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Remembering the great leaders of world proletariat

“The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. ...The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world-market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. ... It is enough to mention the commercial crises that, by their periodical return, put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. ... And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones.”



KARL MARX
5.5.1818 — 14.3.1883

“Capitalism may become partly stabilized, it may rationalize its production, turn over the administration of the country to fascism, temporarily hold down the working class; but will never recover the “tranquility”, the “assurance”, the “equilibrium” and the “stability” that it flaunted before; for the crisis of world capitalism has reached the stage of development when the flames of revolution must inevitably break out, now in centres of imperialism, now in the periphery, reducing to naught the capitalist patchwork and daily bringing nearer the fall of capitalism. Exactly as in the well-known fable, “it pulled its tail out of the mud, its beak got stuck; when it pulled its beak out, its tail got stuck.”



J. V. STALIN
21.12.1879 — 5.3.1953

Poll Alliance

Naked Display of Opportunistic Vote Politics

The tenure of the 13th Lok Sabha has been curtailed by eight months not because of any compelling situation or on genuine grounds, but election exigencies of the BJP-led NDA. Encouraged by the “triumph” in the assembly elections of the three states in the Hindi heartland, the BJP top brass, desperate to secure another term in central government, did not lose any time to dissolve Parliament ahead of schedule and advance the poll. Obviously, this early dissolution of Parliament and holding of elections, not in the interest of the people but prompted by the narrow sectarian politics of the ruling bourgeois political outfit, is to be endured by the people. And once the elections have been round the corner, usual pre-poll gimmickery and chicanery, hectic parleys to forge opportunistic poll alliances, episodic nit-picking and mudslinging, floor crossing by the self-seeking bourgeois politicians have taken the centre stage of the political scene in the country.

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Health Bulletin on Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

As had been stated earlier our beloved General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, sustained a fracture of the neck of right femur following a fall on 12th January, 2004, for which he was operated on by a team of surgeons led by the eminent orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Anjan Pan for hip prosthesis. After being released from the hospital on 10th February, 2004, he was recuperating at the Salt Lake Commune, when he developed acute respiratory distress on 16th February, 2004 due to a bad infection. As his condition gradually became very critical and other complications developed, he was readmitted to Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital on 17th February, 2004. He is being treated there by a team of specialists including Prof. N. K. Mazumder, Dr. K. B. Bakshi, Dr. Sushrut Bandopadhyay, Dr. Partha Sarathi Bhattacharyya, Dr. Goutam Sarkar, Dr. Sanjoy Ghosh, Dr. Sumanda Adhikary and others.

According to the doctors, his condition continues to cause anxiety as he is suffering from recurrent bouts of respiratory distress with infection, old age and diabetes adding to the complications.

CPI(M)-CPI join bandwagon of bourgeois vote politics

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The murky scene of opportunistic alliances

The Congress and its associates blame the BJP for failing to govern and halting the pace of progress. They also charge the BJP of overplaying the communal card and putting the disputed 'Mandir' issue ahead of development. The BJP juggles with statistics and figures to project a contrived spectacle of progress, spends hundreds of crore of rupees from the public exchequer to advertise its "achievements". The BJP leaders create a smokescreen of so-called development to hide its rabid Hindutva agenda and worst communal politics the latest form of which the people witnessed during the last assembly elections. When the DMK walks out of the NDA for its own compulsions, the BJP rediscovers overnight a faithful ally in Jayalalitha once branded as the queen of corruption by none else than Vajpayee himself! Immediately, Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the CPI(M) general secretary, lands at the DMK headquarters as emissary of Sonia Gandhi to persuade its leaders to join the Congress camp. Sonia is quick to absolve the DMK of all her previous charges of plotting the murder of late Rajiv Gandhi lest there is any impediment to the intended tie-up. Mulayam, who till the other day was inclined towards the Congress and hurled so many invectives against Vajpayee to reinforce his "secular" character, assumes power with the tacit support of the BJP. While he keeps the door ajar for the BJP, he also keeps open the channel of dialogue with the Congress so as to have both the options in hand. Ms. Mayawati, who enjoyed chief ministership with the patronage of "Manuwadi" BJP is now being wooed by the Congress towards it. It may be recalled that Mayawati fell out with the BJP after the latter declined to share the responsibility of the Taj corridor scandal that rocked her boat. She resolved to teach the BJP a lesson. But after a brief exploration of her poll prospects in company of the Congress and finding the latter still not averse to strike a deal with her bete noir Mulayam, she now turns the gun back towards Sonia. Kalyan Singh, the infamous BJP chief minister who dissociated from his parent party to tie knot with Mulayam and threatened to expose Vajpayee-Advani in the Babari

Masjid demolition case, returns to the BJP fold to carry forward the "Mandir" agenda. Sharad Powar, who broke away from the Congress over Sonia's foreign origin question, now breaks his own breakaway group to side with the Congress. The BJP blames the Congress in the Bofors scam. The Congress retaliates by pointing out the BJP's involvement in the Tehelka, coffin and other shady defence deals. The BJP overtly uses its Hindutva plank to woo majority votes on communal line. The Congress foments "soft" Hindutva sentiment to give blushes to the BJP. Blurring of lines between crime and vote oriented bourgeois politics happened aeons ago. Judeo-Jogi-Rudy-Telgi-Raja Bhaiyya-Shahabuddin and the likes crowd the BJP, the Congress as well as the organizations of Mulayam, Laloo and others. D.P.Jadav, accused in 30 criminal cases, is welcomed in the BJP fold with Sushma Swaraj, its firebrand leader, justifying the inclusion by saying, "the BJP is an ocean and all kinds of rivers flow in it, but these do not affect the ocean's cleanliness." However, in the face of severe public condemnation and in view of this naked exposure before the election, the BJP leaders reverse the decision to induct Jadav, for the time being.

CPI(M)-CPI traverse the same way

While this is the position of the known bourgeois political parties and their leaders whom the subservient media project as messiahs to the people, let us shift the focus on the 'Lefts' like the CPI(M), CPI and their obedient allies who pose to be different. Are they taking any initiative to make the people aware of this murky game and release an alternative current of left democratic movement to stem the rot? Not at all. On the contrary, they are now hobnobbing with the Congress to defeat the BJP in the elections. According to them, they as secular political parties are collaborating with the Congress, another secular outfit, to combat the fundamentalism-communalism of the BJP. What could be a better example of travesty of truth! Whence has the Congress become secular? The Congress all along pandered to communal politics, engineered communal riots at various parts of the country, even enjoyed RSS backing to win an election. It was

late Rajiv Gandhi who broke open the locks of Babari Masjid which allowed the BJP to take up the Hindu communal card and play it with a vengeance triggering the chain of events that led to exacerbated communal tension, and eventually to fratricidal bloodbath and worst pogroms in Mumbai and Gujarat. In fact, no bourgeois political party can remain secular today. Yet the same Congress is perceived to be a "secular" ally by the CPI(M) and the CPI. Mr. H. S. Surjeet, the CPI(M) general secretary says, "At this hour, one cannot wish away the Congress. Because Congress is the largest party in the country. Without its support it is not possible for the

against communal forces has to be backed by powerful, conscious democratic mass movements. But the CPI(M)-CPI, too eager to make electoral gains anyhow, are least bothered about the genuine interest of the people and hence the right course of action.

The double standard of the CPI(M) leadership

Apart from their preposterous policy of aligning with the Congress, what is shocking is the manner in which they are treating the people of the country. When the CPI(M) leaders find that it is proving increasingly difficult to sell the secular credential of the Congress to the people, who rightly possess a strong anti-congress feeling in the backdrop of their harrowing experience of the Congress misrule for decades, they surreptitiously change the refrain to feign as if they are equally opposed to both the Congress and the BJP. And to dupe the people further, they begin to say that "they would oppose the harmful economic policies of the Congress while launching independent propaganda" (Ganashakti, 01.02.04). "Nowhere would the party enter into any alliance or join any front with the Congress," said the CPI(M) central committee after its recent Hyderabad meet (Ibid). But at the same time, one saw the CPI(M) general secretary in the role of Sonia's emissary in working out deals with the 'like-minded parties'. One could not but notice that the CPI(M) central committee, while declining to have any pact with the Congress, goes on record that its "main aim is to keep a vigil so that a secular government is formed at the Centre once the Fourteenth Lok Sabha is constituted." (Ibid) Elaborating further, Sitaram Yechury, the CPI(M) polit buro member, in his recent address to the students in Guwahati, "underlined the need for avoiding a split in the votes of the secular platform — one led by the secular parties and the other by the Congress so that the BJP-led communal forces can be resisted from coming back to power." (People's Democracy, 9-15 February, 04). Could there be anything more revealing than this to uncover what lurks behind the so-called anti-Congress posture or sham anti-Congressism? In fact, the Congress-DMK-CPI(M)-CPI alliance is

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Page of CPI(M) organ Ganashakti sold out to project BJP's 'success'



Is there anything LEFT ?

secular front to dislodge the BJP." (Ganashakti, the CPI(M) Bengali organ dated 4.1.04) In fact, both Surjeet and Jyoti Basu have been openly advocating alliance with the Congress in camera, in press statements and interviews and in public talks. The CPI leaders too, have never kept secret their desperation to join hands with the Congress to stall spread of communal venom by beating the BJP in the ballot war. Time and again, we have shown in the pages of Proletarian Era that the menace of communalism-fundamentalism can be counteracted only by releasing an ideological struggle against it propelled by massive democratic movements. Even the election fight

New Economic Policies of Globalization : Globalization of Fascist Corporate Policy

(Contd from last issue)

Mass pauperization, market crisis : product of capitalism

Deliberations were recently held on the Report on programmes of reforms and removal of poverty in India. This is the first study report by the World Bank on India's "development policy". The Report regrets that India is not being able to achieve its declared targets. The targeted rate of growth of 8% will not be attained in the 10th Plan. Not only this. The rate of development, instead of increasing, is actually decreasing. Between 1992-93 and 1996-97, the average annual rate of growth was 6.7%. Between 1997-98 and 2001-02, it dropped down to 5.4%. Finally, in 2002-03, it has further reduced to 4.4%. To meet the situation, it was directed that : 1) In order to reduce budget-deficit, the services (including industry and agriculture) should be made more productive, 2) Stress should be given on poverty removal programme, 3) The environment for investment should be improved. The Indian government has declaredly been pursuing these very objectives. But the World Bank has advised accelerating the process in these spheres.

The question is : Is whatever productivity that is there, being preserved ? Is it being properly utilized ? No, it is not. In capitalist economy, "market" connotes presence of purchasing power. In our country, market comprises only 15-20% of the population. Tens of millions are unemployed. Correct figures of unemployment are not available. 74% of the people live below the poverty line. Even the Central government admits that 36.5% of the people are below the poverty line. Because of the ever-increasing difference between prices of agricultural commodities and the commodities of industrial produce, the implements and wherewithals of production are more and more passing into the hands of capitalists and rich peasants. In 1953-54, 31.43% of the rural families were of marginal peasants. After two decades, it was found that 43.99% of rural families had been transformed into marginal peasants, and their average land-holding had reduced

from 0.27 acre to 0.1 acre. In case of small and middle peasants too, the land-holding had been reduced. In 1953-54, the peasants of these three categories together totalled 89.95%. After two decades, the figure increased to comprise 94.57%. These data prove that almost all the cultivable land had become concentrated in the hands of 5% of the rural families (Source: Indian Economic development on the path of globalization by Ajit Kumar Ray, Pathikrit). Because of this pauperization of the rural population, the already contracted Indian market is getting further contracted. That is why the clamour for "poverty removal" is being raised sky-high. Even if the programmes like Annapurna Yojana and granting some advantages/reliefs to the poor listed as BPL (below poverty line) are implemented to an extent through combined efforts of the Centre and the states, that would merely be somehow preserving the poor as the source of cheap labour and a trickery to hoax the people.

By frequent discussions about pension, bonus and salary, the Central and the state governments seek to stress that these constitute a "heavy economic burden". Arguing that this burden should be reduced, the opportunities and advantages existing in regard to these are being curtailed, and the advisability of switching over to contract service system is being advocated. There is a lot of clamour in various circles over this. It is to be noted that whereas the Central government spent Rs.12,606 crore in 1990-91 on salary, wages and other expenses under the head of Administration, total expenses under this head shot up to Rs.36,669 crore in 2001-02. It is worth examining how much of this huge cost increase was for maintaining the top-heavy administration, for providing costly security arrangements for the ministers, MPs and the VIPs.

Massive contraction of employment opportunity in the country : inevitable outcome of capitalist economy

Even if the expenditure on the common employees has increased compared to the past, prices of consumer goods have, according to

the statistics recognized by the government, increased by 2 to 4 times in the meanwhile. In this way, the "burden" of emoluments doled out to the employees is lightened by picking their pockets! Besides, number of employees is being reduced all round. The number of railway employees was 18 lakhs in 1974, but this was reduced to 13 lakhs by 1988. In the decade preceding 1985, 15,000 in the TISCO and 37,000 in the TATA collieries lost their jobs due to modernization. The abolition of 3 lakh vacant posts in the Posts & Telegraph Department caused a furore a few years back. These are but some figures indicative of the all-round contraction of employment opportunity that is on. The FICCI openly announced that permission to retrench workers is an inseparable part of modernization. (Business Standard). But what is new about this ? When was modernization effected under capitalism without retrenchment of workers ? The regional team of the ILO conducted a study on the economic liberalization that has been on in this country for the decade of the eighties. A finding of theirs was that from 1989, the organized building trade had been suffering from extreme sterility as far as generation of employment was concerned. And that was the decade the study team described as the decade of liberalization of the Indian economy! The hired economic experts serving the capitalist system are prescribing retrenchment-closure as the measure for solution of the economic crisis, calling it the good-bye policy. This has now become the general, legal procedure. Combined effect of all these has been the further intensification of the market crisis.

Alongside the verbiage about the benefits of the good-bye policy, the capital-intensive nature of modern industry is being harped upon. What learned discourses are being mouthed by government spokesmen and owners of industry! As if industry was ever not dependent on capital under capitalism ! Did the owner-capitalists ever desist from investing more and more capital for modernization as a guarantee of securing profit, to withstand

competition and to reap profit from the contracting market ? This modernization means adoption of the most advanced technology available at a given time. Just as the computers have come in recent times. The "hi" of hi-technology is always a relative term. The progressive development of technology has always been reducing dependence on labour. This is still going on. Under capitalism, any technological advancement means reduction of labour hours, that is, to get more work done in less time, which means purchasing the labour power of less number of workers to reap more profit in the same time at reduced cost. Each time this is done, workers are retrenched. So, unemployment rises. That means, the market gets more contracted, the crisis further intensifies. In the face of this intensified crisis, retrenchment and closure are again resorted to, agreements are revoked and changed and further reduction of wages and salaries follow. Modernization comes again. The temptation of distress sale of labour power grows. As the net result, supply of labour power goes up, the demand for it falls down. Wages are lowered again, the number of workers gets reduced. This goes on and will continue so long as capitalism exists. Here, the full productive capacity of the machinery is not utilized. Because factories have to be kept closed and the surplus unsold commodities pile up, the question of full utilization of the productive capacity of the producing class, the working class, also does not arise. Rather, capitalism cannot proceed without systematic destruction of these two capacities. The capitalist economic system keeps idle the capital created by labour. The problem is not one of lack of capital, but of the character of capital. Lakhs of factories are closed down in the country and 93% of the labour days lost have been because of lock-outs and closures. This is as per the recent reports.

In the year 2000, the rate of increase of the number of workers in the organized sector became negative for the first time in the history of the past few decades.

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Crisis-ridden capitalism resorts to fascist policies

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This rate has been since 1996 as follows :

1.56% in 1996, 1.09% in 1997, 0.46% in 1998, 0.04% in 1999. And in 2000, it plunged down to -0.15%. In that year, 45,000 were retrenched in the organized sector. The report of the Central Labour Directorate shows that in the public sector, there has been an employee-reduction of 0.7%. 1,40,000 were retrenched in 1997-98, 59,000 in 1998-99. In the public sector, 4,20,000 workers-employees were retrenched in 2001-02. In The Economic Times dated 7.5.2003, it was reported that during the same time, 1 lakh jobs were abolished in the banking industry. There is a rush of closure of factories. 138 factories were closed down in 2000; lay-off has been enforced in 209 factories. The figures as in March, 2001 showed that as many as 2,52,947 units remained declared sick, out of which 249,630 were small scale units and the balance 3,317 were medium and large scale industrial units ; out of the latter, 254 were government-owned and the rest were privately owned (Ananda Bazar Patrika, 8.5. 2003). Since then, the employment situation has worsened even more. In an editorial in The Statesman dated 02.01.2004, it was stated : "Employment in the organized sector declined by a shocking 1.5 per cent last year." The strange thing is that such a catastrophic situation is called growth, advancement ! The hired economic pundits and the political leaders serving the capitalist class have termed this jobless growth ! It is a growth no doubt, but a growth of the profits of the corporate houses and capitalists. And it is an immeasurable growth of the poverty, unemployment, cruel hunger and starvation of the common people.

There is a wide disparity between the wages of female and male workers. Since the female workers are paid less wage, the proportion of female workers is being increased to reduce production cost and increase profit. The Census Report published in 2001 shows that this proportion was 22.3% in 1991, but it increased to 25.6% in 2001. For the same reason, there was a huge increase in the number of child labourers. They now numbered 1 crore. A startling figure !

Reality belies false promises of parliamentary politicians

Leaders of all rightist and official leftist parties, the Central and the state governments assert at the time of each election on the issue of contraction of employment that just as jobs are being lost, new jobs are being created as well. And they announce, in election promises, that they would provide employment to so many lakhs or crores. What a great falsehood this is, can be easily seen from a look at the actual figures. Let us consider the case of West Bengal. In 2000, only 12,520 people secured employment in West Bengal in the establishments and concerns of the Central and the state governments or those taken over by them. Out of these, 413 were employed by the Central government, and the rest by the state government. In the year 2002, the picture was even more dismal. Only a little over 7000 were employed by the government concerns, and the number of vacant posts was also reduced (Bartaman, 17.3.2003).

Contract employment is replacing permanent employment, workers-employees are being employed on casual basis. For example, the West Bengal state government has announced that 70,000 teachers will be appointed on contract basis. Whatever the political leaders and ministers may say, the real picture that emerges cannot be wished away by any supposition, belief or conjecture of the governments, leaders, ministers or experts. The Indian capitalist economy is being tossed about in the vortex of a terrible all-out crisis, and in order to preserve it and make it permanent, unprecedented poverty, economic exploitation, oppression and curtailment of rights earned by past struggles are being brought to bear upon the lives of workers-employees. India is becoming a state at the service of monopoly capital and Corporate houses.

Economy in advanced capitalist countries crisis-ridden

US propaganda has been busy projecting that the US economy plunged into crisis as an after effect of the incident of terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001. This is a false assertion. What was the picture of US economy before the terrorist strike ? In the second quarter of

2001, the growth of GDP in the USA fell down to a mere 0.2%. Seven successive reductions of interest rate had failed to arrest the downward trend. 8 lakh jobs were lost in the production sector in the month of August alone. In just one month, unemployment rose from 4.5% to 4.9%. And after September 11, one lakh employees lost their jobs in the sphere of air travel alone. The share prices fell by 15%. Even IT share prices fell by 11%. In this richest country of the world, over 4 crore people cannot secure two square meals a day now, because they lack employment, income adequate for the purpose. Even those who get unemployment allowance, cannot feed their families properly with that.

Bourgeois pundits often cite the case of Japan as an example of success. What is the condition of the Japanese economy, the second largest in the world ? The balloon of Japanese boom has burst. For over one decade, that country has been afflicted with extreme recession. In 1997, the total national production slid down. Instead of increasing, the production fell by 0.7%. In 1998 too, the situation remained unchanged. Mining and production sectors presented a similar picture. Many big banks have gone bankrupt.

Now look at Germany, the country with the third largest economy. The situation there too is pathetic. Because of continuous recession, largescale retrenchment is being resorted to all the time as a safeguard against recession and diminishing profits.

France is plagued with "minus growth", and South Korea too. Economy in all capitalist countries is crisis-ridden.

Crisis-ridden capitalism turns to fascist corporate policies

Plagued with intense, continuous recession, capitalist countries of the world have been resorting to anti-people measures in the economic and political spheres, similar to those being adopted by the Indian governments, to safeguard capitalist class rule, to serve the interest of monopoly capital, to pass the total burden of capitalist crisis on to the shoulders of the common man, and at the same time smothering all voices of dissent in fascist manner. The bourgeois parliamentary democracy "of the people, for the

people and by the people" has degenerated into corporate democracy, that is, a democracy "of the monopoly capitalists, for the monopoly capitalists and by the monopoly capitalists." The shackles of democracy of the corporates are being imposed on the society. The whole world is being re-cast and moulded under WTO dispensation to clamp down the dictatorship of monopoly capital on the working people, to firmly establish Corporate economy and Corporate state. There is a tide of movements by workers-employees-students, common people of all strata from country to country. Slogans like "Down with Globalization" and "Down with Imperialism-capitalism" rise from rallies and processions and rend the sky. And capitalism, in order to preserve the capitalist class rule, is making use of the fascist Corporate policy as the weapon to strengthen the Corporate economic and state structure and to direct the coercive state power against the working class in an organized manner. And the WTO has become the instrument for this, the Centre of international effort to plan and implement comprehensive fascist Corporate economic and political policies.

There is similarity between the present crisis of capitalism and that obtaining before the Second World War, as also similarity between the present Corporate economic and political policies and the measures fascist Italy and Germany adopted at that time. This similarity is at once striking and of grave concern.

"Industrial Peace" in Fascist Italy

In the Italian journal Corriere della Sera of March 26, 1932, Signor Biagi, a high official of the Confederation of Fascist Unions of Italy stated: "... between June 1927 and December 1928, wages had fallen by about 20 p.c.; a further drop of approximately 10 p.c. had taken place in 1929 and in November 1930 there had been a general downward movement, in some cases 18 p.c. but in particular instances as much as 25 p.c. ;" According to Salvemini, a renowned journalist-writer on the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany, the industrial workers of Italy lost at least 40 to 50 p.c. of their wages.

And in such a background, Benito Mussolini, the fascist

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Corporatization in Fascist Italy

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dictator of Italy, smugly said : "Fortunately, the Italian people is not yet accustomed to eat several times a day : its standard of living is so low that it feels scarcity and suffering less." The leaders of the Indian state can also indulge in similar pride, because question-and-answer in the Indian Parliament has revealed that 26 crore people in this country can afford only one meal a day!

The Charter of labour in fascist Italy revealed how the state had passed the burden of the capitalist class on to the common people. Commented Salvemini : "The Charter of labour says that private enterprise is 'responsible to the State'. In actual fact it is the State, i.e., the tax payer, who has become responsible to private enterprise. In fascist Italy, the state pays for the blunders of private enterprise. As long as business was good, profit remained to private initiative. When the depression came, the government added the loss to the tax-payer's burden. Profit is private and individual. Loss is public and social." (emphasis ours). But Italy became a country with "peace" in the industry because "Strikers are promptly gaoled. The labour problem in Italy no longer exists." (Comment by A.P. Dennis, formerly American Commercial Attache in Rome, in 1929). "Italy", wrote the Saturday Evening Post, "became a commonwealth of industrial peace. Between 1926 and the closing months of last year (1930) there was not a single ripple on the labour surface." "On October 12, 1925, the Confederation of Industrial Employers concluded with Rossoni (a close associate of Mussolini - Ed. P.Era) an agreement known as the Vidoni Palace Pact. ... By the terms of this pact the Industrial Confederation recognized the Fascist unions as being the only representative of their workers and promised to make no agreements with their workers except through the Fascist unions: the latter authorized the industrialists thenceforth to ignore the factory committees elected by the workers. On October 6 1926, the Grand Council of Fascism approved the Vidoni Palace Pact and decided that it should be consummated by the abolition of the right to strike" (Salvemini).

In India, we are familiar with how, year after year, the total burden of the crisis in capitalist economy is systematically passed on to the shoulders of the common people through the pricing and fiscal policy of the governments, acting as servitors to monopoly capital. We are also familiar with the sight how the unions controlled by the ruling parties, at the Centre and in the states, are unduly favoured by the employers to form an unholy nexus to the detriment of the workers' interest.

"Class Harmony" in Fascist Italy

What was the picture of the "co-operation" between the employers and the workers in Italy? Salvemini noted: "Strikes are forbidden by law and punished by a rising scale of penalties according to whether they are economic or sympathetic, ... the maximum penalty being seven years' imprisonment for a strike aimed at bringing pressure to bear upon the public authorities. Lock-outs are forbidden as well as strikes. ... But since the workers cannot strike, the employers have no need of recourse to the lock-out. If an employer declares that he can no longer maintain the existing volume of employment in his concern, the stoppage of work is then not a lock-out but a closing down induced by a justified motive."

In India, the things are not yet so bad, but they are moving in that direction. We wish to remind the people that the Central government has declared that employers with a work force of upto 1000 in an industrial unit are no longer required to take prior permission of the government for retrenching workers or declaring lock-out. What do the recent Supreme Court verdict on the right to organize Bandh and strike, or the Calcutta High Court directive restricting the right to hold meetings or take out processions portend? Do not these remind one of the dark days of fascist rule? When, in this background, the Central as well as the state governments including the CPI(M)-led West Bengal government call for "peace in industry", whither are they taking the country?

Salvemini quoted from *Lavoro-d' Italia* dated September 3, 1929 : "It is well known that the employers can reduce the number of employees or of working hours without closing

the factories and producing a lock-out." Basking in the glory of ushering in such "social peace" in Italy, Mussolini sermonized, directed at the American capitalists: "Why are there strikes in America? They are not necessary here in Italy. We have done away with strikes and lock-outs."

Is India moving in the same direction? Leaving aside the other states, even in West Bengal, once the citadel of leftist movement in the country, strikes are almost non-existent now, thanks to the over 26 years' uninterrupted rule by the pseudo-Marxist CPI(M), while the workers-employees are plagued with the spate of lock-outs. If the names of the Indian prime minister or the chief minister of Tamil Nadu or West Bengal is substituted for that of Mussolini, will there be a fundamental difference in the stand taken by them?

Viewing the then situation in Italy, Paul Einzig, a noted bourgeois economist and an admirer of fascism, wrote approvingly in his *Economic Foundation of Fascism* : "In no country was it so easy as in Italy to obtain a consent of employees to a reduction of wages." Had he been alive now, he could not have been so proud about Italy being unique in this respect. In the northern part of West Bengal, tea garden workers have to make do with 3 days' wage while working for 6 days. Families of workers of closed tea gardens are dying of starvation. Similar is the plight of a large section of jute mill workers in West Bengal. Production has been increased by 3.5 lakh tons after reducing the number of workers by 30,000.

Regarding the growing tendency of switching over to contract labour as against maintaining a regular, permanent workforce that we observe in India, it is worth mentioning that this characteristic of corporate economy was pronounced in the advanced capitalist countries of Europe as well when, on the eve of rise of fascism, the capitalist countries there, in a bid to mitigate deep-seated and continuing crisis, were adopting fascist corporate policies. In Britain in 1924, the regular salaried employees numbered only 28 lakhs as against 1 crore 54 lakhs contract labourers and employees (Source : *Fascism & Social Revolution* by R. Palme Dutt).

Fascist Corporate State

Corporate democracy, that is, the democracy of the corporate bodies is nothing but fascist dictatorship imposed on the working class. The British fascist leader Oswald Mosley, in his *Fascism in Britain*, said : "Our policy is the establishment of the Corporate State. As the name implies, this means a state organized like the human body. Every member of that body acts in harmony with the purpose of the whole under the guidance and driving brain of the Fascist government. ... Class war will give place to national co-operation. All who pursue a sectional and anti-national policy will be opposed by the might of the organized state."

What is the economic policy of a Corporate state? Said Mussolini : "The Corporate economy respects the principle of private property. ... The co-operative economy respects private initiative. ... We are sure of ourselves because our revolution has a whole century before it." In fact, this was so. From the experience of working class movement and working class revolution gained and after observing the lasting intensity of crisis of capitalism, Mussolini's Corporate state, Corporate economy was implementation of a well thought-out plan of a revolution against working class revolution, a reactionary revolution, that is, a counter revolution by monopoly capitalists. Its object was to meet the challenge against the capitalist system posed by the leftist parties in the social, economic and political spheres. This is how Brady analyzed in his book *The Spirit & Structure of Fascism*.

In such a situation, with the working class under attack, conciliatory adjudication takes the place of conscious class struggle and working class movement. Not only the leaders of the state but the working class movement and the governments led by the rightist as well as the official leftist parties in this country have taken to this course. This has become the main tendency at the state level. If strikes are banned, the right of workers to organize is also nullified in practice, because no one can go on strike alone, isolatedly. The new Industrial Disputes Act, proposed to be introduced, would facilitate the supremacy of conciliatory adjudication by stifling the trade union movement, when the authorities would accord recognition to only the

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Fascism, the greatest enemy of civilization

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union with a majority of workers-employees as its members, and sit in discussion with that union only; the other unions would lose importance. Not only this. Any decision to go on strike would be taken only on the basis of approval of a majority of workers through secret ballot. And the strike would have to be conducted keeping the production unhampered! In practice, only the union obedient to the owner-capitalists would "secure" support of the majority through muscle power, malpractices and manipulations, and would be favoured with recognition. In this way, a stream of trade union movement serving the owner-capitalists would strengthen the foundations of Corporate democracy, that is fascism, in India too. Unbridled class exploitation by the capitalists would go on in the name of "national interest". The net result would be that exploitation-oppression by the owners would go on, but there would be no resistance. Any opposition would be brutally suppressed as has been done in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and as has been going on in West Bengal.

Fascism is a worldwide phenomenon

Mussolini had stated : "...can the Corporate principle be applied in

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other countries ? There is no doubt about it. As there is a general crisis of capitalism, solution by the Corporate state seems to be necessary in other countries." (Italics ours).

But the idea was prevalent at that time that the dark force of fascism could rise only in industrially advanced capitalist countries. It was Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our founder leader, teacher and guide and one of the foremost Marxist philosophers of the era who showed by incisive analysis as far back as in the early 1960s how fascism was becoming a world-wide phenomenon, affecting all capitalist countries, advanced or relatively backward. He showed that "The distinguishing features of fascism, ... are discernible, no doubt, in varying degrees, in all the capitalist countries of the world, not excluding the backward countries in Asia and Africa. This historical experience of the age calls for a revision of the classical concept about fascism. In the pre-war days, with the establishment of fascism in Italy and Germany, ... the idea gained ground that fascism could grow and develop in powerful capitalist countries alone. ... The growing tendency of fascistization in some of the economically and militarily weak capitalist countries in Asia and Africa and the establishment of military and fascist dictatorship in some such other countries prove the incorrectness of the old postulation."

At present, the all-out crisis of capitalism, being tossed about in the vortex of permanent recession, has provided the impetus to capitalism to move towards Corporate state from country to country. The WTO, in the name of globalization, is accelerating the process of corporatization on a global scale as per a comprehensive plan.

Danger of Fascism in India

For years, the Indian rulers, acting in the interest of Indian monopoly capital which they serve, through the much trumpeted countrywide spree of liberalization and privatization coupled with anti-people measures in the economic and political spheres, have been consolidating Corporate economy and democracy in the country in a planned way strengthening the foundations of fascism. The comprehensive economic-political-

cultural blue print for fascism of the present BJP government at the Centre including its industrial and educational policies is nakedly revealed today. To strengthen the base of fascism in the realm of mind, in thought process and culture, the vision of the exploited masses is being clouded with spiritual-feudal obscurantism and superstition, by whipping up Hindu revivalism and jingoism - rabid nationalism, by fomenting communal strife and various ethnic, nationality dissensions to destroy the unity of the exploited masses by intoxicating them with aggressive nationalism and war psychosis, snaring them by holding up the mirage of class-unity and class-harmony before them to disarm them mentally. Side by side, the economy is sought to be artificially stimulated by resorting to all-out militarization of it, which is a common feature in all capitalist countries now.

Long back, by studying the characteristic features, form, essence and philosophical roots of fascism, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh held aloft a concrete, and penetrating analysis about it. He showed that "Fascism is a peculiar fusion of spiritualism with science. It is, in other words, a queer admixture of spiritualism, obscurantist ideas, illogical and fanatic bent of mind with the technological aspects of science. When such a thing does really take place in a country then the logical and scientific bent of mind of the people to probe things critically, thoroughly, dies out."

How true these words ring in the context of the content and aim of BJP's nefarious activities to further fascism in the country!

Evil of Fascism must be combated tooth & nail

The people have to remain ever vigilant against inroads of fascism into the society. They can lower their guard only at their peril, for fascism relies on deception to secure popular sanction behind it to pave the way for ruthless suppression of all opposition and discontent at a later stage after it has come to hold the sway.

Comrade Ghosh taught us that fascism is much more dangerous than any kind of naked dictatorship, even military dictatorship in so far as it strives to achieve national unity in favour of the bourgeoisie against revolutionary proletariat. He

analyzed that "Fascism always and everywhere adopts a dual policy of suppression and persuasion. In the beginning, in its attempt to entrench in the national life firmly, ... its aim is not so much to ruthlessly suppress the mass force as to win it over to its side as volunteers, willing to carry out fascist plans and programmes ... Without a co-operating mass force at its back, fascism can hardly hold its sway."

Fascism can also be deceptive regarding the form in which it may come. Comrade Ghosh taught us that "As to form also fascism presents no stereotyped pattern. ... somewhere it has adopted the form of individual dictatorship, somewhere the autocratic rule of military junta and yet in some other countries, it has been able to usurp power under democratic garb, keeping the parliament still alive but limiting its power by economic and political centralization. The appearance of fascism in democratic garb through two-party parliamentary system of government is, certainly, a post-war social phenomenon, having no historical precedent ; because of its seemingly democratic appearance it is, at the same time, the most deceptive."

So fascism must be resisted tooth and nail, painstakingly and through protracted anti-fascist struggle, ideologically and organizationally, in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres, comprising all sections of well-meaning, patriotic people with the good of the country at the heart irrespective of caste and creed from all walks of life.

Fascism is the greatest enemy of civilization and the struggle against it has to be conducted in an all-embracing manner, to be fought to the finish, always bearing in heart Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's historic caution : "Remember, even a ruthlessly oppressed and starving nation in the midst of utter destitution can stand up on its feet and fight if it has not lost all concern for human values and self-respect. But when fascism makes deep inroads into the society, there remain very few who can be called MAN in the real sense. Because when fascist way of life and thinking prevail in a country, that creates hindrance to the very process of making one a real man."

Ensuing Lok Sabha Elections : Central Committee's Call

Defeat BJP and Congress

Make the forces of mass movement victorious

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the SUCI in course of releasing the list of candidates of the party who will contest from different states on party's behalf in the ensuing election to the 14th Lok Sabha and to some state assemblies where simultaneous elections are being held, stated in a statement that the Central Committee of the party at its meeting held on 3rd and 4th February, 2004 in course of deciding its approach towards the forthcoming elections to the 14th Lok Sabha strongly indicted the BJP-led central government for the premature dissolution of 13th Lok Sabha with the ulterior motive to draw maximum electoral advantage. The Central Committee also strongly deplored the advertisement spree that is being resorted to by the BJP-led central government and other state governments to advance their electoral interest at the cost of crores of public money. The Central Committee having strongly felt the necessity for the emergence of a real left democratic combination on the one hand, to defeat and expose the BJP and the Congress, the two reactionary wings of the ruling capitalist class and on the other, to shape and articulate democratic mass movements centring round their urgent demands within and outside legislature — to its dismay found that the CPI(M) and the CPI instead of realizing this historical necessity, have on the pretext of fighting BJP's communal politics, chosen the path of aligning with the Congress, the other trusted wing of the ruling capitalist class which throughout its prolonged rule over the whole country practised and encouraged worst form of divisive and communal politics. The Central Committee condemned it as an out and out opportunist politics arising out of their twin need of appeasing ruling capitalist class and deriving maximum electoral advantage in the hustings.

The Central Committee of the party under the circumstances decided to face the ensuing election with the sole objective of bringing to the electorate the urgent necessity to defeat the BJP and the Congress — the two arch enemies of the people and to stress the imperative of combining parliamentary election with the cause of democratic mass movements exposing in the process the hypocrisy that is being practised by the pseudo-lefts.

Loksabha Election

Name of the Constituency	Name of the Candidate
ASSAM	1. Karimganj (SC) Comrade Radhakanta Tanty 2. Silchar Comrade Kantimoy Deb 3. Mangaldoi Comrade Bhupendra Nath Kakati 4. Dhubri Comrade Minhar Ali Mondal
ANDHRA PRADESH	1. Anantapur Comrade B. S. Amarnath
BIHAR	1. Baisali Comrade Ashok Kr. Singh
DELHI	1. East Delhi Comrade Harish Tyagi
GUJARAT	1. Baroda Comrade Tapan Kumar Dasgupta
HARYANA	1. Rohtak Comrade Anoop Singh 2. Sonapat Comrade Hari Parkash 3. Mahendergarh Comrade Rajender Singh
JHARKHAND	1. Jamshedpur Comrade Sitaram Tudu
KERALA	1. Thiruvananthapuram Comrade B. K. Rajagopal 2. Kollam Comrade Smt. Shyla K. Johan 3. Alappuzha Comrade Parthasarathi Varma 4. Mavelikkara Comrade Smt. S. Radhamony

Name of the Constituency Name of the Candidate

KARNATAKA	5. Kottayam Comrade Smt. Mini K. Philip 6. Calicut Comrade D. Surendranath 1. Gulbarga Comrade Bhagawan Reddy 2. Bellary Comrade K. Somasekhar 3. Bangalore South Comrade B. R. Manjunath 4. Bangalore North Comrade Smt. K. Uma
ORISSA	1. Jajpur (SC) Comrade Radhaballav Mallick
TAMIL NADU	1. Chennai Central Comrade N. Kumaresh 2. Periyakulam Comrade Venugopal
UTTAR PRADESH	1. Machhalishahar Comrade Jagannath Verma
WEST BENGAL	1. Darjeeling (Name to be announced later) 2. Coochbehar (SC) Comrade Nripen Karjee 3. Alipurduar (ST) Comrade Rampratap Baraik 4. Jalpaiguri Comrade Shankar Ganguly 5. Balurghat (SC) Comrade Binoy Mallik 6. Jangipur Comrade Abdus Sayed 7. Murshidabad Comrade Smt. Khadija Banu 8. Berhampur Comrade Apurba Banerjee 9. Krishnanagar Comrade Sk. Khodabox 10. Nabadwip (SC) Comrade Gopal Biswas 11. Barasat Comrade Shankar Ghosh 12. Basirhat Comrade Kartik Sarkar 13. Joynagar (SC) Comrade Tarun Naskar 14. Mathurapur (SC) Comrade Prahlad Kumar Purkait 15. Diamond Harbar Comrade Abdur Rouf 16. Jadavpur Comrade Smt. Banasri Chakraborty 17. Barackpore Comrade Amal Sen 18. Howrah Comrade Aloke Ghosh 19. Serampore Comrade Dilip Bhattacharya 20. Tamluk Comrade Manab Bera 21. Contai Comrade Jiban Das 22. Midnapore Comrade Panchanan Prodhan 23. Jhargram (ST) (Name to be announced later) 24. Purulia Comrade Smt. Pranati Bhattacharya 25. Bankura Comrade Bhaskar Bhadra 26. Bishnupur (SC) Comrade Sraban Mondal 27. Asansol Comrade Sunil Mukherjee 28. Katwa Comrade Jakaria Biswas 29. Bolpur Comrade Bijoy Dalui 29. Birbhum (SC) Comrade Brojomohan Das

Assembly Election

Name of the Constituency	Name of the Candidate
ANDHRA PRADESH	1. Anantapur Comrade Smt. G. Lalitha
KARNATAKA	1. Gulbarga Comrade Smt. V. Nagammal 2. Shahbad Comrade H. V. Diwakar 3. Bellary Comrade Smt. M. N. Manjula 4. Raichur Comrade T. S. Suneeth Kumar 5. Mysore Comrade M. Shashidhar 6. Malleswaram Comrade Smt. H. G. Jayalakshmi 7. Rajajinagar Comrade Smt. B. S. Prathibha Kumari 8. Basavanagudi Comrade V. N. Rajsekhar 9. Binnypet Comrade M. N. Sriram
ORISSA	1. Joshipur (ST) Comrade Shambhunath Naik 2. Binjharpur (SC) Comrade Surendra Mallik 3. Athmallik Comrade Bhimsen Behra

Success of General Strike voices working class resistance

The 24th February All India General Strike was a tremendous success. Convened by the central trade unions — UTUC-Lenin Sarani, CITU, AITUC, AICCTU, TUCC and UTUC, this successful strike demanding of the government appropriate steps to combat the situation arising out of the Supreme court verdict against government employees' right to strike, and withdrawal of anti-people economic policies, etc., brought forth the great potential of the united movement of the working class.

In a joint press conference held on 24th February in Delhi, Comrades Krishna Chakraborty, Vice-president, UTUC-LS, Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary, CITU, Gurudas Dasgupta, General Secretary, AITUC, Abani Roy of UTUC described the overwhelming

strike as unprecedented in India.

The General Strike was total in bank and insurance sectors. In public sector undertakings, in mines, ports, oil sector, steel industries, etc., workers made the strike successful. In private sector, both in organized and unorganized fields starting from the jute workers, agricultural workers, bidi workers, tea garden workers, etc., all participated in the strike. In fine, workers struck work in all walks of life.

During preparation and on the day of strike, UTUC-LS workers all over the country were very much active to organise the strike. In Delhi, UTUC-LS participated in the joint rally while under its auspices government employees of forest department demonstrated separately. Although hospitals were outside the purview of the General Strike,

hospital workers led by mainly UTUC-LS, wore black badges in support of the strike, defying Delhi High Court judgement prohibiting demonstrations and rallies by the hospital workers.

In Mayurbhanj, Orissa, a big workers' procession led by the UTUC-LS was blocked by the police. Police arrested over 500 demonstrators. In West Bengal, in view of the fact that workers of different strata struck work in total, be they government employees, shop employees, restaurant employees, etc., the state wore a deserted look. In different districts of West Bengal, UTUC-LS organized workers' rallies. Even in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, despite the BJP and the Congress governments' opposition, the strike was successful. Mines were closed in Jharkhand, Orissa, Chattisgarh. UTUC-LS led workers participated in central and other rallies in Kerala and Karnataka. UTUC-LS led workers brought to a standstill the Tamil Nadu Lignite Mines complex, where both the mines and power workers participated in the strike. In Assam, oil refineries, tea gardens, state buses, government offices came to a standstill. Comrade Bimal Nandi state organiser of UTUC-LS was arrested.

The most important thing of the General Strike was the mass participation of government employees, because it is particularly against them the Supreme Court verdict banning their participation in strike was directed. Another notable feature of the strike was that though BMS (Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh) was not in the strike and INTUC

leadership earlier agreeing with the strike call, backtracked in the last moment, affiliated unions and workers, en masse, participated in the strike.

Two distinct line of approaches came to the fore in the campaign on the eve of the General strike. While the major TUs, especially the CITU conducted their campaign to make it complementary for ensuing Lok Sabha elections, the UTUC-LS came up with an appeal to the working class to view the strike as an integral part of sustained movement and make it successful to ensure one step forward in the ongoing struggles against globalization, attacks on job opportunities, employment and workers' hard won rights.

Alongside, the UTUC-LS was of the view that apart from increasing class bias of the judiciary over participation of workers-employees in the democratic movements including right to strike, there remains a material basis for giving such anti-working class verdict. As for example, although there is no provision in the chapter of Fundamental Rights of the Constitution for right to strike of the workers-employees, the provision remains for both the Centre and the states to legislate on it ensuring right to strike. The successive governments at the Centre and in the states even after 56 years of independence could find no time to come with that legislation to ensure basic right to strike of their respective employees-workers. It no doubt, cuts a sorry figure on the part of the ruling parties including those who call themselves to be 'Left'. This pro-working class approach of the UTUC-LS had a tremendous impact on the workers-employees alike.

Opportunistic Vote Politics

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through in Tamil Nadu. Secular combination of the Congress-CPI(M)-CPI and separatist Telengana Rashtriya Samithy in Andhra Pradesh is in the final stage of formation. Talks are on in other states as well to work out combinations between the Congress and the CPI(M)-CPI. One recalls that the CPI(M), CPI fought the last assembly elections in Gujarat, J & K, Rajasthan and other places in alliance with the Congress. The CPI(M) candidate in Bhavnagare in Gujarat, was found campaigning with the photograph of Sonia! One could judge for oneself how the CPI(M)-CPI leaders take the people for granted and think whatever they feed, would be swallowed. Is it anything but political opportunism and double standard per excellence and an affront to the people?

Heightened duplicity of the CPI(M) leadership

But this is not the end of the story of heightened duplicity and treating the people with contempt. The CPI(M) leaders have informed that there would be no alliance with the Congress in the states of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala where in the state level parliamentary duel, the two parties contend each other. In one or two more states, such alliance might not work out because of the sectarian and other petty considerations of either of them. Is it

also not an instance of worst double dealing? How could the CPI(M) have one policy of colluding with the Congress at national level to prevent split of the anti-BJP votes and simultaneously decide to contest in a few states soliciting anti-Congress votes? Moreover, if the CPI(M) candidates win from such states securing anti-Congress votes, what moral right and propriety, even in the bourgeois sense, would they have to extend support to the Congress in the next Parliament to keep the BJP at bay? Is this how the CPI(M) leadership respects people's verdict? What then remains of even rudimentary ethics and moral conduct? What is then the difference between the known bourgeois parties and these leftists as both practice with equal impunity crass opportunism and play with the mandate of the people for self and power?

Perhaps the CPI(M), CPI leaders think that they would get away with all such opportunist and deceptive acts. But we know from history that whoever has tried to betray the cause of the people, discharge the role of servitor and protector to the exploiting class had to face the consequence ultimately. History never forgives such treacherous acts. We fervently appeal to the honest rank and file of the CPI(M) and the CPI to seriously ponder over this and decide if they would allow themselves to be dragged along the rotten anti-people bourgeois vote politics.

Comrade Tapas Dutta congratulates the working people

In a statement issued on 24.2.04 on nationwide general strike that took place the same day the General Secretary of UTUC-LS, Comrade Tapas Dutta said:

On behalf of UTUC-Lenin Sarani I convey my warm heartfelt congratulation to the working millions of India for their courageous participation in the nationwide general strike today convened by six Central Trade Unions including ours against apex court's infamous judgement striking down government employees' right to strike and anti-people economic policies being pursued by the central and state governments. We particularly congratulate those lakhs of followers of INTUC and BMS who by their participation in this strike have made it clear that they are not with their leadership's frantic competitive exercise in serving monopoly houses of home and abroad. We also condemn the state government of Orissa for arresting five hundred workers of UTUC-Lenin Sarani in the district of Mayurbhanj.

The working people have given their verdict today that rejects the verdict of the Supreme Court of India. We appeal to the working class fraternity to go ahead with firm determination and keep their sustained struggle alive till final victory is won.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : NIHAR MUKHERJEE

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