

New Drug Policy framed for drug barons at the cost of the people

The Central government has recently announced its Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 1995, or the new drug policy which has been framed in tune with the policy of liberalisation and privatisation, i.e., total withdrawal of state control and giving unbridled scope to the drug manufacturers to fleece the common people as per their whims. So naturally it has earned much appreciation of the profiteers. But those who feel concerned about public health cannot but raise their voice of protest and hence physicians, scientists, intellectuals and research scientists have already expressed their indignation in various forms against it. Barring a few monopoly houses all are of the opinion that the DPCO will bring inevitable disaster to the public health as the government has left this indispensable and vital sector at the mercy of a handful of drug manufacturers, both Indian and foreign.

The DPCO '95 will remain in force for 4 to 5 years and it will be instrumental in determining the prices of medicines. The main thrust of the DPCO is to allow, like in other fields, the market forces to play the role in deciding the prices of drugs. The new policy has under its control only 76 bulk drugs against 142 in the previous one, framed in 1987 which had a list of 'essential' and 'non-essential' drugs with a 'profit' ceiling, called Maximum Allowable Post-manufacturing Expenses or MAPE, of 75 per cent on the 'essential' and 100 per cent on the 'non-essential' drugs. But the new order has only a single ceiling of 100 per cent on all.

To conceal its heinous design behind the DPCO '95 to smoothly facilitate the earning of super profit by the monopolies and multinationals, the senior officials of the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers provides the logic that drugs have been decontrolled to provide the manufacturers with an incentive to step up production. They even argue, "In a life-threatening situation, isn't the availability of a drug more important than its price?" (*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 13.02.95) The other point of cover-up frequently given by them is that it is not objectively possible to determine what is a 'life-saving drug'. In certain situations, even an extra dose of vitamins could prove to be 'life-saving'. They even tried to explain that the DPCO '95 has attempted to formulate 'simple', objective and quantitative criteria, essential to 'eliminate corruption' in place of the earlier qualitative and subjective categories of 'essential' and 'non-essential' market.

Whatever plea the government may advance, an analysis of the DPCO '95 will make it clear how it is framed at the behest of the drug manufacturers.

Firstly, as mentioned above the number of government controlled medicines has been reduced from 142 to 76. It means the production of the previously listed 66 medicines will completely depend on the owners' profitability. Whatever the people's necessity, the government can neither compel the industrialists to produce nor it will have any control on the prices. It is the industrialists who will determine prices with the sole purpose of profit.

Secondly, regarding the government controlled 76 medicines changes have been made in previous regulations allowing further profit for industrialists. In other words, to increase profit of private producers the government will steeply increase the prices of these 76 medicines.

Thirdly, only 8 medicines will be kept under absolute government control. All other medicines, i.e. not only the decontrolled ones, 68 out of the government controlled 76 medicines are virtually left in the hands of the private owners. So the government control over medicines exists in name only. As the entire process of production depends on profit, the owners will stop producing those medicines which yield less profit. Naturally its impact will be grievous on the production of life-saving and other vital drugs. The owners will produce only those medicines, maybe not so necessary or even unnecessary, which will bring them high rate of profit.

Fourthly, by the new DPCO foreign capital is going to enter freely in drug industry. The multinational medicine companies have been demanding since long many changes in government policy. The central government has fulfilled most of them in the new policy. From now on other than the government controlled medicines the multinationals will have the right to invest in all other drugs; they are given the right to hold 51% equity shares and will be treated on a par with the domestic investors.

It is clear now that whatever minimal responsibility the central government had been so long compelled to bear regarding medicine and public health is now being evaded, and through the so-called liberalisation the drug sector has been made a happy hunting ground for reaping super profit.

To probe the problems centring round drug industry the central government formed the "Hathi Committee" in 1974. The Committee's recommendations are very significant in the backdrop of the present changes. The Hathi Committee recommended: (1) government must control production to ensure supply of life-saving and other vital medicines; (2) government must exercise control regarding determination of prices also, so that life-saving and other vital drugs do not go beyond the purchasing power of the people; (3) foreign equity share in drug industry must be reduced to 40% and then gradually it must be further reduced upto 26%; (4) the entire drug industry must be nationalised.

In its report the Hathi Committee severely criticised the role of the foreign multinational drug manufacturers and concluded that their activities in India were totally against people's

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SUCI condemns design of reducing higher education to business

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, has on 18th February last issued the following statement to the Press:

"The Human Resources Development Minister Mr Scindia's plan to encourage multinationals and monopoly houses to own educational institutions is a threat to higher education which has already gone beyond the reach of common people turning it exclusively reserved for the rich. It has already been reduced to a profitable industry and by the very plan of Mr Scindia it will allow imperialists and capitalists to corrupt more the students ideologically and culturally.

Instead of privatisation or government control we demand elected autonomous bodies consisting of educationists and others to run the institutions while government must bear the entire financial responsibility without wasting public money."

Historic Women's Movement in Jabalpur

The otherwise quiet town of Jabalpur, MP witnessed an unprecedented and historic militant movement by the womenfolk against atrocities perpetrated on them led by the local unit of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS).

The movement originated when the womenfolk of Jabalpur came out on to the streets to protest against the killing of Ruma Vachaspati, a young housewife, at the hands of in-laws.

Ruma was married into the Vachaspati family in February, 1994. Her parents could not provide

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Militant rally of women on 17th January last by Jabalpur Mahila Sangharsh Samiti at Jabalpur Collectorate against dowry death.

WTO an enforcing machinery of imperialist diktats

Towards the end of World War II (1944) the Bretton Woods Conference made recommendations to set up three international organizations: (a) International Monetary Fund (IMF) for dealing with balance of payment issues; (b) World Bank, also called International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), to deal with problems of reconstruction and development; and (c) International Trade Organization (ITO) intended to deal with the specific issues of international trade and commerce. The (a) and (b) above came into being in 1945 whereas the third one, the (c) above could not be established then and there due to serious differences among the chieftains of the capitalist-imperialist camp. The bone of contention mainly centred round the incorporation of an 'international commercial code' dictated by the USA. The other major imperialist powers, exhausted by the World War II, were in no mood to concede to the overall sway of the USA in the proposed ITO over and above their virtual succumbing to the US supremacy in IMF-World Bank (Fund-Bank) combine. The USA then came up with the general principles of a 'multilateral trading code' in connivance with the Fund-Bank combine in 1945 for its adoption. But this proposal had nothing to do with any substantial reduction in the protective trade barriers, tariffs and quota restrictions on imports, exchange controls and other restrictive trade practices for the purpose of which the idea of ITO was avowedly mooted. Naturally the conflict of interests between the USA on the one hand and the other rich imperialist powers on the other became so acute that the London Conference, 1946, convened to consider the US proposal, instead entrusted the Economic and Social Council of the UN with the job of preparing a charter for the proposed ITO.

In the meanwhile, the Preparatory Committee along with drafting a charter for the ITO, sponsored, at the same time, a tariff negotiating conference at Geneva and its proposals were embodied in a 'multilateral contract', called General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), short of what the ITO would have envisaged. This interim contract was signed on October 30, 1947 at Geneva at the instance of the USA and the UK, and became effective from January 1, 1948. Thus, the GATT came into being with the compromise struck between the USA on the one hand and the European imperialist powers on the other facilitating in its wake post-World War II ravaged European Economy Recovery Programme (Marshal Plan) led by the US capital to substantially reduce its import tariffs, contrary to what it proclaimed in document. It was aimed at ensuring that countries that pursued policies of free trade, do not erect walls around their domestic markets with tariff and non-tariff measures, and do not engage in bilateral retaliation, meaning trade wars. The GATT then was signed by 23 countries, including India. Since its beginning the treaty has been revised periodically through rounds of negotiations. The much talked of Uruguay Round is the eighth of such negotiation. Later on, in March 1948 the Havana Conference after considering the Charter completed by the Preparatory Committee appointed by the UN, came out with the recommendation of setting up of the ITO signed by 53 countries. Again, it fell through due to refusal of the US Congress to ratify it. Naturally, the interim body, the GATT, in intent and

purpose, was continued as a permanent body dealing with international trade in goods. Knowledgeable persons can say that from the very inception all these three international organizations were dominated by the USA. Especially, the GATT was so much loaded with bias in favour of traditional imperialist powers that it came to be informally known as the "Rich Men's Club".

Emergence of resurgent bourgeois national states and its impact

Post-World War II witnessed emergence of independent resurgent bourgeois national states in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which, immediately after gaining political independence became engaged in reconstructing their national economy in the shortest possible time in the then already contracted world capitalist market. The USA, the newly emerged chieftain in the capitalist-imperialist camp in the post-Second World War situation, in conjunction with other imperialist powers stood as a stumbling block to the realization of nascent aspirations of the bourgeoisie of the newly emerged nationalist countries. Historically speaking, it was a different chapter as to how the bourgeoisie of the respective national states, in order to fulfil their aspirations to grow stronger economically, politically and militarily even, came closer to the then socialist bloc led by the USSR, among others. But to realize this common objective, these newly emerged relatively backward capitalist countries could not gain anything out of GATT. As a matter of fact, the articles and rules of GATT was based on the US Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act, 1934, which mainly addressed to trade among the rich imperialist powers. For, in those products which were of special significance and interest for these resurgent bourgeois national states insofar as international trade was concerned, the GATT was of no avail to it. As for example, trade in cotton textiles in which the developing countries were favourably placed with their cheap exports, had to bear the brunt of imposed restrictions by the developed imperialist powers through the 'Short Term Arrangement' till 1961. Only after 1962, it had come under a special arrangement, outside the GATT, called 'Multi Fibre Agreement'. Under it, the imperialist powers were allowed to impose tariffs and non-tariff barriers on textile exports from relatively backward capitalist countries, which in its turn were also obliged to impose voluntary quotas on their exports to imperialist countries. The UNDP Report, 1994, has provided us with an insight picture as to how the 'G-7' imperialist nations went on imposing heavy dose of import duty on the 'textile & garment' exports from the lesser developed countries chanting the slogan of global free trade and commerce. In 1992 alone, Britain, Canada and the USA imposed as heavy a levy on it as 18%, 20% and 38% respectively in which field the developing countries are favourably poised. According to this Report, about an estimated 5 thousand crore dollars in foreign exchange could have been earned by these developing countries in a year if these industrially developed countries, true to the spirit of 'free trade', allowed exports on textile & garments in their home markets. Paradoxically enough, almost the same quantum of money flows each year from the imperialist countries to the lesser developed countries in the guise of "foreign aid". (The UNDP Report, p. 66) To cap it all,

since all the erstwhile socialist countries including the USSR and the People's Republic of China, were out of the GATT arena, the role of the GATT in course of time became virtually an enforcing machinery of imperialist trade dictates. It was in this context that the UNO in 1963 as a means to come to an acceptable settlement to the newly emerged bourgeois national states appointed a committee to consider how best the anti-imperialist sentiments of them could be cooled down. The UN Committee, in its turn, recommended to set up United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as a possible alternative to ITO, a via media, so to say. It was set up in 1964 to be treated as a part of the UN Secretariat to bypass possible veto being thrust upon it by the US Congress.

Interestingly enough, the formation of the UNCTAD could not satisfy these newly emerged bourgeois nationalist countries and so they did not sit idle. During the tenure of negotiations for setting up the UNCTAD, they established an international organization, 'G-77', meaning Group of 77 developing countries, which subsequently was joined by most of the resurgent bourgeois nationalist countries. It goes without saying that the formation of 'G-77' body was opposed by the rich imperialist 'G-7' nations led by the USA. Initially, it is worth recalling, the Scandinavian countries took favourably the formation of 'G-77' group of nations but subsequently they distanced themselves from it as the forum gradually appeared to them to become a bargaining counter with the imperialist powers led by the USA. So the pressure of the 'G-77' group of nations was mounting to extract economic mileage so much so that at one time it seemed that the UNCTAD might replace the GATT. But that was not to be. The traditional imperialist powers were quick to stop the UNCTAD gaining in stature and flocked to the GATT with their total support and virtually made the GATT the sole arbiter in the international trade. Nevertheless, sustained pressure of 'G-77' on the GATT continued without relent, could make the GATT sometimes liberal resulting in a very significant concession coming out in favour of the developing countries during the Tokyo Round of the GATT even. As a sequel to the recommendation made by the UNCTAD II Conference (1968) the GATT was forced to allow a system of preferential tariff rates on manufactured and semi-processed exports from the developing countries. This came to be known as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). From here the battle between 'G-7' and 'G-77' took an uglier turn. Not content with the outcome of the Tokyo Round, the imperialist powers' economic club, 'G-7', started devising ways and means for further squeezing the scope of the GATT towards benefits flowing to the developing countries.

Uruguay Round

The Uruguay Round of talks, eighth in series, started in 1986 with this sole imperialist design. The discernible readers will recall how in the initial period of 2/3 years, the 'G-77' nations could maintain a united pressure. Soon afterwards, as if a magic wand, to say the least, came into interplay to break the unity of 'G-77'. As one analyst aptly says: "... the US exploited the differences between different section of 'G-77' nations, e.g., exporters, importers, oil (Contd. on page 3)

WTO 100 times more harmful than GATT

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producing, newly industrialised countries, etc. ... In this it used cleverly the Super and Special 301 of US Trade Act and various diplomatic, financial and other manoeuvres. ..." Till 1989, the core-Group of 'G-77' led by India and Brazil, was functioning quite effectively but thereafter India accepted unilaterally some of the proposals put forth by the USA and in its wake making volta face came to a solid understanding with the USA. The result was that India was isolated and the erstwhile supporters of India made their own compromises with the USA.

The end of contentious play of superpower rivalry between the former Soviet Union and the USA, in the meantime, thanks to ascendancy of counter-revolutionary renegade clique led by the capitalist roader Gorbachev, was sending danger signals to developing countries in general and India in particular bereft of it, of its ability to interplay in between the contradiction between the former USSR and the USA. The end of Gulf War as also collapse of socialist USSR and east European socialist countries soon thereafter, brought about a sea-change in the international situation. It became an extraordinary experience for the world at large, especially the relatively less developed countries, to witness Moscow under the hated Yeltsin's unabashed dittoing of whatever Washington cared to do, abandoning all the time-tested former Soviet positions, in the highly conflagrant Middle East War in particular and the ominous developments that followed in right aboutturn thereafter.

New World Order: dream of US, the imperialist chieftain

The emergence of the USA as the sole superpower with its outcry for building a 'New World Order' tremendously increased its clout. With this end in view and having bagged the prompting and strong support from the US-based transnational corporations (TNCs), the USA came forward to force the GATT bring out from the confines of only to tariff and trade in goods. Not satisfied with its present structure, the USA pressed for the GATT's extension to 'Services', 'Investment' and 'Intellectual Property Rights' (IPRs) together with a 'World Trade Organization' (WTO) to oversee all these four. A fierce tussle ensued both among the advanced capitalist-imperialist countries and between the advanced and relatively backward capitalist-imperialist countries over the issue of a reformed GATT. At this crucial juncture, the then Director General of GATT, Arthur Dunkel, put forward a draft of his own, with some possible compromises in mind. After about long 8 years' fierce bargaining and counter-bargaining the Dunkel Proposal, with some modifications, was accepted by all the members of the GATT in December, 1993 at the official level and in March 1994 at the Ministerial level.

It is worth mentioning here, that about a dozen countries including the USA and India, in course of signing the Draft Agreement made it a pre-condition that they would ratify it only after their respective legislatures approved it. And in any case, course of events followed thereafter witnessed that no such 'misfortune' befell on the ruling cliques of these countries to ratify it on the dotted line.

So, on the New Year's day, this year, the World Trade Organization and its ancillary agreements came into operation on dotted line. For the least developed countries this will take

effect a year later. Beside the WTO the following ancillary agreements have come into operation:

1. GATT (Revised GATT) dealing with tariff and trade in goods including agricultural commodities;
2. GATS relating to Services;
3. TRIMS relating to investment;
4. TRIPS relating to Intellectual Property Rights;
5. Provision for Cross-Retaliation (Between sectors for violation of the prescribed conditionalities)

For all the GATT-1947 members, three options are left open before them to choose as per GATT Secretariat clarification offered by them sometime ago:-

- (a) to withdraw from GATT-1947 (as amended by the Tokyo Round) once one joins the WTO.
- (b) to remain a GATT-1947 member without joining the WTO.
- (c) to remain a GATT-1947 member as also to join the WTO.

In the third world developing countries like ours, the issues of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and agriculture have been widely debated and covered in the media as never before. But the composition and functioning of the WTO which carries significant bearing on the interests and benefits of the developing countries has not come into focus with so much light. We give below the expressed functions in brief for careful scrutiny of our readers. (Source: *Economic And Political Weekly*, 22.10.94)

The WTO will :

- Facilitate implementation and operation of all the agreements and legal instruments negotiated in connection with the Uruguay Round
- Provide a forum for all negotiations
- Administer the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes and the Trade Policy Review Mechanism
- Co-operate with the IMF and IBRD with a view to achieving greater coherence in global economic policy-making.

The Preamble

The agreement establishing a WTO reiterates the objectives of GATT :

Raising of standard of living and incomes, ensuring full employment, expanding production and trade, optimal use of world's resources, at the same time extending the objectives to services and making them more precise.

Introduction of the idea of Sustainable Development in relation to the optimal use of world's resources, and the need to protect and preserve the environment in a manner consistent with the various levels of national economic development.

Recognition of the need for positive efforts designed to ensure that developing countries, especially the least developed ones, secure a better share of growth in international trade.

Decision-Making

The WTO will continue the decision-making practice followed under the GATT.

Decision by Consensus which is deemed to exist if no member formally objects.

Recourse to voting, where a decision cannot be reached by consensus, is now institutionalized, whereas earlier it was exceptional.

Decision continues to be taken by a majority of the votes cast on the basis of one country one vote. In case of interpretation of provisions of the agreements and waiver of a member's obligations the majority required is three-fourths of the members, unlike the earlier two-thirds of the votes cast representing at least half of the members under the GATT. The granting of waivers will be more strictly controlled.

Any member of WTO may submit a proposal to amend the provisions of the Agreement to the Ministerial Conference and the General Council. The quorum required to implement changes will depend on the nature of the amendments.

Amendments relating to general principles such as MFN treatment must be approved by all members.

For all other amendments only a two-thirds majority is required.

From its organizational diagram indicated above, it transpires that unlike the World Bank and the IMF, the WTO will have one country one vote. Nonetheless, it is altogether a different thing if this improvement will be of any help to the weaker nations having regard to the painful experience of the predominance of 'G-7' rich imperialist powers led by the USA with their supremacy over finance, share holdings as well as directors controlling the executives from one country in particular and 'G-7' rich imperialist powers in general.

For all practical purposes, however, the WTO in conjunction with the IMF and the World Bank will become the most powerful international body in the globe and emerge in its wake hundred times powerful than the erstwhile GATT.

MSS movement

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for the dowry demanded by her in-laws which in turn led to Ruma being subjected to tortures in her inlaws. The in-laws were so inhuman that she was forced to have terminated her pregnancy more than once. In fact, she died during one such operation at a very advanced stage of her pregnancy on 9th January last.

However, her in-laws tried to pass the death as a case of suicide by hanging. The local police ignoring strong circumstantial evidence treated the case as one of suicide.

On learning the news and sensing foul play the AIMSS immediately took cudgel and sent a 15-member delegation comprising Sm. Neelima Ray, Chandra, Gopa, Meena Yadav, Kalpana, Rina Yadav, Alpana, Mamta, Shanti, among others, to submit a memorandum to the police officials urging them for a thorough investigation.

Meanwhile, the deadbody which was being hastily cremated was stopped from doing so due to timely intervention of the AIMSS volunteers and was brought back to the locality and placed in front of the Vachaspati household. Hundreds of women joined in a militant procession and took the deadbody to the office of the Defence Factory administration where Ruma's father-in-law works and to the office of the District Superintendent of Police. Only after getting a firm assurance for proper action from the authorities the body was released for cremation. The mounting pressure of the movement forced the

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Comrade Stalin on Questions of Organisational Leadership



[The 5th of March, 1995 is the 42nd Death Anniversary of J.V. Stalin, the giant communist leader, the most worthy continuer of Lenin's behest. On this occasion, we are publishing the excerpts of his speech on 'Questions of Organisational Leadership' which he delivered in his concluding address to the 17th Congress of the CPSU(B) in January, 1934. We hope, this will provide us proper guidelines in our mission. — Editor, Proletarian Era.]

... Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it for all to hear, state it in the form of general theses and resolutions, and have it voted for unanimously, for victory to come of itself, automatically, as it were. That, of course, is wrong. It is a gross delusion. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists can think so. As a matter of fact, these successes and victories did not come automatically, but as the result of a fierce struggle for the application of the Party line. Victory never comes of itself — it is usually won by effort. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line of the Party are only a beginning; they merely express the desire for victory, but not the victory itself. After the correct line has been laid down, after a correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on how the work is organised; on the organisation of the struggle for carrying out the Party line; on the proper selection of personnel; on checking the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading bodies. Otherwise the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being seriously prejudiced. More than that, after the correct political line has been laid down, organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure.

As a matter of fact, victory was achieved and won by a systematic and fierce struggle against all sorts of difficulties in the way of carrying out the Party line; by overcoming these difficulties; by mobilising the Party and the working class for the task of overcoming the difficulties; by organising the struggle to overcome the difficulties; by removing inefficient executives and choosing better ones, capable of waging the struggle against difficulties.

What are these difficulties; and where do they lie? They are difficulties of our organisational work, difficulties of our organisational leadership. They lie in us ourselves, in our leading people, in our organisations, in the apparatus of

our Party, Soviet, economic, trade-union, Young Communist League and all other organisations.

Bureaucracy and red tape in the administrative apparatus; idle chatter about "leadership in general" instead of real and concrete leadership; the functional structure of our organisations and lack of individual responsibility; lack of personal responsibility in work, ... ; the absence of a systematic check on the fulfilment of decisions; fear of self-criticism — these are the sources of our difficulties; this is where our difficulties now lie.

It would be naive to think that these difficulties can be overcome by means of resolutions and decisions. The bureaucrats and red-tapists have long been past masters in the art of demonstrating their loyalty to Party and Government decisions in words, and pigeon-holing them in deed. In order to overcome these difficulties it was necessary to put an end to the disparity between our organisational work and the requirements of the political line of the Party; it was necessary to raise the level of organisational leadership in all spheres of the national economy to the level of political leadership; it was necessary to see to it that our organisational work ensured the practical realisation of the political slogans and decisions of the Party.

In order to overcome these difficulties and achieve success it was necessary to *organise* the struggle to eliminate them; it was necessary to draw the masses of the workers and peasants into this struggle; it was necessary to mobilise the Party itself; it was necessary to purge the Party and the economic organisations of unreliable, unstable and degenerate elements.

In this the Central Committee was guided by Lenin's brilliant thought that the chief thing in organisational work is *selection of personnel and checking fulfilment*.

In regard to *selecting* the right people and dismissing those who fail to justify the confidence placed in them, I should like to say a few words.

Besides the incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists, as to whose removal there are no differences of opinion among us, there are two other types of executive who retard our work, hinder our work, and hold up our advance.

One of these types of executive consists of people who rendered certain services in the past, people who have become big-wigs, who consider that Party decisions and Soviet laws are not written for them, but for fools. These are the people who do not consider it their duty to fulfil the decisions of the Party and of the Government, and who thus destroy the foundations of Party and state discipline. What do they count upon when they violate Party decisions and Soviet laws? They presume that the Soviet Government will not venture to touch them, because of their past services. These overconceited big-wigs think that they are irreplaceable, and that they can violate the decisions of the leading bodies with impunity. What is to be done with executives of this kind? They must unhesitatingly be removed from their leading posts, irrespective of past services

(Voices : "Quite right !") They must be demoted to lower positions and this must be announced in the press. (Voices : "Quite right") This is essential in order to bring those conceited big-wig bureaucrats down a peg or two, and to put them in their proper place. This is essential in order to strengthen Party and Soviet discipline in the whole of our work. (Voices : "Quite right !" Applause.)

And now about the second type of executive. I have in mind the windbags, I would say honest windbags (*laughter*), people who are honest and loyal to the Soviet power, but who are incapable of leadership, incapable of organising anything. Last year I had a conversation with one such comrade, a very respected comrade, but an incorrigible windbag, capable of drowning any live undertaking in a flood of talk. Here is the conversation.

I: How are you getting on with the sowing ?

He: With the sowing, Comrade Stalin? We have mobilised ourselves (*Laughter*.)

I: Well, and what then ?

He: We have put the question squarely. (*Laughter*.)

I: And what next ?

He: There is a turn, Comrade Stalin; soon there will be a turn. (*Laughter*.)

I: But still ?

He: We can see an indication of some improvement. (*Laughter*.)

I: But still, how are you getting on with the sowing ?

He: So far, Comrade Stalin, we have not made any headway with the sowing. (*General laughter*.)

There you have the portrait of the windbag. They have mobilised themselves, they have put the question squarely, they have a turn and some improvement, but things remain as they were.

This is exactly how a Ukrainian worker recently described the state of a certain organisation when he was asked whether that organisation had any definite line: "Well," he said, "as to a line... they have a line all right, but they don't seem to be doing any work." (*General laughter*.) Evidently that organisation also has its honest windbags.

And when such windbags are dismissed from their posts and are given jobs far removed from operative work, they shrug their shoulders in perplexity and ask : "Why have we been dismissed ? Did we not do all that was necessary to get the work done? Did we not organise a rally of shock brigaders ? Did we not proclaim the slogans of the Party and of the Government at the conference of shock brigaders ? Did we not elect the whole of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee to the Honorary Presidium? (*General laughter*.) Did we not send greetings to Comrade Stalin — what more do you want of us?" (*General laughter*.)

What is to be done with these incorrigible windbags? Why, if they were allowed to remain on operative work they are capable of drowning every live undertaking in a flood of watery and

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endless speeches. Obviously, they must be removed from leading posts and given work other than operative work. There is no place for windbags on operative work. (*Voices: "Quite right!" Applause*)

I have already briefly reported how the Central Committee handled the selection of personnel for the state and economic organisations, and how it strengthened the checking on the fulfilment of decisions. Comrade Kaganovich will deal with this in greater detail in his report on the third item of the congress agenda.

I should like to say a few words, however, about further work in connection with increased checking on the fulfilment of decisions.

The proper organisation of checking the fulfilment of decisions is of decisive importance in the fight against bureaucracy and red tape. Are the decisions of the leading bodies carried out, or are they pigeon-holed by bureaucrats and red-tapists? Are they carried out properly, or are they distorted? Is the apparatus working conscientiously and in a Bolshevik manner, or is it working to no purpose? These things can be promptly found out only by a well-organised check on the fulfilment of decisions. A well-organised check on the fulfilment of decisions is the searchlight which helps to reveal how the apparatus is functioning at any moment and to bring bureaucrats and red-tapists into the light of day. We can say with certainty that nine-tenths of our defects and failures are due to the lack of a properly organised check on the fulfilment of decisions. There can be no doubt that with such a check on fulfilment, defects and failures would certainly have been averted.

But if checking fulfilment is to achieve its purpose, two conditions at least are required: firstly, that fulfilment is checked systematically and not spasmodically; secondly, that the work of checking fulfilment in all sections of the Party, Soviet and economic organisations is entrusted not to second-rate people, but to people with sufficient authority, to the leaders of the organisations concerned.

Our tasks in the sphere of organisation work are:

- 1) To continue to adapt organisational work to the requirements of the political line of the Party;
- 2) To raise organisational leadership to the level of political leadership;
- 3) To secure that organisational leadership fully ensures the implementation of the political slogans and decisions of the Party.

I am coming to the end of my report, comrades.

What conclusions must be drawn from it?

Everybody now admits that our successes are great and extraordinary. In a relatively short space of time our country has been transferred on to the lines of industrialisation and collectivisation. The First Five-Year Plan has been successfully carried out. This arouses a feeling of pride among our workers and increases their self-confidence.

That is very good, of course. But successes sometimes have their seamy side. They sometimes give rise to certain dangers, which, if allowed to develop, may wreck the whole work.

There is, for example, the danger that some of our comrades may become dizzy with successes. There have been such cases among us, as you know. There is the danger that certain of our comrades, having become intoxicated with success, will get swelled heads and begin to lull themselves with boastful songs, such as: "It's a walkover," "We can knock anybody into a cocked hat", etc. This is not precluded by any means, comrades. There is nothing more dangerous than sentiments of this kind, for they disarm the Party and demobilise its ranks. If such sentiments gain the upper hand in our Party we may be faced with the danger of all our successes being wrecked.

Of course, the First Five-Year Plan has been successfully carried out. That is true. But the matter does not end there, comrades. Before us is the Second Five Year Plan, which we must also carry out, and successfully too. You know that plans are carried out in the course of a struggle against difficulties, in the process of overcoming difficulties. That means that there will be difficulties and there will be a struggle against them. Comrades Molotov and Kuibyshev will report to you on the Second Five-Year Plan. From their reports you will see what great difficulties we shall have to overcome in order to carry out this great plan. This means that we must not lull the Party, but sharpen its vigilance; we must not lull it to sleep, but keep it ready for action; not disarm it, but arm it; not demobilise it, but keep it in a state of mobilisation for the fulfilment of the Second Five-Year Plan.

We have achieved successes because we have had the correct guiding line of the Party, and because we have been able to organise the masses for putting this line into effect. Needless to say, without these conditions we should not have achieved the successes that we have achieved, and of which we are justly proud. But it is a very rare thing for ruling parties to have a correct line and to be able to put into effect.

Look at the countries which surround us: can you find many ruling parties there that have a correct line and are putting it into effect? Actually, there are now no such parties in the world; for they are all living without prospects; they are floundering in the chaos of the crisis, and see no way of getting out of the swamp. Our Party alone knows in what direction to steer its course, and it is going forward successfully. To what does our Party owe its superiority? To the fact that it is a Marxist Party, a Leninist Party. It owes it to the fact that it is guided in its work by the teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin. There can be no doubt that as long as we remain true to this teaching, as long as we have this compass, we shall achieve successes in our work.

It is said that in some countries in the West Marxism has already been destroyed. It is said that it has been destroyed by the bourgeois-nationalist trend known as fascism. That, of course, is nonsense. Only people who are ignorant of history can talk like that. Marxism is the scientific expression of the fundamental interests of the working class. To destroy Marxism, the working class must be destroyed. But it is impossible to destroy the working class. More than 80 years have passed since Marxism came into the arena. During this time scores and hundreds of bourgeois governments have tried to destroy Marxism. And what has happened?

Bourgeois governments have come and gone, but Marxism has remained. (*Stormy applause.*) Moreover, Marxism has achieved complete victory on one-sixth of the globe; moreover, it has achieved it in the very country in which Marxism was considered to have been utterly destroyed. (*Stormy applause.*) It cannot be regarded as an accident that the country in which Marxism has achieved complete victory is now the only country in the world which knows no crises and unemployment, whereas in all other countries, including the fascist countries, crisis and unemployment have been reigning for four years now. No, comrades, that is no accident. (*Prolonged applause.*)

Yes, comrades, our successes are due to the fact that we have worked and fought under the banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin.

Successful Haryana Students' Conference

The 4th Students' Conference under the auspices of the AIDS, Haryana was held from 10-12 January, 1995 last at Rohtak amidst great enthusiasm. Dr Karan Singh Rathee, a well-known educationist and a member of All India Save Education Committee inaugurated the conference. In his inaugural speech Dr Rathee while condemning the anti-education policy of the Centre and the state governments said: While privatisation and commercialisation of education, the government is shirking its responsibility from providing education to all. By increasing fund-fees, capitation fees, etc., the government is bent on making education out of the reach of the people at large. Dr Rathee stressed secular and scientific education for all which, he lamented, is a far cry even after 48 years of independence.

Rising to speak as the main speaker, Comrade Dipankar Roy, Vice-President of the AIDS, characterised the government's education policy as out and out anti-people as it has all through neglected the education like that of the health care of the people. He said, for any meaningful development of the society, education is a must. Comrade Roy called upon the students community to come forward to assert their birth right to education for all by developing sustained movement in the country.

Comrade Satyawan, member, Haryana State Committee, SUCI was present as the guest-in-chief in the conference. In course of dwelling on various aspects of education vis-a-vis the obstacles standing in the way of achieving it, Comrade Satyawan urged the students to acquire, grasp and assimilate the revolutionary ideology of scientific socialism as a compass to guide their movements in the right direction.

Comrade Ram Mehar Narwal, the State President of the AIDS, was in the chair while the State Secretary Comrade Om Prakash, Comrade Pratap Shamal, member, All India Committee of AIDS spoke in the Open session.

In the 2-day delegate session started on 11th February the main resolution was adopted to build up powerful students' movement on the basis of 20-point charter of demands. Another resolution condemning brutal murder of a school teacher Miss Sushila Kumari of Hissar also was adopted demanding exemplary punishment to the culprits. After two days' lively debates, State Committee as well as a State Council was elected with Comrade Om Prakash as President and Comrade Bijender Singh as the Secretary.

New Drug Policy

(Contd. from page 1)

interest. If we compare the recommendations of Hathi Committee with the present role of the Centre, it is not difficult to understand that the Centre's moves are out-and-out anti-people.

What motivated the Centre to formulate the DPCO '95 is the ambitions of the monopolists in medicine industry, who, backed by Indian capitalism and its government, have gradually become very powerful. Even after independence most of the Indian drug industry was under absolute control of British multinationals; from the 60's the condition started to change. During this time Indian capitalists too, assisted by government measures through five year plans, came forward to invest in the profitable medicine business. Whatever little be the technological advancement achieved by government and private owners despite technological limitations and drug manufacturers' indifference to invest in medical research, the production of drug ingredients, all of which were imported from abroad previously, also started in our country. But to do this the greatest hurdle was the British-imposed patent law, the demand to change which became more and more stronger among the domestic industrialists and hence in 1970 Indian Patent Act was made. In this Act not the product patent but the process patent has been brought under the statutes taking advantage of which domestic medicine industries got gradually inflated. Drug policy of 1978 and Drug Price Control Order of 1979 made stronger the organised private medicine industry. Around this time, the domestic companies also started to export, which increased with passage of time. In 1985-86 the export was worth Rs.140 crore, and in 1992-93 it reached Rs.1281 crore.

From mid-80's domestic drug manufacturers started demanding that production of medicines and its market reserved for government sector, be opened to them, government control be withdrawn, arbitrary power to ascertain prices be given and this right be granted that according to their need a particular medicine may or may not be produced. Let us mention here that the rulers of our country under the pressure of organised public opinion and the anti-imperialist tradition of our country, were compelled to build up the infrastructure of drug production under government initiative, and this is being dished out as a welfare measure. Behind it there was no real concern for public interest. So we see even today everywhere in our country millions of poor people gather round 'godmen' for treatment, go to temple or mosque, every year thousands die in cholera, diarrhoea, malaria; to save the life of those wretched people there was no government initiative. The private owners too wanted to produce medicines under government control not for any concern for public health; their intention was a wide market for super profit. And for this they did not hesitate to join hands with foreign investors for liberalisation in drug industry. Conceding to these demands the central government notified in 1986 and changed the drug policy of 1978 and on its basis formulated lenient drug price control policy (1979). As a consequence we witnessed around this time the steep rise of almost all medicine prices. But this could not satisfy the big monopolists. To extract more advantages, more profit, they started to demand complete decontrol and privatisation.

The DPCA, '95 is the outcome of this policy which has totally unmasked central government's so-called welfare cloak nakedly exposing the servitor character of the ruling class.

To shield this the propounders of this policy are repeating the putrid oft-repeated phrases. They contend that as the government will not obstruct any company to produce a particular medicine, likewise it would not compel a company to produce particular medicines. The companies claim that a healthy competition between them would ensure the supply of medicine to market, which is nothing but a lie.

They also claim that through competition prices will be stable as the market forces will be fully operative. But this is also a false claim as experience proves. Medicines are generally divided into four categories :- (a) life-saving; (b) essential; (c) less essential; (d) unnecessary. By the previous drug policy the government fixed different rates of profit for the above categories - 40% in life-saving drugs, 55% in essential drugs, 100% in less essential and unnecessary drugs. This was done ostensibly to make available the medicine of the first two categories to the common people. Although the government exerted control over prices, it did not establish control on production. As a result the drug industries decreased production of life-saving and essential drugs fast and increased less essential and unnecessary formulations to reap high profit. In 1978 the rate of production of first two categories of drugs was only 21.2%, and the rate of production of less essential and unnecessary medicines was 78.89%. In 1979 and 1980 this rate came down to 19.8% and 80.2% respectively (Source: *The Indian Pharmaceutical Industry, Problems and Aspects*, P.Narayanan, NCEAR) The fact brings clear the real state of affairs in medicine in the hands of the industrialists and their servitor government.

Moreover, a recent analysis has revealed that most of the 80,000 brand of medicines in our country are unnecessary. Among them a good number is not only unnecessary but harmful too. Among the highest sold 80 brands of medicines in our country, 23 are either unnecessary or harmful. (Source: *Operation Research Group*, January, 1993) Medicines banned in western countries, even in neighbouring Bangladesh, are being sold here. Yet the government keeps its eyes closed to it. This is the real face of 'market forces'!

By announcing the new DPCO the government in an attempt to allay people's apprehension contends that it will not push up the drug prices. But people's experience of life proves the utter hollowness of this false claim. To satisfy the greed of the Indian and foreign monopolists the government is singing the glory of 'market forces'. And the more fierce the battle for supremacy over the market among the monopolists the more becomes the collective financial onslaught on the people and with it is spiralling up of the prices of essential commodities. The same is going on in case of drugs. The partial decontrol of 1987 pushed the drug price line almost beyond the reach of common man. And can there be an iota of doubt as to how precarious will be the life of the people once total decontrol is implemented?

Through DPCO '95 the government has also provided easy measures to the monopoly drug houses for swallowing the medium and small drug companies. In the drug policy adopted in

1978 some drugs were specifically demarcated for smallscale manufacturers only but this time the restriction has been abolished. These small scale units for so long had been playing a significant role in producing both medicines and bulk drugs. Not only this, they have so far provided jobs to a good number of people. Now with the abolition of the above restriction these medium and smallscale units, as a result of unavoidable competition with the big Indian and foreign companies, will either be devoured by the big ones or close down throwing lakhs out of job. And along with this the pernicious effects of the GATT would spell disaster which the government is cleverly concealing. In consonance with the TRIMS of GATT and the new economic policy the central government has opened wide the national drug market to the foreign multinationals giving equal facilities as enjoyed by Indian companies. And to this the rights and facilities of TRIPS and Intellectual Property Rights will be added which means both product and process patent rights instead of the present process patent only. This patent right provision in GATT treaty is all-pervading and has far-reaching effects. Now not only the production process but also the very product and every component of the product will come under the purview of patent rights. In the field of medicine, not only a medicine of a particular brand and its manufacturing process but even the ingredients of the medicine will be covered by the patent rights.

The patent laws now in practice in India provides patent right for only five years and if a particular patent right is not utilised for production in the country in that case the government has every right to cancel it. But as per new patent laws the patent rights will remain valid for twenty years and if the product or process or both are patented in any other country that will also be treated as patented in India. The patent right holder shall have the sole authority to use or not to use it or selling or leasing out to others and the government shall have no authority to prevent it. Actually, the Intellectual Property Rights provision has been incorporated in the GATT only in the interest of the imperialist countries. The giant multinational companies with enormous power of capital are far ahead in the field of latest technology and research and development and they naturally hold the lion's share of the patent rights.

Change in Patent laws

The DPCO has exposed the hollowness of the heinous propaganda of the government of India about the conditionalities regarding patent rights in GATT and its repercussions in India. In this regard, particularly about product patent rules the Central government had tried to allay apprehensions about changing the Indian patent laws in tune with the patent rules of the GATT firstly because India being a developing country, would get a ten-year concession period for changing her own patent laws and secondly because the central government has constituted an expert committee for formulating necessary safeguards and according to their recommendation new patent laws would be framed.

Recently two ordinances have been promulgated by the Government of India — one about patent laws and another connected with customs laws with an eye on getting membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) formed in place of GATT. For, only after changing its

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Drug Policy

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respective patent and foreign trade laws, any country can be eligible for membership of WTO. For this purpose the Indian government is required to change its patent laws and it needs discussion in and consent of Parliament which the Centre is afraid of facing. Also at the time of signing the new GATT treaty in last April at Marrakesh the government did not feel it necessary to take the consent of Parliament. This time too, the government after the end of the winter session promulgated two ordinances and changed the patent laws avoiding Parliament.

According to the provision of the ordinance, for all practical purposes, the question of ten years' interim period has become irrelevant. That means, the system of product patent is taking effect right from now. Such provision was already in the GATT treaty. As per the provisions of this new ordinance firstly, the foreign companies can now, entitled after the formation of WTO since 1st January '95, apply for product patent of particular medicines and agro-chemicals and the government will have to entertain it. The second provision of the ordinance plays the main role here as it stipulates that the ten-year interim period will lose its effectivity. As per it if any company claims product patent it shall have the exclusive marketing right which is practically equivalent to getting the product patent. Consequently, all foreign drug companies in India applying for product patent will not bother even if the product patent is sanctioned in black and white even after ten years. Because, after submission of application a particular company shall have the exclusive right to sell a particular brand of medicine in India at any price they like. If the new drug policy is meticulously analysed it will be clear that through this DPCO'95 the foreign drug manufacturers will have near monopoly control over the medicine market. It goes without saying that from now on the big multinational drug manufacturers will scramble for product patent of very vital life-saving drugs and the Indian companies will not get sufficient time to produce those drugs in a different process; naturally the foreign multinationals will rapidly have an absolute hold over the drug market. And these very companies will later on acquire the product patent too. Thus it is not at all difficult to understand what a disaster it will spell over the fate of medium and smallscale Indian drug companies, their employees, and the lives of crores of lower middle class and poor people.

The government has not also made the people acquainted with the observations of the 'Expert Committee' in this regard. Just like bypassing Parliament the government has in this regard also suppressed the facts before the people. The government had previously claimed that under this new patent process the big Indian drug manufacturers will have an opportunity to develop their own technology but nothing of that sort did happen in reality. To mislead the people the Centre has unleashed a propaganda that change in patent law will have no effect over ninety per cent of the medicines and on the contrary, the foreign companies will bring superior technology in this country to the benefit of the common masses. But this government propaganda is far from truth. Experience of the Third World countries like Chile which has already changed its patent laws in line with GATT is that not even in a single case the imperialist

MNCs did transfer their superior technology; on the contrary, they have reaped fabulous profit by importing their ready products into those countries and selling them at exorbitantly high prices. This is but inevitable, because the imperialist MNCs do not go to other countries out of philanthropy or to develop the industry and technology of those developing or underdeveloped countries — they go there only to mint super profit by inhuman exploitation. In India also the multinational drug companies after acquiring unlimited power will plunder this market to reap unlimited profit by fixing high prices for the life-saving and other latest essential drugs leaving the overwhelming millions in the lurch and unattended.

On the other hand, the Indian monopoly drug industries will maintain their rate of profit through collaboration with the foreign multinationals and by exporting medicines to other countries on give and take arrangements with them. But the entire poor people and the middle and lower middle class will have to bear the brunt. Health service as a whole including use of medicine will go out of reach of them and they will die beastly death in the coming days.

US rulers now offer the children of the poor nothing but an early death

In late December the USA's largest consumer group, Citizens Action released a study called "Dying Before Their Time: Child Mortality in the United States" which shows that every year, poverty kills atleast 23,000 children in the United States of America. This has been further corroborated by a government study conducted by the Illinois Department of Public Health which published its statistics on the state Illinois's infant mortality for 1993. The study shows that almost 14 of every 1,000 babies born in Chicago in 1993 died before reaching their first birth days. The situation may become more grim after President Clinton further cuts support for social services.

If the moral worth of any society is judged by how it treats its children, one can clearly see the morals of the world leaders of all imperials including the US rulers. (Source: People's Tribune, Chicago, 23.01.95)

CLIPPINGS

TADA the most dreaded draconian Act

... India's 1985 Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act — it is one of the most draconian "emergency" edicts among modern democracies' ...

'The law, commonly known as TADA, gives state and central authorities almost unlimited powers of arrest and detention. TADA is on the books in 23 of India's 26 states. And, critics say, it is misused by nearly all of them. Of the more than 67,000 people who have been arrested under TADA since 1985, 54,000 were released, most of them without being formally charged. Of those indicted, 99% are acquitted.'

'Even in areas where no major threats to public order exist, the law is used routinely to jail opposition politicians, unionists, journalists, political activists and petty criminals. Ravi Nair, director of the South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre in New Delhi, calls TADA "India's secret Emergency", an echo of the mid-1970's interregnum when Indira Gandhi's government assumed dictatorial powers. Says Nair: "Even during the apartheid regime in South Africa and in Pinochet's Chile you did not have a law like this..."' (Time, September 19, 1994)

What Capitalism has brought for the Russians

... the strongest emotion of ordinary Muscovites is probably fear, specifically fear of crime. Mafia-like gangs have transformed a city that in Soviet days was one of the safest in the world into a virtual crimino-polish. For the first six months of this year, the Moscow police reported 813 murders, in increase of 41% over the same period last year. According to General Oleg Gaidanov, Russia's deputy prosecutor, criminal gangs are "handpicking" their victims from among the newly affluent, bankers,

traders, businessmen and foreigners. There has also been a rash of previously unheard of crimes, such as contract killings — about 100 in 1993.'

'A presidential study concluded in March that virtually any retail trade booth, store, cafe and restaurant in the capital pays protection money - as much as 20% of gross receipts - to organized crime. Those who resist are beaten and sometimes killed. "Violence is becoming a business, bringing super profits in Russia", says Gaidanov. "And mercenaries, racketeers and musclemen are used in this business by warring gangs.'

'These days an estimated 40,000 street tramps sleep in Metro tunnels and beg for change outside the new temples of affluence.' (Moscow: City Adrift, Time, 22.8.94)

Jobless in Russia far above official figures

Real unemployment in Russia far exceeds the official level, the International Labour Organization, said. Hundreds of thousands of Russian workers are living below the bread line, officially described as "in work" but actually without jobs, the world employment body said in its latest economic survey of the Russian economy, ... The true picture is disguised by long-term layoffs, production stoppages, short-time work and extended maternity leave, it said. ...

The ILO survey shows that more than 50 percent of firms are paying workers late, paying them less than contractual rate or not paying them at all. It also found that 53 percent of the companies surveyed were in severe debt with half the enterprises fearing they could go bankrupt within a year.

While official employment analysts say restructuring in Russia has led to a rise in average real wages, the reality is that official data give the contractual wages and not the wages actually paid, said Standing. (Associated Press/Business Standard, 02.11.94)

Historic March Demanding English at Primary Level

At the call of the All Bengal Save Education Committee a Mahamichhil (massive march) traversed the Calcutta streets on 14th February last. It started from the foot of the statue of Vidyasagar, opposite to Calcutta University and ended at Esplanade where a massive meeting was held. This Mahamichhil was convened by the All Bengal Save Education Committee. Before the Mahamichhil started, huge procession of students led by the All Bengal Students' Struggle Committee from Sealdah railway station joined it at the Vidyasagar statue. Participated by around 25,000 people the Mahamichhil demanded introduction of English and pass-fail system on the basis of examination right from class I. At the front of the Mahamichhil marched thousands of primary students who with their youthful vibrant voice joined the thunderous chorus of slogan that reverberated all throughout. This education movement has assumed a historic importance as, apart from other factors, it is continuing for long 16 years on one single issue, something unique in our country's history.

It may also be mentioned here that the Primary Education Development Board, a parallel body to the govt. board, evolved through this movement, has been holding Primary Scholarship Examination for class IV students for the past 4 years. This year the number of examinees has reached almost two lakhs, a glaring example of people's total rejection of CPI(M)-led West Bengal Left Front government's harmful education policy.

The Mahamichhil was led by Dr Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, former Vice-chancellor, Calcutta University, Sri Manik Mukherjee, a front ranking figure in cultural movement, Prof Sunanda Sanyal, who protested the West Bengal Left Front Government appointed Ashok Mitra Education Commission's anti-education formulations as its member, Prof Prabhudayal Agarwal, Sm. Prativa Gupta and other eminent personalities. From all over Bengal, students, youths, teachers, guardians — mothers in particular, and people of other walks of life participated in this Mahamichhil. And when the head of it with six files reached the meeting spot at Esplanade, the meeting started; and when the meeting was about to end after an hour, only then the tail-end of the Mahamichhil reached the spot. Esplanade turned into a sea of humanity. People, but for whose support this movement could not have continued for so long a time, joined the meeting in huge numbers, beside the organised force.

The meeting at Esplanade was presided over by Prof Subir Basu Roy. The meeting was addressed by Dr Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, Prof Sunanda Sanyal and Sri Manik Mukherjee. The speakers appealed to the government not to make the matter of education a prestige issue but to fulfil the demands of the people. The government from the current education session had introduced English from Class V instead of Class VI. This is only an impact of movement. But complete achievement of people's demands is yet to reach. The speakers appealed to the people to intensify the movement to achieve final victory.



A portion of the massive march in Calcutta on 14th February organised by All Bengal Save Education Committee

Jabalpur Women's Victory

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police to arrest the members of the Vachaspati family later on the same day.

Women in thousands, under the initiative of AIMSS volunteers have later formed the Jabalpur Mahila Sangharsh Samity, elected Sm Neelima Ray as President and chalked out programmes to resist such heinous crimes perpetrated against women.

To begin with, the Sangharsh Samity has

already organised a militant and massive demonstration of women before the Collectorate on 17.01.95 which is quite unprecedented in Jabalpur. The rally deputed a delegation to submit a memorandum to the District Administration demanding the processing of the case strictly under the provisions of Anti-Dowry Act and exemplary punishment to the in-laws, the husband and also to the police officials who tried to hush up the case.

Since then, the Jabalpur Mahila Sangharsh Samity is endeavouring to form Sangharsh Samitis of women in all the localities.

Assam SUCI on AGP's Bandh Call on 20th February

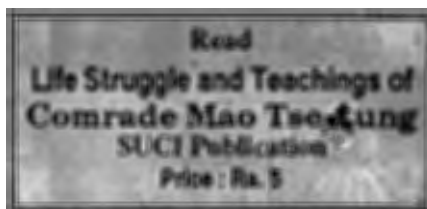
Reacting to the Asom Gana Parishad's (AGP) call for Assam bandh on 20th February, 1995, Comrade Kalyan Chowdhury, State Secretary, SUCI, has issued the following statement on 15th February last:

"When as a result of anti-people policies and the high-handed rule of the Congress(I) government of the state the life of all sections of the people has become unbearable, when only a sustained powerful united democratic movement alone can force the government to concede the urgent and just demands of the people and thereby can bring some relief to their life, it is obvious that actions like one day's bandh only, devoid of any other programme of a sustained movement, are quite ineffective in forcing and clinching issues arising out of the policies of an out and out anti-people government.

"Therefore, the development of a powerful democratic movement throughout the state of Assam demanding: a) effective measures to check alarming rise in prices of foodgrains and other essential commodities, revitalisation of public distribution system, which is in a shambles today, for regular supply of adequate quantity of foodgrains and other essential commodities both in the urban and rural areas, b) immediate measures to improve the worst ever power crisis, c) measures to firmly deal with the mounting administrative corruption, d) effective steps for the speedy industrialisation of the state and abandonment of the policy of privatisation of public undertakings, e) withdrawal of all the draconian Acts and restoration of democratic rights, and f) removal of all restrictions upon legitimate democratic movements.

"In such a grave situation the State Committee is of the firm opinion that it is not the time to indulge in mock fight and to play with people's anti-Congress feeling simply to reap electoral gains but to strive for developing powerful democratic movement centring round the burning problems of people's life. The Assam State Committee of the SUCI calls upon the AGP leadership that if they are really concerned about the acute sufferings of the common people of the state, they should undertake the responsibility of building up a powerful and sustained movement uniting all sections of the people.

"At the same time the State Committee once again urges the leadership of the CPI(M) and the CPI to review their political line of falling behind this or that opportunistic combination only for electoral prospects forgetting the disastrous consequences such policies bring upon the cause of united democratic movements. The State Committee once again appeals to them to take bold initiative to forge an instrument of struggle, a Left democratic alliance, comprising all the Left and progressive forces in the state."



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