

# Proletarian Era

Volume 40 No. 2  
September 1, 2006

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



26 September, 1893 – 9 September, 1976

*“Being Marxists, communists are internationalists, but we can put Marxism into practice only when it is integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and acquires a definite national form. The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries.”*

— Mao Zedong

## Central Committee denounces Huge pay and perks hike for MPs Centre’s safeguard to Coke-Pepsi

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 25th August last strongly denounced the bill passed in parliament to give effect to the central government’s proposal of a fat hike in the salaries, perks and even pension of the Members of Parliament entailing an additional burden of not less than Rs 60 crores on the public exchequer paucity of which is often being referred to as the cause for not undertaking essential public welfare activities. It is queer, if not utterly hypocritical, observed Comrade Mukherjee, that close on the heels of approving this whopping hike, the Prime Minister is stated to have issued a directive to various ministries to curtail expenditure. Expressing deep indignation, Comrade Mukherjee said that this is no isolated an instance. While the majority of the country’s people are semi-fed, semi-clad, dying out of starvation and doomed to a sub-human living condition; not only the ruling bourgeois parties but even the CPI(M), CPI, running government in West Bengal, are, in pursuance of the same policy, frequently raising the compensation package of the legislators. It is for this reason, mentioned

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 23rd August last, strongly deprecated the way central UPA government rejected the report of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) pointing out presence of very high level of unhygienic pesticides in the soft drinks sold by the two US-based Cola majors and thus quashed the charge that the two manufacturing MNCs are selling health hazards. Comrade Mukherjee wondered that when the union health minister himself has asked the CSE to come out with some more details so as to substantiate its charges of excessive pesticide, he could so easily dismiss the CSE findings as no conclusive evidence. It is evident, said Comrade Mukherjee, that the government by simply alluding to a contrary report hurriedly produced by a committee set up the other day under the aegis of the government and arguing verbatim in the lines of these giant US based multinationals are subverting the all important question of people’s health to the utter commercial interest of the foreign monopolists. Comrade Mukherjee recalled that when similar allegations based on laboratory test of randomly picked up samples by the CSE were levelled against the same two MNCs in 2003, the then BJP-led government too made every attempt to give a clean chit to them through eliciting a favourable report by a Joint Parliamentary Committee set up for the purpose but the Committee also could not but endorse the allegations. Since then, observed Comrade Mukherjee, the government has been talking of setting standards for carbonated beverages based on permissible limits of toxic material, but such have not yet seen the light of the day. It is ridiculous, remarked Comrade Mukherjee that when even US-based universities are banning these cola drinks for being contaminated to the point of a kind of slow poisoning, the Government of India is shamelessly holding brief for such death merchants.

Comrade Mukherjee demanded immediate setting up of a non-government high powered committee comprising eminent scientists and experts in the field to probe into the allegations and come out with its findings as expeditiously as possible and called upon the countrymen to exert strong pressure on the government to concede to this just demand.

## To keep the bourgeois rule out of sight Real face of latest instance of social democracy of CPI(M)

With greetings for its readers, People’s Democracy, the organ of CPI(M) published a special number on January 26, 2006 on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the Indian republic. How much importance, the party laid on this publication is evident from the long list of their fore-ranking leaders contributing to the volume. They included Sitaram Yechury writing the editorial himself, Prakash Karat, the General Secretary setting the dual tasks of defending the republican values and advancing people’s interests, Jyoti Basu tracing the 55-year history of the republic highlighting the centre-state relations, Harkishan Singh Surjeet calling for struggle to consolidate the Republic’s gains, Prabhat Patnaik on imperialism and economic decentralization, Anil Biswas (since deceased) on

strengthening the federal structure of the state, Biman Basu on tribal people’s emancipation, CP Chandrasekhar on liberalisation and economic sovereignty, Sudha Sundararaman on achieving gender equality and so on. Obviously, it may be safely accepted that the views expressed by such front-ranking leaders of the party must be reflecting the views of the CPI(M) party itself.

Notwithstanding the variety of issues and eminence of the contributors, the articles in the volume, as a whole, set the tone of discussion to such a vein, that can only be described as marked and dangerous deviation from Marxism-Leninism to the extent of becoming anti-Marxist. And all the more, this whole exercise is done behind the smokescreen of Marxist verbiages with the design

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# CPI(M) leaders stand in defence of bourgeois republic and Constitution of India

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to confuse and mislead people. In such a situation, even after all these few months following publication of the volume, it demands a thorough analysis of what CPI(M) wanted to drive home through this volume and what was their objective.

## CPI(M) eulogy for bourgeois republic, constitution and parliamentary democracy

To begin with, we should see through the writers' own words. In the editorial, the Polit Bureau member of CPI(M), Sitaram Yechury says: "It is customary that on this occasion (of the Republic Day - Ed. Board, P.Era) every year the Indian people resolve to consolidate the **gains made so far** and to advance their struggles for a **better life in the future**. This is also an occasion to declare the redoubling of the resolve to **strengthen republican values in the country**. This necessarily means the **strengthening of the foundation pillars of our Constitution**, viz., secular democracy, federalism, economic self-reliance and social justice." (emphasis added: P.Era).

Prakash Karat, the General Secretary of CPI(M) adds more facets to these views, when he says: "...the **Constitution**, which **instituted the parliamentary democratic system** with adult franchise, was a **major achievement**", though he maintains that the Constitution "bears the hallmark of the ruling classes who acquired State power in 1947." Not only instituting the parliamentary system, Karat has further to add: "Despite the narrow base and constraints of running a democratic system in a developing capitalist system like India, it is creditable how **parliamentary democracy** has **retained its vitality** over the years', functioning much 'better than in most other ex-colonies'. And what is the sign of this vitality? Let us quote at some length from Karat's words. "India does not witness apathy or suspicion for the electoral process by the rural poor and the dispossessed. On the contrary, what is noteworthy is how the landlord/dominant caste forces seek to shut out the dalits and the poorest in the rural areas in many places from voting, by violent means. Finally, despite the failure of many political parties to institute internal

democracy, this has not led to the breakdown of the party system. **Political parties crop up and proliferate, testifying to the vitality** of the party system. Those who had wishes to straightjacket politics into two-party system found their hopes belied."

However, in spite of these eulogies, the CPI(M) leaders do not refrain from bringing out the darker sides. So Yechury admits: "...lofty **objectives contained in our Constitution are prevented from being translated into reality by the class rule** that exists in the country... the **bourgeois-landlord classes** that **assumed the leadership** of the class rule in independent India under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie, in pursuit of their class interests have not allowed the fruition of many of the aims and ideals set out in the Constitution." While speaking of consolidating the gains made so far, right at the beginning of his editorial, he mentions a few lines afterwards: "As the relentless neo-liberal **economic reforms** continue to **widen inequalities** in the country, the **plight of the deprived is becoming much worse**. Distress suicides by the farmers, starvation deaths in the countryside and the worsening plight of the tribals, dalits and the other weaker sections give a clear indication that there are **two Indias in the making**." Karat too, admits "The failure of the Republic to ensure even a semblance of social equality is stark"; there are also the "most basic failure" "in tackling mass poverty", added by liberalization and privatization "with an anti-democratic and anti-working people attitude" or rise of communal politics and rightwing authoritarianism, abandonment of non-aligned independent foreign policy and so on. Not emanating from "some parties or individuals alone", these policies represent "**a wider anti-democratic ethos** generated by the aggressive pursuit **by big capital** for greater capital accumulation and the demands of international finance capital"; even the "higher judiciary has reflected this ethos" in its prohibiting bandhs and hartals, limiting rights to assemble and protest, proscribing student politics on the campus, passing a host of judgments in the Supreme Court against the working class and so on, all admitted by none other than Karat. Harkishan

Singh Surjeet, an eminent veteran leader, too, has the following opinions to place: "the **state power** is seeking to **reverse** whatever rudimentary **land reforms** have taken place ... not the landlords alone, big industrial houses and foreign capital are trying to bring pressure. State-owned or controlled "**industries and services are being handed over to the bourgeoisie** on a platter and for a song." "**Indigenous industries are being thrown**" to the MNCs. Thus, Surjeet holds that the ruling classes "are not sincere about implementing the promises they made" to people.

On the effect of globalization-liberalization the CPI(M) leaders find some common tunes in these affecting people's life. Yechury says: "While **globalisation** is mercilessly **assaulting the economic sovereignty** of independent countries, imperialism through this process is seeking to economically recolonize the developing world. The paramount need to strengthen India's economic sovereignty and thereby our self-reliance must preoccupy our attention in the year ahead." Jyoti Basu, the veteran leader Polit Bureau member and the erstwhile Chief Minister of West Bengal submits: "The policy of **liberalization** and the imperialism-driven **globalisation** have opened up the economy to the marauding forays of **multi-national corporations**. The bureaucracy, the education system, the media, and the realm of culture are now subject to the penetration of finance capital." And CP Chandrasekhar feels that "India's economic policy today is driven by an indiscriminate desire to integrate the country with the capitalist world system. More than a decade and a half of accelerated economic reform has substantially increased **India's integration**, even if in a subordinate position, **with the developed world**", "... even if it has damaging effects on the working people and could imply a "recolonisation" of the Indian economy."

Obviously these inequalities, failures in implementing people's dreams, the wide anti-democratic ethos and assault on economic sovereignty or damaging effects of globalization etc. on working people stem from the basic class character of the Indian state. Karat defines it once: "...the **basic nature** of the

**Indian State** - its bourgeois-landlord character" and finds support in Yechury with the same phrasing: "bourgeois-landlord classes that assumed the leadership of the class rule in independent India under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie". However, elsewhere the same leaders as well as other leader-writers characterize the Indian system as "developing capitalist system" or "class rule of the bourgeoisie" (Prakash Karat) and "present capitalist set up" (Jyoti Basu)

CPI(M) leaders do not lose heart. So doesn't Karat, when he says: "All these negative features, however, do not undermine the importance of parliamentary democracy. **Although a form of class rule of the bourgeoisie, the present parliamentary system also represents an advance for the people**. It offers certain opportunities for them to defend their interests, intervene in the affairs of the State to a certain extent and mobilize to carry forwards the struggle for democratic and social progress." So he sets the tasks of people in strengthening the parliamentary democratic system and pressing for electoral reforms that are essential. Yechury is more elaborate when he prescribes that people must resolve '**to strengthen the foundation pillars of the Constitution**', 'put pressure on the government through popular struggles **to shift the focus of economic reforms** from being **solely** preoccupied with corporate **profit** towards **people's welfare**', 'to carry forward' the popular struggles 'to **translate** much of its (**Constitution's**) **content into reality**' and on that basis towards a **society** 'where **exploitation of man by man ceases** to exist'.

So these are the visions, the analyses and the prescriptions from the CPI(M) leaders placed in commemoration of the anniversary of the Indian Republic. All these are placed by the leaders of a party that go by the banner of Marxism, the leaders who publicly profess, at least dish out Marxism and write these articles with Marxist vocabularies and jargons intertwined with their own brand of thoughts. And it is for this, since their thoughts and analyses are presented with coatings of Marxism, and in the name of Marxism only,

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# State, constitution, republic, democracy, none can ever be supra-class

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that we feel seriously concerned at the confusions that these may generate in the readers and carried via them, in the masses at large. So we take it upon ourselves to present a scientific analysis of their words and views, an analysis in the light of Marxism at heart, not on the skin.

## What precisely is the Marxist concept of state, constitution, republic and democracy?

Before delving into the topic, we would like to place a few basic Marxist concepts and tenets. As we would find from the above quotes from the CPI(M) leaders' articles, they have stood all praise for the Indian Republic and its Constitution, though mixing it with veiled criticisms. Now, we must confront the first question at this stage. What precisely is the Marxist concept of state, its republic, its constitution, or of democracy and its so-called representative parliamentary form? Let us bring in the great Marxist leader Engels' words to clinch the issue.

*In his unique contribution* "Origin of family, private property and state" Engels made these penetrative remarks, to start with characterizing state as : "... a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." (*Origin of family, private property and state*)

He added "... As the state arose from the need to keep class antagonisms in check, but also arose in the thick of the fight between the classes, it is normally the state of the most powerful, economically ruling class, which by its means becomes also the politically ruling class, and so acquires new means of holding

down and exploiting the oppressed class. The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave-owners for holding down the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is the instrument for exploiting wage-labor by capital.." (*ibid*).

With reference to the modern democratic republics, Engels pointed out : "... the democratic republic, ...the form of state in which alone the last decisive battle between proletariat and bourgeoisie can be fought out- .... no longer officially recognizes differences of property. Wealth here employs its power indirectly, but all the more surely.... the possessing class rules directly through the medium of universal suffrage" (*ibid*). Do the CPI(M) leaders agree to this analysis of Engels? Will they disagree with the Marxist understanding that in a class-divided society, state, its constitution, its form of republic or otherwise, its representative character reflected in, for example, parliamentary democracy, none of these can be above class, can ever be supra-class?

Yet, now they express eulogy for the Indian republic, constitution or parliamentary democracy without mentioning or even recognizing their class character and then, fully aware of their misdeeds, add words and jargons in a general way to show how class oriented they are. Such an act can have only one motive: to create confusions and thereby conceal the class itself. Thus now they say that the Constitution "bears the hallmark of the ruling classes who acquired State power in 1947" or " the lofty objectives contained in our Constitution are prevented from being translated into reality by the class rule that exists in the country" or have remarked that "in a developing capitalist system like India" "running a democratic system" has its "narrow base and constraints", despite which the parliamentary democracy has proved its vitality! And then they eulogize the Indian republic, ask people to strengthen the 'republican values' or call its constitution and its parliamentary democracy as 'major advancement' and ask people to 'strengthen the parliamentary democratic system' and 'press for

electoral reforms', to 'strengthen the foundation pillars of the Constitution', to put pressure on the government through popular struggles to 'shift the focus of economic reforms from being solely preoccupied with corporate profit towards people's welfare', and in carrying forward the popular struggles to translate the 'Constitution's content into reality' with a view to marching towards a society where exploitation of man by man ceases to exist. All these words they spend without mentioning a single on their class root.

## With the capitalists in political power, Indian revolution could not be anything other than anti-capitalist socialist revolution

Undeniably, such a duplicity in the name of Marxism, such an act bereft of a genuine class approach, creates grave concern among those true to Marxism. It exposes CPI(M) leaders themselves no doubt, but in the process generates serious confusion among people, raising questions about Marxism and Marxists. So it is incumbent that a correct appraisal of the economic-political-social-cultural scenario of India since independence is made at this stage.

Through the anti-British imperialist, national independence movement, India emerged as an independent country; the Indian national bourgeoisie which had assumed the dominant role, the leadership in the independence movement, usurped the state power. So India emerged as the sovereign bourgeois national state, as a republic nowhere beyond a bourgeois republic, the political structure of the Indian capitalist state. Its Constitution was meant, and continues to be so, to serve to protect, strengthen and run the state and its capitalist system, to provide the formal sanction of the rules and measures required for that. The Indian capitalists, which had already assumed the character of monopolists, became the ruling class with the sole objective of perpetrating and establishing firmly the rule of capitalism here. To characterize such a state as a bourgeois-landlord state by its "basic nature" with "bourgeois-landlord classes" assuming "the

leadership of the class rule in independent India under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie" would amount to ignoring the plain facts: first, in any mixed phenomenon with different forces acting upon, the Marxists characterize it by the dominant force which determines its principal contradiction; second, in the context of Indian state, who are these big bourgeoisie other than the Indian monopolists, or who are these landlords other than their rural counterparts, or, the fact that it is these Indian capitalists-monopolists that play the dominant role by holding the state power they captured with independence, whatever be the other forces, if any at all, that might have carried on as hangovers of feudalism; third, such a capitalist state cannot be anything other than the "the instrument for exploiting wage-labor by capital" as Engels envisaged; and consequently and fourth, in the class-divided society of India, the exploited toiling people, the working class, the landless labourers and poor peasantry of the villages, the petit bourgeoisie face the task of overthrowing this capitalist-monopolist class from the state power by the stroke of the anti-capitalist revolution under the revolutionary leadership of the genuine working class party.

Marxists can never miss the invaluable Leninist principle, elaborated subsequently by great proletarian leaders like Stalin, Mao Zedong and Shibdas Ghosh, that characterization of a revolution and fixing its strategy involve finding out the right answer to the political question : which class is in the state power, against whom the revolution is to be directed and which class and classes are allied against this ruling class. To the extent the capitalists assume the state power in India, the Indian revolution is set against them as anti-capitalist socialist revolution only. Characterizing it as a people's democratic or any other brand of democratic revolution on the strength of feudal vestiges in agricultural economy, a plea often used by the proponents of democratic revolutions in India, also does not stand scrutiny on Leninist principle. Concentration of land in the hands of a few landowners or 'jotedars' and consequent rise of

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# Post-independence India marked the advent and consolidation of a bourgeois national state

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landless peasants and agricultural labourers, with the two being tied up in the irreconcilable antagonistic principal contradiction of the Indian society, that of the production relation between labour and capital, the agricultural economy changing from its feudal self-sufficient character to become a part and parcel of the national market with pricing, marketing and even production being controlled by the demands of the market set by the corporates, Indian or foreign, and motive force of production changing from consumption to profit making, all this attest to the firmly established capitalist character of the rural agricultural economy too. Hence, the Indian toiling people have none other than their capitalist state being ruled by the Indian capitalists, to fight against for their emancipation from exploitation.

Any attempt to circumvent these truths, and to perform a jugglery of words like 'bourgeois-landlord state with bourgeois-landlord classes assuming the leadership of the class rule under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie' or to ask people to strengthen the Republic, its Constitution or the pillars of Indian state, or even to set their tasks at accomplishing this or that kind of democratic revolution, be it a people's democratic or national democratic or new democratic revolution, does simply mean concealing and thus protecting the monopolist-capitalist class that rule the Indian state in reality. We are fully aware that CPI(M), or rather, most of the various factions of the undivided CPI, are no longer interested in and concerned about bringing about a revolution in India. Foreranking leaders of CPI(M) are often explicitly giving vent to this attitude of theirs. But the fact is that a section of left-minded people is still under the spell of confusion created from their jargons and tends to take their words in all seriousness. Clearly by their theories, the capitalist class which, being seated in power of the Indian state, is bleeding people white, becomes the ally, the friend of the people's democratic revolution of CPI(M). The enemy of people thus becomes a friend in their brand of revolution. This is what is meant by their revolutionary theory! This is

how their theory of revolution falls flat!

The ruling Indian capitalists did not refrain from taking every possible means to consolidate and strengthen their rule of capitalist exploitation, right from the word go on the day of independence. Their goal was to achieve industrial development and emerge as a powerful capitalist country. But they were already crisis-ridden; their monopolist character attested to that. Added to it, in those post-world war days, the world capitalism had entered their third general phase of intense economic crisis. So the more the Indian state consolidated capitalism, the severer was its exploitation, the more the common people were impoverished losing purchasing capacity at every moment. The crisis-ridden Indian capitalism faced greater and greater intense internal market crisis. The all-out crisis of world capitalism dogged Indian capitalist society too. No panacea of planned economy, or the slogan of socialistic pattern of society with a view to cashing upon people's sentiment for socialism, or the palliative for the restive people in the parliamentary system of governance, the so-called "major achievement", none of these could prevent widening of "social inequalities", namely worsened "plight of the deprived" and "mass poverty" on one hand, and immense concentration of private capital, development of state capital, fusion of the two into state monopoly capital and financial oligarchy on the other, thereby laying the economic base of fascism.

There were thus "two Indias in the making" as lament the CPI(M) leaders, a process that deepened and aggravated with what is known as globalization-liberalization towards the end of the last century. The Indian monopolists frantically looking for external market, to make up for the loss of internal market, now exported their finance capital to weaker developing countries, even advanced capitalist ones. Thus attaining the imperialist character, to start with as a junior partner of the world imperialist system, but now aspiring to emerge as a regional superpower, they took up the chance of sharing the global market and set out for accentuated economic reforms at the behest of the imperialist powers and

institutions like the World Bank, IMF etc. The result has been simply devastating for people. Over and above the already existing spiraling price-hike and sickening height of unemployment, the entire economic panorama of the country bleed with closure of indigenous industries, perishing of middle and small scale industries and trades, the much trumpeted disinvestments meaning handing over of public sector industries to the Indian or foreign capitalists at throwaway prices, closure, lock-out, merger of industries, leading to retrenchment, forced retirements, slicing of work force, freezing of recruitment, promotion and wages, penetration of indigenous and foreign MNCs into agro-economy with a firm grip on pricing and marketing of agro-products, all this come down heavily upon none other than the already suffering common people, only to the benefit of the handful minority of ruling capitalists-monopolists. Added to these, is rampant commercialization of service sectors leading to vital services like education, health, power, water supply, housing etc., receding beyond the reach of common people.

Economic measures are paralleled with political-administrative-judicial measures to curb movements and minimum democratic rights of toiling people. Labour laws are amended only to the detriment of the workers; bans are imposed on Bandhs etc.; democratic movements on minimum economic demands are ruthlessly crushed by brute force. All this are designed to concentrate power in the hands of administration-bureaucracy on one hand and bulldoze any and every opposition and resistance to the capitalist rule and exploitation, on the other.

## **Centralization of economy and concentration of administrative-political power marked the design for fascism**

Centralization of economy and concentration of administrative and political power with the outward constitutional and parliamentary frame kept intact, manifest the growing tendencies of fascism, that the ruling class is designing to establish. In keeping with this design, it is also trying to bring about a fusion of technological

aspects of science and religion, at the cost of true rational, scientific method of thinking, thus stoking up all sorts of obscurantist, irrational thoughts and ways of thinking, creating grounds for racial antagonism, communalism and national jingoism, in the end invoking a regimentation of the thought process, the cultural ambience for fascism to grow.

Characterization of this heart-rending devastation of people's life in face of the most cruel and grinding wheel of exploitation of the Indian capitalism, in which, the monopolists of the soil are making their doors wide open for the imperialists and their MNCs, only with the motive that they themselves get a liberal sanction for shares of global market, simply as 'being driven by an indiscriminate desire to integrate the country with the developed world, even if in a subordinate position', is nothing but a manoeuvre to cover up the increasing consolidation of imperialist role of the Indian monopolists with guarded words. Again describing the political scenario with such words as 'wider anti-democratic ethos is generated by the big capital for greater capital accumulation and the demands of international finance capital' with the higher judiciary "reflecting its intolerance for the collective rights of the people", without precisely indicating how this political centralization of power and its brute use is making room for fascism to grow, is once more an attempt to keep the root of evils, the Indian capitalism behind the wings. With such tricks, no amount of wailing for the plights of the tribals or the womenfolk or the dalits, no amount of concern for rising spate of communalism - obscurantism, or for secularism, federalism, unity of people etc. would mean any seriousness of purpose.

## **With evasive, contradictory utterings CPI(M) only try to protect the ruling bourgeoisie**

Now, with this economic-political-social-cultural background in our view, we would like to place a few words on some important statements, analyses or conclusions of the leaders of CPI(M). The CPI(M) leaders lament for the 'lofty objectives contained in our

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## Abetted by ruling capitalists

# Spate of religious superstitions take menacing shape

The march of modern India into the twenty first century of cyber age nose-dives at the beaches of Arabian Sea on August 20, 2006. Thousands of local people, seeking respite from their intolerable condition of daily miseries thronged the Mahim Beach at Mumbai after reports erupted that saline sea water had become 'holy' as it tasted sweet. The rapidly spread rumour was that this 'miracle' was on account of the blessings of Baba Mukhdoom whose mosque is situated in its vicinity. Similar happenings were also reported from Valsad district of Gujarat. Throwing all senses and reasons in air, people flocked in thousands to collect and drink the murky, highly polluted water of the beach. Within twenty four hours of this, a fresh spurt of hysteria was observed across UP, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and West Bengal where there was reportedly re-enactment of the episode of 1995 when the deities of lord *Ganesh* were noticed to be drinking milk on offer. Only difference was that previously it was only *Ganesh* but this time the divine grace was manifest in the idols of all other gods of Hindu religion like *Shiva*, *Durga* and so forth. And in tandem, someone spotted tears rolling down the cheeks of Mother Mary's portrait in a church. Once more the rationality and scientific outlook took back seat, thus exposing us to the reality that at a time when India is contemplating to send man on moon, its multitude is still groping in abject darkness of superstitions and blind faith.

### No miracle but science

Immediately after the incidents came to light, scientists and people with scientific outlook provided simple explanation of these 'startling' but natural phenomena on the basis of elementary principles of Physics. Scientists from IIT-Bombay and Institute of Oceanography opined that, due to heavy rain that was incessantly pouring over Mumbai for the last few days, a large volume of fresh rain water caught within the underground rocks near the coast was discharged into the sea because of widening of fractures in rocks. Being less dense, the fresh sweet water rose above the sea water and spread along the coast. This lowered the salt content of water over a large stretch which was to remain sweet as long as fresh water kept on

discharging into the sea. In course of time the fresh water would mix with sea water and become saline. Similarly, deities drinking milk had been explained with the help of high school level Physics like surface tension, capillary action and viscosity, some of the basic properties of liquids. It could be recalled that in 1995, some of the scientists demonstrated that if the liquid offered is kerosene and deity is of a metal body, the intake would be much faster because of better capillary action. Likewise, paraffin if applied on a portrait would melt and ooze down if kept exposed for a while. But clearly, the frenzy surrounding this 'supernatural phenomenon' was way too great to pay any heed to reasoning. As a matter of fact, these scientific explanations were never given enough publicity or brought before the masses in any earnest. The media, especially the electronic media, in search of 'breaking news', highlighted more on the frenzied activities of the superstitious believers, collecting and drinking sea water or jostling in the temples with bucketful of milk rather than exposing the hoax in the light of science. In fact, they blew the entire episode out of all proportions shunning all responsibility to uphold the scientific truth of the event, to a large extent fuelling the craze instead by airing exclusive coverage round the clock.

### Such incidents are not in short supply

Hysterical action based on blind faith, obscurant ideas and often religious fanaticism devoid of any logic and rationality is nothing new in India. Apart from *Ganesh* drinking milk in 1995, wearing of so-called sanctified amulet for fulfilling wishes, reliance on charms and spells, practice of exorcism, sacrificial rites to invite monsoon under the patronage of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), carrying out of *Sati*, burning alive women folk suspected of performing witchcraft and even human sacrifices etc. are increasing at a galloping speed. Role of the bourgeois government is most condemning in all these cases. Flouting all the constitutional vows to uphold secularism and democracy, instead of helping foster scientific spirit and rational outlook, the government either covertly or

overtly has been encouraging spread of irrationality, revivalist thoughts, bigotry, superstitions and religious fanaticism. Self-proclaimed god men are found to be mentors of even prime ministers of the land. So, it is no surprise for such a government to introduce astrology and *Purohitantra* (the performance deals of religious acts and rites by Hindu priests) in university curriculum, black magic, and weird and superstitious tribal practices in school-college syllabi. To avoid being questioned of their motives, the ruling bourgeoisie and its servitors carry out the whole thing in the name of ancient culture and age-old, revered tradition of India. Not only BJP-RSS or Congress-led governments, CPI(M), CPI run governments are also found equally adept in endorsing many of such mentalities and performing many Hindu-religious customs like lighting of lamp etc. without any qualm.

### Deep rooted bourgeois conspiracy behind fomenting 'divinity'

Such acts of '*divine spectacular*' are not isolated phenomena; nor are they simple stunts of some cheats or imposters seeking to make some quick money exploiting people's ignorance of natural science, just the way some priests or sorcerers of bygone days used to stultify people by performing tricks. Even today, instances are galore where self-proclaimed demi-gods are deceiving even so-called educated by flaunting, what they call, their supernatural (!) power. There is a much deeper conspiracy behind it. Backward thinkings, age-old obsolete creeds, vulgar religious customs, blindness, religious fanaticism, resigning to faith, affirmation in astrology, and palmistry are being made to permeate fast across all sections of people. Instead of facing reality, frustration and challenges escape to divinity to seek solace is becoming commonplace, our national character taking self-respect and self-confidence to dip into an all time low. The dominance of the *Babas* and *Gurus* in the mental world is now so supreme that not only illiterate people even a sizeable number of educated middle and upper-middle class are running after the so-called saints and sages for blessings and shaping their destiny.

Dependence on one's own will is fast dwindling; reasoning faculty, rationality and self-confidence are getting dissipated. In such a milieu it is only obvious that people will run for anything that hold promise for redemption. Even many of those who practice analytical methodology and inquisitiveness in their profession and are supposed to lead the masses out of their slumber, are themselves succumbing to the derogatory ambience and failing miserably in the outside world. It is on these enchanting fringes that the ruling Indian bourgeoisie . is working its stratagem as an inalienable part of decadent moribund crisis-ridden capitalism seeking to provide extra lease of life to its exploiting class rule by retrograding the mental process and dehumanizing people

### Inherent weakness of Indian freedom struggle

As we have mentioned above, the root cause of all these aberrations like each and every phenomenon lies in the given socio-political context. On critical inspection we can unearth the same. The source of rampant prevalence of superstitions and obscurantism in the mindset of the Indian populace, educated or uneducated, rich or poor alike, can be traced back into the feudal pasts of India and in the inherent weakness in the anti-British freedom struggle, because of its failure to integrate the tasks of the socio-cultural movements with the political programme.

It may be recalled that science went into total eclipse during the dark medieval age due to the domination of monarchy and religious influence overshadowing the human mind. Since science tried to explain all phenomena in a material way and sought to reveal the causal relation among the various phenomena, it was a powerful weapon against supernaturalism, religious prejudices, fanaticism etc. and hence poised to weaken the ethical and moral foundation of monarchical rule. That is why, science was not only restricted in its development but also put into shackles in this period. It was only after the medieval period of human history that science again stepped up on the scene with its full glory and grandeur. Endowed with the spirit of

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# Indian monopolists tend to build up fascism to avert insurmountable all-out crisis

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Constitution are prevented from being translated into reality by the class rule that exists in the country'. The Indian Constitution being that of a bourgeois state, were not those 'lofty objectives' really some empty words, hoax at bottom, and dirty tricks to cover up the real class motive? Why not the CPI(M) leaders admit that? What sort of class rule is it that exists in the country? Why do not they specify it? What made the ruling class prevent from translating the lofty objectives of the Constitution into reality? Why are the CPI(M) leaders not explicit on it? In the publication under discussion, the CPI(M) leaders have cried hoarse at the widening of 'social inequalities' on account of 'relentless economic reforms' and at 'two Indias' 'in the making'. But who is responsible for this? Who is bringing in those 'reforms'? They keep mum on that. They do not admit that it is the intense antagonistic contradiction between labour and capital, it is the ruthless capitalist exploitation that creates such conditions. And how would people find the remedial measures so long as the force or forces responsible remain in power and continue to rule over the hapless, unorganized people? Is it not the revolution to overthrow them from power the only means by which people can thwart these attacks? Why do not CPI(M) spell that out? When poverty has become a grueling menace every moment, those leaders of CPI(M), the writers, rest content with the sort of a casual remark: 'even mass poverty has not been successfully tackled'. Leave aside 'successfully', has it been tackled at all? They say a "wider anti-democratic ethos is generated by the big capital for greater capital accumulation and the demands of international finance capital": is it not then capitalist rule and exploitation that is generating the "anti-democratic ethos"? Then why do not they wage struggle against this capitalist rule? They hold that even the "higher judiciary" has joined the bandwagon against the working class. A Marxist knows it clearly and makes it clear to people that judiciary, like any other permanent state organs, is also never above class. The present attitude of the judiciary manifests that. Thus when the ruling class and its system totters with crisis, judiciary is often

coming out bluntly and unhesitatingly in support of the ruling class going against people's interest and even jurisprudence itself, shedding apart the minimum relative independence, the relative neutrality it once used to bear. CPI(M) leaders complain that 'industries and services are being handed over to the bourgeoisie, including the foreign MNCs'; but do they bring it home to people that with what class motive the capitalists are doing these and what programmes of struggles against those capitalists, the CPI(M) even contemplate? The CPI(M) leaders say: "the state power is seeking to reverse whatever rudimentary land reforms have taken place". But they do not add, why? Why cannot the peasants hold back their lands, that they came to own from the land reforms? Is it not on account of the cruel capitalist exploitation, prevailing and pervading even in agricultural economy? Then is not this process an inevitable consequence of the rule of the capitalist class in state power? Why do not the leaders then spell out what the state power is in India?

Instead they ask people to strengthen the parliamentary democracy. Well! Have not they themselves said that the 'landlord/dominant caste forces seek to shut out the dalits and the poorest in the rural areas in many places from voting, by violent means'? Do not people themselves find to what depth this parliamentary system has degraded itself, and has become a dungeon of corruption and career, a den of squabbles and opportunist hobnobbing? Is not the election process managed outright by crores of rupees of black money of the monopolists as also by the muscle of mafia who no longer help the parties but have now assumed the leadership in many cases? Does not a large section of media, print or electronic, again sponsored and fuelled by the monopolists set up the stage to artificially project or discard this or that parliamentary party at the beckoning of the class? Why are the CPI(M) leaders silent about the governments' promulgating one act or provision after another to make the election process so money-consuming and otherwise fettered as to make the parties of poorer section of the masses that uphold people's real voice, debarred from it? Is it not

the reality that most of the smaller regional bourgeois parties have to tow themselves for their mere existence, with one or the other of the two major alternatives, that the ruling class is trying to project? Then how do they negate the process of implementing the two-party system as the CPI(M) leaders hold, which the ruling class is trying to establish as the last prop to put up a face of democracy on the surface, while they try all means to establish fascism in reality? Has not the election campaigning been reduced to the process of fomenting communalism, regionalism or such other seeds of disunity that make people pitted against one another or simply to the process of mutual brickbating or even personal slandering, in place of raising any serious political questions or issues? Has not the menacing trend of rigging elections, with the help of brute force or administration, turned into an added danger? Thus election having been made a farce and vile business, people are disenchanted and dejected. Yet, since the real revolutionary alternative is yet to gain ground all over the country, the helpless common people queue up with the feelings of despair and discontent to perform their sacred duty of electing their representatives. The said CPI(M) said leaders consider multi-party system 'crop up and proliferate, testifying to the vitality of the system'? Is it not amply clear to people how these parties come up from the greed of power, from regional, sectarian interests or such others? Do they testify vitality at all? Are CPI(M) leaders at all concerned about such a debased nature of the bourgeois parliamentary system today, whose only function has been to strengthen the strangulating exploitative rule of capitalism run in the name of maintaining democracy, with this or that party in charge?

So, we would like to drive this point home to our readers that the front-ranking leaders of CPI(M) have written these articles in their bid to observe the occasion of the anniversary of the Indian bourgeois republic. Is the way in which they have dwelt upon many vital issues of the socio-economic-political life of the country, by any means, the Marxist way of analysis? No, it is not. A Marxist recognizes exploitation only with a view to

putting an end to. And a Marxist recognizes that in a class divided society no exploitation can be ended with, without overthrowing the perpetrator, the exploiter, the ruler of the state, not the government, but the class itself which controls the state power with all its permanent organs like military, bureaucracy and judiciary. It is a class outlook and only class outlook which guides the Marxists in all their analyses. Then, how is it that the CPI(M) leaders speak of the class rule, its effect on people, of class exploitation, or even characterize the Indian set-up as the capitalist system and yet set the final tasks for the people in strengthening the very same republic, the very same constitution and the parliamentary democracy that the ruling Indian capitalists have prepared, founded, amended, flouted or utilized to hoodwink their own people only with the goal of further consolidating the brute ruthless exploitative capitalist rule of the country? Are not all these analyses of CPI(M) then mere distortions, shameless practice of falsehood, particularly in view of the fact that CPI(M) leaders pose themselves as champions of Marxism? Why do they do it then?

## Why does CPI(M) tread this path : Lenin, on social democracy, has the answers

Before we try to find the answer, we quote at length from Lenin, the great leader of Proletariat and the architect of the November Revolution in Soviet Union. While discussing state and revolution, he opined: "What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary

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# Capitalism can not be ended without putting an end to social democracy

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theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it. **Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism.** They omit, obscure, or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. ...

"... the "Kautskyite" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing above society and "alienating itself more and more from it", it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent

revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation"....

"...The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this "more" from universal suffrage. **They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage "in the present-day state" is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realization.**" (*The State and Revolution : emphasis ours*)

This is how Lenin thought about 'all the social-chauvinists and opportunists', the social democrats of his time, that pertains precisely in the same vein to the opportunists

and social democrats of the present day too. In view of this scathing Marxist analysis by Lenin, we should add that here lies the answer why CPI(M) and its leaders have treaded this path of falsehood, distortion and deception. It is plainly expected from them. Why would not they do it so? Being social democrats all through their history, they have rotten perfectly in tune with the rot of the capitalist system itself. So, as the system plunged into deeper and deeper crisis over all aspects of life, CPI(M), a part and parcel of the system, has slid downwards in their opportunist, social democratic role. Bankrupt in politics, they now hinge heavily for their survival on the system and its ruling class. The more they face their own doom, the more they cling to their role of subservience to the ruling Indian monopolists. Presently added to it is the fact that, while the aspirant Indian ruling class makes moves to

increasingly 'integrate' with the 'developing world', that is the imperialists, CPI(M) too now feels the compulsion to crave for the blessings of the imperialists.

It is precisely this motive that prompted CPI(M) to publish their coveted issue of People's Democracy as eulogy to the Indian republic. They are hell bent to protect the ruling class from the wrath of people and not to help people identify their real enemy, by catering all their analysis with all sorts of muddled phrases, contradictory statements and even falsehood. So there was this orchestrated publication. It clearly and adequately exposes bare the real face of the social democratic character of CPI(M). We are aware that history has repeatedly given its correct verdict on all brands of social democrats and their treacheries. We are sure that CPI(M) will also receive its dues. It is now only a matter of time.

## Spate of religious superstitions take menacing shape

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bourgeois renaissance and driven by the evergrowing urge of social necessity of the corresponding time, there was unprecedented advancement of science. It was not only to meet the material need of the society. With an object of fulfilling the spiritual necessity, it also meant freeing human mind from the pernicious influence of religion and churchdom and mould it towards rationalism and objective world. This epoch of rising capitalism or industrial revolution, following the breakdown of feudal society through abolition of monarchy and feudal social order is marked in the history as a period of stupendous progress of science, both material and spiritual. The rising bourgeoisie was then patronizing science and scientific outlook in its great stride ahead.

But capitalism could not retain its position as the social stimulus for science for long, because of its inherent contradiction which gradually intensified and became irreconcilable. The worldwide victory of capitalism over feudalism brought the capitalist class face to face against the proletariat in whom it saw the harbinger of its doom. So long as the bourgeoisie as a class

was favouring the growth of science, it declared crusade against all backward mystic supernatural irrational thoughts. But from the time capitalism became ridden with insoluble crisis endemic of the system, became moribund decadent reactionary and haunted by the fear complex of anti-capitalist revolution, it begun obstructing the progress of science and society and striking compromise with discarded anti-science thoughts.

In the light of the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader, teacher and guide, we have discussed on a number of occasions that since Indian capitalism grew and developed at a time when internationally capitalism had lost all its progressive character and became out and out reactionary, the nationalist movement that started around later part of the nineteenth century, with the emerging Indian bourgeoisie at its helm, was not completely uncompromising against obsolete feudal thinkings and fads. As this newly developed Indian capitalist class led the freedom struggle against the British, it compromised with religion on the questions of social and cultural values and advocated a fusion of humanist values with the traditional

ancient and feudal ideas. Therefore, importance of fostering secular and scientific outlooks as part of democratization of the society was severely undermined, outdated thinking prevailed and religious revivalism took hold of the mainstream political movement, religious fanaticism and fundamentalism remained strong, superstitions and obscurant thinking thronged.

### Post-independence scenario

With the Indian bourgeoisie assuming state power after independence, pandering to superstitions, unscientific beliefs and practices went on increasing, as haunted by the fear complex of anti-capitalist revolution, the ruling capitalists wanted the people to languish in a mental world bereft of scientific inquisitiveness and logical coherent thought process. Here we would like to recall the brilliant analysis of Comrade Ghosh in regard to characterization of fascism. He said, "Fascism is peculiar fusion of spiritualism and science. The adoption of the technological aspect of science in its bid to develop the economic and military might of the fascist state and the dishing out of all sorts of anti-science religious fads and

idealistic jugglery as the panacea for all the ills that are concomitant evils of the exploiting capitalist system and the present society, go together in the name of national culture and heritage. Fascist culture is thus a queer admixture of scientific or truthful and illusory elements. ....The aim is to turn the mental process of the people from the scientific path of causality to the mystic alley of blind faith, misconception and obscurantism, ultimately developing contempt for social action." (Call of the hour, Selected Works, Vol. II, p-58) That is why on one hand have come up technical institutes like IIT and research bodies like CSIR, DST, ICHR etc. while on the other anti-science fads like religion, obscurantism, mysticism, irrationality etc. are perpetrated through the entire formal and informal educational process, all forms of recreation and the media. A state of complete anarchy is thus found to exist in the ideological and intellectual domain. Thus we see with each passing day, as the capitalist rule becomes more grinding, in face of absolute uncertainty in life and total lack of sense of security, the rulers are

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## Spate of religious superstitions

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forcibly pushing people to depend on fatalism and spiritualism. Rather than organizing themselves against the exploitative capitalist rule for revolutionary struggle, in absence of immediate sight of relief, people too are getting inclined towards supernatural beliefs having no other recourse. Even the educated minds have become victim of all these retrograde ideas and rotten practices. It has now become usual, almost normal to depend on astrology to determine ones own future, even to expect divine interventions for successful outcome of scientific results in laboratories!

### Despicable role of the government

The role played by government in this saga of 'sweet' sea water or renewed craze of feeding milk to idols has to be understood in this backdrop. Other than issuing some half-hearted warnings, the government did almost nothing to prevent people from drinking highly polluted water or to stop wasting thousands of gallons of milk. It had, instead, kept ready a few hospital beds knowing well that far from healing and relieving pain, physical or mental, people consuming the muddy contaminated sea water (a substantial quantity of drain water and industrial wastes are carried into the Mahim seashore through overflowing *Mithi* river during rainy season) and would soon fall sick. Actually, any government subserving the class interest of the ruling bourgeoisie arraying all its arsenal to keep people plunged into stupor of ignorance to keep the real cause of their impoverishment and destitution obfuscated before them, never intends to stop this euphoria because it knows that groaning under the yoke of accentuating ruthless capitalist exploitation, the toiling people, irrespective of religious faith desperately seek some relief, some succour. Lest this craving coupled with the seething anger against utter deprivation in every walk of life crystallize into a united organized movement and surge forth and gradually got transformed into revolutionary struggle to uproot the real cause of their exploitation and plight, it in fact in pursuance of the class-design of its masters encourages occasional sprouting of such incidents of 'divine miracle' so

that the unconscious masses could release the anguish and frustration of daily anxiety, defeat and uncertainty in life as well as blind faith and infirmity are further entrenched in their mind. This is what lurks behind the scene. To those who are reeling under abject poverty and malnutrition, faced with the grievous prospect of lock-out, lay-off and retrenchment and having no immediate hope of any solution to end to their plight, the only solace the government thus offers is in the form of such miraculous (!) supernatural (!) sensations. The ruling bourgeoisie, its caretaker government and pliant media make every effort to see that people are plunged in the dungeon of superstitious practices and spiritualism and unquestioning acceptance of predetermined dogma in order to stultify their thinking faculty and bring about regimentation in mind thus immune to logic and reason. Thus the fascist machination is operative in full swing.

### Free science from the clutches of capitalism

So in order to combat the situation, the long term object is to free science, the hand-maiden of civilization, from the clutches of the fascist rulers. So long as capitalism is there, critical appraisal of situations and events on the anvil of logic and reason free from any preconception and the spirit of inquiry will continue to be discouraged and instead people will be increasingly pushed towards meek acceptance of all aberrations, penury, and misery as foretelling of star signs, or having been divinely ordained. So it is imperative to overthrow exploiting strangulating capitalism to save humanity and civilization, to free human mind from the shackles of backward rubbish thoughts. The more the anti-capitalist movement developed on the edifice of higher proletarian ethics and culture gathers momentum, the faster the human mind will be freed from all these obscurantist thoughts and superstitious beliefs. And the immediate task of all right thinking men particularly scientists, technologist and scientifically conscious people is to roll out a concrete conscious social movement to foster scientific bent of mind that would ultimately conduce to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement.

## Huge pay and parks hike for MPs

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Comrade Mukherjee, that while the bourgeois parties offering a lucrative career to their members by charting out passage to the legislative houses are elated over the government's announcement, the CPI(M), CPI also, apart from customary murmuring for public consumption via bourgeois media, are showing no genuine will to oppose the motion despite commanding sufficient numerical strength on the floor of the House and providing crucial support to the government for its survival.

During the days of advent of democracy, legislative membership, recalled Comrade Mukherjee, was viewed as a patriotic duty and selfless voluntary honorary service to the country and hence tested and tried persons of character imbued with true patriotic spirit were found to come out to discharge this noble responsibility to the nation. Even during the days our country was in ferment against British imperial rule, self-less freedom fighters surcharged with genuine patriotic fervour came forward to render this great service to the motherland. But now in the era of all-out decay in the bourgeois system, membership to the legislative bodies in capitalist India, pointed out Comrade Mukherjee, has become, so to say, a kind of roaring

profession fetching thicker pay packets, bunch of lucre, free conveyance and air travel, a host of other reimbursements and plethora of other financial benefits including special allowances for attending various parliamentary committee meetings, parliament sessions and so forth. Moreover, the government is creating a number of key posts in various sponsored bodies and organizations, now being referred to as 'office of profit', for being occupied by the members of legislatures and thereby be additionally benefitted through avalanche of special benefits associated with these out-of-the-ordinary positions. It is being agued, stated Comrade Mukherjee, that such hefty compensations are provided to dissuade the legislators from indulging in malpractices. But the fact is that, regretted Comrade Mukherjee, despite all such abundance of benefits; the so-called representatives of the people are increasingly getting plunged into limitless scams, corruption and malpractices of all kinds.

Comrade Mukherjee, therefore, called upon the countrymen to build up strong public opinion against such a despicable move on the part of the UPA government to aggrandize the already privileged.

### India's poor little MPs

Basic salary	—	Rs 16,000 per month
Constituency allowance	—	Rs 20,000 per month
House allowance for attending sessions and meetings—Rs 1,000		
Pension for ex-MPs	—	Rs 6,000 per month
Housing— Bungalows	—	Worth Rs 1 lakh per month
Rental paid	—	Rs 2,500 per month
Medical expenses	—	All paid by government
Power	—	Free upto 50,000 units
Water	—	Free upto 4,000 kilolitres
Telephone	—	Upto 1.7 lakh free calls
A mobile connection and free second mobile		
Office expenses	—	Rs 1, 68, 000 per year
Travel allowance	—	Rs 13 per km
Free air tickets	—	34
Air travel	—	Rs 6 lakh per year
Air travel allowance	—	Rs 1.5 lakh
Train travel	—	Unlimited
<b>Yearly cost to exchequer for salary and perks of a MP = Rs 38 lakh</b>		
<b>Cost to Country</b>	—	<b>Rs 300 crore per year for 790 MPs</b>
		(Vide <i>Times of India</i> , August 28, 2006)

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