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SUPER CYCLONE IN ORISSA Criminal Negligence in Relief Work

The scale of devastation in Orissa which followed the terrible cyclones hitting the state successively within the space of a fortnight is now news across the world. Marooned areas remained cut off from the outside world even after the lapse of a week. No one knows what has happened to the millions living in those fertile lands of coastal Orissa — perhaps it will never be known, for hardly a soul may have survived the havoc to tell other of the colossal tragedy.

Media reporters visiting the ravaged districts, army personnel deployed on rescue operations, government officials doling out relief to the multitude, ministerial high-ups taking off from helipads to get views of the disaster, and political bosses waiting to gain access to the victim-cum-voters are giving out figures and facts to describe and prove the scale of destruction wrought by nature's fury. It is calamitous in dimension, unprecedented perhaps in memory. Reports say that over 20 million people, about half the population of the 12 most severely battered districts, have fallen victims. Over 10 million houses have been razed to the ground, or washed away. Out of 2.5 million hectares of cropland 1.5 million hectares have been devastated, crops

worth more than 20,000 millions of rupee being lost. To restore these lands will take a few decades. At least 100,000 cattle have perished. The death toll of humans, whatever the figures given by the government, would certainly stagger all guesses.

Hunger claws away at these millions. Starving for days together, forced to drink water contaminated with floating corpses, breathing air thick with the stench of bloated carcasses, no shelter of any kind, no means to light a fire, no routes left to move out to safer places, these men of a supposedly twentieth century civilized society find themselves in the dark of primeval mercy in the aftermath of nature's pounding. No words are enough to match their sufferings, but in terms of grief, agony and deprivations, above all, their tragedy is far greater than the sufferings nature's blind hit could inflict upon them.

At the other end, ministerial flocks from the Centre and the state, official teams assigned to assess the magnitude of destruction, and army deployment have thronged the state capital and other towns. Press briefings are fat with figures of such and such quanta of food, medicine and other

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Letter to the President for urgent relief-rehabilitation for Orissa victims

Mr. K. R. Narayan
The President of India
Rastrapati Bhawan
New Delhi

November 8, 1999

Dear President,

I write these lines in extreme agony for those tens of millions of survivors of the havoc-wreaking super-cyclone of October 29 last that hit Orissa and, who, full ten days after are now languishing from an inadmissibly inept and inadequate rescue-relief-rehabilitation operation at the hands of an incompetent state government and a no less slack union government whose task it was to meet such a colossal human tragedy on a war-footing.

It rebels against human conscience and shames the governments because, had vigilant and all-out preemptive measures been taken against this foreknown and forewarned disaster, then the horrifying magnitude of the loss might have been reduced to the least possible extent. The governments stand twice shamed, and the union government more, since its highest functionaries do scarcely more than making pious statements, pompous promises, aerial surveys and petty politicking even when the overwhelming majority of the still surviving remained marooned and forsaken without food, drinking water, clothing, medicine and roof over their heads. The union government's complete and callous failure to attend to the enormous task of pressing promptly into service the necessary men and material, of properly coordinating even the little that is being done, and top of all, its deploying the armed forces in rescue and relief work in a half-hearted way leave most irresponsibly and inhumanly the starving, dying and diseased millions of victims in abject suffering, frustration and desperation. Yet, the worst is yet to come — epidemic and pestilence — along with the receding water. This is unbearable, and inexcusable.

It is more so because none but your godself, placed in the country's highest office, had assured timely, October 29 itself, that : "I am sure relief and rehabilitation work will soon be put in place to alleviate human distress in the affected areas", as the media reports. But this expectation has been belied by the shocking unconcern and ineptitude of the union government while precious lives, time, money and material have been wasted without proper planning or purpose.

Review of Elections and Post-Election Situation

At last, the unwilling Indian masses get an 'elected' government which is anti-people to the extreme. Showing the claws from the very oath-taking ceremony Mr Vajpayee, the head of the government, declared 'harder' decisions for the coming days especially meant for the common people. The voting drama of concealment and deceit is over and real faces now come up. Our party warned beforehand that "whichever party comes to power after the election, will follow anti-people policy in serving the interest of the monopolists" (*P. Era*, June 1, '99) That has come prophetically true.

Some pre-election developments

Let us look back. After the 1998-election the BJP, forming a combination with Jayalalitha (AIADMK) whom Vajpayee once declared the "queen of corruption" came to power along with some others and that was a sheer opportunistic alliance typical of the moribund and decaying capitalism with rottenness as the feature of its daily existence. The BJP, which once trumpeted the drum of value-based politics, honesty and

principled party, could not even maintain an outward show of that character and proved itself to be bankrupt. Here the lesson of history is, whichever party or group or honest individual goes to serve the decaying capitalism of the day is sure to be corrupt and lose its integrity as a principled entity. Moreover BJP's opportunism, corrupt alliance, extremely anti-people moves made it so unpopular within its 13-month rule that it lost both Rajasthan and Delhi assembly elections a few months ago. This unprincipled alliance was sure to break down and it was a matter of time only. Internal stress and strain were sufficient for its eventual breaking up. But the power-hungry Congress in a hectic attempt to ascend to power alongwith CPI-CPI(M) was out to fish in the troubled water to dislodge BJP from power, an opportunistic manoeuvre which gave BJP the chance to be painted as a 'martyr'. Not only that; the opportunistic role of CPI(M) to paint Congress as a secular party and make seat adjustment in some states was a blow to the left and democratic movement of the country and to the honest CPI(M)

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Corporate Houses Manipulate Elections

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workers also. Finally, BJP took advantage of leading a care-taker government. It is interesting to note that at this stage, all the parliamentary parties including the CPI(M), responded unhesitatingly to the call of the President of India to pass the BJP-engineered Budget unanimously. None thought over the outcome of this anti-people budget. They were busy in forming combinations and coming to power by any means and people's cause was certainly not on their agenda. This exposed the character of all these parties that they were out to serve their master, the vested class and not the people.

Being in the chair of a care-taker government the BJP showed its claws. While no care-taker government is supposed to take decisions on policy matters, the BJP violated all the norms and took important decisions on both domestic and foreign affairs. Even on the Kargil-issue they ignored Parliament. The Opposition parties also failed to discharge their role to adopt effective measures to discuss the 'Kargil-question' in the Upper House. The BJP had practically proclaimed an undeclared national emergency over Kargil-issue. The PTV was banned, Mr Vajpayee was projected as the national hero, anti-Pakistani hysteria was generated through the media. In an attempt to cover up their 13-month-old misrule, when lakhs of employees were thrown out of jobs, Christians were lynched and murdered, price was soaring high, BJP used the Kargil-conflict nastily. The conflict was used to divert people's attention to cover-up their callousness to detect in time the Pakistani infiltration in Kargil, they were reluctant to solve the issue through dialogues with Pakistan and used the conflict to reap benefits in the ensuing election, projecting Mr. Vajpayee as the hero. The BJP used it as a multi-faceted move at the cost of lives of so many soldiers and resources. This was an issue to hoodwink the people of both the countries, India and Pakistan. While in Pakistan it culminated in a military coup and in India BJP, with the patronage of domestic corporate houses and foreign MNCs, came to power. Against the anti-imperialist tradition of the Indian people Mr. Vajpayee allowed US-imperialism to poke their nose into Kargil-issue and recognised that evil force as their mentor. It has also joined hands with Clinton in their bid to extend their influence in troubled Central Asia on the pretext of combating terrorism for which US imperialism was herself the real culprit. All these they did on behalf of the care-taker government which is unprecedented in the history of violating democratic norms and traditions. This too, speaks of decaying values of the moribund capitalism.

That the disgusted Indian masses were unwilling to choose any such parties to rule them was evident from the day election was declared. Sensing the deep apathy of the masses to politics, muddled with opportunism and deceit, the BJP tried their utmost to break people's apathy in favour of election. The media organised interviews with the masses and personalities so as to create into people's mind the impression that because of instability in the government-making, they have become apathetic and the right solution was to form a stable government and therefore they should exercise their voting right. So, not only voting, but the idea of voting for a stable government thus was tried deeply influence people's mind. To serve class

interest, even barbaric force was used against people. In Baramulla constituency in Kashmir, security forces gunned down 4 persons who refused to cast their votes and herded villagers to booths against their will. (Ref. : *The Statesman*, 18.9.99) So, not only voting, but the idea of voting for a stable government was spread to entrench people's mind deeply. Even the Joint Election Commissioner joined the chorus and commented in filthy language that frequent elections are but a 'yearly pregnancy' to mother India. SUCI did protest and called for measures against it. The Joint Election Commissioner also urged the people to vote candidates and parties who can form stable government. Exit Polls were organised with the same objective. But why this instability in the government? Are people to blame for it? Let us have a look into the matter.

Parliamentary Democracy — A Facade

For a pretty long time, the single party government at the Centre took a back seat making room to coalition governments from time to time. This has been termed 'coalition politics' and has been deemed to be the order of the day. People observed that parties were breaking up and coming together only to break again for which the combinations did not last long. But does this happen at the sweet will of some persons? Or lack of will to unite?

Our party analyzed it aptly — "It is a reality that these parliamentary parties served the interest of this or that monopoly groups or regional capitalists. Before the '80s it was seen that the monopoly houses extended support to their chosen party, and their interest was protected in the bargain. But despite that these parties maintained an outward appearance of independence from these corporate houses till then. It is known to all discerning people that all the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, social-democratic and even the regional parties grow and thrive on the financial support of different financial groups. These financial groups, including monopoly houses, used to get different kinds of patronage in return. These forces in the then condition used to act from behind the scene. Although the parliamentary parties started becoming subservient to the interests of the monopolists since long — a feature of fascism in the political-economic field — today the things have moved so much so that even a facade of democracy cannot be maintained by these ruling parties who are placed in a position to openly comply with the diktats of the monopoly houses. In order to maintain this facade of democracy, the ruling capitalist class tried for a considerable time to foist a two-party parliamentary system in the country since it is the most effective means to deceive the people and persuade the working class and other sections of the toiling people to desist from taking to extra-parliamentary democratic movements and to depend upon either the ruling party or the so-called opposition parties for the supposed redressal of their grievances through parliament. But the crisis of Indian capitalist economy has been aggravated to such an extent that all attempts to maintain a facade of democracy are now torn asunder." (*P. Era*, June 1, '99)

Finally, the money power, muscle power and the media power whipped up swings, if not super cyclone, to sweep people's 'verdict' for a chosen combination of parties — either BJP or Congress

and enhancing support to different political parties of different States on regional basis. Yet in the voting days people turned up in less and less number and that was covered by scientific rigging raising the polling percentage substantially. Yet the BJP could not gain much, only one seat was added to its tally of previous election and it would not have been so if results in Bihar and Maharashtra were otherwise. It was more than compensated by increase of seats of other parties of the NDA. The corporate house in a united move met Prime Minister Vajpayee immediately after election and lent their support to him and in return Mr. Vajpayee assured them all patronage. The class has not deserted totally Congress either, keeping their tally at the second best performance with even a problematic President of the party. In an attempt to build up two-party (and now in the form of combinations) system while BJP has been raised to power, the Congress has been kept waiting in the wings. Regional parties were also chosen regionally. Mr Sharad Yadav in Bihar could not even dream that he would be backed by the class and so sat in a hunger strike till death. But his result has clearly shown that rigging machinery set up by Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav and the officers involved in it worked mainly in favour of Mr. Sarad Yadav outbidding the another Yadav with a crushing defeat. The class did not choose Laloo Prasad Yadav (RJD) this time.

All these permutations and combinations occur due to the fact that the corporate houses, which back up the parties, are a divided house. This time the Tata's and his allies lent support to BJP while Birlas and his allies to Congress. There are groups in chambers of commerce. They compete with one another and sometimes unite in common interest. The regional capital has also a vital role to play. The combination of big corporate houses with regional capital also go amidst stress and strain. Due to deep seated crisis in the economy there is hectic lobby to grab the limited internal market of the country. Added to this, there is personal ambition of the leaders of some parties. All these things are responsible for an unholy alliance of these parties.

We also have to note that Yaswant Sinha, the Finance Minister of the caretaker government, assured the imperialists in his meeting abroad that they were committed to pass the Insurance Regulatory Bill within three months of their coming to power and that assurance came at a time when the voting chapter was just over and the results were yet to come. Thus he assured the imperialists, particularly the US so that they can help BJP to power by influencing groups or personalities to the effect. But it will be oversimplification to cite this instance to show that the Indian capitalism is a 'puppet' of the US imperialism. Indian capitalism, as a relatively small partner of world imperialism is also an aspirant one. The tilt of Indian capitalism towards US is in the interest of the class design of the aspirant bourgeoisie of India. We are to note that they are, at the same time, making relations with other imperialist forces, even maintaining ties with Russia established earlier with the erstwhile USSR. Tie with US-backed Israel is an addition. They are opening the country to globalization, liberalization and by that to foreign investments only to get a share of their own in other countries. It is prompted by their frantic effort to get out of

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Military Takeover in Pakistan — An Analysis

On October 12, Pakistan came under military rule again. General Parvez Musharraf, the army chief who was removed from the post while he was in Colombo and the plane carrying him back as he was rushing back to Karachi was obstructed from landing by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, struck back with his band of generals. The army put the deposed Prime Minister and other ministers under 'protective detention' and the charge of conspiracy of either to kill Musharraf along with 200 passengers on the plane or force exile has been brought against Nawaz Sharif and his close associates.

On 15th, declaring himself Pakistan's supreme executive, General Musharraf proclaimed a state of emergency, suspending the Constitution for an indefinite time. According to the proclamation, only the President of Pakistan shall continue in office. The National Assembly, the Senate and the Provincial Assemblies stand suspended.

Thus an extremely volatile political situation after the debacle in Kargil, sense of national humiliation generated out of it, loss of face in international arena, acrimonious accusations between the civil rulers and the army as to the responsibility of the same, untold poverty of the common people and consequent widespread and deepest popular anger and resentments, particularly against Nawaz Sharif personally and his government for rampant corruption over and above bankruptcy of the economy, the Shariat rule denying civil liberty and minimum democratic rights, has been sought to be put at rest, for the time being, by the military rule.

Dictatorship of a class — forms differ

We are to bear in mind, at the outset, that the term loosely used, so often, of military dictatorship does not speak the whole truth. In a bourgeois state, be it run by a civil 'elected' government or a military rule, surely the form differs quite perceptively, but in content the basic truth is that in the ultimate analysis both the forms represent dictatorship of the bourgeois class. The army is like the spine, that last resort for the class in state power to survive.

Pakistan can be credited with seeking the help of army or military rule, so often, to meet the civil problems and the present one is fourth in the order of succession. In our country, not to speak of lay public even a section of educated persons, frustrated by thoroughly corrupt and oppressive civil rules, harbour the illusion as if military rule is the panacea, the only answer to all-pervading evils.

The concrete experiences in Pakistan will help them to grasp the truth. Before this coup, Zia-ul-Haq took over the charge also by a coup. He promised to hand over to a civil rule within 90 days. It took, however, long 10 years for restoration of civil rule. But what is the experience of Pakistani people? Did the military rule solve a single burning problem in their life? Was the civil rule of Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif anything basically different? This time, there was no promise even of a particular time frame for return to civil rule. The reason may be, certain political gimmicks are to take place to divert the attention of the exploited and oppressed people from the fundamental task of overthrowing the bourgeois system which is the source of all the evils tormenting people's life. Zia-ul-Haq executed Bhutto who brought him to the position of army chief. Nawaz Sharif did the same by bringing Musharraf, superseding two senior

Generals. Whether the army will execute Nawaz Sharif or not only further can tell it but charges against him of high corruptions are longish ones. On November 11, Pakistan's military regime has charged Mr. Naqaz Shariff and seven others with treason and kidnapping, which carry death penalty.

The principal point here is that both civil and military rules are but two forms of the same bourgeois class dictatorship. To claim superiority of civil over military rule is for the precise reason while military dictatorship lays bare the real face of the class dictatorship, the parliamentary rule conceals it and confuses the people most.

Reactions at home and abroad — certain aspects

It has been reported in the press that Musharraf's coup was greeted with jubilation in the streets of Karachi and other cities in Pakistan. This may partly be explained as a writer in a daily, *The Telegraph* (16.10.99) observes that Musharraf bears the mojahir antecedents, being the son of an Uttar Pradesh official. As such the coup making him the Chief executive may give fillip to the Muttahid Quam Movement (MQM) that suffered bloody riots in Karachi. May be, the supporters of the movement along with common people impelled while passing through the traumatic experiences of the economy in a shambles and consequent deprivations and untold sufferings, the most oppressive Shariat rule denying basic human rights hailed a military takeover from a sense of relief and hope for a change in their life, though soon to be belied.

There is another point to be considered. It is known to the knowledgeable circle that the Punjabi industrial military bureaucratic clique rules the roost in Pakistan. The Sindhis, the Baluchs have strong resentment against it. Discension and political opposition of these dominated nationalities mark the Pakistani politics. Those in Pakistan who hope that Musharraf because of his different antecedent can go against this ruling clique will surely be mistaken. In fact Sharif picked up Musharraf on the calculation that the latter unable to build up his own power base within the ruling structure, would not be a cause of worry. But concrete event proves that the army is like a machine and it reacts uniformly. It has struck against the civil rulers as an anticipatory move against mounting public resentment, clearly at the wishes of the ruling capitalist class. The ruling class requires military help to meet a complex political situation.

The imperialist rulers of the USA and Great Britain condemned it. The USA imposed fresh sanctions. The US decision follows its failure to win a commitment for restoration of civilian rule after talks between the general and the US ambassador Mr William Milan. But the new sanctions will be of no consequence as these were already there under the Glenn Amendment, following the nuclear tests in May last. In the calculations of Pak authorities, the country will loose, in all \$ 2 million aid in this fiscal year. Britain was due to give Pakistan 28 million pounds, this year, making it the European Union's largest donor. This will be stopped, except for about 9 million pounds which goes to NGOs. Mr Rabin Cook, the British foreign secretary, warned, "We demonstrate clearly to the military government of Pakistan that there can't be business as usual between them and the rest of the world." (*The*

Statesman, 16.10.99) But business was as usual. The US President, Bill Clinton, commented: "We have been in touch with the Pakistanis. We don't like it when military leaders forcibly displace elected government and we have made that clear." (*ibid*) How hypocritical it sounds when the record of his administration, particularly of the Pentagon and CIA in post second world period till date is unparalleled in this business of toppling elected governments even through the most barbaric means of military muscle as in Chile, for example. Yet after this initial reaction for the sake of show of commitment to democracy, the Clinton administration swung into action.

Bankrupt fiscal position

For Pakistan with just over \$ 1 billion in foreign exchange left in the coffers, the help of IMF and World Bank is crucial. Thanks to the right signal to these international bodies from the US administration Musharraf was assured of their help under more stringent conditions. This help has been thought necessary to enable Pakistan to pay back installments due on its huge foreign debt. It has been reported: "If Pakistan agrees to the conditionalities attached to the next \$280 million tranche of \$1.6 billion aid package there is no reason why the multi-lateral donor's intravenous drip should not keep the economy alive indefinitely." (*India Today*, November 8, '99). The IMF's demands like major hike in fuel prices and almost certainly the cost of power too, have a striking similarity with what is happening in our country!

The USA held the Pakistan army top brass under General Parvez Musharraf and the ousted Prime Minister Mr. Nawaz Sharif as being equally responsible for their country's Kargil misadventure. The US spokesmen told: "The Pakistani military, headed by General Musharraf was an active proponent of the Kargil incursion. It was approved, we also believe, at the highest level of the civilian authorities including Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. And we do believe that it was mistake." (*ibid*)

Real Picture of India's claim of superiority vis-a-vis Pakistan

The Indian media is gloating over a false sense of pride by the deceptive stance of the US.

It has been stated that in the post-Kargil scenario whereas the Indian people returned a new government, Pakistani people saw removal of an elected government by military coup. And the disapproval of the US as also the exhortation of the South African President not to allow the representation of a military government in the forthcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments at Durban, coupled with the success of India's initiative to postpone the Saarc meet at Katmandu are all shown to be the superiority and strength of India.

It will be complete misreading of the situation. It must be understood that the US was quite aware of a possible coup and it gave warning to that effect. Despite this when the coup actually occurred there should not be any doubt that the Pakistani ruling class was sure of not a strong reaction coming from the US and its imperialist allies. Washington, they know, despite verbal protestations, would see nothing untoward in Musharraf's move.

The man, according to *Washington Post* is
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BJP-led government baring its claws

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the crisis in the economy.

Role of corporate houses

The whole exercise was meant for creating a government which can last for coming five years. But will it survive? No doubt, they will try their utmost, but still there is a question — can they have it for long five years? The laws operating in the phenomenon are of disintegration of the combinations. When it will happen, how far they will be able to extend their life line is a matter of anybody's guess. There is every possibility of split ; but that may not lead to fall of government. New combination may crop up, especially when the Congress is waiting in the wings. Stability may be lost, governments will be coming up. There will be no dearth of players of the game also as because whatever may be the nature of vocabulary of the parties, whether 'swadeshi' or 'videshi' based on 'self-reliance' or 'openness' — all agree to protect the aggregate interest of Indian capitalism. Mr Rahul Bajaj the newly elected president of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said at a press conference in Calcutta before election : "We have held already discussions with the top two political parties and made our views known and hope that they will agree with us." He further said that CII will sit down with the political parties to draft a common agenda after the elections were over. He, in no uncertain terms, declared that non-compliance of their dictation will attract penalty in the form of withdrawal of monetary support to the parties in question. Who can, among these parliamentary parties, survive without the moneybag?

Economic Attacks

But what about the people? That is the question to be raised, to be pondered over. The BJP-led government started with unprecedented hike in diesel prices that will increase the prices of all the essential commodities. It will have cumulative effect on all spheres of life. This will not end here. More stringent measures, 'tougher' decisions are coming that were declared by the Prime Minister after the oath-taking ceremony and repeated again and again. But at whom these 'harder' decisions are aimed? The top-most capitalists of the country have usurped bank loans to the tune of Rs. 46,000 crore known as NPA (non-performing assets). The Vajpayee government refused to pressurize them to return the money arguing that it will harm their impetus to build up industries. They were to be let off. But the common men, for no offence of their own, will be punished, burdened with newer and newer taxes. Harder decisions are meant for common people while soft treatment is for the monopolists. Further taxes will come. We will not be surprised to see the government imposing Kargil tax as well.

Costly craze for hi-tech weaponisation

Economy is being highly militarized. Already, the government had declared that after the Kargil conflict modernization of military is a must. The Kargil conflict has helped the government to clear up the stock pile of arms who badly needed a war. During the Kargil conflict, the government spokesmen and army officials singing the same tune declared that Indian army needs modernization of arms and ammunition. It is a fact that the Indian ruling class in order to survive and stave off the crisis badly needed a war, that they got an artificial

stimulation through hectic business of steel and other industries which served their purpose. And now on the pretext of defence of the country, they are seeking another sanction of military expenditure in the name of modernization. All are at the expense of people's money steeply increasing military budget. Thus people will have to suffer and bear the evils of militarization of economy for the sake of giving a lease of life to the crisis-ridden moribund capitalism.

Fundamentalism — BJP plunk

It is not surprising to note that while the BJP, in order to serve the interest of ruling capitalist class to compete with others is taking to higher technology, in the one hand, while espousing religion on the other. The BJP boasts of its nuclear agenda in the public to whip up national jingoism, typical feature of today's capitalism. Indian ruling class wants to be a super power in this region and already they have made most of it. This imperialist character has made them brotherly to US imperialism who wants a responsible partner in this region. This hegemonistic aspiration of the class is reflected in the tall talks of the BJP leaders for a new nuclear agenda. For that, science and technology is a must to them. That does not debar them from taking to religion. While taking to science and technology for latest class aspiration they want to keep religion alive among the people. 'Religion must be kept alive for the people' — that is the slogan of the advanced capitalist-imperialists. Of course, BJP is not interested for the inner kernel of the teachings of great religious teachers. BJP is only interested in fanning up of religious and obscurantist ideas. In order to protect capitalist class from the wrath of the exploited masses they want to bring about a divide on religious line and engage the people in fratricidal conflicts and break their unity pitting one section against another so that they cannot stand unitedly and protest against capitalist exploitation. It may be noted that the Indian rulers representing Hindu fundamentalist forces did not find any difficulty in inviting the Pope recently who represents nothing but Christian fundamentalism. Both had common objective in so far as preaching of fundamentalist outlook and obstructing progressive movement are concerned. Judging from this angle posing for photo of that Pope hand in hand with the Sankaracharya is of no surprise. Christians were lynched, murdered, raped in India under the umbrella of the BJP government, till the Pope John Paul II did not hesitate to shake hands stained with the blood of his fellowmen and women. Christianity of John Paul-type and Hinduism of BJP-type have a common stage to share — to hoodwink the masses. Through fusion of technological aspects of science with spiritualism and obscurantist religious ideas, the BJP leaders are building up the foundation of fascism in this country.

Danger of Casteism-Parochialism

Also casteist parties like Mulayam Singh-led SP and Kansiram-led BSP and parochial parties like Telugu Desam, DMK and AIDMK all backed by regional capital and corporate houses are playing role in national politics in favour of the capitalist class while disrupting people's unity.

BJP's communal agenda

True, this time the BJP came to power in the form of a combination of 24 parties — National Democratic Alliance (NDA). But that does not

minimise the arch reactionary character of the party. Govinda Acharyya, theoretical spokesman of BJP has said that they see the world in bi-focal lense. It is a temporary phenomenon. So long as they cannot acquire sufficient strength to run the government on their own, it is their tactics. So what we see — building of Rammandir is going on in full swing, article 370 is virtually eroded, Kashmir has been kept at boiling point. Mr. Advani said, every party has an agenda which it cannot give up. The purport of the statement is clear. So it will be a complete blunder if one thinks that as because BJP had to move with NDA agenda, it will have to mend its ways. BJP has changed from a merchant's party to a party of the monopoly house — no doubt that is a change — but that does not impel them to shun their arch reactionary character. The BJP will continue to be a real danger to the people and this time more aggressive.

Swadeshi BJP for foreign capital

Whatever agenda the BJP can afford to conceal but the economic agenda they cannot. Globalization, liberalization, openness, privatization, disinvestment of public enterprises and industries — all these agenda cannot be stopped or even halted now as because the BJP is committed to the monopolists and to their big-brother imperialist powers. They cannot try to hide it even. It is their commitment to the exploiting ruling class which brought them to power. What is the effect of all these agenda on the common people of India? Lakhs of workers are thrown out of employment, hundreds of small-scale industries are being destroyed, workers are deprived of their rights, soaring prices push the common men to destitution, unethical means of livelihood getting rampant adding to the general crisis of ethics and morality.

No doubt, with the advent of BJP in the Central government an allout attack on peoples' life is in the offing. Starting from 35% increase in diesel prices even when oath-taking was yet to come and threatening of using the black act of ESMA against anti-price-hike protest movement, placing of notorious Insurance Regulatory Authority Bill in Parliament to the glee of American businessmen, trying to introduce a bill barring any move of no-confidence motion without ensuring alternative government, planning for large-scale disinvestment of public sector and thereby giving the foreign investment a free access and the like are there and so many others are in their immediate agenda. The recommendations of Law Commission are also alarming for the parliamentary democratic process of election of the country. Debarring of candidates from contesting election who have not secured at least 5% of votes and other recommendations will not allow henceforth, to contest the representatives of the poorer section of the society. Law Commission is trying to throw representatives of have-nots out of election process.

Education-culture under attack

Not only in economic field, in the sphere education and culture also they are out to introduce their arch reactionary programmes. Mr. B. R. Grover, who dug-up the RSS-friendly so-called archaeological evidence on Ayodhya has been made the Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and Professor M. L. Sondhi, a known person of the Sangh Parivar has been made the head of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). Preparation for making Ram Mandir is going in full swing. Text books of history

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BJP bids to foist abysmal darkness of medievalism

(contd from page 4)

will be rewritten in the BJP-way, philosophy will be catered with RSS-flavour, mathematics will tend to push back the people to Vedic days. Obscure ideas will be upheld as Indian tradition, ethics and morality will be preached from ideas of bye-gone days of long long past having no relevance with the necessity of the day.

What is the RSS-teachings of history, geography, geology? Let us have a glimpse of it from books of class V —

1. *Bharat ko Bhagwanne hi ek saman nahi banaya hai. ... Jatiya, panth, sabhi kuch alag alag hai, Branman, Kshatriya, Baishya aur Shudra sab alag alag hai.* (God himself did not create India equal... caste, creed all are different, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baishya and Shudra are different.)
2. *Bidhata ke tino putra me paheli bhai ka nam danab, dusre ka manab, aur tisre ka deota tha.* (Among the three sons of the creator, the first was demon, second man and third God.)
3. *Jal me deotaka bas hai. Barun deotaka bas hai.* (God lives in water. It is the abode of God Barun.)
4. *Pahale Jal paida hua. Usse prithvi nikli.* (First water was created. Earth emerged from it.)
5. *Vindhachal ke dakshin me samudra tha. Dakshin Bharat ki dharti alag thi. ... Agast Rishi Vindhachal ke par gaye. Dakshin Bharat se milna-jurna suru hua.* (Ocean was on the south of Vindhachal. South India was separated (by sea) ... Agastya Rishi went beyond Vindhya. From then association and integration with South India began.

“Hindu Economics” of BJP

Mr. Promod Mahajan, the BJP-RSS ideologue is also advocating for “Hindu Economics” as ‘*Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini*’, an organisation chaired by him, publishes a paper on “Economics : A Hindu view point”, from Bombay.

The publication writes : “Hindu Economics thus means, Economics modified by the Hindu wisdom incorporated in it. It is ‘Indian economics’ in the true sense of the term.” The publication explains — “The problem we face are not caused by any particular economic system or a particular political set up. The problem is economism.” And to solve it “we must pick up such concepts and principles from our ancient wisdom and incorporate them into the mainstream economic philosophy, in order to free economics from its present crisis.” “Economics can be made more relevant to the to-day’s world by incorporating in it those principles and practices of our ancient wisdom, which restrict economism, not through legislation, but through reintroducing some of the traditional self-restraints.” It further adds, “The traditional wisdom and sacraments of our society can certainly check the root causes of economism.” The publication emphatically says — “The emphasis all through is on self-restraint of the mind (*chitta-brittii nirodh*)” or “containment of wants by a self-restraint.”

So, Hindu economics asserts that it is not capitalism that fosters misery of the masses but it is purely “economism”, the growth of wants among the masses that is creating problems. In order to end the crisis and solve the problems we shall have to take to containment of our wants by self-restraint. And this can be best done by

educating people on Indian traditional religious thinking. In order to put an end to hunger we have to eradicate sense of hunger and that can be best done by spirituality of India. What a splendid solution to human wants !

The ‘Hindu economics’ adds more. It says, “Two more concepts from our tradition can be helpful here. The first is the concept of rebirth or transmigration of the soul, and the second is the *Ashrama-Vyavastha* or the division of life in four stages. ... If we propagate the traditional concept that the body is only a temporary dwelling of the soul, which is one’s true self, this ‘now or never’ attitude will weaken considerably. In our journey towards self-realisation, our body is a temporary abode. When we die we actually leave for a better, younger and healthier abode (subject to our performing duties *dharma* properly). This conviction reduces the attachment to the sensuality considerably.” Regarding four stages of life in *Ashramavyavastha* it says — “*Vanaprastha* ... in this stage the ex-householders are to retire to a hermitage in the vicinity of nature (forest) *Sanyasashrama* ... this is a stage of renunciation of all attachments to life ... with the least possible wants.” This solves the problems of the old and gives the ruling class an innovating benefit !

This instruction is for the people, the common mass, no doubt. The rulers cannot long for a “better, younger and healthier abode” and embrace death. Neither they retire in the stage of ‘*Banaprastha*’ or ‘*Sanyasa*’ — their innings continues till death as a centurian. The instruction is valid for the common mass, the people — “religion must be kept alive for the people” — this being the design of the clever capitalists, is the motive of the BJP Think-tank.

So, the message of the ‘Hindu Economics’ is clear — “A better alternative is to restrain one’s mind through religious sanctions, ... the religious institutions, educational institutions, community organisations and even the family-heads have the responsibility of continuously imbibing the containment of wants.” And this is “an alternative to the capitalist, non-capitalist and socialist patterns of development.”

Vedic Mathematics

The Sankaracharya of Puri (Shrikrishnatirth Maharaj) collected some facts from the *Atharva Veda* and compiled them into ‘Vedic mathematics’. Actually some measurement and calculation for Architecture was narrated in the *Atharva Veda* which had naturally, reference to mathematics. They had their solution to Architectural work-problems and was jotted down in the literature.

The problems solved or method suggested in these Vedic mathematics bear no importance in today’s world of mathematics. In the background of today’s highly computerised calculations, whither the vedic way of calculation, which was unique in its age, will lead modern civilisation today? Vedic mathematics boasts of finding a novel way of getting cube-root of a number in the ‘*Biloken*’ method. This, today, can be easily done by using logarithm. Higher mathematics is inconceivable without Calculus and the Vedic mathematics of Sankaracharya borrowed from the *Atharvaveda* could not dream of it.

‘Vedic mathematics’ can only serve as solutions to some mathematical puzzles. Or used as mathematical tricks. But that demands no serious thinking to replace mathematics of the time. It may

be kept as the relics of the past but not as a serious mathematics of modern times.

Regarding “Saraswati-Bandana”

The BJP is trying to introduce ‘Saraswati-Bandana’, prayer to the goddess of education as a compulsory item for school education. Let us examine from the teachings of ‘*Rikveda*’ how the Saraswati-worship came and what for.

‘*Rikveda*’ writes — “The flowing Saraswati has created huge water and inspired all the knowledge.”

The Saraswati was an important river in vedic ages which can be compared with the Ganges of the later period. The Vedic-people performed ‘*Jagnas*’ on the bank of the river and chanted hymns. In this way Saraswati was turned as the goddess of sacred hymns and later as “*Bag-devi*”. It is clear from the quoted ‘*sutra*’ of *Rikveda* that the river Saraswati had two functions — offering water and inspiring knowledge. In Sanskrit “*Sarah*” means water. Hence it is evident that ‘Saraswati’, imagined as the goddess of learning, came from this historical background. Like-wise ‘Saraswati-Bandana’ had this original meaning. But today where is that ever-flowing and huge Saraswati? What is the utility or significance of ‘Saraswati-Bandana’ today? The river dried up and exists no more — then what for Saraswati-Bandana will be compulsory in school education taken as a ritual or spiritual flavour and worship?

An appeal

But it is one side of the whole picture. We have faith on people, they will identify the notorious design of BJP, nodoubt. It was evident from the fact that during the election campaign in different states wherever our comrades could reach with our analysis of the situation and the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh there was a tremendous enthusiastic response not only from common masses but even from the cadres and supporters of the CPI, CPI(M) and other left parties. We again appeal to the people to rise against this onslaught, attack on economic-political-cultural life of the people. We also appeal to the workers of the left and democratic parties to evaluate the current situation with calm of mind and persuade their leadership to build up united left and democratic movement throughout the country on the higher edifice of ethics and culture or jump into the struggle of their own.

It is a fact that the parliamentary politics of India is totally gone rotten because it is serving the crisis-ridden capitalism which has gone out and out reactionary and corrupt. Whoever goes to serve the moribund capitalism is sure to be corrupt and devoid of ethics and morality. It is the politics of reaction and retardation. But politics has other aspects also. It is the politics to serve the toiling and exploited masses of India built on higher edifice of morality and culture which can combat this situation. It is the politics of progress. It is noble, and nobler still is the revolutionary politics. People cannot go out of politics. So to put an end to the nasty game of prevailing parliamentary politics, we are to practise politics of morality and culture, which, in the process of building democratic mass movements on the burning issues of the people’s life, will ultimately go to the destination of emancipation of mankind. Allout struggle in this right direction is the only answer to this stifling situation — this is the call of the hour.

Cuba calls for struggle for justice against criminal US aggression

For the last 40 years the US imperialists have imposed an economic embargo and blockade against Cuba, just as they have done time and again against some country or other that dared rebel against US domination, including Korea, Chile, Libya, Vietnam and Nicaragua among others, with devastating effects on the people, esp. of the smaller countries. These acts of the USA are in flagrant violation of all international laws and conventions to which the US imperialists themselves are signatories. But whereas in the past the blockaded countries, such as Cuba could look to the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc for help, with their collapse this help has ceased. It is in such a critical situation when US imperialists have further stepped up their criminal aggression that Cuban people under Fidel Castro are standing firm despite the havoc wrought by total US blockade. In their heroic struggle to defend the revolution against US onslaught the Cuban people are setting an inspiring example before the world. In the UN General Assembly, world support for Cuba has increased overwhelmingly. Thus in 98 it received 157 votes in favour of ending the economic US blockade while the USA managed to get only 2, including its own. In view of US contemptuous disregard for the world's opinion, the people of Cuba have decided to carry the battle to legal forums beyond the UN Assembly as outlined in the address given by the Cuban Minister of foreign relations at the 54 session of the UN General Assembly.

First, while discussing the dramatic situation facing the vast majority of countries in the world, the Cuban minister highlighted the need fight attempts to impose notions like limitation of sovereignty and humanitarian intervention that pose a threat to Third World countries and violate the letter and spirit of the UN charter, and cautioned among others the danger of WTO becoming a fiefdom of the United States and its allies, just like the IMF and the World Bank. Subsequently talking of his country he said: If there ever was an example of what should not be done in terms of relations between powerful and small nations, that is provided by what is happening in Cuba.

Throughout more than 40 years, my people have been subjected to a brutal policy of hostility and all sorts of aggressions imposed by the United States. Senior authorities in that country have openly confessed that this policy is aimed at destroying the political and economic system built by the Cuban people of their own free will, and at restoring the neocolonial power that the United States definitively lost on January 1, 1959, with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.

As demonstrated by events, by public declarations made by American spokespeople and by secret documents declassified in the United States, this policy of aggression has been carried out through means that have ranged from political and diplomatic actions, propaganda campaigns, espionage and subversion, and the promotion of defection and illegal emigration, to acts of terrorism, sabotage and biological warfare. It has not been missing the organization and support of armed groups, air and naval raids against our territory, the organization of over 600 plots to assassinate the leader of our Revolution, a military invasion by a mercenary army, the most serious threat of an international nuclear conflict ever known on October of 1962, and finally, a brutal commercial and financial blockade and a ferocious economic war against my country that have now lasted 40 years.

Setting aside the economic aspects of the aggression against Cuba and dealing solely with the physical aggression and violent acts carried out by the U.S. government, a number of Cuban social organizations have filed a civil lawsuit against the U.S. administration demanding reparation and compensation for losses and damages resulting from the 3478 Cuban citizens who have died and a further 2099 survivors who have been left disabled as a consequence of covert

plots and the dirty war waged by the United States. The suit demands that the U.S. government, which is responsible for these human losses and injuries, be sentenced to pay a total of 181.1 billion dollars in reparation, as a minimum, symbolic compensation for the loss of something that is clearly irreplaceable and impossible to put a price on: the lives and physical well being of over 5500 Cuban citizens who have been victims of the United States' obsessive policy against Cuba...

The ferocious economic blockade, which reaches out to every possible angle of our country's foreign trade and financial relations, in the minutest detail, deserves special attention.

This blockade, that has lasted over 40 years, began to develop before the triumph of the Revolution. A secret U.S. document, declassified in 1991, reveals that on December 23, 1958, at a National Security Council meeting attended by President Dwight Eisenhower where the situation in Cuba was discussed, then CIA director Allen Dulles categorically stated: "We ought to prevent a Castro victory."

Three days later, on December 26, President Eisenhower instructed the CIA that "he did not wish the specifics of covert operations [against Cuba] to be presented to the National Security Council." Everything had to be kept strictly secret.

The sudden and overwhelming triumph of the revolutionary forces six days later did not give them time to "prevent a Castro victory."

The first U.S. assault on the national economy would take place on the very day of January 1, 1959, when those who had looted the Public Treasury fled for the United States, together with the perpetrators of the most heinous massacres and abuses against the Cuban people...

The spoils of this colossal theft ended up in

U.S. banks. Not a dime was returned to Cuba.

The National Bank immediately requested a modest quantity of funds to confront this highly critical situation. That request was turned down.

The Agrarian Reform Law passed on May 17, 1959 was aimed at providing food for the vast majority of our undernourished people and direct or indirect employment for a large percentage of the population unemployed at the time. It had been enacted when the word socialism had still not been spoken in Cuba; however, it provoked an extreme reaction in the United States, whose companies owned much of the best and most fertile land in Cuba. Cuba's willingness, stipulated in the law itself, to provide the owners with deferred compensation paid out in reasonable and workable installments, was met with the U.S. government's demand for prompt, effective and full cash compensation. There was nothing in the public coffers with which to fulfill this demand...

On April 6, 1960, L.D. Mallory, a State Department senior official..., proposed "a line of action which makes the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Three months later, on July 6, 1960, the United States adopted one of the measures proposed earlier: the removal of the Cuban sugar quota. Never again would the United States buy a single pound of sugar from Cuba. A market that was established over the course of more than 100 years between the United States and Cuba, with Cuba guaranteeing the supply of this essential food product to the United States and its allies in the first half of the century, during the two World Wars from which the United States emerged as the wealthiest, most powerful nation in the world, was wiped out in a second, dealing a savage blow to the country's major source of employment and revenue and depriving it of essential funds for acquiring the food, medicine, fuel and raw materials needed to ensure the survival of our people.

From that time onward, successive economic measures against the Cuban people continued to accumulate until taking shape as a full and comprehensive blockade, which went as far as to prevent Cuba from importing even an aspirin produced in the United States, or exporting to that country a single flower cultivated in Cuba.

This full-fledged blockade, shamelessly and euphemistically referred to in official terms with the apparently innocuous word "embargo", has been progressively intensified throughout the last 40 years.

Then, at the most critical and difficult time in our history, when the USSR and the socialist bloc collapsed and the country was deprived of the fundamental markets and sources of supplies it could count on to withstand the ferocious economic warfare waged against an island located only 90 miles from the U.S. coasts, they decided to act more ruthlessly still against Cuba, and the blockade was intensified to the maximum, in a

(Contd. on page 8)

'Hard Decisions' — their implications

Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behary Vajpayee in his first official speech after assuming power for the third time made it known that his government is going to take hard economic measures this time. Mr Kushabhau Thakre, the BJP President, in the recently held National Executive Meeting "urged his partymen to mobilise public opinion" in defense of these "tough decisions" (*The Times of India*, 4.11.99) These speeches hint at what serious attacks are in the offing in the economic field. Already some attacks in the economic field have come over the people, and it can be reasonably apprehended that some more can be seen in the coming budget and consequent effects through various means.

The Union Finance Minister Mr Yashwant Sinha's speech is more unequivocal in this respect. In his inaugural speech to a national seminar of FICCI on "Second generation reforms", he hinted at the shape and colour of the coming budget. Ample hints are there that the budget would come as a body blow to the poor. Thus the total economic plan of the government is basically pro-corporate and anti-poor. Let us discuss in brief how far "tough" these decisions are.

Hike in Diesel Price

Before the new government took over, the caretaker government led by the BJP announced a 35% hike in the price of diesel. This was a sly move to show as if the new government has nothing to do with it. Their pleas for the hike in the price of diesel are i) rise in its price in international market and ii) to reduce the huge oil-pool deficit. The first argument is confusing and misleading. The fact is, from Jan. '97 onward the price of crude oil was reduced in steps from \$ 19.20 per barrel to \$ 10.99 per barrel upto Dec. '98. But the government never cared for lowering the price of the same in the national market to keep parity with the price in international market. The current price in the international market which is \$ 21.90, is, though double compared to the price of Dec. '98 but only 14.1% higher than that of Jan '97. (*The Hindustan Times*, 23.10.99) So, the argument behind raising the price by 35% is not at all tenable.

Regarding the second argument, if we consider 1 barrel = 42 gallon and 1 gallon = 3.78 litre according to the US Standard, the international price of crude oil would have been Rs. 5.98 per litre which is far below the current national price of Rs. 14.20 in Calcutta. Even if the transport and refining cost are accounted for, this price can never be as high as 2.5 times that of international market, unless the government uses it to earn heavy revenue from it. It can be recalled here that during Gulf War the Central government had imposed Gulf cess of Rs. 1.50 per litre on the plea that due to war the oil was being transported not straight way but through a longer route. But the people of the country continue to bear the brunt of this cess nine years after the war was over.

Thereafter, the argument that it is an attempt to lower the oil pool deficit is also untenable in the background of the above discussion. The government has hiked the price in order to earn heavy revenue by taxing the people, on the one hand, and creating scope for the transport owners to multiply their profit, on the other, as close on the heels of the hike in oil price, many state governments announced a steep rise in bus fare

disproportionately to the rise of oil price. The WB government also hiked the fare of tram which runs by electricity. Truck owners' associations launched countrywide truck strike demanding revision of freight. The government's threat to promulgate ESMA on the truckers' strike, reveals its authoritarian attitude to push through 'hard decisions'. The hike of oil price would help the corporate houses, as is apparent from the fact that Rahul Bajaj and Swaraj Pal rushed to meet Mr Vajpayee to request him not to roll back the hike in the face of any public protest. So far the Prime Minister has obliged the corporate magnets.

Then for whom is this government — for the transport owners, the corporate houses or the millions? This step of raising the price of oil is an illustration of utter dishonesty on another score. If BJP and its allies would have been honest regarding reducing the oil pool deficit as they claim, they would have announced this during their last tenure in the government and before election, to get the public mandate on this issue. But they did it stealthily and cowardly after the election avoiding its accountability to the Parliament.

It is pertinent to note that the boastful claim of bringing down the rate of inflation to a 20 years low before the election by the BJP falls flat because the hike of diesel raises the rate of inflation by 2.4% in wholesale price index, alone.

Opening up Insurance Sector to Private Capital

Opening up of the insurance sector to the Indian and foreign capitalists is the outcome of pursuance of the policy of globalisation. The then Congress government mooted this proposal, the United Front later supported this and the BJP, crying Swadeshi, then opposed it. But now, the equation is changed with the BJP in power proposing this, and the CPI(M) and the CPI, the partners of the then UF, having tough times to devise how to wriggle out of this situation. It is to be recalled here that the Foreign Minister Mr Jasawant Singh in an official visit abroad committed to the US authorities before the elections that his government would introduce the IRDA in the first session of the Parliament.

We already showed in this column (15.12.98) that this public sector is not a losing one. The LIC's profit was Rs. 199.87 crores for the year ending 31.3.98. The expected contribution of the GIC and the LIC to the infrastructural development fund is Rs 1,00,000 cores for the 9th plan. In this background their plea of mobilising resources for national development for deregularising the insurance sector is quite untenable. We also highlighted in that article the track-record of the national and international private insurance companies in evading the claims of the policy-holders. Facts prove that the LIC and the GIC have far better record in this regard than the foreign companies. So it is apparent that their design is to facilitate loot

and plunder by the national and foreign private capitals at the behest of the IMF. Consequence would be horrible — threat of lay-offs, VRSs would mount. But these parties feel no concern for the tears of the workers lest they fall from the grace of the ruling capitalist class.

Restructuring in Banking Sector

In banking sector also the workers face similar threats. Bank-restructuring in pursuance of the globalisation policy poses a serious threat not only to the employees working but also the customers, i.e. the people. In short the devastation is going to destroy 10,00,000 jobs out of 13,00,000 in this sector alone.

In passing we may refer to another attack in a different way on availability of education for the common people. That all-out saffronisation of education has been on the agenda of the government is demonstrated by its move to replace the Presidents of the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) and the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) by Hindutvavallahs. A Bill is proposed to be brought to Parliament in order to facilitate the pumping in of foreign capital in education and more so in higher education. This will surely raise the cost of education because of withdrawal of government subsidy, denying the common people access to higher education, apart from other evil effects.

So there is no dearth of money when nuclear weaponisation and building up of most modern naval base — the biggest in Asia — come for actual implementation by the government. But on the question of meeting the irreducible minimum needs of the exploited and oppressed millions bled while 52 years after independence there is dearth of many and Mr. Yashwant Singh's call for austerity. Yet one cannot find an iota of austerity when a jumbo cabinet of 70 members to accommodate the 29 constituents of the NDA is formed and there is every possibility of the growth in this exercise of appropriating public money in the name of serving the people. Not only this, warning comes to the deprived and deceived teeming millions to be prepared for 'hard decisions' or in other words harder blows to be inflicted. The monopolists at whose pleasure these parliamentary parties are in power have nothing to fear. They are to earn rather more and more concessions and wider and more open field for loot and exploitation. This is coming in the life of the common people who voted the party to power under the illusion of betterment of their lot. Already they are faced with the hard reality of harder blows on their life and living. Our party's warning that only the overthrow of the moribund capitalist system, the source of all their misery can change their lot is and will be vindicated more and more in the coming days.



Dharna by AIKKMS on 20.10.99 at Power House Burauli, Rewari district in Haryana

Cuba calls for struggle for justice

(Contd. from page 6)

case of truly vulgar and repugnant opportunism.

The 1992 Torricelli Act, among other restrictive measures that considerably affected the maritime transport of food and other commodities between Cuba and the rest of the World, prohibited U.S. subsidiaries based in third countries from trading with Cuba. The legislation put an end to commercial operations that, in terms of food and medicines, amounted to over 700 million US dollars worth of imports from those countries.

This genocidal policy reached even more infamous heights with the Helms-Burton Act, which codified all previous administrative restrictions, expanded and tightened the blockade, and established it in perpetuity....

The American Association for World Health (AAWH), following a 1997 study of the consequences of the blockade in this field, concluded that it "appears to violate the most basic international charters and conventions governing human rights, including the United Nations charter, the charter of the Organization of American States, and the articles of the Geneva Convention governing the treatment of civilians during wartime. [...] The Geneva Conventions, to which 165 countries are parties, including the United States, require the free passage of all

medical supplies and foodstuffs intended for civilians in time of war. The United States and Cuba are not at war. In fact, their governments even maintain diplomatic representations in Havana and Washington. Nevertheless, the AAWH has determined that the embargo's restrictions signify the deliberate blockading of the Cuban population's access to food and medicine - in times of peace."

In the same report, the AAWH expresses its belief that "the US embargo of Cuba has dramatically harmed the health and nutrition of large numbers of ordinary Cuban citizens. [...] It is our conclusion that the US embargo has caused a significant rise in suffering -and even deaths- in Cuba."...

Given the absolute contempt demonstrated by the United States with regard to these UN General Assembly resolutions, the people of Cuba have decided -independently of the battle that goes on in this Assembly- to resort to the legal procedures to which they have a right in order to demand the sanctions corresponding to those responsible for these acts of genocide....

As a consequence, the National Assembly of People's Power of the Republic of Cuba declared this past September 13 :

I. That the economic blockade imposed by the government of the United States on Cuba

constitutes an international crime of genocide, in accordance with the definition stipulated in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948....

3. That as a result of the grave, systematic and ongoing genocide carried out over the course of 40 years against the people of Cuba, and in accordance with international standards, principles, agreements and laws, the Cuban courts have the right to try and punish the guilty parties, whether they be present or absent.

7. ...it(The National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba) calls on the international community for support in this struggle to defend the most elemental principles of justice, the right to life, peace, and the freedom of all peoples....

We are prepared not only to make these denunciations, but also to engage in debate and demonstrate the facts that support our assertions....

Let us continue the path of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao!

Long live Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought!

IMPERIALISM AND ALL REACTIONARIES ARE PAPER TIGERS!

United Convention at Hyderabad against Communalism

A united convention was held by the SUCI, CPI(M), and CPI Hyderabad City Committees against communalism on 5th November 1999 at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram.

A presidium comprising Comrade P.S.N. Murthy, CPI(M) and Comrade Ch. Murahari, SUCI conducted the proceedings of the convention.

Comrade C. Sambhi Reddy, CPI(M) state committee member, Comrade Aziz Pasha, CPI state committee member, and Comrade K. Sridhar, Secretary, state organising committee, SUCI were the speakers.

A resolution was passed condemning the communal activities of Sang Parivar organisations, particularly the yatra from Goa to Delhi.

Addressing the gathering Comrade K. Sridhar said that the main reason for the growth of communal forces was absence of united democratic mass movement. If democratisation of society was absent, then fascisation of society took place, and that was what precisely happening in our country and it was a failure of left parties. Comrade Sridhar appealed fervently to build up united movements on burning problems of the people. The Sangh Parivar and BJP were deliberately trying to divert the attention of the people from their real problems to fake ones.

Comrade C. Sambhi Reddy, said that it was ridiculous to demand apology from Pope for conversions. He said that it was because of oppression and humiliation of upper caste Hindus that the lower caste Hindus had converted themselves voluntarily to Christianity. He said that conversion was a democratic right of the people and nobody had any right to question this right.

Comrade Aziz Pasha, while addressing the gathering said that during thirteen-month rule of

the BJP, many savage atrocities took place on the Christians like burning alive of an Australian Christian priest, Graham Steins along with his two minor children and it is scar on our nation and defamed India internationally. In Gujarat, Rajasthan around 300 churches were burnt and many copies of Bible were burnt. But neither Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee nor Mr. L. K. Advani condemned these activities, instead they called for national debate on conversions. This was ridiculous, Mr. Pasha said.

Pope's Visit

Memorandum against "Yatra" of VHP-RSS combine

ANDHRA PRADESH

30.10.99, Hyderabad : A number of prominent individuals including O. Chinappa Reddy, former Judge, Supreme Court urged the President of India Shri K.K. Narayanan to take steps for stopping the proposed "Yatra" from Goa to Delhi by the VHP & the RSS to protest against the papal visit to India and to demand his apology for conversion.

This posed, they observed, a grave threat to secularism and public order.

KARNATAKA

The AIMSS, AIDS0 and AIDYO mobilised opinion of many renowned personalities of Karnataka in the form of an appeal to the President of India against the "Yatra" by the VHP and the RSS to whip up communal frenzy on the occasion of papal visit in India. The appeal was sent to the President and simultaneously released to the press.

Victory at Rewari

Rewari dated October 20, 1999. Power shortage is acute in Haryana. Since last 10 days 35 villages in particular are suffering acute shortage. Underground water has dried in the area. Thus electric pumping sets are used to water as well for agriculture. AIKKMS called upon the people to observe demonstration and dharna in front of the power house of Burauli in district Rewari. Poor and middle peasants participated in good number. A memorandum was submitted to the Sub Divisional Officer of Power Corporation demanding immediate supply of power thus resuming the supply of drinking water, light and irrigation. People were in a fighting mood. The authorities promised to resume the supply in two days. The dharna was withdrawn after this assurance. Comrade Satyawar, Secretary, AIKKMS, Haryana on this occasion addressed the assembled peasants. Administration fulfilled the promise. Victory was achieved and minimum power supply was restored. AIKKMS also organised another dharna at Ateli power house in district Mahendergarh. There also a large number of peasants assembled to press for the adequate supply to fulfil the requirement of irrigation in these sandy parts of Haryana. Peasants of these areas depend upon wheat crops in the main.

Earlier Bansi Lal Government has promised to give 24 hour supply throughout the state which has proved to be a hoax. Now Chautala government of Indian National Lokdal an ally of BJP-led NDA did not differ from the previous rulers, in spite of tall claims and high promises of popular nature in favour of the peasantry. The present situation of shortage of power supply throughout the state has exposed the real character of the present rulers whose only aim is to serve the capitalists. (Photo on page 7)

CPI(M) Savegely Murders A Child

On October last, in Deulbari, Kultali Block of South 24 Parganas district, 8-year old Aminuddin was shot at point blank range by a CPI(M) Panchayat member and his killer gang. They were looking for his uncle Alembari. Not finding him they shot his little nephew who had come for a visit. So low have the gangsters sunk, that they even obstructed the parents of the Aminuddin on their way to the hospital for more than an hour, till he died in their arms.

What is the reason for this dastardly crime? The Congress which pursued a pro-jotedar and rich peasant policy turned a somersault, with its activists becoming CPI(M) in this area in the eighties after the Left Front had come to power. Now with the help of police and administration they want to destroy SUCI, the party organising the agricultural labourers and poor peasants and establish their domination. Alembari has left the CPI(M) and become an organiser of our party. He is taking a leading role in organising the peasants

against the conspiracy of the CPI(M) to evict the peasants holding land deeds from the land. In the struggle to resist the increasing activities of the anti-socials, fostered by the CPI(M), Alembari is in the forefront. He also played a role in the question of defeat of the CPI(M) candidates in the recent election to a local school committee. That is why Alembari's name is in the hit list of the CPI(M) killer gang. There has been one project



after another aimed at eliminating him. That is why 1 hour after shooting Aminuddin they came back to look for Alembari. When they did not find him they set fire on their way back to the house of Shajahan, a relative of Alembari, burning it to ashes.

Canard Refuted by SUCI W. B. State Committee

Comrade Provash Ghosh, Secretary West Bengal State Committee, SUCI issued the following statement on 11th November exposing the CPI(M) canard accusing our party of murder:

The CPI(M) State Secretary has issued false and misleading statement regarding the incident at Chowbhangi village under Joynagar police station. No leader or worker of our party is connected with this incident. The fact is, most of the poor villagers here are supporters of our party. Bhadu Baidya, who recently passed away, was one of those whose sons have been cultivating for the last 25 years as sharecroppers the land of one Dhiren Sardar. Some time back local respected persons, panchayat member and the owner of the land decided that the cultivators would buy the land and accordingly peasants advanced some money to the owner. But this year, long after the seasonal cultivation of land anti-socials owing allegiance to CPI(M) and BJP suddenly raised the flag of a club on the said land and claimed that from now on they controlled it. As local people obstructed the miscreants they were compelled to retreat following which they started to threaten the peasants. Although the PS was informed of this incident no measures were taken.

Then on 5th November these anti-socials being armed came for harvesting crops. Due to the resistance by the villagers, on that day, too, they were compelled to retreat. But on that very night the anti-socials suddenly fired on Uttam Mondal, one of those who resisted. He was shifted to NRS hospital in a critical condition. He has already lost one eye. Despite FIR police did not arrest anybody and had not taken any measures to stop attacks on the peasants by the anti-socials enjoying protection from CPI(M) and BJP. Then on 10th November those anti-socials along with anti-socials from outside started to harvest paddy. Excited villagers unitedly resisted it and a clash ensued. As a result, some anti-socials lost their lives.

Had the police taken measures after the incident of 5th November, this clash would not have at all taken place. But as police and administration work under CPI(M) leaders' instruction, they did not take necessary measures. In the last 22 years owing to attacks by anti-socials, 122 comrades of our party alone in South 24 Parganas district have lost their life. Over the last two months they have killed 5 activists of our party, including an eight-year old child of a comrade. Police are not taking any steps,



Law Violation in front of Raj Bhawan, Calcutta against hike in Diesel Price by BJP-led Centre and fare hike by W.B. Left Front Government on 15.10.99.

not even arresting the... When people... and handing them... the police, police are... them free, pleading... fled away. Police... not submitting... heet on time and thus... ving the CPI(M)... ed murderers from... ment. This role of...) is not unknown to... ple of West Bengal... s new is that CPI(M)... BJP unitedly are... g down onslaught... our party supporter... asants to evict them... ne land. We believe... of West Bengal will... misguided by the... stander campaign of the... CPI(M) leadership.

So far the police has not arrested a single culprit. Deep anger and grief has gripped the people in this area, even the general supporters of CPI(M), the common man, are upset. A journalist of "Annachokhe" who went there, writes: "Even the general supporters of CPI(M) are upset. This was evident in the utterances of a young CPI(M) supporter. When I asked him: Why did your leaders murder this child, he curtly replied - they are no more our leaders, they are CPI(M) leaders. I asked: But you are working for the CPI(M), I have heard you have participated in CPI(M) processions? Came the answer: I used to, but no more; now I am taking to the path of Alembari."

I asked a local old man: why did they kill this innocent child? What was his crime? With choked voice he slowly said: it had committed one offence: it was a child of the Alembari family, it was born in a SUC family, that's his crime. He could say no more and wiped his eyes again and again.

I asked a middle aged man: What's your name? With firm voice he shot back: Why do you ask? Why have you come to us? Go the CPI(M) leaders — and back in Calcutta write: "I went to Kultali and have seen the reign of terror by SUC - a child was killed in the clash between SUCI and CPI(M) over control over this area. We know the like of you, people. But let me tell you that in our struggle for recovery of benam land and for just demands of the sharecroppers since the fifties we have sacrificed much blood and many lives, we have built up organisation. At that time we fought against the attacks of jotedars-Congress-police, now the Congress men have gone over to the CPI(M), so the fight is against the CPI(M)-police-administration combine. They are using the lure of money, and getting the anti-socials to gang up against us, they are assassinating our leading cadres, unleash a reign of terror. In this district with Aminuddin they have murdered 112 of our people. Still then I tell you they cannot break us, no matter how much slander you write against us in the papers. We are poor. The party is our blood and soul. It is like our son, it is even more dear to us. Today I am talking to you, tomorrow you may hear that night I have been done to death. Still then we cannot be subdued. If I am no more my child will go on, if it dies its child is there. We cannot be wiped out."

Having said all this in one go, he was breathless. There was no need for any more questions, for by now I had got the answer to all questions."

Narrow Politics over Cyclone by Central BJP and State Congress Governments

(Contd. from page 1)

relief items having been transported for distribution among the victims. But reports pour in that the victims are going without food and drinking water for more than a week, famished masses are scrambling in a mad rush for whatever is reaching out to them, and patients are fleeing even premier hospitals for want of food, medicine and drinking water. There is no coordination of work, no organization to guide speedy relief and rescue operations. Only chaos prevails, taking advantage of the chaos criminals are on a robbing spree to loot relief trucks and waylay vehicles to rob passengers. Reports say that some political leaders and police personnel are in collusion to let loose the criminals to fetch fortune.

These victims, who grow crops and labour in lands, mines and mills to produce for others, have lost their homes and livelihood, many their lives. Now the spectre of famine and epidemic haunts them. With former croplands now turned into waste, many will be thrown off cultivation for years to come. Broken in health and spirit, many will be laid off jobs for all the rest of life. Natural calamity has pushed them into indescribable sufferings. But it is the lack of genuine concern on the part of those in power, whose responsibility and duty it is to do everything possible on a war footing to help the victims and stand by them at this hour of peril, who have shattered the hopes and trusts of these people and made them real destitutes.

Nature could inflict sufferings, but those who rule did ruin their spirit to live. The government has enough stocks of food and medicine, contingents of doctors and nurses, numerous technical experts and machineries at its disposal, and, above all, there are so many people across the country who are ready to do everything humanly possible to save the victims and rehabilitate them! But the lack of true concern for the suffering masses on the part of those in power has turned all this into abject failure in the face of this emergency. Desperation grown out of this criminal negligence of those entrusted with the responsibility is leading to food riots among the victims, hands turning into fists, as only can

happen in a naked battle for survival.

What purpose then governance? What for is the administration? What sense does operation on a 'war footing' make, if excuses are to be found for inability to rally all sources to save men in the hour of emergency?

Helicopters abound on the warfront, even during routine military exercises, but on the front of calamity that struck the masses they are too few to be deployed in full. Money is no obstacle to testfire missiles or explode a nuclear weapon, but money is wanting to rescue and feed the victims of calamity.

It is not a criminality of the state government alone. It is a criminality on the part of the Central government, too. The BJP-led government at the Centre refuses to declare the devastation of Orissa a national calamity because the brunt of responsibility devolves upon it in that case. The Centre would give money from the national calamity fund but wants to control the relief operations so that the BJP and its allies can project themselves before the people as the real benefactors in hours of need. On the other, the Congress government of the state is trying to pass the responsibility on to the BJP and its allies in order to save itself from the wrath of the victims and to put the blame on the Centre for all its failings. Unconcerned with the people's sufferings, but all these parties are not without interest in these sufferings, because they, too, are in a scramble to capitalise on the sufferings and win votes at the next elections in the state due in a few months from now. These parliamentary parties — none — can be absolved of this crime against humanity.

This far has gone the human tragedy. Man cannot prevent natural calamities till today. But when there is an advance alert on an impending cyclone or flood, preemptive measures are possible to take to minimise destruction and sufferings. Massive evacuation can be arranged, food and relief materials can be stockpiled, administration and army can be kept in combat readiness to be pressed into service at the flicker of a calamity hitting. No such measures in the true sense had been taken by the government, except

for sending out a routine alert and making a show of precaution. Cyclones are annual events on these coasts, not infrequently of fierce kind. Only a few years back almost a similar devastation had afflicted people on the coasts of Andhra Pradesh. But no state governments, nor the Centre, in particular, have ever truly thought of planning long term measures to minimise the devastating effects of cyclones or floods, such as repairing and constructing dykes on coasts, improving the drainage system, raising forest belts to break storm speeds, and constructing pucca houses in the place of mud huts of the poor people living on the coasts. To expect these political parties and their governments to promote scientific research on why and how these calamities arise, whether predictions can be made about them and what preventions have to be planned in advance is foolery, simply because in the reckoning of these defenders of the ruling class the masses of the people are a herd to be fleeced, a votebank to be lured and looted. They will only induce the people into thinking that a calamity which is the handiwork of nature is a curse on their lot to be patiently endured. Men of the savage society did think in these terms. On the eve of the twenty first century, too, such thoughts are in order, but only in a society whose rulers have nothing in common with the ruled.

During tribulations as this in the pre-independence days, people of all walks, including the leaders of the nationalist movement, and students in particular, plunged into relief and rescue operations to stand by the victims. Because, they felt truly concerned for the masses and the unconcern of the alien imperialist rulers aggrieved them most. Do the present rulers of the country and the political parties defending their interest have genuine concern for the people's sufferings?

Now also, then, the people have to take on the initiative to protect and advance their own interest. They must rise to the occasion and while rallying for the cyclone-hit masses of Orissa they should ponder over the questions basic to these problems.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee on Orissa Cyclone

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, demanding war-footing measures for super-cyclone hit people of Orissa said in course of a statement on 2-11-99 :

Thickly populated ten districts of coastal Orissa have been reeling under unprecedented cyclone and flood resulting in two crores of people severely affected as per nonofficial estimate and 1.5 lakh people as per Star News are dead or washed away by tidal waves. Paradeep port city, Jagasingpore, Kendrapara, Jazpore, Anandapore areas are still submerged under sea-water or floodwater and completely cut off from the outside world. Even in the capital Bhubaneshwar and Cuttack city, people are passing days without food, drinking water, electricity and other essential civic necessities.

Relief operations of the Central and state governments are almost next to nil. Telecommunication is totally disrupted. We could get a fax from our Orissa state unit only on 1.11.99 at 5 pm through PAIG office. Under the circumstances, our

representative Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta, a member of the Central Committee, demanded in the all-party meeting with the Chief Minister at Bhubaneshwar to declare the situation a 'national calamity', which was accepted by all. We appeal to the people and all medical organisations to stand by the super-cyclone hit people of Orissa with food articles, baby food, garments, medicines and money. Our party also demands of the Central and state governments to take rescue, relief and rehabilitation measures on war-footing. We urge at the same time upon both the governments that narrow politics should not stand in the way.

State committees and frontal organisations of our party have been collecting relief materials from the members of the public as per decision and appeal of the Central Committee and those will be sent to affected people.

We firmly believe that the people all over the country will come forward with their mite at this grave hour.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee thanks the people

Our Party appealed to the people of the country to contribute their mite in the relief collection for the super-cyclone victims of Orissa. All the party units of different states of India embarked upon relief collection and it is heartening that the people responded generously to our call. Our party is seriously engaged in rescue and relief operation since the beginning. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of our party thanked all those who came forward to help the hapless people of Orissa in this hour of their calamities and crisis, and hope more people will come forward in coming days with generous contributions including medicines, baby food and clothes.

Military Takeover in Pakistan

(contd from page 3)

known for his pro-western leaning. Rather, as has been reported in a daily (*The Telegraph*, 16.10.99) : "Being more concerned about proliferation and missiles than democracy, the US sees the military as being in even more direct control of the nuclear programme."

Not only this, the US may turn a blind eye to Pakistani mischief in Kashmir in exchange of concessions on Osama bin Laden or the Taliban now seem to boomerang on its previous policies. A point to be noted here. The Islamic fundamentalism along with its 'terrorist' force is being feared by the US imperialism most because it represents the contending reactionary bourgeois forces over the grip and control of oil resources as also market. Afghanistan, has rich oil and other resources. The US imperialism glued on these. Under cover of combating Soviet army, it created with the help of Pakistan, the Taliban and terrorist gangs are moving with the sole object of grabbing those. Today, exploiting the situation in Pakistan, the US imperialism with the backing of UN Security Council resolution is putting pressure for the expulsion of Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan and trying to bring the Taliban under control from the same motive, who are presently negotiating with US. The Indian government, representing the aspirant bourgeoisie tries to be a partner of the US with the hope of reaping some benefits. It will surely be hard time for Musharraf when Laden is being backed by the Saudi billionaires and Saudi Arab being the most dependable and biggest donor of Pakistan. It may be noted in passing that India is developing a good relation with Israel, close ally of USA, which nakedly express India government's closeness with US imperialism.

In sum, the US imperialists would surely try to exploit the situation in their favour. They find India under BJP leadership to be a willing partner in their global politics and more particularly for their interest in having a firm grip on South-East Asia. Moreover, both India and Pakistan offer to the US

finance capital a good market which they can ill-afford to lose. The total economic-political grip over the entire Indian sub-continent has been set to be the object by the US imperialists.

Musharraf's balancing tricks

Placed in a very tricky situation Musharraf is putting up a brave face. He is to satisfy many but worried most on economic and political fronts. To keep up neutrality he had to brush aside Benazir Bhutto's overture by calling him a "civilian dictator", describing October 12, "not the day that democracy died in Pakistan" but "rather the day it began to be reborn". This was only to obtain her safe return to Pakistan from the sanctuary in London along with 'ill-gotten billions of dollar.' On this charge she escaped trial by fleeing from the country.

To meet the unfavourable reaction the General assured "an efficient and impartial interim set up, which would ensure stability, credibility, transparency and accountability in running the affairs of state" was being worked out. He was however evasive as to the question of time for civil rule to return. Not only that to show his peaceable intention or to exonerate his guilt in Kargil incursion he announced to withdraw forces from India-Pakistan international border but encouraged at the same time the violent secessionist activities presently going on in Kashmir. He also kept silent on reduction of forces from the LOC.

His first public act was to show off his family to international audience to make him look a normal person, a family man rather than someone hungry for political power. His first international engagement after the coup was to visit Riyadh, the Saudi capital to assure the biggest benefactor that everything was under control. He began to talk about Kemal Attaturk who brought about social, political reforms in Turkey, took the country to a modern society based on western culture, burned the burkha (veils) and abolished caliphate. This was not to secularise the Islamist fundamentalists who are firmly entrenched in a Islamic theocratic

state where barring Saudi Arabia Shariat rule prevails but to stem the tide of popular discontent finding expression in protest movements, demonstrations, in the streets. The primary concern for the army rule under Musharraf is to confuse and dissuade the exploited and oppressed from the path of revolutionary movement to overthrow the very capitalist order, the fountainhead of all their divisions and miseries.

A week after the coup, the General promised to respect freedom of speech in Pakistan which was absent. But who does not know that Free Press and military rule cannot co-exist? There is a lurking suspicion that the media might be gagged and the people forced to accept the promise of an efficient government under military rule.

During Saudi Arabia visit Musharraf said : "I will concentrate on improving the economic situation... consolidate unity and lead Pakistan to a new horizon." this is obviously to reassure the donors and benefactors of Pakistan.

Musharraf's army administration has raised hue and cry against billions of unpaid taxes and defaulted loans. It holds Sharif family alone of having outstanding debt amounting to \$70 million. Some 300 politicians from different parties are accused of having evaded huge amounts of taxes and have made bank loans as gifts. It seems both the neighbouring countries though in armed combat, as also in nuclear weaponisation are racing closely in matters of corruption and turning public property into private property of the politicians and their favourites. The army administration has ordered financial institution to freeze accounts of politicians including the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. There is assurance of bringing strict measures to collect taxes as also bank loans. It is sure, however, all this cannot bring solution of the basic problems in people's life in Pakistan.

We hope and trust that the Pakistani people will understand and realise the situation in right perspective and come forward to uphold the interests of the exploited and oppressed against the deceptions and trickeries of the bankrupt capitalist ruling class.

Letter to the President

(Contd. from page 1)

But even though the huge loss suffered can not be regained, it is still possible to save the remaining and avert the worst that is approaching. Even if failing to come out of the prejudice in declaring the disaster in Orissa a national calamity, the union government must with no more delay rise up to the occasion on a war footing, i.e., deploy the armed forces to take full responsibility of a well-planned and well-coordinated rescue-relief-rehabilitation operation covering the entire region of the ten worst-affected coastal districts together with the other affected parts of Orissa — a most complex and gigantic task beyond the scope of the civil administration at its present state.

Last but not the least, the union government must not grudge whatever money and material the task needs ; the armed personnel must collaborate and cooperate with all individuals and organisations that offer their manual and/or material aid ; and all concerned, the union government above all, ought not act with charitable dispensation but with genuinely pro-people attitude in bringing the cyclone-hit millions back to normal life again.

Accordingly, we consider it utmost necessary

to ensure :

1. Immediate airborne and waterborne rescue of all marooned people.
2. Immediate establishment of a wide and well-supplied network of relief camps providing adequate food, drinking water, babyfood, clothing and shelter to the affected.
3. Establishing a network of medical camps well-provided with competent medical personnel and sufficient medicines and other materials.
4. Ensuring, with armed protection if necessary, regular supply to these camps by land, water and airways.
5. All out preventive measures against the imminent threat of epidemics.
6. Earliest possible disposal of dead and decomposed human and animal bodies and debris.
7. Well-planned, comprehensive and coordinated drive to as soon as possible restore all communication and civic services, e.g., telecommunications, electricity, water supply, sanitation, postal communication etc.
8. Similar planned arrangement, together with procuring, from now on, all equipments, men

and material for taking up immediately after the water recedes, the work of :

- a) restoration of the wrecked transport system, e.g., roadways, railways, bridges etc., and,
- b) constructing cyclone-proof and habitable dwelling places, rural and also urban, for the enormous homeless people.
9. Full provision to be made, first and foremost by the union government, for 'complete economic rehabilitation' of the jobless affected millions — by reviving normal industrial, agricultural, trade and commercial and all other ancillary and auxiliary activities for enabling one earn his livelihood.
10. As long as complete economic recovery is not attained, so long and so far the union government shall stand duty bound to provide each and all affected, without exception or discrimination, that necessary minimum subsistence which enables them survive with dignity.

Expecting that your timely intervention will make the government do the needful.

Awaiting your reply at the earliest.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- Nihar Mukherjee
General Secretary, S U C I

Red Salute Comrade Bakul Chowdhury

Comrade Bakul Chowdhury, a veteran communist, breathed her last after a heart attack on 19th October at the Salt Lake party commune, Calcutta. She was 66. She had been suffering from rheumatoid arthritis for a very long period and was bedridden for the last 16 years at a stretch. The news of her demise plunged the party comrades and people who knew her in deep sorrow. Red Flag was lowered half mast at the Calcutta District Party Office. The last journey was held the next day, on 20th October, so that leaders and workers and common people could pay their last homage.

The Central Committee members attending the CC meeting there, paid their revolutionary tributes to Comrade Bakul Chowdhury. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, paid floral tribute followed by Comrades Tapas Dutta, Ashutosh Banerjee, Sukomal Dasgupta, Sitesh Dasgupta, Provash Ghosh, Ashit Bhattacharyya, Krishna Chakraborty and Central Staff Comrades Ranjit Dhar and Manik Mukherjee. Central Committee member Comrade Anil Sen was bedridden. So, floral tribute was given on his behalf by Comrade Manik Mukherjee.

From Salt Lake party commune Comrade Bakul Chowdhury's body was brought to the party office on Lenin Sarani. Bereaved comrades paid revolutionary homage there. Homage was paid by Comrade Protiva Mukherjee on behalf of West Bengal State Committee of the party and, Comrade Yakub Pailan on behalf of West Bengal KKMS. Different party units and units of mass organisation paid floral tribute. From there the body of Comrade Bakul Chowdhury was taken to Bhowanipore. She was the secretary of the Bhowanipore party local committee. Homage was paid by Chakraberia Hawkers Samity, Byabsayee Samitee and personalities from the locality close to Comrade Chowdhury.

From there the last journey started towards Keoratala crematory ground. Comrades there paid red salute to Comrade Chowdhury. The song on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and the Internationale were sung.

A Condolence meeting was held on 29th October at Ashutosh College, Calcutta. Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, Central Committee and

Secretary West Bengal State Committee, was the main speaker there.

In his long and emotional speech Comrade Ghosh highlighted the exemplary aspects of the character of Comrade Bakul Chowdhury. He said :

"...Comrade Bakul Chowdhury was one of those rare comrades, to whom nothing else than party and struggle existed. She exemplified what we understand by 'party is life', 'work is life'. No exhaustion, no weariness, no consideration of sickness, no question of rest, no search for excuse justifying non-action. If she was restrained due to physical reasons, she would struggle to get permission to work. As long as she could move, she did not cease to work. She was compelled to stop when she could not walk any more. Hers is a great life of work. ... It was never a headache for her whether she was the member of a particular committee or not, whether somebody gave her importance to her. Work alone was all important. Whatever responsibility the party gave her, wherever the party sent her, she discharged everything with dedication.... Nowadays in ordinary workers is found an attitude : 'How can I work alone? I need a comrade with me.' In those days none was provided with a comrade, it was never thought of even. At that time she worked in Kasba singlehandedly, organised a school, ran it by a public committee formed by her. There too she recruited activists, created supporters. From there she came to Bhowanipore, again she was alone. She recruited activists in single numbers, here too she built a primary school which still is there, an example of her creativity."

"...She made a hard struggle to study party literature, because she did not have scope to get good primary education. There was no party organ, booklet, handbill that she did not read. She read meticulously. While sick she could not read, she took help from other comrades. She could not attend meetings, but she meticulously took information from comrades who attended them. Many of our so-called degree holder comrades had much to learn in this respect. Even though she was completely bedridden her mind was always with the party, its views, activities and ideology..."

Comrade Bakul Chowdhury was bold and passionately determined. Had she any viewpoint of her own, she would debate with any leader, till she was convinced. Sometimes she appeared obstinate. But when she grasped the reasoning, whoever might have pointed it out, she would value it and accept it. But talking behind others' back, leaving things half said, trying to save oneself by blaming others, trying to make a point in a roundabout way considering the mood of the leader, trying to please the leaders — such petty bourgeois fads were absent in her.

"...I knew such incidents and moments in Comrade Bakul Chowdhury's life when she was injured, felt sorrow, pained — but there was no grievance. What I want to highlight is the party tuning expressed in her. ...She used to look upon and love party activists as her own children. Though she was without a child, but in reality she was the mother of many children. If someone, who might be younger in age, might have joined the party much later, but due to his merit attained the responsibility of higher leadership, she would be happy and as an elder sister affectionately encouraged him. I have witnessed her struggling role in every democratic movement. I have witnessed how in 1959 on historic 31st August amidst desperate firing, lathicharge and teargas, while many were embracing death, a male comrade beaten by the police fell on the street, who might have died if further tortured by the police. Comrade Bakul Chowdhury rushed to the spot. She too was severely beaten and dishevelled, in that condition she almost carried that comrade to safety and brought him to the party office. These are unforgettable.

"...She lived in the party commune. Outside there was party work from morning till night. Then coming back like other female comrades she used to cook, clean rooms, nurse patients. Sick comrades from different states, districts would come, they stayed in the commune and commune members nursed them. Even one, not a comrade, a brother of a comrade, who came afflicted with cancer was nursed. The 3-4 female comrades who did this — Bakul Chowdhury was one among them.

"...Through the loving touch of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the impact of his teachings — Comrade Bakul Chowdhury developed into an exemplary woman character. Her identity was not as a housewife or a mother of a child. A woman who stands on honour, in whom the dignity of womanhood bloomed — Comrade Bakul Chowdhury was like that.

"...You know, our party has three stages of membership — applicant member, member and staff member. Staff membership is the highest stage, its number is very small in our party. She attained such a stage of higher communist character that according to the view of the General Secretary of our party and the Central Committee, she acquired the qualities of a staff member. This is not at all easy."



Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of the party and other Central Committee members paying revolutionary tribute to departed Comrade Bakul Chowdhury

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