

Proletarian Era

Volume 37 No. 18
May 1, 2004

Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA
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Price : Rs. 2.00

Iraq up in arms against US imperialism

To say that the position of the US forces in Iraq at the first anniversary of occupation of that country is not a happy one, would be an understatement. For the past few months, US media had given the world to understand that except for the so-called Sunni-triangle comprising Tikrit-Ramadi-Fallujah areas, the rest of Iraq was under US control; as for the triangle itself,

with a concentration of Sunni population, there was understandably some Iraqi resistance in favour of the deposed President Saddam Hussein, who was a Sunni, which would die out as the mopping up operation by US troops continued; most other areas of the country were inhabited by the majority Shias who were considered to be anti-Sunni and anti-Saddam

and therefore not much opposed to US occupation. Had not the USA taken care to pack the puppet Iraqi Governing Council set up by it with Shias who were expected to be relatively friendly?

Mounting Iraqi Resistance Jeopardizes Bush's Plans

But the developments of the past one month or so have changed all that. Iraqi resistance in the triangle has stiffened. Following the killing of 4 US security contractors by Iraqi freedom fighters at Fallujah, US marines supported by the US-formed so-called Iraqi security force launched a full-scale attack against them. But having failed to defeat them, the US-led coalition force has had to negotiate a cease-fire with them, an ignominy hitherto inconceivable for the only super power on the planet.

Most disconcertingly, the majority Shias too, have swung into action against the occupying forces. Muqtada Al-Sadr, a radical Shi'ite leader, is leading the Shia uprising. There have been fighting in Najaf,

Baghdad itself, Kufa, Amara, Kut, Hawijah, even Basra in south Iraq and other places. In a word, the whole of Iraq is up in arms against the US invaders. Iraqi resistance is on from Kirkuk in North Iraq to the far south of the country. A militia led by Al-Sadr, known as the Al-Mahdi army, is spearheading the Shia uprising. Reportedly, in many cities, followers of Al-Sadr control the streets and hold the police stations; the authority of the US-appointed Governing Council is virtually nonexistent; the Iraqi security force, a US creation, is reportedly "melting down" at the sight of Al-Mahdi militia. US administrators have declared Muqtada Al-Sadr an "outlaw" and ordered his arrest "if he can be found"! Al-Sadr, on his part, has declared himself head of an Iraqi government. Before the invasion, the USA assessed, based on intelligence reports, that there was animosity between the Shias and the Sunnis. It thought it could utilize the Shia-Sunni divide in its favour. But in practice, it found no Shia fifth

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Iraqis rejoicing over a destroyed US military vehicle

Vajpayee's overture to the Muslims Height of hypocrisy

Until the last election, the BJP pretended as if it did not care what the people belonging to the minority communities thought about them. It was overzealous with its Hindutva agenda, spewing venom against the religious minorities, pandered to Hindu-fanaticism and made hero of the worst communalists who stained their

hands with the blood of innocent carnage victims. After the state-sponsored pogrom in the BJP-ruled Gujarat that took an unprecedented toll on the life and livelihood of the minorities, Atal Behari Vajpayee blamed the Muslims by saying that wherever Muslims lived, "they create trouble and cannot live in peace with others." Not only this. In

the Goa conclave of the party immediately after the Gujarat genocide, Narendra Modi, the criminal chief minister of that state, who supervised the planned savagery on the hapless religious minority, was given a hero's welcome in presence of Vajpayee himself. In fact, Vajpayee advised Modi to perform his *rajdharm*.

Modi too did oblige. After butchering thousands of innocent people including women and children, Modi is now busy in helping the perpetrators of this worst crime, most of whom are Sangh Parivar members, to get away without any punishment. Even the Supreme Court observed that Modi's cruelty and bestial proclivity made him comparable to Nero, the hated autocratic Roman emperor known for reaping a grim harvest of the lives of innocent slaves. But Vajpayee did not utter a single word

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LONG LIVE MAY DAY

Iraqi resistance grows defying US savagery

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columnists. When the going became tough during the invasion, the USA tried to incite the Shias against Sunnis, but that too failed. And now, all Iraqi's, Shias and Sunnis alike, have risen up in countrywide rebellion against US occupation. The US troops are resorting to beastly barbarity like mass killings of Iraqi civilians and savage torture on the Iraqi prisoners.

President Bush's plan for Iraq is in a quandary. The plan was to effect a reduction of US troops in Iraq to assuage outraged US public opinion and to organize a show of "transfer of sovereignty to the Iraqis" by 30 June this year through modalities to be worked out by the Iraqi Governing Council which would keep US imperialist control over Iraq intact. But hardly a day passes now without fresh US casualties, official US figures for which have rapidly mounted to 600 plus from 200, the last figure given out. As per US Congress resolutions, the number of US troops was to be reduced. Accordingly, the Pentagon had announced the plan to reduce troops from the present 135,000 to around 100,000 by the summer. But the current adverse military situation has meant that instead of a reduction, fresh reinforcement is on the cards. Spain, a member of the US-led invading coalition, witnessed a change of government due to mounting public pressure against closeness with the US, and the new Spanish premier has ordered the Spanish troops in Iraq to "withdraw as soon as possible." The Governing Council is loosing its utility as a tool to implement US imperialist design. One of its leading members, Ahmed Chalabi, chosen for being a pet of the US administration and the Pentagon for long, is so unpopular in Iraq for being a traitor to his country that reportedly, even the USA may be forced to drop him from the new Iraqi administration that is slated to take over from the Council on 30 June. And Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who has considerable influence on the Shias, has called for direct democratic elections to effect a transfer of power to the Iraqis, and refused to talk to the Americans.

Despite concerted propaganda by the US administration that Saddam Hussein had stockpiled WMD which justified the US invasion, few believed that to be true. The US invasion was a

predetermined one to fulfil its imperialist design and clamour about Iraqi WMD was motivatedly orchestrated to provide the excuse, the "justification" for the invasion of a sovereign country ravaging it. The "proof" of Iraq's possession of WMD was provided by US Intelligence reports cooked up to suit the evil purpose. This is getting more and more corroborated in course of investigation by an independent committee that is on in the USA. Faced with this inquiry, the White House has been forced to release an intelligence memo that had been put up before President Bush on 6 August, 2001, 36 days before 11/9/2001 that mentioned about possible terrorist attack in New York, hijackings, air planes and involvement of Al Qaeda. But the administration did not act upon it. Richard Clarke, a former US counter-terror chief who worked under both Clinton and Bush, testified that the Bush administration showed no urgent concern about the Al Qaeda threat before the 11/9/2001 attacks and even after it, it was more obsessed with Iraq. To quote him, Iraq was "an idee fixe, a rigid belief, received wisdom, a decision already made" within US administration. And Colin Powell, the US secretary of state, has had to publicly admit recently that the US intelligence data that he had presented as evidence before the UN Security Council to justify the Iraq invasion might not have been "that solid."

The inescapable conclusion is that the US imperialist administration is not really concerned about the safety and security of US citizens or serious about fighting terrorism. The bogey of terrorism was raised and intensified to justify the pre-mediated invasions of first Afghanistan and then Iraq, the latter sought to be justified by cooked up intelligence data to suit the evil design, and the 11/9/2001 terrorist strikes in the USA provided a handy opportunity. It is not that the US electorate is blind to this and does not perceive the potential of Iraq to embroil USA in a long conflict, of Iraq developing into another Vietnam, although President Bush resolutely rebuffs that idea as he must. This has been reflected in a recent opinion poll in the USA that has revealed that President Bush's job approval figure, the most

important rating for an incumbent President, had fallen to a dangerously low 43 per cent.

US Imperialist Plans to Wriggle Out of Tight Situation

The message is not lost on President Bush. With the US presidential poll not far off, and also because of the 30 June date line for Iraq already announced by his administration, he must act fast, with the twin objective of reducing US troop involvement in Iraq and organizing the show of handing over power to the Iraqis while keeping the US control over Iraq unimpaired.

The USA, having failed this time to use the UNO as rubber-stamp to endorse its nefarious imperialist designs as has been its practice, went ahead with invasion of Iraq in total disregard of the UN. But now, in the face of the Iraqi imbroglio, it wants the UN to rescue it, and is poised to cunningly pass on to it the onus of working out and installing an interim Iraqi administration that would succeed the Governing Council on 30 June. Lakhdar Brahimi, an UN envoy, is already engaged in drawing up a plan for this. But who will protect the UN personnel that will have to be in Iraq for this from the wrath of the Iraqi people who can never forget the murderous sanctions imposed on their country by the UN at the behest of USA for over a decade, bleeding Iraq white? So, it is necessary to have more troops in Iraq, from countries other than the USA but under overall US command, ostensibly for protecting the UN personnel but fitting into the overall US design to keep Iraq "pacified" with less number of US troops, although about 100,000 of them would still continue to be in Iraq to protect its sovereignty! The USA has already asked over a dozen countries including India, Pakistan and France to join a new international military force for this purpose. The Vajpayee government in Delhi has not yet responded officially, presumably to avoid adverse public reaction on the eve of the Indian election. But it is not unlikely that the new government that would be set up in Delhi after the election, led by either of the two combinations trusted by Indian monopolists, would agree to the US proposal to get closer with the USA and Indian troops would be in action in Iraq as cannon fodder to further US imperialist design.

USA and Britain are reportedly working on the resolutions to be placed before the UNSC to spell out the UN role and that of the proposed new international force. Outlines of this latest US scheme would be clear when these are finalized.

A sinister long-term US imperialist plan came to light on 19 April when it became known that President Bush had approved a plan to commit \$ 660 million over the next five years to train, equip and provide logistical support to forces to be raised in third world countries to participate in peace keeping operations anywhere on the globe. This scheme, named Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), is aimed at relieving the pressure on US troops to join such operations. The idea is simple. The USA is finding it difficult to man its imperialist military expeditions with the American youth in the face of mounting pressure of domestic public opinion. Through the GPOI, the USA plans to have a permanent pool of armed personnel at its disposal for this purpose, luring them with money and bribing their governments for providing them.

Latest Sinister US Moves On Palestine

The ugly face of US imperialism has once more been nakedly revealed by some recent developments about Palestine. Pursuing its programme of state terrorism named "targeted killing", Israel has physically annihilated scores of leading Palestinian freedom fighters through launching attacks within Palestinian territory at will. It has even threatened to target and annihilate Yasser Arafat himself, the Head of the Palestinian state! In the latest strike, Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi was slain. While a host of countries including Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Jordan, Malayasia, China, Russia, France, Germany and Japan have condemned the assassination and even Britain, the European Union foreign policy chief and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan have had to do so, the USA defended the assassination! Any right-thinking person should ponder: If it goes on like this, where will it end up? Whither Zionist terrorism is taking the world? And it should be an eye opener to those in this country who may still have some illusion about

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Minorities must see through Vajpayee's hoax

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against him. Nor has he protested against any of the actions or provocative speeches of Togadia-Singhal brigade of the VHP, the Hindutva zealots who thrive on minority bashing and fundamentalist paranoia.

Have Vajpayee and BJP 'Shifted'?

But suddenly Vajpayee has been overenthusiastic in establishing his catholicity of outlook and belching out sympathy for the Muslims. "What happened in Gujarat should not have happened", has been his lamentation in one election meeting in a Bihar constituency, where a sizeable section of the electorates belongs to the Muslim community. He also announced an economic package for them, and promised employment for two lakhs of Urdu teachers from the Muslim community, which some has commented to be another fraud perpetrated on the Muslims. Going a step further in his sudden pro-Muslim posture, he prevented Modi and Uma Bharti, the rabid communal chief ministers of the BJP, from entering his election constituency in an effort to blunt the hostility of the Muslim voters. Alongside, he went on romping in aspirant opportunist Muslim politicians and clergies to solicit the minority support for him and his party in the elections. And of late, he has flagged off a Muslim *Himayat Yatra* to feign repentance for Gujarat and exhorting the Muslims to back the BJP in the elections. One would recall that it was the same Muslim community whom the BJP leaders, including the echelons in the hierarchy, called anti-national and linked them with Pakistan and the ISI. It is the BJP and Sangh Parivar who strategised precipitation of mistrust between the majority and the minority communities, engineered Babri Masjid demolition, instigated Mumbai riots and continued to patronize anti-minority moves and measures. All along they treated and projected the Muslims as necessary adversaries, categorized them as the archetypal 'others'. Vajpayee, putting a veil on his face, is now saying, "Let us resolve not to allow another Gujarat to happen anywhere else. Hindus and Muslims should not see each other with mistrust". If he is so repentant, why is he not

taking steps against those who planned and executed the Gujarat mayhem? Rather when he is putting such enigmatic frown on his forehead, chief ministers hailing from his party, such as Uma Bharti are openly pursuing Hindutva agenda and bullying the minorities to accept the same. Modi remains unfazed at the rampant discrimination against the riot-ravaged minorities in his state. A harrowing fear-psychosis and sense of insecurity continue to haunt the minority community people. The BJP leaders have also not distanced themselves from the controversial Babri Masjid demolition and Ram Mandir issue that sparked off worst communal riot and frenzy in the country in which the Muslims became the worst victims. In fact, the Ram Mandir issue has found a place in the manifesto of the BJP-led NDA. The VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal are not the least ashamed of flaunting their crudity. Vajpayee is a silent beholder. Advani, Vajpayee's second-in-command, has just completed another hi-tech *Rathayatra*, which, under the pretext of election campaign, was nothing but an open clamouring of Hindutva. Vajpayee himself greeted Advani for such a *yatra*. One would recall that such *yatras* by Advani in the past stoked the fire of communal conflagration in many parts of the country. Vajpayee during the course of his current exercise of coaxing the minority voters is repeatedly referring to the peace process with Pakistan and saying that it would normalize the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims. Is it not equating the Indian Muslims with Pakistan, questioning their patriotism and a surreptitious reiteration of the hated two-nation theory based on religion that entailed vivisection of the country after independence? Where is then the so-called departure from the saffron-doctrine?

Why is this Minority Wooing

So there is hardly any scope for believing even for a moment that the BJP is changing its facade or Vajpayee is having a soul-searching. The ruling capitalist class, submerged in indissoluble crisis, is mounting increased onslaughts on the people devastating their life and livelihood. It knows that there is bound to be resentment and revolt against this all-out attack. So-called

publicity of 'development' and 'shining image' would not dissuade people from bursting in protest and embrace the course of movement. It is the democratic mass movement, the conscious united mass action that the class and its servitors dread most. Hence they seek to divide and disunite the toiling people by fomenting casteist, communalist and other separatist thoughts. The political parties subserving the ruling capitalist class carry out this agenda of driving a wedge among the people. The BJP, too, is implementing the same class design by espousing rabid Hindutva and religious fanaticism. Vajpayee, as leader of the BJP, is a key player in this game of duping and disarming the people in order to shield and protect the ruling capitalism breeding all miseries and maladies. The BJP was born in the lap of the RSS whose main plank has been Hindu communalism and spreading hate against the minorities. Like Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and other bigwigs of the BJP, Vajpayee too is a product of the RSS. He boastfully flaunts his credential as an RSS Pracharak. These communal wolves can never shed their teeth and talon. What apparently makes Vajpayee wear a goat skin is the election exigency. He and his colleagues have found that with the passage of time, the takers of Ram Mandir frenzy and Hindutva passion are steadily on the wane. Playing of Hindutva card at this moment is not eliciting the desired response from the majority community. Hence for securing another term in the central ministry, it would be electorally unwise to antagonise the Muslims who form bulk of the voters in many constituencies. Hence the mantle fell on Vajpayee to initiate the exercise of deception donning a radical cloak and exhibiting an apparent volta-face in regard to the minorities. It may be added that the BJP which has emerged as an extremely trusted representative of the ruling capitalist class, has always, with the backing of the class and support of the media, sought to project a sane neutral tolerant image of Vajpayee. As if he is above the party and supra-class. Many a times, the class and the party used this pitchforked image of Vajpayee to hoodwink the people, suppress hostility against the party, control intra-party feuds and

squabbles and cover-up the RSS and Sangh Parivar link. Once again, the class and the party felt the necessity to repeat the old ploy. So Vajpayee wears a radical mask, rues the felony, sheds crocodile tears and plays the usual rhetorics to the gallery to indicate as if he is repudiating the Hindu-communal line of the BJP. But the entire drama is enacted to woo the Muslim community for votes. This is deception and cunningness par excellence!

Once the elections are over, Vajpayee and his party would take no time to revert back to their original colour, chant Hindutva at higher pitch and give renewed thrust on the rancorous campaign against the minority community.

Minority People Must Rise Against This Affront

People particularly those belonging to the minority segment ought not to be duped by this fraudulent posture of Vajpayee and his party. They must take it as an affront to their esteem, a calculated move to subvert their honour and dignity by categorising them as a "community vote bank". How can these hypocrite bourgeois politicians and their lackeys take them for granted, assume that they do not have their independent thinking, sense of judgement, ability to determine right or wrong and the freedom to act on their own? Are they pawns in the hands of power-hungry politicians and a few self-seeking so-called community-leaders or clergies? Would they allow even a bourgeois election to be conducted on communal polarisation or would like to ensure that voting is based on principles, policies, ideology, values and ethics?

They must rise up against the chicanery of these bourgeois politicians like Vajpayee. Only deterrent to such politics of treachery and stultification is the massive participation of the people in conscious democratic movement against all anti-people policies and measures of the bourgeois class and bourgeois governments. We call upon the toiling people irrespective of caste, creed or religion to come forward and join the course of united democratic mass movement that only can exorciate this baneful bourgeois politics.

Abject Surrender of NDA Partners to BJP's Communal Agenda

The *Vision* document released by the BJP and the manifesto issued by the NDA bring to the fore one thing — abject surrender of the NDA partners to the rabid Hindutva of the BJP. Such is the extent of their yielding that one could hardly find any independent identity of any of these political outfits. During the last Lok Sabha polls, the BJP allies at least did not openly endorse the arch communal agenda of Rammandir construction, abolition of article 370, introduction of uniform civil code and ban of cow slaughter. So the BJP, in order to ride to power, had to concede to exclude these issues from the NDA manifesto. And the others also at that time pretended as if they were distanced from the BJP on such controversial matters.

Political bankruptcy of NDA partners

But it took no time for the political bankruptcy of the NDA partners to get exposed. None of them sounded a voice of disapproval, not even verbally, of the persuasion of the hidden agenda of Hindutva by the BJP. Rather on occasions, many of them were found to shamelessly support some of the hated acts of fomenting communal passion and upholding Hindutva by the BJP. The BJP, as everyone is aware of, in connivance with the RSS and other Sangh Parivar members, boastfully flaunted its Hindutva credential, aroused communal passion, provoked fratricidal bloodbath, instigated murders and engineered worst pogrom and carnage to buttress its political ill-motive. Incidents have been galore during the rule of the BJP-led coalition at the Centre. Father George, a Christian priest was hacked to death in the compound of a school in Mathura. Uday Barik, a poor preacher of Christianity was dastardly killed in Orissa. Four simultaneous explosives rocked four churches in Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka on a particular day. Copies of the Bible were burnt in Gujarat. Christian nuns were gangraped in Madhya Pradesh. Construction of a Christian community prayer hall was banned and collective prayer disbanded in the Singhbhum district of

Jharkhand. Graham Steins, an Australian missionary and his two sons were ghastly burnt to death. Proveen Togadia of the VHP rakes up the Mandir issue, spits venom at the minorities and Advani holds brief for him, advocates Hindutva as a way of life and cunningly lends credence to minority-bashing. While the well-meaning people of the country, infuriated at the arrogance and hostility of the Hindutva zealots, are voicing protest, the NDA partners are conspicuous in their observance of the code of silence. Some of them have even demonstrated their allegiance to the communal BJP in one or the other form. Naveen Patnaik, the BJD chief minister of Orissa, refused to lend an ear to the people suffering at the hands of the Hindutva brigade. Chandrababu Naidu, the TDP chief minister of AP senses a conspiracy against the BJP if someone resents the acts of the Sangh Parivar goons. Mamata Banerjee, the chief of Trinamool Congress, famous for her exhibition of gimmicks and piety, not only remains tight-lipped over these issues but even attends RSS convention to seek support to her candidature for ministership.

Encouraged by such approbation of its allies, the RSS-Bajrang Dal-VHP combine, with the full backing of the BJP, ran amok in Gujarat, killing, maiming and raping the members of the minority Muslim community at will in bestial pleasure and thereby precipitating a permanent fear psychosis and insecurity among this segment of Indian citizens. Through such cowardly acts, mayhem and carnage as well as exacerbated communal polarization, the forces of Hindutva gained strength to perpetuate a reign of terror and violence. RSS, it may be mentioned, finds their hero in Hitler who similarly unleashed a hate campaign against the Jews and finally executed them en masse to demonstrate 'Aryan purity' of the German fascists. The BJP as the political outfit of the Sangh Parivar, used this communal divide and pogrom-ravaged situation to ascend to the throne through a blood-stained hoax on the electorates. None of these had been unknown to the NDA partners. Yet they did not hesitate to join hands with the

communal BJP to feed on the remains of power. Such has been their lust for power that civilization, social cause, human life, least of human values are all relegated to abandonment. To keep the master BJP happy, they do not hesitate to be accomplice to the crimes of their kingpin by way of acquiescing in all its moves and acts.

Increased Strength Helped BJP to Dictate Terms

With such tame submission of the allies, the BJP consolidated and concentrated its strength within the NDA to such an extent as to dictate terms to these spineless alliance partners. Trinamool Congress had a bitter taste of it. Allured by a prospect of climbing to the governmental power in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress and its leader Mamata Banerjee deserted the BJP and NDA, albeit raising hue and cry over Tehelka episode, and combined with the Congress, the party they moved out of as a splinter group. But routed in the elections, Trinamool Congress severed relation with the Congress and sought re-entry into the BJP-led coalition. But it was not so easy for Mamata. She had to eat a humble pie to get a berth afresh. Because she and her party had no way out. Bereft of ministry and power, they are non-entities even in the vote politics. Devoid of any ideology, their 'feel' for the people is a parade in utter deception. All the NDA partners including Trinamool Congress, TDP, BJD are equally responsible for adding strength to the communal BJP. They owe an explanation to the people for such conduct.

With this increased strength and consolidation, the BJP could succeed in getting the balance of power in the coalition appreciably tilted towards enabling it even to incorporate the Hindutva issues in the joint manifesto. One can easily understand that if the BJP returns to power, it would immediately swing into action to implement these arch communal and fundamentalist programmes. One had a glimpse of it when Uma Bharti, the BJP chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, marked her tenure with an overwhelming suffronised environ, moves and pronouncements. The

so-called 'secular' Congress too had a significant role in the rise of the communal BJP to such a powerful position. It was Rajiv Gandhi who, in order to garner majority community votes by fomenting Hindu religious passion, broke open the hitherto locked Babri Masjid to rake up RamlalaPujan issue that snowballed into a major controversy, drove a wedge between the two communities on religious line and ultimately triggered massive attacks on minorities. The BJP took full advantage of the divide, ratcheted up the Mandir construction issue, roused communal passion, vitiated the atmosphere of the country and ultimately paved the way for its riding to power.

Role of Sham Marxists

The so-called Marxists like the CPI(M), CPI who now are so eager to "defeat the communal BJP and form a secular government with the Congress at the Centre", also had lent a helping hand to the BJP in rising to the centrestage of Indian politics with so much strength. In 1977, the CPI(M), CPI in the name of fighting the authoritarianism of the Congress supported the Janata conglomerate government at the Centre which had Vajpayee-Advani as ministers. When Rajiv Gandhi allowed the "Shilanyas" at the disputed Babri Masjid premises, CPI(M) called him and his party "more communal than the BJP". Subsequently, the CPI(M) and the BJP joined hands to dislodge Rajiv and install V.P. Singh's government at the Centre. At that time in the words of the CPI(M) Rajiv was "worst communalist" and "far worse than the Hindutvabadis and the BJP". It would thus be clear that the CPI(M) as per convenience alternated its alliance between the Congress and the BJP for making election gains. So when it found that combining with the BJP would be more profitable, it posed the "authoritarianism" of the Congress as the main enemy and underplayed the communal character of the BJP. But when aligning with the Congress is considered more beneficial in order to improve the position in the parliamentary vote politics, the BJP's "communalism" is targeted as the principal foe and the Congress credited with "secular" credential. This brazen opportunism of the pseudo-Marxists helped the BJP to gain ground, increase its number of seats from meagre two to

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Millionaires Vie For Serving Pampers

Hoarse may cry, the watchdogs of bourgeois parliamentary democracy eulogizing their system and its electioneering processes; pages after pages may fill up, their paid 'writers', to create the hype about their ensuing and ongoing 14th parliamentary election in India. Facts remain, the sacred election of the bourgeoisie has now been reduced to a farce. Parliamentary parties of different shades, from rightists to so-called leftists, parties big or small, national, regional or local, they have all turned the electioneering and election itself into a plain and simple business, albeit clamouring at the same time slogans and jargons of democracy. They have found here a field of investment, which ultimately pays back many times more, if and when they can ensure their win. So all of them, all the big names like BJP or its so-called alliance of NDA and Congress, in the national arena, or Trinamul, Telegu Desham, ADMK, Samajbadi Party or such others in regional folds including leftists by name, like CPI(M) or CPI, are spending crores of rupees to see that their respective candidates meet success. And who are these candidates they have chosen to vie for power for them? As the reports go, most, if not all of these candidates are expressly wealthy persons. By the rules of the Election Commission, candidates have to declare their assets to the public. It shows that the candidates have assets not just to the tune of lakhs of rupees, many reach the mark of crores in the value of their assets; in cases the total soars up to hundreds or even thousands of crores of rupees. It means, they are not just rich, they are millionaires, even billionaires.

Obviously in a country where corruption has crept in to the very root of the system, these declarations are only tips of icebergs. Actual figures of assets, legal or illegal, kept in one's own name or of others, must be manifold more. A few instances already made public, reveal this clearly. Somnath Chatterjee, a well known figure from no other party than CPI(M), has declared various assets in the affidavit, apparently fair and frank. They include a property in New Delhi, shares of landed properties in different prize localities of South Calcutta, similar properties in Birbhum district of West Bengal or in Varanasi in UP, owned either by him or by his wife

or jointly by both. In each case, figures in the affidavit and the market value assessed by valuers are gulf apart. For instance, for the New Delhi property the affidavit value is 25 lakh, while the value estimate is between 3.5 and 4 crore, both in rupees. For other properties the affidavit values are Rs 2 lakh against the real value of Rs 1.2 crore, or Rs 30 thousand against 13 lakh or Rs 40 lakh against Rs 3 crore. With Pranab Mukherjee, a veteran leader of Congress, the story is the same. Reportedly he or his wife or the two together, owns residential premises two in New Delhi, two or more in Calcutta and in West Bengal districts, like Birbhum and Murshidabad. For each the market value is several times more than the declared value. (Source : *The Statesman*, Kolkata Edition, 22 April 2004). It can be assumed very well that if the top-ranking leaders of the parties show this record of honesty, what the others will have in their store. And the pattern is not restricted to West Bengal too. The 'high-tech' chief minister, Chandrababu Naidu of Andhra Pradesh has declared asset of Rs 21 crore, owned by him and his wife. But it remains undisclosed that he owns a mammoth industrial estate of worth Rs 400 crore. In Orissa, which includes perpetually drought- and famine-stricken Kalahandi with more than 400 starvation deaths even in the last year, there are at least 19 millionaires in fray. Among them, Pinaki Mishra, the Congress candidate from Puri declares a more than Rs 20 crore asset of his family. The BJD chief minister Navin Patnaik owns more than Rs 2 crore by the affidavit. The new state of Jharkhand has more than half the population living below the poverty line. Here too, there are numbers of millionaire candidates, with the BJP contestant from Giridih constituency declaring an asset of Rs 1.7 crore. The Congress candidate from Mysore of Karnataka hails from the erstwhile Mysore court. His declared asset is more than Rs 1500 crore. His opponent, the BJD candidate CH Vijayashankar owns 525 running ships. Another chief minister, S M Krishna, jointly owns with his wife an asset of more than Rs 3 crore.

The list can be made longer. The crux remains the same. So we stop here to avoid fruitless repetition. The first question that should be addressed is: From where do they

amass even this staggering declared asset and by which means? Obviously the source must be huge and fluid, to help these people roaming around the seat of power acquire their wealth fast. There is no dearth of such a source. Thousands of crore of rupees are now added to government funds in the name of development, or on account of relief measures for drought, flood or such other natural calamities. A simple and silent siphoning of that money is the most lucrative and dependable means. Much of this money comes as loans from different sources, internal or even external to the country. This tightens the debt-trap on people, but adds cream to those around power. For instance, the AP government led by Chandrababu had Rs 50000 crore as loans from different sources for development of the state. One third of which had come from the World Bank. And what has been the result? Per capita income has come down in this cyber-state from the eighties to the nineties. The state is still among those in India, that lead in the rate of death for want of medical attention and treatment, or in child death out of malnutrition. Drought is perpetual in some parts of this state; suicide among poverty and debt stricken peasants is a regular news. On the other hand, most of the legislators, be it to the Assembly or the Parliament, are themselves the contractors in the run of 'development' or act as the kingpin of a set of contractors under their respective fold. Added to this, there has been the new flourishing business of 'education', as the MLAs and MPs own dozens of engineering or medical colleges and English medium schools, by courtesy of unbridled privatization of education.

With variations in details the same pattern is repeated in other states from Gujarat under the rabid rightist BJP to West Bengal with so-called leftist rule. Thus results are also the same. "Peoples' representatives" grow richer, while peasants and workers face starvation death or take to suicide, or plunge into hopeless misery.

So that is the story of who are contesting this election and how on the strength of money power. Of course money is not the only power that matters; added to it are the musclepower of mafias and propaganda power, turned hi-tech these days, of print or electronic

media. These in turn are sponsored and maintained by the moneyed class, the vested interests, the capitalists, the big business, jotedars or big landowners and industrialists. This way they meet a number of ends. They invest from their huge reserve of black money earned through illegal and immoral means only to ensure political protection of their interests and wealth; at the same time, helping candidates of their own choice win, they make way for earning ten, twenty, hundred, or even more, times of investment. The legislators, too, faithfully serve their sponsors, the moneyed class; when returned to power, they pay back through legislative measures that help price hike to keep earning profit on, raise fees for education, medical and other services, increase power-tariffs, exempt taxes for the rich or arrange means to evade tax and so on. The process feeds them too; they make their political career and material fortune. And when it comes to repeat the whole act in the next election, they dole out crumbs to the illiterate, unconscious poor people to buy their votes. To what depth the process has plunged, is amply clear in the Lucknow incident, where the poor womenfolk were lured with the prospect of a saree for their vote. The stampede that followed to get hold of the sarees thrown to the air caused pathetic death of 25 women. The dead could have only one consolation. The incident was brought to the attention of the nation only at the cost of their lives!

The fourteenth parliamentary election has laid bare such a putrid skeleton of bourgeois democracy. What once emerged on the slogans "of the people, by the people, for the people" has now been reduced to a system "of the millionaires, by the millionaires, for the millionaires". It has become the highway for earning a fortune. Naturally, it no longer intends to, nor does it have the potentiality to solve any of the burning problems that confront people's life. The pack of millionaires and criminals that adorn the legislative houses today, can never be regarded as peoples' representatives. They represent exploiters, owners-industrialists-big business-capitalists-monopolists; they represent the plunderers. How can then people at large expect their interest to be served by these people, by this system?

56th Anniversary of SUCI Observed in States

[We give below some of the reports received so far from states about observance of 56th anniversary of the party foundation day.]

On the occasion of 56th anniversary of the party foundation day, a mass meeting was organized by the Calcutta District Committee on 24 April at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta. Comrade Kalika Mukherjee, member, West Bengal State Committee of the party presided.

Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Calcutta District Secretary and Central Staff, was the main speaker. In his speech, he said, inter alia, that BJP and the NDA have spent a few hundred crores of public money to spread the false propaganda about the "feel good" factor and "Shining

it wants to share power at the Centre in combination with Congress, should the opportunity arise.

Continuing, Comrade Manik Mukherjee said : The ruling capitalist class wants to establish two-party system in the country by projecting the BJP and the Congress as the two main contenders. Whichever of these two parties forms the government, the real power would remain in the hands of the capitalist class. The great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that in the present era, attempt is being made to establish fascism through the two-party system from

movement, fighting on the burning problems and demands of the people.

Delhi

Delhi State Organizing Committee of SUCI observed its 56th Party Foundation Day with a well-attended public meeting on 25th April evening at Transformer-wali Gali, C-Block, Shradhdhanand Colony. The meeting was addressed by Comrade Satyawar (Secretary, Haryana State Committee), who was the main speaker. SUCI candidate from East Delhi Comrade Harish Tyagi also spoke. Comrade Pratap Samal (Secretary, Delhi State Organizing Committee) presided.

In his presidential address, Comrade Samal recalled the historic struggle of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and his handful of compatriots in building up the SUCI as the genuine communist party braving all odds and spurred by a firm ideological conviction.

Comrade Satyawar said that the uncompromising stream of the Indian freedom struggle, led by leaders like Bhagat Singh and Subhas Bose had been sidelined, and the national bourgeoisie had gained control over the Congress. The Indian national bourgeoisie had thereafter actually strengthened capitalism in India under slogans of Nehruvian socialism raised by the Congress, followed by slogans like Garibi Hatao and Mera Bharat

the parties in power through election, the problems of the people cannot be ended. Since its foundation by Comrade Ghosh, SUCI has been relentlessly organizing mass and class struggles conducive to anti-capitalist socialist revolution throughout the country. Comrade Harish Tyagi said that SUCI views elections as an extension of the people's struggles and as an opportunity to strengthen people's struggles through the presence of its leaders in legislative bodies. He also said that developing an independent Left democratic force to fight communalism on the ground was the only way to defeat communalism.

Kerala

In Kerala Party Foundation Day was observed with flag hoisting, wearing of GS badge and public meetings in different places.

In the public meeting organized in this connection at Trivandrum on 24th April, Comrade Chhya Mukherjee, in her address as the main speaker said : the fundamental analysis upon which this party took shape under the leadership of a great Marxist philosopher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has been fully vindicated by history. The scenario of the 14th Loksabha elections brings forth this truth all the more. The bourgeois parties as well as the sham Marxists like the CPI(M), CPI are indulging in all sorts of



Comrade Manik Mukherjee addressing in Calcutta with Comrades Anil Sen, Sukomal Dasgupta (Central Committee members), Kalika Mukherjee (West Bengal State Committee member) and Provas Ghosh (Central Committee member) on the dais.

India". For crores of the poor in the country, this is nothing but a cruel joke. It is not that there has been no development in the country after the independence. But development for whom ? Not for the 100 crore common people, but for the handful owners of capital, rich and the affluent. On this there is no policy difference between the BJP and the Congress. But since the ruling capitalist class wants to pit these two major faithful subservient parties of their own against each other as the main contender, it has become necessary to highlight the "political difference" between the two. That is why the slogan has been raised that this election is a battle between communalism and secularism. But is the Congress secular ? Its antecedents belie it. Today, the CPI(M) is very vocal about secularism of the Congress, because

country to country. If the attention of the people can be confined between the two parties serving capitalism, they will not think about any third force. Therefore, the bourgeoisie brings two such parties to the limelight through money, muscle power and propaganda so that the people's own alternative of mass-movement, revolution are kept away from their attention, thinking. The revolutionaries participate in election in order to develop the consciousness that voting right carries no real meaning in people's life, to dispel the illusion about election in mass mind. This is why, we contest elections, we tell the people that even if election is totally free and fair, which is an impossibility today, exploitation of man by man cannot be put an end to through that. Revolution is needed for that. It is with this objective that the SUCI is conducting mass



A part of huge gathering in Calcutta

Mahan. Capitalism, which was in a historically moribund stage, was unable to solve the problems of the people, rather, the basic problems of poverty and unemployment intensified.

The working class and the common people must realize that the root cause of exploitation lies in the system of capitalism-imperialism. Without overthrowing this system, and by merely changing

unethical and immoral deeds to somehow grab the power while the toiling millions are pushed to extreme ruination due to the most intensified and ruthless exploitation under globalization policies.

SUCI is the only party holding aloft the noble banner of Marxism-Leninism and relentlessly trying to build up democratic mass movement on the edifice of higher ethical and

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Exit Poll Survey

Conspiracy to Confine People's Choice to Bourgeois Combinations

It is now an undeniable fact that elections today are mostly controlled by the moneybag of the industrialists and monopoly houses and they also create illusion among the masses about the parties or candidates they want to bring to power. And in that game, media play a vital role which are also controlled by the same capitalist class. Through continuous and orchestrated propaganda in the name of report, review, analysis, exit poll, interview, debate etc., starting from long before and upto the last day of the election process, the media project only those parties or combinations which are favoured by the ruling bourgeoisie. They thus foist on the electorate an induced polarization in the election process — both the sides or poles subserving the same class interest of the bourgeoisie.

Recently a controversy centring round publishing exit poll result before the completion of the last phase of election has come to the fore. Publication of exit poll results forecasting fate of the contending parties has started just after the completion of the first phase of the polls in the different parts of the country. Taking opinions of a minutest fraction of the total voters, the TV channels like Aaj Tak, Sahara, Star, ZeeTV etc., began to foretell the possible results of the election posing the survey process as scientific and error-proof. Be that as it may, this way the print and electronic media, no doubt, are heating up the election atmosphere to a great extent and artificially creating extra interest in public mind, already disillusioned greatly, about election fanfare and influencing subsequent phases of polls.

Before the start of the elections, all the parties objected against publication of such heresy result of the polls before completion of the last phase of elections before the Election Commission and the Supreme Court was also moved on this question. But both the Commission and the Supreme Court declined to actively interfere for stopping such exit poll exercises of the media on the plea of legal intricacies involved in it and upholding 'fundamental right' of expressing opinion. But in the past, in so many other cases involving

public interest, they were seen to be proactive enough. Naturally the question arises, what actuates them all — the media, the EC and the Supreme Court even — to sanction practising this exit poll gimmick inspite of objections from all corners, let alone the question of veracity of predicting future result of the polls by the media in this way.

It goes without saying, free and fair election is an indispensable part of democracy and it requires such an atmosphere where people can judge the views and characters of all contesting political parties or candidates and the candidates' personal life etc. and can freely vote accordingly. But the fact is that the country miserably lacks such an atmosphere and election has turned to be farce to the great majority of the people.

Today both the ruling and opposition parties are winning the elections with false promises to the people using money and muscle power. But after being saddled to power they take up anti-people measures in the interest of the vested class. Year after year, people are witnessing how the elections are being rigged in different ways to exemplify butchery of democracy. People are rapidly losing all faith in elections as a result of, on the one hand, treachery of the ruling parties to them and on the other, intimidation and forcible voting etc. Thus in spite of continuous propaganda campaign voting rate does not go above 50 to 55 per cent, that too including enormous false voting. In the midst of such a scenario, even demand for provision of voting opining 'none acceptable' is being raised. Thus it has now been difficult for the ruling bourgeois class to preserve the mask of 'shining' democracy over the crude dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in the Indian state. So the bourgeoisie in its own class interest is trying to create an atmosphere of interest in elections among the masses using the media to the maximum. In this design, exit poll has proved to be a very handy tool.

The bourgeoisie always wants to keep the parliamentary facade intact. They try to see that the illusion of the people towards election is not shattered at the least, but they never want the people to exercise their

franchise basing on firm and independent political outlook without being influenced by other factors. Because they know it very well that if political consciousness and cultivation of politics grow and develop among the masses, their trickery on the masses will get exposed one day or other. People will realize that whatever be the apparent differences among the ruling bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, they are all alike — they all serve the interest of the owners and their hirelings. Side by side they will be able to distinguish between genuine Lefts or pseudo-Lefts, identify who are the forces of mass movement, who will lead them along the path of revolution, to their emancipation. And if that happens then it will no more be possible to keep them helplessly stuck in the quagmire of election politics of bourgeois democracy.

Thus the bourgeoisie wants that let there be elections, let people participate in these, but people's political sight must remain confined within the bounds of the bourgeois politics. In election politics the media is just providing this service. In their propaganda barrage they project parties/candidates not on the

basis of principle, politics, character or struggle — these are all made not only secondary but totally irrelevant and the sole and all important question appears to be 'who will win and who will lose'. Thus they project the whole election process before the people as something for electing, within the most narrow and distorted bounds of bourgeois politics, either of the two particular big parties or combinations serving the same bourgeois class. And this is nothing but foisting two-party parliamentary system by the ruling capitalist class. Side by side, the media also try to create a credibility of the rigged results using exit poll reports in favour of that party or combination whom the bourgeois class wants to bring to power.

The exit poll survey is of another great service to the bourgeoisie. The newspapers, radio, TV, etc., by constantly focusing exit poll results, surveys, analyses, etc., create such an atmosphere in which the rigged election results also appear as true and normal to the people.

Thus there is no doubt that all such drama is enacted by the bourgeoisie through the media solely in their interest to befool the people. That is why, the Election Commission refuses to ban exit poll on flimsy legal plea. Neither the Election Commission nor the Supreme Court is a supra-class body.

AIMSS protests stampede deaths in Lucknow

Comrade H. G. Jayalakshmi, General Secretary, All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS) in her immediate reaction to the stampede deaths in Lucknow issued the following statement on 13.4.2004 :

The All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS) expresses its deep shock and dismay over the death of twentyone women and serious injuries caused to many more women out of whom more than twenty are said to be in a critical condition as a result of stampede caused in a programme organised for distributing sarees. That it has happened in the Prime Minister's own constituency that too on the occasion of the birthday celebration of the Prime Minister's campaign manager, Mr. Lalji Tandon is a cruel joke. It is very sad that these poor women had to die just for the sake of a saree and this lays bare the hollowness of the "Feel Good" and "India Shining" slogans of the BJP. One may wonder whether for the BJP leaders India shines on the dead bodies of those women.

AIMSS demands of the Election Commission to take immediate action against the BJP for holding such a programme without taking prior permission- that too in a prohibited area as reported in the Press- with the sole purpose of bribing innocent and helpless people. It demands of the UP government to give adequate compensation to families of the bereaved and those seriously injured. AIMSS calls upon the women and also the common people to defeat BJP and such parties, which play with the lives of the common people with scant regard for their safety and dignity just for electoral dividends.



In Kultali, South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, CPI(M) murdered well over 100 leaders and cadres over the years. Recently CPI(M) goons abducted Comrade Ajit Pal and killed Comrade Sahidul Sarder on 24th April last. On the same day Comrades Anil Sen and Provash Ghosh, Central Committee members, SUCI led a protest demonstration in Calcutta and on 28th April a successful 24-hour bandh was observed in Kultali.

Iraq up in arms against US

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prime minister Vajpayee that the Indian government has kept mum on the issue.

But a far more dangerous move has just been taken by President Bush. After consultations with the Israeli PM Ariel Sharon, he has just declared that Israel could keep some of the areas it had unlawfully captured on the West Bank during the 1967 war and the USA would not henceforth recognize the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to Israel from where they had been evicted. How sinister this US move is can be understood if one remembers that the so-called US Road Map to Peace in Palestine, sponsored by the USA and now under implementation, was itself heavily tilted against the Palestinians and forced upon them since they had no option but to accept it. But even so, nobody ever questioned that Israel must vacate

24 April

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moral values in this country and expose oppressive capitalism.

On the same day there were public meetings, one at Kottayam and another one at Alleppey addressed by Comrade C. K. Lukose, State Secretary and Comrade. V. Venugopal, State Secretariat Member respectively.

all land unlawfully occupied by it on the West Bank and the Gaza strip, and that the Palestinian refugees had the right to return to Israel. But now, at one stroke, the brute force of US imperialism seeks to shatter the dream of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland and to allow Israel to convert the promised Palestinian state, at least on the West Bank, into isolated Palestinian cities surrounded by security walls and fortified Jewish settlements and highways.

But the Palestinian freedom fighters will not be cowed down. They have vowed that thousands of Rantis would spring up and take revenge. They will continue to fight heroically as they are doing, till US imperialist machinations and perfidy and Zionist state terrorism are finally rebuffed and given the burial.

In Iraq, the heroic people will fight on and their struggle will grow from strength to strength till the US imperialism is given a crushing defeat.

Such is the inexorable law of history.

We salute the heroic Iraqi freedom fighters !
We salute the heroic Palestinian freedom fighters !
Patriotic Indians, beware of and foil the Indian government's conspiracy to develop closeness with USA and Israel !

Surrender to communal agenda

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comfortable 150 plus and be saddled in power. This might pay dividend to the CPI(M) in vote-based politics, but surely it would neither prevent communalism nor thwart authoritarianism. Crisis-ridden moribund capitalism, in its bid to provide extra lease to its life, does need both authoritarianism-despotism as well as communalism-fundamentalism as succour.

The BJP made full use of such a congenial environment to win confidence of the ruling bourgeois and soon turned out to be an extremely trusted representative of it. The Congress provided a fertile ground for cultivation of communalism-fundamentalism. The BJP spared no time to sow the seed of Hindutva on it. And the NDA partners with all dedication watered and manured the soil to grow a giant tree out of the seed. Time and again, the SUCI had called upon the left and democratic forces to come forward and build up a nationwide democratic mass movement to realize the just demands of the people. The menacing rise of the BJP as a rabid Hindutva outfit and rapid spread of communal virus could only be resisted by such a mass movement which could also place before the people a left democratic alternative politics as against the right-wing vote politics of the Congress, the BJP and others. But the CPI(M), CPI never wanted that. Otherwise they would have responded to such call. Both of them were too eager to be partners of the bourgeois vote-based politics, albeit with their "left" signboard, for pelf and power and hence refrained from indulging in any activity that might irk the ruling capitalist class.

Left-Democratic Movement Alone Can Resist Communalism

Taking full advantage of absence of a countrywide mass movement, the BJP surreptitiously went on projecting Ram Mandir construction as a key national issue to divert attention from the gruelling problems of unemployment, layoff, retrenchment, price rise, rent hike, food and shelter, healthcare, education, wrenching poverty and so forth afflicting the life of the common people. Regrettably, it has to some extent succeeded also.

The well-meaning people of the country as well as the left democratic forces must be alert of this impending danger of cultural fascism that seeks to retrograde the mental process by incessant propagation of age-old obsolete creeds, obscurantist and backward ideas, fundamentalist thoughts and killing of reasoning faculty. The BJP is ahead of others in the race to impose this cultural fascism that, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader and teacher, showed, would kill the very process of creating MAN. So this has to be resisted at any cost. All the political parties and elements who are helping such a devilish force to gain strength, must be isolated from the people. Unleashing a massive democratic mass movement on the burning problems of life can only repel the menacing attack of communalism-fundamentalism. There is no other way. The election battle must also be fought in such a way as to conduce to the development of this massive democratic movement embracing toiling people from all walks of life. History enjoins this task on us.

CPI(M) finds Mascot in Sonia

Chandigarh: It is an irony. Congress president Sonia Gandhi seems to have become the mascot of the Communist parties here.

During a trip to the CPM office on Sunday, this correspondent saw rows of CPM posters with portraits of Sonia Gandhi adorning them.

... the Left parties here unabashedly rely on a quote ... "Let's shed our differences and strengthen the nation."...from Sonia Gandhi to inspire their workers and voters in the run up to the Lok Sabha polls on May 10. (excerpts from Times of India dated 29.4.04)



Graffiti in Nagarcoil (Tamilnadu) Lok Sabha constituency for the CPI(M) candidate A. V. Bellarmin. Malayala Manorama published this on 10 March.

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