

# Proletarian Era

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**“Correct process of solving the communal problem in our country lies in democratizing the society through social and cultural revolutions.”**

**— Comrade Shibdas Ghosh**

*(24th April, 2015 will be commemorative of the 68th Foundation Day of our beloved Party, SUCI (Communist). On this occasion, we publish selected excerpts from the work “On Communal Problem” (Selected Works Vol II, 1992, 1st edition, p 171-184) by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary of SUCI(C) and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era. In developing an intense ideological-cultural struggle against the rising menace of communalism-fundamentalism, the invaluable analysis and guideline provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader, teacher and guide, in the said article will work as the beacon.)*

“...could pulpit speeches denouncing communalism and extolling the virtues of peace and amity between different communities solve the problem of communalism and communal violence then that problem would have been long solved in our country. Had not great personalities like Deshabandhu Chittaranjan<sup>1</sup>, Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup> and Netaji Subhas Chandra<sup>1</sup>, all of whom enjoyed unquestionable confidence of the Indian people at large, equally condemned communalism and communal violence and extolled the necessity of maintaining peace and amity between different communities living here? And what has been the net result of those exhortations? We are not an inch nearer to our goal compared to their time. Communalism still remains with its deadly influence over our people, manifesting itself in the ugliest forms of communal frenzy and communal violence at the slightest provocation, as before....

...I know that the British imperialists, in order to perpetuate their colonial rule and economic interest, resorted to a divide-and-rule policy in our country and deliberately antagonized the Muslim masses to the nationalist movement. This is, no doubt, true. But did not the British imperialists adopt the same divide-and-rule policy in Burma also? Is it not a fact that the Dutch imperialists, too, were by no means less active than the British rulers of India in their attempts to disrupt the unity of the Indonesian people fighting for national independence? Why then of all these countries did India face the peculiar problem of communalism, leading to periodic communal disturbances, demand for separate nationhood by the Muslims and ultimate partition of the country on the basis of religion? To try to explain this peculiarity of the Indian situation by simply referring to the divide-and-rule policy of the British rulers of our country as its sole cause is to deceive oneself and refuse to acknowledge certain basic weaknesses from which our national liberation struggle all through suffered...

The cause of this failure lies in the very nature of the leadership of the national liberation

movement in our country. However much some of our nationalist historians may claim to the contrary, it is a hard fact that in the pre-British era India had never been a political whole. In fact, we had at that time a large number of separate principalities. It was only during the centralised British administration that India became a political whole, which created, step by step, the material condition, so long absent, for the emergence of a modern all-India concept. During the centralised British administration of India associated with the emergence of a national market and intercourse of trade and commerce on an all-India basis between the people, and in the course of the Indian people's fight for national independence against the imperialists, the different nationalities in India speaking different languages and different communities professing different religions were in the process of merging together and forming a nation. Had the leadership of this national movement in our country been in the hands of the working class, it would have been possible not only to eliminate imperialism completely but also to take the country along the non-capitalist path of development and solve the nationality, communal or racial questions once for all, as it has been done in China and the Soviet Union. But unfortunately for the Indian people, the leadership of our national liberation movement lay in the hands of the national bourgeoisie of our country. And this accounts for the peculiarity of the Indian situation...

...in India the process of formation of nation started in the second half of the nineteenth century, when capitalism, as a world social force, had not only lost its revolutionary character but also become definitely anti-revolution. Over and above this general characteristic, Indian capitalism had its specific features. Unlike western capitalism, which grew independently, Indian capitalism grew and developed under the domination of foreign finance capital with feudal relations surrounding it. As a result, it had a

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## **SUCI(C) opposes doubling of railway platform ticket rate, calls for building up powerful resistance movement**

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 17 March, 2015 :

The BJP Finance Minister while presenting union budget 2015 gave indication that tax increases can take place outside the budget as well. We have also been repeatedly pointing out over the last three four years that the government has made it a practice to raise tariff or impose additional tax through issue of administrative fiat and bypassing the parliament. And in keeping with that, the BJP government has dealt the first blow on the people by doubling railway platform ticket rate from Rs 5 to Rs 10 to be effective from 1st April, 2015. Not only that, the Divisional Railway Managers have been empowered to increase the rate of platform ticket beyond Rs 10 to regulate rush at platform during specific requirements like *mela* (fair) and rally. We strongly oppose this most atrocious decision to thrust hefty burden on common people who often come to railway stations for receiving or seeing off their relatives or friends.

We call upon the people to build up powerful resistance movement by organizing massive demonstrations, blockades and gheraos in front of the railway offices and force the government under pressure of movement to withdraw the hike.

# Indian nationalist leadership took up religion as a vehicle of propagating nationalistic ideas

*Contd. from page 1*

stunted growth. The nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie was naturally stirred into movement against imperialism; because, the imperialist rule in our country stood as an insurmountable obstacle in the path of establishing its class rule here and freely exploiting the Indian masses. But, like all colonial bourgeoisie in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution, it was mortally afraid of revolutionary mass struggles against imperialism. For, it apprehended that the revolutionary struggle by the Indian people for national liberation, if successful, would not only end the imperialist rule in our country but, along with it, also remove the national bourgeoisie from the leadership of the struggle, open up the path of non-capitalist way of development and completely shatter all possibilities of establishing a capitalist rule in India. Antagonism with imperialism, on the one hand, and mortal fear of the revolutionary struggle by the people against imperialism on the other hand, made the nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie maintain a *reformist oppositional* role against imperialism. Its role against feudalism was equally compromising. Indian capitalism, therefore, tried to develop through compromises with both imperialism and feudalism. The result of compromises with feudalism was that the Indian bourgeoisie could not and did not carry out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions essential for the democratization of the society and complete merger of different nationalities speaking different languages and different communities professing different religions, into a nation. In the course of the political movement against imperialism, the Indian people speaking different languages and professing different religions became a nation politically but for failure on the part of the leadership of our national liberation movement to accomplish, in the main, the tasks of social and cultural revolutions for democratization of the society against feudalism, feudal disunity and religious bondage, the Indian people remained socially and culturally divided into different communities disunited by religion, caste, language, race, etc...

This is not all. The Indian nationalist leadership not only did not try to free the Indian masses from the bondage of religion and democratize the society by carrying

out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions, it took up, on the contrary, religion as a vehicle of propagating nationalistic ideas. Indian nationalism, therefore, was basically religion-oriented. This religion-oriented nationalism manifested itself in the form of Hindu religious revivalism. The psychological reaction which the Hindu revivalist Indian nationalism created in the non-Hindu masses was, *by and large, responsible for keeping them, especially the Muslim masses, away from the national liberation movement in our country.* Furthermore, it also gave every opportunity to the British imperialists and the anti-nationalist, pro-imperialist Muslim leaders to impress upon the Muslim masses that India, when freed from the British rule, would be no better than a tyrannical rule by the Hindus, where no Muslim would have any security and freedom of faith.... Why talk of the Muslims alone? What about the so-called lower caste Hindus? Since the tasks of social and cultural revolutions were not carried out the people belonging to the socially backward strata of the Hindu community remained not only in religious bondage but also under the social and cultural suppression by the so-called upper castes among the Hindus. And, in this regard, Indian nationalism could not even express itself as a broad Hindu revivalism. In spite of the attempts by Gandhiji and some other leaders to the contrary, it identified itself rather with the revivalism of the Brahminic cult dominated by the Brahmins<sup>5</sup>, Kshatriyas<sup>5</sup>, Kayasthas<sup>5</sup> and Baidyas<sup>5</sup> in Bengal and other so-called higher castes...

These attempts by the nationalist bourgeois leadership to integrate the Muslim masses into the Indian nation on the basis of tolerance and broadness of Hindu religion, or by helping to preserve the Islamic religious customs inconsistent with the principles of a democratic society, only widened the gulf between the Muslim masses and the nationalist forces. It was but inevitable. For, real unification of the people differing in religion, language, caste, race, etc., into a homogeneous national whole can never be achieved by lending support to religious customs, the force that impedes the process of unification. Real integration of different communities into a nation can be achieved only by making religion completely powerless, in so far as the social activities of individuals are concerned, through

democratization of the society in the course of accomplishing the tasks of social and cultural revolutions. Neither the nationalist bourgeois leadership nor those forces who spoke of the necessity of establishing a leadership alternative to the nationalist bourgeois leadership did perform these essential tasks of formation of the Indian nation. So, notwithstanding the sincerity to unify all the communities into a nation, the wrong process adopted for the purpose failed to integrate the different communities, particularly the Muslims, into a national whole...

Even after coming to power the nationalist leadership did not rectify the wrong approach of theirs in this respect. The present rulers of our country, in place of carrying out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions, are only aiding more enthusiastically, in the name of secularism, the anti-secular forces and tendencies by encouraging all sorts of religious customs, conventions and prejudices, which have increased several times compared to the pre-independence days. It is no wonder that in the circumstances the slogan of Hindu revivalism is finding a strong foothold now. It should be realized that true secularism does not mean encouraging the individual to profess, practise and propagate his religious faith. Nor does it presuppose state patronage to every religious faith so as to widen the influence of religion over the masses of the people. Far less does it aim at giving some premium to a given community professing a particular faith by offering it special privileges on religious consideration alone. A really secular state considers religion the private affair of its citizens and does not, therefore, interfere, either by encouragement or by opposition, in the profession, practice and propagation of religion by the individual. On the contrary, it guarantees full freedom to the believers to profess any faith as well as to the non-believers. By carrying out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions, it democratizes the society and takes the wind out of the sail of religion, in so far as its influence on the social activities of the individual and on the state is concerned. As a result of the strong Hindu revivalist tendencies of the present ruling bourgeoisie of our country, even today the Indian people are a conglomeration of socially and culturally different communities distracted by language, religion, caste and race...The

correct process of solving the communal problem in our country, therefore, lies in democratizing the society through social and cultural revolutions.

Tasks of democratic revolution cannot be accomplished by the bourgeois today...

...It is true that in the western democracies the process of nation formation has been essentially completed in so far as feudal disunity is concerned. Hence, communal or religious difference exerts little or no influence on the national life there. But no bourgeoisie is capable of fully completing the process of democratization which it had itself started. So, under the bourgeois rule, some tasks of democratic revolution still remain unaccomplished. The national question is such an unaccomplished task. In all the capitalist countries where there are more than one nationality, the dominant nationality suppresses the other nationality or nationalities. Under capitalism, therefore, people are subjected not only to economic exploitation but also to nationality oppression. The race riots in the western countries are reflection of this suppression of the national minority by the dominant nationality. Besides, capitalism, which for the sake of national integration and formation of nation at a certain stage of its development tried to unify different communities of people in a given territory, also tries at a different stage of its development, i.e. in the imperialist stage, to disrupt the unity of the people for its own security against popular uprising. The more acute its crisis becomes, resulting in more intense struggle by the working people against the capitalist order, the more fascist capitalism becomes, when it tries to fan up religious or racial sentiments of the people to misdirect popular struggles against capitalism. It is for this reason we are increasingly noticing symptoms of religious fanaticism, racialism and race riots even in the bourgeois democratic countries of the west. Thus, so long as capitalism will exist, there will remain the root cause of anti-people ideas like communalism, casteism, racialism, etc., and, consequently, the ground of communal violence will also be there. Only when the working people led by the working class will capture power, eliminate the survivals of capitalism and fully complete the tasks of democratic revolution in order that socialism can be successfully built, will national,

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# Powerful, militant working class and democratic movements and fierce ideological struggle against fundamentalism-obscurantism — Need of the hour

(This is the speech Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), delivered, on being invited at the inaugural session of the 22nd Congress of CPI in Puducherry on 25 March, 2015)

Respected Comrade A B Bardhan, Members of the Presidium, Leaders of other Left parties and Comrade Delegates,

On behalf of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), I extend my hearty greetings to you all. CPI is the oldest left party in our country and it had a long tradition of struggle. In spite of our ideological differences, we have taken lessons from those struggles, as we always learn from others.

I agree with the views placed by your General Secretary regarding the international situation that world capitalism-imperialism is in deep crisis. As Great Lenin pointed out long back, capitalism had reached the stage of monopoly, imperialism, and become moribund. Capitalism is in deepest of crises today, lying on its death bed in the intensive care unit under ventilation. And there is no doctor to save the dying capitalism-imperialism.

But the tragedy is that the grave-diggers of capitalism-imperialism, that is the revolutionary proletariat of the world is not prepared to dig the grave.

There has been sad dismantling of the great world socialist system caused by the revisionists denouncing Great Stalin in the name of fighting cult of personality and thereby renouncing the very authority of Leninism. Thus ground was prepared for counter revolution.

But hope is also there. There are sporadic outbursts of people's discontent all over the world, crying for leadership. Sooner or later, we hope revolutionary movement will develop world over with correct revolutionary understanding of Marxism-Leninism. Again the working class leadership will emerge to dig the grave of world capitalism-imperialism.

In our country, it is a fact that the monopoly houses, multinationals, the bourgeois class as a whole engineered installation of BJP in power with a view to continuing and intensifying its ruthless exploitation and on the other hand accelerating the process of facisation which is fast becoming a serious menace for the country.

In our country already capital is concentrated in the form of monopoly, state power is centralised, and administrative fascism is in

place. And there is a serious attack in the field of ideology and culture in the form of fomenting, encouraging, highlighting all moribund, age-old religious ideas, obscurantist thoughts and medieval thinking. Even ludicrous claims are being made that in ancient India all the scientific discoveries of modern age were in existence. All these are done only to foment Hindu jingoism and ancient traditional sentiment.

I can recall when Hitler was being denounced throughout the world, there was a voice on our soil, the voice of Golwalker – who praised Hitler because Hitler in order to save the purity of the German race purged the Jews in Germany. Golwalker enthusiastically hailed Hitler and said that it is the only way to establish Hindu nationalism in India and save its purity.

BJP is an outfit of the RSS. The RSS never participated in the Indian freedom struggle. Rather, the RSS leadership criticized it because it was not based on Hindu nationalism but on territorial nationalism and by way of fighting common enemy, i.e. British imperialism. The RSS is destroying all the secular, democratic values that were upheld by the Indian Renaissance. So, in the field of culture, we find spiritualism and obscurantism are being encouraged, alongwith only technical aspects of science instead of fundamentals of science. All scientific outlook and values are being destroyed. This is out and out a fascist attack. A powerful ideological struggle is necessary to defeat this attack.

A united left democratic movement is the need of the hour. But who are leftists? Obviously those who regard themselves as Marxists though, of course, there are basic differences in regard to the understanding of Marxism and its applications. They are to be considered as leftists. There may be ideological differences and ideological struggle, not to weaken unity but to strengthen it. Ideological struggle is necessary to develop better understanding.

Who are democratic and secular parties? There is much confusion about it. Opposition to BJP does not *ipso facto* connote that a party is a secular party. There is opposition to BJP only for achieving election victory. Congress is opposing BJP;

can we call Congress a secular party? There are other regional parties, casteist parties, parochial parties which cannot be termed as secular.

Secularism is having a historical meaning. The very concept of secularism emerged at the time of the European renaissance, bourgeois democratic revolution. Philosophically, secularism means non-recognition of any spiritual entity, recognition of only nature and material world as reality.

Politically, secularism means, — politics, education and social affairs must not have any relation with religion. In the Indian Constitution, the word secularism is mentioned; it is merely written in words but not put in practice. Encouragement to all religions is not secularism. The state and its all activities must be free from religious approach.

Who are democratic parties? Democratic parties mean that, not only in words, but in deeds the parties would practice secularism, fight casteism, parochialism, and communalism, consistently oppose imperialism and support leftism, uphold democratic rights of the people. Even if these parties are in power, they will not suppress democratic movements, peasants struggles, workers struggles.

So, these are the points which we should apply our brains on and ponder over. There must not be any hotchpotch combination to derive electoral mileage. Leftism, secularism, democracy must be defined very clearly.

Firstly, need of the hours is a fierce decisive ideological struggle



Comrade Provash Ghosh addressing in Puducherry. Central leaders of different left parties are seated on the dais

against these religious fundamentalist approach, medieval approach and it is very much necessary to free people's minds from the pernicious influence of these ideas.

Secondly, very powerful, militant working class and democratic movements are to be developed just like what India once had immediately after Independence. That was the glorious period of India's left movement. Even facing bullets and bayonets, we will have to develop that type of class struggles and mass movements. And only then leftism will regain the prestige and credibility among the masses.

This is the understanding of our Party and I place it before you for your serious consideration. I should not take more time. Already, I think, you are exhausted.

Red Salute to you all and I wish success of your Congress.

Marxism-Leninism Zindabad!  
Proletarian Internationalism  
Zindabad!

## AIMSS condemned ghastly incident of Ranaghat, West Bengal

Dr. H.G.Jayalakshmi, General Secretary, AIMSS, issued the following statement on 16 March 2015 :

“The All India Committee of AIMSS expresses shock and severe condemnation over the incident of gang rape of a 71 year old Nun belonging to the Convent of Jesus and Mary school, Ranaghat in Nadia District of West Bengal, by a group of dacoits, while she tried to resist them. As reported in the media, though the School authorities had complained that they were under threat, the police had not taken action. In the background of the growing attacks on minorities and their places of worship by the politics of intimidation, urgent action from the Government is necessary. AIMSS, therefore, demands that a speedy investigation of the entire incident is conducted and the criminals of this inhuman act are arrested immediately and given stringent punishment.”



## Harrowing rise in Power Tariff

# NEED IMPERATIVE TO RESIST

Electricity is the prime mover of modern civilized society. So, the citizens of every civilized country have every right to receive electricity at affordable cost. But in capitalist India which is boasting to be the fourth largest economic power in the world, electricity instead of being treated as an essential product and hence needing proper distribution to the people under the aegis of the government, has been turned into a commodity which the private operators seeking maximization of profit have been allowed to sell on a commercial base. This privatization spree started in early 1990s and got a fillip following passing of the Electricity Act, 2003. Thereafter, disintegration of power sector and speedy hand over to the corporate sector went on in full swing. Now that Act, which was once amended in 2007 to further speed up the process of privatization and commercialization, is again slated for another amendment the details of which are not yet made public. Indication is that there will be addition of a fourth tier in power industry meaning more fragmentation in distribution. As the trend is, power tariff is going to be phenomenally higher making life of common consumers particularly the working people, peasants and middle class much more stifling. It is worth mentioning in this connection that recognizing the need to develop a sustained people's movement to thwart the pernicious move of the rulers towards privatization and commercialization of power sector, All Bengal Electricity Consumers' Association (ABECA) was formed in West Bengal in 1992. Since then, ABECA has been in the forefront of power movement and could achieve some of the demands waging intensified struggle bringing some relief to the people. Now the ABECA leadership in order to step up the movement and spread it throughout the country in view of the impending attacks has planned a Delhi March on 7 April next on various people's demands including annulment of Electricity Act, 2003, providing subsidies to consumer power tariff and stringent punishment to those guilty for the Coalgate scam which defrauded the exchequer to the tune of Rs 10.7 lakh crores. After that, ABECA will hold an All India convention in Delhi to form an All India Struggle Committee. In view of this, it is felt necessary to recollect the salient features of the deep conspiracy hatched by the bourgeois governments, run by both Congress

and BJP, to fleece the people by deregulating power sector.

### **Anti-people Electricity Act, 2003**

After independence, the power industry was developed in a 'vertically integrated way' i.e. generation, transmission and distribution were handled by one and the same organization or a few closely connected government organizations. Under public pressure, electricity was considered as an 'essential service' and hence it was incumbent on the government to ensure providing that service to all consumers. This closely integrated operation was not unique in India but was more or less followed in all advanced countries. As power generated at any moment has to be simultaneously distributed and consumed, any imbalance results in voltage fluctuation affecting the consumers. Similarly, any instability and loss of synchronism among the generators connected to the grid results in load shedding in affected areas. For all these complexities and peculiarities, the 'vertically integrated' module under one roof was favoured and correctly so.

But from the day, Indian capitalist rulers embraced the ruinous prescripts of globalization-liberalization-privatization in early 1990s, their subservient government began the process of unbundling the power industry by separating generation, transmission and distribution sectors in most states and opening up the industry to separate private operators. The State Electricity Boards (SEBs) were forced to buy power from the private companies at a very high rate so much so as to make the boards unviable. Then was introduced the most anti-people Electricity Act, 2003 by superseding all the existing laws of power generation. The new Act recommended abolition of the SEBs, proposed breaking up distribution system into smaller units and inviting private companies to run these smaller units as "distribution licensees". Moreover, the Act prescribed that any private company, domestic or multi-national, could invest in generation of power for which they needed no license. Even national water resources were opened up to private operators for setting up hydel plants and running them with the aim of maximizing profit. The Bill also talked of conducting generation, distribution and supply of power "on commercial principles", suggested elimination of cross subsidies (meaning pushing up

power tariff for rural, domestic and small scale industries) and declared power as a "commercial commodity". Thus, the multi-million rupee infrastructure built up over 50 years of independence with people's money was handed over to the private companies for a pittance. Despite mounting protest from the people which was voiced in the historic Delhi March organized by ABECA on 22 March, 2005, the then BJP government, subsequent Congress government and even CPI (M)-led the then West Bengal government accepted the new Act saying that once this Act was promulgated, there would be (i) spurt in electricity production, (ii) the work of electrification of the entire country would be over by 2007 and all houses even in the remotest villages would have power, (iii) all the Electricity Boards would be relieved from incurring huge recurring loss, (iv) power tariff would be cheaper for agriculture, industry, small traders and domestic consumers, (v) investment in power sector would increase, (vi) standard of rendering electricity service would improve and problems of load-shedding, low voltage would be solved, (vii) right from fixing tariff, everything would be decided based on the opinion of the consumers so that their interest is protected and (viii) an Electricity Regulatory Commission would be formed to prevent the misdeeds of the power companies and compensation would be extended through an Ombudsman. The media unleashed a massive propaganda that now development in the power sector would assume speed following such reforms. But the aim of the Act was to commoditize and privatize power, large scale retrenchment of the permanent workers in power industry and allowing private companies to mint astronomical profit by raising tariff through the roof. Alongside, the objective was to disown the responsibility of providing subsidy to lower tariff, cut the rate for big industries and gallopingly increase the rate for the tribal-populated backward regions, forest and hill areas, poor peasants, impoverished middle class and small scale industries.

### **Pernicious move to cut subsidies**

In 2007, the then Congress government brought some amendments to the Act in furtherance of the aforesaid objective. Now the Modi-led BJP government is bringing more

amendments to make things worse for the common consumers. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the former Vice-Chairman of Planning Commission had categorically stated in a conference of the chief ministers that under no case, there should be subsidy in power sector. As a result, subsidy has virtually been abolished in West Bengal and some other states. For a long time, there is a false propaganda that subsidy inhibits development. But what is experienced is that there is avalanche of subsidies to the big industrial houses and corporate sector in the form of various concessions, waivers and exemptions. In fact, just in 2014-15, such subsidy to the big business and monopolists has been as high as Rs. 5, 89,285.2 crores which is more than the budget estimate of fiscal deficit of Rs. 5, 55,649 crores and stated to have exceeded figure of total borrowings by the government. But the government is wary of giving any subsidy to the people. It may be mentioned in this connection that providing subsidy to power is no non-productive a system. By this, there is a boost to agriculture and small industries creating job opportunities. That is why, this subsidy is so essential. Naturally, the demand of the suffering consumers is that if the power companies go on hiking power tariff unbridled, the government ought to shoulder the responsibility of pegging the tariff down by providing subsidy. So has arisen the demand that centre and state governments ought to provide subsidy to power tariff at the rates of 20% and 30% respectively.

### **Perils of electricity consumers**

As mentioned above, after independence, the power industry grew and developed in the public sector being financed by public exchequer. The countrymen expected that there would be no more any difficulty in obtaining electricity which is key to development. A new modern society would be established. But now that public property is gifted to private monopolists. Electricity, a path-breaking discovery of science, is now a commodity in the hands of the monopolists for being sold at a huge profit. So, for the common consumers it is akin to the proverbial saying, 'If you touch the pot, you must touch the penny' meaning if one has money, one can get power. If one does not, one has to languish in darkness.

Earlier when power was

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## Harrowing rise in Power Tariff

# Spate of privatization of power sector is holding consumers into ransom

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produced through 'vertical integration' under one roof, the law permitted them to earn 3% additional income. Now after unbundling into four separate units, every unit is permitted to earn minimum 16.5%. The figure would be 66% taking all the four units together. The entire profit is minted by proportionate loading on the retail tariff, brunt of which is borne by the common consumers. Emboldened by this legal provision, the private companies have been amassing phenomenal profit running into hundreds and hundreds crores of rupees every year.

To give an idea as to what extent the tariff has gone up over the years, certain facts would be relevant. In 2002, cost of one unit of electricity was Rs 2.76 paise in West Bengal. In the last 12 years, it has risen to Rs 6.58 on an average. The peasants used to receive power free for cultivation. Now they need to shell out Rs 3.54 per unit. In small scale industry, power was earlier available at a rate of Re 0.50 per unit. Now that has been raised to Rs 10 per unit. Tariffs in other states are also quite high. For example, in Assam, prevailing minimum tariff in lowest slab of domestic consumption is Rs 4.95 per unit while commercial rate is Rs 5.75 per unit. In Punjab it is Rs.4.56 and Rs 6.04 respectively. In Haryana the rates are Rs 2.70 and Rs 5.85 respectively. Rates in Tamilnadu are Rs 3.00 and Rs 5.70 respectively. Existing rates in UP are Rs 4.00 and Rs 6.00 respectively. In Delhi, while commercial rate is Rs 8.50 per unit, domestic rate which used to be Rs 4.00 per unit has since been slashed to Rs 2.00 per unit (upto consumption of 400 units) by the new AAP government with effect from 01-04-2015. Delhi example shows that if any government desires, it can give some relief to the consumers. But otherwise, the owners of power industry would continue to exercise a virtually monopoly right to exploit the consumers ruthlessly.

Similarly, as per the Act of 2003, the work of total electrification of the country was supposed to be over by 2007. But as per latest report, on an average 60% target has been achieved in the country. Further, it is not that this 60% work of electrification has been completed by expending a part of the phenomenal profit reaped by the power companies. The central and

state governments have borne the expenses from public exchequer and thereby paved the way for the private companies to benefit from a roaring business. In fact, this is colossal wastage of national resources. The Act stated that the power companies would provide correct service. But they have not done that either. They are duping the consumers, government, Electricity Regulatory Commission and all others with alacrity. So, there is no respite from load shedding and low voltage. In many places, there is no proper wiring, even no meter and no transformer. Many of the meters are defective or non-functional. Meter reading is often faulty. Even endangering people's safety, electric connections are provided by drawing lines on medieval wooden posts. On the other hand, by retrenching permanent workers, the work is getting done through appointment of contract labour on low wage. So, standard of work is deteriorating and at the same time corruption is rising. Cost of production, instead of going down is spiralling and tariff is hiked under this or that pretext. But, in spite of extending such a poor service, no step is taken against the guilty power companies. Even the law which is in vogue for taking action against these companies is a deceptive one. Ombudsman has been constituted to redress the grievances of the consumers. But the companies are not obliged to obey the decisions of the Ombudsman. However, for the consumers, such decisions are binding. The consumers virtually have no right to seek justice in a court of law but the companies have. So, there is no improvement in service, no compensation for service deficiency or default. On the contrary, the consumers are harassed, if not criminally penalized, because of ghost bills, inflated bills and improper disconnection of line. That is not all. Using the provisions of the draconian Act, the power companies are making life miserable for poor peasants, lower middle class and small scale industries by slapping of false cases of power theft. Some such consumers have even been pushed towards committing suicide. This is how the power companies are oppressing the common consumers using Electricity Act, 2003.

### **South African experience**

In this connection, a reference may be made to the experience of

power reforms in South Africa where so called standard model of unbundling, competition and privatization was once considered, but later rejected. The South African Electricity Supply Industry (ESI) remained dominated by the state-owned and vertically integrated utility, Eskom. The entire electrification programme was funded by Eskom, either through internal subsidies (garnered mainly from higher-than-cost electricity charges to large industrial and mining customers) or through transfers to an electrification fund that the National Electricity Regulator (NER) allocated to the municipalities. It had been the national policy that a portion of the capital cost of connections should be subsidized. The government also decided to grant 50 kWh per month free power to the poor consumers. The South African experience demonstrated that it is possible to make substantial progress in widening access of the poor to electricity services through proper planning and state-controlled industry.

But South African government in 1990s decided to unbundle Eskom and sell a part of it to private corporates. It also envisaged that private sector would be responsible for new investment in generation capacity. In the second half of 1990s, South African reform process broadly separated into reform of the distribution and supply side of power sector. In 1995, the government established an independent regulatory commission and rolled out process for private participation in the ESI. Besides corporatization of Eskom, it was decided to form separate corporate entities for transmission, distribution and generation and promote internal competition among different participating companies. A new Eskom Conversion Act, 2001 replaced the old law. The Cabinet also approved proposal for reform of the ESI through a "managed liberalization process." But with new reforms in place, none of the target dates was met and apprehensions were sounded for a possible bottleneck in power industry. So, the government revised its stand and decided that Eskom would remain in state ownership and private power producers would be invited to bid for new capacity but only on the margin of the industry. The government thus reassured the lead role of the state in infrastructure investment

and security of supply was once again made top policy priority. The other lesson was that most important variable for the success of public benefit programme is not industry structure or ownership form but definite public policies to achieve social goals. There is enough for the Indian government to learn from this experience.

### **Coalgate scam**

Coming back to the national scenario, next is about allocation of coal blocks to the power producing companies. In order to reduce production cost and provide power at lower cost, the central government has allotted coal blocks to all power producing companies at a 30% cheaper price. There is rampant corruption in this area for last several years. Of late, people have come to know of the Coalgate scam involving several lakh crores of rupees. From 1998, ABECA have been drawing attention of both the central and state governments to such growing fraud and irregularity in this sector. Even media was briefed about it. But none of the ruling parties, whether Congress, BJP, CPI (M) or even TMC currently ruling West Bengal took any effective measure to curb this corruption. Because, as is revealed now, big industrialists, influential politicians, ministers and top bureaucrats are involved in this mega scam. So, neither of these parties who ride to power or remain in the race for power with the backing of these monopoly houses and corporate sector dared to take any action in the matter. Similarly, the monopoly-controlled media also chose to remain mum.

After the recent verdict of the Supreme Court, the matter has again come to surface. The Supreme Court has said that there has been a scam in allocation of coal blocks and the monopoly owners of the power companies who received coal blocks at 30% cheaper price did not use that coal for power production but sold the coal at higher price to fatten their purse. Following that, power tariff went up phenomenally. So there was a demand from the people that these corrupt companies should be punished. The Supreme Court has also ordered that scam-ridden power companies would have to pay a penalty of Rs 295 per tonne of coal extracted. But the Modi government instead of punishing the culprits is now going for fresh

*Contd. on page 6*

# Root cause of communalism lies in present socio-economic structure

*Contd. from page 2*

communal and racial problems find their permanent solution. Those who really intend to eliminate communalism and communal disturbances in our country for good should keep this teaching of history in mind and cannot but work for the overthrow of capitalism and establishment of socialism...

The root cause of communalism lies, no doubt, in the present socio-economic structure of our country. But the mere presence of the cause does not automatically lead to its effect under all conditions. By discovering the cause and strengthening the force that could ultimately eliminate the cause man can restrict and even temporarily prevent the effect. Hence, only by constantly strengthening the democratic movement which is the anti-thesis of communalism, can we restrict communalism in our country and temporarily prevent communal violence.

...the programme for the democratic movement should not exhaust itself in economic and political demands alone as in the past. It should include the tasks of social and cultural revolution in our

country, which remain unaccomplished even today. Unless these tasks are completed and our people freed from the bondage of social and religious prejudices, conventions and institutions and unless the barrier separating them socially and culturally are demolished and they are transformed into a homogeneous compact community, not only politically but also socially and culturally, communalism cannot be done away with in reality. I like to emphasize once again that this is not a movement directed against religion as such. Rather this movement bases itself on equality and freedom of both believers and non-believers. Religion will certainly continue to exist but it shall have to be solely the private affair of the individual, having no relation with the affairs of the state and no influence on the social activities of the individual...

Religion and religious customs are two different things. Customs had changed in the past and will change in future as well to fit in with changed social conditions. So, anyone fighting for a change in the existing religious customs cannot be accused of hostility to or

renunciation of religion .... The democratic movement will certainly wage relentless struggle against all sorts of religious customs, inconsistent with present social requirements but not against religion as such. The Indian bourgeoisie is incapable of carrying out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions in our country. It goes without saying that they cannot also be performed through individual efforts, however great and powerful that individual may be. Hence, the duty of performing these tasks rests on the democratic forces of India.... should not only align itself with the broader democratic forces in our country and link up its programme of accomplishing the tasks of social and cultural revolutions with the struggle by the democratic forces for the realization of political and economic demands but also essentially rely upon the working masses fighting for emancipation from capitalism. The strength of the democratic movement under correct revolutionary working class leadership is the only guarantee for the safety and security of the members of the minority community in our country....

It is idle to think of putting an end to communalism and communal violence only by administrative measures. For, who does not know that the administrative machinery in our country itself is infected with communal bias under normal conditions and becomes arch communalist in times of communal tension. It is equally futile to leave the question of solution to the communal problem to the inherent values of our people. There is no dearth of goodwill in our people. But when communal fever rises, it comes to no help. The condition will remain like this, so long as the breeding ground of communalism cannot be destroyed, the tasks of social and cultural revolutions remain unaccomplished, and our society is not completely democratized and religion is not relegated to the position of an exclusively private affair of the individual, having little or no bearing on his social activities."

<sup>1</sup>. Outstanding leaders of Indian freedom struggle.

<sup>5</sup>. Upper strata in the caste hierarchy of Hindu society

## Harrowing rise in Power Tariff

# Electricity Act, 2003 must be repealed

*Contd. from page 5*

auction of the coal blocks. If coal blocks are allotted through bidding based on commercial consideration, power tariff is bound to soar further.

It is not all. Within no time from the announcement of the Supreme Court verdict, people are stunned to know that many important files and documents connected with this mega scam have been stolen by breaking the lock of the office of the secretary of the Coal and Power minister. Could it be the job of any outsider? Certainly not. It ought to be a handiwork of the nexus that had masterminded and benefitted from the scam. Still the media is trying to tone down the graveness of the incident by terming it as trivial and "nothing unusual" a matter. This is a glaring example of the "transparency" of the Modi government.

### **Additional fiscal burden in the budget**

Not only that. In the rail budget, freight charges for coal transportation have been increased by 10%. In the general budget, cess on coal has been hiked from Rs 100

to Rs 200 per metric tonne and service tax increased from 12.36% to 14%. Accumulated effect of these hefty increases will also push up power tariff at least by 20%. As stated above, the proposed amendment to Electricity Bill has recommended a fourth tier in power industry in the form of a 'supply' trade. This would enable the power merchants to swell their coffer further by investing lower amount. This amendment would be placed in the parliament in the next session. If this amendment is passed, that would also escalate tariff. Apart from this, there are also many other anti-people clauses in the proposed amendment.

### **People must thwart the attack**

From the experience of last twelve years, it is clear that the anti-people Electricity Act, 2003 must be repealed lock, stock and barrel. The privatization spree must be reversed and the government should take entire responsibility of producing and distributing electricity on non-commercial basis preferably in the vertically integrated way and supply power at affordable cost to the

people. Power to the poor peasants for cultivation should be free of cost. So long the privatized trade is not abolished, the central and state governments ought to provide subsidy at least at the rates of 20% and 30% respectively. All the additional cess, increased freight on coal transportation and augmented service tax on coal has to be withdrawn. All those found guilty for the billion-rupee Coalgate scam and theft of important document from government custody must be hauled up and meted out stringent

punishment. But all these just demands would not be realized through appeals and petitions. To wrest these demands, it is imperative that a countrywide well-organized sustained powerful people's movement is developed in right earnest. With that end in view, ABECA has given call for a Delhi March on 7 April and taken initiative to build up an all India struggle committee. Our appeal to the people is to stand by ABECA's move and help building up the much needed movement.

## **AIMSS school of politics at Jaunpur**

At Badlapur, Jaunpur in UP, a state-level school of politics was held under the banner of All India MSS on 14- 15 February 2015. More than 100 members were present in the school which was conducted by Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, President, AIMSS and Member, Central Committee of SUCI (C). UP State convener of AIMSS, Comrade Rashmi Malaviya was also present. While elaborating how matriarchal society was transformed into patriarchal one, Comrade Mukherjee pointed out that women today are subject to twin exploitation of the capitalist society itself and the patriarchal domination. To come out of these exploitations women must organize themselves and wage struggles on the strength of the teachings of the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh aiming at building a new society based on equal rights of men and women. Later in a convention, an 18 member state committee was formed with Comrade Rashmi Malaviya as president and Bandana Singh as secretary.



## AIDSO observes All India Demand Week across the country

At the call of the All India Committee of AIDSO, as a part of its ongoing All India Demand Week, different state units of AIDSO held different programmes against no-detention policy upto class VIII, optional board examination at the end of class X, introduction of CBCS and semester system that tell gravely upon quality higher education and will further intensify privatization- commercialization, curtailment of education budget and government aids and grants, saffronization of education, fee hike at any level of formal education and other issues.

The Delhi state committee of AIDSO organized on 17 March a protest demonstration at Delhi Secretariat, I.T.O. Students from various schools and colleges of Delhi participated in the protest. A delegation under the leadership of Ravi Kumar, State Committee Member of AIDSO submitted a memorandum to the Hon'ble Education Minister of Delhi.

Assam state committee of AIDSO organized a rally on 14 March at Guwahati. Later, a procession starting at Dhigulipukuri reached the Deputy Commissioner's office and submitted a memorandum to Ministry of Human Resource Development.

At Agartala, Tripura State committee of AIDSO organized a protest demonstration on 14 March.

At Jaunpur, UP, AIDSO held a

student march to the DM office on 12 March and submitted a memorandum to the DM, addressed to the Prime minister and Union HRD minister.

On all the occasions leaders of the organization, including Prashant Kumar, Delhi State Secretary of AIDSO, Comrade Mridul Kanti Sarkar, Tripura State Secretary, Comrade Jitendra Chaliha, President, Assam State AIDSO and others addressed the participating students highlighting how the state and union governments are bringing about reforms one after another reducing education into a commodity, while abolition of pass-fail system and several measures are fast destroying the minimum quality education that had been still existing. They called upon the student community and education-loving people to help build up massive movement against these attacks.

Hyderabad district committees of AIDSO and AIDYO held a dharna programme at Indira Park against Telangana government, for not fulfilling a single poll pledge, even after completing one whole year of the government. AIDSO and AIDYO leaders of the state and district highlighted the demands of immediate releasing of government scholarships, issuing the DSC (teachers recruitment) notification, immediate filling up all vacancies, and providing free education from the lowest to the highest levels.

## Haryana protests against Land Acquisition Ordinance

SUCI (Communist) organized a powerful state level protest demonstration on 28 February against the pro-capitalist anti-people policies of BJP government including the black ordinance of land acquisition. Workers, peasants including women, students and youth assembled in large number at the Huda complex at Rohtak and then proceeded through main crossings of the town to reach Mini Secretariat where they submitted a

memorandum with a 22- point charter of demands to DC Rohtak addressed to Prime Minister and Chief Minister Haryana. Com. Satyawan member Central Committee and Secretary Haryana State Committee SUCI(C) along with other leaders Comrade Anoop Singh, Rajender Singh (Rewari), Ramphal (Bhiwani), Ishwar Singh Rathee (Sonipat), Roshanlal (Kaithal), HariPrakesh and Vijay Kumar led the demonstration.

## Save Education Committee Movement at Telangana

The Telangana chapter of All India Save Education Committee submitted a petition to the Director of SCERT on March 19, against the proposed trend of including the works of only Telangana state in school textbooks stressing on giving due importance to the study of language and literature making such studies free from all sorts of

regionalism and separatism. Under pressure of the movement participated by eminent educationists and dignitaries including the renowned poet Himajwalla, S Govindarajulu, the state convener of the committee and others, the Director assured inclusion of important works of Telugu writers even from beyond the state.

## SUCI(C) led Peasants' Movement achieves significant victory in AP

Repeatedly drought-stricken in the last 125 years Anantapur district in AP faces alarmingly aggravating situation. The average rain fall in this district is the second lowest in the country after Jaisalmer in Rajasthan. Severe shortage of water for both drinking and irrigation force people here to buy water at high price for daily use.

Neither Congress nor Telugu Desam, during their respective prolonged rules in the state, felt it necessary to pay serious attention to this grave problem of people's life. A project by name "Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi" (HNSS) was proposed way back in 1993-94. One of the giant lift irrigation projects in India to irrigate 6,02,500 acres in the four districts of Rayalaseema namely Kurnool, Anantapur, Kadapa and Chittoor and provide drinking water to lakhs of people in hundreds of villages at an estimated cost of around Rs 1,480 crores at 1993-94 rate (now escalated to above Rs 6,000 crores), the project remains yet unfinished for about two-thirds even after two decades. People of the area, from their experience of life now await the doom with the danger of Anantapur district turning into a desert staring hard at their face

Sensing that the situation called for a people's movement, SUCI(C) Hindupur town organizing committee initiated it, later strengthened under the guidance of the district and state leadership, demanding completion of the project on war footing. This

movement spread thick and fast. Ultimately, under pressure of movement, a government order was issued for tackling the administrative and technical problems, though the issue of allotment of funds was not addressed. As a culmination of this first phase of the movement a massive demonstration and a huge peasants' convention organized by SUCI(C) was held on 2 March 2015 at Hindupur. Comrade B S Amarnath, secretary of Anantapur district organizing committee of SUCI(C) led the procession, Comrade Girish, secretary, Hindupur town committee of SUCI(C) presided over and Mr. Sudhakar Rao leader of "Powra Chaithanya Samiti" inaugurated the convention. Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, AP and Telangana State Organizing Committee of SUCI(C), called upon people to develop mighty movement until the demand is achieved. At the end of the convention a 30 member committee named Handri-Neeva Jala Sadhana Samiti was announced with Comrade Girish as convener. The convention demanded that the state government must allocate adequate funds for the project to be completed within a year. Finally, the government has yielded to the pressure of movement and allocated an amount of Rs 212 crores in the state budget for the project. SUCI(C) hailed the people for their participation in the movement and urged upon them to step up the movement for full completion of this project giving it priority.

## AIMSS observes

### International Women's Day

#### Tripura

On 8 March, Tripura State AIMSS organized a 3-hour stay-in-demonstration at Battala, Agartala, on the demands of (i) stopping atrocities on women, rape and trafficking, (ii) ensuring safety and preservation of dignity of women, (iii) equal wage to both men and women for similar kinds of jobs, (iv) stopping spread of obscenity through cinema, TV and other media and (v) stopping proliferation of liquor, gambling and other toxic material. Those who spoke on the occasion were Comrades Shibani Das, President, Shefali Chowdhury, Secretary and Sukla Chakraborty, Member, Tripura state AIMSS. Also spoke was Comrade Arun Bhowmick, Tripura State Secretary, SUCI(C).

#### Assam

Assam State AIMSS observed the Day by organizing a well-

attended meeting at Kumar Bhaskar Natya Mandir on 8 March. Among those who spoke on the occasion were Smt. Nirupama Borgohain, Academy Prize winning litterateur, Smt. Renu Devi, eminent educationist, Prof. Priti Barua and Comrade Chandralekha Das, Assam State Secretary, SUCI(C). Comrade Ina Hussein, AIMSS State President presided over. Before the meeting, a well decorated procession of women passed through various thoroughfares and converged at the venue.

#### Bihar

On 8 March, a women's rally was held at Patna in Bihar highlighting protest against rising atrocities on women. The rally ended in a gathering at JP Circle (Golambar) which was addressed by Comrade Anamika, the Patna district secretary, AIMSS, and other leaders of the organization.



Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Member, Polit Bureau, SUCI(C), and President, AIUTUC, addressing the West Bengal State Conference of AIUTUC, in Kolkata on 29 March, 2015. Seated on dais are Comrades Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), Mobinul Hayder Chowdhury, Secretary, Bagladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxist), Sankar Saha, General Secretary, AIUTUC and other central and state leaders of AIUTUC

## Country remembers the revolutionaries, pledges to fulfill the tasks bequeathed by them

Every year as the occasion of the martyrdom of the great revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad and Sukdev Rajguru arrives, pale faces of crores of people crushed under capitalist exploitation remind us that the dreams of these revolutionaries of ending all exploitation has not yet been realized. Today, when the cries of women tormented and oppressed, seeds of malevolence being sown anew, innumerable deaths occurring due to communal strife— all these have become an everyday affair, lives of these valiant martyrs can serve as the beacon light to the students and youth.

Pledged to establish a society free from exploitation making the dreams of those martyrs come true, the organizations the **Komsomol, AIDS, AIDYO and AIMSS** have celebrated with due honour the occasion of martyrdom of these revolutionaries throughout the country. Different programmes were held.

A booklet entitled “Life struggle of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh” has been published by the Party unit of Punjab in Punjabi (Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh da Jiwan Sangarsh)

Saraikela-Kharsabang : In Saraikela district of **Jharkhand** state the great revolutionary Saheed Chandrasekhar Azad was remembered with due honour and dignity at Saraswati Sadan Pustakalay, S N High School, Middle School Kulpatanga, Royal Middle School and at 19 Chowk, Adityapur Colony. The 84th Shahadat Divas of

Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh was observed by Saraikela District Committee of AIDYO on 23 March at Adityapur, in Chainpur as also in Adardih village of Chandil through garlanding of the portrait of the great revolutionary, rally and other programmes.

At Surat city in **Gujarat**, the great martyrs were remembered with due honour on the initiative of AIDS. On the occasion a drama was staged as well.

**Hyderabad** district committees of AIDS and AIDYO organized a week long Saheed Bhagat Singh programmes from 23-30 march 2015, in several colleges such as Masab Tank Polytechnic College, Balnagar ITI and Musheerabad ITI as also holding a candle lighting programme at Khairathabad main circle.

On 23rd March, the 84th Martyrs’ day of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru was observed in Ghatsila College, Ghatsila, **Jharkhand**, by garlanding their portraits and with a meeting addressed by Professor Naresh, Dr. Kabita Choudhary, Prof. Mitreshwar, school teachers and AIDS leaders. After the meeting, a ‘Mashal Rally’ marched from Ghatsila college to Ghatsila Railway Station with around 400 children, students, teachers, professors participating. Afterwards a movie on Bhagat Singh was shown.

Similar programmes of garlanding were also held at Durg, **Chhattisgarh**, by AIDS Durg unit, by the AIDYO Varanasi, **UP**, in the latter case along with a meeting.

## FACTS SPEAK

### 2 Rapes, 15 suicides everyday — Hallmark of Gujarat’s ‘vibrancy’

On an average, two cases of rape and 15 suicides were reported everyday in Gujarat from April 2013 to March 2014, the state government told the House on Wednesday. Replying to a question of by Viranngam MLA Tejashree Patel, the government admitted that except theft and chain-snatching, all other major crimes have gone up in the past five years.

The cases of rape in the last five years spiked from 427 in 2009 to 793 in 2013-14, an increase of over 85%. In 2013-14, in all 5,526 suicides were reported. (*Times of India*, Ahmedabad 19-03-15)

## State Conference of ABSEC in West Bengal

All Bengal Save Education Committee (ABSEC) organized its State Conference on 29 March at Darbhanga Hall of Calcutta University, Kolkata. Veteran Prof. Tarun Sanyal, renowned poet and educationist who had been scheduled to preside over, could not attend the Conference seriously incapacitated; he sent a message wishing success. On behalf of the Presidium, Tapan Roychowdhury, well-known leader of the teachers’ movement and one of the Vice-presidents of the ABSEC presided over. The Conference was addressed by eminent educationists and fore-ranking activists of

education movement like Profs. Pabitra Ranjan Gupta, Miratun Nahar, Nisith Ranjan Pradhan, Dhruvajyoti Mukherjee and Anis Ray, Ms Prem Sharma, the well-known writer and Kartik Saha, the Secretary of the ABSEC. The speakers called for intensifying save education movement against saffronization and commercialization of education, abolition of pass-fail system upto Class VIII and such other pernicious policies of the central and state governments. The Conference adopted several resolutions and evolved and accepted a new Committee with slight modifications over the present one.

## Rally in Dhaka against murder of Abhijit Roy

Protest demonstration and gathering were held twice, on 27 February morning and evening, at the initiative of the central committee of the *Samajtantrik Chhatra Front* (Socialist Students’ Front) in demand of proper enquiry and trial of the ghastly murder of Abhijit Roy, the eminent science writer and founder of *free mind* club. Comrades Saifuzzaman Sakan, president of the organization, Snehadri Chakraborty Rintu, general secretary and Naima Khaled Monika, president town unit, addressed the gathering. Comrade Sakan presided over. They highlighted the fact that Abhijit Roy and his wife Rafida Ahmed were attacked and the assailants fled away safely, in front of hundreds of people and in presence of police and members of different detective organizations. Police has not been able to arrest any single person. It amply proves to what extent the government-administration have failed to offer any security for people’s life and property. The speakers also pointed out that murder of Abhijit Roy is a severe onslaught upon the practice of progressive thoughts and freedom of speech. Earlier too in 2004 similar ghastly attacks were brought down upon Dr Humayun Azad, professor of Bengali department of Dhaka University. The miscreants associated with the murder of Dr Azad have not even brought under the purview of trial.

The government itself is directing the severest attack on the democratic right of freedom of speech. Along with that the culture of undemocratic rule and absence of justice being practiced by the present government are proving the greatest boon to the terrorists. The forces that have ruled this country for the last 44 years have financially, politically and socially strengthened the fundamentalist- communal forces for their own riding to power.

Similar acts are being perpetrated by the Hindu fundamentalists in India. Last year they murdered Narendra Davolkar in Maharashtra, the prominent figure in movement against prejudice- superstitions; recently they have killed Govind Pansare, the veteran personality of left democratic movements in that state and close associate of Davolkar. These incidents in the two countries expose that the Muslim and the Hindu fundamentalists do not differ in their character.

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