

# Proletarian Era

Volume 37 No. 11  
January 15, 2004

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

Price : Rs. 2.00



22 April 1870 V. I. LENIN 21 January 1924

“Parliamentarism has become “historically obsolete”. That is true as regards propaganda. But everyone knows that this is still a long way from overcoming it practically. Capitalism could have been declared, and with full justice, to be “historically obsolete” many decades ago, but that does not at all remove the need for a very long and very persistent struggle on the soil of capitalism.”

[Left-wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder]



As a part of state wide militant students' movement against hike in examination fee for High School Certificate Examination and on other demands the Orissa State Committee of AIDSO organized, alongwith other district and local level protest programmes, massive students' demonstration before the Board office at Cuttuck on 18.12.03 and a larger demonstration submitted memorandum before the Mass Education Minister at Bhubaneswar on 23.12.03. (Photo above)

## BJP's Pre-election Hoax

# Bounties Benefit the Rich and Business Houses

Eyeing the ensuing elections to be prematurely declared by it, the BJP-led NDA government has announced a large package of relief in tax and duty to the tune of Rs. 10,000 crore. Although the government is claiming that these are for the benefit of the common people, these are actually nothing but sops doled out to the

corporate sector, monopolists, and the rich people. The poor have no place in such reliefs. No poor or people of lower income are going to get anything out of this 'mini budget'. It would not bring down the price of any essential commodities like rice, dal, oil, salt, books, cost of education, medicines or cost of treatment which are on the

increase daily. In fact, through this so called 'mini budget', the BJP has simply tried to satisfy the capitalists, both Indian and foreign, to come to power again with the backing of moneybags, media and muscle power. It is to be noted that the chambers of commerce are all in praise of this 'mini budget'.

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## Repeal of IMDT Act

# In whose interest, for what purpose

Assam, which was in flames two decades back and saw some worst possible fratricidal blood booths and carnages is once again under

the grip of a serious tension. This time it is centring round the demand for repeal of Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act or IMDT Act which is being spearheaded by All Assam Students' Union (AASU). It may be recalled that it was the same very AASU which sponsored the earlier chauvinist movement that went on between 1979-1985 resulting in brutal killings of thousands and thousands of innocent men, women and children, mostly belonging to the minority community people.

Toeing the same line the BJP led Central Government has taken initiative to repeal the same IMDT Act. A bill accordingly was introduced in the last session of the

Parliament which has been referred to the select committee of the Parliament under the chairmanship of Mr. Pranab Mukherjee of the Congress(I). The Committee is at present taking opinions of different political parties and organizations to give a final shape to it. Now the question is, what has prompted the Central Government to repeal this Act ? How far are the demands of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), the AGP, the BJP and the other parochial organizations for repealing this Act justified ? What is the real motive behind this move ? All these are to be critically examined to come to a just conclusion.

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# Chauvinists Plan to Burn Assam Again

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The background of IMDT Act

It may be noted that there is a historical background behind introduction of IMDT Act which needs to be understood to have a proper insight of the matter. During the period of six years from 1979 to 1985, a strong movement which was not only anti-democratic in character but also later on turned out to be a semi-fascist one, swept the entire state of Assam. The socio-political scenario of Assam in which the movement developed should be looked into first. In the year 1978, the Congress(I) after a continuous rule of 31 years since independence was voted out of power. During its rule, it did not take any initiative to develop the economy of the state even to the extent the other states of the country could develop within the limitation of the capitalist system. On the contrary, to suppress people's wrath against its misrule, it took recourse to the path of dividing the people in the name of Assamese, Bengali, Tribal, non-Tribal, immigrants so on and so forth. The RSS and the Jansangh which were very much active to build up their base in the entire North-Eastern region seized the opportunity. On the other hand, centering round the misrule of the Congress(I) government, the leftist forces which were very weak in Assam also began to grow during this period. The bourgeoisie and the bourgeois parties being afraid of the growth of the leftist forces, made desperate attempt to contain the mounting discontent of the people by channelizing it in parochial and chauvinist lines. In fact, all the rightist forces, the bourgeoisie, the regional bourgeoisie, the police, the bureaucracy backed the chauvinist AASU and the Assam Gana Parishad (AGP). AASU, it may be recalled, was formed as a conglomerate of the various students' unions of Assam barring those of Barak valley. Later the AASU leaders floated AGP as their political outfit. And the Congress(I), thoroughly discredited and desperate to retain power, backed the AASU sponsored chauvinist movement which demanded ouster of "foreign nationals" and "outsiders" from behind. Many of the workers and leaders of the movement were in fact originally Congress(I) men.

It may be mentioned that there was no difference of opinion so far as detection and deportation of genuine foreign nationals were concerned. All the political parties had unanimous opinion in this regard. But severe differences did persist centering round the understanding of foreign nationals. Crucial controversy arose over two categories of people. The first category included the Hindu refugees who had migrated long ago from erstwhile East Pakistan when large scale riots threatened their lives. Though there had been national commitment at the time of partition of the country to protect these people and the whole country was ready to confer on them Indian citizenship, the sponsors of the movement stoutly opposed any such move and demanded their deportation to Bangladesh. Nothing but racial hatred and dislike was behind such attitude.

The second category included those immigrant Muslims who at the instance of the then government of Assam came to settle permanently in the state from adjoining districts of erstwhile East Bengal when it was a part of undivided India. These people now do not have any connection with that part of former East Bengal which after partition became East Pakistan and thereafter in 1971 emerged as independent Bangladesh. The agitators by implication considered them not as Indians but people of Bangladesh origin and hence unwanted.

Being guided by the communal hatred against these two categories of people, the sponsors of the movement made a false claim that more than forty lacs of foreign nationals were residing in Assam. Some even put the figure even higher. Such claim of a figure which equals to the total population of these two categories, made it clear that their intention was not to detect and deport foreign nationals but to drive out all these genuine Indian citizens. Their intention became more vivid when the agitators in a semi fascist manner attacked one after another the villages where genuine Indian citizens belonging to the minority community were living, burnt their huts, killed and butchered thousands of them. The agitators further incited the common Assamese speaking people by saying that if all these foreign

nationals (though in reality Indian citizens) could be driven out, then they would get the jobs and lands occupied by these so-called 'illegal' migrants. By spreading such propaganda they in a mischievous manner misdirected the people's wrath against the capitalist exploitation, struck at the root of the united movement of the common people and plunged the entire state into fratricidal blood bath. This brought the agitators and the democratic minded people and forces of the state in opposition to each other.

This is the background against which based on the demands of the oppressed minorities and the democratic forces of the state, and as a safeguard to the genuine Indian citizens against undue harassment, the IMDT Act was adopted in the year 1983 to detect and deport genuine foreign nationals. It may be mentioned that all the political parties after having taken into consideration the Constitution and relevant laws of the country, national commitments and international pacts and agreements considered 1971 as the cut-off year for detection and deportation of foreign nationals.

The fixing of the cut-off year

To give effect to all these considerations the Act was passed. The Act provides the police administration with extensive power to make enquiry about any person and on doubt to send the case to the tribunal through the screening committee constituted under this Act. It also provides that any person may name his neighbour as a doubtful citizen to the appropriate authority. Later on, in the year 1985, the Congress(I) government under Rajiv Gandhi struck a most unjustified compromise with the agitators and signed an agreement known as Assam Accord. As per this agreement, though the cut-off date of deportation of foreign national remained as 25th March, 1971 but cut-off date for detection of foreign nationals was decided as 1st January, 1966 and the people who came between 1966 to 1971 would remain in the state but without any voting right for the next ten years from the date of registration as foreigners. The foreigner identity of this stream (i.e. 1966 to 1971) would be judged by

Foreigners Tribunals constituted under the Foreigner's Act 1946 and Foreigners Order 1964. So at present two sets of tribunals are functioning in Assam — 16 tribunals under the IMDT Act for foreigners of post 1971 period and 15 tribunals under the Foreigners Act, 1946 for the foreigners pertaining to 1966-1971 period and to give it statutory empowerment, the Parliament amended the Indian Citizenship Act 1955 and inserted a new clause 6A in it.

The hoax of massive illegal infiltration

All know that as a part of the hidden understanding between the two parties of the Assam Accord, the then Congress(I) government of Assam under the leadership of Hiteswar Saikia resigned, fresh election was held and with a tacit understanding with the Rajiv Gandhi government at the Centre, the AGP government was installed. The AGP government took up the task of detection of foreign nationals with all earnestness. The government issued instructions to all police stations to locate foreign nationals in all towns, villages and chars throughout the length and breadth of the state. After such a thorough search some two lac eightyeight thousand cases of doubtful citizens were referred by the police administration to the screening committee. The screening committee constituted by the DC, SP, SDO, DSP etc. after thorough verification could find about twentyfive thousand names as eligible for being referred to the tribunals for adjudication. The tribunals after trial could declare only 8694 persons as Bangladeshi nationals. The meagre number so declared after such an extensive search for foreign nationals conducted under the supervision of the government formed with the forces of Assam Movement, proved beyond doubt that the claim of infiltration of several lacs of foreign nationals was nothing but a hoax.

After failing to implicate the genuine Indian citizens belonging to the minority community as foreign nationals through the accepted justifiable process, the chauvinists, parochial and communal forces tried to make a plea that the IMDT Act stood in the way of detection of

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# Move to repeal IMDT Act — A Sinister Design

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foreign nationals. It may be mentioned that certain amendments suggested by them were duly incorporated in the Act in the year 1986. Now they want to repeal the Act totally so that the genuine Indian citizens do not get any scope to prove their bonafide through a judicial process.

## The fallacious arguments in favour of repealing the Act

However let us examine their arguments in favour of repealing this Act. Their points are (i) that this Act is applicable only in Assam and not all over India, hence it is a discriminatory piece of legislation, (2) that onus of proof is vested with the prosecution and not with the alleged persons. The point that this Act is not applicable to other states is not true. The sub-section (2) of this Act clearly states that this Act 'extends to the whole of India and the Central Government can enforce this Act in any state by a notification whenever it is considered necessary'. Further, the argument that if an act or a law is adopted for a particular region under a special condition, then it becomes discriminatory in nature does not stand. In that case all the legislations made under the 6th schedule of the constitution for the Hill Districts of Assam become discriminatory. No country can run without taking into consideration the particular circumstances in a particular region.

Secondly, the allegation that the onus of proving the foreign national identity is vested with the person bringing this to the notice of the authority is totally false and is an attempt to misguide the people. Section 10 & 11 of the IMDT Act state that the tribunal shall issue a notice accompanied by a copy of reference to the person named therein, calling upon him to make such representation in his defence with regard to the averments made therein and to provide such evidences as he may think fit in support of his defence. This clearly shows that the onus of proving the nationality is not vested with the prosecution alone but lies on the person alleged to be foreign national as well. Here it may be mentioned that the fundamental tenet of jurisprudence is that 'burden of proof lies with the prosecution'. It is

an internationally accepted norm practised in all civilized countries. Contrary to this basic principle, the IMDT Act vested the burden on the alleged person as well. But the chauvinists, communal forces, the BJP, the ASSU are not satisfied with this. What they want is virtual abolition of the judicial process so that the individual alleged to be a foreign national does not get any scope to prove his bonafide as Indian citizen.

But this is not all; there is yet a bigger conspiracy behind this. By repealing the IMDT Act, the ASSU, BJP, AGP and other chauvinist forces want the Foreigners Act 1946 to be the sole Act to govern detection of foreign nationals. As mentioned earlier, through this IMDT Act, fixing the year 1971 as the base year for detection and deportation of foreign nationals as agreed to by all political parties and also incorporated in the 'Assam Accord' was brought into action. Foreigner's Act 1946 does not stipulate any cut-off year for detection and deportation of foreign nationals. So, the forces demanding repeal of the IMDT Act are in a conspiratorial way trying to go back to the original demand of making 1951 as the cut-off year.

## The Foreigners' Act 1946

It may be mentioned that the Foreigners' Act, 1946 was passed during the British Rule with the sole purpose of detecting foreign nationals, easily identifiable by their features and spoken languages, who infiltrated to this country without any valid passport or visa. The context was different and the vivisection of the country did not take place at that time. Subsequently, a substantial part of the country was carved out of the then states of Bengal and Assam to create East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. It was akin to create a wall in the middle of the same set of people and conferring on them citizenships of two different countries. Obviously, distinguishing such citizens on the criteria of facial feature or language is an absurd proposition. This act of detection has to be through appropriate judicial and administrative procedures and steps. Otherwise, when the chauvinists are on a spree to spread communal hatred and rancour, the genuine Indian citizens

belonging to the minority community have every reason to be apprehensive of being bracketed as foreign nationals and subjected to all kinds of ill-treatment including forcible ouster from the state. In fact, during the period of 1965-66, thousands of bonafide Indian citizens from the minority community were picked up by the police administration in Assam and by invoking the Foreigners' Act, 1946, forcibly deported to the then East Pakistan branding them as illegal Pak-infiltrators. There were massive protests against such unjust and illegal Acts which compelled the authorities to set up by special order, a number of tribunals to deal with the issue. Neither the Foreigners' Act, 1946 provides for any such judicial process nor does any such tribunal exist in any other state. So are the chauvinists so keen on having the Foreigners' Act, 1946 in the form it exists in the other parts of the country despite the peculiar and unique situation prevalent in the state of Assam. The real intention behind all these is to discriminate against the non-Assamese speaking genuine citizens of Assam, ignite communal and parochial passion, escalate tension and engineer riots and then fish in the troubled water to make way to power. Hardly can this be shrouded with any amount of opacity.

## The apprehension of the minority community

So are the genuine Indian citizens belonging to the minority community so panicky as they have horrifying experience of chauvinist savagery. As per instructions of the Election Commission, the voter lists prepared after house to house scrutiny did not include the names of genuine voters as the authority expressed "doubt" about the validity of their citizenship. People applied for inclusion of names filling the form 6, a mockery of hearing was conducted, but the officers were not satisfied even though the people deposed with all valid documents. Being guided by the chauvinists, they were shown as 'doubtful' citizens. In this manner more than three lac and a half names remained in the voter's list as doubtful citizens who have been deprived of voting rights. It was told that all these cases would be sent to the tribunals. But more than five years

have passed, the matter still remains hanging. It is now evident that through this route, they would be singled out as doubtful voters and would be banned for ever from exercising their legitimate voting right as bonafide citizens of India.

All these make the motive of the BJP led Central government behind the move to repeal the IMDT Act amply clear. A sinister design is working behind. Being emboldened by this move all the chauvinist forces of Assam have become active again to create a situation that prevailed during the Assam movement. The bourgeois press is playing the same role as they had during the Assam movement. It appears as if all these papers are the organs of the chauvinists. When all sections of the people irrespective of language, caste and religion gradually started to unite to develop movement against the ruthless exploitation, poverty, unprecedented price rise, enhancement of all sorts of tariffs, continuous shifting of burden of the crisis of the capitalist system on the shoulder of the common people, the chauvinists are again vitiating the atmosphere with communal hatred and thus striking at the very root of democratic movement. Need of the hour is to free the people from all sorts of pernicious ideas of chauvinist and communal forces and to expose their real design.

## Concrete 4-point proposal of our party to resolve the tangle

Here it may be noted that our party during the Assam movement, sensing the genuine aspiration of all sections of the people put forward a four point formula which contained the following proposals :

1. All possible steps to keep the international frontier free from the danger of fresh infiltration.
2. Amendment of constitution or adoption of a special resolution by the Parliament so as to make the present official language status of Assamese language permanent, without in any way linking it with the change in the pattern of population and keeping intact the constitutional rights presently being enjoyed by the linguistic minorities, large or small.
3. A package programme for setting up of major industries in

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# Disruption of People's Unity Serves Exploiting Rulers

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the state with a view to dealing with the problem of mounting unemployment.

4. Identification and deportation of genuine foreign nationals through judicial process keeping in mind human consideration, taking 1971 as cut-off year.

All sections of the people including the Assamese speaking people did warmly welcome these proposals and appreciated the approach. The Government of India and the agitators were quite aware of these proposals but sought to ignore them with an ulterior motive to keep the Assam problem alive and derive maximum political benefit out of it.

## The so-called apprehension of Assamese language and culture dying out

In this connection, there is an important point that needs mention and explanation. While sponsoring the Assam movement, the AASU precipitated an apprehension in the minds of the Assamese speaking people that if there was 'unabated influx of outsiders (meaning people coming to Assam from the rest of the country) and of the foreign nationals' (which in reality included several lakhs of Bengali speaking immigrant Muslims, who were not at all foreigners but very much Indian by birth), Assamese speaking people would surely be losing their socio-cultural identity, they would be outnumbered by these 'outsiders and foreign nationals' and in this process lose their political power. They went on saying that the international border with Bangladesh was open, thousands of infiltrators were entering the state everyday with the ulterior motive of annexing Assam to Bangladesh, that a conspiracy was afoot to create 'Greater Bengal' annexing Assam to it. Exposing the hollowness of this argument, our party has been consistently impressing upon the Assamese speaking people that whenever a culture comes in contact with other cultural varieties, it becomes enriched, more beautiful, more colourful. For example, India as a country of "unity among diversities", witnessed blossoming of various cultures of different nationalities and segments of people through the process of intercourse and exchange among their respective cultures. This intermix

has not destroyed any of the cultures but helped each other to enrich and be enriched. People, left to themselves, never destroy each other's culture. It is the exploiting class in a class-divided society and its protectors who hatches conspiracy to strike at the root of flourishing of healthy cultural thoughts lest that nourishes the human mind to move along the right course of social evolution and progress and thus pose a threat to their exploitative class rule.

As regards the question of the future of the Assamese language, our party has been stressing the fact that the Assamese language being the main modern language in the North-East, can never die out. On the contrary, enjoying people's love and affection and with persistent endeavour of the Assamese speaking people, it is bound to flourish and attain new heights.

Coming to the question of the orchestrated campaign that the Assamese people are going to lose political power, our party, time and again, stressed the fact that in a class-divided society, the question of political power is inextricably linked with the class. In a capitalist society like ours which is divided between the exploiting capitalist class and the millions of oppressed, exploited people of workers, peasants and other sections of the toiling masses, the state and political power for obvious reasons are in the hands of the ruling capitalists. Unless the ruling capitalist class is overthrown from the state and political power by way of successful accomplishment of anti-capitalist revolution, political power cannot get transferred to the people. Who does not know that more crisis-ridden is the capitalist class, more ruthless is its attack on the people including progressive curtailment of whatever limited rights and liberties the people enjoy within the system. Everyday in our country, we find such hard earned democratic rights being snatched away from the people. All the language-speaking people from all the states are victims of this gradual erosion of power to exercise legitimate rights. There is no exception to this. In a capitalist set up, who would grant political power to the people and for what? The question has to be viewed and understood in this backdrop.

This being the reality, if anyone spreads a fear-psychosis among a

particular linguistic group that they would be dispossessed of political power, would it not amount to shielding the exploitative capitalist system, the root cause of all evils, and thus, knowingly or unknowingly, serving the class interest of the exploiting capitalist class?

There is one more angle to the issue. Irrespective of the state power having been usurped by the Indian national bourgeoisie after the British imperialists were forced to quit India in the face of the glorious freedom struggle of the people, it is a fact that in the culmination of the Indian freedom movement and as a reflection of the collective will and firm unity of the people belonging to different nationalities and sub-nationalities subjugated under foreign domination, there did emerge an Indian nation, albeit, with some inherent weaknesses. The various nationalities and sub-nationalities, people speaking different languages and professing different religious faiths, tribals, non-tribals all broke open their shackles and voluntarily plunged into freedom movement thereby giving birth to a new awareness, a new entity which came to be known as Indian nationhood. They were at the same time divided into conflicting classes — the exploiting national bourgeoisie and the exploited toiling millions.

This being the case, can we speak in a mutually exclusive sense, political power of the Assamese speaking people, the Bengali speaking people or the Oriya speaking people, so on and so forth, which invariably leads to conflicting situation in which one section of the oppressed people is pitted against another section of the oppressed people by the bourgeois rulers under one pretext or the other? If every such community comes to be regarded as separate entity in terms of political power, what remains of the struggle of the Indian people to gain real power through revolutionary overthrow of the ruling capitalist class? Viewing the issue in another way, if every community living in a single country, because of having different religions and speaking different languages begins to consider itself a separate entity, what happens to the Indian national entity of each of them, which freedom fighters, belonging to all communities living in British India gave birth to

through their blood and toil?

United democratic mass movement — sole deterrent to stall chauvinist machination

Our party firmly holds the opinion that our country is a multilingual state and there is only one nation divided into two antagonistic classes — the capitalist class and the exploited common people. The question of emancipation of the people from all sorts of exploitation — economic, political, linguistic, cultural lies in conducting the struggle of the common people against the ruling capitalist class and the capitalist system. Contrary to this correct contention, the CPI and the CPI(M) who regard India as a multinational state contributed much in making the confusion confounded. As a matter of fact these two parties had very little to differ with the theoretical contention of the chauvinists and that is why a combined ideological struggle against the Assam agitators could not be developed. And for such a position, these two parties, could combine with the AGP, the forces of the Assam movement in the formation of government in Assam.

We observe with deep concern that when today all the chauvinist forces are again mounting tension centering round the repeal of the IMDT Act, all the bourgeois parties are also toeing the line of these forces. The Congress(I) who poses before the minorities as their protector is playing a most dubious role as it had played in the past. Their MLAs belonging to the minority community are trying to assure the minority people that they would oppose repeal of the Act and there is nothing to worry about. But the fact remains that they have not opposed the bill at the introductory stage, no protest has been voiced. Rather their leader Mr. Pranab Mukherjee is heading the committee to finally decide on the issue. In fact, they are maintaining a secret relationship with the chauvinist forces and that is why they have not issued any statement to the press and speaking in an evading language. They want to reap election benefits in either way out of this complicated situation.

But what is worrying is that even the left democratic forces including the CPI and the CPI(M) instead of

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## Warm felicitation to respected Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee

January 1, 2004, bore witness to a commendable effort on part of the students to felicitate an outstanding representative of the teaching community as well as a man possessing lofty human values, Prof. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, the internationally renowned scientist and educationist on the occasion of his attaining the age of ninety. The All India Democratic Students Organization (AIDSO) arranged to offer felicitation to professor Mukherjee as much for what he achieved in course of his service life, as for what he is, what he stands for. Former Vice-chancellor of Calcutta and Kalyani Universities, Dr. Sushil Mukherjee is one among the few personalities of the outgoing generation who dedicated themselves to the noble profession of teaching and at the same time, offered service in the greater sphere of social life, particularly on issues affecting the life of common people.

Among the distinguished guests present at the gathering assembled at the historical Calcutta University Institute Hall were Dr. Krishna Kamini Rohatgi Mukherjee, wife of Dr. Mukherjee, Dr. Manindra Mohan Chakraborty, ex-Vice-chancellor, Jadavpur University, Prof. Tarak Mohan Das, eminent scientist, Sri Samar Bagchi, ex-Director, BITM, Prof. Sunanda Sanyal, Prof. Niranjana Prodhana, Prof. Jyoti Sen, Comrade Dipankar Roy, General Secretary, All India Save Education Committee and Comrade Manik Mukherjee, an eminent mass leader and Vice-president, All India Anti-Imperialist Forum.

The messages sent by the former Justice of Supreme Court, V. R.

Krishna Iyer, the freedom fighter from Karnataka, Prof. Doriaswamy, the former Director of National Library Prof. Rabindra Kumar Dasgupta, renowned scientist Dr. Ashima Chatterjee, eminent poet Nirendra Nath Chakraborty, Dr. Sushila Khan, former Principal, Raja Narendra Lal Women's College — were vibrant with appreciation and good wishes for the educationist.

A written felicitation address of honour was read out by Comrade Debashis Roy, General Secretary, AIDSO reflecting the high esteem in which Dr. Mukherjee was held by the gathering, highlighting his achievements and personal qualities, his commitment to social progress and the common people.

Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Vice-president of the All India Anti-Imperialist Forum, presented a commemorative silver plaque to Dr. Mukherjee who happens to be the General Secretary of the Forum.

Those present included Dr. Mukherjee's students, teachers and professors of schools, colleges and universities, persons associated with scientific research centres who all congratulated the AIDSO for organizing the meeting.

Retired professor of Presidency College, Dr. Gourishankar Ghatak, presided.

At the outset, Comrade

Mohiuddin Mannan, Secretary, State Committee, AIDSO reminded the audience of the inspiring words Dr. Mukherjee had said years back: "It is the students and youths among my friends who will lead the country from darkness to light," and also, "Though my days are numbered, I am hopeful on seeing you all."



A section of the audience at the felicitation meeting

Prof. Manindra Mohan Chakraborty paid tribute to Dr. Sushil Mukherjee for his strength of mind as well as for the broadness of his outlook. Prof. Tarak Mohan Das pointed out that Dr. Mukherjee never gave in to political pressure. Comrade Dipankar Roy highlighted the warmth of feeling and affection which he experienced in direct contact with Dr. Mukherjee, as also the vastness of his knowledge and depth of character. Shri Samar Bagchi, said that whenever Dr. Sushil Mukherjee was confronted with any crisis or social injustice, he never failed to actively strive for its

eradication or redressal. Prof. Sunanda Sanyal opined that Prof. Mukherjee's name would be memorable in the history of education. He set an inspiring example in the movement for the reintroduction of English at the primary stage and for starting the Scholarship Examination through

setting up the Primary Education Development Board in West Bengal. Dr. Mukherjee was rightly termed in his message by R. K. Dasgupta as the last independent-minded Vice-chancellor of the Calcutta University. Among the speakers was Comrade Manik Mukherjee, who emphasized that Prof. Mukherjee had acquired degrees not for pedantic purpose, but his devoted engagement in science and education was directed towards the true advancement of the country, in the interest of the exploited people. Also, being a man of culture, he

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## MSS Convention in Gujarat

The Gujarat unit of All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS) organized a state level women's convention on 6th January, 2004 at Vadodara in the Akota area. A good number of delegates from Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Surat including students, working women and housewives attended the convention.

In the first session Comrade Meenakshi Joshi spoke at length about the philosophical orientation, aims and objectives of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan. Comrade Bharti Parmar spoke about the need of a revolutionary

organization to carry forward the historic task of social reform movement and the significance of the individual role in this process.

Comrade Kusum Chauhan spoke about the different dimensions of woman's exploitation in the present society, both within the home and in the workplace and the need to struggle for woman's dignity which can come about only by a correct revolutionary organization.

The main speaker of the convention Comrade Shyamali Mukherjee, member, All India Committee (AIMSS), by citing incidents and examples gave a

penetrating insight into the plight of woman in the present society.

She pointed out, it is the crisis of capitalism which is responsible for an all out attack on humanity in general and women in particular. She stressed the necessity for women to be politically conscious and equipped to fight for their rights. By quoting Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, she stressed that women's emancipation cannot be gifted but women will have to struggle for it and in this struggle woman and womanhood will have to attain higher culture and ethical standard. She made an all out appeal to make the All India Women's conference at Cuttack a huge success.

Comrade Dwarikanath Rath, Secretary, State organizing committee SUCI, said that women are victim of dual exploitation, one by the capitalist system and the other by the patriarchal society and that it is necessary for women to feel and retain anger against the same.

Ms. Nainaben Shah also spoke.

A strong state level twelve member working committee was formed unanimously which includes Comrade Daminiben Shah, Meenakshiben Joshi, Bharatiben Parmar, Ranitaben Nagar, Bhavikaben Shah, Leelaben Gohil, Karunaben Patel, Nainaben Shah, Manorama Singh, Vasantidevi Maurya, Zhunu Sahu, Rimmiben Vaghela.

# Aim of my life was to do something for the country through education — Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee in felicitation meeting

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actively participated in the movements for study and deliberations upon the lives of great personalities of the past which Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had inspired us to take up, and this drew him nearer to us. Comrade Mukherjee called upon students not just to read the books written by Dr. Mukherjee but also to take lessons by studying his life.

To mark this occasion, a compilation of the writings and speeches of Dr. Sushil Mukherjee in connection with different programmes organized by the AIDS0 was published.

It was now the turn of Dr. Sushil Mukherjee himself to address the gathering. The text of his speech is given below.

In conclusion, at the call of the president Prof. Ghatak, the audience rose up in a standing ovation to Dr. Mukherjee.

## Speech of

Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee

I do not know exactly what I should say in this meeting. Your love, respect and good wishes have been expressed through all that have been said at length. I have been thinking: am I the Sushil Mukherjee you have been speaking about for so long? I was not aware that so much could be said about me. I have been trying to recognize myself through all these. I have been thinking: could I really become like the person you have been speaking about, I would have considered myself blessed indeed! I am overwhelmed with your deep affection and good wishes. Perhaps anyone would have been. And I admit that I am embarrassed too. How to speak to you about myself?

I had never contemplated joining the freedom movement. In childhood, I studied in a school in my village Kulgadi in Barisal district — now in Bangladesh. I held in the highest esteem, first my father and then the teachers of my school. As if, I tried to discover myself in them. I do not know whether they were very learned or not. Neither had I the capacity nor inclination to contemplate about this. Not only their love and affection, but their effort to mould us up as true men

too, inspired me and I resolved to become a teacher. Later in my life, I had the opportunity of acquiring dignified positions in other walks of life but I left those behind, because I felt that if we could build up the nation through teaching, then that would be a real achievement. I found what we call 'role models' in the teachers of my student life. Even today, they are living and vivid in my memory. I remember everything about them, I recollect their teachings. Hence, my mission became to spend my life in teaching.

Again, many among the freedom fighters used to move about in the countryside. They used to tell us about the freedom movement. I saw many of them — they used to lead a simple life, they were all educated. We could not understand everything they said, but were moved with the emotion: why don't we also join the freedom movement?

You all must have heard about Aswini Kumar Datta, a renowned personality of Barisal at that time. We listened to his talks. Listening, I felt that his was a truly rich and worthwhile life. I tried to follow him. On the other hand, there was Satin Sen. Ultimately, he breathed his last in Bangladesh itself, under imprisonment. We learnt about him too. He was a believer in armed struggle. These agitated our minds as we grew up. But I felt that the best service I could offer the people was through teaching.

Aswini Kumar Datta, too, believed that education was the first priority. He founded a college named after his father, which was to gain much reputation. Many scholars passed out of that institution. Also, he established a school for girls. He wanted to lay stress on education in the first, preparatory stage of our lives. That is why, I became so keen about education.

Here, let me say something. All of you have said that I have achieved much, but I do not think so. All have worked together, and I have been one of them. I do not think I possess leadership qualities. But work has brought many persons close to me. Although I am not personally acquainted with all of those assembled here today, yet I know them. It is a great honour for me to

be associated with such an organization. In this, I consider myself fortunate.

I feel embarrassed to have to repeatedly say "I", "I". I am not everything. Those who are present here, have guided me. Whatever you consider to be my achievements —

none of these was work by me alone. I do not claim credit for it, nor would it be the right thing to do so. All these have been collective effort, could not have been done unless all had worked together.

In the early phase of freedom movement, we came across many instances of higher human qualities personified. In post-independence period, however, we have witnessed that the standard has fallen down. You know well many examples of this, I need not exaggerate.

I have felt that unless we can protect ourselves from such degradation, perhaps we cannot claim ourselves to be true human beings. We must stand up against this. I often think, there must have been the necessity to put up such resistance. Had we not conducted struggle to resist the evil, it would not have been possible for us to effect awakening of human qualities and values, character-building.

When I first came to Calcutta, I got to know many leftist friends. I still recollect that I read Das Kapital by Marx in the original German language. I used to know German more or less well then. My head bows down in veneration. What a noble man was Marx! Yet, those who call themselves Marxists today, are far apart from Marxism, they are Marxists noway. Rather, among the political parties that exist in the country, I must acknowledge that I have not come across any like the SUCI. They are not after grabbing power. They want to achieve the right for the people to lead a life worthy of man. That is why, I have come to love this party and shall not hesitate even to lay down my life for it.

We must resist the degeneration



Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee speaking on the occasion

that has set in in the post-independence period. There is no other way out. We witness the activities of the political parties whose politics stem from lust for power. Corruption is rampant, human values are discarded. Neither can they mould true men nor are they trying to do so. It is we who have to resist this degeneration. And I think, yours is the only organized party that can dedicate itself to this mission and advance towards its realization.

I shall remain ever grateful to you for inviting me, enabling me to appear before you, and honouring me. I have received your love and affection, cooperation and good wishes. It is you who have strengthened me from all sides, ennobling me. That is why, today's programme will live in my memory as long as I live. I have read the writings of Shibdas Ghosh, who is the guide, the fountainhead of inspiration of the SUCI, and they hold a completely special kind of appeal for me. That is why, I cannot but admit that I am bound up in an inextricable bond with the SUCI, and if ever this bond is broken, it would be a matter of profound, life-long grief for me.

You have given me many gifts. These express your affection, sympathy and good wishes for me. I fervently wish that I can be with you in your activities, that I am never reluctant to take up any responsibility in this, that my mind is ever receptive to you. Here I end my short speech, once more expressing my love and good wishes for you.

[The message of Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer will be published in the next issue.]



# BJP's limitless trickery upon the common people

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By way of cut in excise duty, customs, reduction in tariff and tax announced by the government, the fare on air travel, cost of television, fridge, washing machine, computer, VCR, VCD and cell phone will be reduced. Who will be beneficiaries from these reductions? Will the 800 million poor most of whom can hardly afford two square meals a day benefit from this? Will even a child believe it? These sops are absolutely for the rich people. For the poor there is increase in diesel and petrol price, which has been effected twice within one month and with 14% central tax being imposed on this price increase, thousands of crores of rupees are being exacted from the poor. Who does not know that due to this hike in cost of fuel, the transport fares have increased, irrigation has become costlier, in fact, cost of all the commodities and services has been pushed upward for the poor? Further, through Electricity Bill 2003, this BJP-led central government has ensured 48% hike in electricity charges which will have to borne by the poor millions. The prices of fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, irrigation necessary for cultivation are on constant rise. The poor farmers are badly affected by this. Besides, at the time of harvest the rich peasants, the Agro multinationals, agricultural capitalists, rural bourgeoisie, the mill owners in connivance with the government administration conspire to drop the price of the produces and force the farmers into distress sale. Unable to recover even their production cost, the poor farmers have been committing suicide in hundreds. Has the government done anything to guarantee a fair price of the commodities produced through hard labour by these hapless peasants in the present 'mini budget'? The answer is an emphatic 'NO' as the BJP-led NDA itself is very much a party to this conspiracy. Has this 'budget' done anything against the persistent closures of industries, against retrenchment, against joblessness? There are 370 millions of unorganized workers who have no job security. And these are the actual problems of the 800 million people. What this budget has done about these problems? Nothing. Rather, it should be noted, the liability of this huge amount of sops

given to the rich will be imposed on the poor through more price rise, more taxation, stopping recruitment in government sector, or forcing the workers to render service on contract basis for a pittance, drastically curtailing welfare budgets in education, health etc., handing over the government's profitable concerns to the private owners and so on.

For over a period, the BJP has been chanting a slogan of 'Bharat Uday' (resurgence of India) through media, both printed and electronic, saying that during their 'good governance', there has been economic vikash (development). For this the followers of the prime minister have rechristened Vajpayee as 'Vikash Purush'. How is this vikash or development? The government claims that the GDP (gross domestic product) has increased by 8.4%. But how many know the mystery behind such figures for rate of development? What are the parameters guiding such 'economic development'? Actually, the government has changed the parameters to estimate the GDP. What are these? In the present formula, repayable debt, returnable savings capital and the speculative share prices which are sure to dwindle in a few days, are all shown as income. Thus what is actually liability is shown here as income to boost up the GDP. Can this be called economic development worth its name? If there had really been economic development, the income of the poor would have risen with the expansion of trade, industry and agriculture, their employment opportunities would have been enhanced. Is it happening in their so-called economic development scheme? Even a liar would be ashamed to affirm it. Rather, just the opposite is the reality. People's economic plight is steadily worsening. So this 'vikash' is the 'vikash' of the owners' profits, and aggravation of the distress of the poor.

In Bombay, the share-market has crossed the mark of 6000 sensex. Last year, the share-prices jumped up by 73%. As a result, while the number of companies owning assets of rupees one billion were 28 in 2002, it jumped to 51. This sudden inflated share value has resulted in higher price on paper for the same assets. Although this

stimulation in share market has pushed up the figure for 'development', its reasons are yet unknown to the market experts. Is there any Harshad Mehta or Ketan Parekh-like brain behind this game of speculation? However, smelling a high rate of speculative profit, the foreign investors too have made a beeline for the share market. In 2003 alone, foreign capital to the tune of seven billion dollars, an all-time record amount, flowed into the Indian share market. No new industry was set up with this money, of course. Only the shares of the existing industries have been transferred. This has resulted in saving of a good amount of foreign exchange which the BJP government has shown as 'income'. But there is no socio-economic commitment of this parasitic finance capital devoid of any link to industry. Lenin emphasized this speculative character of this usurious capital in the era of imperialism. Such speculative capital roams from one place to another for securing highest profit. When the process of flight of capital begins, the so-called vikash collapses like a pack of cards. This occurred in many a country in the past.

This bullish share market has to be kept stimulated artificially. Otherwise, BJP's boasting balloon would be deflated ridiculously. BJP leadership is aware that this unnatural stimulation in share-market cannot last long. Any moment it can go down to the abyss. What they are trying is to keep up this stimulating condition at least up to the elections. It is their compulsion. Hence this continuous propaganda about GDP growth, swelling of foreign exchange reserve, economic development etc., in order to retain the confidence of the investors in share market as well as to keep the flow of investment continuing.

To achieve this, the BJP government has even allowed the investors and speculators in the share market to draw half the amount of their investment from the banks as loan. In this way, the BJP has opened the door of banking capital, the hard-earned deposits of the people, to the share-brokers and speculators for investment in the share-market in the interest of their election politics.

Be that as it may, this massive duty and tax relief indicates the

crisis of India's capitalist economy, not its strength. The prices of consumer durables which are luxuries to the poor and hence remain unsold because of recession, have been slashed down by way of reduction in duties and customs to make them marketable with the help of the government among the rich and upper middle class people. Thus, although the media are projecting this 'mini budget' as a middle class budget, its real object is to protect the interest of monopoly capital, both Indian and foreign, by decreasing the price of the articles used by the rich and the upper middle class.

At such doling out of huge subsidies and subventions to the rich avoiding any debate or discussion in the House when spate of criticism overtook the BJP, the NDA government announced the next day, formation of a Rs. 50,000 crore fund for 'development' of agricultural infrastructure professedly to lend money to the peasants, for Atal Griha Nirman Yojna, and loan to small-scale and cottage industries, etc., as a diversionary tactic. But until now only the announcement stands, no sign of allotment is visible. And only the BJP ministers know how they would manage to allocate this huge fund with high budget deficits running higher and higher. To appease the senior citizens mainly depending on interest income from their savings and now in a most distressed condition for curtailing interest rate rapidly, the government has announced release of a new bond — Dada-Dadi Bond — with 2 percent higher interest, that is at the rate of 8 percent which is nothing but a bluff. For, small savings in post office MIS already yields the same rate of interest with additional bonus. But the retired aged people need higher interest in monthly income scheme now subjected to a marginalized rate of interest. Thus, actually this new bond is only for propaganda purpose in the coming elections but actually to no avail of the millions of already economically shattered retired and forcibly retired (through VRS etc.) people.

The fate of agriculture and home-building loan to rural masses is known enough to all since the Congress rule. The lion's share of such high-sounding yojanas

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On the occasion of 50th anniversary of AIDS the Karnataka State Committee of the organization organized a 'Students' Educational-Cultural Festival' on and from 28th to 30th December, 2003 in Bangalore. (Left) Veteran freedom fighter H. S. Doreswamy is seen inaugurating the festival. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, member, Central Committee, SUCI addressing the gathering and (below) a portion of students' gathering.

# IMDT Act

Contd. from page 4

coming out and speaking against this sinister design, are posing themselves as neutral. What does this neutrality actually mean? The CPI(M) is saying that the Act is discriminatory and it has not been wise in putting the burden of proof of nationality on the prosecution. They hold that notwithstanding some clauses needing amendment, the Act may not be repealed. It is akin to say that the contention of the chauvinists does have a basis. Now if all such clauses are removed from the Act, then what remains of the Act? It turns out to be Foreigner's Act 1946, as demanded by ASSU and others.

These being the position of the so-called left democratic forces, the situation is really grave. All the minority communities are sensing danger and find no one to stand by their side. It is quite natural that deep anxiety and agony is haunting their mind. But they should understand that it is not an attack on them alone, it is an attack against the democratic forces and democratic movement of all sections of the common people. Hence counter-reaction will not solve the problem, rather, will strengthen the hands of the reactionaries. They should unite with all the democratic forces and come forward unitedly to resist this attack by building up strong democratic movement. We urge upon all the democratic forces of Assam as well as of the whole country to come forward to foil the sinister design of the BJP, the AGP, the AASU and other chauvinist and parochial forces.

# BJP's Pre-election Hoax

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christened with the name of Nehru, Indira, Rajiv and now Atal, et al and others goes to the pockets of the rich peasants and the rural gentry and the poor millions there cannot afford to avail of such loans due to their perpetual poverty and incapacity to repay continuously augmented by crop failure due to flood and drought or fall of prices of their agricultural produces in the market manipulated by the big landholders, hoarders, big businessmen and companies dealing with foodgrains and above all, the

money lenders. The Atal Griha Nirman Yojna also is thus nothing but a hoax to the rural poor and a bonanza to the rich counterparts in the villages.

The cunning BJP leadership is trying to kill two birds with one stone through deception and falsehood. On the one hand, they are giving huge benefits to the rich and, on the other, are projecting the same as gift to the middle class. Such cleverness on the part of ruling bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties on the eve of election is very much common. The Congress, the Janata or the CPI(M)-backed UF governments would do the same if they were in power. But these opposition parties are showily decrying this practice of the BJP most vociferously which is also nothing but a concomitant game of the virtually two-party bourgeois parliamentary system. When these very parties are saddled in power at the Centre or in a State they resort to same kind of deception to the common people in the interest of election gain and decry or stage show of movement against such political depravity leading to capture of governmental gaddi hoodwinking the common people and at the same time to remain in good book of the ruling bourgeois

class frustrating the real movement of the masses. The pseudo-left parties like the CPI(M), etc. and the regional bourgeois parties are also no exception to this nasty game.

So, the toiling people must see through this game, they must not be misled by the war of words of the parties in power and the Opposition and realize that people's mighty movement developed on correct base political line alone can defeat the attack of the government. They have to compel the government to backtrack from such deceptive anti-people steps and policies by building up alternative power of mass movement.

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Delegate Session :

29th and 30th January, 2004 Barabati Stadium

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE

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