed economy' for the relatively freest, speediest and widest

development of the capitalist economy in the then conditions, and the Indian capitalist class in course of time not only consolidated itself and gained strength despite crisis, but has attained imperialist character as well. The aspirant character of the Indian bourgeoisie is discernible in the fact that India has now already become a regional superpower. But the more Indian capitalism has been consolidating, the more purchasing power of the people is dwindling and this is creating a shrinking home-market. And on the other hand there is stiff competition in the overseas market where the Indian goods face competition with the superior technology and the know-how of the western multinationals. But the surplus capital which is growing and multiplying because of the super profits of the Indian monopolists, becomes idle and bureaucratic if it remains blocked. In such a situation there is a frantic search by them for an alternative outlet for the investment of this surplus capital.

Now globalization is being thrust by the advanced imperialist countries on the other less developed capitalist countries as a way out of the endemic crisis of their capitalist economies. Through this they are seeking to dismantle the tariff barriers put up by the developing capitalist countries to provide sheltered market to their respective bourgeoisie. At the same time through globalization imperialist multinationals desire access to the cheap raw materials and labour of the less developed capitalist countries so that they can reap super profit by freely setting up manufacturing units in those countries. To the Indian monopolists this offers an opportunity to invest their idle surplus capital as junior partners in imperialist multinationals and find better outlets for their products in the international market to maximize profits under the given conditions. In fact, they have no alternative. Acceptance of the globalisation scheme embodied in the Dunkel proposals by the Central government subservient to the

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UNITE AND RESIST

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compromises the cause and virtually weakens the movement against GATT treaty and thus allows the enemy to consolidate.

Organisationally, a united front must be forged which will wage the battle in a most concentrated manner. The united front should be built on the basis of a common agreed programme and a commonly agreed code of conduct. And only thus can it act as the most powerful weapon in people's hand to unleash a protracted movement. Against the organised state machine of the capitalists only a united battle can snatch victory, unless it is weakened by sectarian or petty party attitude.

So the call has come, the call of the hour to every left and democratic party and person to wage a sustained battle against GATT treaty. We will defeat GATT, and the working class will write a new history.

Capitalists once shy are out to grab basic & heavy industries which now have lucrative ready market

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Indian monopolists represents a marriage of convenience between Indian monopoly capital and the international imperialist monopoly capital.

Side by side with this attempt to penetrate the global market as junior partners to fulfil their growing aspirations commensurate with their strength, the monopolists are targeting those profitable public sectors built by taxing the common people for investment for their idle surplus capital. So this policy of privatization has been adopted by the government to give the monopolists an opportunity to extract profit from the relatively assured market of the public sector units. Initially the public sectors were built in the interest of the capitalist class, and now these are being privatised also in the interest of the same class.

The central government is also taking the plea that the privatization is being done to reduce the fiscal deficit. But can this plea be at all tenable? This fiscal deficit is mainly due to extending concessions to the monopolists and increased military and administrative expenditure. While the common people have been hit hard by administered price rise on all essential commodities, substantial benefit has been given to the capitalist class by a significant net reduction in both customs and excise levies. And this is done at a time when both gross and net profit and profitability of the corporate sector have substantially increased. The following table published by *The Economic Times* in its Annual Study of 300 private sector giants, clearly reveal the real picture.

It may be seen from the table that both profit and profitability of these corporate

giants and mini-giants have substantially increased. It may also be seen from the table that the percentage increase in net profit surpasses the percentage increase in sale. But despite this substantial profit increase the government has given them yet one more major concession in the form of excise duty and custom duty relief, which again increases the deficit. Now the government says that this deficit would be made good by selling the public sector units created by the public money.

But this policy of privatization adopted by the Government of India is nothing novel. This policy is today a global design of the capitalists. Because of the acute crises of the world capitalist market, the problem of excess capital is rocking the foundation of the economy of the capitalist-imperialist countries. The monopolists in their own interest invite the foreign multinationals in the internal market. In the past the individual capitalists of our country were, in comparison to the present stage, weak, the gestation period was long, and so in order to save the capitalists from the ordeal of developing the infrastructure and the basic industries in such a situation the public sector was built for the sole benefit of the capitalists. Now that initial phase is over and the Indian capitalist class is no more weak as it was just after independence, it has gone on from strength to strength to give birth to monopoly capital and monopolists. These monopolists now want a free hand in the loot and plunder of the wealth created by the public sector units. So if these public sector units are step by step privatised they can have a free hand to do anything they like there.

This is nothing new. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher followed the same policy during her tenure as the Prime Minister of Britain. But what is the result? The result is that the British economy plunged into a far deeper crisis. In our country some people think that the industrial boom of our country is obstructed just because of the procedure of license and permit. But this is not the whole truth. The malaise lies far deeper in the very system of capitalism. But capitalism is today in such a state of crisis that it takes recourse to any desperate measure for any temporary relief though it may land the system into a still greater crisis. The privatization of the public sector units is such a desperate measure which will throw the life and livelihood of hundreds of thousands of people into a state of uncertainty and doom. This government has no right to sell the national wealth to the private capitalist owners for their profit.

The present policy of privatization embarked upon by the central government cannot be viewed in isolation. It is a part of the overall scheme to give the Indian monopolists a free hand in conjunction with imperialist international monopoly capital through globalisation as embodied in the modified Dunkel proposals to which the much vaunted new economic and industrial policy of Rao government is geared. These policies are sure to bring about fresh onslaughts on the life and living of the toiling masses of the country. It is the bounden duty of all patriotic, right-thinking people to rise in protracted protest movement to foil this conspiracy against the people.

Half-yearly Results of Corporate Giants : 1993-94 (Amount, Rupees in Crore)

	SALES			Gross Profit			Net Profit			N/P Sales (%)		N/P Sales (%)	
	1993	1992	%rise	1993	1992	%rise	1993	0992	%rise	1993	1992	1993	1992
Top ten	12785.8	10843.3	17.9	1372.4	1150.4	19.3	620.3	558.2	11.1	10.7	10.6	4.9	5.1
Top Giants(143)	44257.5	38726.9	14.3	4505.1	3624.5	24.3	2101.5	1605.9	30.9	10.2	9.4	4.7	4.1
Mini Giants(126)	11305.0	9990.4	13.2	939.5	785.1	19.27	466.6	345.3	35.1	8.3	7.9	4.1	3.5
Total (269)	55562.5	48717.3	14.1	5444.6	4409.9	23.5	2568.1	1950.9	31.6	9.8	9.1	4.6	4.0

At Their Old Game Again

The RSS and one of its infamous outfits in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry (Union Territory), the Hindu Munnani (Hindu Front), are at their old game again. They claim that the 200-year old cathedral church situated at the centre of Pondicherry, the capital town of the Union Territory of the same name, was constructed at the site of a demolished Hindu temple. The 'discovery' is sudden, of course, that the historians and archeologists should have been taken by surprise. However, who does not know that these people care the least for truth and reason and religious bigotry is their sole political capital. And they proceeded with their diabolic designs despite the fact that the people were least interested in the hue and cry raised. After all, the 'RSSwallahs' are taught by their chieftains how to make an issue out of a non-issue and develop even mob frenzy out of that. So on March 5, they declared that they would perform "Deeparadhana" (a Hindu religious ritual) on March 10 before the said church.

To the utter dismay of these RSS-Hindu Munnani fanatics, common people simply ignored the 'call' given by them. Protests voiced from all sections of people not only in Pondicherry but also from the neighbouring state, Tamil Nadu. So on March 7, the RSS-Hindu Munnani forces withdrew their 'programme'. The Home Minister of the Indian Union, for his part, sent the CRPF; but that has got nothing to do with the hasty retreat of the fanatics. Don't we remember what the security forces did on December 6, 1992 at Ayodhya?

Be that as it may, people of the country, particularly of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, can ill-afford to underestimate the danger posed by the BJP-RSS combine to the much-needed unity of the people in general, and the toiling people in particular. Criminals are working overtime to create communal riots by discovering various pretexts. People should remain vigilant against obscurantist forces of all hues and develop democratic mass movements on the burning problems of people's life against the anti-people policies of the rulers. And democratic movements alone can unite people crossing the barriers of caste and religion.

Anti-Dunkel dharna before MP Assembly

Bhopal: Under the auspices of Madhya Pradesh State Committee of SUCI a dharna was organised before the state Assembly at Bhopal on 18th March last. The demonstrators assembled at the Roshanpara 4-point crossing, Bhopal and staged dharna under the leadership of Comrade Asok Sharma, State secretary, MP, and Comrades Ramavatar Sharma, JC Barari, Bhavani Ghosh and RK Sharma, all members of the Madhya Pradesh State Committee of SUCI. Addressing the people assembled around the leaders demanded scrapping of the GATT agreement and appealed them to join the 5th April Delhi Rally a success.

Later, under the leadership of Comrade Asok Sharma, a 5-man deputation comprising the above mentioned leaders submitted to the Chief Minister Digvijoy Singh a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister demanding withdrawal from the GATT treaty.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee condoles demise of Comrade C. Rajeswara Rao

Socialist Unity Centre of India
Central Committee

48, Lenin Sarani, Calcutta-13.

To

Comrade Indrajit Gupta,
General Secretary,
Communist Party of India,
Ajay Bhawan, New Delhi.

10.4.94

Dear Comrade,

The loss of Comrade C. Rajeswara Rao, a distinguished freedom fighter, the former General Secretary of the undivided C.P.I., a prominent organiser of the 1940s Telengana Peasants' Struggle and the founding General Secretary of the C.P.I. and further more, a consistent fighter for the cause of left democratic and secular movements, will be deeply felt at this crucial hour when efforts to forge united struggle of all left - democratic and secular forces of the country has become the prime necessity today.

On behalf of the Central Committee of our Party as also on my own behalf, I convey deep condolence to all leaders and rank-and-file comrades of the C.P.I.

With revolutionary greetings,

Comradely yours,
Nihar Mukherjee,
General Secretary,
S.U.C.I.

Protest demonstration in Trivandrum

Trivandrum: Our party, the SUCI, organised a mass protest demonstration against police atrocities on demonstrators in New Delhi on 5th April, who were protesting against the central government's new economic and industrial policy and acceptance of the sinister GATT agreement.

The huge demonstration starting from the central bus stand ended at East Port City bus stand and was addressed by Com. Rajagopal.

Procession and public meeting in memory of Bhagat Singh

Sagar(MP): To observe the day of martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, a procession was organised by AIDSO which later was converted into a public meeting. Speaking on this occasion Com. Ramavatar Sharma, member, MP State Committee of SUCI, showed how the revolutionary character of Bhagat Singh stood out among his contemporaries. Dedication to the cause, self-criticism and correct thinking process, the quintessential character of a revolutionary, had become integrated in his life. AIDSO, the true revolutionary students' organisation in the country is striving to fulfill the dreams of Bhagat Singh, Comrade Sharma said. Comrade K.D. Sharma presided over the meeting which was conducted by Com. Mohan.

Massive Anti-Dunkel March by 10-party combine in Calcutta

The powerful imperialist countries, led by the USA, with their might of capital and technology are out to make the weaker countries their helpless prey of savage neo-colonial attack through GATT treaty, of which the Government of India has also become a signatory in the interest of the monopolists of our country. It is absolutely urgent to build up a united resistance movement of all left, democratic and secular forces and parties and patriotic people to thwart this unprecedented attack coming down on people. At the same time, the workers of backward and of the advanced countries should build a strong bond with the same objective. With this above objective already at the national level joint programmes are being taken by different left, democratic and secular parties including the SUCI.

But it is regrettable that because of the sectarian attitude of CPI(M) the cause of the united movement received a serious setback in West Bengal. Though much derided by the common people for the anti-people policies during its long misrule in the State, in the interest of building up a broad-based united movement throughout the country, in accordance with the call given by the Central Committee of our party, we strove hard for a joint movement.

At the outset the CPI(M) was prepared only to accept our party the SUCI and the CPI-ML (Liberation) in the united programme. However, our proposal of including all the left and democratic forces in a broader unity was finally accepted. From the beginning, we made it very clear that this unity move must be seen as a united endeavour of all left parties to build up mass movements rather than seeing it as a mere move for combination of Left Front and non-Left Front parties. A massive protest demonstration (*Mahamichhil*) was proposed to be organised in Calcutta on 4th April.

While the preparation for this demonstration was under way the CPI(M) unilaterally decided to exclude the CPI-ML(Liberation) from the rally on the pretext of the latter's anti-CPI(M) stance. The CPI(M) felt no need to consult

other parties before making its decision public. It has always been our stand that it is wrong to take unilateral decisions concerning the united movement without taking other participating parties into confidence as this is the basic code of conduct of united movement. We strongly feel that on this principle of unity-struggle-unity, the CPI(M) can always criticize - from its own platform - the standpoint of the CPI-ML (Liberation), but it has got no right, whatsoever, to make the standpoint of another party a pretext to harm the united movement. The cause of united movement had suffered greatly in the past because of such intolerant and arrogant attitude of the CPI(M), and we had conducted serious polemics with CPI(M) on this question. This time, this attitude of the CPI(M) forced us to opt out from the 4th April programme. Ten left and democratic parties, including our party, separately organised a massive demonstration on 6th April.

On 6th April more than twenty thousand demonstrators marched from the College Square, Calcutta, to the United States Information Service (USIS) office passing Raj Bhavan on their way. Two effigies, one of President Clinton of the USA and another of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, were burnt before the USIS. Reflecting the opposition and indignation of the people of West Bengal, two protest memorandums were handed over--one addressed to the President of the USA through the USIS and another to the Prime Minister through the Governor of this State.

The spirit and enthusiasm with which common people from far-off districts participated in this demonstration shows how fervently the people want movements against the GATT agreement and the 'new' economic policies pursued by the central Congress(I) government. The call of the hour is to bring all left and democratic forces under the banner of united movement to resist the all-out danger of the GATT treaty and the new economic policies of the central government. And this is possible only through popular pressure by unity and pro-movement consciousness of the common people.



Part of the vast assembly of demonstrators in New Delhi on 5th April last demanding scrapping of the GATT treaty by the central government.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE