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Assembly Election Results

Renewed Imperativeness of Left Democratic movement

The elections to the four states in the Hindi heartland are over and the BJP have won in three of them. The Congress who was running the governments in all these states could retain power in just one of them. The Congress, however, was claiming from the beginning that it would make a clean sweep. But as the dates of the poll were drawing near, the media and the so-called pollsters were indicating a tilt towards the BJP. After the results were out, many ascribed the victory of the BJP to the policies of development and good governance of the Vajpayee government at the Centre. Some went ahead to opine that the referendum has gone in favour of the BJP because it put the Hindutva issue in the backburner and instead emphasized on the issues concerning people's life like water, road and electricity. Another section including the CPI(M) has maintained that there was a massive anti-incumbency factor at work behind the debacle of the Congress. Speculations as to

which caste people tilted towards whom and who succeeded in capitalizing on 'vote-banks' of which segment are also not in short supply. Whatever might be the reason each of them has found out, they all were unanimous in holding that this has been a verdict of the people.

Elections have become a murky game

But the people of this country are aware of the way the elections are conducted these days. Right from the day the dates are announced, the authorities and the media rally behind the two major parties or combinations whom they, at the behest of the ruling bourgeois class, project as the principal contenders. This is seen both in parliament as well as assembly elections. By design, the choice is restricted between two major contesting parties or alliances both of whom subserve the class interest of the exploiting bourgeoisie. Thereafter the spectacle is of terror, intimidat-

ion, forcible booth-capturing, false voting, administrative rigging and indiscriminate use and complete dominance of money and muscle power. The common people, torn among all such kinds of manipulations and violent muck-tricks, have hardly any role in deciding the poll results. So, they show least interest in such election process which is a total mockery of the system. They find from experience that whichever bourgeois party is catapulted to power, there would be no abatement to the rapidly deteriorating condition of their life. In the absence of necessary political consciousness, they fail to detect that it is the moribund capitalist system which breeds all misery and destitution. So they give vent to their ire against the ruling bourgeois party and this is promptly painted by the adjuncts and defenders of the system as anti-incumbency swing. The ruling class also keeps a watch on the public mood. When it finds that the people are too enraged and disgusted with the ruling dispensation, it pulls all strings of manipulation to hoist and foist its other trusted political outfit on the seat of governance. Thus the people are made to shuttle between the confidants and underlings of the exploitative capitalist rulers and this farcical exercise is highlighted as mark of a great democracy in action. The criteria for selection of the party

to receive the blessings of the class depends on which of them at that particular time is poised best to serve the interest of the class. One would recall that in the previous elections, the BJP was routed in the hands of the Congress in these very states and then too there was an adducement to anti-incumbency wave. This time also the contest was squeezed between the same Congress and the same BJP with the latter capitalizing on the mounting discontent of the people. Had there been a wave of left democratic movement in these states, the people's discontent could have been channelized in the right direction. But in the absence of that the BJP took the advantage and became a beneficiary in vote politics. Misrule, so to say, is not peculiar to the BJP or the Congress. It is common with any political party or combination which would serve the ruling bourgeoisie and the decadent bourgeois system.

The so-called success of 'Atal' factor of development

It is a bunkum to say that the BJP received the mandate because of the success of Vajpayee government at the Centre on the issue of development. What is the experience of the last 5-year rule of the BJP-led NDA? The policy of liberalization-globalization-privatization initiated by the Congress in early ninetens and implemented by the

Contd. on page 2



A massive rally of school children was organized in Calcutta by Bengal Primary Teachers' Association (BPTA) demanding re-introduction of English and 'Pass-Fail' system from class - I on 12.12.2003

Freedom struggle in Iraq will continue

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, has issued the following statement on 14.12.2003 :

"The US imperialists, like all other despotic rulers, will be living in fool's paradise if they think Saddam Hussein's capture will end freedom struggle in Iraq.

We firmly believe, patriotic people of Iraq will continue and further intensify their freedom struggle more vigorously and with greater determination till the end of US occupation."

Both BJP and Congress dangled communal and caste card

Contd. from page 1

BJP with due expediency, has completely shattered the economy. Scams, malfeasance, misfeasance are galore. Unemployment is at all time high. Retrenchment, lay-off, VRS are throwing people out of job and robbing their purchasing power. Closures and lockouts are galloping in number. Pauperization and appalling poverty are on the rise. Prices are soaring; starvation and malnutrition are sniffing out innocent lives. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening day by day. Are these signs of development or complete devastation? Would anyone other than those handful trading in and thriving on the hunger and destitution of the millions be so shameless as to put a seal of approval to such incumbency?

Was Hindutva discarded or embraced by the BJP

Next comes the argument that the resounding success of the BJP is due to its eschewing Hindutva during campaign. Could anything be more economical to truth than this? The BJP need not make any fresh espousal for Hindutva as it has become synonymous with the doctrine of Hindu-communalism. Uma Bharti, one of the prime accused in the infamous Babari Masjid demolition case and a saffron-clad self-styled ascetic, was announced as the chief minister designate in case of a BJP victory in Madhya Pradesh. Vasundhara Raje, another front-ranking votary of rabid Hindutva, was projected as the chief ministerial candidate in Rajasthan. Narendra Modi, the Gujarat chief minister and a mascot of bestial Hindu-fundamentalism, was drafted for taking part in the campaign. The very presence of these identified faces ignites communal passion and works in the direction of prejudicing the minds of the people on communal line. Thousands of Sangh Parivar volunteers were requisitioned from outside to work for the BJP in these states.

And the motive and ploy remained no secret. The BJP chief ministers took oath amidst chanting of "Jai Sriram" and other Hindutva slogans. Saints and sadhus associated with the Ram-mandir agitation were seen occupying seats of prestige on the saffron-coloured stage. Uma Bharti straight went to Tirupati temple, tonsured head and demonstratively fed cows with bananas under media glare. Prime Minister Vajpayee also made a

statement that Rammandir would be built within the month of March. "There is nothing wrong about Hindutva" quipped L. K. Advani, the Deputy Prime Minister and saffron brigade leader. More candid and confessing has been RSS spokesman Ram Madhav, "the BJP victory was the result of a united effort by the entire parivar. There was a Hindu undercurrent in all these states and the efforts succeeded when the local parivar organizations were taken into confidence by the BJP."

Congress peddled in soft-Hindutva to counter the BJP

The Congress was well-aware of this BJP strategy to foster communal passion. True to its character of a bourgeois class party of reckoning and in keeping with its record of fomenting communal sentiments to reap election gains or divide the people, the Congress too played the same game. Digvijay Singh, the Congress chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, resorted to open peddling of soft-Hindutva to take the wind out of the BJP's sail. He even demanded a ban on cow-slaughter. Similarly, Ajit Jogi of the Congress in Chhattisgarh suddenly received a 'divine mandate in dream' to build a temple of Kaushalya, the mother of Rama in the Ramayana mythology. Thus it was a battle between crude Hindutva and soft Hindutva. It may be recalled that it was late Rajiv Gandhi, who first opened the lock of Babari Masjid to give birth to the controversy that snowballed into worst communal frenzy, riot and pogrom which the BJP, as a traditional Hindutva outfit, took full advantage of. In the current elections also, the Congress could not make itself more acceptable than the BJP as a champion of Hindutva philosophy and had to eat a humble pie. Apart from contesting on communal considerations, indiscriminate use of casteist polarizations and divides was also resorted to by both the BJP and the Congress. Neither Uma Bharti nor Ajit Jogi was hesitant in dangling their "dalit" origin to woo the oppressed backward people.

The CPI(M) holds Congress as secular

And curiously, the same Congress is branded by the CPI(M) — desperately appeasing the ruling class for pelf and power, albeit, under the garb of Marxism-Leftism — as a secular force. Of late, the CPI(M) leaders have repeatedly said

that they would support the Congress in election with a view to defeating the communal BJP. Jyoti Basu, the veteran CPI(M) leader had been openly advocating this line with all vigour. However, in order to confuse its rank-and-file as well as the left minded people who question such 'secular' credential of the Congress, the CPI(M) of late is posturing to show as if it is a big critic of the Congress. After the recent elections also, it has admonished the Congress for "at times competing with the BJP with communal agenda". But a careful perusal of its policy statements would reveal that there has not been any shift in their stand. "The Congress can never be the real and complete alternative to the communal forces", says the CPI(M) in an editorial in the People's Democracy of November 26-30, 2003. The same editorial "called for the defeat of the candidates of the BJP alliance, even if it means voting for the Congress candidate." In fact, they did support the Congress in all the states. The CPI(M) spokesperson in Rajasthan is quoted to have fought the election with the Congress. Earlier also the CPI(M) jointly contested the elections with the Congress in Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir. Similarly, in the ensuing assembly poll in Andhra Pradesh, the CPI(M) has decided "to extend support to the candidates of secular parties that have strongest chance of defeating the TDP-BJP alliance". (People's Democracy, Nov. 17, 2003). It obviates to say whom the reference is made to. Already it is reported that the CPI(M) and the CPI have asked for 70 seats from the Congress in the Andhra Pradesh elections. It is clear that this support to the Congress is solely purported to secure election gains. It has no connection with people's interest or combating communalism. Rather such politics of the CPI(M) is emboldening the communal forces further and creating confusion about secularism in public mind.

Corruption is hallmark of decadent bourgeois system

The other ploy of the Congress and the BJP was to play the corruption card. Uma Bharti paid a sum of Rs. 1 lakh to a rape-victim and presented her on the dais in an election rally as an indictment of the Congress regime. Within few days, Ajit Jogi, himself under investigation for a forgery case, caused a chilly flutter by releasing a

video tape showing his bete noire Dilip Singh Judeo of the BJP greedily grabbing wads of cash as bribe. It was almost a repeat telecast of the former BJP president, Bangaru Laxman captured slobbering over bundle of notes by a camouflaged TV camera. The BJP yelled, accused the Congress of framing its leader but lay in wait to turn the table. Soon Ajit Jogi was caught unaware while offering bribe to the newly elected BJP MLAs for engineering defection. An audio-tape of his conversations on the bribery proposal was released to the press by the BJP. While Jogi denied any hand in fixing Judeo, Mr Advani admitted to have trapped Jogi. Both have engaged in the devious sting operation. It is like the needle ridiculing the strainer for having holes!

This moribund capitalist system is breeding corruption day in and day out. Anyone depending on or subserving the system cannot but plunge into the cesspool of corruption. Lalu, Mulayam, Jayalalitha, Bhujbal — nobody has a clean slate. Even the CPI(M) is no exception to this as has been revealed in a number of incidents in recent times including the episodes of Dulal Banerjee, Tarakeshwar Lohar and others, the self-styled dons who were reigning supreme and terrorizing people as party and trade union leaders. It is ludicrous to see these parties accusing each other of corruption.

BJP outmaneuvered Congress in eliciting class preference

We have already mentioned that both the BJP and the Congress are the most trusted representatives of the ruling class. Yet in this election the BJP managed to score over the Congress for certain specific reasons. As the party in power at the Centre, the BJP could implement all the bourgeois schemes including the policy of globalization-liberalization widely and speedily notwithstanding the fact that the Congress initiated the process of liberalizing the economy. This has pleased the class. Secondly, the intensity of inner-party squabbles and group conflicts coupled with leadership crisis has currently put the Congress in much disarray. The BJP too has factional feuds and interpersonal rivalries which often get manifested as well. But compared to the Congress, the BJP has been able to demonstrate an apparent unity to assure the class.

Contd. on page 8

Adivasi Rebellions Against East India Company Class Struggle In Reality

[The speech Comrade Ashutosh Banerji, departed member of the Central Committee of our party SUCI, delivered on the occasion of the Santal Hool (Rebellion) Day in 2002, in the light of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat, was published in the Party's Hindi Organ Sarbahara Dristrikone, in its issue no.18, Vol.17 (23 September - 7 October, 2002). We publish here an English rendering of this valuable speech. Responsibility of any error in translating is ours — Editorial Board, Proletarian Era.]

We have assembled in this meeting today to discuss the role of Tilka Majhi-Sidhu-Kanu and Birsa Munda, on the occasion of observing the Hool (Santal Rebellion).

Outlook in Evaluation

But what kind of discussion do you want? It is one thing to want to know in the way history is written in text books, elaborately citing dates and years. The other method of study is to know the general picture in the realms of economy, politics and culture prevalent at that time and then, on its basis, to know about the specific characteristics of the specific sections of the then society, that is, to grasp an overall understanding of the contradictions and conflicts at work between the different sections of the society. Only this second method can help us somewhat in finding in way to the future. So, first of all we have to decide what should be the angularity and basis of discussion. Should we consider the stories and songs — mythological tales, folk tales, legends and ballads existing for generations as the basis? It is true that an indistinct picture of old society can be had from these sources but actual history cannot be obtained from these. Because, imagination of poets and the personal thinking of the play-wrights mingled with the reality to make these aesthetic creations, works of art. It is necessary to differentiate history from these aesthetic works. True historical discourse involves observing the inherent laws which govern the progress of society and the contradictions-syntheses constantly arising in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of society. So, it goes without saying, our discussion should be in consonance to this historical angle and on the basis of history.

Written history of mankind is for more or less the past 6000 years. And unwritten history of course spans hundreds of thousands of years. Now, the written history is an irrefutable proof of onward motion and changeability of society. In

history, different social systems have arisen and then become extinct. In course of this change, a law of social transformation is discernible: an established society keeps on changing gradually and after attaining a particular stage, the whole society undergoes a radical change. And simultaneously, a new social system comes into being. Thus, the 6000 years old society is not there today. We live no more in a tribal primitive communist society, nor in a slave society ruled by the slave-masters, nor in an early feudal or late feudal monarchical society. Today's society is such a society where the workers produce with their sweat and toil and the capitalists more and more increase their capital through investing it in this process of production. This is capitalist society. It is this society that we live in. So, whether we like it or not, it is not at all possible to make any historical analysis keeping one's eyes closed to this inherent law of social change.

Secondly, the phenomenon that is observed is that social change does not come about on its own, automatically. Contradiction and unity (synthesis) go on continuously within the society. Continuous conflicts between the rising forces and the decaying ones within the society operate also in the process of quantitative changes that go on slowly. For example, in feudal society, when the feudal lords could no longer play a progressive role in development of the society, they became reduced to a dying force. On the other hand, the serfs, trading community and intellectuals constituted the rising force. It is only through the culmination of continuous struggles and conflicts between them and the feudal forces that revolutionary transformation of the feudal society came about. This is what we see in history. That is, we find the law of contradiction operating. Contradiction goes on even when social changes occur gradually but the whole society does not undergo any fundamental change. But some changes are going on and the new rising force is

continuously gaining strength while the dying one is getting more and more weakened. As a result, the rising force is bringing about radical change of the prevailing conditions — this is what we see in history. This contradiction cannot escape anybody's notice.

Thirdly, one should also analyze the real character of the new society while examining the process of development of a new society from the womb of an old one. Each social system is inseparably linked up with its definite and distinguishing economic base and political-cultural superstructure. Economic systems of different types of society are governed by different inherent laws. For example, the economy of a capitalist society is guided by the law of maximum profit. We must note the phenomenon of unity and contradiction within this economic law also.

Marx said that history of social changes is the history of class struggles; it is only through class struggles that the classes will disappear eventually. This theory of Marx is not just a product of his individual realization. The inherent law of society that operates through the rebellions and conflicts and the inherent social ingredients that are revealed and come to the surface through these, form the bases of this theory. It is only through the examination and analysis of the ingredients that come out of the social activities and class struggles, in the background of the laws of development of history, that theory can be formulated. No doubt, individuals play a role in this. It is this role that Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao-Zedong and Shibdas Ghosh played in history.

The struggle against Zemindari system was in reality against the British rulers

In numerous discussions, analyzing the sepoy mutiny of 1857, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that the nationalist ingredients were there in every small and big conflict and struggle

of the people and the peasants in different places that occurred against the Zemindars and British revenue officers centring round the right to land and imposition of taxes. This historic struggle was the beginning of class struggle of the peasantry against the East India Company. According to some people, the sepoy mutiny was merely a mutiny of the sepoys, it was the powerful kings whose kingdoms had been annexed by the British rulers that organized the mutiny to get back their lost kingdoms. Comrade Ghosh showed that although this was true, this was not the whole truth. At that time, peasant uprising and struggle had occurred in Bihar, peasant uprising developed also in Bengal. Comrade Ghosh drew our attention to these events. However, these uprisings occurred in an isolated and sporadic way and not in a co-ordinated and well-organized manner. But this marked the beginning of the class struggle of Indian peasantry against the East India Company. This historically important aspect cannot be denied. Poor people of all sections joined it; the Adivasis, even that section of the peasants whom the zemindars were depriving of their cultivation accelerating the process of their conversion into landless agricultural labourers, that is rural proletariat, joined it. This also is an instance of a historical process.

In all his notes on the 1857 mutiny, Marx showed how the East India Company had set up their administrative machinery all over India to collect revenue and used to resort to various means for collecting taxes. They introduced Zemindari System in East India for this purpose but that system was not in vogue elsewhere in the country. In Northern India, the jaigirdars themselves came into arrangements with the Company to decide the method of tax collection. In some places of West and South India, this was done directly between the administration and the ryots (peasants). But the high ranking British administrators and the heads of the Company began to apprehend that such direct collection of revenues might ultimately prove dangerous to the Company's rule. Because, in that case, there would be no third party between the administration and the ryots to settle the disputes which would deliver verdict in favour of the British administration in any dispute. And then, direct confrontation between the administration and the people would become inevitable. So,

Contd. on page 4

Long History of Deprivation and Oppression of Adivasis

Contd. from page 3

a third party put up in between the administration of the East India Company and the common people which would collect the taxes and land revenue and deposit the same with the government.

Thus the Zemindari System was introduced. So the struggle against the zemindars was a struggle against the British rule in reality. The zemindars let loose oppression, exploitation and torture upon the village poor and tribals everywhere to extract revenue and created cleavages among them. It was in such a background that the Adivasi rebellions started. But there are some historians who say that this rebellion was not freedom struggle, it was not a struggle directed against the British — it was against the zemindars. They forget that the British government purposely used the zemindars as their shield.

No doubt the struggle of Tilka Majhi-Sidhu-Kanu-Birsa Munda was against the oppression and injustice of the zemindars but in the fundamental analysis, it was directed against British rule also. It was a struggle against the system of revenue collection introduced by the British. Zemindari System snatched away from the Adivasis their hitherto existing rights over the wood, fruits and lands of the forests. As a result, the living the Adivasis somehow procured by collecting the produce of the forest, was denied to them. One fine morning, they woke up and learnt that the land they had made arable by clearing forest and cultivated by extreme toils was no longer theirs, it belonged to the zemindars — they had no right to till that land without paying taxes to the zemindars. Thus the zemindars snatched away the land of the Adivasis by the force of guns. According to the Kshatkari (Tillers) Act in Chhotonagpur region (now in Jharkhand), people of other communities were barred from buying the land of Adivasis; but the rich people of other communities used to buy up poor Adivasi land in 'benam', that is, in the name of other poor Adivasis by paying the latter some money. The Adivasis lost their land in this way also. This apart, the moneylenders and businessmen used to buy up the lands of poor Adivasis by cheating them, even those who tried to retain their land by somehow paying taxes to the zemindars. At the time of the Permanent Settlement

also, rich peasants and businessmen usurped the lands of Adivasi by bribing the police and the administration. Such is the background of Adivasi rebellion. It is true that at the beginning, the class struggle of Indian peasantry against the East India Company were unorganized and scattered, limited to a few places, and could not grow in an organized manner. But the elements of this class struggle did appear through these rebellions. Historically, it is a very important aspect. Such is the background of Sidhu-Kanu's struggle.

True significance of observing Sidhu-Kanu Day

When we observe Sidhu-Kanu Day, that should have a specific purpose. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has taught us what should be the correct method and outlook in commemorating anything noble. Is there any sense in commemorating in the manner of the bookish historians? No, because this type of commemoration would be merely a ritual. No doubt history should be the basis of commemoration. But this Day should be observed on the basis of correct understanding of the then social events, their significance, through analyzing history with a class outlook. We must understand what sense of morality inspired Sidhu and Kanu to plunge themselves into struggle, what sense of duty and commitment inspired Birsa Munda to sacrifice himself. Events of their lives can be found in the history books. But which book of history explains what sense of morality and commitment and what class outlook inspired them to build up struggle and sacrifice themselves? With what sense of duty and morality should we act in our struggle against the present social problems and with what sense of duty and morality these revolutionaries fought in the then society — we have to understand the difference between the two as well as the similarity between the two. Because, the present-day class struggle that we live in the midst of, has appeared in continuity with their class struggle. They were involved in class struggle; we too are involved in it. But a fundamental difference has come about in the character of the problems, in the sphere of theory, in the purpose and aim of struggle and in the mode of struggle too. In these, just as there is a continuity

between them and us, there is also a break between them and us. Those who are not revolutionaries and do not believe in class struggle, talk about class collaboration and desire to preach that doctrine — they cannot even think of such analysis. Their job is only to garland the statues and their evaluation of the past heroes ends there. But every revolutionary knows that all of us exist within a stream of constant changes within a state of motion and we are all performing our own roles existing within this state of motion. Those who understand this truth, will also understand that the seeds of our present-day movement were there in the womb of past movements. We cannot disown this debt. We pay homages to Tilka Majhi, Sidhu, Kanu and Birsa Munda with this outlook. They are the predecessors of today's revolutionaries. Had they not been there, we could not have been here and our movements too would not have developed. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us that this is the most important aspect. It is from this angle that we have to examine the true condition of life of the toiling masses of the Adivasis as well as the other sub-nationalities of India. India is a vast country, its different areas are different. Even among the Adivasis, there is many a difference in identity, character, level of development, language and culture. Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh of the North Eastern Region are all inhabited by tribals. There are different tribal communities in these states which have their own different habits, customs, culture and language. There are Adivasis everywhere in India. So far as I know, there are Girijans and Todas in South India. There are Gondas, Bhils and Kols in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. In Orissa too there are various types of Adivasis. In Jharkhand there are the Santals, Onraos, Mundas and Hos. Among the Nagas who live in Nagaland there are tribes like the Aos, Semas and Angamis, etc. In Mizoram also, like the majority Mizos there are also some other tribals. There are Garos, Khasis and Mikirs in Meghalaya. If we carefully study the Indian scenario, we would find that there do not live only the principal sub-nationalities, but there are also a large number of sub-nationalities with comparatively far less population which include the

Adivasi people too. It is not possible to solve the problems of India unless the problems of the Indian Adivasis are seriously considered.

Transformation of the adivasis into proletariat

The process of transformation of the Adivasis into proletariat has been operative since the days of the British rule. Just remember, who were sent to toil in the tea gardens of Assam and North Bengal? The Adivasis of Chhotonagpur. Who are Adivasis involved in conflict with the Boro community supporting the Boroland within Assam? They are the Santals who started living there many years ago and thereafter became permanently settled there. They were forcibly evicted from their own homesteads, their lands and villages and brought to this region for working in tea gardens and for building border roads. Who have been working as labourers in coal, mica, chromite and dolomite mines in Chhotonagpur regions right from the British days? They too are the Adivasi people. Who used to live in the villages like Dhurwa, Hatia, etc., which were razed to the ground at the time of building the Heavy Engineering Corporation in Ranchi? They were the Adivasi people like Onraos and Mundas. Where did they go? They became coolies, transformed into proletariat labourers, they were not even rehabilitated. Wherever big projects come up — take the huge dam which is being constructed on the Narmada — whose villages are being demolished, deserted, who are being driven from their homes? Everywhere, it is mainly the Adivasis who are being evicted. It was the Adivasis of Bengal and Jharkhand who were evicted at the time of construction of dams over the Damodar and other rivers along the border of Bengal and in areas formerly in Bihar.

As a result, these Adivasi people have been uprooted from their lands, villages and social life. The way they lived together in cohesion, inhabiting the same village, the relationship that had grown up between the families, the commitment they felt towards each other and the social emotion and feelings that had grown up among them in this process, all these have been totally destroyed. Just as they were evicted and sent to different places to labour, so also their sense of social responsibility

Contd. on page 5

True Significance of Remembering Tilka Majhi-Sidhu-Kanu-Birsa Munda

Contd. from page 4

had been shattered. They have been moulded into this mentality: work and earn and then do whatever you like. It was the Adivasi people among whom this process of transformation into the proletariat started earliest in India. Poor people of other sub-nationalities who are called Scheduled Castes and Tribes, etc., became subjected to this process later on. That began from the middle of the nineteenth century.

They were sent abroad too as what is called immigrant labour. They were sent to Mauritius, the West Indies, Sri Lanka, Malaysia. They had no personal possessions — neither land nor implements of work. They had no implements like what the cobblers, masons, blacksmiths possess to work with and earn. They possessed only labour power. But who would buy that? Only those who needed it. Those who did not need it, would not buy it. Once the job was over, the relationship ended too. In this way, the process of transformation into the proletariat started first of all among the poor people of the Adivasis, Scheduled Castes and Tribes. This fact can be obtained from the history of the Adivasi people, the history of the poor Scheduled Castes and Tribes. We cannot deny this fact. So, the true and proper picture cannot be obtained by just saying that Tilka Majhi, Sidhu, Kanu, Birsa Munda fought against the oppression of zemindars and the British, shed their blood, courted imprisonment and sacrificed their lives.

The adivasi society too is class divided

It should be remembered that the process of transformation into proletariat is still operative, but in a different form. It is also true that a middle class has developed too from among them. Education has spread to a certain extent among the Adivasi people, Scheduled Castes and Tribes and skilled workers are also appearing among them. But the skilled workers too are nothing but proletarians. Again, a middle class section has developed among them who have risen to the level of foremen, even to the managerial level. Lands of many have become concentrated in the hands of a handful among them who are exploiting the very Adivasi people.

Class struggle is discernible even among the Adivasi people themselves. But a vast section of the Adivasi people are labouring in the mines, are working as agricultural labourers moving from one state to another. Because, they have nothing of their own, they have lost their farm lands. They have no other means but to earn their living by toiling. This feature is mostly found among the Adivasi people, Scheduled Castes & Tribes. As a result of being reduced to proletarians, they have become migrant labourers who roam about all over India searching for work. They are found in Gujarat, the ports of Maharashtra, everywhere.

Problem of language and script of the adivasi people

Another serious problem of the Adivasis is the problem of developing their own culture and language. According to the Constitution, all have equal right and opportunity to develop but where are these in practice? Let us examine the instance of only the Santali language. Literature exists in Santali language — but written in different scripts. It is written in Bengali script in Bengal, in Devnagari script in Jharkhand and in Oriya script in Orissa. Besides, there is the fourth script “Alchiki”. The fifth one is the Roman script in which very little literature has developed. Now, what is the outcome of this situation? If the Santals from Bengal do not know the Devnagri script they will not be acquainted with the Santali literature written in Devnagari script. Similarly, the Santals who do not know Bengali script, in spite of being the Santals, will remain deprived of the taste of Santali literature written in Bengali script. Santali literature written in Oriya script will also remain unknown to the other Santals. So, just see, how difficult it is to develop a common literature for all the Santals in Santali language until and unless a common Santali script is developed and made widespread! So, one definite common script must be adopted. But there is no help from the governments in this regard. Universities also are extending no help. Whatever is being done is being done on personal initiative, such as the development of “Alchiki” script by Pandit Raghunath Murmu. This “Alchiki”

could have become the common script. But all are not agreed on this point so far. The West Bengal Government has accorded recognition to the Alchiki script but not to the Santali language. The government is recognizing the script but not the language! Is there any logic in it? If the script of a language is recognized, recognition must also be given to the language itself. Again, if any language is recognized, the task of publishing books in that language should also be taken up. Care should be taken to ensure that study in the Santali language be introduced at least in all classes at primary and secondary levels. The government should recognize such study upto whatever level it can best be introduced. But this has not been done. Such recognition has been accorded neither in Orissa nor in Bihar too. Similarly, the question has been raised: what should be the official language of Jharkhand? There are people speaking Santali, Onrao, Munda, Ho, Kurmi. Then, what should be the official language here? What should be the medium of instruction in schools, colleges and universities? Can these problems be solved by any individual effort? No. This linguistic problem troubles not only the Santals. In Nagaland, there is a lot of difference between the different dialects of Naga language. There are smaller communities within the sub-nationalities. For example, among the Naga themselves, there are different tribes and communities who have their own culture and dialect. But there is no common Naga language. “Nagamese” is the dialect in Dimapur area but it has no script or literature. Is there any effort on the part of the government to develop all these? Not at all. The ex-chief minister of Gujarat, Amar Singh Chowdhury is himself a tribal. But could that stop the exploitation of the tribals in Gujarat? What has been done for the development of the culture of the Adivasis in Gujarat? Nothing at all. Now, the government in Jharkhand has been formed under the leadership of an Adivasi chief minister. Let us see what this government does for the development of Santali, Munda, Onrao and Kurmi languages and literatures there. The Munda language was not only given a firm shape on the basis of Roman script

during the British rule which we once fought against, but a grammar of the Munda language was also written. Is the government of the Adivasi people in Jharkhand doing anything like what was accomplished during the imperialist British rule?

Such is the outline of a few of the various problems of the Adivasi people. On the questions of language and culture, all the Adivasi people face similar problems. No doubt, you will consider and deliberate upon these problems of theirs while observing the Santal rebellion (Hool) anniversary today. Side by side, you have to think about those Adivasi people of India who are engaged in class struggle. Who will ensure their emancipation? Who will show them the path? Can any movement today, be it cultural, literary or on language, succeed only through the movement of the intellectuals without the support of the toiling masses and without being integrated with their movement? That is not possible. That is why, all those Adivasi groups who do not have a common language, literature or a script, will have to develop their respective common language, literature or script. It is the toiling sections of the Adivasi people who need most a language and education for exchange of their understanding, feeling and judgement. For, it is they who constitute the rising force that would liberate not only themselves from the tentacles of exploitation and oppression but would also liberate the whole society. That is why, if you keep the programme of observance of Hool anniversary confined to the intellectuals only without strengthening the struggles of the toiling Adivasi people then that would be a mere ritual. So, I think, this Day should be evaluated from a class outlook. We cannot remain blind to the class contradiction inherent in this struggle.

Even though staying outside India, Marx had no difficulty in understanding that the struggles that went on before, during and after the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in India, contained elements of nationalism. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, too, has said this. The movements of the Adivasi peasants under the leadership of Tilka Majhi, Sidhu, Kanu and Birsa Munda and others against the exploitation and oppression of the zemindars and the East India Company constituted nothing but class struggle with elements of nationalist movement.

AIMSS Organizes Convention Against Supreme Court's Verdict

BANGALORE

The Bangalore District Committee of AIMSS had organized a convention on "Increasing Crimes on Women and on the Supreme Court's verdict on arrest of women."

Hundreds of students and women participated to the convention which was addressed by renowned advocate and writer Smt. Hemlatha Mahishi, ex-Justice Bopanna, Shri K. Channabasappa and Dr Jayalakshmi. Smt. Hemlatha Mahishi expressed her concern that the Supreme Court judgement was a threat to dignity of women in custody. She cited a few custodial deaths in the hands of police.

Mr Justice Bopanna noted with concern that women did not have a respectable position, they were subjected to atrocities everywhere. He also cited various instances of crimes on women and quoted statistics of various countries in support of his contention. He said the law had enabled the criminals to go scot free. To emphasize this, he referred to one of the cases — Rony Vs. State of Maharashtra and said that the youth involved in this case, raped a woman and murdered three members of a family. Since, they were educated the Supreme Court reduced their term of punishment.

Shri Ko. Channabasappa observed, "One cannot expect justice in the court." Societal change is not possible through law; instead, a social movement is required and for that women should come forward, he said.

Dr H. G. Jayalakshmi, State Secretary, AIMSS, in her speech said that the Supreme Court's verdict was a blow to the honour of women and democratic rights. The jurists should have social responsibilities while passing a verdict.

Smt. Prathiba Kumari, Bangalore District President presided over the convention. An appeal to the Chief Justice of India to review the Supreme Court's verdict was read out.

HYDERABAD

AIMSS, Hyderabad Unit held a seminar on recent Apex Court's verdict on arrest and detention of women without the presence of

Lady police. "The Supreme Court judgement with regard to arrest and detention of women without the presence of Lady Police at any time of the day or night is detrimental to the safety and security of women", held Dr H.G. Jayalaxmi, All India Secretariat member of AIMSS.

Speaking in a seminar on "Arrest of women and procedural safeguards" held on 7th December, 2003 at Press Club, Hyderabad, she said: when the condition of women in society is so precarious and incident of rapes, molestations, humiliation on women are growing day by day, such a judgement of Supreme Court cannot but create turmoil in the society. 15,500 rape cases are recorded every year in our country and unrecorded rape cases are much more because only one out of 69 is recorded. It is not only criminals but also police and military personnels who are committing such crimes on women. Very recently, in Delhi the security guards of President of India have raped a girl and a Swedish woman who attended the International Film Festival was raped by the criminals in a moving car. In fact, in 1983 the Supreme Court in Sheela Barse Vs. State of Maharashtra gave clear guidelines with regard to ensuring safety of women prisoners in police custody. But now the same Supreme Court has given the judgement which undermines fundamental principles of jurisprudence. She also said the judgements of Supreme Court in recent times are fashioned in a way people in general and women in particular can be refrained from participating in social movement developing against globalization and so-called economic reforms. She appealed to the people to come forward for pressurizing the government and the judiciary to review the judgement keeping in view the safety and security of women.

Prominent journalist Sri ABK Prasad, who spoke in the convention opined, the international agencies of imperialist countries like World Bank has proposed to remove the chapter on fundamental rights in the Constitution of Trinidad. He felt that the recent Supreme Court judgement should be viewed on this background and we should develop movement to

Orissa State Conference of AIMSS



A view of the dais of Orissa State Conference of AIMSS held at Jajpur with Shri Achhutananda Pati, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, General Secretary, AIMSS, Comrade Binapani Das, President AIMSS, Orissa and others

AIMSS Conference in Nagpur



Nagpur district conference of AIMSS was organized at Nagpur of Maharashtra on November 4, 2003. Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, All India Secretary of AIMSS is seen addressing the gathering. Distinguished guests, namely, Prof. Malati Papadkar, Sm. Sangita Kambley, Sm. Ambhai Bhowde, Sm. Sandhya Nidhot, Benu Bankar, Soguna Valekar, Nambai Pundor and Dr. Sulochana Madabi also spoke.

AIMSS MP State Convention at Jabalpur

The first state convention of AIMSS in Madhya Pradesh was held on November 2, 2003 at Jabalpur at the Makhanlal Chaturvedi Sabha Bhawan. Before the convention started a big procession of women from different parts of the state was organized. Comrade Chandra Patra presided over the meeting. Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, All India Secretary, AIMS addressed the convention as

review it on lines of Bombay High Court judgement which is in accordance with moral standards of society.

Sri Prattipati Venkateshwarlu, senior advocate, AP High Court said that every judgement should reflect the conditions prevailing in the society. As this judgement gave more powers to the police, it will endanger the women. He made fervent appeal to re-examine the

the main speaker and veteran freedom fighter Shri Manish Dutta Misra was present as the chief guest. Comrade U.P. Biswas, MP State Organizing Committee, SUCI also addressed. A State Organizing committee of the AIMSS was unanimously formed with Comrades Jagriti Sharma as the President, Chandra Patra, Secretary, Kalpana Baroi, Vice President and Jali Sarkar as the Treasurer.

judgement by constituting a larger Bench.

Hyderabad Central University Guest Faculty member Dr V. Lalitha and Sri K Venkateshwarlu, advocate, also spoke in the seminar.

Ch. Prameela, State Secretary, AIMSS presided over the seminar.

A memorandum addressed to the Chief Justice of India was also sent signed by the participants in the seminar.

Massive Students' Demonstration in Bhubaneswar

Under the banner of All India DSO State Committee more than five thousands students from different parts of Orissa staged a massive protest demonstration on 2nd December 2003 before the State Secretariat against the fee hike, DPEP, freezing government aid to educational institutions, autonomous college scheme, introduction of self financing course, privatization of North Orissa University, commercialization and communalization of education and demanding total exemption of all fees of flood affected students, a

governments to curtail education budget on the plea of financial hardship and adopting the policy of DFID, World Bank, IMF denying own responsibility. The government has opened the flood gate of privatization of education. He urged upon the student community to build up mighty student movement to pressurize government to come forward to accept the demands placed by DSO. A five member delegate team headed by state Vice President Comrade Nirakar Pasdav handed over a memorandum to the Higher



well decorated procession led by Comrades Rajendra Verma and Ashok Mishra, respectively the State President and Secretary started from railway station. The processionist marched along the important roads of the city and staged the demonstration before secretariat at P.M.G. Square where finally a protest meeting was held. Comrade Rajendra Verma, presiding over the meeting, vehemently criticized the apathetic attitude of both the state and central

Education Minister. On behalf of the delegates State Secretary Comrade Ashok Mishra among others addressed the gathering. Among others, state secretariat member Comrade Rajkishor Mallick, Manoj Mahanta, Brajagopal Sahoo and student leaders like Sibasis Praharaj, Pravamanjula Brahma, Saroj Mahapatra, Manasi Swain, Dipak Mohanty, Biren Naik, Soren Gouda, Akshoy Das, Bhabani Nayak spoke in the protest meeting.

Seminar in Calcutta against dismantling IDBI

Against the central government's move to corporatise the IDBI aiming at its privatization employees of IDBI throughout the country has been agitating for last one year. In continuation of this agitation of the employees, a seminar was organised by IDBI Employees' Association, Calcutta on November 21, 2003 at Kalakunj Auditorium.

Eminent advocate Shri Parthasarathi Sengupta, Prof. Tarun Sanyal, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Vice-President, UTUC-Lenin Sarani, All India Committee and Shri Samar

Chakraborty, General Secretary, INTUC, West Bengal addressed the seminar. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty detailing the objective of the government to dismantle IDBI, dealt with the government's policy of globalisation and as a sequel to which PSUs in various sectors as also PSU banks are in a process to be handed over to private owners. He also told that in pursuance to its policy already quite a few industries/organisations in public sector have been handed over to big capitalists. He further said that whether at the Centre or in the

Red Salute Comrade Madhu Sinha

Comrade Madhu Sinha (65), member, SUCI, Bardhaman District Committee, West Bengal and a prominent trade union leader died of an accident on 27 November last. On spreading the news of his sudden death, hundreds of tearful workers, party activists, supporters and sympathizers thronged the hospital.

From beginning of his service in Durgapur Steel Plant, Comrade Mudhu Sinha was a part of the left-led workers' movement. While as a member of the Hindustan Steel Employees Union, Comrade Sinha came in contact with the SUCI workers in the joint movement in the 60s and was attracted to the thoughts of the great leader of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. A long and thorough discussion convinced him that no other trade union than the UTUC-Lenin Sarani guided by Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thoughts can free the working class from economism-opportunism and emancipate from the tentacles of capitalist exploitation.

This realization led him to sever connection with the old trade union, later led by CITU, and established the fighting steel workers' organization, Durgapur Steel Workers' Co-ordination Committee along with the like-minded workers. It is for his initiative and fighting character that Comrade Sinha was elected President of the organization and later its General Secretary. Until death he, as the General Secretary, organized protest and resistance movements of the workers belonging to different departments including Coke Oven, Refractories department of the Steel Plant and forced the authority to bow down or restrain on many occasions. For example, in 1987 when the authorities high-handedly deducted money from the workers' salaries on the



Comrade Sinha compelled the same authority to money. It is in the face of intense movement led that the Durgapur Steel Plant authority in collusion could not introduce the hated cluster system for 1 years. Free from any sectarian outlook this leader greatly attracted the workers. His sweet nature of culture, and affectionate mind had a deep impact on the hearts and sisters of many a workers' family. He was the guardian of them all in their woes and happiness. In the movement of the workers of the steel plant, he was the workers' struggles at different concerns at different points of time. Till his last breath he continued his struggle to build up his revolutionary character on the basis of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Besides being the Bardhaman District Committee member of the party he was elected the President of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani, Bardhaman District Committee, member of the West Bengal State Committee, All India Council and the General Secretary of the Federation of Indian Steel Workers.

A memorial meeting was held on 6 December. Comrade Manik Mukherjee, member, West Bengal State Secretariat, SUCI addressed the meeting as the main speaker to pay his tribute to the revolutionary character of departed Comrade Sinha.

states, whoever be in government and willing to stick to the power, will have to pursue the policy of globalisation in the interest of the capitalist class. He called upon all sections of employees to fight unitedly against the policy of globalisation. Comrade Chakraborty thanked the organisers for taking up such an issue of national importance and launching a serious agitation keeping their own interest aside

which has created an unprecedented example in the history of banktrade union movements. He hoped that the employees in IDBI would continue with the agitation.

Comrade B.K. Roy, Secretary, IDBI Employees Association at the beginning gave an account of the evil design of the central government to dismantle the IDBI. Comrade Jagannath Roymondal, presided over the seminar.

Assembly Elections

Contd. from page 2

Moreover, in all these three states, the Congress was in power and so centring around distribution of favour and other opportunities, as well as penchant for pelf and power group, conflicts and clashes within itself went to a dizzy height and surfaced nakedly. On the other hand, the greed and quest for being in power combined the various groups and warring factions within the BJP to put up a united face.

The BJP had one more advantage. Saddled in power at the centre, it took every initiative to establish an intimate relationship with the US imperialism through economic and military co-operation. And at the behest of the US rulers, it went on closing ties with the Zionist Israeli rulers. Its relations with the Bush administration is so intimate that the US authorities appreciated its political compulsions of impending parliament elections in not being able to send troops to Iraq. Also, at the instance of the US imperialism, Vajpayee government has, of late, started dialogue with Pakistan to normalize relations. Hence there has been an obvious tilt of the US administration towards the BJP which has also worked in its favour during the polls. So the BJP had the blessings of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie, the multinationals and big corporates who benefit in globalized economy and of the US imperialism. Accumulated effect of all these gave them an edge over the Congress at this juncture.

Democratic mass movement — only course

This election has once again

proved the mockery of bourgeois democracy. Some power greedy politicians immersed in utter corruption are indulging in the acts of total betrayal to the people. It does hardly matter to the common people as to who wins or loses. This is no way to defeat the menace of communalism either. It is imperative to build a massive united left democratic movement against the ruling capitalist class and the moribund capitalist system begetting all the burning problems of life. Class struggle has to be intensified to provide the desired political consciousness to the people for unraveling the truth and come out of the vortex of the bourgeois vote politics. This movement should also incorporate the essential task of waging an all-out war against communalism-fundamentalism. Unfortunately, the wrong politics of the CPI(M) and the CPI is impeding the process of building up the desired movement.

We call upon all left and democratic-minded people including the honest rank of the CPI(M), CPI to recognize the truth, realize the impending danger and come forward to organize a strong democratic mass movement which is the only course to uphold the genuine cause of the people. Even if the people intend to have some relief and respite, it could be possible only through intensification of such class and mass struggles. Movement alone can thwart the dogged persuasion of the communal agenda of the BJP and the rabid anti-people politics of the Congress.

Birds of the same feather !

The CPI(M) now finds a strange bedfellow in the BJP. Immediately on ascending the governmental throne in West Bengal 27 years back, the CPI(M)-Front announced abolition of pass-fail system in the school. And now M.M. Joshi, the Union HRD minister of the BJP has suggested to banish examinations up to class VIII. "Failure is a stigma," laments Joshi, "which is carried throughout the life of a student. We don't want to be a nation of failures." So, in order to avoid failures, he has preferred to see that there is no occasion to fail. Automatically, the students would get promoted to higher classes without any test or scrutiny of their comprehension. Thus the Joshi Ministry feels it would bring a cooperative atmosphere in place of cut-throat competition and relieve the children of their pressure.

See ! What the CPI(M) thought in '70s is now being appreciated by the Hindutva mouthpiece. The guardians and students of this state are well aware to what standard education has stooped to after this policy together with abolition of English at primary level were put into action. Joshi might also be aiming at the whole country turning to West Bengal condition in no time.

(Source : *Times of India*, 11-12-2003)

Wealth of Monstrous MNCs

Globalization or the concept of free market economy that the capitalist-imperialist camp eulogizes so much as panacea for all ills no doubt has multi-faceted ramifications. A recent survey published in the Economic Times dated 11.12.03 shows that the present day globalized apparatus run by transnational and multinational corporations, the carriers of globalized market economy are slowly taking over the economies of various countries. These big corporate giants owned by the tycoons have booked super profit through ruthless exploitation of the raw material and labour power round the globe to such an extent as to feature in 50 out of 100 largest economies. General Motors, the American automobile giant, with a revenue earning of \$1,86, 763 million in 2002 is bigger than Saudi Arabia and Turkey whose GDP

during the year were \$1,86, 489 and \$1,82, 848 million respectively. Exxon Mobil and Royal Dutch Shell are likewise bigger in financial strength than Denmark and Indonesia. Chrysler and Toyota stand above Finland and Thailand.

India recorded a GDP of \$5,15,012 million in that year while Wal Mart, the super market giant of the USA had a revenue earning of \$2,46,225 million. Two of such Wal Marts might overtake India in no time. What should one call it — a measure of economic development or saga of neocolonial penetration and enslavement ?

Add to this another data of economic strangulation. The richest one-sixth of the world population received 78% of world's income, the poorest three-fifths of the world's population received 6% of the world's income. Three richest people in the world have assets more than the combined annual product of the 68 poorest countries. (UN Human Development Report and World Bank statistics).

Hunger hits 12 m families in USA

Washington: Despite America's struggle with obesity, the US agriculture department says more and more families are hungry or unsure whether they can afford to buy food.

Some 12 million families last year worried they didn't have enough money to buy food, and 32 percent of them actually experienced someone going hungry at one time or another, said a USDA report on Friday.

Nearly 3.8 million families were hungry last year to the point where someone in the household skipped meals because they couldn't afford them. That's 8.6 percent more families than in 2001 when 3.5 million were hungry, and a 13 percent increase from 2000.

The report was based on a Census Bureau survey of 50,000 households. It marks the third year in a row the department found a rise in the number of people who are hungry or uncertain of whether they can afford their next meal.

It found more families are unsure if they can buy food or don't have enough food in their cupboards. Last year, 11 percent of 108 million families were in that situation. That's up 5 percent from 2001 and 8 percent from 2000.

Times of India, 2.11.03

SUCI Condemns Communal Clashes in Hyderabad

The State Organizing Committee of the SUCI expressed its grave concern over the recent incidents in old city of Hyderabad where some vested interests with the backing of some political parties were instigating communal clashes with the help of criminals. The SUCI demanded the government to take necessary steps to bring the situation under control. The party also demanded of the government to expedite the judicial enquiry and book the criminals who are responsible for the clashes.

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