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Students from 21 states observe Historic 50 years of AIDS with Pledge and Determination

The end of the year 2004 was made memorable with the historic 50th Anniversary observance by the All India Democratic Students' Organization. The city of Calcutta woke up to witness a solemn celebration through the three days, 27 to 29 December. It was marked by an exhibition of collages and posters with photos, paintings and news of historic events and movements of AIDS's struggles as well as memorable quotations of noble personalities, a historic rally of students coming from all 21 states of India and a Reunion of AIDS leaders, organizers, cadres, supporters and sympathizers of all this fifty years of the life and history of the organization.

On 27th December 2004 students from all

over India, young and bright, ardent in their devotion and determination converged on to College Square, Calcutta — the place bearing the heritage of long struggles particularly of students in pre and post-independence India to attend the 50th Anniversary celebration of the AIDS. Between 27th and 29th December, the AIDS

Message from Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

Friends,

On the occasion of completion of 50 years of the AIDS, students from schools, colleges and universities all around the country have assembled in Kolkata to learn correctly the significance of fifty years of struggle of their organization. You need to understand the root cause of why this deep crisis grips education, culture and ethics all over the country. Why the ruling capitalist class is restricting education, instead of universalizing it? Why the rulers reducing education into a commodity, commercializing and communalizing it. What makes them

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee urges relief on warfooting for quake and tsunami victims

Expressing deep shock and sorrow over the sudden death of thousands of people as a result of severe earthquake and tidal wave which hit mostly of the southern and south-eastern coastal belt of the country bringing in its trail severe destruction and devastation, in the early morning of December 26, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on the same date urged upon the central and concerned state governments to undertake rescue and relief work at warfooting and leave no stone unturned in easing this severe natural calamity. He also called upon the people of the country to stand by the side of the affected people and extend all forms of co-operation to mitigate their sufferings.

of collages and posters with photos, paintings and news of historic events and movements of AIDS's struggles as well as memorable quotations from the works of noble personalities. The exhibition was inaugurated as the initial programme by Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, one of the founder organisers of the AIDS and

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A part of the historic students' rally in Calcutta on 28 December, 2004

November 17 Bangla Bandh

Court verdicts and their implications

When SUCI called a West Bengal Bandh on 17 November last, against exorbitant rise in petrol and other fuel prices and on a number of other demands, the Calcutta High Court, deliberating on an appeal by a few individuals, declared the Bandh illegal, referring to the Supreme Court verdict to this end. The latter verdict of the highest court of the country, made on 12 November 1997, had come in sequel of a decision of the Full Bench of the High Court of Kerala arrived at on 28 July 1997. On original petitions by two citizens of Cochin and by the various Chambers of Commerce of Kerala, respectively in 1994 and 1995, the High Court of Kerala had concluded in that decision that "the calling for a bandh by any association, organization or political party and the enforcing of that call by it is illegal." Notably, the issue cropped up in Kerala that CPI(M), the party claiming itself as leftist, holds as one of its citadels. They have been in the government in Kerala many times and for long periods. Even such being the background, the party did not take to the course of releasing mass movements in real vehement opposition to the Kerala High Court order exposing the danger it spelt for the people. Rather, it preferred to take to the legal course that ultimately proved abortive. In regard to the appeal from CPI(M) to the Supreme Court, the latter decided in the aforesaid verdict that they were "in agreement with the view taken by the (Kerala) High Court." Thus the thoughtless act of that party, instead of securing redress for people, helped the Kerala High Court verdict earn sanction of the Supreme Court.

This verdict of the highest judiciary of the country may have made the ruling capitalists and their henchmen in society and government gleeful and enthusiastic. But the vast masses of common working people, as also right-thinking intelligentsia including eminent jurists have, on the other hand, been shocked at this unwarranted intervention of the judiciary on people's right to live and launch movement for their mere survival. The move, they realize, will emasculate people, robbing them of one of their basic, inherent rights, that is the right to protest, so

vital for earning and securing the minimum basic needs for survival. By its very nature, it stands against the basic tenet of democracy, that the democratic system, its institutions are built upon the sovereign power of people. Hence all its organs, the judiciary, the executive and others, have to pass through tests and trials on the anvil of acceptability by that sovereign will and power of people. The present act of the judiciary curtailing the basic right of people to protest thus infringes upon that sovereignty of people and deals a mortal blow to the roots of democracy itself. Thus, it is not just undemocratic, it smacks of fascism, in its wake. We feel it incumbent on us that we make a thorough analysis to bring out why the issue is vital for people's life and how dangerous the recent undue interference of the judiciary really is.

Let us start with a few points with reference to the November 17 Bangla (West Bengal) Bandh. In its deliberation on banning of bandh referred above, the Supreme Court itself stated at the beginning that 'It is true that there is no legislative definition of the expression 'bandh'. It means there was no legal, or constitutional provision for imposing a ban. Yet quite arbitrarily, without such provisions, the Court which is generally supposed to interpret and enforce laws, raised the point of individual's right being curbed by bandh and then infringed upon people's right to protest. We are constrained to say that if it starts moving this way beyond legality with bandh, it may end up anywhere in defence of the interest of the prevailing order of capitalism going against the interest of the society at large, its vast majority of suffering people and social progress in truest sense of the term.

The Supreme Court has tried to differentiate at length between general strike or hartal on one hand and bandh on the other, asserting that bandh has an ingrained element of force in forcibly making people comply with the bandh call. Insofar as hartal, general strike or bandh all aim at involving the vast majority of common people in support of a just demand of their life and living, we must submit, it is meaningless to differentiate among these. And on the question of applying force, it depends primarily on the attitude of

the government itself: whether it takes up, to appease owners — industrialists- monopolists, the heinous role of strike-breaker, threatening or even forcibly coming down upon peaceful bandh-makers. Will anybody advise the bandh-organizers to swallow all attacks peacefully and succumb? Then again, the question of applying force also depends on politics and culture of the party or organization calling the bandh, their confidence in convincing people of the cause and their acceptability with the latter, their place in people's life and heart. In fact, the November 17 Bengal Bandh called by SUCI was a clear example of a bandh without force, admitted even by ministers of the Front Government of West Bengal.

Then again, the argument raised that a bandh creates obstacles and infringes upon individual's right to livelihood for the daily wage earners and other poorer sections of masses, right to avail of necessary medical facilities etc., is also manifest of posing the question in a tricky way. Are those who argue thus ignorant of the fact that essential and emergency services of life are exempted from the purview of bandhs and in particular, for critical or special cases, conscientious bandh-organizers always show enough flexibility to meet a request from concerned persons? What do they say when 80-percent or more of the population of the country are deprived of their basic minimum needs of life? What do they do when millions of daily wage-earners, not to speak of the unorganized sectors, even those of organized industries, lose their job and bread from rampant lay-off, lock-out, closure, merger of industries in series due to loss of market of the crisis-ridden capitalist system itself? How do they take it when thousands and thousands of daily wage earners and other workers of cities and villages frantically run about in search of a job of whatever-kind-it-be to provide them with the minimum support for their bare sustenance? What answer do those arguing about 'people's inconvenience' have for hapless victims who face even death in hospitals because of their inability to meet exorbitant rise in medical charges or lack of infrastructure, maladministration

and sheer callousness? What would they say about increasing number of deaths from starvation and malnutrition, suicide of peasants from abject poverty and debt trap and such others? They evade these realities, yet shed crocodile tears for the poor. They create confusions, to curtail for ever the right to disobey and protest, the minimum weapons these suffering people still have for them and are prepared to exercise that right even forsaking a day's earning or daring punishment as a price of joining the movement. Are not those posing sympathetic for the poor, really curtailing individual's right to stay away from their work in positive response to the bandh call? Is not it then a mere design for curbing movement?

In regard to West Bengal Bandh called by SUCI on November 17, the role of the Front Government, particularly the party of CPI(M), is also noteworthy. When the Calcutta High Court, referring to the Supreme Court, imposed ban on that bandh, the CPI(M) and its government simply issued threats to give effect to the court order. They warned government employees of a day's pay-cut; they let loose police on peaceful demonstrations of SUCI activists on the Bandh day; they ran a more-than-normal contingent of state buses and trams on roads at the cost of people's money only to ply virtually void of passengers. Yet how the people of the entire state reacted calmly and coolly in favour of SUCI's call has been amply demonstrated to everybody.

We may now pass on to a few general yet relevant points.

As already said, the recent moves of the judiciary under scanner are contrary to the law and Constitution of the land, going also against jurisprudence. In human civilization, during the course of its development and progress, there have arisen a number of individual and collective rights, that, in their turn, have paved way for further progress. Thus the democratic revolution produced for the first time in human history, concepts, thoughts and values built thereupon like democracy, democratic right, individual freedom and sovereignty, sovereignty of people to choose their forms of governance, parliamentary institutions, modern system of judiciary, Rule of Law and Constitution.

Through long and arduous fight, the newly emergent class of bourgeoisie strove to free society

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BJP's Resurgent Swaggering of Hindutva Semaphores Fascist Assault

In the national executive committee meeting at Ranchi on November last, the BJP made it clear that it would vigorously pursue the communal Hindutva agenda in the days to come. "If anybody tries to take cover of secularism to indulge in anti-Hindu politics and statecraft, the BJP will stand in their path like a rock." — declared the BJP top brass. Though under the compulsion of running a coalition for being saddled in power, the BJP had to camouflage its rabid communal face by talking about "developmental focus", "shining India" etc., it, as political front of the RSS, never for a moment moved an inch away from the vile doctrine of Hindu fundamentalism to score in the electoral game. Successive defeats in the 14th Parliamentary election and the Maharashtra state assembly election put the party in total disarray and mutual bickering, group squabbles and mud-slinging surfaced with all virulence. Even there have been mounting dissent and open revolt at the highest level. To steady the rocking boat, Advani, known for his blunt advocacy for RSS-ideology was brought back as party president. On assuming the chair, Advani made no delay in reiterating Hindutva as the ambrosia for raising the sagging morale and went to the extent of saying that "the BJP is the chosen instrument of the Divine" to rule the roost in India. And to reconfirm that the "Divine's choice" has been on the basis of Hindutva, Vajpayee, deliberately projected by the BJP think-tank as a "moderate" so as to enable him play the role of a shrewd manipulator in the politics of exigency through bouts of somersaults in public utterances and postures, too, had to bare his communal fang by saying "There is no contradiction between Hindutva and Bharatiyatva (Indianness)..... The issue is to preserve the ethos and take it forward."

Communal distortion of Indian nationhood concept

It may be recalled that the RSS-BJP had all along been eloquent over a Hindu identity of the Indian people, exhorting their own interpretation of Hinduism as Hindutva and calling it a "way of life". They had been consistently

trying to administer this cooked-up political-social-cultural theory, draped in the fabric of a contrived philosophy to confuse the people. Now to reassert that, they have once again raised the issue of bracketing Hindutva with Indianness — a proposition estranged from and discarded by the testimony of history and science and thus is a blot upon the civilized world.

The import of such deliberate assertions by these self-seeking agents of communal politics is ominous, having pernicious ramifications and indicative of persuasion of a sinister design to drive the people without relent towards communal and parochial chasm drifting the country into a dark and disastrous future. Historical concept of nationhood, the process of growth and development of a nation and the very history of emergence of Indian nationalism would show how hollow the claim of the RSS-BJP is. Students of political economy know that nation is a historical category belonging to a definite epoch in history, history of rising capitalism. It is no endowment of any religion or, as the RSS-BJP gleefully proclaim, a geo-cultural concept. History and science have established beyond doubt that the material condition of thoughts and ideals appears first and then, on that base, emerge and develop thoughts, concepts. Every thought, sense of values, moral principles, social structure, pattern of governance, outlook and practice has its particular socio-historical stage of appearance. The idea of 'eternity', as the RSS-BJP preached while propagating Hindutva is a myth. In its urge to build up a common national economy on a given geographical territory through industrial development based on capitalist production relation of labour-capital and production motive of earning maximum profit, the aspirant bourgeoisie seeks to build up a national liberation movement against feudal or colonial rule by involving different sections of the people having diversity of language, religious belief, culture, ethnicity and so forth, striving for bringing about a territorial and cultural integrity among them, developing in them a common national psychological mental

make-up and kindling in them a nationalist spirit. Indian nationalism along with its sense of patriotism and urge for independence from the British imperialist rule also grew alongside development of national capitalist economy in India. It is the indomitable urge for developing as a nation free from the shackles of feudal bondage and foreign domination that drew the people dwelling on the given geographic territory, irrespective of caste, creed and religion into the vortex of national liberation movement. Rising above all petty interests and considerations, setting aside all the differences, the people joined the struggle that spanned from the foot of the Himalayas to the seashore of Kanyakumarka. So many martyrs laid down their life, blithely embraced the gallows. Heroic battles were fought, endless sacrifices were made and brutal tortures were borne. Then only the much desired political freedom could be achieved and in the process, the concept of Indianhood or Indianness also grew and ultimately took shape.

Freedom fighters cherished secular principles

It was secularism, the kernel of bourgeois democracy, which called for adorning and nurturing democratic principles and values independent of religion and relegated religious belief, if any, to a matter of personal life, that was ingrained in the concept of the freedom fighters engaged in the struggle for attaining Indianhood. That due to the compromises of the nationalist bourgeois leaders maintaining a reformist oppositional role against imperialism, this secular bent of mind of the patriotic Indians could not find desired expression is quite a different matter. But in spite of this weakness, it cannot be denied that the freedom loving people cherished and nourished secular values while giving birth to Indianhood. That is why, the RSS, hyperactive with its noxious communal doctrine in those flaming days as well, could not create any impact and in fact was abhorrently rejected by the people imbued with the spirit of Indianhood.

It is the very root of this precious Indianhood that the RSS-

BJP are now striking at, outraging the secular conscience of the people, threatening to rip asunder the very fabric of Indian nation. This attack on national solidarity and identity has not come suddenly but in the sequence of relentless pursuit by the RSS-BJP of what Savarkar, founder of the RSS said, — "to Hinduize politics and militarize Hinduism." This sinister move to bracket Hindutva with Indianness is not just rolling a process through which truth ebbs away and room is made for cluttered thoughts and convoluted reasoning to drag the thinking process down to debasement level and court incarceration. It seeks to negate the glorious inheritance and very essence of national liberation movement and hence has dangerous implications particularly when the need has been to free Indian nation from retrograd feudal hangovers, consolidate the gains of freedom struggle, firm up national integrity and cement the unity of the people to fulfill the unaccomplished task of democratization of the society.

Serious threat to national integrity

What would happen if the RSS-BJP succeed in dropping the shroud of darkness over the country? What effect would it have on the minorities particularly the Muslims constituting 12-13% of the population and already having the chill down their spine haunted by the harrowing reminiscence of the countrywide holocaust after the Babri Masjid demolition and the brutal pogrom in Gujarat? The equating of Hindutva with Indianness is a recrudescence of what Golwalkar, one of the founding fathers of the RSS-BJP, said about the Muslims that they must adopt Hindu culture, hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea except glorification of Hindu religion and merge in the Hindu race. What is it other than coercing the minorities to abandon their religious belief and accept Hinduism? This is something that fundamentalists of other countries could not dare to venture till date. But the Hindutva brigade is shameless in taking the lead and showing others the way. How would the votaries of Hindutva react if in the same vein, the Muslim fundamentalists of Pakistan and Bangladesh compel the Hindu minority there to embrace Islam? No religious person can submit to

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50 Years of AIDS0

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member, Central Committee of SUCI. At the outset, Comrade Manjunath, the erstwhile DSO organiser from Karnataka presiding over the meeting called upon Comrade Debashis Ray (All India General Secretary AIDS0) from West Bengal, Comrade Protap Shamal (All India President, AIDS0) from Delhi, Comrade Sreejit Sudhakar from Kerala and Comrade Jayesh Patel from Gujarat, to garland the statues of Renaissance personalities, the stalwart educationist Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and the revolutionaries of yester years Surya Sen (Masterda), Tarakeswar Ghoshdastidar, Nirmal Sen, respectively. This was followed by an enthusiastic rendition of a song carrying the mottoes and pledges of the AIDS0. Seated at the front row were the Central Committee members of the SUCI Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, Comrade Provash Ghosh, Central Staff Comrade Manik Mukherjee and member of West Bengal State Secretariat, Comrade Prativa Mukherjee and a few other veteran ex-DSO members. In his inaugural speech, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty pointed out that it was historically determined task of the AIDS0 with a view to wage a continuous and ever-accentuating struggle to build up a revolutionary students' organization in spite of there being several bigger student organizations like AISF, and others to intensify battle against the attacks on education and culture in particular, by the Indian capitalism. The history of the AIDS0, distinguishing it from other student organisations lies in its correct ideology based on Marxism-Leninism and concretised by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, whose teachings have inspired the AIDS0, and will continue to do so and the AIDS0 will advance even further with a nobler outlook and nobler concept of life and values. He pointed out that the exhibition arranged at College Square, was in essence embodied the life and the ways and values the AIDS0 stood for.

On December 28, was scheduled the public meeting at Shaheed Minar. The dais was beautifully planned and decorated with the emblem of AIDS0 portraying figures of young men and

women with the red banner held aloft. The announcement "50 years of struggle of the AIDS0 between 1954-2004" attracted even distant eyes. Against the backdrop of a clear sky with the Shaheed Minar outlined, fifty Red Flags bearing the motto of 'struggle', 'unity' and 'progress' and set atop both sides of the dais fluttered gracefully in the winter wind which latter, however, could not dampen the indomitable spirit of those youngsters — students from all parts of the country who converged on Shaheed Minar that afternoon having travelled great distances to take part in the celebrations of the day on which the Democratic Students' Organisation was born fifty years back.

Students from 21 states of the country including those from all districts of West Bengal had started in a procession from the College Square, to gather at the Shaheed Minar. The huge students' rally, unprecedented in recent time, its mammoth size, equally drew attention of the city people by its discipline and enthusiasm. It was elaborately decorated with a tableau, and scores of banners and festoons depicting different slogans, even messages recognizing the struggle and contributions of the senior comrades of the past and present. Earlier veteran leaders of the AIDS0 had paid floral tribute on the statues of Vidyasagar at College Square, of Subhas Chandra Bose at Subodh Mullick Square and the martyr's column of Madhai Haldar at Rani Rashmoni Road.

"Introduce scientific, secular, democratic education", "curtail military budget and allot 10% for education", "stop privatization, commercialization and communalisation of education" — such were the demands of the banners and posters that the demonstrators hold high. Spread all over the ground were the youngsters, eager in anticipation, excited to join the rally at the Shaheed Minar, the site of many historic battles before and after independence. In fact, the huge ground was rendered mobile as if by massive human wave — the students enthusiastically shouting slogans in English, Hindi and different regional languages to uphold the cause of education.

Before the meeting commenced, garlands were put on the martyr's column in front of the dais by

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reduce the role of formal education and, in its place, promote distance learning, correspondence courses and schemes like DPEP at the primary level? Why they try to make students self-centered, indifferent to society, bereft of human essence and conscience, constantly harping on that the primary goal and endeavour in education in general is to build one's own career. And why is that on completion of education students find today an impenetrable darkness descended all around, a deep despair engulfing, which lures them astray, even pushing them into anti-social activities.

In order to arrive at the correct answer based on history, reality and science, you should first understand why the AIDS0, started on its course of struggle 50 years ago on the basic demands for scientific, secular and democratic education. In correctly realising the proper significance of these lies the key to comprehend the purpose and object of the relentless onslaught which the ruling class is mounting on education. It is to sustain this moribund, decadent, exploitative capitalist social system that today the ruling class seeks to confine education within narrow bounds so as to make students socially indifferent, mechanical in makeup, poisoned with communalism and emasculated under influence of depraved culture, thereby prevent them from stepping ahead to join mass movements. Today, it devolves upon the AIDS0 to rouse students with the strong sense of self-respect against this heinous conspiracy of the ruling capitalist class.

All the burning problems which students, workers, agricultural labourers, small and middle peasants and middle class people face everyday in social life today stem from the existing production system which runs on the motive to earn maximum profit. Bear it in mind, everything in this exploitative-oppressive system revolves around the main contradiction or conflict between the working class and the

capitalist class. So, the question of advancement of civilization, of emancipation of all toiling people including the student community is inseparably linked with the question of emancipation of the proletariat, the working class. Solution to the main problems of education is not possible to achieve from within the bounds of the student movement alone. Student movement will have to be built up on the edifice of the higher proletarian culture and ethics so as to make it conducive to the working class movement itself. On this line will develop a mighty movement under the leadership of the working class.

To take on their role in today's specific situation, the role in social struggle, in radical transformation of society in particular, which has historically devolved upon them in every age, students will have to, on the one hand, wage struggle with courage and dignity against prevailing social mentality, careerism, vulgar individualism, selfishness, opportunism and all that; and at the same time, to advance this struggle to its correct objective and logical culmination, they will have to conduct this struggle, imbibing the noble ideology of communism. To this end, student movement too shall have to be transformed into a 'School of Communism'. This way will emerge a section of declassed intelligentsia from amongst the students, those who will inspire and kindle the emancipation struggle of the entire toiling people, not of the student community alone, and will play a vanguard role with sense of responsibility, strength of character, high standard of culture and tastes, profound analysis and endearing behaviour.

I strongly believe, the AIDS0 would rise to the occasion and carry out in letter and spirit the task and the role history bequeathes to it in the specific situation. This will bring end to the exploitative and oppressive capitalist class rule and will usher in the socialist social system.

Long Live Revolution !

Comrade Provash Ghosh, Chief Advisor of the AIDS0 and Member, Central Committee, SUCI, Comrade Krishna Chakraborti, and Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, both among the founder organisers of the AIDS0 and both members of Central Committee, SUCI, and by Protap

Shamal, President, AIDS0 and the president of the meeting as well.

Thereafter, condolence resolution was read out by Comrade Debasis Roy, in memory of those thousands of victims of the recent disastrous earthquake and tsunami

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affecting South and Southeast Asia taking a toll of human lives and destroying public property. One minute's silence was observed. January 4 was declared as the All India Relief Collection Day for the quake and tsunami affected people.

Two publications of the AIDS0 was released on the occasion by Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, one entitled 'Problems of Education and Students' Movement', a compilation of different articles on the issue by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the eminent Marxist thinker and founder General Secretary of the SUCI, and the other with the title 'Some Aspects of Students' Movement and Organization' by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, the General Secretary, SUCI.

Thereafter the fraternal delegate from Nepal Comrade Jiban Gautam addressed the gathering and congratulated the AIDS0 for its completing 50 years of struggle. On behalf of his organization All Nepal Union of Students, he thanked the organizers for inviting him to this august gathering. He informed the gathering of the Nepalese students' struggle against the monarchy on one hand and against the comprador bourgeois oppressors moving hand in glove with the Indian imperialists on the other. He also pointed out that the Nepalese people had taken part in India's struggle for freedom and still have a common cause with the people of India for fighting against injustice. He expressed solidarity with the AIDS0 in the latter's revolutionary cause and movement for justice.

Comrade Provas Ghosh, the main speaker to address the meeting expressed, at the outset, deep shock at the recent natural calamity in which thousands of human lives were lost and huge public property destroyed. He urged upon all DSO activists to respond to the call by their leaders for relief collection, true to their ideal and cultural tradition. In his instructive and inspiring speech, Comrade Ghosh said: Since its inception 50 years back at the initiative of just 5 students in South Calcutta, the organization has now spread out over 21 states of the country. Such a spectacular organizational expansion was possible only because of application and cultivation of Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, who was

the true successor of lofty ideals of the Renaissance personalities of the country such as Raja Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Premchand, Nazrul, Phooley, and the valiant freedom fighters and leaders like Netaji Suibhas Chandra Bose, Surya Sen, Asfaquallah, Bhagat Singh, Subramaniam Bharti and others. Comrade Provas Ghosh remembered with respect the contributions and struggles of earlier organizers of the AIDS0 who sweated to develop

the organization, faced imprisonment or got shot and injured, some even embraced death of a martyr. Now the organization is conducting movements in different parts of the country on political, cultural and educational problems of people's life and life of students. He added that the concept of scientific, democratic and secular education, which AIDS0 demands can be traced back to the European Renaissance. In our country, too, Renaissance personalities considered education to be the backbone of a nation and demanded education for all. However, at present, under political parties of different hues and slogans, education is being snatched away from the majority of students. Education is being privatized and commercialized. Faced with acute crisis of capitalism, unemployment problem is intensifying. Factories are closing down, lakhs of workers are retrenched. Along with this, to gag the voice of protest, education is being restricted so that the analytical mind, power of analysis and inquiry do not flourish among the large majority of students and youths. Also, whereas great educationists and pioneers of Indian Renaissance like Rammohan, Vidyasagar or later still, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, were opposed to dogmatism and desired education to be isolated from religion, the ruling capitalist class today, in their own interest, is encouraging communalism through education in the name of traditionalisation or Indianisation of culture. Hindu fanaticism is being fanned up.

At the same time crisis-ridden capitalism-imperialism has given



Comrade Provas Ghosh addressing while former and present AIDS0 leaders are sitting on the dais at Saheed Minar Maidan, Calcutta on 28 December, 2004

rise to narrow individualism, self-centrism. Earning maximum profit by maximum exploitation is what capitalism is based upon. This is controlling individual's life and morals too. Hence crisis of values and morals is destroying even family life not only in the West, in our country as well. Earlier, during the thirties, forties and fifties even, students dreamt of a life of rich with ideals. Today, even students run after money and earning through smuggling, blackmailing, contract murder or even women trafficking. Capitalism is making man mechanical, bereft of values and ethics. It is Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's thought that can expose the true nature and reason of exploitation. So to denounce Marxism is to deny or turn a blind eye to the existence of exploitation itself. Even in America and other imperialist-capitalist countries, workers are engaging themselves in movements. 'Down with globalization', 'Down with capitalism', such slogans can be heard there, too.

Students and youths imbued with Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's thoughts will have to brave all hazards and to fight for the cause of education as also to give support to movements of workers, peasants, women and other sections of society.

In conclusion, Comrade Provas Ghosh expressed his firm belief that the DSO would be continuously advancing equipped with revolutionary ideology and shaping out revolutionary life in a way that the next 50 years' observance of the AIDS0 would be held in a socialist India.

The mammoth students'

gathering was also addressed by different state leaders of AIDS0. They included Comrades Govind Rajalu from Andhra, Ram Avtar Sharma from MP, Om Prokash from Haryana, Swajar Khan from Kerala, Rajendra Verma from Orissa, Deepak Kumar from Bihar, Indrajit from Punjab, Rajmal Sharma from Rajasthan, Jiten Chaliha from Assam, Mohan Singh from Jharkhand, Babul Banik from Tripura, Joyesh Patel from Gujarat, Promode Kamble from Maharashtra, Prokash Saini from Delhi, Lilamoy Mondal from Chhattisgarh, Ramesh from Sikkim. Comrade Navendu Pal from West Bengal read out messages from fraternal organizations from Syria and Cuba. All the speakers pledged to continue the glorious battle started and carried through by DSO organisers of yesteryears. The meeting ended with a song rendered by the AIDS0 Music Troupe.

A grand reunion of thousands of former and present AIDS0 organisers, activists, supporters and sympathisers was held at the Salt Lake Stadium on December 29.

Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukhopadhyay, the veteran educationist and erstwhile Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University inaugurated the Reunion and released a souvenir on this occasion.

Founding organiser-leaders of the AIDS0 like Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Central Staff, SUCI, Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Central Staff, SUCI, and Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Comrade Krishna Chakraborti and Comrade Provas Ghosh, all three members of the Central Committee, SUCI, addressed the gathering. This was followed by cultural programmes.

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from age-old fetters of feudal absolute power of the monarchs, clergies and feudal landlords. In that they also wanted and needed to free individuals too from the same obstacles hitherto held unchangeable and guided absolutely by the rule of monarchs and religion. So, during these early days of capitalism, individuals were assured of freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion, choice and expression. They were fortified with the inalienable right to hold opinion, to choose his own life and profession, even to differ in public, to argue, to debate and, if and when necessary, to protest on the strength of his own opinion. During this stage of history it was "natural, and even valuable, in that age of individual expansion, to conceive justice as 'a making possible of the maximum of individual free self-assertion' as also 'the maximum development of the capacities of personality in the maximum number of persons'." (E. Barker: Principles of Social and Political Theory: p.171)

These rights of people were proclaimed as basic, inherent rights beyond question and challenge. Different countries have defined them as fundamental rights of individuals to live a rightful, decent and free life and have included them formally in their respective constitutions in different forms and languages. Over and above these, there have remained a few more other which have become so inalienable from life that they did not require or wait for formal recognition or codification. They have existed as axiomatic, as conventions, yet with the same importance and significance as the formal, codified and written ones, being synonymous with them as fundamental, or basic. Even they were beyond intervention from any quarter whatsoever.

They found expression in two ways. The prime was the individual's sovereign will and power by virtue of which people could organize and take part in public debate, discussion, polemics; they also bore the right to demonstrate, to make rally with a view to propagating their opinions and mustering strength to make their voice heard. The same sovereign power of people gave them the right of choice for their own government. In fact, not only

individuals' right to choose their government was held vital, they were awarded the right to dislodge a government, if they had found it unjust. This right to undo people's own choice, was held so sacred, that individuals were reminded of their own right to disobey a law which did not express the idea of justice, a ground adopted in an event like the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 (E. Barker: Principles of Social and Political Theory: p.220). People were also entitled to form legislative bodies that framed the laws of governance and society. Even here it hinged on the idea that social necessities and social opinions were always more or less in advance of law. So even laws change for progress. (Henry Maine) Laws found unjust and incompatible with the interest of majority at the same time, were supposed to make room for others. So even bourgeois thinkers could pronounce in clear terms that by 'the visible testimony' of 'disobedience' of existing laws, thereby seeking 'to impress the value of the idea on others, to get it incorporated in social thought, to make it part of common conviction, and ultimately to secure its adoption as part of the law of the State.' (E. Barker: Principles of Social and Political Theory: p.223) At the same time, there developed parliamentary democracy, as a form of governance as against the totalitarian absolutism of monarchy. Based on the bourgeois ideology of liberty-equality-fraternity and developed as an infrastructural edifice of the laissez-faire free-competitive economy of the early phases of capitalism, this parliamentary democracy was the then political instrument to serve interest of the bourgeoisie striving to consolidate their newly earned political power. Bringing relief from the crushing burden of feudalism, it also fulfilled, to a bit though, people's aspiration for freedom and progress. The system itself had provisions for opposition to exist as an essential ingredient of governance, as a check and balance to the power that be. It meant political parties had an unfettered right to face people with their views and interact with them; thus propagate their standpoints among the masses to make them aware of their own problems, create public opinion of their right causes; organize them and finally engage themselves in parliamentary battle

on the basis of adult franchise. They were to contemplate moves, both parliamentary and extraparliamentary, that they thought, would bring social good; had to evolve and develop devices that would fit their purpose of propaganda and protest. The bourgeoisie themselves held that any restriction to this right might lead to totalitarian dictatorship. It was during this dawn of democracy that there was raised the voice "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty". Needless to say, people's sovereignty to hold and assert their collective opinion in the interest of the society could be safeguarded only through mass movements that emerged, or emerges still, through incessant ideological struggles of different political parties. At the core of this lies the precept that it was the people, not any Constitution or laws, who held the key to all the sovereign power, who determined not only the goal of the movements, even their forms.

Crisis-ridden capitalism curtails rights once held as inalienable by the bourgeoisie themselves

Such was the scenario in the age of emergence and growth of capitalism. The inexorable laws of history, the irreconcilable inherent contradictions of the system brought about drastic changes in the scenario in the present age of decadent capitalism that has reached its highest and the most crisis-ridden stage of imperialism. In one country after another, on the plea of reasonable restrictions on individual's right to expression, movement and protest, the ruling bourgeoisie of this moribund system are enacting preventive or preemptive repressive black acts and measures that provide unbridled power to rulers to arrest, try and even execute and thereby rob people of even their minimum basic right to seek justice. At the same time, making use of enormous strength of their power and pelf, of media both print and electronic, the rulers are unleashing tailor-made campaigns to create public opinion in favour of their unjust moves, sometime in the name of national security, at others of fighting 'terrorism' and so on. This is thus giving rise to, afresh or even anew, controversy centring round legality and legitimacy: in any society based on class exploitation, legality protecting the order and legitimacy standing for truth and progress may not be the same. Comrade Sibdas Ghosh, one

of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era and the founder General Secretary of our party SUCI enriched this concept by pointing out that anybody conversant with jurisprudence knows that whatever legal may not always be legitimate, rational and humanitarian. Thus, in history, fascist Hitler or Mussolini had their respective constitutions, that demolished all democratic institutions, Constitution and systems. Those who stood against this fascist rule, including men like Einstein, Brecht and others surely acted illegally against the regime. But would any right-thinking man call them illegitimate and criminal?

Thus the same system of capitalism, that once brought to human civilization the concepts of individual and collective rights to freedom of existence, expression and association, has become the force of reaction. The acute economic-political-social crisis mounts each day from one country to another, from one soil to the globe. And as it mounts, the ruling class squeezes and curtails rights, it itself once awarded to the society. Crisis strengthens its antithesis, the proletariat, too; it endangers its position of power, with vast masses of toiling people exploited by capitalism tending to organize against the ruling class. Right to protest, right to organize, right to ventilate difference freely, all this proves inimical to the rulers. So increasingly these are snatched off from people who were enjoying it or are denied to them, who never tasted it. It goes on not only in states with military or similar dictatorship. Even in countries with parliamentary democracy of long tradition, it is simply used as tools and veils to deprive people of their rights and thereby disarm them in the face of crisis. The whole onus of the crisis is thus thrust on people, crushed under intense exploitation, yet helpless and defenceless. Thus with or without parliamentary democracy installed in the country, every capitalist state of this era of imperialism-capitalism, manifests all symptoms of trampling the kernel of democracy itself, symptoms of bringing in fascism in its wake. Democratic rights, even the fundamental, inalienable basic rights are denied.

What consequences the recent Supreme Court judgement on bandhs may have on the democratic atmosphere of the country should be judged in this background. In our

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country capitalism as also the parliamentary democracy were born and developed, in the era of moribund capitalism- imperialism and was thus inherently decadent from the beginning. And now the Indian capitalist state is showing every signs of fascist trends. Crisis of the system gives birth to a wide disparity with wealth accumulated with a few and the vast majority of masses being pauperized in increasing number. Over and above the economic exploitation, the common people have also to bear the whole heavy thrust of the all-out social crisis reflected in intense cultural and moral degradation, shameless corruption, naked discrimination from the administration in favour of moneyed people, fast receding scope of meeting minimum basic needs of life including education- health and shelter and such others. In such a background, the ruling class, the bourgeoisie is trying to establish administrative fascism keeping the parliamentary façade of governance in tact. Using all sources at hand they are trying out the two-party system, which is merely a prop to confine people within the limits of election-politics, run basically in the bourgeois interest, outlook and method. Parallel to it, they are increasing the power of executive through scores of black acts and measures with a view to curbing and finally totally destroying the scope of extraparliamentary movement of the toiling people. They know that, shattered by capitalist exploitation, people are frantically looking for way out, to give vent to their resentment and urge to come out of this throttling situation through democratic movements. In the face of it the ruling class, inevitably unable to get over this crisis, is taking to the fascist road of smashing any sort of opposition, of protest. Curtailment of right to protest at the behest of the judiciary is a part of that design, pointing to a further stark reality. Now, as legislative and executive, even the military, that is all trusted pillars of the capitalist state have become more and more exposed to common people, judiciary, the remaining organ of the state is raising its head to render support in rescue of the crisis-bogged ruling class.

But how is it that the judiciary chooses this present moment of

Indian politics and even selects its launchpad in states run by CPI(M) and their allies? Also, even after dealing such blows, the judiciary and the class in the background, stand nonchalant, whereas the party of CPI(M) that boasts of its commanding size in parliamentary forums, refrains from making any serious move other than some verbal wagging. In fact this is the very ambience created by the inert attitude of the pseudo-lefts, rather their appeasement to the ruling class, that is emboldening the class to bring down decisive attacks on the toiling people, now through judiciary, then through legislative or executive. People, in their turn, must realize that the economic-social-cultural attacks — oppressions-degradations will go on rising so long as capitalism exists in power; a change of government will make no difference, nor a change of laws, a constitutional amendment can be the sole means to prevent this attack. They will have to go for movement for even reliefs within this system. But, if and when, by the present judgement of banning bandhs they lose their right to dissent, to protest, to strike, they will be simply disarmed to be brought down to their knees to the merciless enemy of mankind, capitalism- imperialism. How will that situation be different from that in Germany under Hitler? And here precisely lies the grave fascist implications of the intervention of judiciary in people's right to protest.

It remains for the people also to realize that this impending danger can only be thwarted by the countrywide massive surge of democratic movement. It is only a determined and conscious public opinion when roused through the length and breadth of the country, that can impress upon the court what danger their move contains. The appeasing attitude of the pseudolefts stand in the way of developing such a movement or such massive opinion to form. It is the call of the hour that democratic-minded people of one and all sections of life throughout the country develop, defying all threats and confusions, audacious democratic movements under correct leadership as complementary to and with a view to strengthening the movement against this infringement upon people's right to protest!

RSS-BJP striking at root of Indian nationhood

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such forced religious conversion. So the Muslims and other minorities among the Indians will be discriminated over religion, feel alienated in their own country despite complete allegiance to their beloved motherland and thus will be left outside the mainstream of nation building process. Will it not have so baneful an impact as to divide the people into two factions each trying to annihilate the other? What effect would it have on the stability if not the very existence of the nation? Will it not pose such a serious danger as well?

One has to take serious cognition of all these disastrous consequences. Already various secessionists, separatists, chauvinistic and parochial forces are raising their ugly head to throw spanner in the unity and fraternity of the people and cause fissure in the national integrity. Where is the end then? We have seen how devastating has been the consequence of partition of the country over religion. People in either part of divided India received nothing but deceit, depravation and disaster. Will the country be torn apart once again and all the sacrifices and bloodshed of the brave freedom fighters go astray?

Fascist content of Hindutva doctrine

From the way the RSS-BJP are pandering to Hindutva histrionics, trying to arrest the thinking process in the thrall of outmoded belief, infirmity and mindless communal rancour, distorting and falsifying history to buttress their own point of view, impeding the very process of analyzing history from a scientific outlook and through application of methodology of science, will it not be correct to say that regimentation of thought, which provides the base for fascism to thrive and thunder, is the vital agenda being pursued by these votaries of Hindutva? In that case, will not increase in strength of the RSS-BJP pave the way for fascism take a firm root on this soil? And when fascism overwhelms, it dehumanizes MAN.

In order to serve the class interest of the moribund bourgeoisie and crush the emerging revolutionary movement of the working class, Hitler embarked upon fascism based on three things — economic and administrative

centralism, fanning up racial supremacy of the German-Aryans and fixing the minority Jews as the single adversary for all ills. Through incessant propagation of racial hegemonism and spewing hate against the Jewish community that led to horrifying gas-chamber killing of these innocent people, Hitler brought about regimentation both in thought and administration to declare war on humanity and bring the world to perilous proximity to ruination. The RSS-BJP too are for economic and administrative centralization through systematic consolidation of power and progressive curtailment of civil and democratic rights of the people, as the six year rule of the BJP-led government showed in no uncertain a term. There is no difference between the BJP and the Congress in pursuing this fascist line to protect the aggregate interest of the ruling bourgeoisie. When the savage and scurrilous hate campaign against the minorities, particularly the Muslims, and carefully crafted scheme of retrograding the mental process are added to that, one can find a striking similarity between Hitler's Nazism and the RSS-BJP's Hindutva. Here lies the incendiary potential of the Hindutva doctrine that all discerning mind and thinking people cannot but take a note of. And in the course of this devious formulation, the Hindutva zealots have also crucified, coarsened and vulgarized Hindu religion. The last exponents of Hindu religious thoughts like Vivekananda and Ramkrishna Paramhans exhorted the people to be tolerant and liberal and eradicate many of the social evils, age-old creeds and disparities that were earlier sanctified by religion. Vivekananda even was averse to use the word Hindu and instead highlighted the preaching of Vedanta for being followed. This received admiration from the people of other religious beliefs throughout the world. But now the self-seeking past masters of the RSS-BJP through their Hindutva histrionics are giving silent burial to all these achievements and causing revulsion among the true believers of the religion.

It cannot be forgotten that these fascist ingredients were inherent in the ideology of the RSS right from the day of its inception and its

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sinister campaign was always on. Sometimes it caught speed, sometimes it had to backtrack. But its odious maxim always caused serious concern among democratic minded people and increased agony and apprehension of the minorities particularly the Muslims.

But how could the RSS-BJP who were abhorrently rejected by the freedom-loving patriotic people during the days the country was in ferment, be so audacious now to ratchet up the issue and flex communal muscle, so insolent to subvert history and so unfettered to threaten wiping out the gains of glorious freedom movement?

Thwart communal upsurge by surge of democratic movement

It is shocking that there is no voice of protest against such a dangerous move to bring fascism, atrocious assault on freedom and serious threat to national solidarity. We do not expect the Congress subserving bourgeois class interest to raise any opposition. But the CPI(M) and CPI who call themselves left and have over 60 members in the parliament have also not even mentioned this on the floor of the house, let alone showing any concern about it.

The CPI(M), CPI who call themselves left and "crusaders" against communalism-fundamentalism, had told the countrymen that by contesting elections in league with the Congress and installing a "secular" government of Congress and its allies, they would defeat the BJP in the elections and oust it from power and thus the menace of communalism would be contained. The BJP has been drubbed in the hustings and a Congress-led government with the backing of CPI(M), CPI have completed over seven months in the office. But has there been any check on the communal howling of the RSS-BJP and their ilk? Reality shows it has not. We knew that it could never be. That is why our Central Committee in its political statement on the eve of the last parliamentary elections had categorically mentioned that "the idea of curbing the ideological and organizational influence of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar just by inflicting an election defeat can be nothing but a figment of

imagination or as daydream." The resuscitated Hindutva slogan of the RSS-BJP and their fresh bid to inflame the atmosphere with communal jingoism vindicate our prognosis in no uncertain a term.

Forewarning that the RSS-BJP is out to impose fascism drawing upon incessant spread of religious fanaticism, we had said that to stem this frenzied rise of the crass communal forces it is imperative to forge unity of the toiling people, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, language or community and develop powerful democratic movements one after another centering around their legitimate demands on the edifice of higher ethics, culture and true leftist ideology. Alongside, there should be a painstaking sustained ideological campaign stretching from the villages to the furthest corner of a town or city against the foul formulations of the communalists-fundamentalists. So long these democratic mass movements do not surge forth and this ideological fight is not taken up in right earnest, communal caterwauling of the RSS-BJP will not be contained and the country will become increasingly vulnerable to a fascist takeover. We call upon all well-meaning people, thinking personalities including the honest rank of CPI-CPI(M) to understand the gravity of the situation and come forward to build up the aforesaid two-fold struggle to resist the impending catastrophe.

Central Committee of SUCI has called upon all the state committees of the party to start extensive collection of money and material for relief work for the quake and tsunami victims. The devastated coastal areas of Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh and in the worst affected districts of Quilon and Aleppy of Kerala, the party has already initiated the relief work, mustering all its strength including those of its mass-fronts.

**Help Generously to the
SUCI Relief Fund for
quake and tsunami victims**

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee condoles the death of Comrade Nripen Chakraborty

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 25 December, 2004 deeply condoled the death of veteran CPI(M) leader and former chief minister of Tripura Comrade Nripen Chakraborty and observed that during his long life Comrade Chakraborty contributed a lot in the growth of left movement in the country. Comrade Mukherjee expressed heartfelt sympathy towards the bereaved leaders and cadres of CPI(M).

On behalf of the General Secretary and the Central Committee of the SUCI, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Member, Central Committee and Office Secretary, Central Office of the party placed wreath on late Comrade Chakraborty's body at the CPI(M) office at Alimuddin Street, Calcutta.

People win a sustained struggle in Tamilnadu

At Thiruthangal, Virudunagar District, in Tamilnadu, a sustained people's movement against some illegally working granite quarries has recently met with success. The movement developed since 1993, under the leadership of a People's Struggle Committee formed at the initiative of Thiruthangal Town Committee of SUCI with representatives of different political parties like SUCI, DMK, CPI, CPI(M) and others, as well as of people's organisations. The quarries in question, situated in residential areas have been functioning without licenses from the Pollution Control Board, even flouting Supreme Court norms. These have been causing serious pollutions and problems from use of explosives even at odd hours of day and night, damages to building and a score of health

hazards and diseases; added to it these quarries blocked the flow of water into the nearby Sengulam lake — one of the main sources of water to the residents around, aggravating the already perennial problem of water shortage in the district. Lands were acquired by both legal and illegal means. Over and above these, the owners maintained a nefarious connection with the Police and local and district administration, even to the level of District Collector, which became evident by their vindictive attitude towards the movement at its different stages. Suffering people, however, remained united in their struggle and through a variety of programmes particularly in the last half this year, that included signature campaign, all-Party public meetings, road blockade, demonstration, hunger strike and even a bandh on July 14 could force the administration issue the government order to close the quarries. Highlighting the fact that people can achieve their demands through sustained and united struggle, led in a correct line by a real leadership and congratulating them, the Committee called for close vigil and preparedness to prevent any possible future attempt by the owners to revert the situation. Its apprehension proved right immediately afterwards when on December 15, the Police in connivance with the district administration, issued warrants of arrest against at least 18 leaders, organizers and activists for taking part in different programmes in connection with the movement. Under tremendous public pressure, they were, however, granted bails.

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