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Salim Deal

CPI(M)'s ideological bankruptcy and total downfall exposed once again

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the CPI(M) politburo member and West Bengal chief minister accompanied by a large contingent of leading industrialists and senior bureaucrats, had been on a tour to Singapore and Indonesia last month to scout for mega scale FDI to the tune of around Rs.50,000 crore. After having a series of meetings with the president, prime minister and other top level government functionaries of Singapore, the CPI(M) leader also held discussions with the chambers of commerce and leading industrialists there. Then he went to Indonesia where he signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the Salim group, the largest business house of that country. As per the agreement, the Salim will invest around Rs.44,000 crore in West Bengal on urban development projects and the West Bengal government will make available 5,100 acres of land to them for the purpose. Urban projects include real estate development to accommodate big posh housing and shopping complexes, IT hubs, amusement parks etc., which are meant to cater to the rich and affluent. Salim will also build the necessary infrastructure for a new

special economic zone (SEZ) where, as one is aware, the capitalist owners are offered a host of concessions including exemption from tax and labour laws. The CPI (M) leader also gave an open invitation to the Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) who operate in the speculative capital market, by saying, "We are not looking for industrial finance only. We want FIIs to pump into our state."

CPI (M) pitches for reforms, globalization

Lest there is an iota of apprehension about the CPI(M) led government's sincerity to buttress the business motive of the foreign monopolists, the CPI(M) leader was also forthright in enunciating the political view of his party. "We have to reform our policies", observed the CPI(M) leader, "otherwise we will not be able to survive. ... We cannot speak anymore about dogmas. ... We learn truth from the facts, not from books ... globalization is a must. ... We have changed ... we must reform or perish." The message was crisp and simple to be well communicated to the capitalist class, captains of industry, foreign

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SUCI Vehemently Protests Latest Escalation of Petrol-Diesel Price

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 6 September, 2005 vehemently opposed yet another steep hike in petrol-diesel retail tariff, sixth time in succession after the Congress-led CPI(M)-CPI backed UPA government was saddled in power just sixteen months back. Needless to say, said Comrade Mukherjee, that this escalation of fuel prices would have a snowballing effect in pushing the general price line of essential commodities to a record high while the common people of the country groaning under the yoke of ruthless capitalist exploitation stand totally incapacitated to bear the brunt any more. Comrade Mukherjee warned that Damocles' sword is also hanging on the prices of LPG and kerosene and a hefty increase could be announced any day.

Rejecting the government's plea that fuel prices had to be increased to bring them at par with the rising global tariff, Comrade Mukherjee emphatically stated that this ready-made

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UTUC-Lenin Sarani's Call :

Make All India General Strike on September 29 a Grand Success

The Sponsoring Committee of Indian Trade Unions (comprising UTUC-LS, CITU, AITUC, HMS, AICTU, UTUC and TUCC) and some all-India federations, have given a call for a countrywide General Strike on September 29, 2005, to press their 16-point charter of demands. Calling upon the people to make this general strike a grand success, UTUC- Lenin Sarani, a party to the call, has issued an appeal. In the said appeal, it submitted the following brief analysis for clear understanding of the background the tasks ahead.

With each day passing in the

regime of globalization-liberalization unleashed by capitalists-imperialists, assaults from the ruling capitalist class on the working people get more and more intense and unbearable in every capitalist country, India no exception to it; capitalist exploitation, all over the world, has become yet more fierce and back-breaking. Needless to say, the aim and purpose of this economic policy have been the same from country to country of capitalist class rule and steps taken to implement it have also been, more or less, pre-planned and of similar nature, albeit varying

in details in conformity with local conditions. In India, to come to our concrete case, commercialization and privatization at random, closing down of public sector undertakings, with abolition of departments in central and state governments added to it, disinvestments and related attacks, have not only created unprecedented job insecurity among the public sector and government workers and employees but along with it, it has also brought down grave economic offensives on the life and livelihood of the common people of the country at large. In private sector too, the picture is

terrible. Rapid curtailment of workforce is taking place in the guise of modernization and downsizing being adopted in the name of structural economic reforms. Already, 305,000 workers have been thrown out of employment with VRS in industries including the giant ones like TISCO, TELCO, Siemens, Reliance, Grasim, etc. Alongside, 105,000 workers have lost their jobs in IT industry alone in 2000-01. According to another report, 700,000 small industries and 7000 medium scale and big industries

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Moribund capitalism can not spur industrialization

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monopolists, spokespersons of global imperialism and big moneybags that they need not attach any importance to the 'communist' signboard which the CPI(M) carries as a subterfuge. Rather they were convinced that the CPI(M)'s is a candid submission sharply contrasted to any kind of prevarication or absurd contortion. Under the cloak of Marxism-Leftism, the party is committed to serve the interest of the capitalists, both foreign and home-grown. Impressed by the pro-reforms pro-globalization stand of the CPI(M), the overseas business tycoons promptly equated the CPI(M) chief minister and his party with the Congress who initiated and has been meticulously pursuing policies of capitalist economic reforms and liberalization. Effusive in praise was Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Congress prime minister and the author of capitalist economic reforms in India. "I congratulate Bhattacharjee. I wish all chief ministers emulate him", said Dr. Singh. Even the chambers of commerce and leading industrialists of India burst forth in cheers and applause. Accolades were showered by the US ambassador in India as well. When reminded that the Salim group is not exactly a lily-white commercial operation and it was extremely close to former Indonesian dictator, Gen. Suharto, who butchered over 1 million communists, the CPI(M) chief minister nonchalantly remarked that he did not wish to see "the colour of the money." This sounded similar to the assertion of Deng Xiaoping, the capitalist-roader and chief architect of counter-revolution in China who is now the role model of the CPI(M) leaders that he did not mind whether the cat is black or white so long it catches mice.

When the bourgeois media seized this opportunity to pitchfork the CPI (M) chief minister as "christened Deng" for his determined reform drive and crusade against the basic tenets of communist ideology and projected the Salim deal as his brainchild, the CPI (M) politburo and central committee put a seal of approval to all his statements and actions thereby confirming that the West Bengal chief minister had only executed the policies and political directives of the party. The

CPI(M)'s open espousal for globalization-liberalization-privatization and exuberant invocation to FDI caused exhilaration in the imperialist-capitalist camp no doubt but there was severe criticism and condemnation from the well-meaning right thinking people round the country who could not tolerate this sickening sycophancy of exploiting oppressive capitalism spelling disaster in the people's life. Particularly the proposal to allot multi-crop yielding agricultural land to the foreign monopolists for real estate business by uprooting the peasants caused a row in the country. Even questions were raised at the lower rung of the CPI (M) as well as among its associates.

How CPI (M) defends Salim pact

In the face of this rage and wrath against the decision to placate foreign monopolists at the cost of poor farmers, the CPI (M) leaders swung into an act of damage containment through hoodwinking. They argued that the proposed mega investment from Salim would foster industrial growth and create substantial job opportunities. So there would be all round development of the state of West Bengal and benefits would percolate down to the lower end of the economy. Hence there was no harm in acquiring agricultural land and hand it over to Salim. But can such FDI spur industrial growth as claimed by the CPI (M)? What is the experience of the people?

Grim Industrial scenario

The industrial scenario is plagued with worst kind of recession and stagnation. Right from the days of independence, the ruling Indian bourgeoisie, despite all efforts, could not bring the desired tempo in industrialization. Rather with the passage of time, the situation became bad to worse. Everyday thousand of existing mills and factories are getting closed throwing millions of people out of job. In West Bengal itself, around 1.5 million workers lost job in the last 5 years and shutters were downed in about 50,000 industries. Damocles' sword is hanging on many of the running units. In the existing industries, there is a spree of lay-off, retrenchment, forced termination, compulsory retirement

and downsizing. There is practically a moratorium on recruitment. Vacancies are abolished. As against permanent employment, contract and casual labour system at much lower wage is taking over throughout the country even in the public sector units and government departments. West Bengal government itself is appointing contract and casual labour, not filling up vacancies. Side by side, no new employment generating industries in the core and manufacturing sector are coming up. Hence unemployment is skyrocketing everywhere. Only in West Bengal, there is over 7 million registered unemployed.

With introduction of globalization-liberalization, there is further curtailment in the job possibilities as more number of factories including a host of public sector units are being declared non-viable and hence either folded up or handed over to private monopolists after severe reduction in workforce and enforcement of stringent service condition of hire and fire removing the last vestige of job security. Foreign capital making forays in the domestic market through set up of limited highly mechanized capital intensive ventures mostly in the unproductive service sectors or real estate projects where manpower requirement is pegged down to almost nil. In the name of encouraging export promotion, bountiful of concessions including complete exemption from labour laws is granted to the entrepreneurs setting up projects in the SEZs.

Crisis-ridden capitalism impeding industrialization

This slide in industrial growth began from the time capitalism entered moribund stage posing stumbling block before the need of industrial production and social progress. As a concomitant to the motive of earning maximum profit in the capitalist law of production, there has been continuous fall in the purchasing power of the people leading to market crisis of the capitalist owners. With the passage of time, this crisis went on being accentuated and has now become an hourly predicament of capitalism. Immersed in this insurmountable crisis, world imperialism-capitalism, in a frantic bid to survive, is taking recourse to several measures like increased militarization of economy,

indulging in massive speculation in capital market and other areas, formation of various business blocks like European Union (EU) and South Asia Regional Council (SARC), free flow of capital across the border in the name of globalization-liberalization. Yet it is unable to find any way-out.

This is the stark reality. In this third phase of general intense crisis of moribund world capitalism, there is no scope for job-creating industrialization at private initiative. Even rich G-4, G-7 countries like US, UK, France, Germany, Japan are so crippled by crisis as to abandon productive industrialization and talk of jobless growth. Unemployment is thus soaring in each and every imperialist-capitalist country. Our country being ruled by the national bourgeoisie, an inalienable part of moribund decadent world capitalism, is no exception to this. There has hardly been any industrialization worth the term under private initiative. Immediately after independence, under public pressure some basic and manufacturing industries were set up in the public sector with public finance at the instance of the government creating limited employment opportunities. But because of all-out crisis of capitalism, public sector units also gradually became sick and either went out of production or handed over to private monopolists at throwaway price rendering millions of workers jobless. After globalization, there is a spurt of such privatization under the pretext of transforming these sick units into viable ones by drastically reducing workforce so that the monopolists receive a readymade infrastructure at least of cost. Naturally this huge exodus from closed or privatized state-sector units coupled with the innumerable workers being retrenched, laid-off, compulsorily retired or terminated in the private sector is getting added to the vast multitude of unemployed craving for a job that is eluding them in the absence of any employment generating industry.

Hoax of FDI-sponsored industrial growth

The foreign monopolists and Multi-national Corporations (MNCs) seeking out in the Indian market are not on a philanthropic

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Build up sustained organized struggle to resist capitalist onslaught

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have already closed down affecting 10 million workforce during the decade after globalization started in Nineties. In fact, the fast worsening economic condition under 58 years' exploitative capitalist rule since Independence, has been overtaken by a new type of horrid exploitation, destitution and deprivation during this regime of globalization. Now, capitalism aims at protecting and augmenting the maximum-profit-fetching interest of private enterprises in virtually all production activities of the country and by any and every means. Whatever little security of job and other fringe benefits were there, are being systematically robbed of.

In fact, reforming labour laws and relations has been one of the most striking agenda of the globalization regime. Avowedly the aim is to bring about so-called 'labour flexibility'. This again includes two types of changes. First, changes in the law to allow easy retrenchment and closure, which the government termed as exit policy. Second, the replacement of permanent labour by contract and casual labour, whereby the former enjoying the various legal rights, in particular job security, are replaced by a workforce that can be hired at cheaper cost and fired at will. Here again, this is a feature in all capitalist countries. In India the last BJP-led NDA rule at the Centre marked an ominous beginning. It tried with much verbosity to introduce a bill in the Parliament, ostensibly with a view to promulgating a comprehensive labour law, that really meant nothing other than shameless robbing of all rights of the working people to uphold and defend their demands through trade unions. In the face of countrywide resistance, it retraced its steps, but the move was not withdrawn; the danger remains as yet to come down on the workers at any opportune moment, if they remain unaware and unalert. In addition to it, or rather being obstructed to implement it, the government has adopted another trick. Cunningly, it is creating, what it calls 'Special Economic Zones', one after another throughout the country. Their only speciality lies in the fact that these are the zones of economic activity, meaning business and industry of capitalists of the soil as well as of foreign lands, in which

the workers would not have any right whatsoever. As a fallout of this so-called 'labour flexibility', tens of thousands of factories have been closed without legal formalities. Even as the pool of job-seekers steadily rise each year, total jobs in organized sector jobs have declined considerably both on account of closure and retrenchment and the decision of not filling up vacancies. In the organized sector alone, total employment fell by 1.2 million between 1997-03. The collusion of subservient bourgeois governments at the Centre and in the states with the managements' illegal actions was crucial to the success of these heinous measures. In other words, even without changing the formal legal situation drastically, changes were achieved as part of a concerted political drive by the ruling classes, both directly and through their subservient governments, their pliant media and their political outfits.

The Congress-led UPA government, supported and backed by the CPI(M)-CPI and their allies assumed office at the Centre in May, 2004, in the backdrop of the BJP-led NDA rule of 6 years. During its ascendancy, it played upon and made use of the tremendous resentment and indignation of people against the BJP-led NDA rule with scores of sugar-coated tall talks and claims. But just within 16 months of its rule, it has betrayed its real character proving itself no better than its predecessor. Immediately after assuming office, it began implementing the agenda of globalization with all vigour and ferocity. It also let loose a series of sinister economic assaults, for example, by way of steeply hiking prices of petrol and diesel twice within a span of two months and six times during its spell of 16-months' misrule. It immediately cut down P.F. interest rate, enhanced the proportion of FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in vital sectors of telecom, civil aviation and insurance. In the small-scale sector, the second largest employment generating sector of the country, it de-reserved 85 more items thus further squeezing the employment potential in the already abysmally squeezed job market.

This grave, ever-worsening situation thus left the working people with a singular alternative. For their survival and sustenance, for protection and preservation, let

alone extension, of their hard-earned rights against this ruthless onslaught of the ruling capitalists and their subservient governments, they have no choice but to develop sustained movement. UTUC-LS, in a letter addressed to all the central trade unions strongly urged for building up stage by stage this sustained movement of the workers. Comrade Krishna Chakraborti, Vice-President of the UTUC-LS, in course of his address in the National Convention held in Delhi on July 9, last categorically stated: We have to understand that the policies of globalization, liberalization and privatization, which are spelling disaster in people's life are the policies of the ruling monopolists of our country. These policies are wedded to safeguarding the vital interests of the ruling capitalist class and hence their implementation is not dictated by anybody's whims or mistaken notions. These are well-thought policies adopted in defence of the ruling class. Naturally, these policies cannot be changed at one stroke, simply by observance of one day's strike or so. The task is therefore to build up prolonged and powerful mass struggle bringing within its fold all section of toiling masses and working people gradually adding dimension to the struggle.

Unfortunately, the big trade unions like CITU or AITUC were not ready to accept this call for sustained movement. May be, as because their parents, the CPI(M)-CPI were co-operating with the ruling UPA government at the Centre and were sort of associated with it, their trade unions' were prompted to express unwillingness for sustained movement, lest that embarrassed their friends in power. The simmering discontent and seething indignation of the teeming millions of toiling people, however, compelled the CITU-AITUC, to accept ultimately at least the proposal of observing one day's countrywide general strike. Undeniably, the immediate task of the toiling people bearing heavily the whole brunt of capitalist exploitation, is to make the proposed countrywide General Strike on September 29, 2005 a total success as the first instance of resistance of the toiling masses against the onslaught. The charter of demands covers the most burning problems of life and livelihood of working people of the whole

country, and includes inter alia, the followings —

- (i) halt moves towards downsizing of work force and lift ban on recruitment;
- (ii) stop contractorization and casualization of labour;
- (iii) stop privatization and disinvestment of profit making and strategic sector, PSU-s including nationalized banks, telecom, airport, etc.;
- (iv) no privatization of public services and utilities;
- (v) revive sick units;
- (vi) constitute 6th Central Pay Commission;
- (vii) implement recovery of Non-Performing Assets (NPA) and unpaid tax arrears from corporate and big business houses;
- (viii) review 'The Electricity Act, 2003' and the National Electricity Policy;
- (ix) suitably amend the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill to ensure employment guarantee for the rural and urban unemployed within a definite time frame;
- (x) enact comprehensive legislation on service condition and social security for unorganized sector workers in general and agricultural workers in particular;
- (xi) take adequate measures for enforcement of all labour laws including minimum wages.

But people, at the same time, must realize that a successful strike for a day is not the end. Occurrence of the Gurgaon massacre perpetrated by the Congress-led Haryana government, acting in open and naked league with the Japanese MNC Honda management has proven blatantly how ferocious and brutal the capitalists and their subservient governments can become. How bestial could they turn into even in the face of a demand for simple trade union right raised by the Honda workers and employees, was witnessed by the whole country vividly on TV-screen. In that case, can it ever be expected that a mere one-day general strike would help workers realize their demands? The answer is an emphatic no!

Millions of toiling people of this vast country must realize this. They

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Against fuel price hike

SUCI observes All India Protest day

To protest the September 6 decision of the Congress-led UPA Government to raise the prices of petrol and diesel yet again, the fifth time it has done so since it assumed power, our party, SUCI, observed All India Protest day. Different programmes of movement were undertaken in different states of the country. Speakers in the meetings held in connection with the programmes highlighted that the excuse of rising global oil prices was just a hoax to raise prices and fill the

coffers of Indian monopolists and multinationals. The Indian government was out and out pro-capitalist and blatantly anti-people. It refuses to reduce the exorbitant tax and cess burdens imposed on petrol and diesel.

They also showed how the Indian working class and toiling millions could have withstood these attacks if the CPI(M) and CPI had not abandoned the path of people's democratic movements. There were ample instances of how

every time when the anti-people Congress had faced the people's wrath, it was these parties, especially the CPI(M), which came to its rescue.

SUCI called upon the people of the entire country not to accept such recurring economic assaults silently but to come out to develop mighty people's movement to force the government rescind its decision. Protests were made also in Ranchi, Gulbarga, Agartala, Anantapur and elsewhere.



Chennai, Tamilnadu



Surat, Gujarat



Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh



5 Left parties — SUCI, MCPI, CPI(ML-new Democracy), CPI(ML) and CPI(ML-Liberation) joint rally at Hyderabad, AP



Calcutta, West Bengal



Trivandrum, Kerala

All India Save Education Committee holds citizens' convention at Sagar

Sagar unit of All India Save Education Committee organized a citizens' convention in the city on July 31, 2005 on the occasion of Premchand birth anniversary, on the problems of education. It was participated by a good number of educationists and litterateurs, many of which addressed the convention. They included Sri Mahendra Pushkek, Prof. S K Chakraborty, Dr. Srinath Sharma, Dr. B K Srivastav

and others. Dr. Ramavatar Sharma, Secretary, MP State Committee of AISEC was the main speaker. They, all in one, voiced the need for universal, scientific and secular education and flayed at the attempt of the ruling capitalist class to privatize and commercialize education at all stages of it, thus snatching away the right to education from the poor and middle class students.

News of SUCI joining LJP alliance in Bihar is baseless

The Bihar State Committee of the SUCI, in a statement said that the news of the SUCI being a constituent of their so-called third alliance as circulated by Ram Vilas Paswan, the LJP leader, in a press conference, is totally baseless. At no stage, the SUCI had any talk with the LJP in this regard. Not only that our party is not a constituent of such kind of electoral combination, we are totally opposed to it. We have always attempted that the left parties should fight elections unitedly on the basis of a distinct left political line as a part of democratic mass movement, which could not materialize mainly due to the role of CPI(M)-CPI.

Gohana incident

SUCI demands action against culprits

On September 1, 2005, Comrade Hariprokash, Secretary of Sonapat District Committee, SUCI, visited the Valmiki Bustee at Gohana in Haryana, saw the burnt down houses and spoke to those affected by the heinous incident of arson and looting which took place the day before by the BJP and Sangh Parivar goons.

Such planned arson and looting of the houses of the Valmiki Bustee people, is an atrocity perpetrated against human rights of living with honour and security. This is unimaginable in democracy. More condemnable is the fact that police and administration, instead of stopping the miscreants, practically instigated them when they were engaged in such nefarious acts. Sonapat District Committee of our party has strongly condemned these acts and demanded : (1) Strict punishment

should be meted out to the miscreants involved in arson and looting on August 31 and to the perpetrator of killing of Baljeet Singh. (2) Compensation should be given to those, whose houses were burnt down and they should be properly rehabilitated. (3) Life and social security of the Valmikis should be guaranteed. Steps should be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur. (4) Strict penalty measures should be taken against the officers of district administration responsible for aiding and abetting the looting. (5) Congress government under Hunda should take the responsibility and be answerable as to why, despite prior warning given by the Panchayat, such an incident could occur.

Comrade Hariprokash was accompanied by the CPI Gohana Party Secretary, who also condemned the incident.

SUCI pays glowing tribute to Comrade Mao

On September 9 last, on the occasion of 29th death anniversary of Comrade Mao Zedong, the great Proletarian leader and the architect of the Chinese Revolution, a memorial meeting was held at Esplanade in the heart of the city of Calcutta under the auspices of the West Bengal State Committee of SUCI. The meeting was addressed by Comrade Provas Ghosh, West Bengal State Secretary and Member, Central Committee of the party and the main speaker. Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Member, Central Committee, SUCI presided over. In spite of severely inclement weather with continuous shower during the proceedings, a huge gathering of politically keen Calcutta people, including those who were in the thick of the left movement particularly during the sixties and seventies of the last century, attended the meeting. The meeting itself was singular in its instance in the city in paying homage in public to this great revolutionary of the world.

Comrade Provas Ghosh drew out, in details, the life-long arduous and complex struggle of Comrade Mao, in course of which he built the Chinese Communist Party with a new vigour fighting against all trends of left and right deviations,

successfully accomplished the New Democratic Revolution in China, a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country of poor, backward, agriculture-dominated Chinese society, propounded his famous military tactics, including those of carrying on guerilla fighting in rural bases and encircling cities with villages fitting perfectly with the concrete condition of the then China, even contributed to the treasure of Marxism-Leninism through his lucid and excellent discourses on the role of contradictions in change, on practice and theory, on developing united front against a common enemy on the principle of unity-struggle-unity, on different aspects of culture and morality indicating how even the illiterate toiling masses bore the highest traits of cultural values, and finally even in his old age, released the Cultural Revolution to protect and preserve socialism, which, the great proletarian leader and the founder General Secretary of our party, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, hailed as courageous and magnificent. All this elevated Comrade Mao to the stature of a giant communist authority to whom the revolutionaries and toiling people of the world would pay homage for still longer time to come.

The President, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya also highlighted how Comrade Mao with his theoretical and organizational brilliance and authority could organize and mobilize the entire population of an abjectly backward country like China into a revolution within a meagre span between 1935 and 1949 to become the real architect of the Chinese revolution.

He, too, made it elaborate that just as Lenin had blended the general theory of Marxism to the concrete tune of Russian people, Mao did the same for China and thereby developed the understanding of Marxism to a further height. After revolution, Comrade Mao not only carried out socialist reconstruction of China rapidly to make China grow phenomenally, even at his old age with failing health he conducted relentless struggle against modern revisionism in the historic Cultural Revolution. As Comrade Shibdas



Comrade Provas Ghosh addressing at Mao Zedong memorial meeting on 9 September in Calcutta

Ghosh pointed out, communists of the present day must start from that magnificent struggle of Comrade Mao, at same time launching intense ideological struggle against the new form of economism and socialist individualism, that stand in way of individual's identification with society, a danger Mao tended to recognize, though could not propound its theoretical-ideological shape on which it was to be fought against. Communist Internationale was rendered to end this august occasion.

Alternative Left combination holds successful Bandh in Bihar

To protest against the opportunistic and unprincipled grouping of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties like the BJP, Congress, CPI(M), CPI, JDU, RJD and others before the ensuing general election in Bihar, a left alternative Vam Jan Vikalp Manch (People's Left Alternative Platform) has been formed comprising the SUCI, MCPI, CCI, RSP and CPI-ML(Class Struggle) to fight the rot in the body politic of the state. This joint platform called Bihar Bandh

on 24th August last on people's burning issues against increasing extortion, murder, rape, dacoity, kidnapping in broad daylight, closure and lock-out of large number of factories, retrenchment, oil price hike in succession, deep rooted corruption, sufferings of the non-teaching staff of colleges and universities and against the all round anti-people policies of the state and Central governments. The Bandh came out as all-out success. A big demonstration led by Comrades Shiv



Demonstration in Patna in support of Bihar Bandh on 24 August

Shankar, Secretary, and Arun Singh, member, Bihar State Secretariat of the SUCI, Tarachand Prokash, Secretary, Bihar State Committee, RSP, Zamiruddin of MCPI, Nandkishore Singh of CPI-ML(Class Struggle), Partha Sarkar and Satish of CCI, traversed the Patna town shouting slogans in support of the demands behind the bandh. Police arrested the leaders along with more than hundreds of SUCI workers and others of different parties at the Dak Bunglow crossing.

During preparation for the Bandh, in Vaisali district, SUCI workers including Comrade Indradeo Roy, 250 SUCI workers in Muzaffarpur district, SUCI workers in Bhagalpur including Comrades Sadhana Mishra, Deepak Mondal, activists including district secretary Comrade Deepak Kumar and Promode Kumar in Munghyr district were arrested. In Banka, Darbhanga, Gaya, Aurangabad, Rohtas, Jehanabad, Begusarai and Bhojpur, hundreds of SUCI activists were arrested by the police to foil the bandh, though in vain.

Anantapur AIDSO holds education convention

At Hindupur, Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh, AIDSO organized a huge convention on August 23, 2005 on the Supreme Court's ruling on professional education. Comrade Govindarajulu President, AIDSO, AP State Committee addressed the convention as the Chief Guest. He condemned the ruling as creating a hindrance for the poorer students to receive higher education and insisted that admission to professional colleges should be based on merit. He also demanded that at least 10% of the central budget should be allotted for education. Among other speakers were professors Sri S Sudhakar and Sri Abdul Aleem and AIDSO leaders Comrade M Basavaraju and Comrade R Gangadhara. Hundreds of students and teachers enthusiastically took part in the programme.

Evicting peasants for jobless urbanization is criminal

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mission to resolve our unemployment problem nor are they under any obligation to accept any term from any of the governments here. Salim or any such vendor of FDI knows very well that beggars are no choosers—the government will either have to accept its terms of offer or leave it. Their sole motive is to usurp maximum profit by exploiting the cheap labour, raw material and plethora of trade and commerce related concessions like SEZs that the recipient government provides them. Hence they canalize their investment only in selective highly capital-intensive tech-savvy projects where only a miniscule skilled workforce is engaged on casual or contract basis at stringent terms and low wage. The principle of appointment in such FDI-sponsored ventures is “hire and fire”. How many people were absorbed in the much clamoured Haldia Mitsubishi plant in West Bengal? May be a few hundred. As against the promise of providing jobs to half a million in Haldia Petrochemicals, the actual figure has not crossed even ten thousand. How do the recruitment figure in the much-hyped IT hub in Calcutta’s special economic zone in Salt Lake compare with the millions of workers shunted out everyday from other industries?

In such a milieu, where is the scope for nursing illusion of employment generation through FDI-sponsored routes? Notably, the bourgeois media has also been lashing out propaganda that for spurring industrialization and development, door must be opened to foreign capital at any cost and any opposition to such moves is retrograding and smacks of dogmatic predilections. That is why the CPI(M) leadership is so desperate to prove that they are estranged from any such ‘dogma’ that impairs the class interest of crisis-stricken imperialism-capitalism gasping in its death throes and in return receiving profuse praise and extensive coverage in the media.

So it is clear that today, there can be no industrial growth at the initiative of private capitalists. Under the circumstances, only the government, if compelled by the pressure of people’s movement, could take some efforts to establish job-creating industries on a limited

scale as happened after independence in compliance with people’s demand. But neither the central government under the Congress, the BJP or any other combination nor the CPI(M) who has been running the West Bengal uninterruptedly for 28 long years took any initiative in this regard. Nor has the CPI(M) exerted any effective pressure on the central government to do so. On the contrary both the central and state governments raising the plea of sickness have been generously gifting away the state-sector units to the private monopolists accepting dismissal of the workers en masse. Even in neighbouring Assam, three oil refineries had to be set up in public sector to give some reckoning to the public opinion. But the CPI(M) had no intention whatsoever to walk that way. The same CPI(M) leaders now want people to believe that they are interested in mitigating the problem of unemployment and hence are providing red carpet to Salim and others. This is perfidy at its best.

Salim to promote urbanization for the rich

One should also not lose sight of the fact that Salim group is not transferring the money to the CPI(M) led government so that the latter could use the same for choosing its own technology and creating maximum number of jobs. The proposed outlay is for building projects on the land specified by the group, using technology of its choice to ensure that it generates maximum returns on the capital employed to be ploughed back as super profit for being taken outside the country. Moreover Salim is not investing for augmenting industrialization either. It is promoting, as we stated earlier, urbanization, realty, service activities of the luxury kind. The plan is to create a beehive of facilities like golf course, swimming pools, star hotels, glitzy shopping malls, entertainment plazas, modern housing complexes, world class health cities and so forth which will cater to the rich, affluent, moneyed business travelers and tourists. Even the few high-tech IT firms and food-processing units Salim is talking about will be in the SEZs which, as mentioned before, are to remain outside the orbit of national tax and labour laws enabling it to

fleece and squeeze the workers at will.

CPI(M) foresees domestic help’s job for evicted peasants

The CPI(M) leaders are claiming that Salim will create 30,000 jobs. Assuming the figure to be not an exaggerated one as is apprehended by many, what type of jobs would that be other than that of contract and casual labour at low wage in the SEZs? Therefore a question is correctly raised by some quarters including peripheries of the CPI(M). Will not the employments and earnings in fact decline if the loss of agricultural outputs and farm employment consequent to transfer of arable land is matched against precipitation of limited jobs in the SEZs? The CPI(M) leaders are of course too enthusiastic about a unique variety of egalitarianism that they have in store for the land losers in the Salim deal. According to them, the evicted peasants will be absorbed as barbers, gardeners and domestic helps in the proposed enclaves of the rich. To what low can one stoop to rejoice at owners of cultivable land being forced to become domestic hands.

Ominous consequences of transferring agricultural land

Obviously the question that arises next is why then should arable agricultural land be acquired by displacing thousands of peasants who, in this harrowing job scenario, are at least trying to eke out a living from whatever little land they possess? Already there is galloping rise in the number of landless peasants and agricultural workers who do not have work even for two months a year. So precarious is the condition that even government is talking in terms of providing them 100 days’ job. As per agriculture census, 2, 91,620 acres of cultivable land has already been lost in the country because of conversion for commercial use in last 5 years. Statistics also reveal that in West Bengal, 2.4 million peasants have become landless agricultural labourers in the past 15 years. Over and above this, if 15,000 more peasant families are uprooted from land because of Salim, where will the influx be absorbed? Had it been so that there was enough scope for permanent gainful employment of sufficient number of people including their progenies, there

could have been no objection to such land transfer and mass eviction. But in absence of that, and knowing fully well that the Salim is no sorcerer to generate jobs through industrial growth, is not such a move to uproot the poor peasants from land tantamount to strangulating them to death?

Eviction to turn peasants into beggars

The CPI(M) is propagating that the evicted peasants will receive adequate compensation and alternative employment. The CPI(M) minister of industries in West Bengal has even given a calculation as to how the bank interest from the deemed amount of compensation will generate a surplus income for the displaced peasants. But the facts of experience bear the other reality. Over 34,000 peasant families were forced to vacate their land holding including multi-crop yielding stretches to make room for sprawling township of Rajarhat and Bantala leather complex. A few hundred more families were dispossessed of land for the similar realty projects in Howrah and Hooghly districts. They have either not received any payment so far or paid compensation much lower than prevalent market price. Contrary to the assurances of the government and the CPI(M) bigwigs, no alternative livelihood was made available to them. Moreover, in absence of any gainful engagement and enmeshed in debt-trap, can any of these families afford to save their money in banks? Rather, they will soon exhaust whatever paltry sum they receive and turn into beggars for generations.

Pernicious fallout of extinguishing arable land

There is another very serious issue related to this deal. Experts of agriculture and food production are saying that currently agricultural production has come to a stalemate situation as fertility of the land is not increasing. According to them, law of diminishing return has set in. Despite so much hue and cry about technological development, the yield of crop in rural India is still at the mercy of the quantum of rainfall in monsoon. And having regard to the increase in population, it is incorrect to claim self sufficiency in food. In view of this, there is no

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SUCI hails victory of people's movement against power tariff hike in Delhi

Comrade Pratap Samal, Secretary, Delhi State Organising Committee of SUCI, in a Press statement on September 6, 2005 maintained :

"The rollback of the 10 percent tariff hike by the Delhi Government is an unprecedented victory of a people's movement in the Capital. ... There had developed to a feeling of deep pessimism in some sections of the common people about the potential of political activity and people's movements against the seemingly all-powerful policies of liberalisation, globalisation and privatisation backed by the capitalist State and political parties in the service of the ruling capitalist class. That pessimism has been decisively broken by this victory of the people's movement in Delhi against the electricity tariff hike. The movement was largely launched under the of the Residents' Welfare Associations from various parts of the Capital

which launched a civil disobedience movement, refusing to pay enhanced bills, giving a mass character to the movement. ... It was the people's movement that clearly spearheaded the opposition to the tariff hike.

The Delhi Government disgraced itself by threatening the RWAs with dire consequences if they went ahead with their civil disobedience movement. ... Finally, it bowed to people's pressure and withdrew the tariff hike, but with a completely unacceptable formula. Half of the deficit created by the withdrawal of the tariff hike will be met by a subsidy given by the Government, clearly helping private companies.

While hailing this people's victory and the energising effect it has on people's movements, SUCI feels that it is necessary to politically deepen and spearhead the current movement against the policy of privatisation itself...."

Salim Deal

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cogent reason for jeopardizing the current production level and that too in a state like West Bengal which is stated to be relatively better off in food production. Whatever might the CPI(M) leaders say, the truth is that in densely populated West Bengal it is impossible to identify fallow, unutilized or unutilizable plots that are contiguously arranged and add up to 5100 acres as requisitioned by Salim. So acquisition of multi crop yielding, fertile land in significant volume is inevitable. The same had happened while lands for Rajarhat and Bantala complexes in the agglomerate of Calcutta were taken over. The CPI(M) leaders contend that the peasants had voluntarily surrendered the land. But fact is their cultivable land was filled up with mud at the dead hours of night to complete the process of acquisition. In whose interest, the CPI(M) is sounding death knell for the peasants?

Resist the sinister move tooth and nail

So viewed from all angles, the deal proves to be not only a farcical exercise to fool around people but fraught with serious ramifications. If

this policy goes unchallenged, then more and more agricultural land will be transferred to serve the class-interest of the indigenous and foreign monopolists. Not only millions of peasants will become beggars, even food production will be affected. So the Salim package is a deliberate fraud on the people, consigning them into more misery, penury and ruination. It is nothing but a pre-election warming exercise to secure another term by foxing people with the illusion of spurt in industrialization financed by foreign imperialists and winning the confidence of the ruling capitalist class through total capitulation. This is what the CPI (M) leaders have "learnt from the facts" as enunciated by the revisionists and counter-revolutionaries like Deng Xiaoping, Khrushchev, Breznev, Gorbachev, to "survive" in the corridors of power. The chicanery of these pseudo-Marxists has to be laid bare. The downtrodden oppressed people from all walks of life must come forward and organize massive movements to frustrate this pernicious move and sinister design of evicting poor peasants from land to subserve the profit need of foreign monopolists.

Make Successful All India General Strike

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must be ready to carry on their movements on the demands included in the charter till they are realized. Only the sustained organized movement can enable the struggling working people attain the objectives of realizing their immediate as well as offering resistance, at least to some extent, to the severe onslaught that is being perpetrated on the people by the Indian capitalist and their subservient governments in connivance with and being pressed upon by the foreign imperialists and their institutions and contrivances like WTO, World Bank

and others.

Under the circumstances, we call upon the common people of India, who are reeling miserably under the capitalist-imperialist globalization-liberalization, to muster all courage and determination to rise up to the occasion. Remaining alert of the weak-kneed role of social democratic forces in the workers' movements, they must build up and intensify the long, sustained movement as demanded by the situation. They must not forget, whatever be their plight at present, history stands in their favour and only in their favour !

Orissa Convention on September 29 General Strike

At the call of the National Level Convention held on July 9, 2005 in Delhi, a State Level Convention was organized by all the central trade unions and federations at Bhubaneswar on August 21 last under a presidium including Sambhu Nath Nayak, Secretary UTUC-LS Orissa State Committee, Sibaji Pattanaik of CITU, Basudev Samal of AITUC, Jogendra Tripathy of HMS and Judhistira Mohapatra of AICCTU. Sixteen point demands on which countrywide general strike has been called on September 29 next was discussed in the convention. They included a comprehensive legislation for unorganized workers particularly the agricultural workers, ban on disinvestments in profit-making industries, legislation for stopping atrocities on women, specially those working in factories etc. On behalf of the UTUC-LS Comrade Raghunath Das addressed this joint

gathering of workers and employees. He emphasized the need of immediate withdrawal of all anti-people policies of the UPA government, asserting simultaneously that there was no difference between the present government and the former NDA government insofar as implementation of policies of globalization and curtailment of workers' and employees' rights were concerned. He also pointed out how the Congress-led UPA government is making calculated moves to give effect to its economic reforms policies. He urged upon the government to amend the Bill for 100 days' job so as to guarantee job for unemployed not just for hundred days, but for the entire year and to withdraw the anti-farmer Seed Act, 2004. Souris Bandhu Kar, Bishnu Mohanty, Jogendra Tripathy, Radha Kanta Sethi and others also spoke on the occasion.



Protest demonstration at Patna, Bihar on 8 September against the hike in the prices of petrol and diesel. (More photos and news on page 4)

In the last week of August of 2005 Hurricane Katrina struck the southeastern coast of USA causing widespread devastation in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and particularly New Orleans. According to estimates not less than ten thousand perished and thousands are still in hospitals, and lakhs of people are passing their days shelterless or have lost their shelters. People died like subhuman beings in New Orleans and elsewhere hit by the hurricane. The aftermath was no less horrible. Even after six days, in Louisiana three lakhs people remained confined in hurricane-hit areas, complained Louisiana Governor himself. In superdoms and convention centres where the calamity victims were provided with shelter, the conditions were worse than that of ghettos. Totally bereft of any rescue measures, for want of food, medicine, oxygen in even hospitals, the surviving population in New Orleans ran amuck. Looting and killing gripped the populace unhindered, police went off the region. Dead bodies floated and were strewn on the streets even after six days of the calamity—a scene of 'hell' and 'doomsday' as described by the survivors. Curfew was clamped. At last even military was pressed into operation to tackle the law and order situation. In short, the whole scenario turned to be a horrible admixture of war in peace time and natural calamity in a 'most civilized' country on the earth!

People of the world beholding such scenes in TV and knowing it from the print media were astonished how such things could happen in a country which boasted of being the economically richest and technologically most advanced in the world. They asked: was this hurricane unwarranted or accidental like earthquake? Even it be so, does such cruelly messy affair happen even in a developing or underdeveloped country? Was there any dearth of men, money or material in the country to meet the disaster? Everybody knows that the answer is emphatically NO.

Before hitting New Orleans on 28th August, the hurricane hit Florida on 26th and that it was building up in the Gulf of Mexico, was known to the US administration at least three days before August 28th. But the government took no precautionary measure before 28th and did not evacuate the vulnerable population. "Actually, the

Hurricane Katrina exposes the ugly anti-people face of US democracy

government did not evacuate anyone. The authorities simply declared a mandatory evacuation and then left it to the people to get out", reports Workers' World, New York on September 8. But the poor people, mostly black had nowhere to go as they had no means of transportation, even bus fare. They, 70 % of the population, stayed put in the hurricane endangered areas knowing their doom was at their doorsteps. This was actually not a surprise. The local newspaper of New Orleans, Times-Picayune reported in 2002 that the city's 1,00,000 residents without private transportation were likely to be stranded by any big storm. Nearly 80% of New Orleans lies below sea level, more than eight feet below at places. After the hurricane, water reached 25 feet over parts of the city. Knowing this geographical position of the city and the very much hurricane-prone climate of the southeastern gulf coasts of the country, several newspapers including National Geographic Magazine in an issue in October 2004 warned of such possible disaster in a tale-telling description which tallies in toto with the condition on 28th August in New Orleans. Houston Chronicle of December 2001, citing a report of Federal Emergency Management Agency, also warned similarly. A consortium of government agencies recommended that three to four billion dollars was needed for projects to avert disaster if a hurricane swept New Orleans. But the US administration which spent 4 billion dollars per month in Iraq occupation and in the name of establishing democracy in other countries perpetrated unlimited destruction and annihilation of lakhs of people in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere did nothing for their own people.

Why was this criminal negligence and apathy to the people of New Orleans and other Katrina-hit areas? Because, as revealed and widely alleged, 70% of the inhabitants of New Orleans are black and more so poor, ruthlessly exploited and dispossessed; 95% of the Katrina victims are poor black

people denied of the minimum humane attention by the US rulers. That is why, the US administration was so insensitive to the approaching hurricane and relief was so inept, which was unthinkable even in a third world country. More serious and despicable side of this beastly act of Bush administration was that it scrapped emergency measures to pay for the predatory war efforts in Iraq. Even after the warning of the hurricane, 80% of flood prevention funds were slashed and work on levees for protecting New Orleans was stopped to finance the war. Such was the criminal attitude of the US administration and nature of its commitment to the security of lives of the people of their own country. Hurricane Dennis of category 5, more dangerous than Hurricane Katrina of category 4, had hit Cuba this year, but the socialist government of Cuba mobilizing the common people and the army successfully evacuated 1.5 million people and the casualty of lives was only 16, whereas the US administration evacuated practically none and the casualty was over

10000 lives. Again this socialist government of Cuba under ruthless economic embargo for over 40 years imposed by the US imperialists sent a team of 1000 doctors with 25 tons of medicines for relief of the New Orleans people! And imperialist US government had no option but to accept it to cope with the ghastly aftermath created by their apartheid character and sheer neglect to the poor.

According to US Census Bureau report of 2003, 36.5 million people, mostly black, in America is poor, which constitutes more than 12.1% of the total population. New Orleans people are only a part of it. US imperialism always preaches of democracy, claims it to be a 'heaven' of mankind and the protagonists of bourgeois cry hoarse of US democracy. But this Katrina Hurricane has now completely shattered the myth and unmasked the ugly face of the American democracy and the bourgeois democracy, as well, at one stroke. However this is quite natural because in every capitalist country the ruling class exploits the working class and the have-nots to the extreme, to fulfill the interests of the owning class. And they care for a fig for the loss of life and property of the downtrodden. Hurricane Katrina episode only proves this truth to the hilt.

SUCI Protests Escalation of Petrol-Diesel Price

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pretext is a hogwash as the government could, had it so intended, spare the people from such periodic price hikes by reducing the exorbitant tax and cess imposed on petrol and diesel. But what is more indignant is that the government is also not taking any step to mount vigorous international pressure upon the international oil cartel headed by the US imperialists who is arbitrarily and whimsically hiking the global oil price to squeeze the people world over, to force it desist from launching such offensives.

Comrade Mukherjee also strongly deplored the role of the pseudo-Marxists like the CPI(M), CPI who while shedding crocodile tears for the plight of the common people, are repeatedly allowing the Congress-led government to get

away with such unilateral price increases when they could well nigh force the government to roll back such hikes by exerting on it sufficient pressure including threat to withdraw support, thereby making it amply clear that this mock opposition is a sheer deception purported to fool and hoodwink the people. Observing further on this hypocritical behaviour of the CPI(M)-CPI, Comrade Mukherjee said, perhaps they do not consider such savage economic onslaughts that serious an issue as to cause any embarrassment to the Congress-led government.

Comrade Mukherjee called upon the people of the entire country not to accept such recurring economic assaults silently but come out to develop mighty people's movement to force the government rescind its decision.

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