

# Proletarian Era

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**Tehelka dot com exposes**

## UGLY FACE OF BJP-RSS

On March 13 last, Tehelka dot com website, at a crowded press conference in New Delhi, screened video tapes the contents of which startled the country. The video tapes had been shot by hidden cameras carried by Tehelka staff who had posed as dealers in defence materials and offered a fictitious contract for supplying high quality binoculars to the army and recorded the conversations and dealings the Tehelka staff had about the deal with a number of politicians belonging to the ruling NDA, senior bureaucrats and army officers over a considerable length of time. This exercise was given the name "Operation West End" by Tehelka. The tapes showed politicians, bureaucrats and army officers freely accepting bribes or discussing about receiving bribes in exchange for piloting the offer so that the "deal" for the binoculars could be clinched ! Besides a number of senior army officers and bureaucrats, Bangaru Laxman, the BJP president, was photographed accepting money ; payment of money in the office of Samata Party president Jaya Jaitly was also recorded in the tapes ; payment of money to the Samata Party treasurer R.K.Jain was also shown. The Tehelka

transcript has it that Rs. 1 lakh was paid to Bangaru Laxman at his house on 5.1.2001 ; Jaya Jaitly was paid Rs. 2 lakh last year in the house of defence minister George Fernandes ; R. K. Jain acts as the front of George Fernandes and Jaya Jaitly in such deals ; R. K. Jain inter alia says, there is 100% guarantee that George Fernandes' approval can be obtained for any deal concerning his ministry ; for deals in Mamata Banerjee's railway ministry, the guarantee is 70%. The transcript also makes frequent references to Ranjan Bhattacharya, Prime Minister Vajpayee's foster son-in-law, Brajesh Mishra, National Security Adviser and the Principal Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and other senior officers of the PMO as having role in fixing such deals.

The bribes paid by Tehelka staff posing as night vision binocular suppliers did not amount to much, being a small gift for securing defence contract, for the scenario of prevalent rampant corruption associated with the procurement of defence material that emerged from the series of conversations recorded by secret Tehelka camera is bizarre and horrifying : Crores of rupees

exchange hands as commission or bribe in awarding defence contracts as a matter of course; Jaya Jaitly acts as the front of defence minister George Fernandes for collecting money paid as illegal gratification; if Bangaru Laxman puts in a good word about some aspiring supplier to Brajesh Mishra, and if Mishra gets interested and issues instruction, then award of the contract to that party is certain; Mishra and Ranjan Bhattacharya regularly act as contract "fixers".

In the ensuing commotion, BJP president Bangaru Laxman admitted that he had accepted the money for "party funds", and resigned at once. On March 15, George Fernandes and Jaya Jaitly had to quit. On the same day, Mamata Banerjee, Union railway minister who has also been implicated in Tehelka tapes, resigned in "protest" against government "inaction" in the face of Tehelka disclosures of corruption !

In the meantime, Tehelka have asserted that they have "conclusive" evidence of PMO's involvement in defence deals and that they would soon make public the next set of video tapes. Mathew Samuel, a Tehelka reporter who participated in the "Operation West End", has alleged that the Tehelka have concrete proof against the home ministry in a Rs. 1300 crore defence deal with an Israeli firm for border fencing communications system in which a part of the total commission of about 25% (Rs. 325 crore) has already been paid.

Questions are being motivatedly raised by the BJP-led ruling NDA circles and the monopoly press as to whether the Tehelka effort represents honest journalism or whether it is a conspiracy hatched by interested quarters, the political opponents of the BJP, to discredit and malign the BJP-led government. The Sangh Parivar even sees the hands of an international conspiracy (meaning a conspiracy engineered by Pakistan through its

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### AGAINST GLOBALISATION

## Rajbhavan Dharna and Secretariat March In Trivandrum

On 23 March, the memorial day of Bhagat Singh, the immortal martyr at the altar of people's uncompromising struggle for justice, freedom from imperialist onslaughts and all sorts of exploitation, SUCI Kerala State Committee organized a Rajbhavan Dharna and Secretariat March in Trivandrum. This marked the culmination of a month-long campaign all over the State against the out and out anti-people policy of globalization and its latest manifestations in the form of Central and State budgets. Hundreds of toiling people from all walks of life assembled before the Rajbhavan in a massive Dharna which started with an address by Comrade C. K. Lukose, Secretary, Kerala State Committee. A resolution demanding the immediate resignation of Vajpayee government which has lost all moral right to stay in power following the revelations of Tehelka dot com about the anti-national role of top NDA functionaries in defence deals, was unanimously passed by the meeting. Comrade V.

Venugopal, member, State Secretariat of the party and Comrade B.K. Rajagopal, member, State Committee also spoke in the meeting, which was chaired by Comrade A. Jalaluddin, State Secretariat member.

Comrade Lukose in short inaugural address said that the policy of globalization is causing havoc in all spheres of life of the common man while it ensures unbridled opportunities for the monopolies, Indian as well as foreign, to squeeze out the blood of the toiling people to its last drop. This demonstration is to give vent to the protest of the toiling millions and is part of the

*(Contd. on page 2)*



*Dharna before Rajbhavan in Trivandrum against anti-people globalisation policy of the Central and the state governments on 23rd March, 2001.*

## Anti-NATO Protest

All around Europe there have been protest meetings and demonstrations on the occasion of the second anniversary of the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia. First of all there had been a mass rally of about 15,000 in Belgrade and meetings in other towns like Aleksinac whose civilian quarters were destroyed by cluster bombs two years ago. In Europe International Leninist Current (ILC) promoted and participated in protests in Cesena (Italy), Vienna and Erfurt (Germany) and similar events have been reported from Berlin, Hamburg and Mannheim (Germany), Stockholm, Athens, Saloniki, London and even Toronto (Canada).

Belgrade saw the biggest mass turn-out against the new pro-imperialist government.

At the same time the protests in Europe

revealed a change in the public opinion. Many who tended to believe the Western propaganda and took a position of equidistance now, facing the Western occupation of Kosovo and the instigation of the war in South Serbia and Macedonia, discovered the lies and are becoming clearer about the imperialist character of the NATO intervention. Therefore many of the demonstrations were successful not only in regard to the participation (1000 for example in Cesena, 500 in Vienna and 400 in Stockholm) but also in regard to the political profile. NATO and the imperialist New World Order were clearly named as the aggressor, the main slogans were "NATO out of the Balkans and Yugoslavia — smash NATO" and the international anti-imperialist struggle was promoted.

## International Women's Day

### Assam

At the call of the Assam State Committee of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan on the occasion of the International Women's Day on 8 March, protest demonstration were held throughout the state against publication of obscene literature, posters and advertisements in TV, violence on women, in short, against degradation of womanhood in all spheres of life.

At Guwahati, a protest demonstration was held in front of the Doordarshan Kendra. A memorandum addressed to the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting was submitted through the Director, Doordarshan Kendra, Guwahati, by a deputation under the leadership of Comrades Chandralekha Das and Ina Hussain, the President and the Secretary of the Assam State Committee of the AIMSS, respectively.

At Silchar, too, a demonstration in front of the Doordarshan Centre, Silchar was held and similar memorandum was submitted.

In other districts of the State demonstrators were held in front of the D.C. office and memoranda through the D.C.s were sent.

## Rajbhavan and Secretariat March

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process of building up powerful democratic mass movement against all anti-people policies of Central and State Governments, Comrade Lukose declared while formally inaugurating the Dharna and the March. At 11 a.m. the protest March started from the Rajbhavan Gate to the Secretariat. The demonstrators holding aloft the red flags and placards shouted slogans against the anti-people globalization policies of the corrupt and communal BJP government at the Centre and pseudo left LDF government in the state. When the march reached the main gate of the Secretariat it turned into a huge protest meeting which was addressed by Comrade C.K. Lukose who in his speech, inter alia, stressed the need to build up people's resistance movements from the grass roots level so that one day people becoming conscious enough can themselves overthrow this stinking system and replace it with a higher social order.

### Hyderabad

On the occasion of the International Women's Day Hyderabad unit of AIMSS, organised a dharna in front of the Censor Board office on 8th March 2001.

Addressing the gathering Comrade Ch.Prameela, Secretary, A.P. State Organising Committee, strongly protested against the spread of obscenity through mass media. Comrade D. Swaroopa, Secretary, Hyderabad City Organising Committee said that obscenity in various forms is creating mental aberrations in the younger generation by provoking base instincts giving rise to psycho paths. Later the committee submitted a memorandum to the Minister Of Information and Broadcasting through the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. The demands raised in the memorandum were : 1. Ban of obscene advertisement in both print and electronic media. 2. Ban of obscene scenes, dialogues, songs, dances etc., in all media. 3. Total ban of F T.V. Channel immediately. 4. Exemplary punishment to all those responsible for production of obscene programmes. 5. Modification of guidelines of censor board and advertisement control council to control obscenity. 6. More power to the boards and council to strictly check the menace of obscenity. 7. Stringent action on the controlling boards/councils if they permit obscenity. 8. The womens' organisations and citizen's committees to be part of these boards and councils.



Demonstration against 'Miss Jamshedpur contest' on 8th March last.

## Privatisation : Post-haste

'Morning shows the day'. The following news in the February 2001 issue 'Silence', published from Paris, shows the bleak and bottomless dark prospect of privatisation of postal services in France.

"Today, French postal services is the exclusive distributor of all postal items below 350 gms. Now not only an EU directive will reduce it to below 150gms, but talks are already on to drastically restructure the entire French postal system, with the declared objective of retrenching 15000 employees, now in service. This will turn rural postal services completely topsy turvy: home deliveries to be purely and simply abolished, people will have to travel to the post offices to post and collect their mail...!"

And thanks to the vigorous push to privatisation by the BJP government in Delhi, and all other state governments in toe, and no less by West Bengal's CPI(M)-led 'leftist' government also, the goods will no doubt be soon delivered at our door too — and post haste!

## Movement against 'Miss Jamshedpur Contest' attains victory

'Miss Jamshedpur 2001' Contest scheduled to be held on 24th March last was abandoned in the face of organised protest. The AIMSS, AIDSO and AIDYO organised movements against this obscene contest and a deputation was given to the District Commissioner on 26th February last with the demand for its banning. On 8th March, the International Women's Day, the AIMSS organised meeting and processions in different places including Jamshedpur, Dhalbhumgarh and Rajnagar in protest against this obscene show. On the day of the contest, more than two hundred students, youth and particularly women congregated at the venue of the contest. There was a grim determination among them to thwart the obscene contest. The contest could not be held and the organisers announced the abandonment of the contest.

Comrade Sarala Mahato addressed the assembly and reminded them that the organised movement was the only answer to any injustice and the victory proved that once again.

On behalf of the Singhbhum District Committee of the SUCI, Comrade Sitaram Tudu thanked the people for this victory.

## The Union Budget and Education

# Deceptive Focus On Elementary Education

The Union Budget 2001-02 has once again displayed the usual pattern of expenditure cut, tax and duty reliefs for corporates and enhancement in the defence outlay. In addition, the speciality of this Budget is its anti-employment and anti-worker thrust. While these are bad enough, a close examination of the provisions for education reveals an equally alarming picture.

### A Deceptive Focus on Elementary Education

Whereas the expenditure on elementary education and literacy is budgeted to increase by Rs. 750.81 crores (23%) in 2001-02 as compared to 2000-01 (revised estimates), that on secondary and higher education is budgeted to decrease by Rs. 678.11 crore (13.3%). In all, a nominal increase of Rs. 72.7 crore over a total expenditure of Rs. 8350.73 crore or 1%. It is clear that while there is no overall increase in the outlay on education, there is also a shift of emphasis on literacy and elementary education at the cost of higher education.

But the importance given to elementary education is deceptive. This is evident from two observations. Firstly, the expenditure cut in the education budget of the previous year is clearly evident by comparing the budgeted plan outlays and the revised estimates of 2000-01. In elementary education and literacy, the expenditure shortfall was to the tune of Rs. 478.75 crore, over the budget figure of Rs. 3728.75 crore (13%). That is to say, elementary education paid part of the price for the Finance Minister to show a reduced fiscal deficit. Secondly, the dimensions of the role played by external funding in elementary education and literacy are astounding. Whereas the Central Plan outlay under this head is Rs. 4000 crore, the provision for externally aided projects is Rs. 1212.34 crore. That is to say, in over 30% of the Central spending on elementary education, foreign donors are associated with their loans and grants. The largest externally assisted programme among these is the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) (Rs. 1098 crore); the DPEP currently covers 219 districts in 15 states. The largest donor to the DPEP is the World Bank. The DPEP has been an extremely controversial programme and has faced stiff opposition from the AIDS, the All India Save Education Committee and the Janakiya Pratirodha Samiti (People's Resistance Committee) in Kerala.

The overall picture is therefore one of spending on education far below the requirement. The need for foreign funding and for private investment has arisen precisely because the government has never been able to allocate 6% of the GDP for education as required by the Kothari Committee in 1966. In fact, the expenditure on education as percentage of the GDP shows a decline from 4.34% to 3.63% in the first half of the nineties. Even for universal elementary education, the Saikia Committee had envisaged an

investment of Rs. 40,000 crore over a five year period, an amount that was increased to Rs. 63,000 crore subsequently by the Tapan Majumdar Committee. The All India Save Education Committee's demand has been that at least 10% of the Union Budget be allotted for education. Considering the total of elementary education and literacy, and secondary and higher education, the percentage works out to 2.49% in 2000-01 (revised estimates) and 2.24% in the Budget Estimates of 2001-02. The expenditure on police in the Home Ministry allocations added to the Defence Ministry allocations stands in contrast to the education figure. This military expenditure was 22.13% of the Revised Estimates of 2000-01 and is 22.11% of the Budget Estimates of 2001-02. The total allocation in education for this year (Rs. 7,570 crore) is less than the increase in military expenditure only (Rs. 7,589 Crore).

instalments will be released only after the Central and State shares of previous instalments reach the State implementation agency. States' financing commitments are to be established through written agreements with the Centre. The programme will definitely be derailed since States have an equally poor, if not poorer record than the Centre, of spending on education. But in the language of the programme guidelines, this is 'sustainable financing'!

The other important buzzword surrounding the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is 'institutional reforms' that states will have to carry out to qualify for Central assistance. The details are not clearly spelt out, but at least two phrases spell a potential danger: 'rationalisation of teacher deployment and recruitment of teachers' and 'policy regarding private schools'. From past experience, we would not be wrong in surmising that the thrust is to reduce the numbers of regular teachers in government schools and encourage the setting up of more private schools.

The norms of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan reveal its true nature as a low-investment programme that is destined to fail in its objective. In 1996, there were an estimated 89.64 million children in the age-group 6-14 who were out of school. For them, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan offers little more than various forms of non-formal education like the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) that was announced in the previous Budget. Under these schemes, village panchayats and Village Education Committees have to provide the school infrastructure and recruit an 'Educational Volunteer'. The Centre will then

provide between Rs. 4000 and Rs. 7400 (for lower and upper primary schools respectively) towards annual training and honorarium for the 'volunteer', equipment for the schools and Rs. 100-150 per student for textbooks. For schools that already exist, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan offers similar meagre amounts for maintenance and repair (Rs. 5000 per year), for replacement of school equipment (Rs. 2000 annually per school), teacher grant (Rs. 500 per teacher annually) supervision and monitoring (Rs. 1500 per school per year). Whereas shortage of school buildings and furniture is one of the biggest problems, the Abhiyan overcomes this by asking village communities without schools to provide 'space' and restricts civil works to 33% of the total programme funds to be spent on improvement of school facilities. The other components of civil works and furniture are the Block-level (Rs. 7 lakhs) and Cluster-level (Rs. 2 lakhs) Resource Centres which are to serve as teacher training centres. With these outlays, it is difficult to imagine the achievement of the lofty goal of the programme. The experience of one non-formal education scheme in Madhya Pradesh is an

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## DPEP in Kerala

Under the Left Democratic Front in Kerala, the controversial World Bank DPEP has spread to many more districts and upto Class VII. Indeed, there is widespread alarm that through its funding, the World Bank has been able to exercise inordinate control over education in the state and is able to translate its ideas on education into practice with the willing co-operation of the State Government. The DPEP curriculum and teaching methods have come in for strong criticism by parents and educationists alike. There is no rigour in the practice of reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead DPEP follows a teaching method of "learning through play" where the teacher has to play with students and local dialects rather than standard language (the latter is totally unnecessary in the context of Kerala). It is quite clear that this is an absurd educational experiment that is being attempted at a very fast pace with scant concern for its fall-out. Again, the DPEP is being implemented only in Government-aided schools. The result is that over a lakh of students have dropped out of these schools, according to news reports. Naturally, they would have shifted to private schools. Those who stay behind are destined to lose out in competition with their private school counterparts. On February 1st, thousands of parents and teachers under the banner of the Janakeeya Pratirodha Samiti (People's Resistance Committee) led by former Supreme Court judge V. R. Krishna Iyer marched to the Secretariat at Thiruvananthapuram demanding the withdrawal of DPEP from the state.

The present Union Budget therefore presents a picture of complete neglect of the secondary and higher education sectors, and a focus on elementary education with the help of foreign funds. This is what the Budget figures reveal.

### Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Rationalisation of Low Investment

The text of the Budget emphasises the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as a programme in Mission mode to universalise elementary education i.e. elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010. A reading of the guidelines of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan shows that it is little more than an accounting head that brings together the expenditure on various existing and separate elementary education programmes of the Central and State governments. The broad estimate of additional expenditure of Rs. 60,000 crores in five years is quoted, but the burden is increasingly passed on to the State Governments. Budgetary assistance for programmes and additional teacher salaries is to be shared on the pattern of (between Central and State governments) 85:15 during the Ninth Plan, 75:25 during the Tenth Plan, and 50:50 thereafter. New

# Eyewash Enquiry Commission — Ploy of Corrupt Bourgeois Governments

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spy organisation ISI) behind the Tehelka episode. Such questions and issues are irrelevant. All this is being done with an eye to confuse the people, to direct their attention away from the main issue of rampant corruption. The people should not be misled by this. They did not need a Tehelka to know that corruption permeates all aspects of bourgeois politics and government activities, including the defence purchases. What the Tehelka has done is to strikingly and palpably lay bare the ambient all-out corruption that prevails in the matter of defence contracts. Provision of enough commission or cut-money on defence purchases is also a contributory cause in the steep hike in defence expenditure allocation that we witness in every budget, raising the bogey that the nation is in danger.

The Tehelka disclosure shows that although relatively new entrants into positions of governmental power, the leaders of BJP and its associates have lost no time in taking to all-out corruption as a way of life just as the fish take to water. To them, corruption has become a way of life. It also shows that even senior members of the PMO are actively engaged in piloting shady, corrupt deals.

It is to be remembered that the present BJP-led government in Delhi has been installed in power with full backing of Indian monopoly capital which deems the BJP to be the best bet in the present situation to uphold its interest and class rule. So, if this government is put to serious discomfiture, it becomes a matter of concern to the ruling class. That is why a section of the big press, owed by monopoly capital, is busy suggesting to the Vajpayee government ways and means to keep its image relatively unharmed. It is being emphasised that the political opponents of the BJP like the Congress and CPI(M) are themselves guilty of numerous corrupt deals and scandals being in government, and so they have no business to level corruption charges against the BJP-led NDA government; it has been suggested that Vajpayee government should set up an enquiry commission to exonerate itself; again, Vajpayee is being advised to remove from the PMO one or two top notch persons who have gained notoriety through the Tehelka disclosure.

Firstly, since the erstwhile Congress governments were guilty of the Bofors and the HDW submarine deal scandals and the CPI(M)-led West Bengal government of the Alipur Treasury scandal or the Wakf property scandal, just to name one or two, how do their crimes in any way absolve the corrupt misdeeds of Vajpayee government uncarthed by Tehelka tapes? How can the misdeeds of one be anyway justified by the misdeeds of others?

Secondly, the Vajpayee government has announced that a one-man judicial enquiry commission will be set up to probe Tehelka disclosures. What is the necessity to probe and investigate what is palpable and has been clearly shown on the videotapes and so already stands proved? It is a common ploy used by corrupt bourgeois governments in the country to form an enquiry commission when there is serious commotion on an issue in order to pacify and cool

down the people and then trust on the proverbial short public memory to ensure that the issue is forgotten. The enquiry commission report, even if submitted, may never see the light of the day or else may be so doctored as to exonerate the guilty (remember the BJP appointed Wadhwa Commission's Report on the Staines murder case in Orissa?). The people have had bitter experience of numerous such enquiry commissions in the past. Already, to the BJP leaders, the finding of the judicial commission which will probe the Tehelka disclosure seems to be a forgone conclusion. Otherwise, how did Advani, the BJP home minister, assert at the NDA meeting on March 16, the very same date on which Vajpayee announced the proposed judicial commission, that Fernandes would return as defence minister after four or five months? It is to be remembered that the proposed judicial commission will be asked to submit report in 4 months' time. Is it not an attempt to influence the commission which is a highly immoral and unethical practice?

Thirdly, as suggested by a section of the monopoly press, Vajpayee may eventually decide to drop some persons from the PMO. The idea would be to send across the message to the people that Vajpayee himself is of unimpeccable honesty and integrity but there were some black sheep in the PMO who have now been weeded out. In this way, some bureaucrats in the PMO might be made scapegoats in a bid to keep Vajpayee's image clean. But such exercise will cut no ice. It is no secret that the PMO which was first formed during Indira Gandhi's regime, is led by men handpicked by the incumbent Prime Minister, men who are close associates and confidants of the Prime Minister. Over the years, the PMO has gained ascendancy and is now widely perceived to be an extra-constitutional authority that functions by curtailing the authority of the various ministries and wields enormous clout. Whenever a ministry puts up a proposal, the same has to be vetted and okayed by the PMO before the Prime Minister approves it. Key figures of the PMO like Brajesh Mishra and N.K.Singh or other close associates of the Prime Minister like Ranjan Bhattacharya are his right hand men, so to say. Is it believable that they are entangled in the mire of corruption without Prime Minister Vajpayee's knowledge and Vajpayee himself is clean? Yet this is what the monopoly press would have us believe!

The opposition parties have reacted predictably. The Congress, whose hands are stained with so many scams over the years during which it was in power, suddenly became alive to the urgent necessity of having a clean government in Delhi. It decided to try to unite the erstwhile UF constituents in a bid to work out a coalition as replacement to the BJP-led NDA alliance. The United Front was hurriedly revived, now renamed as the Lok Morcha or People's Front with the Samajwadi Party, CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc, RSP and Janata Dal-S as partners and Jyoti Basu as the chairman and Mulayam Singh Yadav as convenor. Did the Congress or the morcha call upon the people to launch a country wide mass movement against the corruption of the BJP government? Far from it. The AICC passed a

resolution in Bangalore on 18th March calling for an alliance with "secular" (read non-NDA) parties to form a government. The Lok Morcha and Congress leaders confabulated about forming a coalition government, in the anticipation that the ruling NDA coalition would fall through defection of some of its constituents. Reportedly, without leaving it to chance, the service of Deve Gowda was drafted for talking with the Telugu Desam chief Chandrababu Naidu into leaving the NDA. Whether the Congress would form the government with support from the Lok Morcha from outside or vice versa and who would lead the proposed coalition government — were discussed. But all this proved to be much ado over nothing as it shortly became clear that the TDP was not going to leave the NDA. With this, the dream of forming an alternative coalition government vanished into thin air, at least for the time being. The Congress and the Lok Morcha have now become reconciled to the continuance of the present BJP-led government at the Centre and are now intent upon gaining the maximum possible mileage against the BJP from the defence scam laid bare by the Tehelka disclosure in election politics, with the coming Assembly elections in five states in view. These opposition parties are creating a row over Tehelka as this comes handy in election politics to catch votes, but are now practically silent about the anti-people budget that was placed by the BJP finance minister Yashwant Sinha only the other day, a budget embodying all-out attacks on the people at the behest of the ruling capitalist class. Serving the same ruling class, these parties too have no concern for the people.

These parties can never take a genuinely anti-corruption stand and strive seriously to build up an anti-corruption mental make up in the country because like the BJP they themselves too are corrupt and have been involved in numerous scams. The sole concern of these parliamentary parties is to anyhow gain in parliamentary politics. When one of them levels corruption charges against another, it is not from its aversion to corruption, but with the object of gaining in election politics vis-a-vis the latter, for pressurizing it and not with the object of rooting out corruption. At other times, an unwritten agreement between them operates, not only to tolerate one another's corruption but also to shield one another's corruption if needed in the interest of petty gains in parliamentary politics. For example, once the CPI(M) used to cry hoarse against the Bofors scam of the Congress government of Rajiv Gandhi. But since the CPI(M) is now moving closer to the Congress on the all-India scene in the quest of a coalition for sharing governmental power with the Congress in Delhi, it is either silent about the Bofors scam or tries to play it down. Again, Laloo Prasad Yadav and Jayalalitha can be called the king and queen of corruption respectively in this country. In order to justify its unprincipled alliances with the RJD led by Laloo Prasad Yadav and the AIADMK of Jayalalitha, the CPI(M) has even said that communalism is the bigger danger before the country than corruption. By this, it seeks to put its unprincipled, opportunistic manoeuvrings in

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# Anti-Capitalist Revolutionary Struggle Alone Upholds Higher Morality And Culture

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quest of power in a better light on the one hand, while on the other, it seeks to undermine the gravity of corruption as a social crime in general and also to shield its own corrupt deeds and practices in particular.

Mamata Banerjee, the Trinamul Congress (TMC) leader, was in the Congress for long and was even a Congress minister in Delhi, hero-worshipping Rajiv Gandhi and keeping silent about the numerous huge corruption scams of the Congress government, including the Bofors without any qualms. She was a minister in corrupt Narashimha Rao's cabinet. She left Congress later only because she failed to become the Congress chief in West Bengal. Now, after the Tehelka disclosure, she has resigned post-haste as the railway minister in the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre. Why has she done this? Is it because she has suddenly developed a great repugnance to corruption? No, she has left the ministry because firstly, her name figures in the Tehelka transcript as being connected to corruption, and she wants to divert public attention from it by resigning. Secondly, winning the coming Assembly poll in West Bengal by any means, fair or foul, is now her be-all and end-all. Tehelka exposure of the BJP-led central government's misdeeds may be used by the ruling CPI(M) in West Bengal poll as a weapon to blame her as an associate in BJP's corrupt practices. She has sought to counteract this by resigning. Taking advantage of the Tehelka disclosure, she has distanced herself from the BJP and is currently bargaining with both the Congress and the BJP and manouevring between the two to secure the best deal in an utterly opportunistic manner. It is not yet clear whether her party TMC will fight the coming West Bengal Assembly poll in alliance with the Congress, the BJP or both (overt or covert). But whatever opportunistic combination she may work out, will be no better than the CPI(M)-led Left Front which stands exposed before the people of the state due to its pursuit of utter anti-people policies and corrupt role during its long tenure.

Let us consider the Bofors scam. It is no wonder that Rajiv Gandhi, being the perpetrator and beneficiary of the scam, did everything to hush it up as Prime Minister, or that the subsequent Congress government headed by Narasimha Rao too did just the same. But after that, what did the UF government under the stewardship of first Deve Gowda and then Inder Gujral, with participation by the CPI and supported by the CPI(M) from outside — "leftist" parties who shout day in and day out against corruption — do about unearthing the Bofors scam and bringing the culprits to book? Just about nothing. Why? Because the UF government was dependent on the support of the Congress from outside in the Lok Sabha.

The BJP-led governments at the Centre have been deliberately going slow on the Bofors investigation because of the BJP's close ties with the Hinduja brothers who are among the prime accused in the Bofors case. Now, at long last, the brothers are being interrogated by the CBI in Delhi. But already, it is being given out in Delhi that the case against the Hinduja may not be

fool-proof! In the mean time, they are being treated regally and accorded privileges like special pilgrimage to Kumbh to take the holy dip!

The inaction of the successive governments in Delhi, irrespective of which party was in power, prompted R.C. Sharma, a former CBI director, to remark that he had to sit on the Bofors papers sent out from Switzerland without doing anything for five years, obviously under instructions!

It is to be remembered that in April 1996, on the eve of Lok Sabha poll, Vajpayee, as leader of the opposition, accused Narasimha Rao government of a scam of \$3.5 billion defence deals with Russia, charging that huge commission money exchanged hands centering round the deals. The deals were for purchase of advanced war planes, 152 mm self-propelled guns, tank-fittings, missiles, rocket launchers, kilo class submarines, the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov, etc. In the elections, no party secured absolute majority. The BJP formed the government which lasted for only 13 days, to be replaced by the UF government. Most of the agreements covering the deal had been signed by the Congress government. But strangely, after the elections, no questions were raised about these nor any investigation started by either the BJP or the UF governments! Rather, Mulayam Singh Yadav, as the UF defence minister, signed the balance agreements! More such deals were signed afterwards under BJP rule. The BJP had earlier promised to increase production of Indian made Arjun Tanks. But now, even before the Kargil skirmishes, the BJP-led NDA government started negotiations for purchase of Russian T90 tanks. That deal has now been finalised.

The underhand collusion between parliamentary parties was once more strikingly revealed centring the recent raids on the offices of Shraavan Todi, a big West Bengal financier close to the CPI(M)-led government in the state and to Chandan Basu, son of Jyoti Basu, and on the offices of Chandan Basu himself in Calcutta. Now, we know that the BJP and the CPI(M) are at loggerheads in politics. But when requests for help were sent to the right quarters in Delhi, Todi and Chandan were promptly helped out. Through the good offices of Prime Minister Vajpayee's son-in-law Ranjan Bhattacharya and the BJP central minister Pramod Mahajan, the raids by the central agencies on the offices of Todi and Chandan Basu were suspended for about one week, allowing them sufficient time to destroy all incriminating evidence of their misdeeds and corruption!

The Tehelka disclosure has thoroughly exposed the utter hollowness and falsity of the much vaunted so-called saffron value-based politics of the upholders of Hindutva. However much it may try, the Sangh Parivar think-tank will not be able to slur it over.

Politicians of all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties vying with one another for power in parliamentary politics are all steeped in corruption. When in opposition, they cry hoarse condemning the misdeeds and corrupt deeds of the parties in power. But once installed in power, they themselves take to the same corrupt means to amass wealth. Their sole concern is to anyhow come to power in order to enrich themselves by hook or by crook. These parties swear by the

name of the country, but it is seen that they have no real concern for the country or its people. A country does not mean just a geographical entity or a map but the people who constitute it. In the present class-divided society, these parties serving the ruling capitalist class cannot but become more and more anti-people in character raising the name of the country and the nation.

A new dimension was added to the country-wide corruption during Indira Gandhi regime, and corruption is becoming more and more brazen faced as time passes. In order to make the people used to corruption and a corrupt way of life, the monopoly media, the bourgeois ideologues are continually harping on the theme that corruption has been there since time immemorial, corruption is normal and natural, all parties and politicians make money by corrupt means. While the apologists for capitalism argue like this motivatedly, the common people are confused and frustrated to find that whichever party they vote into power turns out to be corrupt. They think: Is the corruption, the degradation that we see all-round, inevitable?

But it is not so. If we examine the lives and characters of the leaders of the independence movement in our country we find that they reflected a high standard of morality and ethics. Not to speak of the revolutionary stream, even the compromising stream of the freedom movement reflected a minimum moral-ethical-cultural standard which is absent in today's parliamentary parties and politicians. Was there so much corruption in public life then, as we witness today?

If not, why not? It is to be remembered that the Congress as a whole became corrupted after coming into governmental power in post-independence period, while serving capitalism being in government. World capitalism is now crisis-ridden and reactionary. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our beloved leader and teacher and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, showed that with passage of time, capitalism is not only becoming more and more crisis-ridden and reactionary, but also more and more decadent and corrupt, engendering corruption. So long a concept, an ideology, a particular category of politics fights against the existing injustice and exploitation and carries the banner of revolution, it stands on the base of morality and ethics. The moment this struggle ceases, its moral-ethical standard falls, degeneration sets in and it becomes corrupt. Today, whoever defends or serves capitalism will sink into the mire of corruption and degeneration. Such is their inevitable historical destiny.

The politics and outlook of only that force which is engaged in anti-capitalist struggle on the basis of correct revolutionary line, can show the path to a higher standard of morality, ethics and culture and usher in a clean political atmosphere, free from corruption. As Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, our beloved General Secretary, has emphasised in his press statement on the Tehelka disclosure: "We want to reiterate that class struggles and mass movements on the burning problems of people's life, based on noble revolutionary ideology and higher ethics, can alone act as a powerful deterrent against these immoral and corrupt deeds of the government, ruling parties and bureaucracy."

# Anti-People and Anti-Secular Thrust In BJP-led NDA Government's Education Policy

(Contd. from page 3)

indicator of the kinds of problems such programmes run into.

## Higher Education : Low Allocations & Targeting Salary Scales

In the secondary and higher education sector as a whole, Plan outlays continue to grow far too slowly. The Plan outlay for university and higher education is increased from Rs. 499.72 crores (revised estimates of 2000-01) to Rs. 575 crores i.e. by 15%. Non-Plan expenditure takes away the larger part of allocations. (The major part of non-Plan expenditure is on salaries and allowances.) The Budget of 2000-01 had a non-Plan outlay that was 63% of the total. The revised estimates show that while there was a marginal decline in the Plan expenditure, the non-Plan component became Rs. 450 crore higher than the budgeted amount, an overshoot of 15.8%, making the non-Plan component 66.6% of the total revised estimates. This was mainly due to a Rs. 460 crore increase over and above the budgeted amount under the head, "Improvement in Salary Scale of University and College Teachers" (from Rs. 600 crores in the Budget estimates of 2000-01 to Rs. 1060 crores in the revised estimates). In the current Budget, the aim is to reduce non-Plan expenditure by Rs. 897 crores i.e. over 26 %, and bring it down to 56.32% of the total outlay. The main reduction is proposed in the same head of improvement in scales of university and college teachers, from Rs. 1060 crores in the revised estimates of last year to just Rs. 2.81 crores in the current Budget. It is a moot question whether pay scales of university and college teachers all over the country have actually improved in accordance with their legitimate demands. It is clear that the teachers will have to prepare themselves for an intensified struggle with the Centre in the days to come.

There is virtual stagnation in the allocations for the premier social science institutions like the ICHR, ICPR and the IAS. The ICSSR shows increases in Plan and non-Plan outlays in the region of 20%. In language education, while the Plan outlay for modern Indian languages has dropped from Rs. 5.20 crores (revised estimates, down from last years budget of Rs. 5.8 crores) to Rs. 3.4 crores, the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and the Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan show increases in allocations. Allocation for the former has risen from Rs. 9 crores to Rs. 12.57 crores, for the latter from Rs. 2 crores to Rs. 3 crores. These two Government institutions are known to be controlled by the RSS.

## The Commercial Thrust to Technical Education

The next thrust in the Finance Minister's Budget speech is on technical education, which lies in the sphere of higher education. This is at the cost of science education. For instance, the outlay for the premier Indian Institute of Science has actually been reduced. One casualty of the

reduced outlay for science is a plan for investment in science infrastructure aimed at attracting young people back to careers in science.

The Plan component of technical education is to rise by 11% over the revised estimates of last year (which was in turn higher than the budget estimates). But the outlays for IITs actually show a decline over last year's revised estimates and the outlays for RECs remain unchanged. What is noteworthy about the outlay for setting up community polytechnics (about Rs. 50 crores), supposedly an antidote to growing unemployment, is that the revised estimates show that less than 50% of the budgeted amount of Rs. 50 crores last year has been spent. Then where is the emphasis on technical education and where is the plan outlay slated to increase? The main increase is in the outlay for re-organising the apex

student loans are that this system will free the Government from the obligation to provide for higher education, that student loans are equitable and all can have access to it, and that students who take loans will be more serious and responsible about their education. In fact, the experience of student loans worldwide is that it is the ability to provide collateral that counts, not merit or the student's financial situation. In the present context of a long economic recession and high NPAs in banks (the experience of student loans in the past has also been one of high default rates), it is unlikely that banks would lend very liberally to students. The risk associated with borrowing, and the risk of recession and unemployment even in high-tech sectors, will prevent really needy students from taking loans. The philosophy behind student loans is one of

## Private Participation With 'Leftist' Patronage

Some who profess to oppose the commercialisation of education are simultaneously resorting to new verbal formulations to justify the practice. When opinion within the CPI(M) and the SFI in Kerala was divided on the issue of allowing self-financing professional colleges, a delegation was sent to West Bengal to study the situation there. The delegation met SFI and CPI(M) leaders, and the West Bengal Education Minister to enquire how several such colleges in that State were faring. The delegation came back enlightened that 'private participation with social control' was possible.

administrative bodies for technical education (apart from outlays for Indian Institute of Information Technology, Gwalior). This ties in neatly with the Finance Minister's statement about public-private partnerships in technical education. The Government will spend on the administrative and regulatory apparatus governing technical education, whereas actual investment is expected from the private sector. 100% deductions have been allowed from income tax on payments made to engineering institutions in the private sector.

This means that the trend of self-financing professional colleges that collect huge capitation fees is set to increase with full encouragement from the Government. (See Box : Private Participation with Leftist Patronage) With this rampant commercialisation of the technical education sector and fee levels way above affordable levels even for the affluent middle class, how will enough students be able to access technical education for the Finance Minister to achieve the desired level of emphasis?

## Student Loans : Further Commodification of Education

The Finance Minister's answer to this is student loans. In his speech, he referred to the Indian Bank Association's Educational Loan Scheme that will provide loans of upto Rs. 7.5 lakhs for studies in India and Rs. 15 lakhs for studies abroad. Loans under Rs. 4 lakhs will not require collateral and will attract an interest rate at most equal to the Prime Lending Rate. The loans of over Rs. 4 lakhs will be against collateral, will have an interest rate of Prime Lending Rate plus 1% and will be repayable in 5 to 7 years. The assumptions behind encouraging

treating education as a private good rather than as a social good. By embracing the student loans idea, the Government is destroying the social character of education. The provision of education to individuals equips them to work on the problems faced by society and to find solutions. The benefits of education are social and it is from this realisation that the concept of governmental obligation towards education had emerged. The philosophy behind student loans is individualist. The individual is expected to take risks and borrow to invest in his or her future, and recoup investments in the future. The connection between individual and society is severed and monetised. Educational loans become comparable to hire purchase schemes of consumer goods. Student borrowers become responsible only to their lenders.

Clearly, the provisions for education in the Union Budget 2001-02 only underline the continued retreat of the Government from the financial obligation of providing quality education, the increasing reliance on foreign funding agencies for elementary education, and the increasing commercialisation and commodification of education. The Budget and the accompanying educational schemes increasingly visualise education as a commercial process wherein low-paid educational workers deliver a service to student-consumers for a price. Judged in the background of people's right to education and right to job, the Budget reveals the BJP-led NDA government's anti-people, anti-education and anti-secular thrusts in its education policy : curtailment of the scope of education, especially higher education, for the general mass of the people, leaving the scope open to the affluent section only ; inculcating a technological bent among students in place of a scientific outlook by de-emphasizing science studies and encouraging setting up of technical institutions with, of course, private participation ; adding boost to revivalism and obscurantism by increasing funding for institutions with religious and revivalist bias and withdrawing patronage for learned bodies who try in their own way to fight communalism, revivalism and obscurantism.

## Meeting Against Corruption in Ananthapur

The Ananthapur district organizing committee of our party SUCI organized a public meeting on 24-3-2001 at the Arts College play ground against the corruption in defence sector as revealed by the sensational Tehelka.com portal. Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary of the state organizing committee, who addressed the gathering as the main speaker demanded that the corrupt Vajpayee government should resign.

He said that during independence movement once our country gave birth to great men like Netaji, Bhagat Singh, and Alluri Sitaramaraju who sacrificed for the noble cause of the freedom of the country. Today the crisis ridden capitalism is creating leaders like Vajpayee, Advani, Sonia, Jayalalitha and Laloo type of characters who are

sacrificing the interest of the country for their petty selfish cause.

Comrade Sridhar ended his speech by calling upon the people to come forward for building up a mighty democratic movement against corruption and on the burning issues in their lives under the leadership of SUCI which is the only genuine Communist party in our country. He also appealed to the people not to go away from politics seeing the corrupt bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties.

Comrade B.S. Amarnath, the Ananthapur district organizing committee secretary also spoke on the occasion. Comrade G. Lalitha member of the committee presided over the meeting.

## Bihar unit of JPA formed

In response to JPA's (Joint Platform of Action) call a convention was held on 18th February, 2001 at Gandhi Sangrahalaya, presided over by B. Prasant, a veteran leader of the state government employees movement. Comrade Achintya Sinha, All India Convenor, JPA, was the main speaker. The state and central government employees from different districts of Bihar participated.

The convention expressed grave concern over non-payment of salaries to thousands of employees and protested dismissal of two employees' leaders.

The Bihar unit of JPA was formed in the convention.



*A view of sightless youths' dharna organised by AIDYO, Karnataka on 12th March*

## Sightless Youths' Dharna in Bangalore

On March 12 a dharna was held in front of the Karnataka Chief Minister's residence at Bangalore, demanding that the government give employment to sightless unemployed youths. The dharna was organised by the All India Democratic Youth Organisation (AIDYO), Karnataka Luyi Blind Association and Panchak Shari Gavai Blind Artists' Association, Gadag.

The visually impaired youths who came from all over Karnataka marched in a procession from the city railway station to the Chief Minister's residence. They shouted slogans against the government's anti-people policies all along the way.

Later the gathering was addressed by Mr. Bhagwan Reddy, Vice-President, AIDYO Karnataka State Committee and other office bearers. They came down heavily upon the government's apathy towards the plight of these sightless youths. They urged the Chief Minister to immediately solve their problems or at least provide unemployment allowance, failing which they have no alternative but to continue their agitation.

A memorandum containing the above demands was submitted to the Chief Minister.

## Martyrs' Day Observed

### UDAIPUR

A meeting to commemorate the 70th death anniversary of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev was jointly organised by Shaheed Manishi Yadgar Samiti, UTUC-LS, Udaipur, and workers' organisations.

Comrade Viren Lobo, Comrade Vijay Choudhary, Sujjan Singh Soni, Mahendra Bapna, Prahladi Bad Gujjar, Mangilal Lohar, Rajendra Singh, Bhagwan Lal Sukhwai, Prakash Paliwal, Narender, Mohan Dangi, Mini Thakur, and Mubarak Hussain were the main speakers.

Comrade Vijay Choudhary raised the issue of the difference in politics between Bhagat Singh and Gandhi. He stressed that personal honesty is not enough and political honesty in the interest of the working class and weaker sections is very essential. He also spoke of today's economic problems of unemployment, disinvestment and cultural degradation and the need to learn lessons from the luminaries and martyrs of the past to uplift our cultural and moral standard.

Comrade Viren Lobo highlighted different aspects of Bhagat Singh's early life, including his leaving of school to participate in the non-cooperation movement at the age of 14, his struggle at home on becoming a revolutionary, and concept

of family embracing the whole of India. He said: Today the State is trying to obliterate the life of the martyrs and luminaries of the Indian Independence movement from the history text books.

There is a need for a new ethics in the context of today's economic conditions, he said while highlighting some of the present day problems, including corruption and individual struggle for self and power. The politics of Bhagat Singh, Shubhas Chandra Bose electrified the people, today's parliamentary politics is creating self centered individuals. Only on the basis of higher social and cultural ethics can we fight the menace that afflicts us, he concluded.

### MUMBAI

A public meeting was organised in the memory of Saheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukh Dev at Mahatma Phule Vyayam Mandir, Chinchpokali, West Mumbai. The meeting was presided over by Sri Shravan Kumar Dubey and conducted by Comrade Uma Shankar Maurya. The main speaker was Comrade A. K. Tyagi, incharge, SUCI, Mumbai-Thane unit. Other speakers were Comrades Y. K. Kulshreshtha, Ashok Jadav, Chinthamani Mishra.

## Demonstration at Gulbarga

SUCI, Gulbarga District Committee, organised a massive protest demonstration against the Central Budget on 5th March in Gulbarga city.

The demonstration was addressed by Comrade H.V. Diwakar, Secretary, SUCI, Gulbarga District Committee and Comrade B. Bhagavan Reddy, member, District Committee, criticised the BJP-led central government for presenting an anti-people budget and called for protracted mass movement against the NDA government. A replica of the budget was burnt. (Photo on page 8)

Revolutionary songs were sung by Sri Gowri Shanker, Sri, Pavan Kumar, Sri Pravin, Sri Hari Chandra, Comrade G. Sathish Kumar and Sri Chinthaman Mishra. Meeting came to an end with Internationale.

# Karl Marx Memorial Day

## BHOPAL

The Bhopal Unit of the SUCI observed the 118th Death Anniversary of Karl Marx, the great leader of the world proletariat and propounder of Dialectical and Historical Materialism at the State Party Office on 14th March, 2001.

Comrade J.C. Barai, District In-charge, SUCI, Bhopal was the main speaker. Comrade Asit Mohanty conducted the proceedings of the meeting.

## BOKARO

SUCI, Bokaro District Organising Committee, observed 14th March, Karl Marx Memorial Day, through dharna and mass meetings against the central budget at Naya-more, Birsha Chawk. On the day, the dharna demanded to scrap budget provisions including retrenchment of workers, contract system instead of permanent job, amendment of industrial disputes (I.D.) Act, all in favour of the capitalists, cut in fertiliser and seed subsidy, etc., as also selling of BALCO, commercialisation and communalisation of education and others. Comrade Mohan Chowdhury, the main speaker, upheld the revolutionary teachings of Karl Marx and called upon the people to fight the utterly anti-working class budget through mass movements. Comrade Ram Mahato also addressed the gathering.

The meeting was presided over by Comrade R.A. Bhagat

## SAGAR

The Sagar unit of SUCI observed the 18th death anniversary of the great teacher and leader of world proletariat Karl Marx at Sagar through a seminar held on 14th March, 2001.

In this seminar Comrade Ramabatar Sharma, District Secretary of Sagar was the main speaker. Leaders of other parties also spoke on this occasion to pay their tributes to this great son of mankind. Comrade S. K. Sahoo conducted the seminar.



*AIDYO Protests in Bangalore against Taliban vandalism on 14th March*

## Stalin Day Observed

### HYDERABAD

The 48th death anniversary of Comrade Stalin, the great leader of the proletariat was observed on 9th March 2001 at our party office.

Comrade Krishna Chakrabarti, member, Central Committee of our party, addressed the gathering as the main speaker. In course of his speech Comrade Chakrabarti explained the magnificent role played by Comrade Stalin during November revolution, in the socialist construction of USSR and particularly during the second world war.

Just after November revolution when fourteen surrounding countries attacked Russia, during the period of civil war, it was Stalin who was sent everywhere by great Lenin to set things right. In one of the telegrams sent to Lenin, Stalin says "leaders of our party are responsible for the trouble here and I will not spare any leader

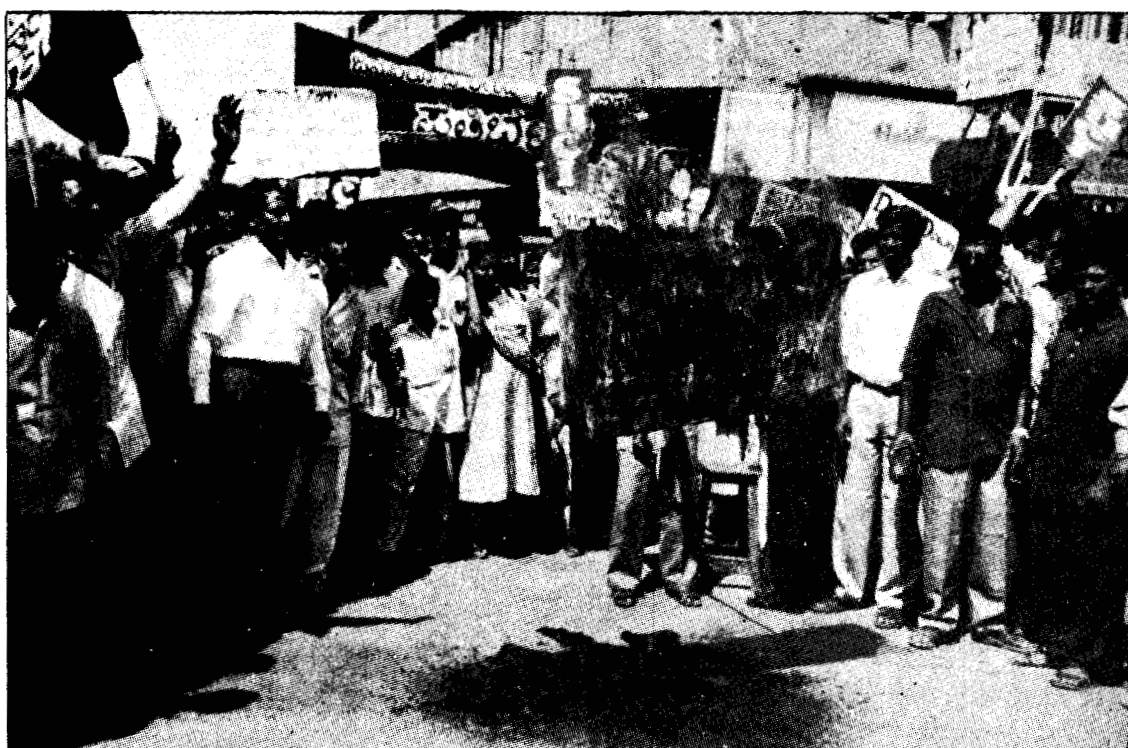
including myself." After the demise of Lenin, it was Stalin who started the construction of Socialism in USSR applying the principles of Leninism and interpreting it in a concrete Marxist way. Comrade Stalin was the authority on nationality question and because of his correct policy many republics joined voluntarily in the USSR. It is not because of his so-called commandist methods of administration as accused by the capitalist world.

Comrade Chakrabarti explained the magnificent role Comrade Stalin played in the second world war, the most devastating war ever seen in the history of mankind. This is the only country where Hitler could not create fifth columnists. Comrade Stalin took firm measures to eliminate such elements in the Red Army and also in the party to safeguard nascent and the only socialist country in the world. Comrade Stalin, a great organiser, involved the whole masses of the people against fascist aggression as one man, in the front as well as in the rear of the front. Again with in seven years Comrade Stalin rebuilt the war devastated Russia into a super power.

Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, State Organising Committee of our Party also spoke.

### Sagar

Under the auspices of Sagar unit of the SUCI the 48th death anniversary of the great leader and teacher of the world proletariat Comrade J. V. Stalin was observed on 5th March, 2001 at Sagar. On this occasion a mass meeting was held there under the presidentship of Comrade S. K. Sahoo. Comrade Ramavatar Sharma, Secretary, Sagar District Committee, was the main speaker in the meeting, who in his speech, highlighted the very many aspects of Stalin's exemplary struggles to protect Marxism-Leninism from distortion, building up socialism in erstwhile USSR and fight against and defeating Hitlerite fascist aggression.



*Replica of Budget burning at Gulbarga on 5th March (News on page 7)*

**Observe 24th April**  
**53rd Anniversary of the SUCI**

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