

Proletarian Era

Volume 37 No. 10
January 1, 2004

Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
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Price : Rs. 2.00

World People Decry Saddam's Criminal Arrest 'Quit Iraq at once' rent the air

After 9-months long strenuous search by the top intelligence departments of several countries headed by the CIA, the British investigation agency and US-UK military headed by the Iraqi anti-national stooges of the soil, the illegally ousted president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein could at last be caught hold of on 13th December last. The fact that he could remain untraced for long nine months in a barren desert land shows what a tremendous people's support he enjoyed in his country. At this news of arrest of Saddam Hussein, who symbolizes anti-imperialist freedom struggle of not only Iraq but also of the Arab world, well-meaning people of the whole world were gravely shocked and they vehemently condemned this arrest by foreign imperialist aggressors and demanded unconditional immediate release of him. Although the world imperialists, particularly the war monger US and British rulers alongwith their hirelings in the Arab world are in over

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee demands unconditional release of Saddam

Demanding immediate release of Saddam Hussain, President of Iraq, who was illegally captured in Iraq on the 13th of December by the occupying US imperialist rulers, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the SUCI, in course of a statement on 19 December last said that the US-UK imperialist axis represented by Bush and Blair, who in blatant violation of all international laws committed naked aggression on Iraq and occupied the whole country, has no moral right at all to try him on any count and that instead both Bush and Blair were to be tried as war criminals for launching an unjust war against Iraq and its eventual occupation and for killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of Iraqis including women and children in their nefarious design to establish their colonial rule there.

Expressing total solidarity with freedom fighting brave people of Iraq who have heroically come out in streets condemning this heinous act of capture of Saddam Hussain and demanding his immediate unconditional release and in reply to this heinous act have further intensified their resistance struggle, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, once again strongly demanding immediate withdrawal of Anglo-US forces from Iraq called upon the freedom loving people of the whole world to identify themselves with the freedom fighting people of Iraq not only to force the US imperialists to leave Iraq at once but also to deal a death blow to American hegemonism and overlordism.

Assam State Committee on Military Operation in Bhutan

Expressing deep concern over the Royal Bhutan Army's military operations going on in South Bhutan since the last 15th December, resulting in the loss of many precious lives, severe torture and suffering of women and children, more particularly the reported outrageous act against the women, the Assam State Committee of the SUCI in course of a statement strongly urged upon both the Bhutan Government and Government of India to suspend forthwith this military operations and earnestly seek a negotiated settlement of the problem arising out of setting up of camps by ULFA and others in Bhutan. The State Committee of the Party also demanded complete safety and security of the women and children. It also called upon the ULFA leadership to agree to an unconditional talks with the government and seek a negotiated settlement of the issues, they have raised.



Dais of the open session of the 5th Women's conference of West Bengal organized by the AIMSS, held at Prangour Basak Nagar (Berhampur) Murshidabad on 27th December, 2003. (Below) a part of the gathering. (News on page 7)

Iraqi People's Liberation Struggle

Inseparably linked up with World Anti-Imperialist Movement

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jubilation, the fact is that thousands of people in the cities of different Arab countries, starting from Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lybia to Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, have taken to the streets in protest of arrest of Saddam. Even in pro-American countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait people have burst forth in condemnation. In Mana, the capital of Kuwait, 10,000 people assembled before the American air base with placards written in Arabic : "US and UK occupying forces hands off Iraq !", "Yankee dogs go out of Arab world!", etc. Protest demonstrations were held in Madrid in Europe and Japan.

It has been charged, and most possibly so, that Saddam was drugged before capture. Whatever the fact, arrest of Saddam Hussein will not change the situation in Iraq and the freedom struggle will continue as before however much the US occupiers may use this

capture for propaganda purposes in order to demoralize the freedom fighters and Iraqi people.

The US-UK imperialists are posing as if they have achieved the final victory in Iraq. This has been completely belied. The attacks of the freedom fighters on the invaders and their henchmen are increasingly surging forth sending shivers down the spines of imperialist rulers. To mention only a few, the day after Saddam Hussein was captured car bombs targeted at police stations in Baghdad killed at least 4 policemen and wounded 17 others. And in Tirkit, hundreds of students — some crying — demonstrated to protest the capture. The US generals had already admitted that they were facing a full-scale guerilla war. The US invaders tried to create a cleavage between Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, but the Iraqis are unitedly fighting them. The Iraqis have given birth to a national freedom struggle to the dismay of occupiers. Braving the bullets, bombs, and rockets the

Iraqi patriots are carrying on their fight for liberation. Whereas freedom struggle in other many countries in the past could receive material help from outside, no people outside or neighbours around are in a position to send help to the Iraqi freedom fighters avoiding the US military surveillance network. Undaunted, with little or no help from outside, these freedom fighters are carrying on their battle solely on the strength of their moral backbone and patriotic fervour, drawing all sustenance from their own people. The US-UK brigands have got hold of President Saddam Hussein and they may kill him, but that would in no way, hinder or undermine the Iraqi people's freedom fight, nor can distract this battle for liberation of their motherland.

It is apparent that after capturing Saddam the US imperialists are hell-bent for eliminating him at the earliest. Bush and his so-called Iraqi Governing Council first demanded Saddam's execution after a mockery of trial in Iraq, but under the pressure of world public opinion later on, Bush wanted his trial in US or by the Governing Council. France, Germany and Russia have objected to Saddam Hussein's trial and execution as desired by the US, this again reflecting the same contradiction and conflict of economic and geo-political interests of these powers which they have with those of US imperialism. Since the beginning of aggression on Iraq, on this issue of Saddam Hussein's summary trial and execution, even the UK, USA's constant ally, has expressed objection to death penalty. It is the depth and extent of public protest and indignation both in its own country and the world over that has forced the UK government to take this stand in public at least.

The pertinent question here, however, is how can the question of trial of Saddam Hussein arise at all? It is the Bush-Blair twine, not Saddam, who violated all international laws and flouted the UN to wage war of aggression on Iraq, plunged the country into death and destruction, let loose unbound savageries and unleashed a reign of terror, killing thousands of innocent people, established a colonial rule there, looted the country of its wealth including oil. For that crime

against humanity, it is they who should be tried as war criminals. To confuse the world people on this score, the international media controlled by the multinationals and the imperialists are spreading canards against Saddam Hussein. Without going into the question of whether there is at all any truth in these canards, it has to be emphasized that these are issues which concern the people of Iraq and it is they who alone can sit in judgement on him. The gravest perpetrators of crime after Hitler, that is, Bush-Blair have no right to talk of and arrange for trial of the President of a sovereign country. The need is, on the other, to release Saddam Hussein, re-instate him and withdraw immediately the US-UK occupation forces from Iraq.

While such is the demand of people all over the world, what is the role of the present BJP-led NDA Government of India? When the US-UK committed aggression, this government refused to condemn it. In the face of countrywide people's condemnation, it agreed only to 'deplore' the aggression. After Saddam Hussein was arrested it uttered no word and after some four days opened mouth to say only that it favoured his trial in an international court. It said nothing about the illegality and illegitimacy of arresting Saddam Hussein, made no demand of his release and reinstatement, kept silence over the sole and sovereign right of the Iraqi people on this issue. On this issue the stand of the Congress and other bourgeois opposition parties was not at all different from that of the BJP-led NDA government. They also toed the same government line of appeasing the US imperialists. What is more shocking, however, is the stand of the CPI(M) and CPI, who have not questioned the right of the US-UK imperialist powers to arrest and arrange for trial of Saddam Hussein in whatsoever manner, far less taking up the issue as Indian people's concern and organizing protest demonstrations and rallies against US imperialists' flouting of international law and rights of the Iraqi people to decide upon their own issues including upon their President. As if to discharge their proclaimed people responsibility to seek justice,

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Demonstration with portrait of Saddam in Mosul, Iraq on 17.12.2003 against US occupation and demanding his release. (Courtesy : H.T. dt. 18.12.03)

CITU Conference

A call to workers to shun path of struggle

CITU, the trade union front of the CPI(M), held its all-India conference recently in Chennai. In the resolutions adopted, documents submitted and the speeches delivered, there was no dearth, rather there was an overdose at places of loaded vocabularies and high sounding phrases in favour of working class movement as well as in denouncement of anti-labour polices of the BJP-led central government. The prescriptions and operation of globalization-liberalization have also been flayed. The owner class too has been reprimanded for denying the labour its legitimate dues. In the face of it, it would appear as if CITU leadership is so serious in developing working class movements and hence is opposed to the ruling capitalist class.

But if one carefully goes through the proceedings of the conference and reads the speeches of the CPI(M) and CITU leaders between the lines, something contrary would obviously be found lurking behind all these vitriolic utterances and pretensions. The picture would be clearer if one simultaneously takes into account the activities and practices of both the CITU and the CPI(M). CITU leaders have advised the workers that in the current phase of globalization when there is an all-out attack on the life and livelihood, the working class movement has to be "defensive" in nature. They have also admitted that many a time they have been succumbing to pressure and agreeing to a lot of things that run counter to their professed line of action.

Going a step further, Jyoti Basu, the veteran member of the CPI(M) top brass and vice-president of CITU, observed in his speech at the trade union's West Bengal conference that as the ruling class has changed its nature of attack the working class would also need to change its style of movement. Explaining what are the precise changes, he said that in the era of market economy, competition in business has intensified. Hence no industry would survive unless the production is increased and produced goods have a competitive edge. The working class, in his opinion, ought to take note of these aspects while chalking out the

course of its movements. Echoing the same tone, Chittabrata Majumdar, now elected General Secretary of the CITU, wanted the trade union leaders and organizers to decide everything on the basis of objective assessment, namely, how far would they extend their movement so that it did not come in the way of sustainability of the industries and enterprises. In other words, Majumdar tried to point out that accentuating the working class struggle beyond a level might make the industry non-viable and hence it might be closed. Majumdar also reminded the workers that the trade union movement in a capitalist system is, unlike proletarian revolutionary movement, not a fight to finish but of striking a compromise. And the CPI(M) and CITU leaders reiterated that both saving industries and protection of the interest of the workers are equally important.

The global scenario

While the CPI(M) and CITU leaders have been preaching all these to the workers, let us see what is the position of industrial growth and the condition of the working people in the capitalist countries round the globe. The picture is not simply dismal but harrowing. Everyday, huge numbers of existing industries are getting closed rendering millions jobless. Unemployment is spiralling. In the US, the chieftain of imperialism-capitalism, the number of unemployed is touching 10 million mark. Massive layoff, retrenchment, forced retirement, unilateral wagecuts and denial of existing benefits are plaguing the lives of the workers and employees. Capitalism, as a moribund social-economic system, is reeling in the vortex of an intense and indissoluble crisis. Every student of political economy knows that the capitalists invest capital not in the interest of the society or for the benefit of the labour. The object of production is a capitalist system is to earn maximum profit through exploitation of labour. As the exploitative capitalist owners amass maximum profit, there is a steady dwindle in the purchasing power of the workers and the people resulting in a market crisis — slump, recession, overproduction what the

capitalist economy is suffering from. So the workers are not responsible for creating this crisis, they are instead the victims doomed to languish in total ruin. It is the capitalist mode of production with the sole objective of earning maximum profit that is the insurmountable obstacle in the way of all-out industrialization.

On the other hand, the capitalist class is making the severe economic crisis as a plea to take away the existing economic and other irreducible minimum benefits and rights which the workers earned through hard struggles, to ensure its profit margin in this critical situation. It is adopting illegal and illegitimate methods, schemes and dubious means, one after another, to shift the entire burden of its crisis on to the shoulders of the working class. The more the crisis, the more despotic and autocratic is the ruling bourgeoisie and the more it is resorting to fascistic means in a bid to ward off the growing resentment and protest of the exploited working masses. Alongside, it is unleashing a deceptive propaganda that the workers' movement, excess manpower and rising wage bill are rendering the industries incompetent and hence the compulsion of choosing between the options of either closing down the industries or undertaking massive downsizing, retrenchment, wage cut, lay off to make the business viable. The doctrine of globalization-liberalization, the so-called market theory and global competition are nothing but an economic blue-print of the crisis-ridden imperialism-capitalism to pursue this line of action cutting across national boundaries, albeit in the garb of undertaking reforms in the financial sector.

The Indian scenario

In this backdrop, let us turn to our country and the spectacle here is no different but more harrowing rather. Implementation of the dictates of globalized market economy is in full swing much to the glee of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie who are an inalienable part of the world capitalism. And obviously the same is spelling doom for the working class and employees. Everyday existing factories and establishments in large

numbers are closing down. According to the official government statistics, thousands of industries have folded up in last ten years. Millions are losing jobs. The employers at their will are resorting to closures, massive retrenchment, wage reduction and all such anti-employee and anti-working class measures. Moreover, those terminated from the services either forcibly or in the normal course are not getting their dues. Embezzlement of provident fund as well as of ESI Scheme money has become a normal affair. The private owners are now talking of open door policies and hire and fire terms of employment which mean unbridled power to fire any worker any time. It is not so in private sector alone. Even the government sector is also following the same trend. Already 3.5 lakh posts have been abolished, many existing departments are being closed down. There would be 3% reduction in the posts every year over and above terminating the job-positions arising out of retirement. Nationalized banks plan to reduce the number of employees to the tune of 9 lakhs. Only 8% of the employees are now in the organized sector while the rest 92% are in the unorganized segment being deprived of any social security. The government also plans to hand over profit making public sector units, established out of public money, to private owners who, in the name of so-called rationalization, would shed manpower in huge numbers thus adding to the list of swelling unemployment.

The owners of industry are also indulging in palpable falsehood while alluding to the so-called viability of an industry. Just to cite one or two, the jute-barons had been for long talking of sickness of the trade and under that pretext, bringing out one after another proposals to fleece the jute workers. But in reality, all the products get sold in no time. Particularly in the wake of global opposition to synthetic packaging, the jute bags and other jute products are in cherished demand. Similarly, the owners themselves had not nourished the old tea gardens and now passing on the buck to the hapless tea plantation workers. Already, over 300 tea plantation

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Crisis of capitalism obstructing industrialization

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labourers have died of starvation. Many have committed suicide. Such suicides are also increasing in number among retrenched workers all over the country. Destitution, hunger and appalling poverty are what the working class is endowed with in the decadent bourgeois system.

Everybody knows that recession, slump, market crises are all, as we have seen in the foregoing paragraphs, stemming from the capitalist production relation and these would continue to be there in a capitalist system even if, for argument's sake, it is assumed that there is no trade union movement. But what is astonishing is that the CPI(M) and CITU leaders are trying to create an impression as if the working class movement is the cause of all these maladies attending the capitalist system. It is shocking to find that in their bid to conceal this truth, the CPI(M) and CITU leaders, in tune with the capitalist bootlickers, are singing the same refrain that trade union movement is responsible for the crisis which is brewing in the industrial sphere. They are also obfuscating the vital truth, revealed in the teachings of great Marx, that as the reaction against this ruthless exploitation of the capitalist class, the anti-thesis is bound to appear. The task in that situation is to scientifically articulate it and provide it a correct direction. The pertinent question that comes to mind is whose interest it is to serve for which they are doing all these — the exploited workers or the ruling capitalists? Does it not mean that in disguise of being friends, the CPI(M) and CITU are in effect asking the working class to keep its eyes shut from reality, submit to the owner class and in the process disarm itself? What else could then be a betrayal to the cause of the working class? And lest this surreptitious act of theirs got exposed, the CPI(M) and CITU leaders, at times give a call of isolated, aimless strikes or certain stray movements, divorced from the purposiveness of advancing the working class struggle, and to pose as if they are so worker-friendly. Staging some mock-fights against the employers is also necessitated for reaping election benefits pretending camaraderie with the workers who constitute a bulk of the electorate. With great pain and

anguish what we find today is that the CPI(M) and CITU leaders are exactly playing that dubious role.

The pro-capitalist policy of CPI(M)-led governments

The story does not end here. Not only that the CPI(M) and CITU leaders are advising the workers to desist from class-conscious trade union movement and in the process serving the ruling capitalist class. In their bid to appease the capitalist class and run the state governments under their control as per the whims and dictates of the industry bigwigs and the corporate giants, both native as well as foreign they are, instead of encouraging class and mass struggles to surge forth, suppressing the very legitimate movements of the gasping workers. Incidents of killing of agitating workers by police firing is also not wanting. The all-India Conference of CITU hailed the 27-year rule of the CPI(M)-led government in West Bengal as a glorious chapter in the post-independence period because of the stability it has provided through six consecutive poll victories. The question is whose stability it is and at whose cost? In the West Bengal state conference of CITU that preceded its all-India conference, it was mentioned that the West Bengal government is giving all cooperation to the private owners for setting up and running industries. Chittabrata Majumdar, the CITU general secretary, said in the conference that both industrialization and protection of the interest of the working class are important. That the interest of industrialization, the West Bengal government would have to give certain concessions to the capitalists and employers. In his endeavour to discourage whatever vestiges remain of trade union movement in West Bengal, he further said that if the workers only think of their own interest and do not take into cognizance the limitation of the West Bengal government, they would widen the distance between themselves and the government.

What a shocking exhortation that comes from some one claiming to be the champion of the downtrodden working class! Look at the way the concessions are doled out to the industry and business bosses. Way back in early nineties, immediately after the Congress-led central government announced liberalization of economy, the

CPI(M)-led West Bengal government under Jyoti Basu came out with an industrial policy which was distinctly in favour of the big business and corporates. Notwithstanding the historically outmoded path of capitalist development, the CPI(M) boastfully declared that the new economic and industrial policy of the central government would play a great role in industrialization of West Bengal where an unprecedentedly favourable industrial climate conducive to rapid industrial growth had been created. Jyoti Basu told the workers that they "wanted responsible trade union movement only" and "obstruction to industrialization would not be tolerated." The message was very clear to the ruling class who found that the CPI(M) leadership, desperate for further pelf and power, sought its blessings and patronage in greater proportions and that the party would ensure that the so-called "industrial peace", a euphemism for unbridled right of the owner class to run its steamroller over the workers, is maintained. From then onwards, the CPI(M) leaders took upon themselves with all alacrity the task of wooing and appeasing the big corporates and industry giants. Regular meetings with the chambers of commerce, big business houses, foreign capitalists even from leading imperialist countries like US, UK, Japan, Italy and others in cozy 5-star hotel became the main function of the front-ranking ministers and leaders. The CPI(M) and CITU leaders released a campaign that if the workers "behave properly", the big monopolists and corporate barons would invest huge capital in the state and that would generate a lot of employment, bring enormous prosperity.

Moving in line with their policy of appeasing the capitalists, CITU leadership initiated the process of discouraging all sorts of trade union movement. More and more the workers have been persuaded to surrender before the employers and owners. In jute industry, CITU leaders have been pioneers in agreeing to implement the so-called "productivity-linked wage" which is nothing but a ploy to deny due remuneration to the workers. In the same industry, CITU consented to a differential wage structure for the same job. In keeping with the formulations of globalization, the

West Bengal government also started privatizing government sector industries, closing down some of the public sector industries and soliciting funds from overseas lending agencies to pay off the workers. Already, 16 such establishments have been identified for the purpose and the workers are forced to accept early retirement. CITU which was a signatory to the proposal of reviving potentially viable public sector units, is now endorsing the move to wind up such units. Contract labour appointment was given a nod and even teachers in the schools are being engaged on contract at sadly below-prescribed minimum wage. Though the state government had on an ad hoc basis, decided a minimum wage structure in 54 industries, the workers there are still paid wages fifty percent lower than the stipulated quantum. The bidi workers are one of this affected segment. The plight of the tea garden workers is known to all. So irresponsible and uncaring have become the CPI(M) and CITU leaders to the workers that Md. Amin, the veteran CITU leader and current West Bengal labour minister, said that it was not his department's job to know how many tea-garden workers have died of starvation and malnutrition following the closure of the gardens. But the same Amin could provide "exact figures" of the amount his government is claiming to have spent on giving relief to the closed tea garden labourers. His cabinet colleague, Nirupam Sen, the state industry minister, while addressing a chamber of commerce meeting recently, profusely praised the industry captains for all their initiative and cooperation in the industrial growth of the state. He also reassured them that the CPI(M) government would not deviate from doing everything to help the investors including reining the working class movement. The state chief minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee who has already become darling of the corporate houses and is being admired and applauded by the captains of the industry now and then, has been committing total support to the big business and corporate. The state government has now decided to have special economic zones prescriptive of globalization and recommended by the BJP-led

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Genuine left government encourages democratic movement

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central government where no normal trade union activities would be allowed. One would thus see that the CPI(M) leaders, in order to stick to power, are in effect implementing what the crisis-ridden capitalist class is desiring. And to ensure that this pro-capitalist stand of theirs does not get exposed before the working people, there is so much of sermon preaching. Does it not prove that on the one hand, the CPI(M) and CITU leaders are yielding to the dictates of the ruling bourgeoisie to curry favour while to the workers they are posing as if they are champions of trade union movements? This double-standard has not remained a secret, down to the level of CITU where opportunism and power-politics have taken over everything else. The CPI(M) controlled trade unions are now dominated by notorious mafia dons, extortionist kingpins and anti-socials who have unleashed a reign of terror and are licensed to self-aggrandizement to any extent. The episodes of Dulal Banerjee of Calcutta and Tarakeswar Lohar of North Bengal Tea gardens are two glaring examples of who are now CITU leaders in West Bengal.

Will a left government act as servitor to capitalism

The CPI(M) and the CITU leaders often refer to "the limitation of the state government and compulsion of working in a capitalist set up. Their contention is that as they are running the government, there is no need for the workers to take recourse to the path of movement in the state as all their demands would be settled through negotiation with the owners with the intervention of the government machinery, wherever necessary. The question that arises is if a genuine pro-people force gets a chance to run government in a capitalist system, what will be its role and responsibility? Will it become a servitor of the system, appease the ruling bourgeoisie, crush the mass struggle and consolidate the system based on injustice and exploitation? Or else, with the extreme limited powers even will it encourage the class and mass struggles complementary to anti-capitalist proletarian revolution? Would it spread illusion about the bourgeois parliamentary system or unmask the parliamentary democracy that

protects the class rule of the bourgeoisie?

Herein we recall the significant teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, a foremost Marxist thinker and founder general secretary of the SUCI. Way back in 1967 when the United Front of the left and democratic forces with the SUCI as one of the constituents formed a government in West Bengal after the uninterrupted misrule of the Congress for two decades, it was Comrade Shibdas Ghosh who provided the guideline, both theoretical as well as operative, as to what approach and outlook a genuine pro-people force of the proletariat should have while in the government. He showed that, it being in terms of character a custodian government working under a capitalist system, it cannot resolve the basic problems of life. It has to be, in essence, a caretaker of the bourgeois state machine. But does that mean that such a government like any other government run by the bourgeois parties would discourage or crush legitimate mass movements? Or it would restrain the coercive state machine to the extent and till the time possible so that legitimate class and mass struggles surge forth to conduce to anti-capitalist proletarian revolutionary movement? SUCI, at that time, armed with the teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh fought for encouraging democratic mass movements through appropriate policy directive while the CPI(M) and its associates subscribed to the

opposite outlook and expelled SUCI from the united front.

CITU leadership plays compromising role of social democracy

Thus a careful examination of the deliberations of CITU conferences, makes it abundantly clear that CITU and the CPI(M) leaders are now following a distinct line of moving in unison with the capitalist class whose wishes and interests are found to be uppermost in their mind. What else can this be other than the policy of class collaboration? They are asking the workers to be "defensive" in the face of attacks of the capitalists. What does it mean except suggesting abject surrender to the oppressor class? Does it not tantamount to disarming the workers, robbing them of all the weapons with which they can defend themselves against the increasing onslaughts of the capitalist class and press for their legitimate demands?

In the conferences, the CPI(M) and CITU leaders have again and again referred to the trade union movement as a compromise and not a fight to finish. What is the real connotation of such a repeated utterance during the deliberations in the existing context? Who does not know that urging the workers to be ready for compromise with the capitalists, without stressing upon the imperativeness of their legitimate struggle, simply means telling them to give up the path of struggle against the growing assault

by the capitalists. All great Marxists have been emphatic on strict adherence to the revolutionary angularity of the trade union movement. A communist participates in a trade union with the clear objective of making the workers aware in the course of conducting legitimate movement, that there is no escape from the exploitation of man by man unless the capitalist system is finally overthrown. A communist knows how to distinguish between economism and fight for realizing economic demands from a class-conscious outlook. It is from this perspective that Marx and Engels had called the trade union a "school of communism". Elaborating the concept further Comrade Shibdas Ghosh sounded a note of caution that "if trade unions are not looked upon as schools of communism and consequently they do not develop as living centres of political studies, then trade union movement will inevitably degenerate into an instrument in the hands of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes to disrupt and confuse the working class movement." But shockingly we find that the CPI(M) and CITU leaders are hell bent in pursuing the condemned path of economism and playing the role of social democrats who have no interest other than to serve as a compromise between labour and capital. We call upon all the workers and the honest rank and file of both CITU and the CPI(M) to seriously ponder over these aspects.

'Quit Iraq at once' rent the air

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all they have done so far is to demand Saddam Hussein's trial in an international court of law. But they have not demanded Saddam Hussein's release nor demanded his reinstatement and leaving the issue to the Iraqi people to decide upon. What, therefore, is needed to be realized is that the role of the BJP is an affront to the anti-imperialist tradition of the Indian people. No less abominable is the stand of the Congress. The CPI(M)-CPI, too, professing leftism have taken the same position objectively. What is heartening to note that in the face of the abominable roles of these parties, the progressive people of India are condemning this US

imperialist crime and conspiracy in unequivocal terms and resolutely demanding the release and reinstatement of Saddam Hussein.

What is important to note is that the brigandage of US imperialism is not a danger to Iraq alone but it poses threat to liberty and sovereignty of any country who would refuse to toe US war mongering. Today, Saddam's release is inseparably linked up with the freedom struggle of Iraq which is again a part and parcel of anti-imperialist struggle in general and anti-US imperialist struggle in particular of the whole world. So it is the bounden duty of the freedom loving people of all countries to regard the fight of Iraqi people as

their own struggle, to open a second front by building up anti-imperialist struggle demanding unconditional release of Saddam Hussein, immediate withdrawal of occupation forces from Iraq and to bear pressure upon their respective governments. It is also incumbent on the freedom loving people of the world to give powerful moral and material support to the on-going struggle of the Iraqi people to ensure their quickest victory.

We call upon people all over the world to build up broad-based mighty mass movements in their respective countries and to coordinate them to give birth to a global anti-imperialist struggle which alone can help achieve the above demands.

Telgi scam again highlights all-round degeneration

Reports on the Telgi stamp-scram case have hit the media-headlines recently. The scam, which was reported first by a private TV channel, is a fake revenue stamp paper case involving three MLAs of the ruling and Opposition parties in Maharashtra, Karnataka and AP. The kingpin of the scam is the Karnataka MLA Abdul Karim Telgi whose name the scam has come to bear. The episode in brief is : A few months back, a Telegu Desam MLA was booked for circulating fake revenue and non-judicial stamp papers. Tracking him, the police arrested Telgi, from whom they got a startling revelation. Printing stamp papers need specially made printing machines and specific designs, which he had acquired from the India Security Press, Nasik. This is a high security establishment under central finance ministry control. How could he manage it without the assistance of highly placed officials and top brass in the police? He had been running the racket for over a decade and the estimated value involved in the scam is Rs 32,000 crore. Moreover, it was not only a fake stamp paper case. A huge number of well-packed cartons containing fake currency notes, Indian and of some foreign countries, were unearthed from the house of one co-accused Abhay Bansal who was arrested in connection with the scam.

Political high-ups involved in the scam

Names of a lot of big shots have surfaced in connection with the scam. Telgi developed close link with political leaders of many hues and police apparatus in different states. Even Chhagan Bhujbal, the deputy chief minister of Congress-NCP led Maharashtra government, was accused to be a "protector of Telgi". When his name first appeared in the press, to stave off pressure from the Opposition, he flew to Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital on 15 December with a "cardiac pain" and convalesced there for three days. On the 23rd., he stepped down from office, though putting on a brave front by saying that his resignation had nothing to do with the scam. However, the media revealed the complicity of, in addition to the deputy chief minister and his nephew Sameer, the state's two former chief ministers Vilasrao

Deshmukh of the Congress and Narayan Rane of the Shiv Sena. It is reported that Deshmukh and Rane were heading the revenue department that recommended Telgi's name for issuance of stamp-vendor licences between 1994-2001. The CBI has named the high profile political and legal personality Ram Jethmalani who allegedly extended help to the stamp mafia in different ways in their unlawful operations. The media also reported the collusion of one and half a dozen other ministers and former ministers of the state, a cabinet minister of Congress led Karnataka government Roshan Baig and his brother Rehan, and the top-brass in the police and revenue departments. One of the co-accused, now in custody, had been an Opposition nominee for deputy speakership in Maharashtra Assembly from Shiv Sena-BJP combine. The scam thus cut across the political divisions! Telgi developed strong ties with both the treasury bench as well as the Opposition. Big shots in police like the commissioner of police in Mumbai and his deputy, three RPF officers including one senior commandant and a Delhi police inspector belonging to the Investigating Unit of South District were also accused to be his accomplices and put behind the bars. The Mumbai police commissioner was in fact taken into custody on the day following his retirement — which is a record in the Indian crime history. The Maharashtra government, following the revelation, formed a Special Investigating Team (SIT) for enquiry while the Opposition demanded that the case be handed over to the CBI. The chief minister of Karnataka refused to concede the demand of the resignation of his cabinet minister Baig, though Baig's brother surrendered to the SIT. With the progress of investigation, we may expect more skeletons in the cupboard to be discovered.

All parliamentary parties involved in scams, corruption

The Telgi scam is not the only one plaguing the Indian body politic. The scams are so rampant, so frequent now that one cannot keep track of them. Not all are reported in the press even. The Bofors scam, Security scam, Hawala, bribing opposition MPs during no-confidence motion,

Tehelka, Kargil coffin scam, UTI scam, fodder scam are but only a few of them which hit the media-headlines over the last decade. The most tragic incident of all happened a few weeks back when Satyendra Dubey, an IIT-engineer, was murdered in Bihar. He was one of the front ranking engineers in the National Highway Authority of India attached to the prime minister's Golden Quadrilateral road project. His only fault was that he tried to expose how the construction mafia was "looting hundreds of crore of rupees of public funds" by supplying inferior material for the project. From his position, he honestly wrote to the prime minister with the hope that appropriate steps would be taken against the corrupt officials. Ultimately, the upright and conscientious engineer had to pay with his life. While he made an earnest request in his letter to the PM to keep secret his identity, how his name could be known to the mafia who slaughtered him within days of the letter reaching the office of the PM? All these demonstrate how corruption, economic malpractice, usurpation of public money by leaders of the parties in power in league with anti-socials and mafia have been rampant in the society. Crores of rupees from public exchequer change hands. We know how the names of more than one prime minister, defence minister, finance minister, a number of chief ministers and dozens of political leaders of national importance were reported for their alleged involvement in so many scams, but none of them was ever punished. Whenever a report regarding a scam comes out, the Opposition raises hue and cry; they stall sessions of parliament or state assemblies and show how serious they are in fighting corruption. That all these are mere playing to the gallery and for serving petty parliamentary interest becomes evident soon. For, no serious movement has ever been launched by them on the issues of corruption in the high places. Today's Opposition may sit on the treasury benches tomorrow and indulge in scams galore. Thus these parties, it is immaterial whether they are in government or in the Opposition, are beneficiaries of this or that scam. So, on paper, they may issue order for police investigations,

constitute enquiry commissions, move law court. But one cannot rule out behind-the-scram-manoevres by these mock fighters before any measure is publicly announced. No truth, therefore, comes out in the long run. Years pass, everything passes out of public memory and one fine morning, the media report that the prime accused has been acquitted for lack of evidence or such other reasons; as a result, no one is punished, every one is let off.

We can mention here the recent acquittal of Jayalalitha, the leader of a one-time constituent of the CPI(M)-led third front, then labelled by the BJP as the "queen of corruption" and now an ally of the Vajpayee government! The land scam in which she and her friend Sasikala were the accused, involved several hundred crore of rupees. However, the BJP, the self styled protagonist of value based politics, has of late seen to it that she be exonerated, as a reward for her newly formed tie with the BJP-led ruling clique at the Centre. One can remember here how the same BJP stalled session after session of the Parliament raising the land scam issue when it was in the Opposition. Sometimes the parties in power raise corruption charges against the main Opposition to pressurize it for bargaining purposes. Bofors is one such issue, which the BJP often uses to pin Sonia to secure this or that deal. The investigation and court procedure on Bofors continue for a decade and a half with no tangible result. In some cases, influential people in the ruling clique intervene with the government to delay investigation. The BJP and its NDA ally, the Trinamul Congress, were much vociferous against the economic malpractices of the Jyoti Basu led front government in West Bengal and Jyoti Basu's son and promised to unearth these after coming to power at the Centre. However, the investigation, when just begun, was reportedly intervened into by a close relative of Vajpayee following a request from Basu's son and was stopped. The Lakhu Bhai Pathak case and the case of bribing MPs against the former prime minister Narshima Rao created much sensation in the country. For the first time, a former PM had to personally appear in the court on charges like bribery, forgery,

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People must rise up and fight corruption

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cheating ! The cases were reported in such a manner that it was not difficult for the people to spot the real culprit. However, he was acquitted of all the charges following a long drawn court proceedings.

Corruption all-pervasive under capitalism

The issue is not just whether a former PM or a leader of similar stature was involved in corruption. Corruption has become all pervasive in the Indian society. Bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties of all hues are sunk in corruption up to their necks. Thousands of crore of rupees of tax-payers' money change hands illegally through a network that operates from top to bottom. They raise slogans against corruption, speak against scam and mafia at the top of their voices, but no proper investigation is done and no criminal is booked. It is a foolproof arrangement for money launderers. There is a two pronged exploitation by the capitalist class: governments impose more and more taxes on people already bled white with spiralling prices, promising services; but whatever revenue they collect is drained out through scams resulting in virtually no improvement of services. Already, it is a talking point that only Rs 10 is actually spent for people's benefit out of every Rs. 100 sanctioned by the government. Could this happen had there been no nexus between political parties, bureaucracy, the police and the mafia? Say for example the Telgi scam. The quantity of faked stamp paper is so high that the union finance minister dares not reject them but tries to water down the issue by saying that this will have no impact on economy. So he intends to allow fake stamp papers of estimated value of Rs 32,000 crore to circulate. Who would be benefited by this? The common people or the criminals?

It is not India alone; the entire capitalist world is plagued with this problem of economic offences. In Japan, only recently, more than one prime minister had to step down on charges of economic corruption; in South Korea, a former prime minister was convicted of similar charges. Even the western world is no exception. Italy ranks high so far as corruption in high echelons of

government is concerned. In the UK, USA and France, reports of administrative corruptions are no less abundant. And in all the cases, the common people are at the receiving end.

The task before the people

This is the real picture of the imperialist-capitalist world. The capitalist society is now rotten, devoid of all moral values and lofty ideals of its hey days. It breeds corruption, economic offences, scams and all other nefarious practices. So long as capitalism exists, these cannot be eradicated. However, this should not be accepted fatalistically. We must strive to resist these through powerful democratic movement. This is the only alternative that the people have. A potent mass movement can mobilize people's opinion against all sorts corruptions, malpractices and economic offences and give a public exposure to corrupted leaders, ministers,

officials and their cohorts. This only can force the hands of the authorities, who otherwise shield the offenders, to take measures against them. This is the only deterrent to the mounting corruption in the society. So, it is the initiative of the people which is the key, the determinant whether a Dubey like tragedy would recur and the hard-earned public money would continue to be misappropriated. The left parties have to play the most vital role to initiate and lead such movements. However, the most unfortunate fact is that the big left parties and their associates, which have considerable representation in the Parliament, play only a casual role by giving lip service on the issues like scam. Are they shaky apprehending that their protest may boomerang on them? For, in whatever states they hold the reins of power, their leaders from top to bottom are plunged in corruption. Frequently, their corruption is reported in the media and they have

to defend their tainted leaders in the same manner as the bourgeois parties do. They have thus turned themselves into appendages of the rotten bourgeois system and thereby lost the moral right to protest. However, there is no room for frustration. It is the strength of the people that has determined the course of action and set the path of civilization through the ages. They have to come forward, take initiative and play active role in launching protests against all sorts of corrupt practices. It is also imperative on them to identify the party, which, based on correct revolutionary political line, is actively engaged in organizing movements on all burning issues of the people including corruption and economic offences. We appeal to them to come forward and rally round it to strengthen the genuine revolutionary movement in the country, which alone can put an end to the exploitative capitalist system, the root cause of all evils.

5th Women's conference of West Bengal organized by the AIMSS

Amidst dishonour, torture and criminal attacks that haunt the life of womenfolk, our sisters and mothers, a new beacon of hope is reaching them, and rousing them with determination to break the chains of patriarchal and capitalist oppression. This found reflection also in the overwhelming response to the call of the 5th West Bengal Women's Conference from 27 to 29 December. It is this hope and determination also that were reflected in the eyes of the processionists marching to the FUC ground in Baharampur, Murshidabad, to attend the open session of the conference on December 27. The processionists, comprising women from all walks of life, including teachers, professors, housewives, domestic helps, peasants and daily wage earners, office goers — raised fervent slogans against evils such as dowry death, globalization etc. On reaching the FUC grounds they joined the women already present there from different corners of Murshidabad to form a huge gathering of over twenty thousand.

Present on the beautifully decorated dais, named after

Comrade Gayatri Dasgupta, the late State Secretary AIMSS, were Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, Central Committee, SUCI and the main speaker, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member Central Committee, SUCI, Comrade Protiva Mukherjee, All India President AIMSS, Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, General Secretary and Comrade Sadhana Chowdhury WB State Secretary of AIMSS, Comrade Menoka Basu Roy, AIMSS State President and Prof. Sandhini Ray Chowdhury, Chairman of the Reception Committee and former HOD of Bengali of Baharampur Girls College.

After the brief presidential address of Comrade Menoka Basu Roy, and the address of Prof. Sandhini Ray Chowdhury, Comrade Provash Ghosh delivered the main address. He said, inter alia, that the so-called development boasted of by the BJP, Congress, CPI(M) and other parliamentary parties is bringing prosperity to the monopolists and multinational corporations while toiling people, both men and women, are forced to lead an inhuman life. This is

capitalism. So today, women's emancipation is inseparably linked with anti-capitalist socialist revolution. It was the bourgeoisie during Renaissance who gave the call for women's emancipation. In our country Rammohan, Vidyasagar fought for the cause of women's emancipation. But why does emancipation yet remain unfulfilled? It is because of the exploitative capitalist system.

Millions of women consider the humiliation and torture they face as their fate. They are steeped in the traditional beliefs that women are there only to serve men, women are the source of all evils — beliefs disseminated by all religions.

Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Saratchandra, Nazrul had to fight this concept of the middle ages which is a stiff barrier to the cherished emancipation. To fight it we need cultural movement.

History recognizes that women were not eternally dominated by men. Rather, matriarchal society was the first human society. Should we then conclude that fate did not play that role in the matriarchal society which it did later? Or that

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50th Anniversary of AIDSO observed with great enthusiasm

28th December is a significant day in the history of revolutionary students' movement in India. This was the day in 1954 when a handful of students imbued with the great revolutionary thoughts and teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, foremost Marxist thinker of the era and founder General Secretary of the SUCI, assembled at Mahabodhi Society Hall in Calcutta and founded Democratic Students' Organization (DSO) to lead and direct the just struggle of the students.

SUCI and first secretary of Calcutta District DSO. Thereafter the martyr's column at College Square opposite to Calcutta University was garlanded by Comrade Mahiuddin Mannan, present West Bengal State Secretary of DSO. A big meeting then followed to commemorate the occasion held in front of the Mahabodhi Society Hall. It was presided over by Comrade Pradip Das, Vice-president of West Bengal, AIDSO. Speaking on the occasion, Comrade Sadananda Bagal, one of the delegates of the

revolutionary thought and living guidance of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that spurred us to move ahead with revolutionary grit, determination and audacity braving all odds and disdaining all ridicules and derisions. So invincible was the power of his thoughts that in no time we could make our organization visible and carve out a definite space of DSO in the minds of the students as a distinctly different uncompromising relentless fighting organization built on the edifice of higher ethical and moral values. While the big students' organization of the then years like the AISF later divided into several fragments, Chhatra Parishad, etc., have now on a downturn insofar as support, cooperation and confidence of the students are concerned, the AIDSO is growing and developing at a faster pace to provide the right direction to students' movement. "The innate strength", Comrade Bhattacharyya stressed, "by virtue of which the D.S.O. could achieve such a unique achievement ought to be correctly realized by all in order

to ensure its uninterrupted march forward". Explaining the factors behind this hard-earned achievement, he said : "This has become possible mainly because of two factors. First, the leadership remain totally absorbed and immersed in developing the organization, working round the clock to fulfil the objectives and the need of the hour; secondly, scrupulous adherence to the path of struggle, as delineated by great revolutionary leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, strict adherence to the concepts of life as he upheld which in its course released a powerful revolutionary struggle within oneself covering all aspects of life with the objective of acquiring a real revolutionary character".

To this end, Comrade Bhattacharyya gave a clarion call to the leaders and organizers of the DSO to keep this historic teaching and distinct way of life constantly alive in them, it being the key to growth and development of the AIDSO in the years to come.



A view of observance of 50th Anniversary of AIDSO in Calcutta. (clock-wise) Comrade Ranjit Dhar hoisting the flag. Massive demonstration approaching the venue and a portion of gathering at College Square.

Fiftieth foundation anniversary of DSO was observed throughout the country on 28th December last with due solemnity. The fighting members of DSO, now brimming organization spread along the length and breadth of the country to grow as All India DSO, remembered with reverence the struggling period of its establishment. In Calcutta, a well-decorated procession of several thousand students with fifty uniformed student volunteers carrying DSO flags in the front originated from the Shaheed Minar to reach Mahabodhi Society Hall, College Square, the venue of the foundation conference. On its way, the procession stopped near the central and state office premises at Lenin Sarani where the organizational flag was hoisted and the portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was garlanded by Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Central Staff of the

founding conference and now a member of the West Bengal State Committee of the SUCI, recollected the days of arduous struggle in building up the organization. Comrade Bhabesh Ganguly, once Calcutta District Secretary of DSO and now a prominent leader of advocates' movement called upon the students to carry forward the students' movement to complement socialist revolutionary struggle. In his address as the main speaker, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member, Central Committee, SUCI and one of the leading organizers of AIDSO during the foundation period said : "The organization that few of us, as disciple of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, had founded as the only revolutionary students' front in the country, is now on the threshold of being recognized as the sole and largest fighting organization of the students on this soil. It was the

5th Women's Conference

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there was another god in the beginning, and another afterwards? Religion cannot give the answer. It is Marxism-Leninism Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thought that has provided the answer, explaining history and development of society in the light of science. Highlighting the specific features of matriarchal society and how patriarchy and class rule came to be established with the introduction of cultivation and emergence of stable property, when a handful of men with muscle power and tricks grabbed land and subjected the labour of others, he showed how in its course male domination was established, women became subjugated and chained.

Emancipation of women is impossible, he said, if women see men with disrespect. Man is not the enemy, enemy is the discriminating social system. Men too should realize that by domination, exploitation of women, man too remains chained. Women should grasp that with love and respect they have to free men from this mental make up. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh again and again had stressed to be.

What is the source of our sustained struggle against the all-out crises created by capitalism? The source of this struggle is Marxism-Leninism Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thoughts. This is the only light before the all-out darkness. The AIMSS is the only organization to lead the exploited women. All of you present here should take this task to lead.

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Edited & Published by Sukomal Dasgupta from 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata 700 013 and printed by him at Ganadabi Printers and Publishers Private Limited, 52B, Indian Mirror Street, Kolkata 700013 Phone : 2244-1828, 22442234 E-mail : suci_cc@vsnl.net