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“What does happen when a change of government is brought about ... without a radical change of the state structure ? If honest men come into government that creates further complications because common people have faith in them. If they are confused despite being honest and cannot take to the path of revolution, they have no other options but to objectively act as lackeys of the capitalist class. It is the capitalist system which they have to reform and further consolidate, yet the grievances of people subside for some time at least because people trust them. Hence, the bourgeois rule, the capitalist rule only gets the opportunity to further consolidate itself and build up a firm foundation during the regime of such ‘honest’ administrators.”
(Independence on 15th August and Problems of Emancipation of People. SW, Vol. III, p. 46-47)

Proposed Lokpal Bill Some Pertinent Questions

People of the country are gravely concerned at mega scams unfolding one after another involving top level government officials, corrupt businessmen, Ministers, Members of Parliament (MPs) and leaders belonging to the ruling parties. They find that thousands of crores of rupees are being merrily pilfered or misappropriated through dubious means and parked in the coffers of the swindlers. The penal mechanism seems to be paralyzed, the administration defunct and the government disabled. While there is a cry of resource crunch for undertaking development work, the public exchequer is being defrauded with alacrity. Of late, charges of corruption have also been levelled against a section of the Judiciary whom people look at as the last recourse for seeking justice. Seething in anger, people wonder if there is any way out of this all-pervasive corruption.

Root of corruption

An impression does do the rounds that this sudden spurt in large scale corruption is attributable to utter degeneration at certain level of governance including the rarefied level of the most powerful at the Centre and in the states. If this degeneration is stemmed and the loopholes sealed, the spectre of corruption would haunt no more. Those who view the problem from this angle and presume there is a remedy available within the existing system might need to ponder over a vital point. Is it an aberration that could be rectified through reforms or it is a breed of the system itself? Had it been just a flaw at certain levels of governance, how is that the virus is spreading thick and fast so as to engulf the entire system? Those who are acquainted with the scientific methodology of ferreting out truth know that no phenomenon, no aberration can be understood if viewed estranged from the objective reality. And if the very cause remains unknown, appropriate remedial action will remain ever eluding. In our earlier article published in Proletarian Era dated 15 May, 2011, we had elaborately shown that root of corruption lies in the very capitalist system we are living in. Through inexorable course of history, capitalism which during the days of its advent as a progressive force established bourgeois democracy with necessary check and balance embedded in the system has now become decadent, moribund and reactionary and hence inhibiting social progress. In order to prolong its worn-out existence, it is itself subverting the very norms, procedures, ethics and morality it once championed against obsolete feudal order. Capitalism itself has become out and out corrupt and so the cancer of corruption has permeated the entire society. In capitalism today, corruption is, so to say, oxygen for the political parties subserving bourgeois class interest irrespective of their being in the government or in the opposition. Same is the case

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LOKPAL BILL**Moribund capitalist system is breeding corruption***Contd. from page 1*

with the pliant administration. Marx had pointed out 160 years back that as capitalism reaches its saturation, the role of money will be omnipotent and omnipresent; capitalist system will strip every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up with reverent awe of its halo and reduce relation to a mere money relation. Money would assume the role of superlord and virtually rule the society. The correctness of his prognosis is vindicated every moment in the present decadent moribund capitalist system. Capitalism has pushed human beings to such a state that earning money at any cost has become the objective of life. This mad craze for money is fostering corruption in every walk of life. So, it is clear that dying capitalism is breeding corruption.

It is pertinent to mention in this connection that according to some key government functionaries, it is inborn greed in human beings which is the cause of this rampant corruption. Such line of argumentation is nothing new but mere iteration of what many shrewd defendants of bourgeois system willfully as well as some honest humanists unknowingly have been advancing for long. But those who are acquainted with the scientific analysis of the course of development of human society and civilization know that despite paucity of production, greed did not appear in human mind in primitive clan communist society. Only when society was divided into two classes—the exploiter and exploited—in the wake of appearance of stable property that greed appeared in man's mind. So long private property and the motive of earning maximum profit in the realm of production would remain, the root of greed would remain too. And more is greed, more is lust and lure for lucre, more will corruption raise its ugly head. Hence the question of eradication of corruption is inseparably linked with the question of overthrowing capitalism. This is the genesis of the problem.

Lokpal agitation of Anna Hazare

Corruption has become so rampant in moribund capitalist system today that it is robbing people already assailed by ruthless exploitation in every walk of life, of

whatever little is left with them for bare survival. So, till the time emancipation from the oppressive capitalist system is achieved, toiling people will have to fight against the menace of corruption by building up protracted powerful democratic movements conducive to anti-capitalist movement. It is only pressure of long-drawn organized democratic mass movements along true leftist line which can to some extent keep corruption under check and thereby offer some relief to the people. Unfortunately, the very process of creating the desired surge of left-democratic movement is seriously hindered because of the treacherous role of the self styled Marxists like the CPI (M) and CPI. They have not only shunned the path of movement but even brutally crushed people's struggles wherever in government obviously to curry favour with the ruling monopolists for pelf and power. Moreover, contrary to the expectation of the people, the CPI (M) leaders and their governments, in course of subserving bourgeois class interest for staying afloat in the corridor of power, have themselves plunged in corruption instead of reflecting a high morale. Even two of their Polit Bureau members openly traded charges of corruption, nepotism and wrongdoing against each other. People find no difference between CPI (M) and other bourgeois parties like Congress, BJP and the various regional outfits on these counts. While the corporate houses or the ruling monopolists and their agents are embezzling public exchequer, pandering to all kinds of corruption and striking at the very foundation of democracy, the latest opinion of the CPI (M) leadership is: "The corporates must surely contribute towards strengthening and consolidating the democratic system in our country". (People's Democracy, 01-06-11) What could be more perfidious than this! Such propagation is a blot on leftist ideology and immensely damaging to the prospect of growth and development of desired left-democratic movement. Thus, in absence of people's movement along the right track, the accumulated wrath and grievances of the toiling masses are getting channelized in wrong direction and often becoming enfeebled by embracing reformist line.

The Lokpal agitation of Anna

Hazare and his followers is to be viewed in this backdrop. It is relevant to mention here that such a demand of administrative reform is not new. Since 1969 Lokpal Bill, under public pressure, was presented in Parliament as many as 10 times but was not passed under this or that pretext despite different parties or combinations having been saddled in governmental power. This makes it abundantly clear that these parliamentarian parties who have been wandering in the corridors of power can hardly subsist without corruption and hence are averse to any kind of fetter put on them. The matter was thus virtually shelved. But when people became visibly surcharged at serialized exposure of large-scale institutionalized corruptions like 2G spectrum, Commonwealth Games, IPL, Adarsh housing scandal, Karnataka mining and Kerala Lavlin oil episodes and so forth, Anna Hazare, a Gandhite social activist, and his followers launched their anti-corruption agitation and revived the Lokpal proposal. They sat in a hunger strike in Delhi in demand for immediate legislation of an anti-corruption Lokpal (Ombudsman) Bill to book the corruption culprits in the seats of governance. According to them, installation of a suitably empowered Lokpal institution within the given administrative set up would effectively deal with the problem of corruption at the highest level of governance. It may be mentioned in this connection that perturbed and exasperated at the incidents of rising corruption among the ruling parties, bureaucracy and other wings of governance, a section of the intelligentsia and bourgeois intellectuals who repose confidence in bourgeois democracy and does not want the system to be destabilized, are intending to bring about certain reforms as corrective measure. Anna Hazare and his supporters belong to this very section. Hazare's agitation received wide publicity in the media and common people desperately seeking an end to this large-scale corruption and scandals at various levels of administration and governance also came forward to lend moral support to Hazare expecting something tangible to happen. Sensing the resoluteness of people's anti-corruption mood, the government after initial dilly-dallies agreed to

discuss the issue with Anna Hazare and agreed to constitute a joint team having equal representation of both Anna Hazare camp and the government side for drafting the proposed Bill. Welcoming the government's gesture, Anna Hazare withdrew his agitation and the joint drafting exercise began in April last. But it soon became clear that though the government subserving bourgeois class interest beat a temporary retreat under public pressure, it had not even slightest of intention to bring a suitable Lokpal legislation. Rather it's has been a cunning endeavour to scuttle the process from within in all possible means by invoking untenable logics, resorting to jugglery of words and adopting such other tricks and thus prevent any effective legislation. The whole ploy has been to buy time and once the public opinion recedes to some extent, bring out what is up the sleeves. A cursory glance at the bare facts will be revealing.

On inclusion of PM and others within Lokpal's ambit

It being a fact that corruption has percolated in every field of economics, politics and for that matter the polity as a whole, there is nothing unnatural for Anna Hazare and his followers to demand inclusion of Prime Minister (PM), other Ministers, Members of Parliament (MPs), bureaucrats—everyone within the purview of Lokpal. According to them, instances of public offices embroiled in worst corruption are galore round the world. Further, the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) which Indian government has ratified requires that any public servant falling in the definition of 'public official' in Article 2(a) is covered by the Lokpal Bill. This definition clearly included the Prime Minister, Judges, MPs and all public officials irrespective of their rank.

Bypassing these points, the government argues that the Prime Minister does not enjoy any immunity from investigation even without a Lokpal. The office of the PM is the lynchpin of parliamentary democracy. So, bringing the PM under the Lokpal's scrutiny would mean leaving his office hobbled, granting the status of a parallel government to Lokpal and destabilizing the system. The PM,

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LOKPAL BILL**Capitalist rulers are subverting canons of democracy***Contd. from page 2*

the government contends, can at best be answerable to Lokpal only after he or she demits office. Moreover, according to the government side, MPs are protected under Article 105(2) of the Constitution for speeches made, and the right to vote exercised, in the House and hence, if they are brought under the ambit of Lokpal, these precious rights of theirs will be curtailed. This cannot be allowed. Any person conversant with the basics of bourgeois democracy will find the argument ludicrous. Essence of bourgeois democracy as enunciated by its founding fathers has been to ensure that every surveillance system is under another scrutiny process. It is for this reason that the exponents of bourgeois democracy brought in the doctrine of Separation of Power among the three wings of the state viz. Legislature, Judiciary and Executive and argued that each and every function must be exercised by a separate and independent organ if guarantee of political liberty was to be secured within bourgeois socio-political economic framework and suitable provisions of check and balance of power maintained between the organs.

In view of this, the government's argument that bringing Prime Minister within the ambit of Lokpal is tantamount to giving the latter an authority over an elected Parliament is flawed on many counts. If we turn to other capitalist-imperialist countries, we shall find that quite a number of Prime Ministers and key government functionaries have been accused of amassing huge wealth through unfair means, defrauding the exchequer and of moral turpitude. Some of the Prime Ministers of capitalist-imperialist countries had to quit on this ground. Have those governments been destabilized for that? In our country also, serious charges of corruption were levelled against more than one Prime Ministers while they were in office though in the aftermath, everything was suppressed underneath through a mockery of trial. Have we seen Parliamentary Democracy collapsing here and the country reaching the precipice of doom because fingers were raised against the Prime Minister even on the floor of Parliament? The other argument of the government about levelling corruption charges against the Prime Minister after he or she demits office

is preposterous. It means that the entire administration and people will remain mute spectators, if not indulgent onlookers, to a crime during its operation but will swing into action only after it is over. Incredible indeed!

Moreover, all bourgeois parties and most of the MPs or MLAs today view membership of legislature or a berth in the cabinet as a lucrative post for self-aggrandizement, as a means to earn maximum money. Bourgeois parliamentary politics has virtually turned into an industry of easy money-making through dubious means. So, criminals, fraudsters and shady elements are freely entering the legislature and undermining the very efficacy of the law-making body with alacrity. Hence, in the people's interest, all possible measures ought to be taken to check the unlawful activities of these tainted characters. The argument of the government about MPs being dispossessed of their rights to speech and vote in the event of coming under Lokpal is also ill-conceived. While the issue is about dealing with corruption, how does the question of dispossession of rights arise? Such out of context references are only meant to convolute the issue and spread confusion. These are all gangster's logics advanced by the government side because it wants to shield the corrupt and mischief-mongers occupying coveted seats of governance.

On inclusion of Judiciary

Next is the question of inclusion of Judiciary within Lokpal. Of late, fingers are also being raised against the Judiciary for indulging in corruption. Instances of favourable judicial pronouncements being elicited on the strength of money power are coming to light. Corruption charges have been levelled against not only lower court judges but even Supreme Court justices. Quite naturally, Anna Hazare and his supporters are demanding that Lokpal must have authority to investigate allegations of corruption against the Judiciary.

When in this era of moribund capitalism, all the bourgeois governments in the world are impairing the relative independence of the Judiciary by seeking to put in place a committed judiciary, it is astonishing to find the Congress-led UPA government making a frivolous argument that bringing judges under Lokpal will infringe on judicial

autonomy. According to government, the Judiciary under the Constitution is the custodian of the rule of law. The intent is to ensure that justice is administered without fear or favour. All judicial proceedings are open to the public and judicial decisions are subject to revision, appeal and review. Judicial errors are liable to be corrected by superior courts. The autonomy and independence of the Judiciary is protected under the Constitution. Individual judges are accountable through the process of impeachment by the legislature. The Lokpal, however, is essentially an investigating agency. The independence of the Judiciary cannot be equated with the independence of an executive authority like the Lokpal. Bringing judges under the Lokpal will, the government claims, compromise the independence of Judiciary, create imbalance in the system and ultimately affect the democratic structure.

All these arguments also suffer from the vice of distortion. The exponents of bourgeois democracy conceptualized the principle of Separation of Power with the objective that power should not be concentrated at any of the wings, there should be no overlapping of their functions and all three state organs should work in harmony while enjoying relative autonomy. So, they firmly held that Judiciary must be granted relative independence to provide justice to the people. But the fact is Judiciary, as posed in bourgeois democracy, is no absolutely independent or supra-class organ but a part of the bourgeois state machine. So, the vices of the bourgeois system are creeping into Judiciary also. Already its credibility is dented with allegations of corruption levelled against a number of judges including one of the Chief Justices. There is also an increased allegation from the suffering people that money is influencing judicial pronouncements and often justices are being bought. In order to suppress all these and convolute the whole issue, the government has been cunningly making unnecessary, unrelated and irrelevant references of judicial process, judicial corrections or protection of Judiciary by Constitution in the discussion of curbing corruption in the Judiciary.

In reply to this, Anna Hazare and his associates have rightly clarified that judicial accountability lies in scrutiny of judgments by the appellate courts, critical analysis and constructive informed criticism by the legal profession, academics, the media and members of the public including parliamentarians. Hence, judicial accountability is different from criminal conduct and Lokpal will not deal with accountability aspect.

Under the circumstances, it is evident that Judiciary which was visualized to be a vigilant watchdog of Parliamentary Democracy is now under scanner as well. Hence, there is definitely a need that concept of an appropriate institution be evolved through widest possible confabulations and discourses among the political parties and the enlightened people of the country to effectively deal with the menacing problem of corruption creeping into the Judiciary while safeguarding the role of the Judiciary to function with relative independence and with its customary jurisdiction and judicial power free from interference by other organs. Though Judiciary will be accountable to this body in corruption-related aspects, the latter should also in no way infringe upon the relative independence of the former.

Government's jihad against democratic movement and public opinion

All the right thinking people of the country are observing with great concern that with every passing day, through host of manipulations, trickeries and other tampering methods, criminals, rogues and unscrupulous elements having no obligation to people whatsoever are making way into legislature only to indulge in all kinds of wrongdoings, misuse of power and limitless corruption in collusion with the bureaucracy for self-aggrandizement. In view of this, Anna Hazare and his supporters have insisted on having the MPs and bureaucrats within Lokpal's ambit.

But in its bid to misguide public opinion and incite people against anti-corruption movement, the government in a most despicable manner is arguing that Lokpal and civil society movement is subverting sovereignty of Parliament. Whereas

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Anti-corruption movement must be conducive to anti-capitalist movement*Contd. from page 3*

the fact of the matter is that in this era of moribund capitalism when administrative fascism is becoming the order of the day, the status and importance of Parliament is being systematically undermined not by any outsider but by the bourgeois government itself through various means. In its effort to brush aside the logic advanced by Anna Hazare and enfeeble Lokpal agitation, the government has shamefully preferred to ride on deliberate distortion and misinterpretation. It alleges that a greater role of the civil society in making laws for curbing corruption would subvert the powers and functions of sovereign Parliament to the extent of negating Parliamentary Democracy. This is another evil counsel and another twisting of the basic enunciations of Parliamentary Democracy. First of all, people's demand for a suitable legislation to prevent a social evil by no stretch of imagination nullifies the role of Parliament. Those conversant with ABC of Parliamentary Democracy know that it is not Parliament but people who are sovereign in every respect. Parliament merely exercises that sovereignty on behalf of people. But it is not that elected Parliament is 'sacrosanct' and cannot commit any mistake or function erroneously. Existence of Parliament is contingent upon enjoying public trust and confidence by discharging its role correctly. So, Parliament should also be under continuous scrutiny by various extra-Parliamentary bodies, fora and democratic organizations through which public opinion is articulated and ventilated. Political parties and other voluntary organizations of the toiling people and civil society constitute such bodies and fora. Public opinion is also expressed through the extra-Parliamentary democratic movements on the burning problems of life. Parliament and the government must heed and give due importance to these public opinions while framing, amending or annulling laws. This is what bourgeois democracy viewed during the days of its advent.

These guiding principles are still in the books but not in practice. Because, when capitalism reached the stage of monopoly, it turned reactionary and began to weaken Parliament in different ways to ultimately make it redundant for all

intent and purpose notwithstanding maintaining a facade of it. Now in decadent moribund capitalism, that process has assumed much more celerity. But what is perfidious is that while the bourgeois government itself in the aggregate interest of the class is perpetrating this crime, is making democratic movements its next target, seeking to denigrate democratic movements by concocting mischievous arguments. In a despicable manner, it is arguing that civil society which is nothing but another name of organized public opinion or democratic movement can have no role in making laws as it infringes on the sovereignty of Parliament whose sole business is to legislate. How does that conform to the founding concept of "by the people, for the people and of the people?" Organization of public opinion developed in social interest through democratic movement is key to democracy. Public opinion can force Parliament to enact law in people's interest and can even bring down a government. Negating people's role in law making militates against the very spirit of democracy. The whole design is, therefore, to strip Parliamentary Democracy of its essence and establish dictatorial rule of the monopolists keeping a facade of Parliament. What a grave danger it is fraught with! The same very bourgeois government which itself is a butcher of democracy and annihilator of Parliament is accusing the civil society of 'threatening the republic'. The very objective of raising hue and cry over so called undermining of Parliament is a cunning ploy on the part of the bourgeois government to malign people's movement, renounce the necessity to frame law based on legitimate demand of people, channelize people's opinion along wrong line and misdirect anti-corruption movement. It may be added that as there is no provision for right to recall i.e. a procedure by which voters can remove an elected official from office through a direct vote or plebiscite in our country as was granted in Soviet socialism, importance of conscious people's movement is much more immense and crucial.

This is nothing but footprints of advancing administrative fascism. The government's is an endeavour to play hide and seek with the people on this corruption issue and turn

away from bringing any legislation that might put some fetters on the rampant corruption at the seats of governance and avalanche of malfeasance and misfeasance. At best it can with a view to playing to the gallery, put in place a law which is bereft of any tooth or claw but could well be showcased as due response to people's will. The draft Lokpal Bill that the cabinet is stated to have cleared on 28th ultimo bears it out in no uncertain a term. Under the circumstances, people must rise in roaring protest against such a sinister bourgeois conspiracy and resist it with all might so as to ensure the enactment of the law to establish a powerful institution of Lokpal.

Serious weakness of Anna Hazare's agitation

At the same time, people should be aware that Anna Hazare and his supporters, while agitating for an empowered Lokpal, are, knowingly or unknowingly, not uttering a single word against capitalism which is the root cause of invading corruption. This is not only shielding the vital truth from the people but creating an illusion that the system can be cleansed of corruption merely through some legal reforms just like the way the election-based political parties create a myth that if they are voted to power, all problems of life would be solved in no time. It is also to be kept in mind that their agitation is centered on an individual and this aspect only is getting highlighted with extensive media backing. Such individual-orientation makes the people passive and because of that, this type of agitations does not assume the character of a mighty organized long-drawn people's movement. Naturally, this kind of individual-focussed reformist agitations cannot bend the government who is taking a stiff attitude against enactment of a suitably empowered Lokpal. Those

who sincerely desire an effective people's resistance to menacing corruption need to understand these aspects thoroughly.

Call to people

Viewing the whole gamut of the problem in this way, it is clear that task today is to unmask the knavery of the government on Lokpal question, build up strong public opinion against that and force the government under pressure of movement to enact a strong and powerful Lokpal Bill to at least check the snowballing corruption at key levels of governance. But, as we have already said, mere legislation would not be enough. Its appropriate enforcement should also be guaranteed by the pressure and constant vigil of sustained people's movement. Second most important point which cannot be forgotten even for a moment is that in a capitalist system like ours, no institution can be free from its corrupting influence and for that matter Institution of Lokpal is bound to gather the dust of capitalist vices, bound to be affected by corruption stemming from the system. Therefore, the Institution of Lokpal must also be under the scanner of a powerful appropriate body evolved through widest possible confabulations and discourses involving all political parties and enlightened section of the society. Need, therefore, is to develop a sustained well-nit powerful democratic mass movements on the burning problems of life based on higher proletarian ethics and culture under correct leadership and conducive to anti-capitalist movement. Anti-corruption movement based on proper class conscious approach should be part of this widespread democratic movement. In the ambience of such movement only corruption could to a great extent be kept under control.



Protest rally of ASHA workers at Kanpur, UP, on 26 July

Comrade Khalequzzaman on Bangladesh : Emergence of BASAD

[[Requested by our party SUCI(Communist) during his visit to India, Comrade Khalequzzaman, General Secretary of Socialist Party of Bangladesh (also referred as BASAD : Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal) spoke at length on the political situation of Bangladesh, present as well as past, at the University Institute Hall in Kolkata on December 13, 2010. We published two instalments of the English rendering of the speech in the last two consecutive issues of Proletarian Era. This is the third instalment. Responsibility for any inadequacy in rendering, rests upon the Editorial Board of P Era.]

As I have indicated, during this whole period of preparation for the freedom struggle, one of the main perceptions that crystallized and grew step by step was the consciousness for democracy, that is, people's rule. It was gradually perceived that it cannot be allowed that a military dictator, or a single group or a combination of them would issue decrees and the country would be ruled on those. People must for themselves choose their own representatives for governance. Even if it was a bourgeois democracy in its essence, it must be a people's rule. This was a longing that was created in people's mind. But, the Awami League leadership, side by side with the political battle, did not consciously conduct a genuine cultural movement to develop thoughts and concepts of secularism in people. Despite their endeavour to keep the freedom movement free from the influence of communalism, they could not or did not organize a sustained secular movement throughout the period. It was their historical limitation, the class limitation. Mechanical materialism which was the tool of their analysis and judgement, was already rendered inadequate and thus ineffective these days to fight out religion and spiritualism. Neither the Awami League leadership was ready to adopt dialectical materialism. This ingrained philosophical limitation in the bourgeoisie that rendered them incapable of fighting out spiritualism. And their class limitation emerged from the fear complex of proletarian revolution. Development of secular thought enhances development of the proletarian class consciousness – one is linked with the other. It is because of these philosophical, historical and class limitations, the Awami League leadership did not go in for organizing a genuine cultural revolution in right earnest. But these limitations notwithstanding, how through the

freedom struggle itself both the concepts of secularism and proletarian consciousness bloomed in the country, I have provided a sketch of that. Because of that, the leadership could not do away with secularism. Democracy, socialism, secularism, and nationalism to develop free from the influence of imperialism – these were the four principles mentioned in the 1972 Constitution – though these were not their contributions. Unable to deny people's aspiration, they were forced to adopt them. However, this discussion is not relevant here, nor would the time permit to do so. Otherwise, I could have shown how, over the last 40 years right since the liberation struggle was over, the rulers have violated and trampled all that were accepted under the impact of this liberation struggle. So all those commitments for democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism free from the influence of imperialism which could not be denied in 1972, could hardly be traced these days. The Constitution of Bangladesh was amended 14 times. The ruling class did all these in their own interest, from their necessity to rise to power or retain it. By this, they ruled and are still ruling the country from a standpoint precisely opposed to that upheld in the very concepts of liberation struggle. The first amendment was done with the object that the forces which stood against independence, must not enjoy fundamental rights. The chapter of fundamental rights in the Constitution which guarantees security to the citizens would not apply in their case. But we found, not the *rajakars* or the forces opposed to freedom struggle, but those of us who had fought for freedom of the country were denied those rights. The Amendment 2 provides a glaring example. In the first Constitution it was laid down that right from the day the parliament sat for the first time and adopted that Constitution, all the laws enforced during the British and



Comrade Khalequzzaman delivering his address in Kolkata

Pakistan regimes, that were not in harmony with the fundamental rights of Bangladesh, would be automatically repealed. And the parliament of independent Bangladesh would not enforce any law, that would stand against the fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution. This was the commitment made in the Constitution. But immediately after independence, when the blood of freedom fighters had still not dried up, an amendment was initiated laying down that if two-third of the members of the parliament passed any Act, it would remain in force and valid, even if it was inconsistent with the fundamental rights. This opened the floodgate of enforcing black Acts. Should, after all these, they be regarded as the forces of the freedom movement, its helmsmen?

Then came the martial rule. By now, we are going to cover 40 years of independence. During these 40 years, the parliamentary system of governance ran only for ten months after the independence. Then, one after another, were imposed one party autocratic rule, non-military or civilian autocracy, military rule followed by the martial democracy i.e., martial rule under the non-martial cloak. Then again military rule was imposed followed by mass revolt. In the span of all these years Emergency was imposed for five times, martial rule for twice, two Presidents were killed, 30 to 35 thousand political activists were murdered; there occurred failed military coup for 18 to 22 times; around 2000 to 3000 soldiers were hanged to death. During these years, several caretaker governments took charge, as well as there was introduced a two-party system giving way to either of the two major parties or their combinations to rise alternately to power.

This is what is going on in Bangladesh. We made an observation: if there is an earthquake, the roof of a building cannot remain stable. The restiveness at the seat of power owes its origin here. This is a nation that has grown up through a prolonged struggle, it is a fighting, militant nation. If we count from the days our aspiration and struggles were initiated, the history of our independence struggle is a long history of 250 years. The country which earned freedom through such a great sacrifice, whose people came out of the struggle with so great expectations, was difficult to rule. On face of these, the seat of power will always be shaking with uncertainty, will always tend to crumble. There was one single alternative, and that was socialism, the rule of the proletariat.

The radical trend inside the Awami League, that called upon the "valiant Bengalees to take to arms and free Bangladesh" in 1970, was also the force that made the party accept the resolution for socialist Bangladesh. After independence, this was the force that gave birth to a trend of petty-bourgeois revolutionary politics, that emerged as Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JASAD) to become the main political opposition. We associated ourselves with that force. After JASAD was formed, during a theoretical controversy there came up a slogan: 'We fight for scientific socialism through social revolution'. But how would scientific socialism be established? What would be the character of the revolution? What would be the stage of revolution? What would be the character of the party that we were going to form? What kind of ideological, organizational and methodological struggles the party should adopt? Frankly, the issues were not clearly understood. We did not have any clear conception on these issues. At that stage, we came upon the thoughts and teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, conveyed to us by the leader of our party, Comrade Mobinul Haider Choudhury. He was already familiar with these. With this, those who had been aspiring for revolution in Bangladesh, who had been longing for socialism to be established in

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Turmoil and betrayal of freedom movement marked post-independence day rulers

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this country, were convinced that so far we had been carrying fragmented thoughts and opinions. For instance, in the book Dr. Akhlakur Rahman wrote on penetration of capitalism in agriculture in Bangladesh or in the 59 points enumerated in the documents of the Third International on the Leninist methods of party formation, there were some issues not very clear. With us issues stood as fragmented, scrappy; there was not any comprehensive guideline before us. On face of these, the analysis and elaborations we obtained from the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, clearly provided us with a comprehensive guideline. JASAD accepted them. Unfortunately, they neglected the task of putting into practice what they had accepted in theory. They did not care for the fact that the general guideline provided by those thoughts might assume some differences while concretely applying them to the concrete situation of our country. Their practice thus went on as usual in the conventional way, while they accepted the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh merely in words. This was a contradiction that cropped up at that time.

We had before us developed and elaborated understanding of Marxism-Leninism, of the thoughts of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had brought to us, the elaborated discourse he had presented on different issues like uniformity in thinking, singleness of purpose, oneness in approach, in a communist party, collective knowledge, collective life, collective leadership, problems of individualism and struggles against them, democratic centralism, democracy in the party and such others. It was necessary to assimilate these invaluable teachings within ourselves through extensive and elaborate discussions and to put those into concrete practice in concrete situations. There existed a wide gap in this regard. It was not that we, including myself, had very clear ideas, clear understanding and conceptions on all these issues. When I went through Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's works, I thought this was what I was looking for.

Once I was associated with a fraction of our traditional Communist Party. I could not maintain it after 1970. I found they were not being able to provide a guideline on the question of freedom of the country. Neither they approved of the ongoing movement. Truly, I did not realize those things in full. But attracted by the current of nationalist movement, from an indomitable urge for freedom, I joined the liberation movement. Thereafter, we got associated with JASAD. Though JASAD had separated itself organizationally from the pro-Moscow-pro-Beijing tradition and severed its link with that trend, soon in absence of proper practice, it itself got into the same old style, the same usual methods of running the party and its activities. In the thoughts of the leadership, in their practice, these cropped up in different scales. We then started ideological struggle within JASAD itself. We wanted to drive this point home that it was not unnatural that even a genuine revolutionary party acting from within a bourgeois society, continuously faces attacks of bourgeois-petty bourgeois ideology, culture-ethics-morality and thus may have to suffer from the influence of these vices. If these are not combated both collectively and individually through an incessant conscious struggle, just as a man becomes sick from the attacks of virus, the party too may become sick. Then as the disease driving its root further may cause death, the party and its individuals, too, may suffer ideological degeneration, may be doomed to downfall. As an outcome of this struggle to break apart from the existing bourgeois-petty bourgeois trends to develop into a genuine revolutionary party, BASAD, was founded on 7 November, 1980.

The questions we probed into at the time of building up BASAD, included among others: What were the problems not just with JASAD, but in the left movement as a whole of the country? Why form BASAD, and not join any other party? In regard to these, we identified 4 major problems. First, any lacking in Marxist basic outlook, analysis and methodology; second, on struggle covering all aspects of life – Stalin mentioned about it, though in a general way. But when based on his teachings, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

pointedly elaborated the concept, it assumed a different significance; we meant a struggle covering one and all fields of life. Third, determining the stage of revolution: which implies correct analysis of the society in which the revolution is to be accomplished as well as correct determination of the character of the state, production system and production relations. Otherwise, if it is a case of malaria, would there be any effect with the treatment for typhoid? With these comes the fourth point: what should be the ideological-methodological struggle for foundation of party. Along with these four as major, there were also a number of other issues of lesser importance. But it was lapses, lacking and deviations in regard to these four problems which were responsible for failure of left movement in this country in the past. JASAD too was not free from these, nor did it wage any struggle to overcome them. There is no reason to claim that we have accomplished these tasks. We have tried to identify the problems, did identify them and are striving to advance freeing ourselves from these. It was quite a hard task. But it is quite important that we could identify the problems. How far successful we will be in the end in solving them, we cannot just foretell.

Let us discuss the first point, that is, the basic outlook. We had talks on it with other left parties of our country. At the beginning there were problems, because even political discussions with the leaders of these parties faced a problem of ego that frequently stood in the way. Perhaps they took it as if we were trying to teach them. In reality, when we started to form our party, we were in the eighth or ninth position in respect of strength. Besides, in the traditional perception, we were neither pro-Moscow, nor pro-Peking. Many people even considered our party to belong to a Awami League-JASAD-BASAD trend. Not only other left parties were much ahead of us in organizational strength. When we came out of JASAD, none of the ten famous leaders of the left movement, was with us. When at the Martyrs' Column, we took pledge to form a genuine revolutionary party, the only asset we had in our possession were Marxism-Leninism, the most

advanced ideology of the present era and our firm determination. At the back of our mind we knew that it mattered little how many people were with us at that time; we bore a conviction that armed with the moral and ideological strength, we would definitely be able to develop into a genuine revolutionary force in the country. We had a fund of a meager 38 Taka with us. Nor did we have a place to sit together; we had to meet at a rickshaw workshop or garage. Such was our beginning, trailing behind eight or nine powerful left parties.

Since then we initiated our struggle with them. We tried to present our views in talks, discussions and writings. But even in those we had many weaknesses. We lagged behind in publication, we lacked competent writers, or could not express different issues adequately to the masses, not even to the extent we ourselves realized. When we raised the issue of outlook or approach, leftist leaders asked us what made us lay importance on it. We had to answer: Look, in Marxist approach, you are dialectical materialists, for Marxism stands on dialectical materialism itself. And what is your opinion. The theory holds that the internal cause is decisive, while external sets the condition. And while referring to 1971, i.e., the freedom struggle, you hold that this country was subjugated to USA and Pakistan, in fact to USA with Pakistan as its manager; and now it has come under the subjugation of social imperialist Russia through the manager India. What kind of assessment is this? How do you characterize then the role of Bengalee people through all these 23 years since 1947? What do you think about people's struggle here during all these years? Did not anything happen during these 23 years? In 1965, it was quite easy for India to occupy our land? Why did not India do that? Then how do you explain the internal cause? Since those days of the language movement in 1952, the education movement of 1962 or the mass upsurge in 1969—all these were the major events during this period. Thereafter, there was not any single month, when people did not fight for some cause or other. When you present your explanation without

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Faulty analysis of state and independence marked traditional left parties

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paying any heed to these events, without explaining how in culmination of those struggles, it ended in the liberation struggle of 1971, does your contention speak of anything to do with Marxism? This, we have marked as the problem of outlook.

Another fundamental tenet of Marxism is the unity and struggle of opposites. You call yourselves a Communist party; you have links and similarities with the CPI of India. Now, when you term Awami League a progressive party, can fulfill the unaccomplished tasks of national democratic revolution jointly with Awami League, and even you can step ahead to an extent towards socialism: what kind of explanation would you call this? What is the class character of Awami League? How do you conclude that in the present days you would fulfill the unaccomplished tasks of national democratic revolution jointly with Awami League, which is nothing but a bourgeois party? Where in Marxist teachings do you find such analysis? Rather, Lenin held just the opposite view. On the other hand, another group of yours announced setting up of liberated zones. They argued: Well, we can see the Indian army ourselves, how could we deny or ignore the fact we find ourselves in reality? They announced setting up of liberated zone, proclaimed and started freedom struggle. The other group set out for completing the unfinished national democratic revolution and for proceeding towards socialism, jointly with Awami League. We termed these views as two extremes at two ends. Both of you have presented a distorted explanation of the 'unity and struggle of opposites'.

We organize trade union movements, participate in parliamentary elections as well as hold meetings. But why? We look at trade unions as the school of communism. And when in course of a movement we bargain with the owners, to finally reach an understanding, a compromise, it signifies no more than coming one step backwards in the broader struggle for uprooting the capitalist system, the system of private ownership. We don't speak for solving the fundamental problems of the working class jointly with the

owners, forming an alliance with the owners.

So it came down to that one group of leftists made alliance with bourgeois parties, and thereupon at one stage dissolved their own party to get swamped into a hotchpotch party. Another group, crying hoarse against occupation of Indian army, declared war of national independence struggle against it. In a few days time the Indian army went back; and ultimately innumerable revolutionary activists had to lay their life fighting against none other the Bangladesh army, who had actually fought in the liberation movement of 1971.

There are so many instances like this that cannot be discussed in details here. We have tried mainly to discuss about the problem of basic outlook. On the question of struggle covering all aspects of life we have emphasized that we are no longer the cave-dwellers of the primitive age. With the development of civilization, so many facets encompassing history, science, philosophy, literature, music, drama, cinema, family, emotion, taste, love and so on, have flourished in human life. Each aspect of life is very much alive, active. So if revolution means a radical change of society, it would not remain confined to political and economic programmes only.

To think this way is not the right understanding about the revolution also. So, whatever influences life, sense of values, sense of ethics, in whatever field that be, that works in favour of the existing social system. No revolutionary struggle, no such upheaval is possible without the struggle for combating these, thwarting these – this is what we have repeatedly and emphatically said.

From our words many took us to be hard-liners and unrealistic. Some jeered at and ridiculed us too. One day a leader (of one of these left parties) told us bluntly that our ideas were utopian divorced from the reality. To prove it he narrated a tale of his life. Once he hired a rickshaw for three hours. Economically, he belonged to an affluent family living with all his brothers and relatives in comfort. While running on rickshaw he informed me that wives of his brothers used to gift his wife sarees worth Rs.5000/- each. Saying this

he asked, would it not sadden his wife if she could not reciprocate his brothers' wives the same way at least offering sarees of Rs.2000/- a piece? Whereas their (his brothers') children reached schools by car, his daughter would sit back gloomily and not want to go to school, she cannot go in her own car. 'How to explain it?' he asked. I retorted, it was he, who himself provided its answer. I wondered, why his wife should think like that. Once she was the worker of the mass movement, would take to the streets joining rallies, would be seen braving the cruel onslaught of the police bleeding her profusely in the protest demonstrations against the unjust rule. How could such a character of lady meet with such pathetic consequence? Moreover, I reminded him, he was discharging his revolutionary responsibility. So, how could he expect to vie with his apolitical brothers that way? Why didn't he teach his daughter in line with his ideals? He replied, this course followed would have segregated him from his family. I reminded him that his family was not an obstacle to his leaving the family. I emphasized that he himself compromised with his conviction surrendering to family to stay with. Such interactions would occasionally take place between us.

Now, on the analysis of the society. According to the established left parties, the stage of revolution Bangladesh belonged to the people's democratic one. In their opinion, the state power was in the hands of comprador bourgeoisie. Who were these comprador bourgeoisie: they were none but commission agents. We tried to drive it into them if there were any instance in history in which commission agents ever led the freedom struggle of a country? This apart, judged from the point of view of class character, what was the background of the emergence of their party? Which class agenda did, the party that emerged, present politically, economically and culturally? What were its political and economic agenda at the time when Awami League was formed in 1949? Which class inspiration did it uphold? We urged them: come, let us sit together to discuss these points. Then again, which class interest did it uphold during the period from the emergence of six-

point programme till 1971? Was it the interest of the Pakistani or the American or the Indian bourgeoisie or else the interest of the resurgent capitalists of the Bangladesh? Which class culture did it cultivate? Be it music, drama or literature, which class economic - cultural interest, with whatsoever shortcomings, did it uphold? Let us analyze all this critically, without which was it justified to conclude the comprador nature of the bourgeoisie? Besides, as you see, the revolution these parties wanted to bring about was the people's democratic or national democratic one. What does it signify? Does it not indicate that the country has still not attained independence? Does it not imply that they meant to bring about national independence and establish socialism all at the same time? Strikingly, while addressing people, their leaders would cry hoarse: 'even so many years after independence, why these demands are not yet fulfilled etc., etc.'. Why don't they give the call for independence of the country first, since the country is not yet independent? It simply comes down to the fact that the social reality and their theory do not conform.

In a serious discourse light comments might not be welcome or desirable, but really I can't desist myself. Often discussing theories with them faced much difficulty. We had to be cautious that they are not offended and take it as if he were giving them lessons; that would have spoilt the polemical ambience itself. Instead we thought of taking recourse to lighter modes, stories or jokes. In that vein, we recounted: Once there was a cat-race. Cats, fresh and strong, from America or Europe, arrived to take part. Also there came a cat from Somalia, not that strong and fresh. Yet it came first in the race. Media persons pounced upon it: How could you come first? Placidly he answered: Well, I am not really a cat. I am a tiger, starving and thus emaciated. Likewise the bourgeoisie of Bangladesh, were bourgeoisie by all means, though emaciated from starvation. How could they emulate the bourgeoisie of the 17th-18th century Europe, beaming with vigour?

Next came the question of

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Bourgeois opportunistic politics raised ugly head during elections under military rule

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principle and methodology regarding the formation of the party. According to them, those left parties, Lenin laid down everything about this. To them Shibdas Ghosh provided merely some subjective jargons on the issue. We asked them: what in Shibdas Ghosh's contention, they thought to be contrary to the Leninist concept. If absence of word-to-word conformity mark a counter-thought, Lenin must be held guilty of having said a lot against Marx. There are so many instances of that, of Lenin going against Marx-Engels. But those are not really contradictory; those complement each other in changed situations. So Lenin's thought are not rejected nor refuted, rather on the edifice of the Leninist principle and based on his teachings, Shibdas Ghosh pronounced his thoughts. Let us have debates to find out whether those thoughts follow Marxism-Leninism or not. The issues to judge are if those thoughts of Shibdas Ghosh are scientific, if they guide us in our revolutionary struggle, towards revolution.

Now, on the character of state : Is Bangladesh an independent national state or a neo-colonial or semi-colonial one? Nowadays imperialism and capitalism are intertwined in a single thread. The US mercenaries gang-raped a 12-year old girl at Okinawa of Japan. But the Japanese Government did not dare to nab or put them to trial. Was Japan a colony? In Germany none of its citizen is allowed to enter into the US military bases. The queen of Australia is elected by the queen of England. What do these mean? Are these countries colonies? If you consider our economy, they do not take out not even 2% of our GDP. There are three categories of investment here – foreign direct investment, joint collaboration investment and national private investment. Foreign investment in our soil is not more than 30,000 crore taka, but the GDP is 6-7 lakh crore taka. Such is the economic scene. In these days political domination of the imperialists is bound to be there. In the capitalist-imperialist world, the capitalists exploit the working class; the big capital tries to gobble up small capital; powerful imperialist

countries dominate the weaker capitalist countries. So, with the national capitalists there is dependence on imperialists, there is alliance with the latter. At the same time there is contradiction and the question of their own national development.

Here arises the importance of realizing that for the torchbearers of socialism it is essential to develop collective way of life with a view to remoulding one's life on the edifice of higher socialist culture. We founded our party in 1980 and the Martial rule was imposed on the country in 1982. Hussein Muhammad Ershad clamped this Martial Rule. We were placed under tremendous difficulties as we had then just started our journey for building up the party and hence were far short of any progress worth mentioning. Even at that stage we had to go underground. On face of this onslaught, a few leaders came to conclude that struggle covering all aspects of life was not feasible in that situation. A sophistry cropped up from some quarter, posing the question, whether beauty of flower, or smiles of babies had any class character, so and so. We tried to answer them pointing out that there was truly no class basis in beauty of flower or smiles of babies as they are expressed, but certainly elements of class culture are embedded in how we enjoy them. Further question arose if simply lying huddled together in a room could make a commune life. But collective life does not really mean that. Even in police-barracks, they live in that manner, sleeping in close-set beds in one single room. Could it be termed a collective way of life? In fact, shorn of the essence of struggle for building up a life, the concept of collective life had no meaning, we said. But to them, it was not only impossible, but its practice was futile too. In the long run, some leaders deserted the party. The question of infeasibility needed to be redressed here. 'I may not be successful in one particular struggle or may even not involve myself in it. Neither the yardstick is based on whether I can or not. If I can't, and if I am honest I would confess that I could not. But I would never put an obstacle to others to proceed, on the ground I cannot or could not'. While this struggle was on for us, there set in

the struggle against the military rule.

Then the question cropped up as to whether we should take part in the elections under the military rule. We held it up to the masses that people of the country had enough experience of the savagery and cruelty of prolonged military rule. They had also known from their bitter experience how the military rulers trapped people in fake parliamentary elections and set up tailored parliaments only to legitimize their illegal grabbing of power. Ershad, coming to power, announced that Quran *Talawat* and *Milad* would be held at the Shaheed Minar. This way, according to him, the *magferate* or purification of the soul of the martyrs would be prayed for. We smacked of imminent danger in this slogan. So, we called upon all the political parties to resist it at any cost. It concerned the history, the tradition and what not, of our nation. These rulers would destroy all our achievements of the past through this. We organized 15 parties and fought against it. The rulers made a retreat; then on, they never dared to stage any *Milad* at the Shaheed Minar. Rather we paid our floral tributes as usual at the Shaheed Minar. Streams of people poured down the streets. February 21 reappeared, as though with a new inspiration for struggle.

However, a few days later, there began a conflict between our party and a few left parties as well as Awami League on the question of movement against the Martial Law. We held that under the Martial Law, we would not take part in any elections, we did not wish to give legitimacy to this military rule, in any way whatsoever. They may stage a farce of an election; why should give it legitimacy? At first all the parties agreed to it, but in 1986 Awami League departed from this stand along with two or three left parties including the CPB. It happened at a stage when an All-Party Students' Unity had emerged from within the Student Struggle Council (*Chhatra Sangram Parishad*), a combination of active students' organizations, when a Workers'-Employees' Unity Council had been formed with all organizations of workers, when similarly Peasants' Struggle Council had been set up with all organizations of peasants, when

there developed United Cultural Combination of cultural organizations, when there had been formed organizations and alliances involving doctors, engineers, agriculturists. In this way, when people of different sections of society and of different professions had started to develop their organizations and thereby give rise to people's organized power, when the movement had been gaining momentum and strength with every passing day, these parties got panicky. Out of that panic and with a view to sharing power with the military rulers, they decided to take part in the elections in 1986. BNP too would have treaded the same path. But the National Party of Ershad needed a clean two-third majority in order to legitimize its power, in the manner Jia-ur-Rahman of BNP had already shown; the question of sharing power with other parties would rest only with the remaining seats. BNP stopped short of making a move unsure of what would be its position vis-à-vis Awami league in this share-game.

Our party was the first to propose boycott of elections and raised it to the 15-party combination. Four other left parties also took the same stand. At that time, one fine morning Ershad declared that decision must be taken by 5 a.m. next morning. At around 2 o'clock that night, we announced that we won't take part in the election. We were aware that we might be felled to bullet or put behind the bar, in case we stepped out of the room. But we were steadfast to stick to our decision of not participating in this farce of an election. Awami League, CPB, Samyabadi Dal and others decided to join that farce. BNP found us staying away from the elections and decided to follow suit. As mentioned, they were sceptic about their prospect in seat-sharing among Ershad, Awami league and their party, BNP. So they left it for those two other parties to scramble between themselves. The movement, however, rose to a peak. The parliament became ineffective, meaningless. Ershad's attempt at winning legitimacy was frustrated to become a farce. Under pressure of the movement, Awami League was compelled to come out of the

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BASAD emerged through intense ideological struggle

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Parliament. The movement gained further momentum. Ultimately Ershad had to step down. Initially, after this, we had been in favour of a caretaker government. But later we demanded the government must be formed of the forces that had been there in the victorious movement. We also made it clear that all the demands that had been raised during the movement against the autocratic rule of Ershad, must be given effect to. Our plan was to go for a government combining the 8-party alliance led by the Awami League, 7-party alliance led by BNP, the 5-party alliance of the leftists including our party. Our object was: if in such a government after a few days the bourgeoisie in power failed to meet the demands of all sections of people, we, the leftists would break away from the combination exposing their betrayal to the people's demands and interests. By that we could have set up an independent trend of leftists movement. But we could not succeed in persuading our leftist friends in the combination to accept this view. Of course with passage of time, people taking part in the movement, could, slowly and gradually yet surely, see and realize the difference of our view from that of others. Indeed, such distinctions could not be established without movement; how could we cope up with them, who were all experts in jargons and arguments. The movement was really like a laboratory, where parties are thrown into tests. This way we could bring out our distinction from others to an extent at least.

Now let me add a few points on the present situation in Bangladesh, which you have been eagerly waiting for. Only day before yesterday (i.e. 11 December 2010), three garment workers have been brutally gunned down by the police in Chattogram (Chitagong) district. Through all these years, the rulers of our country have destroyed all our traditional industries of jute, cotton, sugar. In the past, Bangladesh abounded in both the raw materials and market of these industries. The surplus of these commodities after meeting the national requirement could be exported as well. But the rulers, in pursuance with the dictates of the policy of globalization, simply ignored these and took to

promoting export-oriented industries, leaving people of the country without food, clothing and shelter. Thus clothes were imported to make garments from them, to be purchased and used again by people of Europe and America. We were supposed to come out as skilful tailors for them. This is what the garment industries of Bangladesh really serving for! Can you guess how fabulous profit these industries are fetching? In 1978, there were two factories in the country, today the number rises to 5100. In 2009 alone, these garment factories reaped \$12 billion profit, which is 84,000 crore *taka* in Bangladesh currency. China leads among the garment-exporting countries, followed by Turkey and then Bangladesh. But while in Turkey the garment workers earn \$2.5 per hour per head, in China \$1.88, their counterparts in Bangladesh earn only 12.5 cents. It is even one-fourth of the corresponding wage in next-door neighbours, India and Pakistan, where these workers are paid about 50 cents per hour per head. Our party have raised demands on where should the wage be fixed; we demanded that it must be \$2 or 140 *taka* per day to help a four-member family to earn the monthly income of that family would stand at 16,800 *taka* per month. This is a figure, which the World Bank itself, whose mission is to help the imperialists loot the world, prescribes to pull people up from below the poverty-line. The Nutrition Science Institute of Dhaka University has suggested that a person requires 3000 kilo calories a day in average, an adult male requiring 3300 kcl, a female or young 2400 kcl. To meet this calorie requirement with the help of even the most common food, it needs 64.50 *taka* per head per day. With a four-member family, the amount would stand at 7740 *taka*. Mind that, this is only for food, leaving aside any other essential expenses. Adding up with this amount, costs of other essentials like child rearing, conveyance, house rent, and such others, the total spending of such a family would take to minimum 14,240 *taka* per month. We contended, if only two persons of such a family are in employment leaving two other unemployed, in that case each employed of the family should earn 7000 *taka* a month. We demanded

that wage for the workers, but the other parties did not agree. They demanded 5000 *taka* against which the government announced a gross total salary of 3000 *taka* with 2000 *taka* as basic per month.

In this context I would refer to 1969 when the country had been a part of Pakistan. At that time I was engaged in trade union movement, many incidents of which I still remember. Aayub Khan, a military dictator, was brought down from power under pressure of a massive movement. Another military dictator Yahyah Khan stepped in. Well before the movement against Aayub Khan, Maulana Bhasani had organized the workers and announced a *gherao* movement. Perhaps Subodh Banerjee, the departed leader of your party, SUCI (Communist) had introduced this movement in India, while Maulana Bhasani resorted to this tool in his movement in East Pakistan. In face of this *gherao* movement of the workers, Yahyah Khan was forced to declare a total monthly salary of 155 *taka* with 125 *taka* as basic. At that time, the price of one *mound* rice was 30 *taka* and a worker could have procured 5 mounds of rice each month with this wage of him. There stood the minimum wage at that time! After 40 years, even two mounds of rice cannot be purchased with one month's wages in the present-day Bangladesh. Hence, we raised the question, was it this freedom that we aspired for? Who did shed blood for freedom? Those who had become the ministers, MPs, military Generals, clerks-turned-Secretaries and were stashing away crores of *taka*, could they say that any member of their families had sacrificed life in the freedom struggle? Where did the 30 lakh martyrs come from? They were all peasants, workers and

common toiling people. The workers who had shed their blood those days, could not even buy two mounds of rice with the same amount of money, with which they could get 5 mounds before independence. Their real wages had slid down to such a depth. But the salaries of those privileged parasites have increased by 16, 18 times even 20 times. Unlimited privileges and prerogatives, they are now enjoying. Yet throughout the year they remain busy quarreling and bickering among themselves for power and pelf, but when the Parliament decides to allow tax-free imported car, they clap together in cheers. They embezzle and stash away money to foreign banks. Was the freedom meant for this luxurious life of a few? Who had paid the price for freedom, and who now enjoy its fruit? We brought these questions to the fore. Workers are not demanding anything in excess, they simply want back their hard-earned rights and dues. The owners do not pay the wages or salaries even on time; they hold those back for 2 or 3 months. These days one can hardly survive in Chattogram on mere 3000 *taka*. Over and above this, there are misbehaviour, repression, harassment of women both mentally and physically, retrenchment or cut down in salaries or wages on any plea, preventing trade unions from working, even growing. The jute merchants who sell even their wastes, raise gangs of goons and persecute workers with their help. Then again now they have formed the so-called industrial security force. While protesting against all this, the government has shot down four garment workers. Over the last 25 years more than 1000 garment workers were charred to death.

[To be continued]



Discussion at Patna, Bihar, on 16 July on Claims of Development and Reality

SUCI (C) represented in 4th International League of People's Struggle in Philippines

The 4th International League of People's Struggle was recently held at Nine Waves Resort at Rizal city in Manila, Philippines on 7, 8 and 9 July 2011. More than 300 delegates and observers representing some of the leftist parties, other progressive organizations, fora and institutions of Philippines, India, Canada, USA, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Argentina, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Greece, Egypt, Senegal, Burundi, Congo, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan and other countries participated in the conference. The theme was, "Build a bright future! Mobilize the people to resist exploitation and oppression amidst the protracted global depression, state terrorism and wars of aggression". The conference listed eighteen concerns for discussion and action. The concerns included imperialism and war, foreign military bases, resistance struggles in different parts of the globe, land grabbing from peasants by the corporates, issues of seeds and fertilizers, workers' rights, privatization of education, unemployment and other problems of youths, issues of the teaching community, issues of cultural movement, issues of the immigrants, healthcare and its commercialization, issues of the aged people, abuse of child rights, problems of indigenous communities and a few others.

Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Member, Polit Bureau, SUCI (C), participated in the workshop on 'Imperialist war of aggression and intensification of people's struggle against counterrevolution' and presented a paper. In his brief but comprehensive analysis, Comrade Dhar showed that after the dismantling of socialism in Soviet Russia and East Europe and disappearance of the mighty socialist camp, the imperialists particularly the US imperialists have become unbridled in pursuing overlordism and brigandage round the globe, launching wars of aggression and illegal occupation of foreign land, orchestrating local and partial wars, fomenting army-based coups, propping up military

dictatorships, engineering regime change and installing puppet governments by sheer flexing of military muscle and trampling underfoot all canons of international laws and conventions as well as barest precepts of democracy and democratic norms. The Pentagon rulers have arrogated to themselves the autocratic right to destroy any country or government who refuse to obey their diktats. It is therefore incumbent on all anti-war peace-loving democratic minded people to close their rank and build up powerful anti-imperialist particularly anti-US imperialist movements under correct revolutionary leadership and co-ordinate all these struggles to from resist the marauding acts of imperialism, and save the world from this scourge.

Comrade B.R. Manjunath, President, AIDYO participated in the workshop on the concern regarding the issues of the youth and problems of employment. He also participated in the discussions held on youth during the seminars held as a part of International Festival of people's rights (IFPRS). The said festival was held on 4, 5 and 6 July at the University of Philippines, Quezon city. On behalf of AIDYO, he placed the analysis of the organization on the problems of the youth. He showed how after liberalization and privatization, the job opportunities are shrinking and how job security is lost. He also dealt on problems of rural youth and issues of imperialist cultural invasion. These points were appreciated by one and all.

The resolution and the plan of action finalized in every workshop were finally placed before the plenary and approved. The ILPS then elected its new office bearers. It was followed by a colourful cultural programme. The delegates affirmed their resolve to fight all the manifestations of imperialist attacks jointly by co-coordinating the efforts of all the anti-imperialist organizations throughout the world. Many delegates individually and on behalf of their organizations expressed their willingness and eagerness to participate in the International Anti-imperialist Conference to be held at Kathmandu, Nepal on 7, 8 and 9 November 2011.

SUCI (C) strongly protests heinous move of the UPA government to open retail trade sector to foreign monopolists

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary SUCI(C) issued the following statement on 25 July, 2011 :

The UPA government serving the interests of the domestic & foreign corporate capital, has decided to open the retail trade sector in India to foreign multinational companies on the plea of bringing more FDI to bolster the economy, the storage capacity of products and the supply side, which is far from truth.

In fact, this sinister move of the government will drive out a few crores of small traders from their profession and turn them into street beggars. This move of the government will only help the foreign corporate capital to establish their monopoly control over Indian retail trade and reap huge profit.

We strongly oppose this heinous design of the UPA government and urge upon not only the small traders but also the democratic minded people of our country to organize mighty movements to compel the central government to withdraw this anti-people scheme.



SUCI(C) protests land-grabbing : At Angul, Orissa, intellectuals in a sit-in-demonstration on 1 July (Top), peasants-fishermen at Srikakulam observe Martyrs' day on 14 July and Comrade Amita Bag of Singur movement addressing as invitee (Middle) and tribals-slum dwellers at Ranchi, Jharkhand on 16 July.

Observe Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Memorial Day on 5 August with due solemnity

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