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SARDAR SAROVAR DAM ON RIVER NARMADA

The pertinent questions

With vast areas of Saurashtra, Kutch and Northern side being drought-prone, Gujarat is a state where scarcity of water has all along been acute. Not only irrigation even drinking water has been a problem in many parts of the state. On the other hand, there are certain pockets which suffer from flood as well. To mitigate this, the government under public pressure, decided to construct a number of dams on the river Narmada and its tributaries in late eighties. Accordingly, Narmada Valley Corporation was set up and a massive plan of erecting 30 large, 135 medium, 3,000 small and 2 mega dams along the 1,312 kms stretch was taken up. One of these mega dams is Sardar Sarovar, the other being Narmada Sarovar. Except Sardar Sarovar which is located in Gujarat, all other dam sites are in Madhya Pradesh.

SUCI's stand at that time and concrete proposal

Our party at that time pressed for the vital demand of proper rehabilitation of the families to be displaced from the site of the dam. By rehabilitation, we did not

mean only a piece of land to the displaced families but proper economic rehabilitation of the affected people as well as their progenies. We were of the firm opinion that the government should not proceed with the Project without resolving all the human and environmental issues mainly resettlement of the evacuees. At the same time, we gave a concrete proposal to tackle the acute problem of periodic droughts afflicting the Kutch and Saurashtra regions. While working among the drought-affected areas of Gujarat in 1985, our party took initiative in forming a "Dushkal Pratirodh Samiti" (Drought Prevention Committee) to submit to the government various demands in this regard. One of our demands was that since it might take around 20 years to operationalize the Sardar Sarovar Dam, let there be interim construction of overhead or underwater pipeline covering a distance of around 20 km across the Gulf of Cambay, from Dahej (near Surat) to Ghogha (near Bhavnagar) to supply Narmada water to Saurashtra. This demand in the form of a proposal, formulated after

obtaining views and opinions of eminent persons and experts, received wide acclamation in all quarters and noted personalities like late Uma Shankar Joshi and others signed an Open Letter to the then Gujarat chief minister to implement the same. Though the state government accepted the proposal as economic and viable, there was no effort on its part to implement the same. As everyone knows, the hapless people of Saurashtra and Kutch went on reeling under several bouts of acute drought since then but except the blue-print of the proposed mega dam, the government had no other carrot to offer them. A lot of euphoria was created at that time over this project which was posed as 'Life line of Gujarat and the then Congress-led ministry left no stone unturned to generate a kind of jingoism over the project to brighten poll prospects. In fact, whoever wanted to raise the very pertinent issue of resettlement and rehabilitation of the oustees before the Project actually took off, was branded anti-Gujarat, meted out worst kind of repression. The government and the parties of the establishment steered the whole episode in such a way as to muzzle the voice of genuine dissent on the question of rehabilitation and create an artificial polarization among the people. Though many other groups and organizations including Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) activists led by Medha Patkar also voiced the demand of resettlement of the affected persons, they, particularly NBA campaigned in such a way as to negate the very necessity of the dam. Hence, they were posed before the Gujarat people as anti-dam and the whole issue was given a twist. While we strongly

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SUCI flays sinister move of the Congress-led central government to divide people over reservation and calls for united movement to resist it

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on May 17, 2006 strongly condemned the way the Congress-led UPA government is brutally repressing the students agitating against its proposed move to provide 27 per cent reservation for OBCs in central universities, medical colleges, IITs and IIMs. Comrade Mukherjee firmly opined that apart from being sinisterly designed to reap electoral benefits, it is a subtle and calculated move to, by dividing students and teachers in terms of caste and community, scuttle the possibility of the movements taking place in the different parts of the country in protest against the most reprehensible policy of curtailment, privatization and commercialization of education to develop into a massive nationwide movement.

Severely denouncing this ill-conceived move of the Congress-led government to impose reservation in higher education, and expressing strong opinion against the prevailing trend of either supporting or opposing reservation blindly, Comrade Mukherjee emphasized that the need of the hour is to build up a powerful united movement throughout the country to inflict a crushing defeat to the government's policy of not only curtailment of education but also of its malafide intention to withdraw itself from the arena of education and hand it over completely to the private

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May Day rally and meeting was organized by UTUC-LS, Bellary District Organizing Committee on May 1. Above is a view of the rally on a main street of the town. In the meeting Comrade K. Somashekhar, Secretary, UTUC-LS Karnataka State Committee called upon the workers to build up movement against policies of globalization-liberalization-privatization and also against amendments made in ID Act, legalization of contract workers etc.

People's issues ought to be addressed

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protested oppression and harassment of all the groups upholding the demand of rehabilitation, we never subscribed to any such anti-dam stand. We always held that government must have a political will to solve the water problem of the state and adopt a correct policy or undertake a viable project after obtaining considered views and opinions of all experts, environmentalists, eminent personalities, political parties and common people and trying to arrive at a consensus with the interest of the toiling masses uppermost in the mind.

NCA's claim

NCA claimed that the main objective of the dam was to check flood in the various parts of the three states and provide irrigation water to the drought-prone areas like Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat as well as parts of Rajasthan. Subsequently, it was added that drinking water would also be supplied from the dam. NCA also claimed that once the dam was completed, irrigation water would be made available through a network of 75,000 km long canal to 17.92 lakh hectares of land in Gujarat and 73,000 hectares in Rajasthan. It would generate 1450 megawatt of electricity. 210 villages as well as the city of Bharuch in Gujarat would be saved from the fury of flood. 135 cities and 8252 villages will get drinking water.

What NCA did not come out with at that time was that 14,000 hectares of forest and habitation would be submerged under this 214 km long 37,000 hectares wide Sardar Sarovar water. 11,318 hectares of arable land would be lost, 355 villages would be extinct and above all around 10 lakh people in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh would be displaced needing proper rehabilitation.

The work of the main dam commenced in 1987. In 1994, a public interest litigation challenging feasibility of the project was filed in the Supreme Court and the work was suspended. In 1999, Supreme Court allowed the work to resume and set up an elaborate system to address two major concerns: rehabilitation of the oustees in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan and possible environmental damages. It also vested the authority of clearing the height of the dam in stages from 90 to 136 meters with an

inter-disciplinary mechanism having NCA at the apex and mandated that project work and resettlement of affected persons should move in tandem.

Current status of the Project

So far, 356 km out of proposed 458 km long main canal has been dug while only 11,500 km against proposed 86,000 km of branch canal work has been completed. Similarly, practically nothing has been done in drought-prone North Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch and barely 50% work is over in the districts of Narmada, Bharuch, Vadodara, Gandhinagar, Kheda and Panchmahal adjoining the dam site. The government is claiming to have constructed 50,000 check dams but people know that most of them are in paper and the erected ones are absolutely dry. Similar is the condition of 72 dams of the states and another 31 are about to be dried leaving 84 others to follow the suit in no time. If this is the pace of work, when will the 8252 villages and 135 cities get drinking water, 17.92 lakh hectares of land will be irrigated?

In fact, there is acute shortage of drinking water in Saurashtra, Kutch and North Gujarat. Water tankers are not reaching most of the villages. Some pipelines constructed to deport Narmada water are not having even a drop of it. But the BJP state government under Modi is taking no real initiative in mitigating the hardship. Rather, as the saying goes, it is pouring water on a drowning mouth. In fact, the government is now levying heavy dose of tax on the people through panchayats and local administrations for getting water. Of late, there is 500 to 1000% hike in water tax. Still there is no supply of required water. Not only this. The government is making a mockery of the distress of the water-starved people by pumping Narmada water into Sabarmati and other rivers for religious celebrations and for running water amusement parks. While this is the reality, Modi is busy in brightening his poll prospects by selling 'vibrant Gujarat' dream and fomenting Gujarat chauvinism over the Narmada dam project.

Resurgence of the issue

However, the situation took a new turn when on March 8, NCA announced that the height of the dam would be raised further from 110.64 metres to 121.92 metres. This is the sixth time that the NCA has decided

to increase the height of the dam since 1995. Raising the height, as is known to everyone, would entail inundation of more areas in the downstream and hence further swell the number of Project-Affected Persons (PAPs). But the imperative task of rehabilitation of the evacuees has not only been lagging in number but has also been seriously deficient in terms of conformity with the conditions stipulated earlier by the Supreme Court. Pending proper rehabilitation of these oustees, if there is further raising of the dam height by about 11 meters, another 35,000 families would lose their habitations and add to the list of PAPs. activists led by Medha Patkar who has been leading a movement for over last two decades in demand of proper resettlement and rehabilitation of the persons displaced on account of this massive construction. NBA swung into action contending that there was serious lapse on the part of both Centre and the concerned state governments in resettling the affected families. Medha Patkar began an indefinite hunger strike from March 29, and NBA filed a suit in the Supreme Court questioning the NCA decision to increase the height till the backlog with respect to resettlement was cleared. The Congress-led central government, guilty as it has been of willful default on the rehabilitation question, tried to appease NBA by mouthing customary assurance of completing the task with due expediency. But NBA maintained that the dam was progressing by "illegal and unacceptable means" and construction needed to be stalled till rehabilitation of the oustees "with land" was completed.

Modi's foil game

When Medha Patkar was on hunger strike and a concern over the glaring lapse in due resettlement of the poor people rendered homeless by the Project was brewing among the right thinking people of the country, Narendra Modi, the most hated arch communal BJP chief minister of Gujarat, sought to give, true to his colour, a parochial twist to the issue without expressing any firm resolve to settle the issue of due rehabilitation or uttering a single word about the concrete measures undertaken so far in this regard. In order to divert attention of the people of Gujarat from the very legitimacy of the demand for proper

resettlement of the displaceds, frustrate the genuine cause of the people, outsmart Medha Patkar, shield the criminal negligence on the part of his government in providing proper rehabilitation of the displaced families and above all to derive electoral mileage riding parochial sentiment, Modi, on the pretext of 'opposing conspiracy to stop work of the dam and thereby harming the interest of the Gujarat people', sat in a counter hunger strike.

Supreme Court ruling

Supreme Court, too, as was found, ruled in favour of continuation of project work but did not deal the question of appropriate rehabilitation of the oustees with the emphasis and importance it did merit. Instead, in its ruling on the NBA petition on April 17, it virtually gave a pass to Modi's hoodwinking stand by allowing the work of the dam to continue. It, however, gave a directive to the central government as well as the Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh governments to report the status of rehabilitation in a week's time and held that "if resettlement and rehabilitation to the unfortunate oustees has not been given in the letter and spirit of the Supreme Court judgments, this court will have no option but to stop the raising of the height." The Court also directed the Centre to ensure completion of rehabilitation of the affected families within 3 months. Till that time, it agreed that the project work including raising of the dam height should continue uninterrupted.

It may be recalled that earlier also the Apex Court, while pronouncing judgments on similar petitions, had observed that any work to increase the height of the dam could be undertaken only if the affected persons were fully rehabilitated and staying the work at the site was "the last resort." "Every displaced family whose more than 25% of agricultural land holding was acquired would be entitled to be allotted irrigable land of its choice to the extent of land acquired subject to the prescribed ceiling with a minimum of two hectares of land and that project-affected families would be allotted a house/plot free of cost" – such was the categorical mandate of the Court. It also directed that 'land for land' rehabilitation of the impacted families must be done six months ahead of effecting any increase in the dam height. But

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Distressing one section to benefit another is no human logic

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unfortunately the Court did not monitor whether and how far the concerned governments and administration were complying with its order. It is alleged that even before resettlement of the persons displaced when the dam height was raised to 85 meters, clearance was given for increasing the height to 90 meters. Thus, there was progressive accumulation in the pendency of the work of resettlement with every subsequent raising of the dam height. It was also disquieting to learn that governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra could not even make land available for rehabilitation of the oustees. Also it is reported that in flagrant violation of the Court mandate, Madhya Pradesh government has been pressurizing the displaced families to accept cash in lieu of land for resettlement. Such a move for obvious reasons has bred rampant corruption. Bribes are being solicited for making such cash disbursements. In this backdrop, the April 17 ruling of the Apex Court is no different, rather a reiteration of its earlier directive. When the governments could not complete the essential task of proper rehabilitation of lakhs of affected persons in so many years, who would believe that the backlog would be wiped off in just 3 months?

However, within hours the Supreme Court passed the order, Medha Patkar broke her 20-day long fast hoping "that the truth would prove itself within the next 15 days". In no time, Narendra Modi, visibly elated at the ruling, also followed the suit. On May 8, the Supreme Court in its subsequent order quashed the prayer of suspending the construction work including raising the dam height but refrained from giving a clear mandate on the rehabilitation issue. It only said that the Prime Minister has constituted a 3-member committee to look into the relief and rehabilitation work of the displaceds and the committee was expected to submit its report by June, 30. A section of the press rightly held that "no matter what the court rules, the truth of failed rehabilitation cannot be hidden. Justice has sadly not won in this case. But the truth, for sure, has." (Shravani Chowdhury – One world South Asia: 13/5/06)

Big Dam vs. Small Dam controversy

As we mentioned earlier that Medha Patkar and NBA, though

agitating over a very legitimate demand of proper resettlement, are making certain observations which are, even if not intended, generating an indiscriminate anti-big dam mentality. Many experts and thinking persons are not at home with such observations. In fact, nurturing an anti-dam mentality is providing a handle to the communal-parochial forces and quarters of vested interest in muddling the whole issue and ratchet up a kind of regional chauvinism. Organizer, the BJP mouthpiece, wrote on 14/5/06 that "the real agenda of the anti-dam groups is not rehabilitation but to stall the dam." Thus, apart from confusions being confounded, various divergent opinions have cropped up inside the country as to whether one really needed a mega dam to tackle the problems of flood, irrigation and drinking water or whether small dams or other alternatives provide a better option. Alongside, some apprehensions have been ventilated about the planning of and claimed benefits from the Sardar Sarovar project. Hence it has become imperative to look into all these aspects from a scientific bent of mind with the interest of the common people kept in the uppermost of considerations.

We first take the debate between big dam and small dam. Those in favour of construction of big dams on major rivers argue that this is the best way to make optimal use of the huge flow of water otherwise going waste, prevent flood, ensure supply of irrigation water to a vast area, provide drinking water and generate substantial electricity through hydel projects. Small dams, local watershed development, water harvesting etc. are, they argue, all complementary measures that can meet only a small part of the requirement and are in no way substitutes for large dams. It is true that large dams have made important contributions to the development of irrigated agriculture, hydro-electric power generation and enhanced domestic as well as drinking water supply. But there are some accompanying social and environmental issues which need to be properly addressed to if a large dam is decided upon as the best option after examining all pros and cons. It is obvious that a large dam would occupy a vast expanse of surrounding land entailing displacement of people and abolition of cultivable soil. So the question of

adequate rehabilitation and gainful resettlement of not only the displaced persons but also their progenies assumes primacy. It cannot be a human logic that to extend benefits to one section of the people, another section has to be uprooted and distressed. So erection of a big dam or for that matter, increasing the height of the dam must be preceded by adequate resettlement of the oustees. Only then the raising of the height of a dam would appear to be highly justified. Otherwise, even if there be a scientific basis for setting up a big dam, it ought to be perceived as inhuman, anti-people and hence liable to being abandoned.

On the other hand, another group of experts feels that large dams have outlived their utility. Indiscriminate deforestation, tilling of land throughout the year, rampant sucking out of underground water through electricity on diesel-run pumps to meet the shortfall of irrigation water are causing severe soil erosion and acute scarcity of ground water. As a result, there is heavy siltation under the rivers disturbing normal flow. So, the rivers are getting filled up to the brim quickly even if the downpour is not that heavy causing devastating flood. Over and above, if large dams are constructed, the problem of siltation aggravates further. Moreover, the upstream silt gets deposited at the bottom of the big reservoirs of larger dams depleting the storage capacity. So when there is excessive rain the reservoirs overflow and the excess water is released to cause more flood. It may be mentioned that when the Damodar Valley Corporation Project was undertaken, eminent scientist Dr Meghnad Saha had sounded caution to this effect and suggested afforestation and such other measures as part of River Soil prevention policy. But since no heed was paid to such timely warning, DVC dams are failing to arrest flood or deliver the desired goods.

Many such experts are of the view that construction of small dams or walls on secured foundations at upper part drainage area or catchments of the tributaries after appropriate geological appraisals provides much better alternative to control downstream flow down the main rivers and hence could better meet the needs of flood-prevention and irrigation. Reflecting on the social and environmental questions involved with big dam projects,

some of these experts feel that they are irremediable. They argue that appropriate rehabilitation of the oustees in the truest sense of the term is never possible as resettlement does not mean only providence of a roof overhead but ensuring recreation of the social conditions and preservation of social bondages besides giving guaranteeing adequate means of livelihood. China, they say, has been, of late, grappling with such problem. A few of them also strongly recommend rain water harvesting as a cost-effective method to mitigate the problem of drinking water.

A balanced scientific approach is needed

While both points of view have their own merits and demerits, it should not happen that both hold so extreme position in either end of the spectrum so as to bury rational judgment underneath. Some of the environmentalists strongly opine that the existing equilibrium of the Nature should not be disturbed and it is advisable to move by adjusting with the Nature. But in being strongly disposed towards such a belief, they perhaps miss a very fundamental aspect. If by disturbance of equilibrium, they mean mindless deforestation, air pollution through ejection of toxic material, burnt oil and harmful chemicals, unplanned, unhygienic dumping of industrial wastes and domestic spoils in the rivers, there is nothing to differ with. Even it is quite justified not to forcibly divert the natural course of a river by unscientific means or from any petty consideration. But if the contention is not to interfere with the Nature at all, then it is no doubt against the very spirit of science and human quest for truth. History of civilization, as we know, is the history of conquest of Nature. Science is the tool in our hand to unravel the laws operative in Nature, the law-governance of Nature. Once we come to know a particular law, its structure, its conditions of operation, then we can act in the process of the law to our advantage, use our knowledge of the law-governance to regulate the Nature. Hence the need to tame the Nature, not destroy it.

So we see that construction of dam on the river is no crime, nor it is criminal to keep the size big. But the prevailing majority opinion is since big dam construction brings in its wake, among other things,

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People's vigilance imperative to foil attempts to frustrate their cause

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considerable human suffering on account of displacement, it is better to avoid it. Yet, if after examining from all angles with a scientific mind, it is found that a big dam is the only alternative in a given condition for the overall development and prosperity of the people at large, then only it should be undertaken as a last resort. The option so chosen should not only be viable but optimal as well. But before finally deciding upon the project, there ought to be a comprehensive planning and scrupulous time-bound execution of a proper rehabilitation scheme of the oustees and proper resolution of all other associated human and environmental problems. There ought to be a general consensus on these vital issues. Both dam construction as well as resettlement of affected persons must proceed apace. Similarly, siltation and other environmental issues are to be handled on a scientific basis to maintain necessary ecological balance and derive desired benefits.

Criticism of faulty planning

Some of these experts through paper articles and other publications are also questioning the very planning process and technical aspects of this mega dam and wondering how much would it actually benefit the Gujarat people. It is reported that originally the quantity of water to be preserved in all reservoirs was estimated around 2.72 crore acre feet. Subsequently, it was slashed by 17%. Gujarat was initially allotted 90 lac acre feet of water. Later it was stated to be an overestimation and concomitantly the axe was destined to fall on the drought-prone Kutch-Saurashtra belt. Report of World Commission of large dams published in the year 2000 observed, inter alia, that in India no network of big reservoir canals could make available more than 40% of the water for use. If that be true, how realistic was the claim of NCA that Sardar Sarovar water after soaking Kutch and Saurashtra would drench the soil of even Rajasthan?

As regards prevention of flood, an expert's opinion is that it warrants a three-tier reservoir structure so that uppermost tier could be earmarked for storing excess rain water. But Sardar Sarovar has only two-tier reservoir. Moreover, the same expert notes that average rainfall per year in the Narmada Valley stretching

around 94,410 sqm of land is 1120 mm per year. In the past, even 25 lac cusec of water has flown down the Narmada river during the monsoon. If that happens and there is a heavy downpour during the last 3-4 days of monsoon, the authority will have no other alternative but to release excess water due to storage constraints. In that event, the city of Bharuch and the agglomerate rural areas will be completely inundated. Even a question is raised that the cost is understated and benefits overstated. The estimated cost of the project is Rs.67,250 crores. In terms of national water policy of 2002, price of dam water should be determined based on project cost. In that event, will the poor peasants and the common people be able to afford using Narmada water or the dam will cater only to the rich, the owners of Vapi-Ahmedabad industrial belt and the rural kulaks? (Kalyan Rudra's article in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, 25.4.06)

A genuine people's issue is being twisted

From the above discussion, it is clear that the issue is not of big dam or small dam but of proper scientific appraisal taking all aspects into consideration and then opting for the most suitable project in the given condition ensuring proper resolution of all ancillary and concomitant problems. Having taken the decision to erect a mega dam and already expending around Rs.20,000 crores of public money, it is never desirable nor advisable to abandon the project midway. What is needed is the speediest and proper execution of the work for extending maximum possible benefits to the common people particularly those exposed to the vagaries of drought. But prior to that, there must be proper rehabilitation and resettlement of all the project affected persons as well as their progenies in a gainful manner. As raising the height of the dam should entail displacement of more people, there cannot be any second opinion but to complete the rehabilitation process before any further structural elevation is undertaken. If need be, the work has to be suspended till the oustees are properly resettled.

But instead of proceeding that way, the turn of events centring round the prospect is taking a different direction. While Narendra Modi is putting the all important issue of due re-settlement of the

affected people in the back burner and instead flaunting petty parochial stand keeping an eye on the next elections, the Congress-led central government is also, notwithstanding customary mouthing of bountiful promises, abetting the stand of the Gujarat government by showing more concern for continuing the dam work including raising of the height. The CPI(M), CPI, as usual, are acquiescing in the move of the Congress though pretending to be pitching for NBA's demand of rehabilitation of the evacuees. On the other hand, various NGOs and some other forces while championing the cause of the PAPs, are conducting the debate of big dam versus small dam in such a manner that, though unfortunate, there is primacy of emotion over reason. Over emphasis on ecological and other associated issues is virtually working towards generation of an anti-dam mentality which is only helping the parochial fuelling.

SUCI's standpoint

We strongly demand that the centre as well as all the state governments should immediately complete proper resettlement and rehabilitation of the people already displaced and guarantee such rehabilitation for all those to face ouster in future before proceeding towards any further increase in the

dam height. We want to be specific that it is not sufficient to allot a piece of land to the project-affected families. The government must ensure that not only the present generation but even their progenies are guaranteed adequate means of earning their livelihood so that in no way there is any harm caused to them. All malpractices and corruption in the name of distribution of relief or arranging for rehabilitation must be handled with a firm hand and stopped immediately. We demand that the governments concerned must seek opinion of experts, eminent citizens, all political parties and the common people so as to decide correct scientific approach towards completion of the remaining work of the dam, properly address all related issues and problems and ensure optimal benefits to the people. At the same time we appeal to the people to remain vigilant against any attempt by the quarters of vested interest to give a communal and parochial colour to the issue and frustrate their cause. After 59 years of independence and with so much advancement of science and technology, it cannot happen that people are left at the mercy of Nature, devastated by drought and flood, and uprooted from their habitations at the whims of the ruling parties.

Sinister move to divide people over reservation

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capitalists to earn maximum profit. Comrade Mukherjee also stressed that the movement should also demand total abolition of all sorts of NRI type of quotas, capitation fees and removal of all restrictions which hinder admission of qualified students in higher education on merit. At this hour, exhorted Comrade Mukherjee, all strength should be mobilised to compel the government create conditions in which all students, more particularly those hailing from the backward communities and weaker sections of the society, have unfettered right and opportunity to get admitted in all educational institutions so as to equip themselves adequately in terms of acquiring due merit to compete with others on equal footing. Alongside, he emphasized that this movement must raise the vital demand for speedy industrialization of the country in

order to generate more job opportunities and immediate abandonment of the ongoing pernicious policy of capitalist.

Urging the Government of India to desist from creating rift amongst the people in the name of so-called reservation which, as experienced by all, has been proved to be hoax yielding nothing to any section of the society save and except giving birth to a privileged creamy layer within some of the backward communities. On the other hand, it only widened the breach among the various sections of the people, precipitated severe disaffection among them and engaged them in internecine blood bath. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, therefore, fervently appealed to all sections of the people to maintain unity and amity at all costs and come forward to develop the mighty movement with a view to realizing the above mentioned just demands.

Party Foundation Day observed in states

In continuation of reports of observance of Party Foundation Day, we include a few more reports in this issue.

Agartala, Tripura

On 29th April the 59th Foundation Day of our party was held at Agartala Yakshanibarani Samiti of Tripura. On this occasion a mass meeting was organized. Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, member, Central Committee was the main speaker. The meeting was presided over by Comrade Malin Debbarma, member, Tripura State Organizing Committee.

In the meeting a resolution expressing solidarity towards the people of Nepal fighting with the demand to end the rule of monarchy and establish full democracy in Nepal was moved by the member of the State Organizing Committee of the party, Comrade Shibani Das and was supported by Comrade Sanjay Choudhury, member, State Organizing Committee.

Comrade Asit Bhattacharya in his elaborate speech stressed that notwithstanding independence, the common people of the country have not been freed from exploitation. After 59 years of freedom 86 to 90 per cent of the people deprived of basic requirement of food, clothes, education, medical care, employment etc., are awaiting doom. On the other hand, a handful capitalists have not only amassed huge wealth and millions of rupees during this period but have morally degenerated the people of the country.

He said, the end of this exploitation and deprivation can be possible only through anti-capitalist revolutionary change of society.

Durg, Chhattisgarh

On the occasion of the 59th Party Foundation Day, a public meeting was organized at Durg which was attended by a large number of party workers and supporters. The meeting started with veteran party leader Comrade Badsha Khan garlanding the portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the great Marxist philosophers and thinkers of this era, our beloved leader, teacher and guide and founder General Secretary. As the main speaker of the meeting, Comrade Khan dealt in detail on the unique struggle conducted by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh along with the then handful of his compatriots to build up SUCI as the revolutionary communist party on Indian soil. Comrade Khan called upon all workers and organizers of

the party to develop mighty mass movements complementary to the revolutionary movement urgently needed for ending people's woes.

Patna, Bihar

On the occasion of the 59th Foundation Day a mass meeting was held on 24 April at IMA Hall in Patna. Comrade Shivlal Prasad, member, Bihar State Committee presided over the meeting. Comrade Shiv Shankar, Secretary of the State Committee addressed the gathering as the main speaker. Comrades M. K. Pathak, Dipak Kumar, Ramadhin Singh, Ramsurat Thakur and Yogendra Ram also addressed the gathering.

Ranchi, Jharkhand

At Ranchi a large meeting held on 24 April was presided over by Comrade Ranjit Modak, Secretariat Member, Jharkhand State Organizing Committee and Comrade Hem Chakraborty, Secretary, Jharkhand State Organizing Committee, addressed the gathering. Comrade Chakraborty in his address spoke in detail on the baneful impact of the globalization on the people of the country. Comrades Rabin Samajpati, Ramlal Mahato, R.S. Sharma, S.B. Singh, Sitaram Tudu, Bimal Das, K.P. Singh, all members of the State Committee were present on the dais.

Nagpur, Maharashtra

On the occasion of the 59th Foundation Day of the Party a mass meeting was held on 26th April at Nagpur. Comrade Ramdas Godbole read the resolution at the meeting conducted by Comrade Vijendra Rajput. Comrade Madhav Bhone, In-charge of Nagpur district addressed the meeting as the main speaker. The president of the meeting Comrade Rabindra Sakhre, alongwith Comrades Rameshsingh Thakurji, Papadkar Guruji Gadchroli, Mukundrao Palatkar also spoke to the gathering.

UP

Party Foundation Day was observed in different districts separately following the decision of the UP State Committee.

Jaunpur : Foundation Day was observed on 24th April at Badlapur. Here at a mass meeting Comrade Jagdish Chandra Asthana, Secretary, Jaunpur District Committee presided. Comrade V. N. Singh,

Secretary, UP State Committee and Comrade Jagannath Verma and other members of the district committee delivered addresses.

Similar meetings were also held in Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Moradabad, Kanpur, Ghazipur, Ballia and Allahabad.

Jabalpur, MP

The 58th Party Anniversary Day was solemnly observed at Jabalpur under the auspices of the Jabalpur district committee of the party on 24th April last. Comrade Uma Prasad, the state organizer of the party addressed the meeting as the

main speaker and discussed the present national and international situation in the light of the teachings of great leader of the proletariat and founder General Secretary, SUCI Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and urged to build up mass and class struggles more vigorously.

Everywhere, the meeting was held in a solemn atmosphere, vibrant with resolute slogans of continued mass struggles, and songs including the one composed on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat, at the outset and the *Internationale* at the end.

Karnataka State Conference of UTUC-LS

The first state workers' conference organized by the UTUC-LS was held on 15th and 16th April at Bangalore. On the first day the open session was held at Banappa Park where thousands of workers of both organized and unorganized sectors of private and public enterprises from all over the state converged in procession. The session was addressed by Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, President, All India Committee, UTUC-LS and Member, Central Committee, SUCI as the main speaker, Comrade K. Radhakrishna Karnataka State President, UTUC-LS, and Comrade K. Somashekhar, State Secretary, UTUC-LS. In his address, Comrade Chakraborty highlighted the very nature of the critical juncture at which the conference was being held. He showed how all embracing crisis — political, social, economic, educational, cultural and ethical, has engulfed the life of workers. It has been ever-deepening since 1991 when the globalization policy was first introduced. It is nothing but a policy of global attack on workers or rather people of all walks of life. In consequence, thousands of farmers are committing suicide, series of industries are being closed down rendering millions of workers jobless, workforce is being reduced in the banking sector, railways and others as a result of moratorium of fresh recruitment. Working hours are being extended to even 14 or more per day. Profit making public sector units are being handed over to monopoly capitalists at throw away prices; hard-earned rights and privileges like well-defined pay-scale provident fund, 8 hours working day, medical benefits and pension etc., are being curtailed. Service sectors like education, health, power, transport are being

rampantly commercialized. All these are creating total insecurity in life. The entire state machinery is being patterned to suit the policy and bring down attacks on the toiling millions. So-called leftists like the CPI(M), CPI wherever in power as in West Bengal are faithfully implementing the globalization policy to serve the ruling capitalist interest. All the national bourgeois parties like the Congress and BJP and the social democratic parties like the CPI(M), CPI are towing the line of globalization-liberalization-privatization in service to the Indian monopoly capitalists and world imperialism-capitalism. Only UTUC-LS guided by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great Marxist philosopher and the founder-president of UTUC-LS is developing genuine movement against this policy across the country.

Comrade Radhakrishna indicated in his speech how the hard-won right of eight-hour working day, which the historic May Day signified, is being increasingly denied and the workers are being taken back into the dark pre-May Day times. He called upon the workers to unite under the one single banner of UTUC-LS.

On 16th April at the delegate session Comrade Shankar Saha, General Secretary, All India Committee recalled the historic teachings of Karl Marx that before changing the world the workers have to change themselves first. A 13-member Karnataka State Committee of UTUC-LS was unanimously elected with Comrade K. Radhakrishna as the President.

Leaders from AITUC and TUC spoke and the CITU had sent message.

RECENT COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN VADODARA**Rabid Communal Forces pursue incendiary agenda unabated**

1st of May. It is the day of International Working Class Day commemorating the historic incident of working people's protest movement in Chicago, USA, in demand of limiting daily duty to 8 hours. In Gujarat there is another significance of this day. It is on this very day in 1960 that a separate state of Gujarat was created by bifurcating erstwhile united Maharashtra. This year when the people of Gujarat were celebrating the Maha Gujarat Day, the city of Vadodara was rocked with fresh spate of communal violence as a sequel to the forcible demolition of the age-old Fatehpur Dargah by the Vadodara Municipal Corporation in the name of removing encroachment on the roads slated to be widened as part of development. Such a decision and that too selecting Maha Gujarat Day for its implementation obviously hurt the religious sentiment of the minority community still haunted by the harrowing reminiscence of post-Godhra pogrom and hence there was a resistance to such a sudden attempt to raze a shrine.

Orchestrated gory parade

As usual there were instigations from the quarters of vested interest, the atmosphere was surcharged with communal tension, passions were inflamed and made to soar and a conflagration ensued. The police of the communal BJP government in keeping with its tradition remained an indulgent onlooker when the criminals and anti-socials ran amuck and an orgy of violence continued for about 48 hours in which the members of the minority community bore the brunt. The police, however, gave all protection to the demolition squad of three bull dozers. A contingent of Sangha Parivar comprising senior leaders like Nalin Bhatt, Niraj Jain and a host of elected councillors were present during the demolition. Soon after demolition, Nalin Bhatt patted the back of the police officers present. Immediately the demolition site was covered with tar and converted into road. Then sweets were distributed among those present followed by wild dancing over the ruins of the shrine accompanied by inflaming communal slogans like "Mini Babri has been destroyed" etc. All these were done in presence of silent, helpless, terribly shocked and frightened local spectators belonging to the minority community. Clearly the intention was to provoke them to react so that offensive could be launched as planned. Exactly that happened. First it started with pelting of stones from both the sides and in no time the communal-fundamentalist elements took over. Hundreds of bike-riding helmet-wearing frenzied youths clad in dresses resembling police uniforms and carrying lethal weapons riding their bikes pounced upon the innocent people. The police notably did not make any

attempt to disperse the rioting crowd by using batons, teargas shells, water cannon or rubber bullet. It allowed the situation to worsen and then resorted to indiscriminate firing without any prior warning targeting the minority community, killing and injuring many. It thus openly helped the rioters in their savagery. One Mohammad Sheikh, adjusting his cycle chain was asked to run away. As he moved a distance barely of ten feet, police fired on him. He is now lying in a critical condition in hospital. Police asked one Miya Khan Pathan, a truck driver to pay Rs 500 and to steer clear of the spot. But he was not allowed to escape, but made to receive bullet. When finally Army was deputed after 72 hours, six people had died four in police firing and two from stabbing and host grievously injured. 29 shops, 33 vehicles, 20 houses, 17 factories burnt down. The fire brigade was prevented from going near blazing houses of the minority community. Ambulance carrying injured persons were stopped and two ambulances belonging to a Muslim Trust burnt. One man was burnt alive in his vehicle. Repeated calls to Police Head Quarter by the victims seeking help were of no avail. According to an R.M.O. of S.S.G Hospital, one of the victims in hospital questioned why should they instead of being tortured like this by the government be asked to stand in front of a firing squad.

It was thus almost a replica of the post-Godhra carnage masterminded and executed by the RSS-VHP-BJP and Modi government combine who once again bared its worst communal fangs to filibuster over a deliberately precipitated issue and thereby destroyed life and property of innocent citizens, widened the chasm between two groups of

people of Gujarat with a view to buttressing petty electoral interest of securing seat of power riding on Hindutva plank.

Background

To these rabid communalists always on the look out for a suitable opportunity to carry out such a blood-curdled terrorism, the Municipality agenda of demolishing religious shrines came handy. Long back, the Times of India made a survey of encroachment of religious shrines on the road in the city of Ahmedabad. Apprehensions were expressed by certain quarters that this survey was mooted at the instance of the fundamentalist forces particularly the protagonists of Hindutva in Gujarat. It was revealed that thousands of temples of different size had mushroomed throughout the state in the last 10 years and most of them were unauthorized. These overnight constructions had been encroaching upon public land and roads. Some dargahs were also found to be located on the roads but they were much older, some of them even centuries old. The High Court of Gujarat then became overactive and gave a suo moto notice for removal of all shrines and arresting those who would be obstructing such removals. Ironically, the Times of India had not gone to the High Court. Hence the suo moto judgment of the Gujarat High Court did raise eyebrows particularly among the saner sections of the masses intending peace and preservation of communal harmony.

The demolished Dargah in Fatehpura Area was known as Hazrat Rashid-ud-Din Chisti of a Sufi saint. It was believed to be 200 years old. The Dargah received monetary help from Devsthan trust during the rule of Gaekwad dynasty and were visited by both Hindus and Muslims. During annual processions on the occasions of Dusserah, Ganesh Chaturthi or Tazia of Moharram etc, both Hindus and Muslims used to pay respect to this mazaar (holy grave) of the saint. People irrespective of religious belief of Masala Bazar of the city used to start their business after taking prasad from the mazaar. So it was revered equally by all. This emboldened the BJP-led Vadodara Municipality to become hyperactive in demolishing religious structures on the pretext of widening roads.

Every saner person will agree that equating lately constructed temples on the roads with very old dargahs and temples is not correct. The Dargah had been in a city survey map of 1912. As per Supreme Court directive, no religious site which is dated back to 1947 could be so demolished unilaterally. Moreover, as people's sentiments are deeply involved with places of religion, any intervention in the affairs of such places become extremely sensitive and hence if such is warranted in the interest of the people at large, it has to be done in an extremely cautious manner without, in any way, antagonizing any community, but only after obtaining their consent as far as possible through persuasion based on logic and reason and preserving communal harmony. This is all the more important in a communally volatile state like Gujarat. But the way Vadodara Municipality showed extreme urgency in razing the shrine cannot but raise certain doubts and an ulterior motive behind the move cannot be ruled out either. The demolition notice was served only on 28th April and as understood from some sources, the demolition was scheduled in the month June. The negotiations were also on between leading citizens belonging to the minority community and the municipality authorities over the matter. Yet bulldozers were pressed into action on the Maha Gujarat Day to undertake the job.

A deliberate act?

Was it then a deliberate act to ignite communal violence? A section of the national press also expressed such apprehension. We quote from a report published in the Times of India on May, 2.

"Why did Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) demolish the mazaar of Chisti Rashid-ud-Din while still in consultation with Muslim community leaders for a compromise? Community leaders are feeling betrayed by officials in the entire incident. Municipal commissioner R K Pathak had himself visited that site on Saturday and suggested cutting it by 2.5 feet so that it did not obstruct traffic around Champaner Darwaja," said prominent advocate Moin Rafai, one of the minority leaders negotiating for a compromise. The leaders say that they had received

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RSS-VHP-Modi government pulled strings to stoke communal fire

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the VMC notice three days ago and immediately approached Mayor Sunil Solanki and Pathak. Given that Mandvi is a communally sensitive area with a history of violence, Pathak had visited the mazaar and suggested the compromise. Local leaders had then convinced residents for the compromise solution. "We took religious opinion of Kamal-ud-Din Bawa, who saw nothing wrong in slicing off a part of the mazaar according to Islamic law," Rafai adds." But then by Sunday morning, we found out that the VMC was planning to demolish the entire mazaar." The community went back to Pathak and Solanki on Monday morning, but by this time, the mood had changed. "The municipal corporators, most of them from the BJP, told us that if they could demolish temples, there should be no objection to removing a mazaar," added Yunus Pathan, another community leader. "We disagree with this logic as the Muslim community never asked for temples to be demolished. We told the officials to handle the situation sensitively, but the next thing we know, the officials started the demolition." To allegations that the negotiations were mere delaying tactics by the community, the leaders say they had even roped in structural engineers and architects for the job. Pathak says, the Muslim leaders had approached him three days back with their proposal. "I had not promised anything," he said. "If I agree to only a partial demolition, it would have set a false precedent."

Another report carried out by the Times of India on May 4, further stated, "Investigations by TOI reveal that on April 13, Solanki (Mayor) and Swaroop (Police Commissioner) had a spat over the VMC's anti-encroachment drive. Swaroop refused to provide security to the encroachment team and Solanki widened the rift by calling up law minister Ashok Bhatt and home minister Amit Shah to complain against Swaroop. The cop was worried that the drive would degenerate into communal violence if religious structures were targeted. Swaroop had anticipated trouble but did not find it necessary to bring in additional forces to handle a possible escalation of violence."

The Hindu fundamentalists, as has been seen, make every attempt to destroy any culture, any symbol of shyncreatic tradition (Hindu-Muslim Unity). May be that is why the Dargah of Sufi saints which was a symbol of Hindu-Muslim amity had been destroyed as a part of this dirty ploy. Incidentally, this is not the first instance of bulldozing dargahs. Dargahs were demolished in the riots of 1969, 1986, 1992 and 2002 carnage. In 2002, the Dargah of well known Vali Gujarati, one of the front ranking poets of Modern Gujarati literature, was razed in Ahmedabad and a road built on the site in no time. Even the memorial of noted classical singer Ustad Fayeze Khan was also razed in Vadodara.

It may be added that after giving suo moto judgment and after demolition of Dargah in Vadodara, the Gujarat High Court gave another notice to all Municipal Corporations to furnish the latest reports on the position of shrines in the city of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat and Rajkot and get rid of the structures to widen the road. However, the Supreme Court has since stayed the decision of the Gujarat high Court to have at least some breather on the question for the time being.

Role of Narendra Modi

A section of the monopoly-controlled media is, however, trying to bail out Modi by saying that he is the architect of modern vibrant Gujarat, wanting to make the state a preferred destination of increased capital investment from all over the world. So he wants to keep the state free from riots. "Minus 2002, Modi", says this media lobby, "is all positive in governance which has become a national belief". This act of riot is therefore sought to be projected by this lobby as having been planted by the anti-Modi group within VHP. There is too much ado about this Vadodara riot. Modi offered to cooperate with the Centre, call Army and take stern measures to quell the riot. But there is hardly any taker of this argument as Modi has already established his credential as the mascot of Hindu fundamentalism, a front ranking votary of the arch communal agenda of the RSS-BJP, having his hand stained in the blood of thousands of innocents. Even he is receiving strictures from the Supreme Court

also in this regard. Modi is a terror to the minority people and most hated by the peace-loving people of Gujarat irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

When it is well-known that not a single leaf moves without the consent of Modi, who would believe that he had no prior intimation of such a planned execution? Rather had he intervened in time with a political will, the situation could have been averted. In fact, there is mounting discontent against the misrule of his government. Hence to divert the attention of the people from the real issue and throw a spanner in the struggling unity of the toiling masses reeling under severe drought, soaring price rise and spiralling unemployment, what could be a better option than to engineer a communal flare-up? If the state could be once again polarized on communal line, Modi, as is apprehended by many, might even opt for an early poll and flaunt his Hindutva card to sail through once more. The Times of India, in an editorial on May 5, wrote that it is the "insensitive administration" and "perverse approach of Narendra Modi administration towards issues of governance" that "sparked Vadodara riot". This only goes to substantiate such an apprehension.

Modi poses himself as the spokesperson of five crore of Gujarati population. Whoever criticizes his communal agenda is branded as anti-Gujarat. He often parrots that there is a conspiracy of the so-called secularist, human rights activists to tarnish the image of Gujarat so that his dream of vibrant Gujarat is not fulfilled. In this way, he is trying fusion of communalism with parochialism to generate jingoism in his favour. In Modi's dictionary, development is associated with communalism, parochialism with trampling of all civil and democratic rights, normalcy with perpetual tension.

Despicable role of Congress and its allies

The role of the Congress is equally treacherous. Those who thought that the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre would firmly deal with the BJP-RSS's communal politics in Gujarat and other parts of the country are now extremely disappointed to find it practically allowing Modi to get

away with all the wrong doings. In fact the central UPA government is found to be tactfully avoiding any intervention in the matters of the state including incidents of communal riot. Even the state Congress is conspicuously silent or loath to effectively oppose any anti-people policy or move. The Congress, as the principal opposition party, could have raised the issue of the proposed demolition of the Dargah in the Vadodara Municipal Corporation or in the Assembly. But it did not. Only after the bulldozing was over, it pretended to have been irked over the incident and solicited intervention of the central government. After communal flare-up erupted in Vadodara, eminent citizens and various organizations of Gujarat as well as from all over the country requested the Centre to deploy military and contain the violence. But it took 72 hours for the Centre to send the Army to Vadodara seemingly to woo the woebegone minority people from electoral perspective. And after everything was over, the Gujarat State Congress, in the customary manner, claimed credit for deployment of Army and eliciting the stay order of the Supreme Court over the Gujarat High Court verdict on demolition of the religious shrines. In fact, the Congress is also soft peddling in Hindutva to reap electoral gains in the state. The CPI(M), CPI, providing total support to the Congress at the Centre and having aligned with the Congress in the state during last parliamentary elections are showing no intention to contradict this perfidious role of the Congress.

No respite from communal riots and fomenting

There is no respite from communal tensions in the state after the 2002 massacre. The BJP-RSS is pursuing their communal agenda in full swing and whenever and wherever possible, organizing communal conflagrations. The wide scale distribution of Trishul throughout the state followed by the communal Mashaal processions, promoted by Modi in the name of BJP's socialization programme, had resulted in riots in Veraval, Amreli and Petlad.

The Godhra and post Godhra

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Mass movements on burning problems of life only deterrent to communalism

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situation is still haunting Gujarat. The riot victims are very apprehensive that the culprits would not be booked but absolved of all the crimes to be encouraged to repeat such criminal acts in future. The dead bodies of Muslims killed in the 2002 holocaust in Pan Arvada of Panchmahal District were exhumed due to the initiative taken by the human rights activist Teesta Setalvad. This has again exposed the complicity of the government administration in killing and burning the bodies to elope all evidences.

The sizeable Christian minorities are also not spared. Last year, from the Shabari Kumbha mela in the tribal district of Dang organized by the Government of Gujarat a clear message was sent to the Christian population of the district to embrace re-conversion to Hinduism. It is the same Dang where the Christians were attacked in 1998.

Communalization of police

Though the flag march by military in Vadodara exercised some restraint on police, it did not make any difference in its communally motivated operation. But it was reluctant to register FIRs, accept written complaints against culprits leave apart arresting them, and is continuing all kinds of maneuvers, terror and pressure tactics to scare away the witnesses. Indian Express of May 6 commented that "The police in Gujarat is the problem, not the solution. The manner in which the police personnel responded to the Vadodara riots is a blot on their government. But this is hardly surprising in a state where police officials who had abysmally failed to control riots are elevated to the post of director general of police".

It is an open secret that the Gujarat police are highly communalized. In 2002, one Vibhutinayan Rai, IGP (Railways) circulated an open letter to his fellow IPS about the way Gujarat cadre of IPS abetted communal carnage. He even went to the extent that a central IPS association should convene a General Body Meeting to deliberate on this. Mr. Julius Rebeiro, ex-commissioner, Mumbai, had also mentioned about

communalization of Gujarat Police. Ironically, Mr. P. C. Pandey, the Police Commissioner of Ahmedabad during 2002 pogrom, has now been appointed as the police chief of Gujarat. This appointment has further bolstered the communalized police to act in this manner in Vadodara and would no doubt marginalize, if not silence, a few upright police officers like Sreekumar who exposed the unholy nexus between police and administration in orchestrating 2002 carnage.

Voice of protest

But it is heartening to note that all these ploys have not succeeded in muffling the voice of conscience. The citizens of Vadodara organized a Human Chain for restoration of peace. The Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and Movement for Secular Democracy (MSD) have toured the disturbed areas, met the people who have lost their property due to burning, and looting, relatives of dead or deceased and the injured persons in the hospitals. PUCL has gone to the extent of giving a token economic help to the families of deceased and aiding the injured. The role played by Sri Kirithbai Bhatt, Prof. J.S. Bandukwalla and others have been commendable in this regard. Though a joint platform of all left and democratic force in the state to uphold the spirit of secularism has been of paramount importance, the CPI (M), CPI, by aligning with the Congress, have clearly kept themselves out of any such initiative. Our party, on the other hand, is working tirelessly with the other progressive forces and concerned citizens to combat the menace of communalism.

SUCI's political line vindicated

The Vadodara riot once again shows that defeat in the last parliamentary elections has not blunted the communal claw of the BJP-RSS. Rather, the combine is merrily pursuing its rabid Hindu communal agenda and pandering to flurry of dastardly acts reminiscent of post-Godhra genocide throughout the country, pitting one section of the people against the other, fomenting communal passion, promoting warped mindset and

exacerbating communal polarization with impunity. It may be recalled that the CPI (M), CPI, while striking an entente with the Congress before the last parliamentary elections and subsequently during pledging unstinted support to the Congress-led UPA ministry at the Centre, wanted the people to believe that by keeping the BJP out of power, they would have the ravenous communalism under check. They also became extraordinarily benevolent in conferring a secular credential to the Congress with a tearing hurry. But it is now clear to all how hollow the claim was and defrauding it was to embellish the Congress with a 'secular' painting. Moreover, such politics of tying knot with the Congress has not proved to be any deterrent to the BJP's ascendancy to power. By practicing the same communal politics, the BJP has managed to be saddled in the governmental power in Jharkhand, Bihar and Karnataka. Even in the recently concluded assembly elections in Assam, it has grabbed twelve seats. In fact, as is glaringly revealed today, the alliance between the Congress whose hands are also stained in communal bloodbath and the CPI(M), CPI, has been with no objective of containing communalism but to anyhow increase the number of seats by deceiving the people and enjoy pelf and power through mutual adjustment and accommodation, akin to counting one's chickens before they were

hatched. It also vindicates the political line of our party that resurgence of united democratic mass movement on the edifice of higher proletarian ethics and culture to press for the burning demands of life and simultaneous conduction of a painstaking, sustained ideological struggle throughout the length and breadth of the country involving all sections of the toiling masses can only curb the ideological-political influence of the BJP-RSS and for that matter, all communal-fundamental forces and isolate these brazenly anti-people forces from the masses. It is only by participating in the common struggle for a common cause and being imbued with a higher ideology that the people will be able to distinguish between right and wrong, identify foes and friends, gain necessary political consciousness to frustrate the ploys of various political opportunists and power-brokers and cement their unity to lodge counter-offensive on their common enemy, capitalism and its servitors. We once again make a fervent appeal to the countrymen particularly the well meaning democratic minded people of Gujarat not to be carried away by the deceptions and deceits held out by the crass communal forces, pseudo-secularists and their opportunistic allies and come forward to fulfill the historic necessity of strengthening democratic mass movement to isolate and wipe out the arch communal forces and their abettors.

Central Committee decries BJP govt's rabid communal instigation in Gujarat

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on May 4 last, expressed deep indignation at the way the BJP-led Gujarat government is directly instigating eruption and spread of communal violence in Vadodara and demanded of the government to immediately take effective measures to contain this communal conflagration with a strong hand and desist from playing the nefarious game of pitting one community against the other to engineer fratricidal bloodbath with the sinister motive of reaping electoral gains through communal polarization.

Comrade Mukherjee also demanded stringent action against and exemplary punishment of all those responsible for stoking the communal fire as well as due compensation to and proper rehabilitation of all those affected and called upon the countrymen to come out boldly against these rabid communal forces seriously jeopardizing people's unity, integrity and common struggle against all aberrations, afflictions and miseries of life.

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