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Resist Insidious Attacks on Autonomy in Education

Hitler had once said that if he could control the text books, he could control the state. What he meant was that if the arena of education could be brought under the direct command of his fascist administration, it would be easy for him to control the very pattern of thinking of the countrymen, regiment the thought process, turn the minds into a mystic alley of blind faith, fanaticism, jingoism and thus facilitate the process of fascization of the society. He was right. Science and scientific temper, secular values, shaping of a rational thought process and fostering of human values, ethics, morality and quality are the backbone of any dignified education system of modern times. It is in this sense that the destiny of the nation is shaped in the classroom of the country. So, if education could be stripped of its essence and disoriented from its goal

of man making, the rulers who fear enlightenment of the people lest that should trigger rebellion against their oppressive regime, feel safe and secure, at least for the time being. Hence is the eagle's eye on education. And now fascism being a general feature in almost all capitalist-imperialist countries, education is under attack everywhere in varying degrees. Capitalist India is no exception. Rather, things are worse in India compared to many other countries.

Academic autonomy is targeted

Alongside changing the course content in such a manner that there is nothing but mere assemblage of facts which does not provide the faculty to discern truth, the ruling capitalist class is working its stratagem to convert education into a lifeless commodity subject to the laws of capitalist market. Rabid

commercialization, closing the gateway to learning to the crores of oppressed people through various means including exorbitant hike in the fees, dragging the country to the age of medieval darkness in the name of Indianization and spiritualization of education and such other sinister moves on the part of the ruling dispensation mark the murky scenario of education in our country. Side by side, there is a blatant move to slubvert the academic autonomy. The power that be has been making all possible attempts to turn the field of education into an appendage to the government-administration. Autonomy of the educational institutions, it is worth mentioning, constitutes an important aspect of secular, scientific and democratic education and of democratic rights of the people. If that is in jeopardy, true pursuit and dissemination of

knowledge is bound to suffer. Even during the days of our freedom movement, the demand for protecting academic autonomy had been voiced by the doyens of Indian Renaissance, the renowned educationists and intelligentsia. Yet, in recent years, we have been witnessing insidious attacks by different governments on the autonomy of educational institutions across India, in varying degrees and forms – be it under cover of high-sounding words and pretexts, or through exertion of indirect pressure or even by open and naked interference.

CPI (M) government in West Bengal showed the way

One of the earliest and most naked attacks on academic autonomy was brought down by the former CPI (M) government of

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On the issue of 'Net Neutrality'

The question of 'Net Neutrality' has captured headlines in the recent past. Internet users have been vehemently opposing any violation of Net Neutrality which, as many have been saying, would be akin to depriving people at large from deriving benefit of a scientific discovery that has brought a sea change in the arena of information gathering as well as dissemination thereby facilitating many human activities particularly in the realm of cultivation of knowledge. When the internet was created, the scientists who conceptualized it and were responsible for the technological innovation that made it possible, visualized it as a free medium of exchange of ideas and information among all members of humanity. So far it has been running that way. That is why anybody can create a website, put whatever ideas or information one wants to convey to the others, and anybody in the world has full access to the information. Before the advent of the internet this was unthinkable: one had to depend on publishers and a marketing

network to make their ideas known to others.

Internet—a boon for humanity

Humanity has reaped rich fruit out of this technological development. Now anyone can send and receive messages through e-mail, which is a service that has become possible only after the advent of the internet. One can now look for and obtain any information through the Google search engine, download music and video, and can even read literature free or at a very low cost. To see what free exchange of information can achieve, take the example of Wikipedia. The founders of Wikipedia simply created an open platform through which anyone can put in anything that one knows, and trusted humanity's collective wisdom. The result is that people from all over the world go on adding to the treasurehouse of knowledge that is freely available to everybody, and now it is a gigantic body of information that would have been impossible for any single agency to create. Science has also reaped

great benefit out of this development. Earlier one had to browse for hours in a library to obtain the information necessary for a certain line of research. It used to take weeks or months for a new research to be published, and the printed copies of the journals to be distributed across the world and to reach the library shelves. Now, one can browse the information on the internet and can obtain it with the press of a button. This has greatly accelerated the exchange of scientific information.

People across the globe have already leveraged internet as a means of mass action against unjust policies. Social media-driven campaign has played an important role in mass movements such as the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, the Arab Spring and the anti-corruption movement in India, whatever may be their weaknesses.

Internet has so far been an 'open platform'

All this has been possible not only due to a few technological advances, but also due to a

"principle" followed by those who provide the service. The principle is that all traffic and content are treated as equal, without discrimination. The Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have to abide by this principle, because the internet was created as an *open* platform, where anyone could set up and host their site anywhere, and be available across the globe. This "openness" means that the internet users anywhere in the world are free to use the internet in whatever form they choose—text, image, voice or video—and the ISPs were not allowed to discriminate between one type of data and another, between one provider of the data and another, and could not levy discriminatory charges based on that.

What is 'Net Neutrality'

'Net neutrality' precisely means what has just been described. It signifies application of the well-established "common carrier" rules to the Internet in order to preserve its freedom and openness. Common carriage prohibits the owner of a

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Ruling bourgeoisie trying to deprive common people of reaping benefit of a gift of modern science

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network that offers itself to all users, from discriminating against information by halting, slowing, or otherwise tampering with the transfer of any data except for legitimate network management purposes such as, what is technically known as, easing congestion or blocking spams and phishing. Common carriage, it may be added, is not a new concept—these rules have centuries-old history. They have long been applied to facilities central to the public life and economy like canal systems, railroads, public highways, and telegraph and telephone networks. So, legitimacy demands that all those who are licensed to provide the carriage should treat everyone equally and without any discrimination. Naturally, the normal expectation is that these common carrier rules should be followed in all telecommunication systems including the broadband internet communications. But now the “free” and “nondiscriminatory” form of the internet is under attack. Now there is a proposal to divide the internet into “fast” and “slow” lanes. If this proposal goes through, the internet service providers will offer faster download speeds to rich companies who pay them and will offer very slow speed for those who cannot pay.

Why this attack on ‘Net Neutrality’

Any student of social science knows that those who control economy also control all other spheres of life including the arena of application of science. Ours is a capitalist society with the capitalist class in power. And to the capitalists, what matters most is maximization of profit no matter how much it causes hardship to the people at large. So far, internet as a gift of modern science has been available to the users without any strings attached to it. But now the profit-seeking capitalist class is out to restrict the use of internet and is trying to put in place certain practices that would enable the rich corporates or individuals to corner the benefits against heftier fees.

Even though the egalitarian philosophy of the internet seems to be inimical to capitalism, the fact is that capitalism has benefitted immensely from it, mainly because of three reasons:

(a) Creation, processing, dissemination and storage of information became faster, cheaper and better, which has resulted in

significantly lesser labour and administrative cost for capitalists. This also means employment opportunities are significantly less.

(b) Online commerce came up in a big way which is far cheaper than the traditional ‘brick-and-mortar’ commerce resulting in higher profit margins.

(c) As the internet and its user-base grew in size web-based companies such as Google, Facebook, Yahoo that offered free service to the people earned billions of dollars in advertising revenue and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like Airtel and Reliance earned fabulous profits in data service charges.

At a time when the shrinking market put the capitalist world in an irresolvable market crisis, the internet opened up the scope of a whole new opportunity of investment and profit. A new term e-commerce was coined where a vendor could directly contact clients and transact sale online. Web marketing was increasingly resorted to. New portals like E-bay, Amazon, Alibaba, etc., opened up to reap profit from net-based business. Even though the initial euphoria epitomized by the so-called “dot-com bubble” did not live up to the expectation and all investments did not fetch expected returns, on the whole capitalism benefitted from the internet boom.

But, as we know from the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary, SUCI(C), and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, the crisis of capitalism is now an hourly one. Capitalism is trying to somehow stave off a crisis only to tumble into another bigger crisis. This has happened here also. E-commerce is also facing the spectre of diminishing return. So, crisis-ridden capitalism is desperately trying to find newer avenues from where it could fetch maximum profit. It has now an eye on manipulating the internet service, doing away with the practice of unrestricted use of internet for collecting and disseminating information and thus opening up a new route to a section of the IT monopolists and behemoths for squeezing people through slapping of differential and tier-based tariffs for the use of internet. That is why the “free” and “non-discriminatory” form of the internet is under attack.

Apart from this economic reason, there is also a political reason behind the move to control the internet. It is true that apart from

deriving economic benefits, the ruling capitalist class which, in a desperate attempt to prolong its mutilated existence, is hell bent on demolishing the moral backbone of the people particularly the youth, found in internet a very convenient mode to spread harmful contents like pornography, sex-perversion, violence and such other degrading things that fuel moral depravity. But at the same time, people across the globe have also been leveraging internet as a means of mass action against unjust policies.

Furthermore, the open internet is a powerful medium in the hands of the people for organizing protests against the ruling class, some examples of which we have earlier discussed. It allows people to effectively spread the ideas for social justice, and to reach a large number of people within a short time. So the capitalist class wants to control the internet and use it for its own interest and block critical thoughts and prevent dissident voices from speaking freely online.

Attack on net neutrality in India

In India the first attempt to subvert the neutrality of the internet surfaced in December 2014, when the internet service provider Airtel decided to charge higher rates for “Voice on Internet Protocol” (VoIP) services like Skype, Whatsapp, and Viber. They argued that, due to the availability of these services, people are using sms (‘short messaging service’ on cellphone) less, and so they are losing revenue. But a little investigation of the actual figures shows that their revenues as well as profit margins due to data services have consistently increased. So, the argument is not tenable. Control of internet cannot be vested in the hands of the ruling class, and the profit-hungry Telecom behemoths cannot be allowed to dictate the consumers’ choice of technology.

Then in April 2015, Airtel announced a scheme called “Airtel Zero” that is aimed to provide preferential access to companies that signs a deal with them. Soon the e-commerce firm Flipkart announced joining the “Airtel Zero” scheme, by which web-access to Flipkart would enjoy a faster speed than other sites. It resulted in an outrage and people felt that if this attempt is not blocked, it will inevitably lead, in course of time, to ‘blocked sites and fast lanes’. Users will be restricted to a few ‘islands of data’ as decided by the Telecom companies and not the entire ‘universe’ of the internet. The

websites of the smaller establishments based on ‘open and free’ model (such as Wikipedia) will become very slow, and these ventures will be forced to latch up with one of the corporate houses in order to survive.

People must press for enacting laws to protect net neutrality

We are happy to note that the outburst of peoples’ protest has forced Flipkart to pull out of the deal. The youth of the country and the scientific community have stood at the forefront of this successful campaign with over 10 lakh people demanding the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to keep the internet free. Airtel’s move to charge extra (about 5 times) for VoIP services also led to a massive consumer backlash and Airtel was forced to reconsider the move, though it has not really been withdrawn.

But due to intense lobbying by telecom giants, TRAI is still planning to allow them a violation of net neutrality, putting at stake peoples’ freedom in the use of the internet. In March 2015, TRAI released a consultation paper for obtaining peoples’ feedback on ‘Net Neutrality’, but many feel that it might have been eyewash. The way such “consultations” were conducted earlier on the issues like ‘National Education Policy’ or the ‘genetically modified seeds’, the outcome of the consultations may be independent of the feedback received from the people. With Modi government overtly serving the sinister class interest of the ruling capitalist class, there is apprehension that the central government may actually favour the telecom companies’ demands. It is noteworthy that while Prime Minister Modi waxes eloquent on the “Digital India Initiative”, he has not spoken up on this raging issue of net neutrality despite such a massive outpouring of anger.

To protect the internet users’ right to information, we demand that ‘Net Neutrality’ should be enshrined into a Law. It is important to note that four countries—USA, Brazil, Holland and Chile—have already made ‘Net Neutrality’ a Law. They did not do that out of goodwill; these countries had to adopt the ‘Net Neutrality’ law due to strong expressions of peoples’ opinion. In our country also, what is needed is an enactment of a ‘Net Neutrality’ law, and only an organized powerful people’s movement can force the government to do that.

Through ceaseless cultivation and correct application of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, hasten up the process of accomplishing socialist revolution in India

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya calls out at Guwahati on 24th April

(This is an abridged and edited version of the speech delivered by Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Member, Politbureau, SUCI(C), in Assamese in Guwahati on the occasion of observance of 68th Party Foundation Day on 24 April. Responsibility of translation error and inadequacy of expression, if any, lies with the Editorial board, Proletarian Era)

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya set out with explaining the significance of observance of the Foundation Day of the Party. He emphasized that this observance is by no means a formal ritualistic programme to us. Its fundamental significance lies in our collectively taking the pledge afresh to carry out quickly and efficiently the specific responsibility that has been laid historically upon us. It further entails correct evaluation of the latest national and international situations as well as threadbare scientific analysis of the prevailing economic-political-social-cultural situations in the country and abroad and then on their anvil, it involves, highlighting the correctness of the political and tactical lines of the Party and, along with that, hastening up the process of anti-capitalist socialist revolution in the country; over and above, it requires affirming once again our pledge to identify ourselves to the cause of revolution and the revolutionary Party; all these characterize the significance of observance of this Day.

International situation

Presenting a brief and objective analysis of the latest national and international situations, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya said that the entire world is presently under the shackles of capitalists-imperialists. It must not be forgotten even for a moment that it is capitalism that lies at the root of the intense crisis in economic-political-cultural fields in all capitalist countries of the world. He added further that in those countries including the ones of Europe and America the all-out economic crisis and the political-social-cultural crisis is stemming from the capitalist rule which is assuming a terrible shape in these countries. It is being reflected in different ways every day in one country or other. Danger of outbreak of war prevails in the entire Middle East, ongoing war in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, and in the surrounding countries have assumed a dangerous dimension. If not a declared war a war like situation is

haunting the whole region. Its destructive outcome is ruining millions of people in these countries. And what is happening in countries of Europe or America is no less alarming. What is coming out in all capitalist ruled states is that totally bogged in crises and without finding a way out, people, at the instigation of the capitalists and their henchmen are getting involved in bloody fratricidal ethnic wars or are thinking of bringing self-ruination by other means; all these are spreading like wildfire. In no country there is any semblance of security in life for the people. The USA is trumpeted as the most developed country in the world. But even people of that country are not spared from the crisis. They are also suffocating. The sub-prime crisis that cropped up in the US economy in recent times and more menacing crises that stemmed from it – were simply unprecedented. It is clear enough that finding no way out the US imperialism is again leaning towards wars, direct or indirect, and fanning up wars and war like situations across the world. Of course it should be noted alongside that the American people are bursting out in resentment against all these, so intensely that the US rulers are no longer being able to hold them back. The state of American economy is such that they are spiraling down into debts and debts without which they cannot make their ends meet even for a single day; by this they have turned themselves as the greatest debtor nation of the world. A host of countries, like Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Lebanon and many others have fallen victim to their design. But the US economy is collapsing in spite of these. You must have heard about the prosperity and wealth of European countries in their good old days. But those countries, Great Britain, France, Germany and such others, none of them is free from economic crisis these days. It is reflected even in their political developments. Plunged in crisis, the more the capitalists are bringing down their attacks on people, the stronger is the

resentment with which people are bursting out now and then, virtually every day. The governments of those countries are facing terrible resistance from people. Such is the depth of the crises and consequent anger of people that capitalist rulers are finding it extremely difficult to stick to their seat of power. In many cases it is becoming almost impossible to complete their tenure. What is more astounding is that the ruling capitalist governments in order to cope with the situation are sometimes forced to grant some relief measures. But it is being found that the ruling capitalist class is opposing those moves. So, many of

countries are not finding ways out from that tangle. What is the reality today all over the world? On one side there is the cruel, unbridled exploitation of the capitalist class and emergence of a handful of people as owners of billions of rupees. On the other there are more than 90% of people forced to live a sub-human life, barely living. Nobody can deny this truth. Not even the subservient parties or the pundits and experts who have been included in the pay roll of their masters, to help the latter, so that the capitalists and capitalism remain in power.

National scenario

The scenario in India is virtually the same with hardly any difference. In fact the barbarous exploitation of the capitalist class for over 68 years has brought more than 80% of people below the poverty line. More than 77% earn less than 20 rupees a day. People cannot make out ways to live on. What does the incident indicate when a peasant hangs himself from a tree in public in the heart of the capital itself? It is merely a single instance. Such things are happening every day at many places in the country. Unable to find any way out, peasants are taking loans at exorbitant rates to carry on their cultivation; but they cannot realize proper price for their produce. So, as I told earlier, with no way out for paying back their loans, lakhs of peasants are rushing towards taking their own life. Not to speak of new industries and factories, the handful ones that were running somehow or other, have brought or are bringing their shutters down one after another. Such barbarous atrocities on women, such ghastly rapes that are assuming menacing form in all capitalist countries of the world, were not to be found even 10 or 15 years back. No woman can rest assured that such atrocities would not overtake her if and when she steps out of her house. But they cannot even sit back in their house too. They do not have food for their children, nor money, no resource at all. And not only outside, they are hardly safe even within their house too. They have to go out to earn livelihood even holding their life and dignity at stake; and they are also paying for that. But look at how the



Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya

the governments are being forced to resign in the face of mass resentment. But the point to note is that, lest there was created a condition which would put the existence of the ruling class at stake, lest there was a mass uprising, the capitalist class itself is conspiring to drag people into repeated elections as a diversionary tactics. And in those elections it is the economic issue which is coming out as the single most important issue. As a result of this, in some elections one bourgeois party is being dislodged by another of the same flock. Then again when the latter faces crisis, another election is being scheduled to repeat the process in favour of another party. The capitalist class is after this game all over the world including Europe. To their advantage they have a number of subservient parties at their disposal; so they do not find it at all difficult to place this party to power or that in its place.

Any in-depth analysis of the contemporary situation would prove that aggressive capitalism has driven its roots fairly deep into the countries of the world, big or small. So much so that people of those

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya's speech

Capitalism is the root of the intense crisis in economic-political-cultural fields

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governments are behaving. Both the union and state governments stand unperturbed; of whichever party the governments may be they have no concern, they are simply nonchalant. Thousands of abjectly poor people are committing suicide unable to eke out a living; the capitalist class and their governments are only saying: No worry; let things run on as they are; some compensation will mend everything right. Compensation for death! Unthinkable how such words can be uttered at all. So you see for yourself, not a single person stands a chance to be spared by this economic crisis generated by capitalism. It is very urgent that we realize this truth afresh on this historic day.

Capitalism is mounting heinous attack on culture and morality

Pointing at the unfathomable degeneration and destruction that capitalism has brought in its trail to the social-cultural fields Comrade Bhattacharyya said that as far back as in 1848 Karl Marx warned that the world capitalism has not just exploited people economically, it degrades all kinds of human relations into mere monetary interactions. This truth has been amply demonstrated in one and all capitalist countries. Nowhere, in no families is there anything called peace. All relations, be it between children and their father or mother, between brothers and sisters, or husband and wife, all these have degenerated into pecuniary relations. Children do not feel any compunction and responsibility towards their parents, nor do brothers for their sisters. Father is committing rape on his daughter. What more of degeneration would we have to see? The capital Delhi is rocked by a question: The CM Kejriwal was holding a public meeting and as it was on, a poor man hanged himself from a tree at the same venue. Nobody cared for the minimum humanitarian compunction of shopping the meeting. There was not any slightest stir and effort to save the man among people assembled there, not to speak of the police and security on duty there. Can there be any more heart-rending phenomenon? Just think what extent of erosion and downfall of humanity could give way to such a phenomenon. I am not casting blame upon people; I am just trying to let them get at the question: what is the

cause. Because it is extremely urgent to diagnose the cause of such a poisonous environment, which has vitiated the entire scenario to such an extent. Starting from Karl Marx, all the leaders great Engels, great Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, everybody has laid utmost importance upon this correct diagnosis of the cause. They have ardently urged all to realize this issue at its depth that it is capitalism which is the main enemy of the mankind today.

Comrade Bhattacharyya said, on one side there is intense economic crisis and on the other this abject degeneration of morality-ethics and humanity. Then wherein lies the remedy? In such a strangulating situation in every capitalist country, there is no alternative to taking pledge for overthrowing the capitalism that is sucking blood of millions of people every day. It can never be that capitalism will bring people to total peril by exploiting and oppressing them and the exploited people in their turn will enjoy it. Inevitably now and often people's indignation and resentment will burst out, but in absence of correct leadership it will only meet still more perilous end. People will be dragged into still deeper crisis. There cannot be any compromise between the capitalist class and the working class. Either the working class will uproot capitalism; or otherwise the exploited people will have to die like cats and dogs unwept and unsung. So to those who still think of bringing some good to people, it will be meaningless to conceive of people's good bypassing this truth, ignoring capitalism itself. Long back it was the great Karl Marx who, for emancipation of exploited, oppressed people laid out his call to build up genuine communist party in every country of the exploited classes and overthrow capitalism in each and every country, as the vanguard dispensation without falling victim to any treacherous and hypocritical path. It is only when 90/95 percent of the exploited people attain high level of revolutionary consciousness, it is only then capitalism will have to spend sleepless nights. But this is to note carefully that in all countries capitalism is conspiring in different ways only to cover up this truth. Lenin emphasized that in this decadent age, capitalism can offer nothing good to the masses of its country; but that does never mean that it does not have its fearful

power to bring down attacks on millions of exploited people. You will find how true the words are: in every country the ruling capitalist class and their subservient governments do not hesitate to crush hundreds of thousands of people either by firing upon them, or by leading them to starvation or by any other means. Robbing people of everything they have, their food, clothes, education, health and everything, they are inciting people to take their own life. Lest the mounting resentment of people was directed against the capitalists, the latter are taking to thousand and one means to confuse people and lead them to astray. They are instigating one community against another. To crush the minimum vestiges of morality, ethics and ideology that still persist they are hatching designs, one after another. They are bringing disunity among people in the name of religion, creed, language or regionalism. Side by side, to protect and serve their interests they are setting up political outfits and parties, investing money, using propaganda machinery and with the help of those, the rulers are attempting to keep people confined within the bourgeois vote politics. Comrade Bhattacharyya said that the idea of elections had emerged nearly two hundred years back during the days of emergence of capitalism itself. But today the more there are elections in every country, more are the unbearable pain, pathos and suffering of the 90% poor people of the country. The main point is that votes can change a government in a country. But it is impossible to bring about fundamental change in the state or its production system. Capitalism cannot be overthrown through elections. Even if there is change of governments through election, capitalist rule and exploitation remains intact, the state machinery unscathed, the owner-worker production relation untouched. So today to think of bringing an end to the oppressive situation, to eradicate poverty or to cast new light upon people's life through votes simply means to drag people into still deeper quagmire.

Remedy lies in Marx's thoughts

Indicating what could be the way to bring an end to such devastating onslaughts of capitalism all over the world, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya emphasized that the remedial way has already been

there in Marx's thoughts. Need of the hour lies in realizing this great truth and in building up genuine communist party in one country after another on the strength of correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism, in raising people's consciousness and making them conscious and ideologically equipped against the capitalist class, and in forging unity of exploited and oppressed people on the basis of consciousness steeled with iron-strong discipline through relentlessly organizing mass movements and class struggles.

But the tragedy is that a communist movement based on correct ideological understanding is pathetically absent these days. Albeit temporarily, clutched in the grasp of modern revisionism the world communist movement has lost its vigour, dynamism and creativity today. It is not being able to face the present situation with required ideological standard and organizational strength. Comrade Bhattacharyya then brought forth the main fundamental principles of founding a communist party which were enunciated by Lenin and which were further elaborated and concretized by great leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on the soil of India thereby enriching the treasure of Marxism-Leninism itself. By way of that Comrade Bhattacharyya explained that it is the basic lesson of Marxism-Leninism that whoever come forward to found a communist party must first engage themselves in an all-out socialist movement among themselves covering all fields of ideological world and embracing all personal aspects of life including sex and love. They must lay the foundation of ideological centralism through intense and ardent struggle. Second, it must be realized that concrete and personified expression of collective leadership cannot be developed without developing inside the party one process of thinking, oneness in approach, uniformity of thinking and singleness of purpose. And without accomplishing this task it is neither possible to give shape to the final organizational structure of a communist party. Third, through relentless struggle within the party there must appear a band of professional revolutionaries who would take up the task of building up of the revolutionary party. While building up the party they will engage themselves in conducting an

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Comrade Krishna Chakraborty's speech at the National Convention of Workers in New Delhi on 26 May, 2015

Members of the Presidium, Leaders of the Central Trade Union on the dais, Comrades and Friends,

The charter of demands what had been placed before the former Congress government and is being relentlessly pursued by us for last several years, is surely not unknown to the present BJP government. You know and the whole country knows that all the demands included in the charter are highly legitimate – a fact which even former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh could not deny. The BJP government also could not deny that, but made only some hollow assurances. But if these demands are legitimate, then why is the government, whether of Congress or of BJP, not accepting them?

Only a year has passed since Mr. Modi has come to power. Not to speak of accepting the demands, this government has gone further ahead in taking steps virtually to deny them. Going still further the government is now bringing several so called reforms of some existing important labour laws and to implement some measures that we

and demands of our movement have already come to the house. You know of that no less than me. Naturally, I don't think further elaboration of these demands are at all necessary. What I will try to do is to go a little deeper, to place before you the reason for which the government is not accepting the demands and why it is very difficult to make the government accept these. Because, unless we know the cause of the disease, we cannot cure the patient. Disease lies in the very ruinous policy of globalization, liberalization and privatization. That is the source which has changed the whole concept of jobs. Previously what was there? You got employment, then confirmation, then periodic increment, then promotion and so forth; and when you retire, you get so many retirement benefits like provident fund or gratuity, monthly pension, etc. Now nothing of this will be available. Contractual job will have a consolidated pay and for a definite period, mostly a short period. According to the policies of globalization, all jobs will be on contact basis. Manmohan Singh

During Mr. Vajpayee's rule a special ministry was created and that was disinvestment ministry and Mr. Arun Shouri was made the disinvestment minister. This ministry was supposed to facilitate disinvestment of public sector units.

As is known to all, the policy of globalization was first introduced by the Congress government led by Narshima Rao. Mr. Manmohan Singh was then the finance minister. Same policies were continued by the Vajpayee government. Then again when the Manmohan Singh government took over, the globalization policies were implemented more speedily. And now the BJP government is implementing these policies in an exceptional speedy way.

Then whose policies are these? Are these the policies of the Congress or of the BJP? Even when the United Front ministry was formed in between, the same policies were pursued by it. Actually these are the policies of the ruling capitalist class, the Tatas, Birlas, Ambanis, Goenkas, Adanis and others. We must understand that. If any government refuses to obey their diktats, that government will be thrown out by the capitalist. This is the reality. When we are preparing for a movement, we must understand this truth. Unless we can develop a powerful movement against capitalist globalization, we may, at best, achieve one or two demands, but by that the general condition of the working class will

not improve at all. It cannot improve. So, we need to build up working class movement against the basic evil i.e. the policy of globalization, liberalization, privatization. Education is going to be privatized and commercialized. Hospitals are going to be commercialized and privatized. Even in a country where water is available in plenty, we need to purchase drinking water. Even supply of potable water is also commercialized and sold for a profit by the monopoly houses. Such is the situation comrades.

I shall not speak more. If you understand this basic thing and develop really a powerful movement based on that understanding, then I can say confidently that the movement would be a historic one. This movement needs to be a protracted one — powerful and militant which can force the government to accept all the demands and withdraw its proposed reforms. Such a historic movement we need to develop. I believe you will do that.

Thanking you all
Long Live Revolution.

Apart from Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, President, AIUTUC, central leaders of AITUC, CITU, BMS, HMS, INTUC, AICCTU, TUCC, UTUC, SEBA and ALPF as well as leaders of various the unions and federations of Bank, Insurance, Railway, Defence, Central and State government employees also spoke in the conference.



Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, President, AIUTUC, addressing

have been opposing for long. Reforms generally indicate improvement of the existing things. Leave apart improvement, the BJP government, in the name of reforms, actually intends to dilute and distort all the existing labour laws like Industrial Dispute Act, Factory Act etc. to make industrial relations scenario even worse. It is proposed that even there will be no more inspection of the working conditions of different work places – a demand the ruling capitalist class had been pressing for long by asserting that “inspection has become inspection raj and it should go”. This government is now going to oblige the capitalist rulers by doing that. Such grim and grave is the situation.

Discussion on different issues

consistently followed these policies. Now the Modi government is also following the same policies.

Two more anti-people policies, liberalization and privatization came in the wake of the policy of globalization. What is liberalization? All foreign capitals will freely enter the country and exploit our people. The BJP government has gone a step ahead of the Congress, it has invited Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) everywhere even in the railways and defence sector. The government is exposing this most crucial sector to foreign monopolists and MNCs. On the other hand, there is a spree of privatization of all key and basic industries, the industries of the public sectors.

Delhi AIDSOS protests anti-education policies

Delhi State Committee of the AIDSOS organized a protest rally in Delhi University on 8 June against CBCS, RUSA and Central University Bill. Students from different colleges of Delhi University participated in the rally. Among others who spoke were Comrades Prashant Kumar Secretary, AIDSOS Delhi and Krishnendu Mukherjee, State Committee Member, AIDSOS Delhi.

The speakers opined that in the name of so called reforms the government is continuously implementing such policies which are diluting the public funded education system in India and opening the flood gates for the rapid commercialization of education. The speakers also highlighted how democratic rights

of students and teachers are being snatched away and the converting democratic bodies are converted into an appendage to the government.

AIDSOS Delhi also organized protest demonstration on 4 June against the ban on and de-recognition of Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC) by the IIT - Madras authority reportedly at the instance of the Union HRD Ministry. Students from different educational institutions took part with enthusiasm in the demonstration held at Jantar Mantar against the Union HRD Ministry. A memorandum was submitted and an effigy of the Union HRD Minister was burnt. Delhi AIDSOS leaders addressed the rally.

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya's speech

Marx warned that world capitalism degrades all kinds of human relations into mere monetary interactions

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all embracing socialist movement. In this way they will be able to rise above everything related to the thinking pattern centering round 'self' in exclusion of collective thinking and collective way living. At the same time engaging themselves unhesitatingly and happily in revolutionary life struggle they will be able to acquire higher and higher ideological understanding. Without accomplishing these imperative tasks to be performed one by one before founding the party, there cannot develop any genuine communist party, any working class revolutionary party. But it is a painful reality that in our country the undivided CPI and presently the CPI (M) and the Naxalites of different shades were nowhere near this mark. As a result their attempts to form a party without caring the least for the scientific process of founding the communist party, as explained above have met with their inevitable outcome —failure from top to bottom, in giving birth to a revolutionary party. As the inevitable consequence of this basic failure, the CPI, the CPI (M) and the erstwhile Naxalites have today turned out to be social democrats. This is why we find they are not hesitating to take refuge even with the Congress, the most trusted party of the capitalists.

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya then said that communism is not a mere slogan or an instrument for winning election. It is a philosophy of life. It entails that on the strength of correct understanding of revolution, covering all aspects of life, one must free oneself from private property, from the private property mental complex and thousand and one complexities of mind and character that stem from those. Second, a genuine communist character cannot grow without ceaseless collective struggle for changing oneself to develop in him or her correct revolutionary thinking and ideas embracing everything like personal relations, relations within families, with spouse or children, always keeping in sight incessant changes that are taking place in this ever-changing world. Then again if such characters are not attained on this understanding of Marxism, it will not be possible also to make people conscious and unite them. So to face the present situation each and every single individual of the party must immerse themselves in an all-out collective struggle going on at every

moment of life. Then to deepen and heighten their ideological standard, they will have to apply it concretely and purposively in their lives first and then amongst the oppressed masses. Through this process they need to identify themselves with revolution, revolutionary party and revolutionary leadership. This is the historically determined course. And on this crucial issue where do we find ourselves? Till his last breath Comrade Shibdas Ghosh tried utmost to drive at this point, waged his struggle to make it clear what the life of a revolutionary should be like. You will have to carry these teachings in your heart, and with that you should become immersed in the masses and extend Party activities wide and far. It will be possible for you to attain communist character only when you will be able to establish Party thoughts in the masses. Only then you will be able to free yourselves from the influence of vile individualism. And only then through your own struggle you will be able to totally remove remnants of capitalist thoughts that are driving their roots into the cadres may be they being unaware of it. It should be remembered that only then you will be able to imbue exploited masses with higher consciousness that alone will pave the path of ushering in revolution.

Situation in Assam

Speaking very briefly about the burning situation in Assam, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya said that with regard to problems confronting the people of Assam, those have no fundamental difference from the extremely suffocating situation prevailing in the rest of the country, being the offshoot of the exploitative rule of capitalism. The nature of exploitation and oppression of capitalism is the same in Assam as it is in Bihar, Gujarat or Odisha. But the problem that especially plagues Assam in addition is the ferocious attacks being launched by the chauvinists, communalists, separatists and secessionist forces one after another with the total backing of ruling capitalist class. Since long this problem has cast its gloom over the social life in Assam. In the absence of any resistance movement, these forces are increasing their strength afresh and are thereby vitiating the life of all sections of people cutting across ethnicity- language- religion- caste or creed. The latest situation is that in the name of preparing the so-

called National Register of Citizens (NRC), that too in Assam only without being a national event, which it should be according to the Constitution. Then again they have raised a dangerous bogey of defining so-called "Assamese" people with the same clear intention to create a bloody cleavage between the Assamese speaking and non Assamese speaking people as was the case just before country's independence which led to large scale riot and ultimately partition of undivided India. Spreading such queer but definitely designful ideas, they have created a highly explosive situation in the state. When in 2010 the work for the so-called NRC was started in Barpeta district, we emphatically pointed out that it was a rabid fanatic chauvinist conspiracy to rob the millions of genuine Indian citizens belonging to the linguistic and religious minorities of their citizenship. Many of you may recall that we actually developed a massive and powerful movement in Barpeta district against this conspiracy spewing heinous ethnic hatred. Besides us, all other parties, namely Congress, BJP, AGP, UDF even CPI, CPI(M) who masquerade as Marxist parties did not only expressed opinions in favour of the NRC, but even raised a campaign, and have still stuck to it, that the NRC would bring a solution to all problems concerning ethnic hatred. In this connection I would like to mention that our opinion on the NRC attracted people like a magnet. Under pressure of that movement the government had to retreat for the time being, and had to withhold their attempt to set out with preparing the pernicious NRC. But this time, the conspiracy has raised its head afresh all at a time over the entire state. Five long years have gone by this time. In the meantime the rabid chauvinist, utterly communal forces have consolidated their strength and have become frantic to bring down another more ferocious attack on the linguistic and religious minority people of Assam. To give effect to this obnoxious demand of AASU both the state and the union governments stand on the same footing. Even judiciary is found to be very unusually sympathetic to them. All tend to think that the NRC must be framed somehow or other. Neither the state nor the union government could deny that the citizens' register of 1951 and voters' list prior to 1971 on basis of which they pretend to carry out

this 'pious' mission is not in existence. The point is how can then a citizens' register be updated on the basis such non-existent documents? Under pressure of movements and awareness of the mass resentment against the move, the state and the Union government are resorting to more deceptive means and subtle trickeries. Therefore they are talking of several supplementary documents. But one must not miss the fact that in Assam, there have been so many ethnic riots, communal clashes, devastating floods and river-bank erosion and because of those many even genuine Indian citizens will not be able to produce those documents. Before 1971 the abjectly poor people did not even think of preserving or collecting these documents. So it is glaring that the governments are listing those documents with an ulterior motive, so that the minority poor section of population cannot produce them and thus lose their citizenship. Had they the intention to ensure that not a single genuine Indian citizen is left out of the register, the governments would have accepted any reliable documents which definitely prove that the person concerned is a genuine Indian citizen. But they did not do that. Besides it is very important to note that one of the fundamental tenets of jurisprudence is that circumstantial evidences also constitute a vital yardstick in determining truth and in dispensing with justice. What is stunning to find is that not only the conspirators but even, often the highest judiciary and the government are not ready to accept this tenet, rather are seeking to bypass that fundamental tenet. Even, in the present case of preparing the NRC, the government is also not going to accept the international law on automatic citizenship by virtue of being born in a country. So it is clear as daylight that there is a deep-rooted design behind preparing this NRC. Loss of citizenship is as good as death. Naturally already there has cropped up tremendous apprehension among the linguistic and religious minorities of the state. The minority community people have been victim of different kinds of oppression during the last 30-40 years. If millions of such people are robbed of their citizenship at the point of a bayonet as it is in the hatching a conspiracy like this, one can well assume what disastrous outcome it will have: we should all realize that

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Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya's speech

Cultivate Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought assiduously to deal a deadly blow upon blood-thirsty reactionary forces

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the fire of disunity, hatred, enmity and turbulence would not spare anybody. This is a very important point to ponder deeply.

On the other hand like adding insult to injury the chauvinists are launching another offensive against the minorities. There has already developed serious complexities on the question of defining who is an Assamese. Such absurd thinking is not going to be found anywhere else, in any other state. Defining an ethnic community is really unhistorical, impractical sometimes an evil intentioned proposition. Any student of history knows it well that the process of assimilation and the process of unification are the main trends in the process of evolution of human society. It is through that process that tribes have appeared from primitive clans, and then through integration of tribes there developed nationalities which through their unification emerged into a nation and a national state within a particular geographical territory. The necessity of unification arises right from the fact that in the interest of fulfilling continuously increasing demands of life, disintegration stands in the way of attaining and maintaining higher advanced way of life, covering all spheres, like economic, political, social and cultural. The theory of negation of negation asserts that sometime in future even the present nations would not exist. The world human society will evolve following inexorable historical laws. In his novel *Shesh Prashna* (Final Question) even the great humanist novelist Saratchandra Chattopadhyay had put these words in that famous novel "Well! May be my identity will not remain as an Indian, but can it be less significant that I will be one of the world humanity?" During the independence movement the then leaders of Assam Association got it merged with the Indian National Congress and by that way they identified themselves with the Indian national movement. At that time the independence movement was conducted on the edifice of one single sense of giving birth to an Indian nation all throughout the country including Assam. Those days the eminent personalities of Assam like Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Nabinchandra Bardoloi, Tarunram Phukan and many other celebrities did not raise the question of defining who is 'Assamese'. On the

contrary they raised the slogan of 'Bandemataram'. They said 'we are all Indians'. Then see, in the name of preserving the identity of the Assamese people, what devastating condition these fanatic chauvinist forces are trying to create by treading a totally unhistorical path simply to fulfill their nefarious fascist design. Whenever these treacherous forces raised the question of identity, we made it clear that identity is intimately linked with economic and class positions. There cannot arise at all a mischievous slogan of identity devoid of economic content and considerations. Because this question of who is what is related to the existing production system, with respect to production relation. Only on the basis of that criterion we can determine where do the 90% of people of the country belong to economically. In a class divided society people belonging to the exploited masses who constitute 90% of the population do not endanger the existence of one or another section of oppressed people. The same is true with regard to questions of language or culture. Toiling people generate wealth wherever they may be living; they do not exploit each other. They do not endanger any other peoples' language and culture. It is the exploiter that exploits: and who are those exploiters these days? It is the capitalist class. Today 68 years after independence the capitalist class is endangering the existence of 90% of the people, the exploited masses, irrespective of their language, religion, race, ethnicity etc. The fanatic forces, in their turn, are continuously conspiring to conceal this fact of exploitation by the capitalist class and bring disunity among exploited people. These parochial thoughts of the fanatic chauvinist forces are nothing but the thoughts of the capitalist class. Today, these are dangerously affecting the unity of diverse people of Assam. Separatist, sectarian and communal thoughts are indirectly helping the rule of the capitalist class to persist. The direction in which blood-shedding incidents of Assam today are moving bear the ominous probability of grading into the fratricidal conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims that cropped up in India in 1947, ultimately leading to partition of undivided India. The Assam

incidents bear the omen of generating such a worst kind of separatist condition. Repeatedly in fragmented Assam such conditions are being created that the geographical existence of Assam is now seriously threatened. Besides, one must keep in mind that at one stage an unjust attack will give birth to a counter-attack. Much more blood will be spilt in Assam. Further fragmentation will become inevitable. If people cannot have a leadership to guide them with a correct ideology, Assam will become a still more devastating graveyard than what it is today. The entire state and its existence will face unthinkable danger. We find none others than us to make people conscious of these features that are proving so extremely detrimental to the state. So my appeal to my party comrades, members, supporters and sympathizers – remember that you

will have to carry the Party's thoughts, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's teachings to the people. In the ideological sphere you will have to deal a deadly blow upon the blood-thirsty reactionary forces. SUCI (Communist) must be strengthened to uproot their pernicious thoughts.

With this call Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya ended his speech.

At the beginning of the proceedings the president of the meeting and Secretary Assam State Committee Comrade Chandralekha Das presented a brief account of the disastrous activities of fanatic chauvinist forces. She called for strengthening SUCI (Communist) to eradicate these political demons on the strength of our assimilation of Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought.

Statement of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxbadi)—BASAD (Marxist) — on the eve of the recent visit of Modi to Bangladesh

Calling upon the workers and leaders of all levels of the party, its frontal organizations and the people of Bangladesh to raise their voice in defence of the interest of the country, Comrade Mubinu Haider Chowdhury, General Secretary, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxbadi)—BASAD (Marxist)— in a statement issued on the eve of the recent visit of Indian Prime Minister Modi to Bangladesh said: "Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming on an official visit to Bangladesh on 6 June, 2015. In this visit, Modi in the interest of the Indian monopolists would sign a slew of agreements on 'connectivity', duty free entry of 23 items produced in India into Bangladesh, setting up of 'electricity corridor' through Bangladesh to benefit India, exploiting the sea resources of Bangladesh (Blue Economy), establishing Indian control over the natural fuel and mineral resources of Bangladesh and above all, signing up a good number of 'national security treaties' to further firm up and consolidate the grip of Indian imperialism on this land.

In reality, through these treaties and agreements, the economy of Bangladesh will be more dependent on Indian imperialist economy and a crisis centring on the security and sovereignty of the country will be created which the countrymen will see for themselves in the days to come. In the circumstances, it is the duty of all patriotic citizens to rise in protest against such self-destructive decisions of the government and the aggression of Indian imperialism."

He further said in the statement that "the demand of just share of water of all the undivided international rivers including the Padma and the Teesta based on 'historical and natural legitimacy' and equality is being totally ignored. India has kept Bangladesh encircled from all sides with barbed wire and is continuously flouting the human rights of 16 crore of Bangladeshi citizens. Despite so many rounds of discussions, border killing is going on unabated. Without resolving all these issues, the euphoria of the Grand Alliance government led by Awami League over Modi's visit is nothing but an act of robbing people's rights creating a smokescreen of hurly-burly." At the end of the statement, Comrade Mubinu Haider Chowdhury appealed to all to build up powerful movement raising vehement protest against the policy of capitulation of the Bangladeshi rulers and the aggressive moves of Indian imperialism as well as with a view to firmly protecting and establishing their rights

People who really have 'Achhe Din'

As per the Forbes list 2014, the 100 richest people in India are all billionaires (\$ 1 billion is equivalent, now, to over Rs 6,400 crore). This is 45 more than the figure of 55 in the same list in 2011. The combined wealth of these 100 billionaires comes to \$ 346 billion. According to a Credit Suisse Report, the top 1 percent of households in India owned 36.80 percent of the total wealth of all households in 2000, while in 2014 their share has increased to 49 percent, which is higher even than the average for the world as a whole (48.20 percent in 2014)

Rising hunger and farmers' suicide mark Modi's "visionary steps towards ending poverty"

When World Bank President Jim Yong Kim has congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on completion of one year of "visionary steps towards ending poverty" India, it has come to light that India is home to the highest number of hungry people in the world, at 194 million according to United Nations annual hunger report. (ndtv-28-05-15) Moreover, the country has seen a 40% jump in the number of farmer's suicide. (dna-27-05-15)

Endowment of capitalism in China

Following completion of counter-revolution in China in 2004, courtesy the revisionist capitalist-roaders, China forsaking the path of socialism and renouncing great Mao Zedong, had turned capitalist. And the festering sores of decadent moribund ruthlessly exploitative capitalism have been appearing with all virulence. China is having 36 million people, including four million children below six years, living in 'extreme' poverty, an official survey said. China's Poverty Alleviation and Development, (PAD) said under the formula of the dollar a day, over 82 million people in China officially remained below poverty. The numbers could scale up to 200 million going by the World Bank's calculation of USD 1.25 a day. (Hindu-27-05-15)

On the other hand, the number of high net worth individuals (HNWIs) in China passed the one million mark for the first time last year, the China Private Wealth Report said. In China in the first three months of this year, a new billionaire was created almost every week, the report said. (Times of India 28-05-15)

Industrial barons owe Rs 6000 crores to poor sugarcane peasants

The Central government needs to control the sugar prices which are continuously falling. When Modi addressed the rally in Meerut ahead of the parliamentary election last year, he raised the issue but he is yet to do anything. The Centre abolished its control on the sugar market because of which the prices are continuously going down. But what is the reality? When open market price of sugar is spiralling—thanks to the manipulation, hoarding and black marketing by the infamous

sugar lobby—the poor producers of sugarcane, the principal crop for sugar production, are virtually consigned to doom. Several sugarcane farmers in Uttar Pradesh have committed suicide.

Now it is revealed that the peasants are yet to get more than Rs. 6,000 crore owed to them by some of the country's top corporates for this crop season alone. The corporate houses that owe the State's farmers money include Bajaj, Birla, Modi group and the liquor baron Ponty Chaddha-led Wave group. These private defaulters, which own 40 of the 103 sugarcane mills, have left the farmers in a state of crisis.

The top defaulter is Bajaj group which is yet to pay Rs. 1598 crore to the farmers. The Mawana group, which owns three mills in the State, has defaulted on the payment of Rs. 524 crore. The Birla group, which owns five mills, owes Rs. 376.5 crore, the Modi group, with two sugar mills owes Rs. 406 crore. The Yadu group, owned by UP political strongman D.P. Yadav has defaulted on payment of Rs. 50 crore. The Dalmiya group which owns three mills is yet to pay Rs. 94.3 crore. There are 20 others in the list with smaller outstanding amounts.

But Modi is unfazed because he has been brought to power by these defaulter monopolists who thrive on the hunger and suicides of the poor peasants. This is how Modi is "worshipping his Bharat mata" (Source: The Hindu-06-06-15)

A tip of the iceberg : revelation of institutionalized bribing in India

An average urban household in India pays around Rs 4,400 annually as bribe, while rural households have to shell out Rs 2,900, a government-commissioned study on unaccounted wealth by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has revealed. A series of surveys showed that black money is generated through bribes and pay-offs to bureaucrats and politicians, which could range from award of contracts to leakages from development schemes, mining, sale of oil products and settlement of non-performing loans by banks. Pointing out that bribe is rampant in rural areas, especially in schemes meant for the poor, the report has revealed how half the beneficiaries of government schemes including rural job guarantee scheme (MNREGS), public distribution system, Indira Aawas Yojna, social security programmes and scholarships had to offer money to get their entitlement. It also highlights the extent of corruption, which ultimately generates black money, so far as public sector investment is concerned. Based on interviews of retired government officials, the report suggested that public sector investment is an easy source of illegal funds for politicians and bureaucrats. The unaccounted money earned could be 2-10% of the project cost and it could cross 20% due to delays. The report estimated that 5-10% of the additional cost in siphoned off. Based on a sample survey of private contractors in 15 states, the report says on an average 9% of the project cost is paid as bribe. The report has also brought to light how on an average people running roadside vends and eateries pay approximately Rs 1,100 per month.

Another study conducted by Centre for Media Studies and MDRA shows that in 60% cases, cops and officials extort money from truckers by stopping them without giving a reason. It has also

revealed that around 90% of the bribe goes to policemen and transport department personnel. These government agencies issue illegal tokens, passes and stickers to allow vehicles to pass without checks. In many cases, government officials use holograms on bribe receipts to distinguish "original" from "fake". While 77% of the truck drivers felt police were the biggest irritant, 73% said it was harassment by transport department officials. Share of corruption is: Police (45%), RTO (43%) and others (12%). (Source-Times of India 24-05-15)

Relevant to recollect is that voters in Maharashtra on the eve of last assembly elections were reportedly asking each other, "How much is your vote worth?" No sooner had the Election Commission begun to look into rumours that the buy-a-vote rate in the Gangakhed constituency was Rs 900, than the resultant buzz on the grapevine caused the price of votes to go up to Rs 1,500 in Bhosari and Rs 2,000 in Aurangabad. It seemed that many voters in Maharashtra had taken to heart – or rather, taken to pocket – the unsolicited pre-poll advice given to them by BJP minister and former President of the BJP Nitin Gadkari, that they should accept 'bribes' from all electoral candidates. If what might come to be called the 'Maharashtra model' catches on, voters across the country might unite to demand from electoral contestants a minimum support price, suitably adjusted to accommodate inflation, for their ballots. (Source: Times of India—18-10-14)

Recession rich: Britain's wealthiest double net worth since crisis

Britain's billionaires have seen their net worth more than double since the recession of 2009, with the richest 1,000 families now controlling a total of £547bn, a rise of more than 112%. While average UK incomes have yet to recover from the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, with thousands still flocking to food banks, the financial elite have emerged not only with their fortunes intact, but holding a larger than ever slice of the cake. In contrast to the soaring incomes of the richest, median household income in the most recent financial year was at around the same level as it was in 2007–08 before the recession, though still more than 2% below its 2009–10 peak. A comment by Duncan Exley, Director, Equality Trust, is worth noting. He said: "Inequality at this scale is hugely damaging for society. Multiple studies show that living in a more unequal country means you're more likely to have poorer education, suffer from poor mental health, trust people less, be the victim of violent crime and even die earlier." This is just a glimpse of the endowment of dying capitalism—"Some have the gap, some stick in the gap". (Source-The Guardian-26-04-15)

Sex crimes rise in UK

England and Wales recorded 32% jump in sex offences. There were 26,703 allegations of rape recorded in 2014, an increase of 39 percent on the previous year. Recorded allegations of other sexual offences rose by 28 percent to 53,559. This shows that crime on women is spiraling in the imperialist-capitalist countries as cultural degeneration and misogyny are soaring there. (Source-rt.Uk 23-04-15)

Academic autonomy

If academic autonomy is in jeopardy, true pursuit and dissemination of knowledge are bound to suffer

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West Bengal way back in late 1970s through political and governmental interference in the administration of educational institutions in the form of appointment of pliant persons as heads of institutions like Vice-Chancellors and increasingly establishing governmental control over governing bodies responsible for running the schools, colleges and all institutes of higher learning – a trend which with time became all pervasive, reaching down to primary level schools from universities. In fact they brought a bill to curtail autonomy of Calcutta University and increase government control on the functioning of the university. But this was not accepted by the awakened conscience of the education-loving democratic-minded people and the luminaries. Renowned educationists, litterateurs, scientists, historians, jurists, journalists and artistes of West Bengal as well as of other parts of the country not only raised voice of protest but even came down to the streets to thwart such a pernicious move of a government which called themselves leftists-Marxists. After that, following the trail of the CPI (M) government, the governments, both at Centre and in the states, also began rolling out the process of subverting academic autonomy as a part of the grandiose design to overhaul education in the interest of the ruling bourgeoisie. Systematically, various reforms have been brought in to ensure firmer grip of not just governments but even the ruling parties on educational institutions.

TMC government is following CPI (M)'s footsteps more nakedly

In this respect also, West Bengal has surfaced prominently. From the days of ascending to power, the Trinamool Congress which once lambasted the CPI (M), for establishing party control on various educational institutions, obviously for playing to the gallery and brighten electoral prospects, began following the footsteps of the CPI(M). Not to speak of the universities and colleges, there is hardly any school in the state which is not having a definite TMC man or a group of TMC loyalists at the helm of governance. Even the various education bodies like Primary Education Board, Secondary and Higher Education boards, Joint Entrance Examination

Councils are all having known TMC person at the top. Not just TMC leaders and ministers, or ruling party nominees with hardly any background of education, even notorious criminals and anti-socials have been made heads of the governing bodies of colleges and schools. These criminals have been given unbridled power to do whatever they want, right from deciding who would be the teachers, who would run students' unions, to who would get contract of preparing midday meals, of building construction, of supply of various stationery items and so forth. Even these criminals have been deciding who would be promoted, who would be the invigilators during the examinations, where mass copying should be allowed freely and what marks to be awarded to which students. The school and college authorities have been made totally cipher and reduced to passive onlookers.

But that is not all. Now the TMC government has passed a 'West Bengal State Council of Higher Education Bill 2015' in the Assembly riding roughshod over vehement opposition by our Party as well as other opposition parties, well known educationists and intellectuals. The Bill granted legality to appointment of the Education Minister (in place of an educationist with proven credential) as Chairman of the Higher Education Council. Apart from that, in terms of this Bill, the Council is also vested with the power to conduct common entrance tests, if any university makes such requests to it. Curiously enough, Partha Chatterjee, the TMC Education Minister, justified such wresting of control of the autonomous bodies by the government by putting forth the plea that this would make the Council more responsible and accountable. He also justified it by pointing to the precedents set by Gujarat, followed by Karnataka and Kerala, as well as Maharashtra in this matter.

The question may be asked, to whom is the Council made more 'responsible and accountable', to the cause of education or to the government and ruling party? This answer has also been given by the TMC Education Minister himself. The opposition parties called a bandh on 30 April last against the terror tactics and large-scale rigging in the recently held Municipal Elections in the state. Our Party also extended support to that. On such earlier occasions, apprehending the

dislocation of the transport system and the possibility of confrontation between pro- and anti-bandh forces, the academic institutions usually postponed the examinations, so that the students do not suffer. But the TMC government in its bid to foil the bandh ordered through a notification that examinations must be held as scheduled on that very day. Such an unprecedented situation left almost 90 thousand university students appearing in various examinations in the lurch pushing them into needless uncertainty and agony. When questioned by the media if the government move to enforce conduction of examinations by the universities on the bandh day was a blatant interference in academic matters, the Education Minister asserted that of course he has the right to interfere in the autonomy of academic institutes, as, after all, it is he who has been paying all the salaries to the University teachers and staff! What could be more despotic and autocratic a stand to justify brazen subversion of academic autonomy? These servitors of the ruling capitalist class are so arrogant because of occupying the seat of power that think they could get away saying anything, trash or nonsense. Is the relation between a university and a government that of employer-employee? Is not the TMC minister aware that the financial support the government provide to universities or to educational institutions in general comes from people's money which the government squeezes out of them as direct and indirect taxes? Is the government the owner or only the trustee of that money? In a democratic and secular country, the duty and responsibility of the government is restricted only to funding the educational institutions adequately. But the day-to-day running, framing of syllabus, deciding on the methods of examinations and evaluation, etc. are exclusive preserve of the autonomous democratically elected bodies headed by academicians. Any infringement on the functioning or decisions of these bodies by the government is tantamount to flouting academic autonomy. It is nothing but a gangster's logic that the government has right to interfere in the academic affairs of the educational institutions because it funds them. The incident provides another example of how the TMC government is bringing fresh attacks

on autonomy of educational institutions, crushing whatever remnants of democratic functioning are there, to the detriment of education itself. This very incident is also an indication of what is the shape of things to come.

The BJP government is also not lagging behind

The BJP-led central government has also not been lagging behind in extending its grip on the educational institutions. In January last, Kunwar Bharatendra, MP from Bijnore, and an accused in Muzaffarnagar communal riot cases was nominated to the 'Court' of Aligarh Muslim University, the highest decision making body of this reputed academic institute. Nomination of such a tainted ruling party man, that too with established communal bent of mind, to such a noble seat of learning is highly undemocratic and unjust and besides other things destined to infringe on the autonomy of the university. Similarly, the BJP government has, of late, disbanded the advisory committee of its journal comprising 21 eminent historians from around the world, including Romila Thapar and Irfan Habib, ostensibly with ulterior motive to banish rational historians from the principal academic body as these historians were scathing in their criticism of distorting history and passing fantasy and myth as history in keeping with the idea of so called Indianization and in pursuit of saffronization which the ruling RSS-BJP is flaunting to buttress their arch communal political-cultural agenda. Amba Charan Vashishth, once part of the editorial team of BJP mouthpiece 'Kamal Sandesh' and known for his definite Hindu communal bias has been made part of the publication department of the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) violating the established procedure of such appointment. Appointment of Gajendra Chauhan, a known BJP man, as Director of prestigious FTII, Pune, has invited wrath of all concerned. The recent incident of slapping a ban on the Ambedkar Periyar Student Circle of IIT, Madras, by the central government for having criticized some of the ruinous anti-people policies of the BJP-RSS like land ordinance bill, beef ban in some states and forced conversion also comes within the ambit of subverting academic autonomy by forcibly muffling voice

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Academic autonomy

Attempt to turn education into an appendage to government is aimed at serving ulterior political motive of the rulers

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of dissent even in the arena of academic discourses. Why should the HRD ministry intervene into the day to day functioning of an autonomous institution like Madras IIT, because someone claimed that the particular students' organization is spreading 'hatred' about Modi and his policies? This is not the end. The BJP government has now brought a draft IIM Bill, 2015 which, inter alia, states that "without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this Act, the Institute (IIMs) shall, for efficient administration of this Act, be bound by such directions on questions of policy, as the Central government may give in writing to it from time to time.... The decision of the Central government whether a question is one of policy or not, shall be final." The bill though says the board of governors of each IIM will be the "principal executive body", but goes on to grant the central government powers which it may use to override

the board. Here is where the BJP and the TMC are strange bedfellows. But there is nothing 'strange' in it as both are committed to implement the sinister class design of the ruling bourgeoisie.

Education-loving people must act positively to stem the rot

That is the reason that such nation-wide attack on autonomy of educational institutions goes hand in hand with the attempts on concentrating bureaucratic powers in the hands of the administration aimed at doing away with opposition of any kind to the implementation of the contemplated educational policy-measures which, in the name of relieving higher education of its ailments and other fashionable slogans, are actually directed towards turning higher education into a mere market commodity and a means to propagate unscientific, unhistorical, distorted views that instead of enlightening would cripple

the students intellectually. Glaringly, all the ruling parties are bent upon turning the education sector into what Rabindranath Tagore long back vehemently opposed by saying that "such an attempt to turn education into an appendage to the government is aimed at serving the ulterior political motive of the rulers." While each ruling party has its own agenda in this regard, it must be remembered that, as mentioned above, it is all an integral part of the larger bourgeois class design to destroy education. For, today any political party, irrespective of hue, subserving bourgeois class interest is bound to move along that road. Should democratic minded people let this go unchallenged? Should they not realize that this no longer remains an issue merely of education; it has much more

dangerous implications for the life of the entire nation, particularly, people oppressed and repressed under ruthless capitalist exploitation? Should they not deeply ponder what is in store if this class conspiracy is not resisted in time? Should they not come forward to build up organized protests against such disastrous attacks on autonomy and move for regimentation? If education-loving democratic-minded people from all walks of life close their ranks and unite to foil this class conspiracy, and stir up a whirlwind of discussion and debates on all such issues, that can ultimately create a tremendous counter-current and might well crystallize into a mighty organized save education movement which is the only way to resist this heinous attack on education and academic autonomy.

Historic Victory of Karnataka ASHA workers!

30,000 ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers of Karnataka state went for an indefinite state-wide "Kaam Bandh" strike from 1 May demanding; 1) release of State government's matching grants arrears pending for more than a year; 2) Central government incentive arrears; 3) Regular monthly payment online directly into the accounts of ASHAs; 4) Minimum wages instead of honorarium/incentives, etc.

On the 11th day of the strike the Health Minister of Karnataka Congress Government Shri U T Khader had convened a meeting between the top officials of the Health department and the leaders

of "Karnataka State Samyuktha ASHA workers' Union" affiliated to AIUTUC. The government assured that all the eleven demands in the charter would be met through time-bound concrete measures. Moreover, yielding to the pressure of the kaam bandh strike the state government had already released a portion of the matching grants arrears during the strike period itself. After this historic victory the strike was called off and ASHAs resumed their work from May 12th in a jubilant mood. The union has not only congratulated all the ASHAs for this hard earned victory but also thanked the rural people for having stood with the workers during the period of the strike.



A Seminar was organized by SUCI(C), Jharkhand, in Ranchi on 22 May in observance of 70 years of victory over fascism. Leaders of various left parties were speakers

Workers and employees of Haryana hold rally and take pledge for greater movements

Under the banner of the Joint Platform of Action, Haryana United Employees Manch including Anganwadi Union and other different unions held a rally at Karn Park in Karnal on 7 June on different long standing demands of the workers and the employees. They had assembled from various places across the states like Panipat, Rohtak, Karnal, Kaithal,

Rewari, Hissar, Gurgaon, Jhajjar etc. They then proceeded to gherao the CM camp office. But the police stopped them en route. They handed over a memorandum to the SDM who met them and assured them of considering their demands. The rally announced to wait till 30 June after which they would launch still greater movements if the demands are not met with.



'Committee for Protection of Citizenship' organized a mass law violation programme in Silchar, Assam, on 22 May in protest against the heinous conspiracy of the government to deny afresh citizenship to innumerable number of bona fide countrymen through renewal of so called National Register of Citizens. About 400 protesters were arrested.

Study Circle in village in Durg

A three-day study circle was organized by SUCI(C) from 26 to 28 May at Kutela Bhatra village in Durg, Chhattisgarh on the booklet *Marxism and Development of Human Society* by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat. The study circle held amidst great enthusiasm of the participants, was aimed at equipping the Party activists of the state ideologically.

AIDSO in AISA Conference

Being invited as a guest at the open session of the 8th National Conference of AISA held in New Delhi on 10th May 2015, Comrade Ashok Mishra, General Secretary, AIDSO, after conveying greetings to the organizers, said that this conference was being held at a time when both the central and state governments in the interest of ruling capitalist class are not only curtailing the scope of education but also destroying humanity, rational bent of mind and snatching away the hard earned democratic rights of students and education community.

The anger and agony of the students are being manifested through various movements in both organized and unorganized forms. In order to distract these movements and to divert the peoples' mind from their burning issues, the Modi

government is playing the dangerous communal card, including most reactionary unscientific discourse in text books, distorting history, claiming Hindu mythology as science, appointing RSS ideologues in the important Apex bodies like ICHR and so forth. All these are paving way to establish fascism. In pursuit of globalization policy, the governments, both central and in the states, are either closing down government schools or selling those to education merchants. Through newly-fangled policy of RUSA, there is a ploy to dismantle the universities. He appealed to all the students' organisation to respond to the call of the hour and to come forward to develop a united militant left democratic resistance movement against the attacks on education and humanity.

Round Table discussion on education at Jabalpur, MP

All India Save Education Committee Jabalpur chapter held a round table discussion on 29 May 2015 at Rani Durgawati Museum Hall attended by a number of intellectuals and education loving people. Speaking on the occasion Smt. Sadhna Upadhaya, , renowned social activist and retired teacher severely criticized the MP Government for its decision to privatize 1.21 lakh government schools under the private-public partnership model and urged people to raise their voice against this decision. Smt. Vibha Shukla, Professor of local Hawa Bagh College pointed out that backed by government which works in the interest of the corporates, education

today tends to make students become irrational and mechanical instead of being logical. The main speaker Comrade Pratap Samal All India Secretariat member of AISEC said that today the all out attack by the governments at the center and state is aimed at curtailing education for people and to make education a ripe field for corporate houses to reap maximum profit. Along with that the new central government is trying to communalize education. They are trying to change and rewrite history according to their whims and fancies, to promote myths as history. This way they are preparing ground for fascism. He urged people to build up a mighty public movement to save education.



Burning effigy of Land Acquisition Ordinance in Kolkata



Mid-day meal employees demonstrated at Bhiwani, Haryana on 25 May to submit a charter of demands to the SDO

"People-friendly" Modi government snatches right to live of millions of tribals

On being exposed at each step that the BJP –led union government was all set for serving to the interests of the corporate, the Modi government has of late been trying to present a people- friendly face of itself. That the face and the mask are not the same, is once more being proved from the attempts of the government to dilute and cripple the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right) Act. It can not be missed that this was the Act that helped the tribal population of Niyamgiri in Odisha, through a decision of their Gramsabha, to thwart the aggression and encroachment of the corporate- capitalist and the state upon their land-forest and water. Now the Modi government right from their coming to power has started to take moves that are going to tell upon the rights of the tribals, even by changing the definition of what forests are. Set up by the government, the high-powered TSR Subramaniam Committee on forest and environment has already recommended that only land with 70% cover should be considered as forests. According to the 2013 report of the Forest Survey of India only 2.54 % of forests fall in this category. The message is clear the Committee recommends that the rest 97.46% of forests are not going to be considered as forests. Hence those will not be under the purview of the Act and instead will be made open for the capitalist land-sharks to extend their rule and regime. The Modi government does not rest merely at robbing the rights of the tribals. It encroaches upon environment and wild animals too. The few steps may be listed as follows: 1) Seeking public opinion on lands for extension of coalfields has been scrapped and any opposition are marked to invite a fine of rupees 1 lakh; 2) Restrictions imposed upon industrial hubs causing pollution have been withdrawn; 3) "No-go" forest rule for mine owners and mining companies have been diluted; 4) Jurisdiction of National Board of Wild Life has been squeezed; 5) Power for ordering assessment of environmental impact has been curbed; 6) Laws concerning prospecting of ores and minerals and making quarries have been simplified.

India has a forest land of 21.05 %. The government data itself reveal that some 3 to 4 crore (i.e., 30 to 40 million) people depend on this land for their livelihood; they live in 1,73,000 villages in forests or their outskirts. The people-friendly Modi government is busy in trampling the interests of these people and in handing over the national wealth of forest at cheap costs to the capitalists.

Modi Magic of Petrol pricing

In May 2014, price of one barrel of crude oil in the international market was \$112 and the retail price of petrol in our country was Rs 63 per litre. In May 2015, the international crude price had come down to \$65 per barrel. But retail price of petrol here climbed to Rs 70 per litre.

Next, the break-up given below shows how this price of Rs 70 per litre is arrived at:—

Basic cost per litre—	Rs 16.50
Central tax —	11.80%
Excise Duty—	9.75%
Vat cess—	4%
State tax—	8%

The total of this comes to Rs 50.05. And there is additional recovery of Rs 19.95 per litre to make the price Rs 70 per litre.

Incidentally, petrol price in India is much higher compared to many neighbouring countries as can be seen from the following chart:—

Pakistan —	Rs 22
Bangladesh—	Rs 26
Nepal—	Rs 34
Myanmar—	Rs 30

India's chronicle of development

Out of 133 countries rated on indicators of well-being such as health, water and sanitation, personal safety, access to opportunity, tolerance, inclusion, personal freedom and choice India has secured the 101th place. Even Nepal and Bangladesh rank higher than India on the Social Progress Index (SPI) ratings. On the parameter 'Tolerance and inclusion' India ranks 128th and is at the 120th place on 'health and wellness'. Certainly a mark of development!

SUCI(C) flays government decision to raise service tax to 14%

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C) issued the following statement on 02-06-2015 : —

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi in course of celebrating his one year in the office is boastfully claiming to have ushered in 'achhe din' (good days) in the country, common people now have another deadly blow of that in the form of shelling out enhanced service tax of 14% with effect from 01-06-2015 on almost all the services including essential services they consume. Not only that. With every likelihood of immediate imposition of a further load of so called *Swachh Bharat* tax of 2%, the effective service tax would come to 16% making people bleed white more profusely while the industrial oligarchies and corporate barons will enjoy net tax concession of around Rs 2 lakh crore following the budget decision to reduce corporate tax from 30% to 25% and the public exchequer will continue to be heavily deprived because of rising black money accretion, tax evasion by the corrupt and powerful etc. This clearly shows for whom Modi and his BJP government is committed to bring *achhe din* at the cost of whom. This is not the end but just augury of the worst fiscal savagery that Modi in naked subservience to the sinister class interest of the ruling monopolists, his mentors, is slated to let rave wild on people.

Our fervent appeal to the suffering people is not to lie low and bear this increasing burden of capitalist crisis squarely passed on to them by the Modi-led bourgeois government but rise in vehement protest closing their rank and cementing their unity and release a powerful movement round the country to repel this menacing economic onslaught.

SUCI(C) vehemently protests move to privatize railways, calls for powerful movement to stall it

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 15-06-15:—

It is a matter of deep indignation that a Committee headed by Shri Bibek Debroy, a bourgeois economist who is known to be extremely close and endearing to Prime Minister Modi, has come out with a blatant recommendation for taking immediate drastic steps to privatize Indian Railways in fulfilment of the wish of the ruling capitalist class. Hitherto, phased privatization of the Indian Railways was being done in a concealed manner through PPP route, large scale outsourcing and such other ways keeping people in the dark. But now the veil has been taken off and the sinister agenda of the BJP government to hand over railway operation to private capitalists has been effectuated by way of eliciting desired recommendation from a pliant committee constituted for this very purpose. Indian railways built with the sweat and blood of the common Indian people is one of the largest in the world and is a national asset created with public money. Obviously, gifting this prime national asset to the private capitalists is impermissible and unacceptable.

So, there is urgent and imperative need to frustrate this pernicious move by developing a countrywide powerful movement. Hence, we call upon the countrymen to come forward and build up that movement in right earnest to stall privatization of Indian railway. Our fervent appeal is also to all the trade unions to unleash a militant working class movement and force the government under pressure of movement to revise this out and out anti-people decision.

Victorious joint struggle by Road Transport Corporation Employees of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

In June 2014 the erstwhile united state of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into two states namely Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The state road transport corporation is going to be split by end of May 2015. Meanwhile the employees from both the states numbering 1,20,000 initiated a joint struggle for wage raise since a few months by submitting memoranda, organizing protest programmes etc., Though both Chandrababu Naidu in AP and Chandrasekhara Rao in Telangana State promised before the elections that they would increase the salary of the RTC employees in par with

the state government employees, they did not care to fulfill it. Finally the workers struck work for 8 days starting from 7 May 2015. Both the governments tried their maximum to suppress the strike by using ESMA. The High Court also declared the strike illegal and issued notices to the leaders. Governments attempted to confuse the public that yielding to the demand of the workers will entail hike in the bus fares. Police was used indiscriminately to disperse the protesting workers. Undeterred, the employees continued their battle unabatedly winning the sympathy of the public.

The AP-TS unit of AIUTUC campaigned vigorously and organized various protest programmes jointly by all the major trade unions. Finally after 8 days of strike both the governments were forced to concede to the demand of the employees. The state governments of AP and Telangana agreed for 43% and 44% fitment in salary as well as regularization of service of 6000 contract employees. This is a significant achievement which proved that working class if united and if all the other exploited sections of the people express their solidarity, justice will triumph!

Haryana

State government yields to movement by students-teachers-education-loving people

Under pressure of powerful movements initiated by AIDSIO involving all sections of education-loving people of the state, Haryana Government had to decide for withdrawal of the Semester System which it had introduced earlier in the schools from classes IX to XII. This victory against the flawed semester system created lot of enthusiasm among all sections of educated-minded people and showed that it is only through development of united powerful movement that people can realize their legitimate demands.



Shri Ganesh Haloi, renowned painter of national fame, delivering inaugural speech of the 3-day painting exhibition of Late Comrade Saurav Bose, Staff Member, SUCI(C), on 29 May at Gaganendra Shilpa Pradarshanalaya in Kolkata. Seated by his side is Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Member, Polit Bureau, and Chief Guest.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH