

# Proletarian Era

Volume 53 No. 1  
August 15, 2019

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

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Price : Rs. 2.00

## Red Salute Comrades Frederick Engels and Shibdas Ghosh



Comrade Sankar Saha, Member, Polit Bureau, paying tribute to great Engels on 12 August at the Party's Central Office in Kolkata on the occasion of his 124th Memorial Day



Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Member, Polit Bureau, paying tribute to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on his 44th Memorial Day on 5 August at Party's Central Office

### Draft New Education Policy 2019

## Blueprint of direct attack on secular, scientific and democratic concept of education

Elegant verbosity and vast coverage characterize the Draft National Education Policy 2019 (DNEP 2019). These may tend to confuse uncritical or casual readers to accept the Draft as 'path breaking' bringing in a 'paradigm shift' in the educational scenario, as

claimed by the Kasturirangan Committee and the BJP-led union government. But a little scrutiny would show that right from the word 'go' the DNEP 2019 presents contradictory and deceptive statements. Verbosity merely conceals these.

Prepared by the Kasturirangan Committee (henceforth called the Committee) and endorsed by the Union HRD Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar, of the then BJP-led government in December 2018, the Draft was made public with unbelievable promptness on the first

working day of the new BJP-led union government in early June 2019. Equally hectically, suggestions were invited by 30 June on this over 400 page document covering so many aspects of education. Did they really think it

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## Toiling masses assemble to recall the life-long struggle and teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat

It's a crucial time the country is going through. All sections of exploited toiling people, from the

poorest of poor to even the middle class, are reeling under the biting pangs of acute industrial recession

that is affecting the entire capitalist-imperialist world, accompanied inevitably by terrible rise in

unemployment, sharp fall in purchasing power of people, gruesome spate of social crimes and atrocities on women-children-marginalized people, and restless uncertainty in political scenes. To prevent this crisis give rise to surges of protest, the ruling capitalist class and its servitor party-in-power BJP along with all other parliamentary parties in the corridor of power, are drastically curtailing economic and political rights of the toiling millions while devastating people's unity through communal and casteist divide. This calls for developing further sustained mass and class struggles based on higher proletarian culture and ethics with greater might. This has been the pledge of us, the revolutionaries all



Gathering at Netaji Indoor Stadium, Kolkata on 5 August on 44th Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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## Draft New Education Policy

# Under the cover of verbosity, stealthily and shamelessly the DNEP 2019 evades truthful depiction of wretched condition of education in the country

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possible? Certainly not, because on protests and questions from academic and other circles, the date was extended first to 31 July and then to 15 August. So it could be and should have been extended earlier, even for longer span! After a bitterly criticized NEP 2016 produced by the previous BJP government, the present 2019 Draft has rather been a redrafting. Welcome move? On what basis? And why so hectic? The whole process carries a shadow of dubious effort. The Committee claims to have received “extraordinary response” from across the country, “from individuals, institutions, organizations and groups of people” (p.23-4). But the list in the document does not include names of the Vice-chancellors of nationally and traditionally reputed universities or institutions and acclaimed educationists and scientists of national and international fame. Clearly, they were not consulted. It shows the name of *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad*, as the only students’ organization, *Bharatiya Sikshan Mandal (BSM)* and an All India Secondary Teachers Association as teachers’ organizations. *ABVP* has already achieved the fame as opponent-bashing student wing of the ruling RSS- BJP combine, *BSM* advocates ancient *Gurukul* system in the Committee’s ‘age of technology’ with a distinct but hidden link with the RSS and AISTA is of totally unfamiliar identity. There is no mention of any other all India or regional organisations of school, college and university teachers-students, or educationists and scientists in general, known for their contributions and opinions on the education movement of the country, though there are public documents on their suggestions on this issue submitted to the Union MHRD or the Kasturirangan Committee, on being invited to. The intent and motive are distinct, only to be read between the lines. The Policy document aims at clearing the path and defining the means and methods for implementing the ideas and thoughts of the RSS without hindrance, rather with a formal and legal sanction of a government-made national policy document. And under the cover of verbosity, stealthily and shamelessly the DNEP 2019 goes its way, evading any truthful depiction of the present

wretched condition of education in the country.

### **DNEP 2019 skirts various problems confronting education**

Thus the DNEP 2019 recommends refashioning of schools and colleges but does not mention that thousands of government-run or government-aided schools are being closed down in different states. The Draft dwells for pages on mode of recruitment of teachers but does not mention why thousands of existing posts are lying vacant for years together in both schools and colleges or why schools and colleges are languishing in miserable lack of infrastructure. Were not the responsibilities of rectifying this dismal state of affairs lying with the government? Why did not the Committee dare to take the government to task? Isn’t it a fact that enthused by the DNEP 2019 the BJP-led Manipur state government slashed salaries of teachers to the scales that existed ten years back in 2009 (Ananda Bazaar Patrika, Bengali daily, 22 July 2019)? The Committee hails Right to Education (RTE) 2009, laments for sharp fall in quality and expresses concern also at the high rate of drop-outs. But it circumvents any reference to the ‘No Detention Policy’, formally legalized under the RTE 2009, which has miserably devastated school education in government-run or aided schools, robbing the students of any desire to study as they get through the grades or classes automatically, without having acquired necessary, if not minimal, knowledge and the teachers of any initiative to teach the unwilling students, question of quality remaining a far cry. Besides, the Committee turns a blind eye to the bitter truth, that it is the menace of poverty which remains the main cause behind the alarming rate of drop-outs, forcing guardians to withdraw their children from schools and engage them for eking out a minimum livelihood for the family. Ever rising cost of education and the ambience created by the ‘No Detention Policy’ add fuel to the fire, only to step up curtailment of education for majority of students. Alongside, obscurantism, bigotry, superstitions, Hindu religious ideas, or even practice of Hindu rituals and food habits in public domains like schools or even ISRO are fast overwhelming education field. Incorporation of distorted material and information in school textbooks

just for the sake of accommodating the doctrine and viewpoints of the ruling RSS-BJP combine, or under pressure from the ABVP to frame the university curriculum in accordance with their dictates or the likes are coming in the wake of these saffronization processes. And to prevent any dissension to take the shape of opposition, autonomy of institutions and academics as well as freedom of choice and expression for individuals are curtailed at every stage through a slew of measures like replacement of autonomous University Grants Commission (UGC) by a nominated Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), introduction of graded autonomy or National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill or by coercing and persecuting the dissenters so much so as to force them to commit suicide like Rohith Vemula. The Committee does not spend a single word on these matters. Why? That becomes clear when we look through even a few pages of the document.

### **Skewed view, denial of truth and further subversion of academic autonomy**

The Committee in its DNEP 2019 eulogizes glorious past of Indian scholarship and heritage, and unique Indian culture developed by way of enrichment through mixing of cultures that arose from the “very first invasions” “till the arrival of the British” (Preamble: Drawing from Indian Heritage, p.26). This is a skewed view, not just audacious, it is denial of truth also. Undisputedly, the great luminaries of the Indian renaissance and the ardent fighters for country’s freedom from the British imperialist rule, coming from every corner of the country and including Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Jyotibarao Phule, Narmad, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Rabindranath Tagore, Subramania Bharati, Jyotiprosad Agarwal, Subhas Chandra Bose, Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, Premchand, Bhagat Singh and scores of others not only fought for freedom of the country from the alien rule, with equal vigour, they waged life-long struggles for freeing people of their country from age-old superstitions, obscurantist thoughts and religiosity and such other hang-overs of the ancient feudal society. Side by side, they dreamt of educating every Indian in independent India with modern scientific education, secular in

essence and universal and democratic in character. It is true that the British rulers, “as unconscious tools of history” introduced modern enlightened education to this country. Though the British rulers largely did so in their own interest of creating a bunch of support hands for running their administration, but in the process and with the language of English as the vehicle of transportation, the Indians were introduced to modern secular humanist, scientific and democratic thoughts and concepts of the world. These were then further nurtured and flourished through untiring efforts of the galaxy of luminaries mentioned above, in this or that way. They, as well, looked ahead for and demanded that the government must bear all the financial responsibilities of providing proper education to all, guaranteeing at the same time fullest freedom and autonomy in academic affairs and democratic functioning and governance of educational institutions.

The Committee tends to write off this whole chapter. Leave aside scientific bent of mind, the Draft DNEP refers to science education only cursorily and on the plea that there should not be any hard separation between arts and sciences (Section P.4.4.3; Section 11.2), it prescribes devaluation of science education in schools as well as in higher education. In addition, it prescribes Liberal Arts education, following the models of ‘Takshashila’ and ‘Nalanda’ of ancient feudal India. How can such an education model of dim past be compatible with modern complex life of today’s India? Absurdity par excellence! Modern India needs modern scientific and secular curriculum and education. Dragging a knowledge-seeking mind a thousand years back to search for truth of modern life is ludicrous. Rather Liberal Arts smacks, in essence, of the discredited CBCS that promotes disjunct, incomprehensive education, destroying acquisition of genuinely comprehensive modern knowledge.

The Committee goes for total black-out of secular, scientific education, but at the same time vouches for scientific temper. And, then it merrily ignores the imperativeness of imparting proper science education as well as the galaxy of Indian scientists like JC Bose, PC Roy, SN Bose, Meghnad Saha, CV Raman, Srinivas Ramanujam, PC Mahalanobis and

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## AMENDMENT OF UAPA AND NIA

# Time to rise up united against the despotic move

The BJP government mooted and got passed the National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in both houses of Parliament last month with the customary avowal of taking tougher action against terrorism. Just a week after that, the government riding on its brute majority elicited legislative clearance to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2019 as well stating the same objective of containing terrorism more stringently. It may be recalled that NIA as a central agency was set up by the Congress-led central government following enactment of the National Investigation Agency Act 2008 by the Parliament of India on 31 December 2008 soon after the terror attack at Taj hotel in Mumbai. The Congress government too justified the enactment by talking of combating terrorism. Now with the recent amendment, (i) the jurisdiction of the NIA is extended to human trafficking, counterfeit currency, manufacture and sale of arms, cyber-terrorism etc., (ii) for the offences under its purview, NIA officers would have the same power as other police officers across the country and (iii) it enables the central government to designate sessions court as special court for trial of the scheduled offences. UAPA, on the other hand, was established way back in 1967 by the then Congress government pursuant to the Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act, 1963 and based on the unanimous recommendation of a 'Committee on National Integration and Regionalism' appointed by the then National Integration Council. The 16<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Constitution was stated to have been necessitated to empower Parliament to impose, by law and in the interests of sovereignty and integrity of India, reasonable restrictions on the issues of (i) Freedom of Speech and Expression, (ii) Right to Assemble peaceably and without arms and (iii) Right to Form Associations or Unions. Subsequently, UAPA were amended four times in 1969, 2004, 2008 and 2012 to make its provisions more stringent obviously to concentrate more autocratic power in the hands of the government. While amendments to UAPA carried out in 2008 were to incorporate many of the provisions of Prevention of Detention Act (POTA) which was introduced by the BJP government in 2002 and then repealed in 2004 by the Congress government, the further amendments of 2012 were in the aftermath of aforesaid terror strike in

Mumbai. Besides NIA and UAPA, there have been more similar enactments. Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), passed in 1971 and amended several times during the subsequently declared national emergency from 1975 to 1977 and recklessly used for quelling political dissent. MISA was repealed in 1977. But other coercive acts like Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) and the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA, 1968) are still in vogue. Another such act named Terrorism and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) was in existence from 1985 to 1995.

### Why are these called Black Acts

The Acts which confer on the government a sort of extra-judicial power to convict any person of treason, terrorism or anti-establishment activities without going through the due process of law and hence possess an anti-democratic character, are called black acts. In India, the British rulers passed a legislative act in March 1919 known as Rowlatt Act or Black Act, to contain, what they called, the anarchical and revolutionary crimes against the Crown of Britain. This Act allowed the British imperialist government to indefinitely extend the emergency measures of preventive indefinite detention, incarceration without trial and judicial review enacted in the Defence of India Act 1915. It was enacted in light of a perceived threat the British imperialist rulers from the freedom fighters particularly those representing the uncompromising revolutionary trend. The infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre in April 1919 was orchestrated by the British imperialists to suppress, among other issues of dissent, the furious protest against the Rowlatt Act. All the Black Acts mentioned in the foregoing paragraph and introduced after independence by the ruling Indian capitalist class and its caretaker governments, whether of the Congress or the BJP, have all been purported to protect the ruthlessly oppressive capitalist rule and modelled more or less on the Rowlatt Act albeit with much more teeth.

And history would vouch for the fact that each of these acts were invoked by the government to exercise excessive and autocratic powers in muzzling the voice of legitimate protest and flagrantly violating civil and political freedoms. Provisions of each and

every act has been used, rather abused, to buttress an altogether different agenda of intimidating, terrorizing and even victimizing persons who dared to rise against the anti-people policies and measures of the governments subservient to bourgeois class interest irrespective of hues. For instance, both the Congress and the BJP governments have records of years of abuse of TADA and POTA. POTA allowed for 180-day detentions without charge only on presumptions of guilt and carried on sketchy review procedures, summary trials and trials *in absentia*. In many ways, POTA was harsher than the "PATRIOT" Act of USA promulgated shortly after the alleged 9/11 terror attack giving law enforcement agencies unbridled powers to investigate, indict and bring anyone deemed to be a terrorist to justice. A review committee set up by the central government found that in two-thirds of around 4,000 cases filed under POTA and pending at the time the act was annulled, there was no *prima facie* evidence against accused. The majority of those held under TADA were women and children. Yet, they were booked by the investigating agencies for committing anti-terror offences. It clearly showed how the act was recklessly misused to implicate people in false cases.

The abuse of TADA was built into the law itself. By replacing normal law and procedure it ate into the very foundations of democracy. It also came to the fore in a report that misuse of the act was nicely shielded by a slew of white lies between 1985 and 1995. Though the official figure of arrests under TADA were stated to be 67,000, the actual number had exceeded 76,000, by 30 June 1994. Twenty-five percent of these cases were dropped by the police without any charges being framed. Only 35 percent of the cases were brought to trial, of which 95 percent resulted in acquittals. Less than 2 percent of those arrested were convicted. Rajesh Pilot, the Congress minister of state of home, himself informed Parliament on 24 August in 1994 that 60,000 out of 67,000 were innocents. Trial was initiated in around 8000 cases and only 725 were found guilty.

### Amended NIA and UAPA surpass all their predecessors in fascistic character

Right now it beggars no description how the BJP as the most trusted political manager of the

ruling capitalist class has been trampling law with alacrity to unleash a reign of terror on the common people, hound and pound political opponents, rationalists and human right activists as well as persecute and victimize religious and other minorities. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which India is a party, stipulates that presumption of innocence is a universal human rights principle. In contradiction to this, the UAPA reverses the burden of proof if the government proves recovery of arms or fingerprints of the accused on materials associated with a terrorist act. This is not only inconsistent with the fundamental norm but also impels the deliberate planting of evidence.

Similarly, how the BJP government has been using the investigating agencies to frame the opposition as well as shield some of the culprits belonging to its fold by diluting the conviction procedures and making a mockery of judicial trials, are also known to all. The acquittal of the convicts of Hyderabad mosque, Samjhauta and Malegaon blast cases bear eloquent testimony to that. Even the judge pulled up the investigating NIA for deliberately presenting a weak case by not producing all the collected evidences. This clearly shows how serious the BJP government is in preventing terrorism, planted violence and unlawful activities..

The new provision of UAPA allowing the government to designate any individual a 'terrorist' arbitrarily and unilaterally is virtually tantamount to presuming guilt even before the individual has been found guilty by a court. This is a wanton violation of the principles of natural justice. Merely harbouring an opinion or an ideology could haul political dissidents or even opposition leaders into the dragnet, when article 19 of the Indian Constitution declares freedom of expression to be a fundamental right. While introducing the proposed amendments to UAPA, the government said that those who would attempt to plant terrorist literature and terrorist theory in the minds of the young through propaganda and frenzy will also be designated as terrorists under the new law. That means it is totally left to the guessing by or simply occurring to the mind of the authorities as to who should be branded as terrorists. The Congress

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## NIA UAPA Amendments

# All Black Acts so far have been abused with impunity

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during whose rule the first UAPA was brought in also supported the amendments now passed by the BJP government. Notably, the UAPA amendments have been brought after virtually making the Right to Information (RTI) Act defunct so as to control, if not totally block, the flow of information sought by the people from the government. So, it would not be possible for anyone to know anything about any detention based on invoking the revised UAPA. Such sweeping executive powers in the hands of government will have a chilling effect on civil liberties and whatever little vestiges of democratic norms are still prevalent.

### How and why such Black Acts strike at the very root of democracy

It bears mentioning in this regard that during the advent of parliamentary democracy as a political superstructure of competitive capitalist economy in the rising period of the bourgeoisie, a slew of codes, norms, conventions and practices were prescribed and documented with a view to ensuring its smooth functioning. Of these, certain legitimacies were then recognized either through incorporation in the law book or in formulating governing principles. "Everybody will be equal in the eyes of law", "every citizen would have unfettered right to freedom and expressing opinions", "Even if a host of guilty go unpunished because of lack of evidence, not a single innocent should be punished", "If anyone brings allegation against another person of misconduct or criminality, the onus of proving the same would lie on the former", "No one can be convicted unless one's crime or illegal act is proved beyond doubt based on irrefutable evidence" and so forth. Parliament was declared as a sovereign democratically elected law-making body whose sovereignty was contingent upon the sovereignty of the people. The bourgeoisie then was the standard bearer of democracy. The enunciators of bourgeois democratic principles during the advent of capitalism also apprehended that as soon as the majority party in the legislature would form government, an identification between the Executive and Legislature, two of the three pillars of parliamentary

democracy, was most likely to happen. So, they prescribed a doctrine of Separation of Power and clearly demarcated the jurisdictions and responsibilities of the Judiciary, Legislature and Executive and—the three pillars of parliamentary democracy—were clearly demarcated and put in place a proper 'check and balance' mechanism was also formulated to avoid any overlapping of functions and overbearing tendency on the part of any of the three pillars as well as concentration of absolute power in any of them. The jurisprudence of the then period professed that none, whoever he might be, could interfere with the liberty of a citizen, except on the condition that he could support the legality of his action before a court of justice. In fact, the Judiciary was entrusted with the special power to safeguard the liberty of a citizen against arbitrary exercise of power by the Executive. Thus, at that stage, the bourgeoisie could implement its slogan of equality, liberty and fraternity as far as was historically possible for it. Bourgeois political theorists held at that time that 'when a state does not enthrone the rule of law, the governed have no adequate protection against the whim and caprice of those in power. Tyranny, despotism and dictatorship exists when a government makes and unmakes the law without permitting public criticism or challenge.' From the spirit of freedom and the concept that every government is built upon a contingent moral obligation and that its actions are right to the degree they maintain or safeguard man's inalienable fundamental rights, they further said man's obedience to political authority was not absolute but contingent on fulfilment of basic rights.

But as the days rolled by and capitalism in course of its development moved towards and finally attained the stage of monopoly, that is, the stage of imperialism. This highest stage of development marks the stage of its decay or reaction. Ridden with crisis and morbidity, capitalism has nothing more to offer to the common toiling people; even its political system, the parliamentary democracy, stinks of rot and decadence, of corruption and total lack of morality and ethics. More the capitalist system becomes crisis-

# Life-long struggles of the Great leader recalled

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over India when our Party the SUCI (Communist) observed FIFTH OF AUGUST, the 44<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the foremost Marxist thinker of this age and the great leader, teacher and guide and the founder General Secretary of the Party. FIFTH AUGUST was observed in 23 states, spanning almost the entire India.

### Kolkata, West Bengal

Comrade Provash Ghosh, beloved General Secretary of our Party, delivered the memorial speech in Kolkata, at the

overflowing Netaji Indoor Stadium. Usually every year the meeting was held in the open on the extensive Rani Rashmoni Road but considering the monsoon hazard that had troubled the meeting many a time in the near past, it was decided to hold it indoors. The meeting, which was presided over Comrade Chandidas Bhattacharjee, West Bengal State Secretary and Central Committee member, adopted a resolution condemning annulment of Article 370 and 35A and bringing down other attacks on Jammu and Kashmir. (Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh would be published later)



*Comrade Mobinul Haider Chowdhury, General Secretary, Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist), garlanding the portraits of Comrade Engels and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on 5 August in Dhaka*

ridden, more would the ruling monopolists in order to prolong their moribund decadent class rule have power centralized in the hands of the bourgeois state and gradually moving towards fascism. So, it is the decadent moribund reactionary capitalism, which, unable to stave off the crisis it has created itself, is imperilling parliamentary democracy, systematically demolishing democratic norms and values, firming up the root of injustice, baring its fascistic tooth and claw more and more and weaving newer ploys to tighten the noose of oppression and repression on the exploited people with every passing day. As a last resort to somehow prolong their obsolete utterly corrupt and reactionary rule, the imperialists-capitalists have found their last refuge in fascism to thwart public protest and movement, arising out of people's extreme distress and privation. This is true for any and every capitalist country, to more or less extent. Promulgation of one after another black acts is to be understood in this historical perspective and context.

### Build up powerful conscious movement to force annulment of black acts

Needless to say that moaning and repenting over the passage of the draconian acts like the UAPA or NIA amendment will not help the cause of the people. Nor would knocking at the door of the Judiciary stem the rot. What is called for is a united organized conscious upsurge of the people against such fascist conspiracies. Time has come to imbibe the truth that parliamentary democracy is not the last word in social journey. It is only a phase and once the relevance of that phase is historically nullified, it is pointless to lament for that. Prudence lies in that. Erudition and intellect demand that the correct course to social progress is duly identified and traversed along to emancipate humanity from the shackles of oppression and in the process get rid of all the filth and smuts polluting the polity. The desired surge of powerful mass movement in demand for abrogation of the black acts, lock, stock and barrel, must be developed as conducive to that historically ordained goal.



# Countrywide observance of 5th August 44th Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh



Guwahati, Assam  
Main Speaker: Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya\*



Durg, Chhattisgarh  
Main Speaker: Comrade Gopal Kundu\*



Jaipur, Rajasthan  
Main Speaker: Comrade Satyawan\*



Jhajjhar, Haryana  
Main Speaker: Comrade Sankar Saha\*



Palghat, Kerala  
Main Speaker: Comrade K Radhakrishna\*



Delhi,  
Main Speaker: Comrade Rabin Samajpati\*\*



Bangalore, Karnataka  
Main Speaker: Comrade K Radhakrishna\*



Patna, Bihar  
Main Speaker: Comrade Sankar Ghosh\*\*



Nagpur, Maharashtra  
Main Speaker: Comrade Satyawan\*



Lucknow, U P  
Main Speaker: Comrade Rabin Samajpati\*\*



Hyderabad, Telangana  
Main Speaker: Comrade V Venugopal\*\*



Ahmedabad, Gujarat  
Main Speaker: Comrade Dhurjati Das\*\*



Guna, Madhya Pradesh  
Main Speaker: Comrade Shankar Dasgupta\*\*



Cuttack, Odisha  
Main Speaker: Comrade Dwarikanath Rath\*\*



Agartala, Tripura  
Main Speaker: Comrade Chandralekha Das\*\*



Dehra Dun, Uttarakhand,  
Main Speaker: Comrade Pratap Samal\*\*

\* Politbureau Member  
\*\* Central Committee Member

(News from other states in next issue)

# Comrade Prasanta Ghatak passes away

Comrade Prasanta Ghatak, Staff Member, Member of Control Commission and West Bengal State Committee breathed his last on 31 July after suffering from prolonged ailments. He was 77. His mortal remains were brought to the Central Party Office on 1 August. Comrades from Kolkata, Hooghly and Howrah districts came down there to pay their last tribute to the beloved comrade.

General Secretary Comrade Provas Ghosh, followed by Polit Bureau members Comrades Asit Bhattacharyya, Sankar Saha, Gopal Kundu and Saumen Basu and the Central Committee leaders, one by one placed wreaths as a mark of their paying revolutionary tribute to the departed Comrade. Party leaders from other states, as also different district committees of West Bengal and Party and mass front units then paid their floral tributes.

Thereafter, his mortal remains were brought to the Party Office at Srirampur in Hooghly district, which had been the centre of his political activities for years together. A number of Central Committee and West Bengal State Secretariat members accompanied. There hundreds of Party activists and supporters-sympathisers paid their tribute to their leader, after which the mortal remains were carried in a procession to the cremation ground.

Comrade Prasanta Ghatak came in contact with the Party during his student days in 1960s. On retirement from a transferable job, his father and his family had settled permanently in



*Last Journey at Sreerampore, Hooghly*

Hooghly district of West Bengal. Initially Comrade Ghatak, along with his family were connected to CPI(M). But, while studying at Srirampur College, he too, like many other students, was deeply attracted and respectful to late Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, our former Central Committee member of the Party and then a professor of that college. In 1961-62, AIDSO formed the Students Union at that Srirampur College. Those days, the Congress was quite powerful in that region. They were furious, as the AIDSO repeatedly won the Union elections in that college. They even brought down a cowardly attack on Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta in the college premise itself. Students burst forth in protest and organized a spontaneous strike. These events left deep impressions upon Comrade Prasanta Ghatak. Comrade Provas Ghosh, the present General Secretary of the Party and then a student leader in charge of that college used to visit there. After a brief discussion with him, Comrade Ghatak accepted the revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as the correct ideology to follow. Then and there, he forsook his academic career, home and everything allied to engage himself as a whole time activist of the Party. He toiled day and night, rushed immediately whenever he would come to know of any new contact. This helped him to develop widespread and close mass contact in the Hooghly district. He inspired scores of students and youth including girls to join the Party. Many of them are now among the most active Party organizers in the district. He led many labour and mass movements and played an important role in organizing historic peasant movement at Singur, for which he had to face police torture even imprisonment.

With all sincerity and unhesitatingly Comrade Ghatak discharged his responsibilities that the Party would give him, be it for organizing the Party in Birbhum or Burdwan



*Comrade Provas Ghosh placing wreathsto the departed comrade*

districts or Kultali area of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. He had perceptible command on ideological issues and could discuss complex theoretical questions in very simple language. Honest, fearless and devoted comrade as he was, he ardently followed Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought as well as ethics-culture and code of conduct of the Party. He could express without any hesitation any differences with any leader, if those cropped out, and sought to sort them out based on logic and proletarian code of conduct.

Towards the end of his life, severe ailments took their toll. When he had become immobile, he would be deeply shocked if the doctors advised him to take rest. A few hours before his end, a comrade had asked him: "How are you, Prasantada?" In a feeble voice he replied: "What is the use of living on in this condition", which meant his not being in a position to undertake any Party activity. In memory of such a priceless comrade, a memorial meeting was organized on 14 August at the University Institute auditorium in Kolkata where Comrades Gopal Kundu and Saumen Basu, both Polit Bureau members, SUCI(C) spoke on the life and struggle of Comrade Ghatak. Another Memorial meeting will be held on 19 August in Hooghly.

**Red Salute**

**Comrade Prasanta Ghatak**

## Draft New Education Policy

# DNEP 2019 puts a seal of approval on rapid commercialization sanctioning liberal hike in fees

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others, who had put the country in the roadmap of the modern science of the world most commendably in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The Committee members expect India to meet the challenges of the 21st century, but looks towards Takshashila-Nalanda, other way from the pedestal built by those stalwart scientists, standing upon which the country has reached its present position. What a weird contradiction the Committee puts itself in!

### **Linking education with religious institutions**

On the other hand, the Committee extends outrageous proposal of encouraging religious

institutions to education as well as of being unconditionally liberal to philanthropic funding.

True, spread of modern education in India rested much on the philanthropic contributions of the then donors. The Senate Hall of the Calcutta University bears ample testimony. But in the present social ambience of widespread philosophical intolerance, rather religious fundamentalism, the proposal will only help organizations like the RSS or such others to spread their network. Can the Committee ensure that in the name of philanthropic investment, religious fundamentalism and allied divisive ideas, adverse to secular, scientific, democratic education, will not be fanned up bringing about

vertical cleavage among the exploited toiling masses, thereby jeopardizing their unity and strength? Already Education minister of the BJP-led Tripura state government reportedly announced handing over ownership of 20 government schools to ISKCON, a religious organization sponsored and financed by foreign capital (India Today 22 June 2019). Is it not an unwarranted aftermath of the Committee proposal on religious institutions, taken up loyally by the Tripura state government?

### **Advocacy in favour of commercialization and privatization**

Not only the poor, even middle class people are gasping under

throttling tentacles of commercialization leading to exorbitant hike in the cost of education. Nonchalant, the Committee declares public and private investments at par. By that, it creates unbridled scope for private money to pour in, slashing the role of governments. To help that process further, the Committee proposes liberal sanction to increase fees in private institutions meaning making ways for minting more money by the private houses from education business. The Committee embarks upon a novel 'not-for-profit investment', virtually an absurdity when recession-struck investors are scrambling for making profit by any means. Besides it is in India that an

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## Draft New Education Policy

# DNEP2019 unequivocally presents views of the ruling monopolists spelling doom for education for the common people

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educational institute owned by a leading monopoly house of the country (Jio University) was given the status of the highest honour by the last BJP-led Union government to claim huge public fund as well as international recognition even before a drop of ink was put on the paper for its formation. Does the Committee wish to make people believe that the same government and the same monopoly houses would change their heart all on a sudden?

### **Diluting teaching and undermining teachers**

The Committee brings in Anganwadi Centres and their already hard-pressed workers into the school system to undertake highly specialized play and discovery-based Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) system at pre-primary–primary stage thus jeopardizing interests and role of teachers and teaching. It proposes school complexes, each a cluster of schools, ostensibly for smooth administration, which are likely to lead to (i) centralization of power with the complex head or local political power, (ii) involvement of political activists as voluntary helpers, as also (iii) to closure of number of schools on the ground of vulnerability depriving marginalized students of education and (iv) using existing teachers without new recruitment—all going against the interest of education. Such complexes are the last thing desirable. Dumping of Higher secondary with Secondary stage, will rob millions of poor students of any chance of trying for a job on the Secondary certificate and will increase the time and cost of education in general. Maintaining status quo, 10+ 2 system, is the only solution.

### **Holding brief for disastrous Semester system**

The Draft proposes Semester system for schools, with Board Examinations on an average on three subjects per semester and a total of at least 24 in 4 years of the Secondary stage, in place of the present 4 ‘in-school final examinations’ at the end of each class. Strangely, the Committee claims that this will reduce the stress and lessen the examination burden on students and will thus help boost up quality. But with semesters and so many Board examinations when and how will

the students study, particularly when their maturity at that age demands slower pace of teaching—learning over a longer time span, say one year? Besides, typical for semesters, students will tend to shelf and forget the subjects or knowledge of earlier semesters, making studies delinked, compartmentalized and incomprehensive. How will the schools be arranging for this year-long drama of Board examinations? Will the teachers get time for updating or should they remain engaged in setting question papers or checking scripts? Is the Committee aware of countrywide rejection of the Semester system which is being thrust upon by brute majority of parliamentary power?

### **Establishing government control on recruitment of teachers**

Thorough screening for teacher recruitment suggested in the DNEP 2019 is likely to ensure that teachers with a particular allegiance are picked up, obviously fitting to the desire of the ruling combine, with the proposed ‘National Testing Agency’ as a handle for the Union government to control teacher recruitment all over the country. The Committee prescribes a four-year liberal integrated B.Ed. degree, instead of the present 1-year or 2-year ones, as minimum qualification. While the country needs more teachers, this extended course will be accompanied by hefty increase in expenditure for aspirant students, will slow down and hamper input of teachers only and block and debar the 4-year specialized degree holders from taking up any other job. Hence, the proposed course cannot replace the existing ones if one abides by logic and objectivity. Any post-recruitment process of confirmation/promotion must be free from corruption, favouritism and political intervention and are to be arrived at after agreement with the teachers’ bodies, taking into account the question of seniority or length of service. Under no circumstances, teachers should be compelled to do non-teaching jobs.

### **Stripping education of its essence**

The DNEP 2019 proposes a discriminatory higher education proposing three kinds of institutions, one doing research, second doing both research and teaching and third

unaffiliated colleges teaching only. This will lead to neglect of colleges by the government, and hence facilitate their expeditious transformation into self-financing institutions, thus leading to increasing commercialization and sharp fall in quality due to lack of affiliation. By integrating vocational education with the mainstream education, it would demolish the cherished man-making character-building role of education, turning it to narrow job-oriented goal only to produce, as Einstein said, ‘trained dogs’. Incorporation of the AYUSH, or courses like nursing etc. will devalue MBBS courses vital for social life. Introduction of the EXIT in addition to NEET follows the hated National Medical Council (NMC) Bill, which would convert Medical education into a lucrative commercial proposition for the moneybags and be governed by the demand of global capitalist market. This along with the recommendation of inviting 200 foreign universities to set up units in the country will not only increase hold and influence of foreign capital in education sector but would also leave scope for infiltration of polluted imperialist culture and anti-life thoughts.

### **Disastrous language policy**

With its proposition to introduce 3-language formula the DNEP 2019 views promotion of Hindi as well as Sanskrit (to be taught in all schools) with reduced emphasis on English for students at large. Only a few affluent would get scope for being trained with good English and compete in the global job market. Language being the vehicle of thought, the general approach should be: at all stages of education, a 2-language formula would be followed—one being the mother-tongue or the local language from among the Schedule 8 as the medium of instruction and the second English. English has historically turned into a language of the country and being a highly developed modern language, can serve as the link language and window on the world. It is to be taught with adequate emphasis. Study of any other language should be voluntary at appropriate stages.

### **Turning education into an appendage to government and saffron brigade**

All said and done, the Draft

NEP 2019 equips the government with enough arsenals to implement the RSS brand of education as also measures necessary for the ruling monopolists to put a leash upon record-breaking educated unemployed and make available to them minimum number of high-skilled labour-cum-employees to serve their select industries and the military. In order to forestall any hindrance to or any surge of protest against these anti-education pro-monopolist moves and the policy, the Committee carefully chalks out a sinister design to bulldoze all impediments. It stipulates regulation to be responsive and minimalistic and then ultimately proposes an over-reaching body of Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA) or National Education Commission. Is it waywardness or mere contradictory views or is it really deceitfulness? The RSA would comprise bureaucrats-politicians-handpicked social activists, all nominated by the government, with the prime minister at its top. Perhaps this is the first of its kind in the world in which the entire educational system including all policy-making, fund-giving bodies, is brought shamelessly under unfettered control of an out-and-out political personality and power that be.

### **Two views**

Undeniably, as in other cases of social life, on education too there are two point of views in the ruthlessly oppressive class-divided capitalist society. One is based on historically-determined social necessity and hence conducive to the people’s interest while the other is of the rulers, the ruling monopolists, working through their subservient governments. The DNEP2019 unequivocally presents the views of the exploitative ruling monopolists fraught with fallacies, problems and dangerous propositions spelling doom for education for the common people of the country. The people can and must only demand that this highly disastrous education policy as prescribed by the DNEP 2019 be scrapped and an education system be evolved in fulfillment of the genuine aspirations of people for a secular, scientific, democratic education with fullest academic autonomy and the government taking the financial responsibility.

## SUCI (Communist) strongly condemns sudden declaration of scrapping Article 370 and reducing Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir to Union Territories trampling underfoot all democratic norms

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist) issued the following statement on 6 August 2019:

The Central Committee of SUCI (Communist) strongly condemns sudden declaration by the President of India, on the advice of the BJP-led Central Government, to revoke Article 370 and reduce Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir as Union Territories trampling down all democratic norms.

It is to be recalled that at the time of transfer of power, Kashmir, which was up till then an independent kingdom, was given option to either join India or Pakistan or to remain independent. At that time, Pakistan invaders attacked Kashmir for occupation, established their rule over a part of Kashmir but larger part of the Kashmiri people led by nationalist leader Sheikh Abdullah voluntarily joined India on some conditions preserving certain rights of Jammu & Kashmir people which were incorporated as Article 370 in the Indian Constitution. Kashmir thus became an integral part of India. It was necessary on the part of the then Congress-led Indian Government to develop Kashmir economically, socially, culturally and democratically to win over the Kashmiri people to facilitate their total integration with rest of the country gradually. But the Congress-led central government instead of adopting those measures resorted to bureaucratic rule over Kashmir diluting Article 370 and causing resentment among the Kashmiri people taking advantage of which Pakistan indulged in a proxy war against India and in its course gave all out support to the armed separatist and secessionist forces working within Jammu & Kashmir. Instead of rectifying its mistakes, successive Congress

Governments adopted the policy of ruthless suppression of Kashmir people which alienated a considerable section of the people of Kashmir and as a consequence to this, the hands of the secessionist forces were further strengthened.

Under the circumstances, when it was necessary for full implementation of Article 370 to win over the Kashmiri people, isolate and defeat Pakistan-backed secessionist forces, this unilateral scrapping of Article 370 would not only further alienate the people of Kashmir but also strengthen secessionist forces.

Armed forces can silence the protesting voice for some time but not for all the time. Rather it will further aggravate the antagonism.



Protest in Delhi against abrogation of the Article 370. The demonstration was, attacked by Bajrang Dal activists



Massive demonstration held in Kolkata on 5 August 2019 against abrogation of the Article 370 from Kashmir

We demand that the government should immediately restore Article 370 and all other democratic rights of the people of Kashmir.

We call upon all left, democratic and right thinking people of India to raise their voice in protest against these undemocratic acts of the BJP-led central government.

Further, we call upon the people of Kashmir not to be misled by this undemocratic decision of the central government and to raise their voice of protest as part of Indian democratic minded people.

### Kashmiri Pandits, Dogras and Sikhs Sign Petition Condemning Abrogation of Article 370

A petition signed by 64 citizens of India including professionals from all spheres of life such as an eminent doctor, a Vice Air Marshal, theatre personalities, academics, journalists, students and researchers from Jammu and Kashmir most of whom are Kashmiri Pandits, Dogras and Sikhs said in a statement that they believe "abrogation of Article 370, made in stealth and using coercive means" is "unconstitutional and in violation of the historical promises" made to the people of the state. In the petition, they said that the "clandestine manner" in which the Centre proceeded to revoke J&K's special status and reorganise it into two Union Territories, "in complete exclusion of the opinion & consent" of the state's legislative assembly amounts to an "authoritarian & undemocratic rejection of all norms of democracy". Calling for an immediate lifting of the "state of siege on Jammu & Kashmir", the petition says the communication gag on the people of the state to be revoked, while also calling for all political representatives to be freed from "arbitrary and illegal detention". The petition concludes by saying: "We are pained at the division of our homeland and we pledge that we stand united in this time of trial and crisis. We will resist any attempt made to divide us on ethnic, cultural and communal lines." (The Wire-10-08-2019)



Flood relief collection by SUCI(C) activists in Karnataka and Mumbai [Right]

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH