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Advani's Pakistan visit

Fallout and reasons behind

L. K. Advani, the BJP President and leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha went to Pakistan on a reportedly goodwill mission. But suddenly he caused a chilly flutter by praising Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of theocratic Pakistan, for envisioning a secular human state where no discrimination would be made over religion and all citizens would have equal rights and obligations. Advani also called Jinnah a determined man who achieved what he wanted and recalled that once Sarojini Naidu in early nineteenth century hailed him as ambassador of Hindu-Muslim amity. Advani referred to an address by Jinnah in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in August, 1947, to drive home his point. Later, to the utter dismay of many, he designated the day of demolition of Babri Masjid by fanatic Hindu zealots of the RSS-VHP as the saddest one in his life and described the horrific anti-Muslim pogrom of Gujarat orchestrated by the same RSS-VHP hooligans under direct patronage of Narendra Modi, the BJP Chief Minister of the state, as a blot in history.

Advani — champion of communal Hindutva

These took many by surprise as everyone

knows that right from his adolescence, Advani was brought up in the Hindu fundamentalist Muslim-bashing environment of the RSS. A hardcore RSS man, Advani rose from an ordinary member of the erstwhile Jan Sangh to the highest rung of the party, later rechristened as the BJP, by flaunting communal Hindutva doctrine and fomenting hatred against the Muslims. As the mascot of hard-line Hindutva in the BJP, the political outfit of the RSS, he seized every opportunity to further this communal agenda. He led *Ram Rath Yatra* from Somnath to Ayodhya to exacerbate communal tension, described Hindu fundamentalist *Ram Janmabhoomi* movement as an expression of cultural nationalism, presided and exalted over the destruction of Babri Masjid, pulled the strings from behind to organize gruesome anti-Muslim carnage in Gujarat through Modi, his protégé and in the process became the chief architect of the BJP's rise to power riding communal wave and polarization.

Hence his utterances in Pakistan created commotion inside the BJP as well and the RSS-VHP leaders also came down heavily on him,

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee strongly condemns petro-products price hike

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 21 June, 2005 vehemently opposed the steep rise in the prices of petrol-diesel, fourth time in a row after the Congress-led CPI(M) backed UPA government took over at the Centre a year back. This rise will clearly have a cascading effect on the prices of items of daily consumption and thus dimension of the burden on the common people will be much more. It obviates to say, observed Comrade Mukherjee, that while in reality over 70% of the population is languishing at below poverty line and, barring the creamy layer of the society, the toiling millions with limited income, are reeling day in and day out under repeated bouts of tax hike and continuously soaring price-line of essential commodities, there is absolutely no capacity on the part of the people to bear the burden of such hefty increases in the prices of petrol-diesel effected in quick succession.

The Union finance minister, recalled Comrade Mukherjee, had given a categorical

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Latest Delhi High Court judgement on Bofors

Crime-tainted high-ups let up by law of the land

In a startling judgement on 31st May last, Delhi High Court passed an order summarily disposing of charges prepared and filed by the CBI against the three Hinduja brothers and the Bofors company for taking and giving crores of rupees as bribe in the infamous Bofors gun deal signed on late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's personal instruction on 24th March 1986. Through this judgement, it has also been revealed that the CBI wasted public money of Rs.260 crore against a kickback of Rs.64 crore and the case could not stand on its legs because the document on which the case was based were

photocopies of some originals whose whereabouts are now unknown! It goes without saying that those crucial documents have conveniently been 'lost'.

It may be recalled that after long turmoil of 12 years, the CBI filed its first charge-sheet in this case, on 22 October 1999 naming Win Chadda, agent of Bofors company; Octavio Quattraochi, family friend of Mrs Sonia Gandhi, now the President of the ruling Congress; former Defence Secretary S. K. Bhatnagar; former Bofors Chief Martin Ardbo and the company A.B. Bofors. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's name figured as 'an accused not sent up for

trial' as he had died already in 1991. Later on, the three Hinduja brothers of Hinduja House, one of the most influential industrial houses in India, were also charge-sheeted after the Bofors company divulged that they had paid Hinduja's SEK 80,797,709.92, i.e., \$11,846,391 as kickback. In the mean time, Win Chadda and S. K. Bhatnagar died unpunished thanks to the long time consuming legal proceedings. Government of India has 'failed' to secure extradition of Quattraochi from Malaysia where he fled to. Thus all the accused bade good-bye to the trial triumphantly. Such is the fate of the tumultuous Bofors gun

deal bribery. But the information already made public was enough for the people to know convincingly, whatever otherwise this or that quarter may try to establish now, that there had been a definite illegal transaction of huge amount of kickbacks, the milder term of simple, naked 'bribery' in connection with a deal that was related to the country's defence. The net effect is, however, that the Bofors gun deal scandal is now buried, particularly when the Congress has returned to power. Everybody in the country knows very well that the police generally shuns of arresting any high-up in the

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Weakness in freedom struggle helped Communalism sprout

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branding him a traitor and demanding his resignation from the BJP presidentship. Advani, shrewd as he is, tendered resignation on his return from Pakistan and initially pretended to be firm in his stand. He even refused to retract from what he said in Pakistan. But after a short-lived drama of drafting and redrafting of compromise resolutions, hectic parleys with the RSS-VHP, trading charges and counter-charges, a truce was arrived at and Advani took back the reins of the party. It may be added that during the entire episode, Advani received support from Vajpayee, a section of the BJP leadership and more significantly the coalition partners of the NDA. After initial fulmination, the RSS top leadership also toned down the voice and Advani also tacitly reciprocated by bowing down to some of its wishes. What then prompted him to wax lyrical about Jinnah and Pakistan and rue the gory acts he himself indulged in from his rabid Hindutva moorings? Is it that he remained faithful to history in his remarks or distorted it to suit his own motive and precipitate confusion? Let us examine these issues on the basis of facts of history and logical weaving of the spate of incidents that are rattling the common mind.

Weakness of Indian National liberation Struggle

At the outset, we propose to recapitulate how the national liberation movement against British imperialist rulers grew and developed in our country. This would help us in understanding the specific role Jinnah occupies in history. It is agreed by all that one of the principal ingredients of national liberation struggle and a democratic society has been the concept of secularism which originated during the advent of capitalism by smashing feudal social order dominated by the monarchical rulers and churchdom. Religion was then used as a tool by the feudal lords and church authorities to suppress people and any dissent. As against this, the secular concept, which has a long history of development, considered religion as a matter of personal faith and hence having nothing to do with political, social or state affairs. A secular state considers religion the private affair of its citizens and does not,

therefore, interfere, either by encouragement or by opposition, in the profession, practice and propagation of religion by the individual. On the contrary, it guarantees full freedom to the believers to profess any faith as well as to the non-believers. In all countries where national liberation movement developed in pursuance of this secular concept, the nationalist leaders conducted their life and political struggle in such a manner that they could rise above religion and thereby could win over people believing in different religions and draw them into the vortex of the movement. Real integration of different communities into a nation, can be achieved only by making religion completely powerless, in so far as the social activities of individuals are concerned, through democratization of the society. In the process, people imbibe the true spirit of secularism and can free them to a great extent from the bondage of obsolete feudal values, religious backwardness and blindness and adopt democratic values and way of life.

But the history of the national liberation struggle in our country, because of objective limitation, did not develop along the desired secular path. Instead it started with Hindu Melas. The process of formation of Indian nation started in the second half of the nineteenth century, when capitalism, as a world social force, had not only lost its erstwhile revolutionary character but also definitely become anti-revolutionary. Moreover, Indian capitalism, because of its growth under the domination of foreign finance capital with feudal relations surrounding it, had a stunted growth. So the nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie maintained a reformist oppositional role against imperialism and was equally compromising with feudalism. This was the peculiarity of Indian situation and hence our nationalist liberation struggle also suffered from this limitation.

Alienation of the Muslim masses

On the other hand, since the British rulers defeated a Muslim emperor to occupy India and a sizeable section of those who organized the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 were Muslim rulers, the Muslim masses developed such an anti-

British mentality that they boycotted English education and English language for a considerable period of time. But a section of the Hindu masses who received English education and learnt English language, became acquainted with the advanced thoughts of Western renaissance. This section came forward to build up the national liberation movement. But they could not rise above religion. Rather, they used religion as a vehicle for propagating nationalist ideas. Though Vivekananda sowed the seed of nationalist spirit and personally was far above religious sectarianism, he was acclaimed as a Hindu saint by faith. Mahatma Gandhi too, despised his liberal views and broadmindedness, invoked *Ramdhun* tune of *Iswar-Allah* to unrealistically dovetail the two religions of the Hindus and the Muslims in order to bring communal harmony. As a result, the Indian nationalism and national liberation struggle could not remain free from the shackles of religious thoughts and ideas and became a religion-oriented nationalist movement and under the circumstances, quite naturally, pursued a Hindu religion-oriented nationalism. The bourgeois leadership of the national liberation struggle who ought to have risen above religious complexes and carry out the essential task of social and cultural revolutions to democratize the society, could not do so because of their compromise with imperialism-feudalism and hence failed to unite the multi-religious Indian masses on the basis of true secular democratic principles. Thus our national liberation struggle suffered from an inherent weakness right from the day of inception.

This weakness kept the broader section of the Muslim masses alienated from the mainstream of nationalist movement. In absence of modern education and enlightenment, they remained backward. Apart from the severe economic repression in the hands of *zamindars* and feudal lords, most of whom belonged to the upper caste Hindu, the Muslims were also subjected to many other socio-cultural exploitations. The British rulers took full advantage of this to encourage all sorts of activities to widen the chasm between the Hindus and the Muslims. Thus the ground was fertile for communalism-fundamentalism to erupt. Failure of

the nationalist movement to address the problems and grievances of the utterly deprived and oppressed Muslim masses through desired process of democratization further prepared the ground. As an outcome of the psychological reaction against deprivation and the Hindu-religion orientation of the nationalist liberation movement, the Muslims, by and large, remained out of the ambit of the movement for national freedom. However, many Muslims overcame the limitation arising out of the Hindu-religion oriented nationalism, rose above sectarian outlook and actively participated in the movement. Some of them even played leading roles.

Emergence of communal outfits

But this alienation of the majority of the Muslim masses and the abject failure of the nationalist leaders prompted the fundamentalist elements within the Muslims to float the Muslim League and channelize the genuine grievances and the feeling of deprivation of the Muslim masses along communal line. And in reaction, arch communal forces within the Hindus launched the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS with Muslim-bashing as their main plank. The British rulers who spared no effort to incite disaffection among the two communities to serve twin objective of crippling the freedom movement from within and jeopardizing the process of emergence of united India as a strong nation, were also after a bifurcated and truncated India and hence rejoiced at this growing communal polarization of the Indian people. It is in this background that the Muslim League's coming to the fore raising the demand for a separate homeland for Muslims with Jinnah as its principal exponent has to be understood.

History of Jinnah

Jinnah, it may be recalled, became a member of the Muslim League in 1913. Subsequently he joined the Congress. But after being denied the post of All India Congress Committee chief in 1923 and certain other incidents of thwarted ambition, he went abroad. On return, he became the President of the Muslim League which was scouting for an appropriate leader. Instead of trying to remove the

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SUCI mass meetings in Assam against chauvinist attack on minorities

Com.Asit Bhattacharyya flays Congress' sham pro-minority stance

A critical situation has developed in Assam. Poor people of the religious minority community, uprooted from their dwellings due to erosion caused by the river Brahmaputra, who had been trying to earn livelihood as rickshaw pullers, carpenters and wage labourers, have been forced to flee in hundreds of thousands from upper Assam by the parochial, communal forces backed by the BJP, RSS, AGP, AASU and the Congress, branding them as 'foreign nationals'. With the coming election in the state in view, the divisive, communal forces are trying to rake up this issue in order to make gains in election politics. There are ominous signs that the situation will worsen and the terrible days of the 1979 Assam movement will return when the movement against 'foreign nationals' encompassed vast masses of the religious minority community of Indian origin and was directed against them, killing many thousands of them. Widespread panic has been caused among the minority community in the state. To meet the situation and in an effort to prevent it from deteriorating further, our party, the SUCI, organized a series of public meetings at Chunari, Fakirgunge and Hatsingimari in Goalpara and Phulbari districts from 7th to 9th June, 2005. In response to the call of our party, thousands of people attended these meetings and listened with rapt attention to Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member, Central Committee of the party, who addressed all the meetings as the main speaker.

Comrade Bhattacharyya, in his speeches, made detailed analysis of the economic and political situation in the country, with particular reference to Assam. We give below some of the salient points covered in his speeches.

Comrade Bhattacharyya stressed that the current spurt of parochialism-communalism in Assam should not be viewed in isolation from the countrywide rise in communalism fostered by the RSS and BJP. The thinking and activities of the divisive, communal forces in Assam were similar to those of RSS-BJP and directed against the religious minority community. Secondly, the ruling

capitalist class was out to destroy the people's unity against capitalist exploitation and rule, by causing rifts among them through encouraging communalism, parochialism and divisive tendencies of all sorts, making use of different political parties and propping up this or that party for the purpose if necessary. This is what they had been doing all over India and Assam was no exception to this.

Comrade Bhattacharyya cautioned that it would be the height of folly for the minority community, haunted by the activities of RSS, BJP, AGP and AASU, to turn towards the Congress in search of protection. The CPI(M) and the CPI, shunning the path of left and democratic mass movement directed against communalism which alone could provide the antidote to communalism-parochialism, were trying to convince the people that communalism could be combated by aligning with the Congress and forming a government along with them. But what had been the role of the Congress? In the areas with concentration of minority population, it appeared posing as a champion and protector of the minority community, whereas in the Hindu majority areas, it joined hands with Hindu communal forces. During the long Congress rule at the Centre and in the states, hardly a day passed when communal riot did not occur in this or that place. It should also be remembered that the Hindu communalism of RSS-BJP had gained strength during the days of Congress rule which culminated in the destruction of the Babari masjid. How could communalism be checked by just defeating RSS-BJP at the polls and forming a government? The only way to root out communalism was through conducting countrywide painstaking ideological-cultural struggle against it. The Congress never had any such programme, nor the CPI(M) and CPI who went by the name of leftists. The way in which communalism had been raising head in parts of the country despite the over a year-long Congress-led UPA rule at the Centre, proved our analysis to be correct. So, the Congress could never be regarded as a genuine friend of the minority community.

Comrade Bhattacharyya pointed

out that the struggle to resist militant parochialism in Assam should be considered to be inseparable from the struggle against the communalism of RSS-BJP at the all-India plane. The minority community should remember that in its struggle for self-protection, communalism of the minority community could not provide the antidote to the communalism directed against them. While doing everything possible to resist communal attacks, they should earnestly strive to develop powerful democratic movements one after another forging unity with poor people belonging to Hindu community centring round the burning problems of life. He also stressed that the present dangerously critical situation was the outcome of 30 years' persistent propaganda by the bourgeois press and all the parliamentary parties, not just the branded communal-parochial ones that large-scale infiltration of people of the minority community from Bangladesh into this country was a daily occurrence and as a result the language, culture and political power of the Assamese people, their very existence was at peril. By this, they had been able to arouse the emotion of the Assamese people to a high pitch and utilize the same to secure their divisive ends. So long as this would persist, the minority community would remain under threat and feel endangered. Stressing the urgent necessity of exposing the dirty game of the chauvinists and arch communal forces engaged in spreading these utterly false and motivated lies, he also emphasized that a long term view also had to be

taken and correct and advanced thinking should be carried to the Assamese speaking people. This could be done only on the basis of communist ideology. While conducting the movement, those of the non-Assamese minority community should earnestly endeavor to win over the hearts of the Assamese speaking people and assure them that they have due respect and love for the Assamese language and would no way stand in the way of fulfillment of their legitimate aspirations as was being mischievously propagated by the parochial, communal forces. In this process, a steel-strong unity should be forged between the non-Assamese speaking and the Assamese speaking peoples.

Comrade Bhattacharyya appealed to all sections of the people of Assam to come forward in a state-wide democratic mass movement against the machinations of the communal-parochial forces, against the inaction and failure of the Congress government to protect the minority and tackle the developing crisis, to form people's resistance committees at all places, to recruit student and youth volunteers in thousands, to hold rallies everywhere including the capital city of Guwahati and to take the movement from higher to higher stage, being guided by and upholding the higher democratic norms and values.

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya's analyses at the meetings made a deep impact on the thousand who sat through even 2 hour long meetings and listened intently, and generated enthusiasm in the areas.

US imperialists running secret prisons round the world

The US government is running an "archipelago" of prisons around the world, many of them secret camps into which people "literally disappeared", a top Amnesty International official said today. Amnesty executive director Mr. William Schulz criticized Bush for holding alleged opponents in "indefinite incommunicado detention" without access to lawyers in an interview with Fox News today. The right's group representative was pressed to substantiate Amnesty's claim that the prison camp at the US naval base at Guantanamo bay represents the "gulag of our times". The gulag reference was not 'an exact or a literal analogy', Mr. Schulz said. "But there are some similarities. The USA is maintaining an archipelago of prisons around the world, many of them secret prisons into which people are being literally disappeared..."

(AFP—Statesman, June 6, 2005)

BJP's political exigency addressed in Advani's camouflage

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deficiencies of the national liberation movement and address the issues of the forlorn Muslim masses from a true secular perspective, he preferred to opt for leading the divisive communal line of the Muslim League using the weakness of the freedom movement as a weapon to press for the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims. He argued that the Hindus and Muslims had two different religions, philosophies, civilizations, two separate views of life and on life. The Muslims, according to him, were a nation by any definition, and hence they could not be yoked together with the Hindus. This was his two-nation theory. Thus, by inducting religion in the arena of politics, he buried the very basic concept of secularism and secular state. By dubbing the Muslims as a nation, he also negated the historic process of development of a nation in the course of fulfilling the basic urge of capitalism to create a common national economy and market, integration of the various communities by building a common psychological mental make-up and identity of interest of people of various caste, creed and religiosity. Ultimately, in Lahore session of the Muslim League in 1940, Jinnah raised the demand for a separate Pakistan state.

Creation of Pakistan

However, it is not that all Muslims supported the demand. The poor and have-nots among the Muslims were opposed to the partition of the country. Prominent Muslim nationalist leaders like Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan were staunchly opposed to division of the country. Even it proved to be not that easy to persuade the Muslim populace of Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province to merge into Pakistan. Only the elite Muslims of Bihar and UP endorsed the bifurcation. It may be mentioned in this regard that while the aspirant Indian national bourgeoisie who was leading the nationalist movement was in favour of a united India so that they have a bigger market at their disposal, a chunk of the Muslims within the bourgeoisie was not comfortable with this, as they thought their prospects of flourishing would be limited in the united market. Hence,

to buttress their commercial interest, they favoured a split of that market so that they could have their exclusive domination on one part. Jinnah's demand for Pakistan perfectly fitted into their scheme and hence they wholeheartedly backed the call of separate Muslim homeland. Thus Jinnah represented the class aspiration of the Muslim section of the bourgeoisie. So the demand became much pronounced. Every Muslim who opposed the ruinous Pakistan plank was branded by Jinnah as a traitor, every Muslim who stood by united India a dupe. It is also too well-known what were the means adopted by the Muslim League under Jinnah to realize Pakistan. Its sole aim was to continuously whip up communal anti-Hindu sentiment among the Muslims and perpetrate intensified ill-feeling between the two communities. Side by side, under the stewardship of the Hindu Mahasabha and later the RSS, a venomous hate campaign against the Muslims developed with considerable pace. Such communal propagation and fast ratcheting up of a warped mindset went to such deleterious an extent that in no time the two communities were transformed into two warring groups and communal clashes and riots became a daily affair in the country. Ultimately, following the call of 'direct action' by the Muslim League, led to worst carnages like the 'great Calcutta killing'

As a result of the pressure tactics applied by the Muslim League under Jinnah and impatience of a section of the Congress leaders representing the aspirant Indian national bourgeoisie to anyhow achieve political independence and be on the seat of power, the country was partitioned. The unrealistic proposition of two-nation theory was not only agreed to by the Congress leaders to grab power, even the then undivided CPI, who called itself Marxist-Leninist but did not grow as a genuine communist party, also stood in support of this odious formulation and thus contributed towards partition of the country. Pakistan was created as a proclaimed theocratic state while India, under the garb of secularism, emerged as a Hindu-oriented state. Likewise, the people had to pay a heavy price because the national liberation struggle could not develop on true secular democratic

principles to stall such an artificial vivisection. This perfectly suited the British imperialists who never wanted that in the post-Second World War scenario when the glory and credibility of socialism was at the peak and revolutionary movement in China was taking bold strides ahead, the leadership of Indian national liberation struggle by any chance be passed on to a genuine communist party and ended in establishment of a socialist state. Transference of political power with the country truncated into two bourgeois states was of much relief to them.

And as soon as Pakistan was created by partition, diabolic communal riots and killings broke out on an alarming scale and persecution of the Hindu and other minorities went to a dizzy height resulting in mass exodus of Hindu refugees to India. In repercussion, torture on Muslim minorities also took an ugly turn in many parts of India and a section of the Muslim masses migrated to Pakistan. The two-nation theory enunciated by Jinnah and accepted by the Congress leaders that led to division of the country thus unsettled and devastated millions of innocent common people. It was a most tragic chapter in history.

Partition on religion — a misnomer

Today we can definitely see how erroneous and unrealistic was the proposition to divide the country on religious line. Religion has never been can never be the basis for creation of a nation. Pakistan was created in the name of protecting the interest of the Muslims. But did it turn out to be so? Then why was Bangladesh born as a separate state on the territory formerly known as East Pakistan? Now the Muslims of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh are realizing from their experience what a grave mistake it was to divide the country and are taken umbrage at the names of those responsible for such a heinous act. When there was every possibility of emergence of a strong united nation on the subcontinent, the Muslim League under Jinnah frustrated that possibility by insisting on the country's division on communal line and the compromising leaders of the Congress in their haste for power consented to the same wrecking and

ravaging the life of the common toiling people. So can a person like Jinnah who was a high priest of this communal politics be certified as secular? It does not mean that the leaders of the Congress were secular either. But after having played a leading role in dividing the country on communal line entailing untold misery and sufferings of the common masses who went through a harrowing experience of communal riots, killings and incessant spread of communal rancour, can Jinnah be a candidate for secular credentials simply because he was not a devout or practising Muslim in personal life or expressed some pious wish of Hindu-Muslim amity after the damage was done? What should have the primacy — the politics he pursued or the private life he led? Even when he was couching in mellifluous words and euphonious wishes his August 1947 Constituent Assembly speech Advani referred to, the fundamentalists were raving wild in his country and minorities were running for life. What was then the propriety or sanctity of such a speech within four walls of legislative enclave? Can one construct or reconstruct history at one's whims?

Curtain Raiser on Advani's visit

Hence, to many people, Advani's overflowing praise of Jinnah's espousal of secularism is posing to be a riddle wrapped in enigma. To find a man like Advani who and his party banter secularism on and often and call those opposed to their doctrine of Hindutva, pseudo-secularists, applauding Jinnah as secular, as a rare individual in history, is incredibly paradoxical. Men with conscience are stunned, unable to explain it out. But one has to unravel the mystery. It is well-nigh impossible to believe that there is a change of heart in Advani as was with pirate Ratnakar before he turned into Maharshi Valmiki. Then what? Is it because of the political exigency of both the BJP and Advani as is being widely discussed in some quarters? It is a fact that the Muslim masses have been apprehensive of the BJP for its Hindu communal moorings and hence their votes were eluding the party. Muslim votes were more polarized against the BJP after

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SUCI protest against petrol-diesel price hike

On 21st June, the day when Congress-led UPA Government at the Centre enhanced the fuel prices and immediately after it, our party organized different forms of protest movement at different places of the country. We publish here brief reports of that movement that reached us during this time. They included Delhi, Calcutta, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Tripura, Hyderabad of AP, Bellary of Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat, Patna in Bihar, Ranchi and Tatanagar of Jharkhand. Among these where there are photographs received so far, we have included only those.

Haryana

SUCI staged dharna at the offices of respective District Commissioners at different places in Haryana against the recent price hike in petrol and diesel. Dharna was held at Rohtak, Bhiwani and Rewari; at Sonapat, the dharna was organised on 24th June, while at Kaithal it was held on 27th June; a demonstration was held at Mohali on 25th June. At each of these places memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister was submitted to the District Commissioners, demanding immediate withdrawal of the increased oil prices. Party leaders, who addressed the sit-in gatherings, condemned the price hike by the UPA government and at the same time exposed the role of CPM and CPI extending their support to it going against people's interests.

Gujarat

SUCI Vadodara unit organized a demonstration and protest meeting against the steep increase in prices of petrol and diesel at Laheripura

Gate on 24 June 2005. Comrade Tapan Dasgupta, in-charge, Vadodara Unit SUCI said, "The people voted NDA government out of the power on account of its anti-people policies. The UPA government, which came to power, opposed the price-hike of petroleum products during the NDA tenure and promised not to raise the prices of petrol-diesel. It has backstabbed people's faith by increasing the prices for the fourth time." Comrade Bharat Mehta, member, Gujarat State Organising Committee, SUCI, Comrade Mukesh Semwal and Comrade Bharti Parmar addressed.

Surat unit of the party staged a spirited demonstration in the centre of the City Chowk in the afternoon on 20th June for more than hour in presence of huge crowd and media in spite of heavy rain. Comrades Satyendra Singh, Tarun Dasgupta, Rammurat Maurya and others addressed the gathering.

Ahmedabad Unit of the party held a protest meeting in Paldi Busstand on 24th June. The meeting

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PRESS CLIPPINGS

"CPM Leaders Requested Congress Not to Raise Price Amid Campaign"

"NEVER mind the Left's war cry against the decision to hike petrol and diesel prices, the government has shown utmost behind-the scene coalition understanding with the Left, particularly the CPM, while deciding on the timing of the announcement. It was on the request of the CPM brass, sources said, that the government delayed the decision till Monday to help the Marxists to complete their immediate concern closer home – the prestigious elections to the Kolkata Corporation and Salt Lake and Uttarpara municipalities which were completed on Sunday.

The government showed the understanding to delay the decision till Monday, following the requests from CPM central leaders to the Prime Minister and the Congress president that prices need not be hiked in the middle of the campaign for the civic polls in which the Left is locked in a battle against Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress."

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"Accordingly, the Cabinet skipped the oil price topic and the finance minister said the next meeting, "on Sunday" could possibly take up the issue. Even though by Saturday the campaign for the civic polls would have been over, the CPM apprehended that a hike on the eve of the Sunday poll could be still politically incorrect for its image."

"So on Friday evening, hours after Ms Sonia Gandhi returned to Delhi from Moscow, the ailing Harkishen Singh Surjeet drove to 10 Janapath for a 10 minute meeting with the Congress chief. Though both the Congress and the CPM circles described their meeting "nothing political", it is learnt that the former CPM general secretary told Ms Gandhi that any decision on the oil prices before the Sunday polls could be politically unviable for the Left. The Saturday cabinet meeting was called off with the government sources attributing the decision to the "absence" of many key ministers from Delhi. With the poll dust in Kolkata finally settling down on Sunday, the government moved in to take the much-delayed decision." (The Economic Times dated 21.06.2005)



Calcutta, West Bengal



Bellary, Karnataka



Patna, Bihar



Agartala, Tripura



Trivandrum, Kerala

What prompted Advani's remarks

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destruction of Babari Masjid and Gujarat massacre. Hence there is a growing realization in the BJP that unless it is able to secure at least a part of the Muslim votes, it cannot regain power. Moreover, the BJP leaders are well aware of the reality that to capture power at the Centre, it is imperative to cobble together NDA partners as achieving single party majority is not feasible. And to keep the NDA in tact it has to restrain itself from overplaying Hindutva and anti-Muslim plank. Otherwise there could be split in the NDA and formation of an alternative combination against the Congress.

On the other hand, the ruling Indian bourgeoisie is keen to enter into the markets of middle-east and south-east Asian countries most of which are dominated by Muslim population. Hence, unless the BJP changes the prevailing impression of its being inimical to the Muslims, it might not be able to subserve the interest of the ruling class in the manner expected of it. All these political compulsions compelled the BJP leaders to hunt for a suitable strategy that could initiate this image makeover process. Moreover, from its class interest, the US imperialists are also very eager for a rapprochement between India and Pakistan. Going by the records, the BJP worked overtime during its stint in the government to have closer ties with the US rulers and continues to nurture that relationship even today. US imperialists, for obvious reasons,

would like to keep the prospects of the BJP alive. US dictates are, everyone knows, binding on Pakistan. Hence there is a discussion in some corners if the US regime had any role in arranging the visit of Advani to Pakistan.

In any case, all probabilities indicate that Advani's Pakistan sojourn was not accidental but well orchestrated at the highest level with the approval of the RSS so that he could seize the opportunity to initiate the process of wooing Muslim sentiment by exalting Jinnah, repenting Babri demolition and regretting Gujarat holocaust. Had he done this on the eve of any election there would have been obvious doubts about his intention among the targeted audience. Hence this timing was chosen. Moreover, to straddle both sides of political exigency – the chasm between communal Hindutva and a liberal posture – the BJP hitherto projected Vajpayee as the soft face (!) and Advani as the Hindutva mascot. Perhaps time has come for Advani to step into the liberal (!) shoes of Vajpayee and make himself the rallying point for other regional and smaller parties. That is why, Advani's tryst with Jinnah in Pakistan received applause from the coalition partners of NDA as well Vajpayee.

Pretended tussle between BJP and RSS

But then one could question why is a section of the RSS-VHP leadership so irked and miffed? Is it because the BJP is drifting away

from the RSS line or Advani is bent upon dissociating from the RSS plank? But the question is can either the BJP or Advani do that? It is true that of late the RSS has been demanding resignation of both Advani and Vajpayee from the leadership of the BJP and heightened that demand after the BJP lost parliamentary elections. The reason perhaps is not that far to seek. Once saddled in power, the BJP, in the aggregate interest of the ruling bourgeoisie, had to withstand lots of pulls and pressures that at times compelled it to wear a radical mask or pretend distancing from the moth-eaten politics of Mandir-Masjid. This invited ire from a section of the RSS top brass who feared that a growing influence of Advani-Vajpayee in the national political firmament might threaten their seat of authority. Hence to restrain the duo and reiterate whose fiat runs in the BJP, the RSS-VHP leaders kept on occasionally chiding them, trying to browbeat them through veiled warning of removal. But the RSS-VHP leaders are well aware that to be in the corridor of power and remain as the chosen alternative to the Congress in the bourgeois design of two-party democracy intended by the ruling class, the BJP has to alternately blow hot and cold. So they too adopt the same tactics of regulating the decibels of their screams and acrimonies as is suited to the situation. Hence there is no conflict over the doctrine of Hindutva. What is apparent is a clash of power and personal interest.

In the instant case of Advani's flirtation with eulogy of secularism in Pakistan, the outrage on the part of a section of the RSS leadership seems to be on a little different count. In his overzealousness to refurbish his personal image before the Muslim masses and secular people, Advani overstepped the Caucasian chalkcircle and committed some excess in his extolling of Jinnah and contrition over Babri demolition and Gujarat killings. Naturally the fuming RSS leaders might have sensed danger in it because such excess might render its very base of Muslim-bashing tottering – something it can hardly acquiesce in. So was the overdose of wrath against Advani to bring back his sense of proportion. But a truce was bound to be arrived at and it did. Advani skillfully reiterated from his eruption in Pakistan and bowed down before the RSS and the dust settled. To assuage the frayed tempers of the RSS, Advani issued a couple of anti-Pakistan statements and the RSS chief Sudarshan reciprocated by appreciably mellowing down his voice. It is significant that while too much noise was made on remarks about Jinnah, Advani's apology for Babri incident and Gujarat episode was raised neither by the BJP nor the RSS meaning thereby that the imperativeness to use salve on the bruised sentiments of the Muslim masses for electoral exigency is consented to by either sides. Hence Advani remained where he was, the RSS too and so was Jinnah. People ought not to be beguiled by the knavery of the bourgeois politicians lusting for power.

Save Education movement across Gujarat

With the recent increasing influence of market forces in education that has opened the floodgate for all-out commercialization of education at all stages of it, sheer neglect of government, municipal and panchayat-run schools and parallel boom of self-financed institutions, abject fall of standard of education and overt and covert trumpeting of the mantra 'pay more money for quality education', all this have given rise to a crisis of education, not limited to any stage of it; it has invaded from primary to the highest, all stages; it has affected all sections of poor and middle class people. Aware of the grave situation, All

India Democratic Students' Organization (AIDSO) launched a state-wide Save Education campaign with active fraternal participation of All India Democratic Youth Organization (AIDYO) and different regional and local units of the All India Save Education Committee. The main objective of the campaign was to give an integrated approach to all educational problems and form a broadest possible platform against commercialization of education. As a part of a long series of programmes, there was a Save Education Yatra (*Shikshan Bachao Abhiyan*), brought out in cities, villages, taluka and district towns

of the state during a period from April 11 to May 18, 2005. The Yatra, in its different phases covered Ahmedabad, and Sanand, Bavla, Dholka in the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Kheda, Mahemdabad, Nadiad, Anand, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Karamsad and Anklav in the outskirts of Vadodara, Waghodia, Dabhoi, Padra and Savli in Baroda district, city of Surat, Bhiloda, Idar, Hammatnagar and Shamalaji Modasa of Himmatnagar and Sabarkantha districts and elsewhere. The Yatra was accompanied by attempts to form public committees for the purpose of spreading the movement further

for a sustained struggle. Front-ranking state and district leaders of AIDSO, AIDYO and AISEC participated in and conducted the Yatra.

In addition, there were citizens' meetings and *dharna* (sit-in) in different cities, attended by eminent citizens, teachers, professors and professionals of other different walks of life. They included a citizens' meeting on May 15 in Ahmedabad, presided over by Prof. Devrat N. Pathak, former vice-chancellor of Saurashtra University, a *dharna* in Surat on 27 May and at Baroda on 18 June, and another citizens' meeting in Vadodara on 1 June.

Latest Delhi High Court judgement on Bofors

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society, particularly bourgeois and petty-bourgeois political personalities, let alone presenting them to the court of law. And since independence, all right-thinking men have been noticing with grave concern that if anybody of such high profile personalities is ever presented to the court, in almost each and every case the accused goes scot free. In this sense Bofors case is never an isolated event of miscarriage of justice favouring the top echelons of the society and body-politic in the country. Actually speaking, from long experience people are now apt to consider such things as the order of the day. Let us recollect for our convenience just a few more cases of the recent past. The list is an assorted one, speaking of the wide spectrum that is engulfed by the high-ups showing their least concern for laws-justice- decency and yet holding their berth in the society unaffected.

During the early nineties when the present Prime Minister Monmohan Singh was the Finance Minister, brokers of the share market in connivance with high officials of banks and financial institutions, particularly PSU ones, siphoned off public money to the tune of thousands of crores of rupees. With much fanfare and under intense mock-fight of the opposition parties in the parliament, a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) was formed to probe into the great share scam. And what did the people see? The probe simply ended in a fiasco as the members kept themselves busy to protect their own favoured men on mutual understanding and to project a clean image of the then Finance Minister. It was, however, that very finance minister, taking full advantage of whose mischievous policy of liberalization, particularly in the field of money market and banking, the notorious and leading share brokers like Harshad Mehta and his ilk performed their handiwork to loot the money. This was possible under the willful negligence of the FM himself and his cohort Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the then Finance Secretary, as they tried to project the manipulated unusual boom in share market as bouyancy in the country's economy as a 'result of success' of their newly introduced liberalization policy. Harshad Mehta died before his long drawn trial could be finished and only a few share brokers and bank officials were

meted out punishment, nominal in regard to what crime they had perpetrated. Most of the money looted remained unrecovered. Reportedly, the then Prime Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao had paid Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Shibu Soren a few crores of rupees to save his government with JMM MPs' votes. Both went unscathed and the man accepting the bribe subsequently rose to become a minister in the Congress-led UPA cabinet. The RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav and his associates, swindled, while he was in the post of Chief Minister of Bihar, more than 1200 crore of rupees in the name of purchasing fodder. So many criminal cases of cheating and forgery are pending in different courts of Bihar against him, but he ruled Bihar for a decade himself and by proxy through his wife Rabri Devi as the Chief Minister and now he is the Union Railway Minister with active support from the Congress and CPI(M)-CPI. Tehelka VDO camera showed tale-telling details how the then BJP president Bangaru Lakshman, the Union Defence Minister George Fernandez and different defence officials took bribes in arms deal, but the minister, though removed from his post for a few months, was re-awarded the same post for the rest of the NDA rule at the Centre. The Fukon Commission formed to probe into this bribery scandal has till to date delivered nothing tangible. In another financial scam in 2001 during the BJP regime the UTI investors lost thousands of crore of rupees. As reported, it was the handiwork of Sangh Parivar backed business houses and some top officials of the financial institution. But nothing happened except sacking UTI chairman. Telgi cheated government of Rs. 36,000 crore or more with fake stamp papers and it has also been revealed that to operate his racket smoothly he regularly bribed powerful ministers and top ranking police officials of different state governments and the Centre. Everybody knows, as usual this episode will shortly be a closed chapter after the death of Telgi who is reported to have been suffering from AIDS.

So much so about cases that involved liquid or solid money. Now coming to vital, sensitive social issues in a country like ours inhabited by people of different religions, languages, castes, creeds and so on, Raghunath Misra

Commission was since instituted by the government. But the same government usurped powers by an ordinance to withhold the enquiry report from the parliament and the people. Afterwards Nanavati Commission was formed to bring to book the organizers of the infamous anti-Sikh riot which killed thousands of innocent Shikhs in and around Delhi after the murder of Indira Gandhi. The culprits, mostly top Congress leaders of Delhi, were all known public figures and were identified as being involved in the riot, but to no avail.

Indian people know it well that it was under the direct instigation, if not leadership of L. K. Advani, Murali Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti and others, that the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992. People saw clear photographs in print and electronic media, showing indecent jubilation of Advani and Joshi along with Ms Uma Bharti and Ms Swadhvi Ritambhara at the act of demolition of the Masjid, standing at stone's throw distance from the renowned monument. The leaders themselves also boasted on different occasions, of their association with that condemnable act, they thought commendable. Liberhan Commission was constituted and a case of criminal conspiracy was also filed against them in the court of law. But the main accuseds, Advani and Joshi adorned the post of cabinet ministers of India for more than long five years and none of the other culprits till to date has ever been arrested even.

These are obvious. For in such cases, the judicial process including investigation and the working of the prosecution is conducted in such a fashion that the accused is ultimately let off for the trial is dragged indefinitely to his pleasure. People also know, whenever a government, its ministers or administration commit a crime or criminal negli-gence, the government, to cover it up in the face of public resentment quickly constitute a commission whose report is seldom brought to light, not to speak of placing the same in the Assembly or Parliament. Thus public money of lakhs of rupees are simply drained out.

What does all this boil down to? In this bourgeois system of law, particularly in India, the rich and powerful can easily escape the long hand of law and there is every way out for them. Whenever the ruling

class or its representatives perpetrate any crime, however much sinister it might be, and faces any serious difficulty in the eye of law the police administration and judicial litigation comes to their rescue.

In the early days of bourgeois democratic revolution, when the bourgeoisie came to power with the slogan of equality, fraternity and rule of justice, there was some relative independence of judiciary and some sort of equality in the eye of law. But in these days of moribund capitalism with the all-out degeneration of the bourgeois society its judiciary and quasi-judiciary system also are loosing their relative independence and are degenerating markedly. Behind the façade of neutrality, the ruling class is increasingly using the judiciary, police and bureaucracy to its petty class interests. The bour-geois and petty-bourgeois politicians, their henchmen, manipulators and their paid criminals are more and more fearlessly taking advantage of this class rule and perpetrating all sorts of crimes freely. The victims, as usual, are the common people.

Thus with time more and more, justice becomes a far cry in this worn out system. The ruling bourgeois class and its capitalist state, through the organs like police, administration, bureaucracy and even the judiciary, not just come out in defense of the swindlers, the criminals, the cheats and the corrupt politicians, they even reward them with social status and political positions, not to speak of allowing them to fatten their purse with unlawful earnings. It is time for common toiling masses of people to realize that they no longer have anything to expect from this system. This prevailing capitalist system will not only fleece them economically bringing about abject deprivation and plight; it will hardly offer them anymore the minimum relief in the face of injustice, coercion and corruption. We appeal to this vast masses of oppressed and exploited people to step forward courageously to build up step by step a massive movement against this decadent capitalist system on the strength of higher and nobler cultural-ethical-ideological standard and of rock-solid organization of their own. Only such a movement can generate in this moribund society such a real force that would stand as the deadly enemy to all sorts of corruption and injustice.

SUCI protests against petrol-diesel price hike

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was addressed by Comrades Jayaesh Patel, Bhaveek Raja

In all these meetings people expressed their indignation towards the UPA government's hike of petrol and diesel price.

Kerala

SUCI activists organized protest demonstrations in Kerala against the steep hike in petrol and diesel prices on 21st June.

In Trivandrum city, the state capital, a protest procession was held, which ended in front of the State Secretariat, where party activists burnt an effigy of the UPA Government. Comrade B. K. Rajagopal, State committee member, SUCI addressed the protest meeting held after the demonstration. Comrade D. Sunderesan, State Secretary, UTUC-LS also spoke. Comrades R. Biju, Benny Joseph, G. R. Subhash, all district committee members, led the

demonstration.

Protest demonstrations, torch-lit processions, effigy-burning etc. were also organised by SUCI activists in various other cities, towns, villages and local areas almost throughout the State.

Tamil Nadu

The Tamilnadu State Organising Committee of the SUCI held a demonstration before the Memorial Hall, near Central Station, Chennai between 11.00 am to 12.00 pm to protest the recent decision of the Congress-led UPA Government to raise the process of petrol and diesel from June 21, 2005.

Andhra Pradesh

Strongly condemning the UPA government's decision to hike petrol and diesel prices, the Hyderabad District Organizing Committee of SUCI conducted a protest demonstration and burning of effigy of the union petroleum

minister in Hyderabad on 22nd June, 2005.

Comrade D. Ramesh, state secretariat member, SUCI and Comrade S. Govndarajulu, member, Hyderabad district organizing committee and others took part in the programme.

Punjab

The Mohali unit of the SUCI held a demonstration on 25 June before the Municipal Council Phase-7 to protest the recent

decision of the Congress-led UPA government to raise the prices of petrol and diesel from June 21, 2005.

Comrade Inder Singh, Incharge, Mohali Unit and Comrade Mudit Bhatnagar and Comrade Jagdish Tiwari, Sh. Pal Singh of Kisan Hit Bachoo Committee, Harpreet Sodhi, President of Shaeed Udhm Singh Club, Harinderjeet Singh G. Sect of Shaeed Udhm Singh Club and Inderjit of DSO-ITI unit addressed the dharna.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee strongly condemns petro-products price hike

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assurance during presentation of last budget that the proposed levy of additional duties and cess on petro-products would be revenue-neutral and would not impact retail price. But in an act of worst treachery, the government is now hiking the retail prices on the pretext of absorbing the effect of the said budgetary measures of imposition of additional duties and cess apart from oft-repeated plea of spurt in global oil price. When there is countrywide demand for reducing the existing taxes and cess to provide some relief to the people, the government is not only disdaining the same but is also refraining from forcing the domestic oil companies, usurping super profit because of periodic tariff escalation and freedom to sell even the 10% domestic production at the same price of imported stuff, to charge lower prices at domestic market. On the contrary, the government is keeping the Damocles sword of periodic price rise hanging on the people so that such is made acceptable as fate-accompli.

It is incumbent on any government having minimal concern for its own citizens, said Comrade Mukherjee, to spearhead movement against the international oil cartel headed by the US imperialists who is arbitrarily and whimsically fixing the global oil prices to squeeze the people all over the world. But the Congress-led government and its pseudo-Marxist friends like the CPI(M), CPI are instead acquiescing in the rapacious moves of the international oil sharks like their most obedient servants. Although the CPI(M), CPI are feigning opposition to the declaration of the price increase, the implicit connivance between the Congress and these pseudo-Marxists in deceiving the people, observed Comrade Mukherjee, is once again amply revealed by the fact that the government announcement has been made on the day next to the date the process of municipal elections in West Bengal were over so that the CPI(M) and its associates could be spared of pre-poll embarrassment and public wrath.

Comrade Mukherjee called upon the people to rise in protest against this brazen anti-people decision of the government and force it to rescind its decision under the pressure of a countrywide mass movement.



Protests against petrol-diesel price hike (top) New Delhi, (middle) Chennai, Tamil Nadu and (below) Ranchi, Jharkhand (More photos on page 5)

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