

Bus Fare Hike Protest Movement

The streets are soaked with blood—the aroma sticks; the air is thick with smoke of teargas shells; the thuds of lathis on human beings, wanton and unceasing; male police both in uniform and without it pounce upon them with beastly fury; they hit women in their chest with blows and belts, the plain clothe forces drive the sharp end of umbrella and pointed sticks in belly as if an exercise in lynching; they groan in pain and roll in the street but never relent in dauntless courage nor the beatings stop. People witnessing the savageries unbound, no longer remain dumb witness. In the midst of shower of brickbats by a special squad of police force, they join with those who valiantly uphold their cause, to protest against the shocking outrage of civilized code and raw barbarity. Yes, this was the scenario.

Are we describing the scene of any town in South Africa or of any other place where savageries have become synonymous with governance? No, you are sadly mistaken. It is Calcutta under the rule of CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' government now about to complete ten years. It has achieved the unique distinction unmatched probably by any other state, of raising the bus fares fifth time to make the minimum from 20 paise to 50 paise. This time the rise is stiff ranging from 5 to 30 paise upon people under the grinding wheel of exploitation and oppression not only by the capitalists but also by their defenders in governments. Those under the savage attacks are men and women who were in a legitimate democratic protest movement from 15th to 17th July in Calcutta, initiated by the Eight Party Combination of which our party is a constituent.

THE BACKGROUND

The 'left front' government riding roughshod over public opinion and in total disregard of people's miseries, announced unilaterally enhancement of fares of buses both private and public for the fifth time. It was made effective after the municipal elections, from 15th of this month. The plea was familiar—the rise in oil prices by the Central government. Had there been slightest sincerity and pro-people attitude then CPI(M) and its constituents in the government could have built up a protracted movement against the Central government. We mean a real movement, not the ritual of a day's bandh, backed by police and administration. No, they did not show

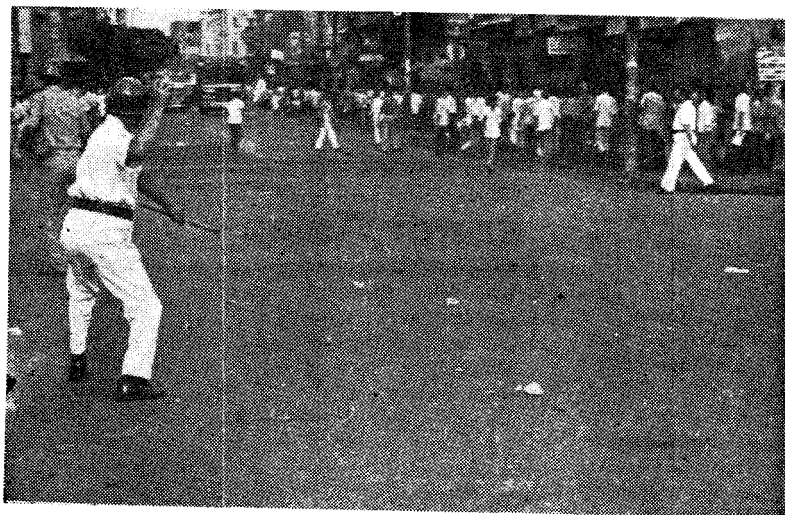
slightest intention of that. Does indicate a pro-people attitude or the desire to use the hike in oil price as a plea to pamper the private bus operators who are minting fabulous profit and the corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats in the State Transport Corporation? Does it not mean that people are asked to pay for corruption and inefficiency as also super profit?

Secondly, it is the concrete experience of people that despite repeated increase in bus fares, the bus service or the financial position of the State Transport, let alone improving has further deteriorated. The amount of subsidy by the poor tax payers has more than doubled over the years, and the state of rampant

corruption in this department has come in for severe criticism even in the press with factual reports, the latest being on the North Bengal State Transport. That is why we demanded and distinguished citizens also voiced the demand of institution of an Expert Committee with a time frame to go in depth as to the justifiability or not of further hike in bus fare. The government should have the guts to meet this justified demand. Those who are in government now once raised the same demand from the united platform of struggle. During Siddhartha Sankar Roy ministry, the R.N. Dutt Commission was appointed at public pressure and it gave its findings. The report did not see the light because it did not favour any further rise and exposed the falsehood that the fare structure in this state was lowest.

Today, Sri Benoy Chowdhury, a veteran leader of the CPI(M) and acting Chief Minister of the state was repeating the same untruth when he

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Let the Minister answer : Who is throwing brickbats—The Police or the Picketers ?

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Comrade Nihar Mukherjee on Gujarat Communal riot

21.7.86 :

With deep pain and anguish we are witnessing the most tragic spectacle of breakdown of civil society trampling human sense of values in every part of the country. The recent happenings in Gujarat, the handiwork of communal forces of both the communities, the anti-social elements backed by Congress(I) and its contenders in parliamentary politics point to the grave danger that stares in the face of our country. The act of shame has by now become an annual feature in the walled city of Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat. There has been a heavy toll in terms of life and property of common people including savage act of burning people alive this time when the state has

not yet recovered from last year's blood-bath.

We appeal to every man and woman of conscience and goodwill to unite and exert so that the dehumanisation process that has been set in motion by the fascist conspirators inciting communal passions do not succeed in destroying the bond of amity among different community people which is the very basis of civilisation. Humanity must be saved at all cost. The struggle must be against the exploiting capitalist class and moribund capitalism which is the source of all evils, unitedly by all exploited and oppressed people. They must turn their face from the path of self-destruction to proceed along the path of life and progress.

COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH MEMORIAL MEETING

5th August '86

Saheed Minar Maidan

5 P.M.

Main Speaker— Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

President— Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta

Bus Fare Hike Protest Movement in W. Bengal

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could have easily collected the information if he wanted that even as a single example, in the neighbouring state of Assam, the minimum bus fare is only 30 paise, despite hike in oil prices. Today, Sri Chowdhury says to the press that hike in bus fare is 'inevitable' without caring to know the actual cost structure compared to fare structure. He does not even think for a moment that the private bus operators ran bus services at old fare rate for months together even after the latest rise in oil prices and this fact by itself proves that they suffered no loss.

And finally, if the bus fare hike is 'inevitable' to a veteran CPI(M) leader, one may ask naturally why does the same party opposes it in states where they are not in the ministry? Does it mean then that economic burden does not increase even after stiff fare hike of buses where they are in ministry? Queer indeed is the logic of political opportunism!

SAVAGERIES UNBOUND

More than hundred of our comrades, both male and female have been severely wounded, including fracture of bone and serious head injury. About 50 comrades were arrested and many more false cases have been brought against them. All of those against whom cases have been framed up have been severely injured and tortured by police. Police bears merrily the colonial legacy under the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' rule. But some instances have come to our notice which not only trample minimum human values but pose serious threat to democratic movement. We may mention in brief those abominable features.

1. Male police force was set on the female volunteers although the government has female police forces and could easily use them. This male police forces violating even the

police code, behaved like wild beasts, outraged the dignity of the women volunteers and beat them fiercely with the motive of maiming them.

2. As a plea for police brutality a 'brickbat squad' has been in the use as we have experienced in the last anti-bus fare hike movement. That the police officials did not deploy the women police force is for this reason. But everyday after display of brutality, they took the plea of brickbat throwing as if from those in the movement. People have seen with their own eyes who threw the brickbats and they protested against it. But most unfortunately, even Sri Chowdhury, himself a veteran leader of CPI(M) and who must be quite aware how it has been the colonial tradition with police still going on of even killing innocent persons in police or jail custody and then covering up the crime with concocted stories and as such the real worth of police report, but still he took it as gospel truth and made such insinuating remark as reported in the press: "if they (meaning those in movement) throw brickbats what can police do? Will they make arrangement of tea for them and send home"! We wonder to what depth political morality has reached.

3. Though not on a massive scale and as auxiliary force as on previous occasions, yet this time also CPI(M) cadres were seen helping police to detect our comrades in movement for arrest and torture. What instances they are setting before the democratic movement?

4. And the false cases galore against those who were severely beaten and jured, both men and women, prove unmistakably that the same colonial tradition goes on under the rule of those who call them 'leftist', 'Marxist'. On 18th, a massive mass deputation waited on the acting Chief

Minister and a deputation from Eight Party Combination met him and handed over a memorandum. The movement has been spreading in the districts though the fare hike has not yet been effected there. In the preparatory stage, massive public support and enthusiasm are noticed. This is the surest indication that people are ready to fight, given the proper leadership.

We salute the heroism of those who stood firm in their courage of conviction. Savage torture, grievous wounds cannot deter them from pursuing the goal in their life,

the life of a revolutionary. They fight for the cause of justice, for humanity. Every blow they receive firms their resolve but those who deliver the blow expose their bankruptcy and mortal fear about mass rousing.

The movement has drawn many youths who sprang forth in their youthful fervour against such gross affront to civilisation. They demonstrate in practice that undying is the call of humanity. The call will ring. The enemies of the people, of humanity and of civilization may stick in government by the benevolence of the moneybags, bureaucracy and drumbeatings of the bourgeois press but no doubt the call will be louder to announce their inevitable doom.



Who are they in plain cloth beating SUCI demonstrators?

Brutal Assault on SUCI workers In Assam

The A.G.P. Government backed recent language circular in Assam, which makes Assamese language compulsory in all non-Assamese medium schools in the State, has aroused a strong protest in different parts of the State. The Assam State Committee of our party submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister on 15th June last, pointing out that the measure would affect the process of normalisation of relation among different sections of the people and also harm the voluntary and spontaneous process of learning Assamese language by the non-Assamese speaking people of the state.

Later, on the basis of this memorandum, the party took the programme of distributing a handbill to

draw the people's attention to the serious consequence that would follow the measure.



Com. Prabhat Roy, wounded by AGP miscreants.

On 1st July last, our party comrades were distributing the handbill in front of the N.E.F. Railway headquarters at Maligaon in Guwahati when some fifteen to twenty AGP supporters assaulted them. They severely beat up Comrade Prabhat Roy and Comrade Ajit Acharya. The R.P. personnels who were present on the spot did not intervene despite being approached. The A.G.P. miscreants tied a rope around Comrade Roy and blindfolding him, took to the nearby hillock and beat him up again savagely. They took away his

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Movements led by SUCI in States

MAHARASTRA

On 7th June last in Nagpur a meeting was held under the auspices of Pragatisheel Mahila Sangathan (Progressive Women's Central Committee of the Ram Library Hall. Comrade Shankar Singh, member, Central Committee of the SUCI, presided. A number of women workers addressed the gathering. Comrades Alka Verma, Mridula Laghve and Nurjahan Karade pointed out how women suffered exploitation in the prevailing capitalist society. They urged women to play their own positive role in the struggle for establishing the socialist society where alone the problems of the downtrodden people, of women in particular, can be solved. Comrade Shankar Singh emphasised the role of women in bringing about the desired radical transformation of the society. He urged women to give up vulgar individualism and work with men shoulder to shoulder to win emancipation from exploitation of all sorts by building up democratic mass movements conducive to anti capitalist socialist revolution. Comrade Harne was the other speaker.

M. P.

On 4th June last a meeting of workers was held at Birul Bazar Maidan in MP under the auspices of All India Majdoor Sangathan. Sri Baburam Dhote, a veteran freedom fighter inaugurated the meeting and Sri Nanarai Khanna presided. Comrade Shankar Singh, the main speaker on the occasion, pointed out that the only way out before workers and peasants of this country to free themselves from the burning problems in their life was to build up and advance united democratic mass movements against the anti people policies and measures of the central and the state governments. Comrades Harne, Gabhade and Gangotri also addressed the gathering.

KARNATAKA

In the first week of July '86 the people of Bellury gathered

in D.C. compound to protest against the indifference of the local authority to some of their problems. The demands included the immediate increase of a school in the village of Somasamudra from V to VII, recruitment of good teachers for the school, provision of public sanitation for the girl students and supply of drinking water to the locality. The rally was addressed by Comrade M. Jambunath. Earlier a procession of 400 people led by Comrade K. Somsekhar, an organiser of Bellury district unit of SUCI went through the thoroughfares of Bellury.

Earlier in June, under the auspices of AIDS0, Somasamudra unit Bellury district, a huge rally also protested against the poor teaching facility of the

tion steps taken in pursuance of the fascist new education policy by the Central Government.

The demonstrating students demanded withdrawal of pre-degree general course and withdrawal of the new pre-degree board formed to introduce 2 vocational education under Government controlled board, (2) the policy to dissolve the democratically elected autonomous bodies to squeeze education (3) open university system, (4) Cochin University Ordinance and Gandhi University Act, (5) Price-hike of text books, (6) the scheme to impose the New Education Policy etc.

The procession in Trivandrum started from Tri-



Savage police assault on SUCI demonstrators during movement against bus fare hike in Calcutta.

school demanding immediate increase in number of classes and The authority under the pressure of the movement yielded to all the demands that were made. The movement created an enthusiasm among the people of Bellury.

KERALA

17th of June last witnessed two massive students demonstrations organised by Kerala AIDS0. This movement was against the Kerala Government's anti-educational

vandum Central Railway station towards State Secretariat at about 12 noon and when a large police contingent halted it on the way, the students immediately started sit-in demonstration on the spot. The protest movement has created a stir among the student community.

RAJKOT

The Sourashtra region of Gujarat is going through severe drought for last six months. The drought turned into famine but the Gujarat Govt. behaved very callously, trying to poli-

UTUC (LS) Protests to ILO on Arbitrary Nomination of Delegation

The UTUC (Lenin Sarani) filed a complaint before the Credentials Committee of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the eve of its 72nd Session at Geneva held on 4-22nd June, 1986, against nomination of Indian Workers' delegate to the ILO session by the Govt. of India. The UTUC (LS) complained that the gov. of India arbitrarily and in violation of ILO constitution Rule 3 has nominated workers' delegate from INTUC and packed all the 6 seats of Indian Workers' team including advisors on the recommendation of INTUC and in the process has discriminated against UTUC (Lenin Sarani)

which is entitled to be included in Workers' team to ILO Sessions.

The controversy between the trade unions in the country and the Government of India with regard to selection of workers' delegates to ILO session has a long history; several years in the past all Central Trade Unions other than INTUC boycotted the delegation to ILO as a man of protest against Government of India's biased manner of selection.

Then it has been decided in agreement between all the Central Trade Unions and the Government of India that organisations having more than 5 lac membership shall be included in Indian Workers' team quota of 6 seats in the workers' delegation has been fixed by the Government of India.

And as per last verification of membership of Central Trade Unions conducted for the year 1980 by the Union Labour Ministry and the result declared by the Ministry of 1984—the INTUC, BMS, HMS and UTUC (Lenin Sarani) are the four organisations who have proved to be having more than 5 lac membership and hence, these 4 are recognised as 4 major representative Central Trade Unions.

Rule 3 of ILO constitution clearly stipulates that the Government cannot arbitrarily select workers' delegates and Advisers; rather the Government is to consult all the major trade unions and the major trade unions are to decide the composition in agreement. The Government shall put efforts to see that the Trade Unions really reach agreement. In the past the International Court in similar cases observed that "the most numerous organisation does not necessarily mean most

ticise the crisis for its own petty party interest. To create pressure on the Govt. by creating public opinion and to distribute relief to the people of affected areas, Dushkal Protirodh Samiti was formed comprising intellectual u a l s,' educationists, writers, journalists, social workers, students and youth. The initiative was taken by Comrade Dwarika Nath Rath, the organiser of SUCI in Gujarat. He was the convener of the Samiti.

The Dushkal Pratirodh Samiti raised its voice against politicisation as

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Movements In States

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well as commercialisation of water supply, non-payment of wages to the workers working in relief works. Sending water train to Rajkot, taking medical measures to prevent epidemic were among the measures the Government was forced to implement. A joint statement by eminent personalities like poet Sri Umashankar Joshi, educationist Sri Yashwant Shukla, novelists Sri Raghuvir Choudhury, Sri Suresh Joshi, journalists Sri Vasudev Mehta, Sri Prakash Shah, Sri Vishnu Panya, Sri Kirit Bhatt, Prof. D. N. Pathak, Prof. Dinesh Shukla, Prof. Jayanti Patel, Sri Hosy-mukh Patel, Sri D. N. Rath was issued holding Govt. responsible for the situation and demanding short term as well as long term measures to solve the problem of drought.

To create public opinion it organised Exhibition on Drought in Ahmedabad, Baroda and Gandhinagar and collected signatures on an open letter to the Prime Minister for solving the problem.

Sensing the break out of epidemic the Samiti started medical relief

School Of Politics in U. P.

On 27th, 28th and 29th June, '86, a three-day school of politics was held in Badlapur Inter College, Jaunpur. Selected delegates from the district of Jaunpur, Pratap Garha, Sultanpur, Deoria, Balia, Ghajipur and Allahabad participated in the school. Comrade Sankar Singh, member of the Central Committee, SUCI spoke on the various national and international questions. Comrade Arun Kumar, leader of AIDS0 delivered speech on National Education Policy in one of the sessions. The school ended with much enthusiasm among the delegates.

work in two mobile medical vans for 45 days and was treating roughly 500 people every day with the free distribution of medicine. The Samiti took the help of Indian Medical Association, Rajkot Medical Representative Association, student doctors of Baroda, Ahmedabad, Jainnagar Medical Colleges. The medical service aroused a great respect for the Samiti and a moral pressure on the Govt.

The Samiti undertook the distribution of grain in the affected areas. It distributed grain worth twenty two thousand rupees to the people.

The volunteers, who undertook the responsibilities of Dushkal Pratirodh Samiti were Damini Shah, Alkesh Patel, Jayesh Patel, Parul Relhrd, Meenu, Bharat Mehta etc.

Conventions Against Fascist Education Policy in States

The education convention, organised against the New Education Policy at Rasrah subdivision of Balia district, U.P. was held successfully at Gandhi Park. It was attended by teachers, professors and a large number of students. Before the convention a students' procession marched the main

streets voicing the demand for withdrawing the fascist education policy announced by the Central government.

The convention was presided over by Sri Shambhunath Sinha, Lecturer, Amar Shaheed Bhagat Singh Inter College and the Assistant Secretary, Madhyamik Shikshak

Shangha, U.P.

The speakers were Comrade Bipin Bihar, President, AIDS0, U.P. State Committee, Saileendra Kumar, Convenor, D.S.O., Balia district Unit, Raghendra Kumar Rao, student leader Allahabad Degree College, Sri Hira Ram, Comrade Arvind Kumar Roy, Sri Ramdin, Advocate, Sri Ram Kisan Ram, Sri Kripasankar Srivastav, Former President, Secondary Teachers' Association, Sri Haranarayan Prasad, Lecturer, Inter College Rashra and Sri Sudarshan Roy, Lecturer, Inter College, Mohammadabad, etc.

The speakers exposed the various aspects of the out and out anti-people character of the New Education Policy in details and appealed in one voice for a powerful movement to develop against it to defend the very purpose of education.



Police beat women demonstrators—Calcutta.

UTUC (LS) Protest to ILO

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representative organisation".

The complaint of the UTUC (Lenin Sarani) rests on the feeling that, Government of India ought to have given sufficient scope to the 4 major Trade Unions to have rounds of consultation amongst themselves so as to arrive at an agreement. Secondly, in the workers' team all the 4 major organisations should have been included instead of leaving the matter at the hands of INTUC.

Whereas the facts remain that the Ministry of Labour issued a letter addressed separately to the 4 major Central Trade Unions including UTUC (Lenin Sarani) on 13 May '86 (this letter was delivered to UTUC (Lenin Sarani) office at 7 P.M. on 13 May '86 by special messenger) asking the union to submit an agreed panel for transacting such a business. And consequently nothing

could be done. On 14th May the Secretary, Ministry of Labour arranged a meeting of the 4 major organisations and finalized the nomination saying that in absence of any agreement Government of India is accepting INTUC's (the most numerous) recommendation.

The ILO Credentials Committee on receipt of the complaint from UTUC (Lenin Sarani) took up the matter for examination and directed the Government of India to submit its case. Mr. Sengma, Union State Ministry for Labour, who has been the leader of the composite Indian delegation submitted the case of the Government.

The Credentials Committee, after its full examination of the case observed inter alia, that:

"The Committee, expressed its concern at the manner in which the consultations were con-

Assault on SUCI Workers

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clothings and ran blade on his person, rubbing salt on the bleeding wounds. After half an hour of torture, they left him in a paddy field after tying his hands and legs. A rickshaw puller rescued Comrade Roy and he was admitted to Guwahati Medical college hospital, with the help of local people. It is significant that the miscreants did not snatch away the wrist watch of Comrade Roy.

ducted in the case without giving the interested organisations sufficient time to submit joint proposals".

Further, the Credentials Committee observed that "the committee hoped that the organisations concerned would in future strive to reach an agreement on the composition of the workers' delegation to the conference which would include all the most represented organisations".

This is the second time that our party comrades have been assaulted in Maligaon and Comrade Roy has been attacked for the sixth time. It is clear that the attack is being mounted on our party because the AGP is getting afraid of the appreciation being shown about our party's stand by different linguistic sections in the State. Immediately afterwards the S.P. of Kamrup was informed, but in vain. On behalf of the State Committee of our party, Comrade Jainal Abedin and Comrade Kantimoy Deb met the Chief Minister. He agreed to take proper steps but till date no step has been taken.

Just Out FASCIST MENACE

Nihar Mukherjee

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