

SUCI's Call for Building up United Left and Democratic Movement to Resist Anti-people Budget

The Central Committee of Socialist Unity Centre of India in a resolution calls upon the people to come forward and organise a broad-based democratic mass movement in order to meet the challenge on the life of our people by the capitalist class through the introduction of Central Budget by the Janata Party Government. This Budget will make serious and adverse effects on the life of all section of the common people who are already miserably groaning under heavy taxation, suffering from soaring prices of all essential commodities carrying the heavy burden of inflation and extremely low purchasing power and living much below poverty line. It is incumbent on the part of the people to raise their vigorous voice of protest against passing of this pro-monopoly, pro-joteder and anti-people budget.

Along with the Central Budget the heavy burden put up by the Railway Budget and different State Budgets should also be taken up for campaign.

The Party Units as well as all Mass Organisations run by the Party must immediately come forward to chalk out a comprehensive programme of campaign through walling, posterimg, squad meetings, group meetings, processions, mass meetings, mass deputation

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to M. P.s, Central ministers, Governors and the Governmental Authorities.

Resolutions adopted in these meetings should be sent to the Prime Minister

and the Central Finance Minister.

The Central Committee urges upon all genuine left and democratic parties and forces to come forward to build up

united and broad-based mass movements, to meet the challenge of the Capitalist Class and their Governments at the centre and in different States in our people's life.

RESIST THE CRUSHING BURDEN OF TAXES ON COMMON PEOPLE

Budget now means in this moribund capitalist order a big swindle of robbing the poor to pay, in the main, for 'planning' the development and consolidation of capitalist economy and the betterment of the exploiting capitalist class. And all this goes under cover of so-called 'national interest' or 'national economy'. This yearly fraud keeps the common people apprehensive on the eve of this season of budgets year after year; through this fiscal device bourgeois caretaker governments bring down ever-increasing financial burdens on all sections of common people by taking a chunk from their purchasing power while the capitalist exploiters whether in industry or in firms scramble for their respective shares in the booty. This year has been no exception and if there is any difference, it is in the brutal frankness of the budget framers as also in the heaviest of burdens in a single year. The Centre has come out with financial offensive to the tune of Rs. 1060 crores against the people. Common people will have to organise strong movements against this capitalist onslaught.

Railway Budget

The financial offensive against the common people starts from the railway budget. The erstwhile 'Socialist' Railway Minister makes a hat-trick of three successive so-called 'surplus' budgets. The budget is surplus this year only after imposing new imposts to the tune of Rs. 178 crores by way of sweeping increases in fares and freights! Besides, there is 'window-dressing' of accounts inasmuch as only about 3 p.c. (Rs 145 crores) is charged as depreciation fund hardly capable

of replacing the equipment.

By sweeping levy of 5 p.c. as supplementary charge up to 500 Km and 10 p.c. beyond 500 Km on all goods traffic including those hitherto exempted like food grains industrial inputs etc. excepting only salt, the government wants to fetch Rs. 108 crores. This is one and mighty pillar of 'surplus' of the budget. The Minister says that this "will not have any significant impact on prices." Perhaps he was observing the ritual of such assertion taking

cue from his "authoritarian" predecessors!

From the law of bourgeois economics, it is well-known that increase in freight charges or transport cost is absorbed in cost of products by way of increase in the prices, the burden thus being shifted to the consumers. According to trade and industry circles, consumers will have to pay more for wheat, rice, pulses, edible oils, sugar, jaggery, khandsari and vanaspati. Likewise, peasants would have to buy chemical manures like urea and sulphate of ammonia at higher prices. A hike in the freight rates of kerosene, cement, bamboos, steel and iron items like angles and bars is bound to be costlier. According to the estimates of the industrial circles, the rise in transport cost on industrial inputs will be the following: coal Rs. 4.50 per tonne, iron/steel Rs. 15.40 per tonne, iron ore Rs. 5.50 per tonne, cement Rs. 10.80 per tonne. And it is the experience in this country that the industrialists and business community generally make a profit out of this increase in costs by

raising the prices of products far more than what the hike in costs can justify. They do this every year with impunity because whatever may be the colour of the government whether branded bourgeois parties like Janata or Congress or social democrats like CPI(M), CPI and others, it protects their interests and have all the sympathy and assistance for them. This year the same thing will happen and already prices of articles have been on the increase from 10 to 20 p.c. even when the old stocks at the retailer's level have not yet been exhausted.

The other pillar of this so-called surplus railway budget is hike in fares, both for suburban and non-suburban commuters. The

'Socialist' Railway Minister brings the argument in favour of this hike at double or more than double rate in fares of suburban monthly tickets which even the imperialist rulers did not put up. He invokes the interim report of RTEC (Railway Traffic Enquiry Committee) that brings the reactionary argument that the suburban commuters pay only six days' fares and this should go. The Minister wants us to forget the logic of subsidizing suburban travel where an employee has to travel a long way to attend his place of service and doubling of the cost means taking a good percentage of his family budget with no way of supplementing it. Besides,

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On the occasion of 31st ANNIVERSARY OF SUCI MASS MEETING

on 24th April '79

SAHEED MINAR MAIDAN

CALCUTTA • 5 P. M.

Main Speaker : Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

President : Comrade Sankar Singh

Get rid of Economism-Reformism and make Trade Unions the Schools of Communist Politics, Ethics and culture

Com. Nihar Mukherjee's ardent call

At the 16th All India Conference of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) call was given to the toiling people of the country to hold aloft the banner of revolutionary working class struggle and build up united struggle to face the onslaughts from the ruling capitalist class and its Government. The Conference reminded the people that the country was at the cross-roads. The prime question now before them is which road to take—whether to go along the historic course of intensification of class struggle culminating in overthrow of the exploitative capitalist order, or to continue to groan under the exploitative and oppressive rule of monopoly capital plunging into abyss of indignity and degeneration in every sphere of life. It urged the working people all over the country to close their ranks and frustrate the deceptive and disruptive manoeuvres of all sorts of compromising forces like the old social democrats, now joined by the band of new social democrats, and to build up unity at the grass-root level and put up a united resistance against the offensives of the ruling capitalist class and the Government's reactionary policies in general and anti-working class policies in particular. It also called upon all the central trade unions to come forward to launch united actions on common programme to fulfil the just expectations of the toiling people.

Great enthusiasm marked the occasion and delegates and observers, as many as 2500, representing nearly 10 lakh members of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) had come from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to take active part in the conference which continued for three days from February 16 to 18 last in Patna. They had come from industries, both public and private sectors, including Steel, Coal, Copper, various mines, Engineering, Jute, Cotton, Textile, Plantation, Road Transport, Railways, Power, Government and other office employees and agricultural labourers. Following the inaugural open session on the first day, the report of which appeared in our issue dated March 1 last, the delegate sessions were held on the 17th and 18th in the Srikrishna Memorial Hall.

Revolutionary homage was paid to the outstanding leaders and teachers of the international working class movement, who passed away during the period under review at

the Conference. In his report to the Conference as the General Secretary of the organisation, Comrade Pritish Chanda placed on record, with a profound sense of grief and respect: "Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the great architect of the Chinese Revolution, Comrade Chou En-lai and Comrade Chu Teh, his close Comrade-in-arms and leaders of outstanding talent in the working class movement, passed away.

"In the same year, 1976, we lost Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the main founders and architect of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) and its departed president, an outstanding Marxist thinker and philosopher of the era, the great teacher and leader of the revolutionary proletariat."

The demise of Comrade Soumyendra Nath Tagore, one of the founders of the organisation and its president from 1958 to 1969, and Comrade Subodh Banerjee, an outstanding leader of the organisation since its inception and its Vice-President till he breathed his last, was recalled in deep grief and respect and placed on record. Revolutionary

homage was also paid to Comrade Rama Prasad Roy Choudhury, a member of the General Council (West Bengal); to Comrade V. Natarajan, a brilliant organiser in Kerala; to Comrade Shanti Das of Bihar, one of the important organisers in the Railways, who died a victim of the historic railway strike of 1974; to Comrades Guhiram Bauri and Ramjatan Singh, organisers of agricultural labourers in West Bengal, who laid down their lives at the hands of jotedars and the Congress gangsters during Emergency. Respectful homage was also paid to the gallant fighters and martyrs, in this country and abroad, who laid down their lives in their struggle against imperialism-capitalism, at the hands of both the ruling class and the social democrats, and in police atrocities.

The delegate session began on the morning of the 17th. The 'Internationale' was sung by the DYOM music squad. The big auditorium was packed to capacity with delegates and observers from different corners of the land seated in curved rows encircling the rostrum. They had come with the object of imbibing a higher consciousness and sense of devotion and deciding their task and course of action at the present historic juncture of the working class movement in the country.

Comrade Pritish Chanda, General Secretary of the organisation, in his report to the Conference, outlined the international situation and experiences and pointed to the grave danger posed by the new social democrats in the trade union movement. "Ours is the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution and Lenin's enunciation of four major contradictions in this epoch in entirety is still valid to-day. We also know from the teachings of the outstanding Marxist thinker and our beloved departed President Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that a new contradiction along with those four has

also appeared in our time between the resurgent independent bourgeois sovereign states with socialism, which also is influencing the world events today. In our time the contradictions of capitalist society have sharpened and reached their climax.The era has dawned when the objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day for the working class to prepare in every way not only for winning their economic-political demands and rights, but also for the conquest of political power."

Comrade Chanda also outlined the national situation—the grave crisis gripping every sphere in the life of our people—and pointed out that the working class is fast getting disillusioned with the other central trade unions including the INTUC, AITUC, and CITU, and is rallying more and more under the banner of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani). Analysing the outstanding working class movements in the past few years, including the historic railway strike which had shaken the Government, he pointed out how the old game of disruption and sectarianism, vacillation and imbecility of the social democrats, who formed the bulk of the leadership of these movements, betrayed the cause of the working class. Comrade Chanda recalled the dark days of Emergency when even the minimum civil liberties and fundamental democratic rights of the people were taken away, pre-censorship on newspapers was imposed, opposition leaders involved in the people's movements were thrown into jails, the quantum of bonus was slashed further, strikes were virtually banned, and meetings and processions too were banned. In short, a reign of terror was let loose.

It was a dark moment for the working class movement, not so much because of the ferocity of attack of the bourgeois Government backed by the

top monopolists of the country, as of the deceptive roles and treachery of the new social democrats, which paved the way for this eventuality. Not only did they contribute to misleading the working people by their deliberate inactions, but they also came out in open defence of, or to defend through tricky means, the 20-point programme which Sm. Indira Gandhi had flaunted only to cover up her authoritarian move and as a deception in her so-called fight against the Right reaction.

The working people was thus placed ideologically as also organisationally defenceless at that dark hour. The UTUC (Lenin Sarani) had to defend alone the banner of the working class and it did its best with all its might. Naturally the organisation had to bear the brunt of the attacks from the ruling class and its Government. A large number of its leaders and important organisers, including the Vice-Presidents Comrades Shankar Singh, Amar Kumar Pandey, Gyan Singh Choudhury, one of the Secretaries Com. Tapas Kumar Datta, Orissa State Secretary Com. B. Jena, and many others in Assam, Orissa Bihar, UP, Haryana Kerala and elsewhere were put behind the bars or were wanted by the police. Comrade Chanda also pointed out how, behind the clamour for restoration of democracy, the Janata Party and its allies are continuing most of the restrictions on the workers' hard-won gains and fundamental democratic rights. Only those changes have been brought about which are necessary to maintain the facade of the parliamentary system and arrest the legitimate democratic mass movements within the confines of parliamentarism-legalism-reformism. The so-called 'restoration of democracy' has been for the bourgeois class, and not for the exploited and oppressed people. The Janata Party

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Crisis-ridden Capitalism finds its main prop of defence in Modern Revisionism

(Contd. from Page 2) has gone back unabashedly on its electoral promises to restore the position of the workers, as regards their rights and gains, to the pre-Emergency state. The CDS has not been refunded in full, nor has the restriction on bonus or charter of settlements been removed and promise for bonus to all honoured. Rather new offensives are being launched by the Janata Government against the workers. Brutal repression and mass killing of the toiling people are going on. The massacres of Kanpur Swadeshi Cotton Mill, Bokaro Steel Plant, Panthnagar, Bailadila, etc. bear testimony to the real character of the much-vaunted 'restoration of democracy'.

Pointing to the role of the class-compromisers and defenders of capitalism in trade union movements, Comrade Chanda emphasised:

"It is also to be noted that, but for their tacit and behind-the-scene assurance of help and co-operation, it would not have been possible for the Janata Government to take all the patently anti-working class steps and measures. The new social democrats are playing a dubious role in defence of moribund capitalism. On the face of it, you hear their protests against the Janata Government's anti-people steps and measures, but whenever the question comes for concrete actions and struggles, they equivocate and try utmost so that a united challenge of the working class and toiling people is not built up, and for this they oppose us in every forum and in all attempted moves for joint action."

The Janata Government, in defence of the aggregate interests of the capitalist class, has come out with a number of patently anti-working class measures to achieve what the Government of Sm. Indira Gandhi had tried to achieve by a different method. In the

name of the so-called 'Income & Wages Policy' it set up a committee, the Bhootalingam Committee, which recommended, under the plea of 'parity' in incomes, a national minimum wage of Rs. 100. Facing sharp reaction from the toiling people it has now changed its tactics and is moving in a subtler way to bring about an indirect wage freeze by introducing a set of 'guidelines' of the Bureau of Public Enterprise in respect of wage negotiations and also by delinking it from the formula of variable DA according to price-index. While the Government does not ensure that it can stabilise prices, rather it admits that inflation cannot be

union movement under tight rope by putting restriction on the basic right to organise unions and the right to strike etc. The working people have however demonstrated their firm determination to fight against this offensive. The organisation, UTUC (Lenin Sarani), took an important role in giving correct orientation to the issue and is in the National Campaign Committee formed at the convention held in New Delhi in November last year.

Comrade Chanda cautioned that it was now evident that the Janata Government, as the spokesman of the ruling capitalist class, was trying to give a structural shape to class collaboration in the trade union field, on the model of West European coun-

Indira Government during Emergency, the Janata Government is trying seriously to form a club of five trade union centres. The intention is obvious. From its experience the Government is fully convinced that on no account the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) will surrender the true interests and demands of the working class and in fact it is due to the dogged fight and determination of this organisation that some of the ill-motivated moves of the Government could be blocked or checked to some extent. The UTUC (Lenin Sarani)'s principled fight is causing irritation to others who by virtue of their class character are more diligent in defending capitalism and are more interested in earning patronage and privileges

number of workers, both industrial and rural, are rallying under its banner. In States where the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) had no organisation even two years back, for example in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the organisation is receiving good response from different sections of the toiling people and is growing up steadily.

In States of West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa, Haryana and Kerala, the organisation has consolidated further and expanded its base among the people.

The significant organisational development can be assessed from the steady rise in the membership figures. At the end of December 1977, the total membership, only in 6 States, stood at about 10 lakhs organised in more than 200 registered unions, whereas in 1970 the figure was 1,56,000 in 79 unions. But, Comrade Chanda cautioned, there was no reason for complacency. Despite the significant growth of the organisation a long way would have to be travelled, bitter opposition surmounted, and hard struggle waged before achieving the cherished goal.

"Comrade delegates, I request you, therefore, to grasp this situation and the line correctly. The responsibility of carrying forward the struggle of the Indian working class along the correct line lies on us—on us only. The working people, being increasingly disillusioned about the social democrats and opportunists are looking forward to a powerful organisation under correct leadership. The UTUC (Lenin Sarani) is to provide this leadership."

Giving out the call for unity, Comrade Chanda declared, "we want unity in the ranks of working class and united actions with others on common issues on the basis of an agreed programme—unity

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A section of the delegates attending sessions on 17th & 18th February at Srikrishna Memorial Hall

avoided, it tries to impose a fixed DA despite increase in price-index. It means that there will be further erosion in real wages and some sort of wage-freeze or pegging down of wage level will be imposed on the working people. By this measure the steady decline of wage cost as against the total cost, which has been the trend for the past decades, will be further accelerated and the super profits of the capitalists will be inflated further.

On the other hand, the Government is trying to enact the black Bill on Industrial Relations in its bid to bring the trade

ties and the USA, in order to stem the tide of militant movements and struggles of the working people. The Government's design is to turn the trade union movement into an appendage of the capitalist class by winning support of the trade unions through patronage and prizes and thus creating a cover of 'consensus' through tacit help and co-operation of the trade union centres under the leadership of the old and new social democrats, or of its own trade union wings.

With this end in view just like the club of three under the name 'National Apex Body' formed by the

from the Government than in defending the just cause and the genuine interest of the working class.

On the growth of the organisation during the period under review, Comrade Chanda described how the UTUC (Lenin Sarani), in the face of this two-pronged attack—one from the ruling capitalist class and its Government and the other from the new social democrats, had been growing from strength to strength in different parts of the country through pursuance of the correct proletarian revolutionary line of struggle. Newer unions have been organised and a larger

Budget and Governmental Resources used to defend crisis-ridden Capitalism shifting the entire burden on the common people

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the prohibitive rent in cities compels the low income employees to live in countryside. So, bringing an argument divorced from social reality but smacking of the tone of a hardheaded businessman, reveals the utterly reactionary and anti-people character of the government. By thus making double or more than double the fares of suburban commuters' monthly tickets, most of whom are of the low paid employees, the Railway Minister wants to fetch Rs 28.96 crores and taken together with such increases in non-suburban fares, the amount comes to Rs 36.13 crores.

Two sinister moves are discernible while imposing this heavy burden. One, the government now tempts the railway employees with payment of bonus. The government's explanation may be that it is footing the bill of the employee's bonus by thus hitting hard the common people and thus wants to serve the mischievous end of pitting the legitimate demands of the railway employees against the interest of the common people. It means a conspiracy to bring division among the working people which the railway employees in particular and common people in general must take serious note of. Secondly, the government now says about some increase in amenities like supply of water in earthen pitcher at railway stations and even relay of recorded music in long distance trains. When finding a seat or berth in a tolerably clean railway carriage is still so difficult, when booking of wagons is very-much a problem and creates bottleneck in the movement of industrial inputs and essential goods, are not all these proposals mere cunning moves calculated to give a so-called justification for all the new financial burdens on the people? What about removing corruptions,

wastage and pilferages from the railways the Janata leaders promised to take actively in their hands? It seems they were only meant for electoral purposes and after they have come to power they are pursuing the same beaten-track which has been followed for the last thirty years by their predecessor.

Central Budget : 1979-80

The new Finance Minister Mr. Charan Singh, known for his rural bias, meaning bias not for the rural poor but the rural bourgeoisie, has kept up to their expectations in his first budget. The industrial bourgeoisie also are not displeased because they have been spared from any new tax, although some of the concessions they were enjoying have gone. But those are of minor consequences. On the whole, the budget has satisfied the capitalists because the axe falls squarely on the poor and fixed income middle class, both lower and upper.

The budget brings heaviest tax effort in a single budget inasmuch as direct additional taxes to the tune of Rs. 665 crore has been proposed. This is over and above railway fare and freight increase of Rs. 178 crores, increase in postal and Telecommunication freights of Rs. 58 crores and continuation of CDS to fetch Rs 160 crores. So all told the fresh impost on the people by the Central Government comes to Rs. 1061 crores. But still there is the huge deficit of Rs 1,355 crores left uncovered fraught with dangerous inflationary potential.

In short, the new taxes may be summed up like the following :

Income Tax

Surcharge on income tax raised from 15 p.c. to 20 p.c. thus bringing the marginal rate of personal tax from 69 p.c. to 72 p.c. contrary to the recommendation of Wanchoo Commission because high rate of personal tax has

produced in India all sorts of corruptions and black deals at the upper levels but stringency only at the lower fixed income salaried employees' level. Not only this, tax concessions for the approved forms of savings like insurance policy, PF contribution have been cut. The much despised CDS introduced by Indira Gandhi Government has not only not given a good bye but given fresh lease of life for still two more years. All these will hit the fixed income middle class people very much.

Excise Duty

The Finance Minister has not spared anything of average consumption from being further taxed. For example, household and laundry soap get a 20% excise duty which means almost four-fold increase in the existing rate. Low-priced toilet soap gets a like increase in excise duty from existing 10.5% to 20%, on detergents from 13.13 p.c. to 20 p.c., on tooth paste from 10.5% to 25%, tooth brush to 25%. Besides, bidi, cigarettes, match box, motor spirit, high-speed diesel, kerosene, cooking gas come among others under higher excise duty. Customs duty has also been increased on rapeseed oil, soyabean oil etc.

Among the Postal articles—Inland letter and Envelope will cost 5 paise more. Telegram charges will be higher. Along with quarterly local rentals phone calls will be raised by 10 paise to 40 paise per call. The total revenue receipts from direct and indirect taxes in the central budget for 1979-80 is expected to reach Rs. 10,821.68 crores.

Reactionary Tax Principles

This year's budget has followed the same reactionary tax principle of preponderance of indirect taxes which shifts the burden to the poor and fixed income middle class and favours the capitalists.

It has been the experience, particularly during the last decade that bulk of the tax revenue comes from indirect taxes which means mulcting the purchasing power of the common people. Some figures will make the picture clear. In 1977-78, the Central and State Governments together collected Rs 13,324 crores in the form of taxes and levies out of which only Rs. 2,599 crores came as direct tax and the rest Rs. 10,725 crores came through indirect taxes. The share of excise duties in the revenues of the Central Government was 48.5% in 1976-77, 46.9% in 1977-78 and about 50.2% in 1978-79 which has further been increased this year.

It may be mentioned in this connection that corporate sector has been enjoying various concessions and this year too, it has not been touched except for the raising of surcharge on corporate income tax from 5 to 7.5 p.c. But as the bulk surcharge is normally paid by big companies, the marginal increase will not be much of a burden to the corporate sector.

Plan outlay & taxation

It may be noted that even after this massive doses of taxation and that too on the common people, there has not been any significant increase in plan outlay. In last year's budget there was a shortfall in plan outlay of Rs. 200 crores. This year there has been a negligible increase from Rs. 10,000 odds to Rs. 12,511 crores. If care is taken of the increase in prices of construction materials then the increase will be negligible if not negative. Besides, another point is worth mentioning. The government set the target of Rs. 69,000 crores as the total public sector outlay in the Sixth Five Year Plan. The outlay of the first two years will amount to Rs. 24,000 crores of 34 p.c. but so far as meeting the target of raising addi-

tional taxes is concerned the government has already reached 80% i.e. around Rs. 6,000 crores!

The question is therefore naturally raised as to where goes this huge amount that is raised from the common people and to whose benefit it is spent. Here are some of the specimens from which this most relevant question gets the answer.

Where goes the money?

This year, as usual, defence expenditure increased by Rs. 205 crores to the total of Rs. 3050 crores.

Subsidies and subvention to the capitalists have been on the increase despite the government's exhortation to the contrary. This year's budget has provided subvention of Rs. 1,340 crores (more than the amount on plan outlay) on food, fertiliser, sugar and exports.

While the common people are bled white by continuous increase in excise duties, the jotedars got a bumper crop of excise concessions. The excise concessions on just four items—unmanufactured tobacco, light diesel oil, power tillers and fertilisers will put up to Rs. 239 crores into the pockets of the jotedars.

Budget and Inflation

A massive dose of taxation by way of increase in excise, customs levies, freights etc. on essential commodities as also a huge deficit left uncovered naturally indicate a serious inflationary spiral in prices. Indications are already there in the market reactions. But the Finance Ministry Officials have claimed that the impact of these new imposts would be 'nominal'. According to their mysterious calculation the wholesale price index may go up by one p.c. and the working class index less than that!

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Build up United Struggle Against the Anti-people Fiscal Policies of the Bourgeois and Revisionist Parties in Governments

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The Economic Times (2.3.79) reports! "Much to the amusements of all, but undeterred by it, the officials (of Finance Ministry—Ed. P. Era) also claimed that articles of mass consumption had not been touched by the finance minister and that the budget would strengthen the national economy as a whole."

They also asserted that proposed massive dose of deficit financing of Rs. 1,355 crores did not pose any danger of inflationary spiral. Comfortable food stocks and a healthy balance of payments situation provided 'enough lever' to ensure stability in prices for the coming years. So, it is clear that common people will be subjected to the twin blades of increased tax-load and erosion in real earnings due to inflation.

Because despite all these so-called assertions it is an elementary law of capitalist economy that unless the producers or suppliers of various items taxed absorb the increase in taxes it is bound to be shifted to the consumers. In our country even the government agency like RBI studies have shown how the industrialists and the rich farmers have minted profit on every occasion of hike in taxes. In absence of all-out state trading including both wholesale and retail or state control over production and distribution of essential items of consumption, the business community and rich farmers will continue to fleece the common people. Secondly, increase in taxes of some items like freight charges in the railways and on petroleum, diesel or kerosene is in fact intended to pass on to the consumers. Moreover, the deficit financing will be met by printing money and giving inflationary spiral to prices.

The Finance Minister has however been brutally frank by holding that the new indirect levies have been imposed

on articles of final consumption, particularly those which are consumed by the poor, middle class fixed income salaried people who cannot shift the burden of such taxes onto others. That is to say, a crushing financial burden has been imposed on the common people for the betterment of the capitalists both rural and urban and all this under cover of national development.

Onslaught of Crisis-ridden capitalism against the people

Before entering into other points, it is to be noted that a false slogan 'rural versus urban' has been raised by the new Finance Minister as if his solicitude for the 'rural' is for the rural poor. It is far from the reality. Reality is that as a result of capitalist development, pauperisation of the poor and lower-middle peasants has been going on at an accelerated pace. According to government statistics (Census report) the percentage of agricultural workers has increased within the ten-year period of 1961-71, from 18.86 p.c. to 30.69 p.c. and in terms of numbers, from 29 millions to 59 millions and consequently the percentage of cultivators have gone down from 60.38 to 51.61. That is to say the poor and destitute peasants are losing fast their tiny patches of land and swelling the number of agricultural workers. The total rural work force also increased during the same period from 162 million in 1961 to 191 million in 1971, i.e. exactly by 29 million, but hardly they have regular work for three months in a year on an average. Does Mr. Charan Singh's fiscal bounty go to them? No. Mr. Singh's fiscal reliefs are for the well-to-do and rich farmers who have access to assured water supply whether government provided or self-provided and have the means to use fertilisers. So, it is obvious that the so-called

slogan of rural versus urban is a false slogan calculated to confuse the common people.

It is to be noted in this connection that Mr. Charan Singh is for sometime past, harping on the idea that as the organised industrial sector is in the midst of crisis and is not in a position to provide jobs to the growing number of work force besides having the difficulty of organised resistance of the workers through their unions, it would be advisable to spend bulk of the government resources in the rural sector to increase agricultural production and in the 'labour intensive' rural cottage or small enterprises. The motive is clear. Agricultural production heavily subsidised will be more for export, that too subsidised, than for home consumption as has been the trend for some years in the past. Secondly, it would be socially-politically worthwhile for the bourgeoisie to keep the destitutes and growing unemployed arrested in all these jobs with mere pittance. The workers will be squeezed of their labour power without any resistance in absence of trade unions in small units or of less striking powers. Moreover, there is now the emphasis on rural programmes like food for work or government spendings both in urban and rural sector.

We have exposed the utterly reactionary, anti-people and fascist motive in all these programmes and devices in our earlier writings and have shown there that the interesting part of this bourgeois exercise is that it has found in CPI(M) a very enthusiastic support and this party in West Bengal is trying exactly this plan to implement through the much advertised Panchayati System. It is therefore of no use dilating too much on the bourgeois design of providing artificial stimulation to a rather sagging

crisis-ridden bourgeois economy by all these subsidies, subventions, defence expenditures and governmental spendings in rural and urban sector just to create artificial profits of the capitalists as also to arrest the growing number of unemployed in odd jobs that can give bare sustenance.

Capitalist production faces crisis of ever-squeezing market because of the ever-dwindling power of the people but it is they the oppressed people on whose shoulders is thrust upon the ever-mounting financial burden to fend the exploiting capitalist class and the system. This is the curse, the people will have to carry till they are able to overthrow this exploitative capitalist system. They have, therefore, before them no other recourse than organising mighty democratic movement against the fiscal tyrannies of the government and the mounting onslaughts of the moribund capitalist order. But in doing so, they are faced with deceptive roles of modern revisionists.

From the formal protest and meeting with the Finance Minister in a delegation from the Polit-bureau with the request to soften the attack to some extent by piecemeal concession not only the discomfiture of CPI(M) but also its dubious role is becoming clear. It is advising the Janata government not to stoke the fire of people's discontent too much which may go against both the parties. CPI(M) is telling the Janata government to give some concessions so that people's discontent does not burst forth and find organised expression in movement because that will touch both the parties as both of them are defending moribund capitalism of course with difference in tactical manoeuvres and finesse.

CPI(M)-led West Bengal

government may take the pride that of all the state governments it has imposed highest dose of taxation within shortest time, and most of which has been imposed on the common people. Even in this year's budget it has brought for the first time in the state a new tax—profession tax on fixed income middle class people. But all this anti-people fiscal policy, this government is pursuing keeping an air of so-called progressiveness. That is why the bourgeois press and the monopoly houses are all praise for CPI(M) and tell the Janata leaders to take lesson in this art of politicking from the CPI(M) leaders of how to pursue anti-people policies and acts keeping an air of so-called progressiveness and uttering pro-people vague talks.

The bourgeoisie by giving this open certificate to CPI(M) is telling a truth—the truth that CPI(M) is defending moribund capitalism better than the branded bourgeois parties like Janata, Congress(I) etc. It is also bolstering up the image of CPI(M) as the third alternative in its design of two-party system. The oppressed people will have to take into serious account this political reality while organising their struggles against the tyranny of the governments both at the centre and in the states. They will have to realise this political awareness that at this stage of deep crisis of moribund capitalism, the modern revisionists—CPI(M), CPI and others are not only avoiding a real struggle against capitalist exploitation rather, as forces of compromise their sole concern is to arrest genuine mass struggles from within and thereby to come in rescue of crisis-ridden bourgeoisie and the exploitative capitalist productive system without the overthrow of which, the oppressed people cannot earn their emancipation.

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not for unity's sake, but for advancing struggle. So, we call upon all the central trade unions of our country, to unite for joint struggle on the basis of a minimum common agreed programme and a code of conduct and to take the unity to grass-root level. We call upon the members of other central trade unions to impress upon their respective leadership the urgent need for the united struggle at this crucial hour".

The main resolution adopted unanimously at the conference outlined, in the first place, the international and national background in which the Conference was being held:

"The capitalist world, as opposed to socialist world, has been passing through convulsion and explosive objective condition marked by further disintegration and absence of relative stability of world capitalist market so much so that its international monetary mechanism is basically disturbed associated with wide fluctuation of currencies. All these find their reflection in chronic recession, fall in growth rate, high rate of inflation, further accentuation of unemployment, destitution and miseries of the people. In this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution the crisis-ridden capitalism is taking recourse to fascism—in some cases negating, somewhere squeezing and elsewhere even maintaining the parliamentary democratic form. The US imperialism, the arch enemy of the humanity in general and the working class in particular, with all its fascist design has appeared today as the bulwark of world imperialism.

".....It is becoming apparent that to maintain their class rule of oppression the bourgeoisie is hard put to sustain the democratic norms and principles once it had set up, and now finds them as obstacles. Ever since the accentuation of crisis and loss of relative stability in

Containment of working people's resistance and perpetuation of more exploitation on them are the designs of Moribund Capitalism

the world market, the bourgeoisie have been discarding fast the democratic norms and values and fascist tendency has become the general feature in all the capitalist countries whether relatively advanced or less advanced. The bourgeoisie have been increasingly clinging only to the facade of parliamentary democracy in the form of two-party system or a system of chosen parties, but that too is becoming more and more difficult for it to hold on."

Pointing to the role of the modern revisionists, the resolution said:

"The conference notes with a deep sense of regret and anguish that this situation in the capitalist world especially the former colonial or semi-colonial Afro-Asian and Latin American countries, which could have provided an excellent opportunity for a truly revolutionary working class leadership to move forward to maturity the militant struggles of the working class along with other sections of the toiling people finding ultimately their consummation in the overthrow of the exploitative and outmoded capitalist system and the state power by the working class, is being missed and remains unutilised in favour of the tottering bourgeois system because of the treachery and betrayal of revisionism in the working class movement. Now social democratism appeared as the main danger in the working class movement so much so that it stands as the stumbling block not only to a revolutionary turn in the working class movement but also in the path of developing militant united struggles of the working people against ever mounting offensives of the crisis-ridden capitalism. It is working as the defender and saviour of the capitalist system and so, instead of turning the ever-deepening crisis of

capitalism into mighty upsurge of militant class-struggles, it is using the situation just in its manoeuvre to come to Governmental power and run the show on their behalf. These forces, pledging to adhere to the ideology of Communism, and waving the red banner, who, are in reality, distorting the ideology of Communism, practising utopian socialism as against scientific socialism and long discarded the revolutionary kernel of this noble ideology and have ever since been trying to confine the trade union movements within the narrow ambit of economism-reformism and opportunism of various sorts, have, with the further accentuation of crisis in the capitalist world, grown cold feet and are showing anti-struggle tendency and class-collaborationist attitude. Not only this, what is more dangerous, they are trying to kill the very spirit of resistance and struggle of the oppressed masses from within the working class movement by spreading confusions and anti-struggle opportunistic outlook.

"This phenomenon is being observed not only in the European working class movement where the leaderships of those Communist parties who degenerated into new social democrats of Euro-Communist brand denying proletarian internationalism, have declared openly their break from the revolutionary goal and aspirations of the working class and have placed instead the goal and inspiration of coming to Governmental power, whether alone or along with sections of national bourgeoisie in order to reform capitalism and pass on to socialism peacefully through such reforms, keeping intact the exploitative capitalist productive system and the state machinery but is also being practised in our country

by the same forces whether they spell it out or not. These forces are, therefore, revealing long discarded rotten social democratic and social chauvinistic thoughts and trends.

"This is one aspect of new social democratism, but it has another aspect—and very pretentious at that. The new social democratic leadership at the helm of powerful state power is following a policy resulting in the creation of spheres of influence and hegemonism. This dangerous policy of imposing revolution from outside by placing the chosen political forces in power in a country by means of coup or even march of army, making the upsurge of the masses totally irrelevant or superfluous, smacks of an activity conspiratorial in nature and definitely antithetical to the scientific concept of revolution, working class ideology and the concept of proletarian internationalism. This interventionist trend and activity have created a good deal of confusion and division within the working class movement and a revulsion among the patriotic people. The working class, instead of winning this section on to side, are losing them to their enemy—the capitalist class. The new social democratic leadership while doing so is coming to both contention and collaboration with the major imperialist power. This hegemonistic contention and collusion have added further to the complexity, have become a serious factor to contend within the working class movement in general and the revolutionary transformation of the society in particular.

"This conference calls upon the working class and the toiling people to be wide awake to the danger of both these facets of new social democratism and reformism in order to steer clear of both in its

struggle to reach the desired goal and aspiration.

On the significance of the present political situation in the country the resolution pointed out

"During the thirty years of Congress rule the Indian capitalist class not only gave birth to monopoly capital and through merger of industrial capital with banking capital the financial oligarchy but also resorted to export of capital which was symptomatic of a still greater crisis. Needless to say, the more the crisis deepened in the capitalist system, the more burden had to be borne by the poor people who were crossing the limit of forbearance. Agitations and struggles of the common people mounted up through the length and breadth of the country which were brutally suppressed by the Indira government through clamping of Emergency negating civil liberties and democratic rights and thus by taking away all the hard-won democratic rights of the people.

"Sensing the danger that an absolutely autocratic one-party rule smothering the discontent of the people might go in favour of the revolutionary thoughts and ideology and the possibility of the mounting discontent of the people being channelised to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement, the bourgeoisie called for a poll, lifted Emergency and resorted to the trick by creating a bourgeois national alternative which gave a new turn in the parliamentary system in our country so as to divert people's attention and confine their struggles within the narrow bounds of parliamentarism-legalism reformism. To achieve this end the Janata Party, a hurriedly contrived bourgeois alternative, backed by money-bags and the monopoly press was brought to power at the Centre through the Lok Sabha Poll of 1977.

In the same process, Congress (I), AIADMK and Akali Dal came to power

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UTUC (Lenin Sarani) alone holds aloft the banner of revolutionary goal of emancipation from Capitalist exploitation

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in different states. The Conference also takes serious notes that even the so-called 'Marxist' party like the CPI(M), consistent to their long pursued political line of reformism-parliamentarism, with the object of becoming a third alternative in the two-party parliamentary system, made all-out attempt to earn the confidence of the bourgeoisie by generally and openly decrying the necessity of strike struggles by the workers, agricultural labourers, poor peasants, and the toiling millions of our country. No wonder, that this party also was suitably rewarded and saddled in power in some states. They, in turn, by their role both in government and outside, have kept their promise to the bourgeoisie.

Pointing to the heinous bourgeois design of disrupting people's unity by fanning up communalism, casteism, and all sorts of parochial sentiments, the resolution said:

"This Conference cannot but draw the serious attention of the toiling people to another dangerous development within the ranks because of the heinous conspiracy of the bourgeoisie. The venom of caste, communal, racial prejudices is being spread among the working people not only by the principal bourgeois parties who are indulging in filthy politics but even by the so-called leftists and 'Marxist' parties who are doing the same for petty parliamentary gains to the serious detriment of the working class movement. The so-called 'Left and Democratic Unity' on national plane as envisaged by those parties taking not only the 'progressive' sections of the branded bourgeois parties but also the parochial and communal forces like AIADMK, Akali Dal etc. is directly or indirectly strengthening the divisive tendency in our country, about the

danger of which the working class cannot remain oblivious. In the face of mounting unemployment and utter destitution of the people, the bourgeoisie is playing this trick to bring disintegration in the class solidarity and unity of the working people over the question of reservation of special privileges for a few crumbs in government departments or distribution of small patches of land, though they are not distributing million acres of land which remain to be distributed to the actual tillers and landless agricultural labourers. The oppressed people of different castes, community or religious faiths are to realise soberly that by being caught in the conspiracy of the capitalist class and vested interest they cannot find out their real solution. We should not forget for a moment that caste-strifes have not only nothing to do with class struggle but also are alien to it. The real salvation for the toiling people particularly of the oppressed nationalities lies not in the insular mentality but in joining the mainstream of working class movement to bring about a real transformation of the society through scientific socialism."

In the end, calling upon the working class to fulfil its historic task, the resolution said: "This Conference reminds that the struggle for better living and working conditions of the workers is, in reality, inseparably linked up with the struggle for emancipation of the working class. So the struggle for achieving day-to-day demands must be carried in a way which is conducive to the struggle for revolutionary transformation of the society.

The call for united struggle of the working class was given again and again at the conference and the following resolution on trade union unity was adopted unanimously:

"This 16th conference of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) notes, in view of the mounting onslaughts of the employers and the Government on the Indian working class, the urgent need today is united struggle of the working class.

"UTUC (Lenin Sarani) urges the working class to close their rank and come forward for broader struggle.

"This conference appeals to all the central trade unions to respond to this urgent need and come forward to build up a platform of united struggle of the working people".

Beside the above resolutions, resolutions on Unemployment, Industrial Relations Bill, Incomes and Wages Policy, Women Labour and Rural Labour were adopted unanimously at the conference.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the SUCI and Chief Guest at the Conference, gave an important speech which set the tone for the entire conference and gave guideline to the UTUC (Lenin Sarani). The presidential address was delivered by Comrade S. K. Pramanik, President of the organisation.

We expect to publish in our following issues the full texts of the speeches of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary SUCI and Comrade S. K. Pramanik President UTUC (Lenin Sarani), delivered at the delegate session.

—Ed. P. Era

The conference also elected unanimously the working committee and General Council of the All India UTUC (Lenin Sarani).

President:

Comrade S.K. Pramanik

Vice-Presidents:

Comrade Shankar Singh
(Bihar)

Comrade Gyan Singh
Choudhury (Haryana)

Comrade A.K. Pandey
(Bihar)

Comrade Protiva
Mukherjee (West Bengal)

General Secretary:

Comrade Pritish Chanda

Jute Strike of West Bengal —In Retrospect

After forty-nine days of prolonged struggle the jute strike in West Bengal was settled through a tripartite agreement on 22nd February last. The way this more than two lakhs of jute workers carried through this struggle braving all odds and enduring extreme sufferings, poverty and starvation and the unity they forged in this occasion deserve hearty congratulation. By this struggle the workers have achieved some of their demands to some extent at least from the unwilling hands of the owners and the government. But more important is that in spite of their full fledged unity and strong determination to carry on their struggle for total victory much has been left unachieved and unresolved. They are to ponder deeply why their struggle could not achieve the desired end.

On consistent pressure from the 'Left Front' Government in the state and mainly the CITU the tripartite agreement was signed on 22nd February in spite of strong opposition from UTUC (Lenin Sarani), HMS, BMS, HMP NFITU and a section of INTUC leadership. Later on for preserving unity among the workers and on the consideration that it would be futile and impracticable to continue the strike with a fractional strength the above noted unions signed the agreement and the strike was withdrawn.

Among the various demands of the striking workers the main demands were increase in basic pay by Rs 75/- P.M, D.A. according to Bhattacharjya Commission recommendation, introduction of new grades and scales, implementation of Raghunatha Reddi Award in question of 'Badli' workers, payment of house rent, withdrawal of extra work load thrust upon during Emergency, gratuity at the rate of 15 days' wages and above all reinstatement of all workers retrenched during Emergency etc. According to the agreement workers have been able to increase their wages by only Rs. 61.77 per month including

Secretaries:

Comrade Tapas Datta

Comrade Fatick Ghosh

Comrade Sitesh DasGupta

Treasurer:

Comrade Ashutosh

Banerjee

An Executive Committee of 14 members and a General Council of 38 members were also elected unanimously.

basic pay, D.A. and house rent allowance. The demand for gratuity at the rate of 15 days' wages has been achieved. But all other demands have been left unfulfilled. Only it has been decided that the government would constitute a committee for considering the rest of the demands and it will decide in future whether those will be accepted or not.

Such being the fate of the workers demands in the much hollowed agreement after long forty-nine days' continuous strike the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) BMS, HMS, HMP, NFITU and a section of INTUC leadership declared that they were not at all happy over the agreement as most of the urgent demands have been left unfulfilled and shelved in the name of constituting a committee to consider those. While, side by side the UTUC (Bowbazar), TUCC, AITUC and a section of INTUC all led by CITU declared this agreement as a great victory for the jute workers and congratulated the 'Left Front' Government for its helping role in achieving this agreement. Also to point it as a big success, they organised a 'victory rally' at the foot of Saheed Minar. This is what actually happened for the recent jute strike.

However, this was not at all unexpected. In our issue dated 15th February '79 we dealt in detail the activities of the CITU and its hirelings, the role of the 'Left Front' Government and the actual state of affairs of the whole strike. (Contd. to Page 8)

EDUCATION

PROMISES AND PERFORMANCES

After coming to power in West Bengal the CPI (M)-led 'Left Front' Government kept saying that in the sphere of education it would bring about radical reforms conducive to the interests of the people. But what the Government did was to dissolve the managing committees of schools appointing administrators instead and to supersede the elected bodies of the Universities setting up nominated Councils in their place, pleading that rampant corruption and malpractices in the Universities, irregular publication of results etc. had necessitated such an action. While bringing the educational institutions thus under Government control, the CPI(M)-led Government firmly vowed to streamline administration, weed out corruption and malpractices, ensure publication of results of examinations regularly within 5 months' time; introduce real democratic functioning of educational institutions and put an end to the harassment of students. Last but not the least, the 'Left Front' Government gave an assurance that after 6 months, during which period they would work these commendable changes, fresh elections to the governing bodies would be held, the elective posts increased and power handed back to the Universities. But how far have these promises been fulfilled? More than a year has passed and time and again the CPI (M)-led Government has announced its intention to hold fresh elections but each time it fell back on its word and promise. As for the other changes; not to speak of streamlining administration or weeding out corruption and malpractices at least concerning early and regular publication of results how far has any improvement been brought about by the Government by superseding the

Universities? Some recent incidents have glaringly revealed what kind of improvement in this regard has been affected and how the harassment of students is going on unabated. When the results of the B.A. and B. Sc. final examination, the theoretical part of which had been held in the middle of 1978, were finally published on February 8, it was found that the results of 3750 students were still incomplete and those of 6000 regular students were withheld on some flimsy technical pretext. Yet when the students protested against this grave injustice and irregularity all they got was an arrogant rebuff from the authorities. How does such an act of publishing incomplete results, thereby pushing thousands of students into a disadvantageous position and jeopardizing their future conform in any way to the avowed aims with which the Councils were set up by the CPI (M)-led Government? Does it not rather indicate entirely different aims and objectives and betray a most callous indifference to the fate of thousands of students? But that is not all. A few days later, on February 13, a number of the affected students staged a peaceful demonstration inside the Syndicate Room of the University before the acting Vice-Chancellor, Controller and officiating Registrar, insisting on the announcement of a definite date for publication of withheld and incomplete results. At that time suddenly some students belonging to SFI, the student wing of CPI(M), entered the room and began to forcefully break up the demonstration and reinforced by some of their supporters among the University employees. They ransacked the Syndicate Room and assaulted the demonstrators injuring 15 students

including girls while the police stood by inactive. Yet that the demonstrators had been completely peaceful and only been insisting on a definite date was announced by the acting Vice-Chancellor himself afterwards. In some newspaper report it is alleged that while the students demonstrated in the Syndicate Room a member of the Council is said to have been seen leaving the meeting room and inciting the SFI students who had gathered outside the University. Shortly after, a number of them began their attack on the demonstrators. No words are strong enough to condemn this heinous act of SFI students of forcefully and violently breaking up a peaceful demonstration just as they did in the case of medical students some time back. The student wing of that same CPI (M) party who is so vociferous in condemning the forces of authoritarianism is nakedly resorting to the most brutal fascist terror tactics, an ominous sign indeed. The truth is that notwithstanding the professed goals of the CPI(M)-led Government its only and true aim is to bring educational institution under its own control for their own petty party interests. This has been borne out by different reports in the press, according to which a spokesman of the West Bengal Primary Teachers Association told reporters on February 20, that "the appointment of ad hoc committees on district school boards by the Government resulted in the curbing of democratic rights and pressure from party sources—" and that instead of toning up the administration the ad hoc committees were usurping the rights earned by the teachers. While a spokesman of the CPI(M) openly admitted that those people who support the policies of the 'Left Front' Govern-

Jute Strike—In Retrospect

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ment those we take into the committees. Equally the Secretary, West Bengal Principals' Association told reporters on February 21 that "Nominees on the governing bodies in most Colleges in the State have been appointed on the basis of their political affiliations....." and representatives of the Association felt that "political pressure was brought to bear on colleges by the member of the governing panels....." while administration of the University was deteriorating.

When the government superseded the universities our party warned that bringing educational institutions under government control only paves the way for fascism and cannot cure the ills. If any improvement in administration is to be effected and malpractices and corruption rooted out, this can be done only on the basis of democratic mass movement. Facts have borne out the warning of our party. Far from bringing about any improvement in the academic sphere the hateful act of curbing autonomy of educational institutions by the CPI(M)-led government has only caused further deterioration in every respect.

strike only for little over Rs 50/- but failed and thus although went hand in glove with the owners and the government. The despicable role of the revisionist leaders of these organisations is all the more palpable from their almost daily statement in the press nakedly appeasing the government and backstabbing the cause of the strike during its entire period and after.

In this background thanks to the fighting zeal and unity of the common workers that the strike could be successfully continued for a record period of time—49 days. The 'Left Front' Government ministers along with the union leaders cooperating with them tried their best to impose the IJMA's terms of settlement on the workers but they failed because of the workers' resistance at the grass root level.

It is thus clear that it is only due to the policy of naked appeasement of jute mill owners pursued by the 'Left Front' in their frantic bid to remain in good book of the bourgeoisie, the most opportunist, compromising role of CITU and their partners both within and outside the government that the most prospective strike of the jute workers could not achieve its desired goal. Most of the major demands remain still unfulfilled for which they have to wage struggle again in near future. But it is incumbent on their part and the broader section of the working masses to take from it the all important lesson that unless and until real revolutionary leadership is established over their struggle, let alone ultimate emancipation, even struggles on legitimate democratic and economic demands cannot be advanced at this stage of moribund capitalism, when modern revisionists along with the old social democrats all stand in defence of crisis-ridden bourgeoisie and its productive system.

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