

# Proletarian Era

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Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA  
Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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## ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

# Opens up new vista of women's struggle

Holding the flag of the AIMSS high, they are marching. Around 30,000, they make a swelling wave of a huge procession stepping in unison towards the Bali Yatra Maidan, Cuttack, to attend the open session of the 2nd All India Women's Conference. They are daily wage earners, professors, peasants, students, Adivasis, housewives, physicians and so on. But they have a bigger identity. They are fighters who have dedicated themselves to the cause of emancipation. For, this is the only life that is honourable, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh the great Marxist thinker, had taught.

Onwards the fighters move, their slogans coming out in rolls of thunder. They condemn indignity on women of every form. They condemn flesh trade, obscenity in media, liquor

and other addictions, female foeticide, rape, barbarity for dowry. They demand economic freedom, they demand honour on equal basis as man. But above all, they condemn capitalism, for it is the source of all evils.

People watch them with admiration. On roadsides, from shops, from windows and balconies, from rooftops men and women watch them. They give glory to the women legion, who fight for not only the cause of women, but for the society as a whole.

Before the massive procession has reached the Maidan, starting from Cuttack Railway Station and winding through Station Bazar, College Square, Rani Hut, Mangala Bag, Naupatna, Buxi Bazar, the other processions of the delegates representing Delhi, Assam,

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat, West Bengal have already reached the venue. On the way, students of Shailbala Women's College, pay greetings to the delegates.

The vast Bali Yatra Maidan is now a massive rally of countless women, unprecedented in Cuttack. On the dais are seated Dr. Satchidananda Raut Ray, eminent author and Chairman of the Reception Committee, All India Women's Conference and Srimati Nirupama Bargohain, eminent litterateur, Comrade Tapas Dutta, member, Central Committee, SUCI, Comrade Pratiba Mukherjee, All India President, AIMSS, Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, General Secretary,

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A view of the open session of All India Women's Conference at Bali Yatra Maidan, Cuttack on 28.1.2004  
Section of the dais ; Comrade Tapas Dutta, member, Central Committee, SUCI addressing (Above). Section of the gathering (Below)

## Women's Conference

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AIMSS, Comrade Rowshon Ara Rusho and Syeda Parvin Akter, representatives of Socialist Women's Forum, Bangladesh, Comrade Anjana Bisankhe of All Nepal Woman's Association and AIMSS leaders of different states.

Comrade Prativa Mukherjee presides over the Open Session.

The huge rally observes one minute's silence in memory of the Martyrs who laid down their lives in our country and abroad, for the cause of emancipation and against imperialism since the First Women's Conference and in memory of Comrade Gayatri Dasgupta, the departed Vice-president of the AIMSS.

Resolutions against Supreme Court verdict empowering male police to arrest women; widespread liquor sale; and in favour of All India General Strike on 24th February, called by the central trade unions – are moved and supported by the following comrades of AIMSS respectively:

Comrade Swayangprova Nayek, Secretary Orissa and Comrade Sailaja John, Secretary, Kerala; Comrade Chhabi Mohanty, Vice-president, Orissa and Comrade Meenakshi Joshi, President, Gujarat; Comrade Chandralekha Das, President, Assam and Comrade Sadhana Mishra, Secretary, Bihar.

All the three resolutions are unanimously adopted.

Next Dr. Satchidananda Rout Roy and Smt. Nirupama Gohain address the gathering. (Their speeches will be covered in the next issue of the Proletarian Era). Speech by Comrade Tapas Dutta followed. Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee gave her speech. In the meantime Comrade Tapas Dutta and Comrade Prativa Mukherjee left the dais owing to their sickness. In the absence of Comrade Prativa Mukherjee, Comrade Menoka Basu Roy, Vice President of AIMSS, chaired the meeting. Comrade Syeda Parvin Akter of the Socialist Women's Forum, Bangladesh and Comrade Anjana Bisankhe from All Nepal Women's Association delivered their speeches. The state leaders who spoke include Comrades Jayalakshmi (Karnataka), Sadhana Chowdhury (West

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## Message of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

General Secretary, SUCI

Comrade President and Comrade Delegates,

From the core of my heart I wish full success of this Second All India Women's Conference convened by your organisation although my indifferent health would not permit me to be there in your midst however much might I wish it. I fully believe that this conference will deliberate upon the most vital problems of life of exploited and oppressed Indian women and determine the appropriate course of legitimate and democratic struggles in this regard. It would help the AIMSS effectively, I believe, in accomplishing the mission it embarked upon at the very beginning following the ennobling thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

Ours is a vast country where diverse people speaking different languages, professing different religions, having diverse cultures, live side by side. This makes uniting all exploited and oppressed women across the country into a really decisive force a difficult historical task. I feel it is worth putting on record that despite its many problems that stand in way, the AIMSS always did its utmost to live up to this task. To us it is a matter of deep satisfaction that the AIMSS had been fighting against the pitiless capitalist exploitation and oppression of women. It had been organising on the other hand women's movements against all sorts of humiliations, oppressions, tortures, bride burning, dowry death, rape and such crimes which patriarchal oppression and domination inflict on women. This pathetic and criminal unconcern for the dignity and security of women now increasing daily is a direct consequence particularly of rapid imperialist globalisation and commodification of women the world over. It has therefore become an urgent necessity today to initiate a broad-based movement against this attack on women by combining with all sections of democratic minded and progressive thinking people.

It should be clearly understood in this regard that patriarchal domination and oppression today essentially reflects the capitalist class domination over society. In our capitalist society a girl child is usually neglected and discriminated against. However, experience has amply proved that given equal opportunity, women can perform equally as men in all fields of activity. So, the idea of women being inferior to men is no more than a diehard prejudice. However, a woman is exploited, oppressed and humiliated doubly. Her subjection to patriarchal control in family is supported by her subjection to the capitalist system which denies her proper and full education, employment and thereby economic independence and finally therefore her security. Capitalism only exploits the labour power of women to earn its profit. Therefore, the emancipation of women from patriarchal domination can only be achieved through overthrow of the capitalist system which nourishes and nurtures patriarchal supremacy. The view held by certain groups which hold not capitalism, but individual men, as responsible for patriarchal domination, is a wholly erroneous proposition. The struggle for emancipation from capitalist rule and the struggle for emancipation from patriarchal oppression, which follows from the earlier, should therefore be integrated.

It is necessary more than ever before since crisis-ridden world capitalism, which wants to nip all

democratic and revolutionary movements in the bud, is bringing down a worldwide cultural attack including the most abhorrent attack on women and her dignity. This global imperialist cultural attack, particularly on women, is the fall-out both of the complete socio-cultural degeneration and insoluble economic crisis of world capitalism. The prospect of fleecing former socialist countries failed. The panacea of globalisation turned out to be a hoax. The "artificial stimulation" of a militarised economy remains before the imperialists and capitalists the only resort today. Their final recourse is fascism. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that the fusion of the technological aspects of science and spiritualism, obscurantism and bigoted ideas of all sorts gives birth to the cultural foundation of fascism. He also said that once fascism entrenches itself in the national soil there will not be left many people worthy of being called man since fascism subverts the very process of emergence of man. World imperialism-capitalism is working along this path. How desperately these countries led by the USA are leaning on war economy and war is vivid from America's brazenly unprovoked aggression of Iraq. The BJP government of our country is cleverly manoeuvring with the arch-imperialist USA, opening up the Indian market to foreign multinationals while at the same time it has raised the Ram Mandir issue and called for establishing a Ram Rajya. It has already unprecedentedly communalised and criminalised Indian society and politics, trampled down all secular values and poses an ominous threat for the country's future. In its frantic bid to fascisize the country by whipping up all sorts of communal, casteist and obscurantist ideas, it has even gone to the length of preaching, for example, that beasts, the lower castes and the women should be kept under the whip. Whose voice is it if not of Hitler? And where would the women of India find their place in the BJP dispensation?

But women were not looked upon with disdain at all times. In the primitive communist society they enjoyed equal right with men, the children were known after them and the society was matriarchal. Their subsequent subjugation by men is a heartrending history which you should study meticulously. The exploitation, oppression and humiliation of women which started thus and has been sustained by all class-divided societies including capitalism, will disappear only when class division will itself disappear. Capitalism being the last form of exploitative society, the struggle for the emancipation of women from capitalist yoke, and consequently from patriarchal oppression would be fought conclusively in this society. It will be fought despite the reactionary attacks on it. History has on record the vain dictat of German fascists to the German women: Go back to the Kitchen and be good mothers! But history did not brook the fascists.

Finally, I urge upon the delegates of this conference to fulfil their historic responsibilities with courage, determination and perseverance for awakening finally the vast masses of women of the country and guaranteeing thereby the awakening of the entire exploited masses and the consequent final victory of the revolution overthrowing capitalism.

Future is yours!

## Creation of Bodo Territorial Area District

# Another Deceptive Move to Divert People's Discontent

On 7th December last a new autonomous territory named Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD) under the 6th Schedule of the Indian Constitution was formed within the state of Assam. A day before, that is on 6th December, 2003, the Bodo Liberation Tiger (BLT) engaged in armed struggle on the demand for formation of a separate state resolved cease-fire and an interim council under the leadership of its supremo Hagrama Basumatari took over the charge.

Such an autonomous territory within Assam is nothing new. Earlier, under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution were formed the Lucia Hill District Council (now Mizoram state), Khasi-Jayantia Hill & Garo Hill Council (now Meghalaya) and at present there is Karbi-Anglang of North Cachhar District. All these were formed for the hill tribal people. There was no such legal provision for constituting autonomous territory for tribals on the plains. For this reason, after necessary amendment to the Constitution an autonomous territory under the same schedule is now formed.

### Two basic questions

This development has brought two questions to the fore. First, how far would this formation of an autonomous territory be able to redress the grievances of the Bodo people accumulated over the years as a result of social discrimination and deprivation they were subjected to. Would it at all? That apart, Bodos in this region constitute 30% of the population and the rest is not of Bodo origin. In this backdrop, while the Bodo people are carried away by the ceaseless propaganda of the leaders of the Bodo movement holding on to the limited power of an autonomous territory and are nurturing hope of an improvement of their lot, the non-Bodo populace like the Santhals, Kotchs, Rajbanshis, Nepalese, Bengalees and Bengali speaking Muslim immigrants who combinedly represent majority in the region, are seriously

apprehensive of their future and hence resenting at the decision. The non-Bodo sections are complaining that the creation of this autonomous council is at the expense of their rights and aspirations and there are vociferous outbursts of this resentment as well. The Santhals who are appreciably large in number had been for long demanding for being recognized as tribals. But the echelons in the leadership of the Bodo movement are refusing to accept their demand. Obviously, right from the day of Bodoland movement spearheaded by the separatist leadership broke out in the region, the conflict between the Bodos and the non-Bodos accentuated further and ultimately led to fratricidal bloodbaths including massacres. After this disastrous declaration of autonomy the situation became yet more alarming. The non-Bodos are haunted by the fear of being utterly discriminated against. Their anxiety and apprehension cannot be held baseless in the light of the experience of the various communities of people residing in the other autonomous regions of Assam but not belonging to the group from whom come the separatist leaders in power in those regions. On the other hand, all sections of Bodo population are not unanimous in accepting the autonomy that has come through an understanding with the BLT. An armed Bodo organization named NDFB is agitating over the demand for establishing an independent and sovereign state. Thus it is found that formation of BTAD has not reduced the complications. Communal and group clashes are on the rise sniffing out innocent lives. The whole issue is to be judged dispassionately on the anvil of logic and on the basis of past experience in this very tumultuous background.

### Experience of previous autonomous council

It has already been mentioned that experience of autonomous regions within Assam is nothing new. Since independence, a good

number of autonomous councils for the hill tribes had been formed. The opportunist political leadership capitalized the legitimate grievances of different tribal or adivasi people who had been victims of social inequality and deprivation born out of the capitalist rule and tormented under capitalist exploitation and misrule of the political leaders subserving the interests of capitalism, and went on fomenting separatist sentiments to form several autonomous regions. But what has been the ultimate result? A small section of privileged people amassed riches while the broader section of common people received nothing but further deprivation. Being faced with questions from amongst the masses the separatist leadership argued: "Simply autonomy will not do. This was our first step of struggle, now demand for a separate state is to be raised." Thus they repeatedly confused the people with further dozes of separatist preachings. In this process from Lusai, Naga, Khasi-Jayantia & Garo Hill District Councils ultimately separate states like Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland had been formed. But this resulted only in benefit to a handful of privileged sections of hill tribes; larger sections of common masses are lurching in the same distressful condition as before. Alongside continuous deterioration in the life and livelihood of all sections of the common people begotten by the ever increasing all-embracing crises of the capitalist system, the majority people in these autonomous regions also went on having increased doze of suffering and pauperization.

As a result of autonomy and formation of separate states, Assam has been fragmented but the common people got nothing but deception. While discussing the outcome of Bodoland territorial district, we have to recollect the past experiences also. In other words, while dealing with the whole issue in the background of both the past experience and the present immflamable situation in the newly formed Bodo Autonomous Territory

(BTAD) we have to recollect the course of Bodo movement and the relevant incidents in history as well.

Previously, the Bodo Autonomous Council (BAC) was formed in 1997 under the 7th Schedule of the Constitution. We had categorically told at that time not to pin much hope on this so-called autonomous council. Instead, we had called upon all sections of the toiling people to unite on the platform of a militant democratic mass movement to realize the just demands of both Bodo as well as non-Bodo people. The council has been in operation till the other day and the people residing within the council are well-aware that there has been no respite from any of the burning problems afflicting their lives. Both the Assam government and the Assam bureaucracy completely ignored the cause of the Bodoland people. Instead, fund crunch was highlighted as the reason for not being able to fulfil any of the promises. On the other hand, the leaders of the Bodoland movement, like any other bourgeois leaders, became rich and prosperous.

So, the inevitable did take place and the whole exercise of BAC became infructuous. When there was mounting discontent against the hoax of BAC the separatist forces, in order to divert the attention of the people raised the demand for a separate state and as a sequel to that was formed the BTAD under the 6th Schedule at the instance of the central government. And it goes without saying that the fate of BTAD would also be no different to that of BAC.

In independent India the outrage of the common people exploited under the capitalist system and misrule of the Congress subserving the interest of the ruling capitalists was channelized in different states towards separatism due to the absence of correct left movement. Some opportunist leaders profusedly confused different sections of people of Assam with

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# Fragmentation of a state does not solve people's misery

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the slogans of separatism and created fanaticism to that end. In this process demand for reorganization of Assam in a federal way was also raised. It was the Congress who, during its uninterrupted rule for over thirty years after independence propelled various kinds of separatist parochial thoughts riding on which a handful of political leaders enjoyed pelf and power while the interest of the common people was completely crushed under feet. In 1967, the Union Home Minister YB Chavan proposed bifurcation of Assam in two parts — the hills and the plain. Right then, our party, SUCI, opposed it and said that with the fragmentation of state the basic problems of the common people would not be solved. On the contrary, feelings of harmony and cooperation among them instead of receiving due encouragement would be seriously jeopardized and seeds of permanent disunity and conflict would be sown. The task of building up united movement of the exploited people centring round the demands for solution of the burning problems of life stemming from capitalist exploitation would be seriously affected by this. (Vide Ganadabi, No.2 Vol.20 dated 04-09-1967) History of last 30-32 years only proved the correctness of our analysis to the hilt.

## Bourgeois political parties fomented separatist thoughts

After independence, as a result of utter discriminatory policy pursued by the Congress rulers, discontent was swelling among the Bodo population against the injustice meted out to them and over the question of development of their own language and culture. Taking advantage of that, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam had in the early seventies raised the demand for formation of an Udayachal state with the areas inhabited by the Bodo people. But it failed to elicit any response from the larger section of the Bodo population. The Bodos till then were hoping of their development by remaining within the state of Assam. At that time, the aspiring political leadership could not instigate separatism to that extent which they could do later cashing on the serious discontent among the Bodo people against the utter negligence, discrimination and

oppression-repression perpetrated on them by the ruling parties like the Congress, Janata and last of all, the AGP. The situation would have been otherwise had the then rulers of Assam tried to work for economic development of the Bodos, remove social disparity and honour legitimate grievances of the Bodo people. But the ruling parties both at the state and the centre did not walk that way.

Everyone knows that an ultra parochial movement started in Assam towards the end seventies with the slogan, "Flush out the foreign nationals" Actually, it was for this movement that various divisive thoughts swept across Assam later. The way the chauvinist leadership rent the air with the slogans like "Identity of the Assamese is at stake", "Assam is for the Assamese", or some others like these, the non-Assamese speaking people shuddered at the prospect of their identity in Assam, became victim of a fear psychosis that got rapidly spread and gave birth to different communal, regional as well as fissiparous thoughts in their minds.

In the general atmosphere of the parochial Assam movement that triggered suspicion, mistrust and disunity among different sections of people in Assam, the Bodoland stir broke out in 1987 with the demand for a separate state. At that time, that typical chauvinist AGP government did not acknowledge the legitimate economic, lingual and cultural aspirations of the Bodo people thus freeing them from the clutches of the divisive forces. Instead, they unleashed a spate of repression and torture. Assam is a multi-lingual state, indeed a miniature of the Indian society. Leaving aside the issues of other minority communities, different sections of people residing in Assam from the days of yore had their own legitimate aspirations on questions of language and culture. But the ultra parochial leadership of the Assam movement denied this reality. They attempted to forcibly convert everyone into 'Assamese' without caring for the desired scientific method of prolonged continual exchange and association among the peoples of different communities. It was not only unjust but hindered the very development of Assamese language also. Immediately after coming to power

in 1985 the AGP government declared Assamese as a compulsory subject in the school syllabi. This stoked tremendous discontent among the Bodos (See Assamese Organ of SUCI, The Ganamukti, dated 08-01-2004) and gave a handle to the separatist forces to confuse and mislead the Bodo people. Treading along the line of ultra chauvinist All Assam Students Union (AASU) born there was All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) which incited the Bodos to launch an intensive movement on the demand for a separate Bodoland. Objectively analyzing this critical situation, our party, the SUCI, showed in 1989 that Bodo movement too was founded on the pernicious parochial thoughts that the leaders of the Assam movement patronized to spread venom. Having been saddled to governmental power, the Assam movement leadership in their bid to serve the capitalist class interest, introduced all the anti-people policies. There was no basic difference between the AGP government and the Congress government of the past in their attitude towards running the administration (See 'On Bodo movement' published by the Assam State Committee of SUCI in 1990).

Later, the Congress came to power in Assam again. But they also continued with the same policy of repression and torture on the Bodos. In reaction, the Bodoland movement gained momentum compelling the Congress government to reach a compromise with the Bodoland agitation leadership. Through a prolonged negotiation, the then Congress government conceded to the demand of Bodoland and passed an Act under the provision of the 7th Schedule giving birth to Bodoland Autonomous Council, 1993. Right from the beginning of both the AASU and ABSU movements in Assam, our party guided by Marxism-Leninism and Shibdas Ghosh thoughts has shown that all our problems, not only economic, but those relating to education, culture and values, minority communities, etc., stem from capitalism. The primary task of the people irrespective of community, caste, language, etc., is to categorically identify capitalism as the main enemy and develop a sustained movement against this capitalist system prevailing in our

country with the objective of overthrowing it finally. Shorn of this clear objective and programme no basic problem of the people can be solved and hence seeking redressal to all the problems by establishing an autonomous region or a separatist state within the capitalist system is an abortive exercise. Nagaland and Mizoram were once autonomous territories; later they were conferred separate statehood; Karbi-Anglang of North Cachhar district still enjoys autonomous status. But not a single basic problem of either the majority or the minority communities in any of these states or territories has been solved.

## The hoax of BTAD

ABSU movement and Bodoland Autonomous Council, too, failed to fulfil the aspirations of the Bodo people. In their bid to suppress this failure and enmesh the Bodo people in deeper fanatic thoughts, the Bodo Liberation Tiger, the armed outfit of the ABSU, surfaced demanding separate statehood. Simultaneously, there appeared another armed organization, namely, the NDFB with the same demand of a sovereign independent Bodoland. This NDFB has brought in its trail individual killings and terror and plunged the whole area into seething tension. This is simply suicidal. For, let alone solving the problem, it just serves the interest of the ruling exploiters who want people to remain perpetually engaged in the fratricidal internecine strifes so that they under strangulating hold of fanaticism are dispossessed of the very urge to find the correct path, to appreciate that democratic mass movement is the right course towards emancipation. In the midst of ultra-parochial movements scaling heights every day, the central and the state governments have concluded a tripartite agreement with BLT on 10th February, 2003. Based on this agreement, the 6th schedule of the Constitution was amended conceding to the formation of Autonomous Bodoland Territorial Area District. Needless to say, this autonomy is also yet another act of deception to the Bodos. Gaining this autonomy after years of so-called movements has quite naturally created an emotional upsurge among the Bodos. That this is

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# Emancipation of women can only be achieved through overthrow of capitalist system

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Bengal), Binapani Das (Orissa), C.H. Prameela (AP). Dr. Sudha Kamath announced the names including Dr. V. R. Krishna Iyer, former Justice, Supreme Court, Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, former Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, Alexander Mombaris, Editor, Editions Democrite (France) Prof. Asima Chatterjee, eminent scientist, who sent their messages to the conference.

Finally Comrade Menoka Basu Roy announced the conclusion of the open session.

## Comrade Tapas Dutta's speech

The All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan is a women organization built on the edifice of higher ethical, cultural and moral values, dignity and self-respect. The illumining thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, have been the guide to action to this organization in carrying forward the struggle of the women for emancipation from all sorts of exploitation. Inspired by his thoughts, the women have come forward and joined hands with the menfolk to eke out the path of social revolution with which the question of women's liberation is inseparably linked. There can be emancipation of the women only when there is a revolutionary change of the exploitative social system that has kept them under bondage. Ever since society has become class-divided, women under male domination and oppression were forced to lead a life of humiliation remaining objects for satisfying the lust of men. The mother who carries a child in her womb, gives birth to him, feeds him with her milk and brings him up, loses all importance once the child grows up; if the child is a son, he becomes the head of the family; if it is a daughter, everyone in the family looks down upon her as of no use.

There has been for long attempts to keep women confined at home, adorned with ornaments. Women have not realized that these are chains of servility, passed off as symbols of beauty. They forget the shameless history behind and accept these as marks of her beauty.

It is heard that in China a girl

child on her very birth was made to wear wooden shoes, so that later on she could not even walk properly. This was considered to be part of a women's beauty. In a similar way, under the barbaric sati system, a widow was burnt alive on the pyre of her dead husband under the pretext of being consigned to heaven. Lest she resists she was administered strong drugs and thereafter her cry for survival suppressed under drumbeats. If Raja Rammohan Ray had not dared to challenge the system and succeeded in bringing a ban on sati system, could we be able to call ourselves civilized before the world?

It was the custom earlier that on the husband's death, the widow had to have her head shaved, shed off all ornaments, wear a totally white thick dress. She was entitled to a single vegetarian meal per day and this was a religious rite for her. However, whenever the woman would die, her husband was not required to perform any rites. He could also marry once again, whereas the remarriage of the widow was forbidden — such had been the injunction of the patriarchal society. At that time the upper-caste Brahmins could marry more than a hundred times. Still now, there is the practice of a woman having to share her husband's home with his other brides.

It was Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, a great personality of Indian Renaissance, who stood against these inhuman social customs and committed himself to the task of social reformation to banish all such barbaric assaults on the women. In order to introduce widow marriage in the society, he waged an arduous struggle against all sorts of social obstacles and Brahminical tyranny. Ultimately he could get this through and thus made a tremendous contribution to the cause of the women. Vidyasagar was like an ocean of human kindness. On a rainy night, finding a street walker on the road, he gave her a rupee asking her to go back home. He had a heart full of sympathy for the street-walkers, the widows, the women deserted by their husbands and all others. He did have boundless love and compassion for the destitute and deprived women.

In many of his books like Sitar Banabas and Shakuntala, he had tried to highlight the plight and misery of the women deserted by their husbands. He also fought against polygamy and child-marriage. He established schools for education of women. He realized

of the venue as per the religious prescriptions endorsed by the great preacher of Vedantic philosophy, a woman possesses no right to chant Vedic hymns.

This happened in the same Calcutta where originated the renaissance movement, the same



On to Bali Yatra Maidan, 28 January, 2004

the necessity of English education. In this respect he differed from the opinions of Ballentine — the then Principal of Benares Hindu University. His opinion was that Berkely's philosophy is as erroneous as the Vedanta and that without English education, it was not possible to be acquainted with the modern science and epistemology of the West, ushering in the illumining thoughts of Renaissance. Had not English education been introduced then, could we have scientists like CV Raman, Acharya Jagadish Ch Bose, Prafulla Ch Ray, Satyen Bose, Megnad Saha and Ramkrishna Parija! 'Manu' the saint, had remarked that "wife is for a male child", i.e. only male children are needed in society, not girls. Sankaracharya had observed thus, "Women are the doors to hell". Incredible indeed as all of them were born from their mother's womb! Only after seeing the light of the world that they grew older to become erudites. Then how could women be just the doors to hell? What is then the threshold to heaven?

The same attitude towards women is found to prevail even today. The Sankaracharya of Puri was in Calcutta recently and attended a programme. There a woman who started reciting from the Vedanta was forcibly thrown out

Calcutta which had been the nerve centre of India's freedom movement. None had protested against such derogatory behaviour with a woman, save and except Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan. But the fact is that Akshyay Dutta, in his book Prachin Bharatiya Upashak — wrote that in the ancient days, women had even written Vedas. We are also aware of the learned ladies of the vedic days like Gargi, Maitrayee, Khana. This bears testimony to the fact that women were not in any way inferior to men.

In the patriarchal society, not withstanding every attempt to suppress the women, the latter did leave marks of excellence in different aspects of science and epistemology.

Who does not know about the discovery of Radium by Madame Curie, the scientist! Could one wish away the historic role of women in the freedom movement or in revolutionary movements if different countries like China, Russia, Vietnam etc.? The laudable role of women in the French Revolution 200 years back is an example of bravery and courage.

Neither can anyone deny the glorious role of the women in the freedom movement of our country. Such was the awakening in the society at that time, that women

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## Women's Conference

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who were kept confined indoors came out in the open and participated in the movements, helped the revolutionary freedom fighters from behind. I refer to an incident here. The wife of a police commissioner secretly gave shelter to a revolutionary in a room at the back of their house for days together. There are many such incidents not recorded in history. Among the women who played leading role in freedom movement Pritilata Waddedar's name is worth mentioning. The names of Matangiri Hazra, Aruna Asaf Ali etc., are other prominent names associated with the quit India movement.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose built up a women brigade named "Jhansi Rani Bahini". This army played a glorious role in the battle against British imperialism.

Today we have fallen to a great extent from the higher cultural standard achieved earlier during the days of freedom movement. Cultural degradation is all pervasive. Assault and rape of women, bride killing, trafficking and trading of women are on the rise. Men baring their bestial instinct are assaulting a mother in front of the child. Five men together are outraging the modesty of a woman in broad daylight. And the police is but a mute spectator. Even in a police lock up women are being molested. Once prostitutes were hired to satiate these perverse proclivities. Now, the lust is satisfied in such cruel way. At present call girl is a term in use — even college girls are available on call. Just to earn the extra cash for buying consumer goods these girls do not hesitate to sell out their bodies. Because of globalization, not only economic exploitation is on the rise, there is a naked attack on the culture. In tourism-business, small girls are being engaged to entertain tourists. You will be surprised to hear that the number of girl-prostitutes is the highest in our country. Yet one boasts of India's cultural heritage.

During a discussion with communist leader Clara Zetkin, about sexual morality, Lenin repudiated the so-called bourgeois logic of satisfying sex urge in any

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## Resolution on Reservation of Seats for Women in Loksabha and State Assemblies

[ Reproduced below is the Resolution on the proposed reservation of seats in Parliament and Assemblies unanimously adopted at the delegate session of the All India Conference of AIMSS ].

The second All India Conference of the women held under the auspices of the All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS) being held at Cuttack from the 28th to 30th January '04 notes with deep concern that most of the bourgeois parties which were or are in power, who during their regime showed no concern for the fast deteriorating condition of the women folk, did nothing to prevent and sternly deal with all sorts of oppression and attacks which went on increasing as a result, have all of a sudden become very vocal in demanding reservation of 33 percent of seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women.

This conference also notes that this move of these parties wedded to the capitalist rule comes at a time when the entire population of the country, men and women irrespective, being victims of the ruthless capitalist system, are living unbearable lives, when women, being denied their economic freedom, which is the fountainhead of all other freedoms, are fast turning out to be destitutes, when they are being forced to undergo drudgery and lead life under subhuman conditions and are exposed to worst form of oppression and exploitation, when nothing is being done to ameliorate this utterly helpless, pathetic, heart-rending conditions of the women folk.

This conference also notes with deep anguish that the votaries of this women's reservation have launched this move at a time when because of the deliberate policy of the capitalist rulers, not only economic power but political power also is getting concentrated into the hands of the bourgeois state fast divesting people of their hard won vital democratic and political rights to the extent that common people under the given condition are left with no right to combat and resist these mounting attacks which are endangering even their mere existence.

This conference also notes that this move for reservation of women has been mooted at a time when because of the manoeuvres and machinations of the ruling bourgeois class and the parties under their disposal, there is not an iota of democratic content, of democratic choice in the entire election process, that because of unabashed use of muscle power, money power and media power resorted to by the chosen parties of the ruling capitalist class, free choice of people's representatives through the election today is a hoax. Election results today are wholly controlled by the monopolist class and the giant industrial houses who jointly operate the mechanism totally ousting the common people from the arena of the election process. It is everybody's knowledge that under the given situation it has been almost impossible to get even single genuine people's representative elected. Election in the ongoing capitalist system today has

clearly become an exclusive preserve of the minuscule richer class.

This being the ground reality, this conference is of the firm opinion that the aforesaid move for reservation even if adopted will not enable a single genuine representative of the oppressed women community to get elected, that it is a clever design in one hand to distract their attention from their real problems, to disrupt their gradually developing movements against oppressions, brutal attacks and atrocities and injustices and at the same time a move to pave the path for election of some women members coming from the richer section of the society to represent the interest of the ruling capitalist class.

Being firmly of the view that women have all the potential to become equal to men in all respects and that the lasting aim of today's women's movement is to force the bourgeois government of all hues to remove all the obstacles and bottlenecks which stand in the way of their all-out development, this conference strongly denounces the intention of these bourgeois parties as manifested through the latest move for so-called reservation, in which it is a matter of indignation that parties like CPI(M) and CPI have also joined, to condemn them to a permanent inferior status, and instead of removing the factors which keep them utterly backward, to treat them as weaker section. This conference in unequivocal terms deprecates this attitude of the protagonists of the reservation and regard it to be an affront to the honour of womanhood. This conference is also of the firm opinion that this move is dictated by the overriding interest of the ruling capitalist class and the parties subservient to it to create cleavage between men and women in their bid to obstruct the growth of women's struggle for emancipation on correct lines, to create serious hindrance to the growth of man and woman's common struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

Pledging itself once again to carry forward women's just struggle for ensuring their rightful place in state and society, to remove by the weight of powerful movements all barriers which stand in the way of women becoming equal to men in all respects, rededicating themselves to the tasks of moving shoulder to shoulder with men both in parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, this All India Women's Conference firmly resolves to expose the utter hollowness and the heinous design behind this move, to fight it tooth and nail, and finally to foil this conspiracy to hoodwink the oppressed women of the country in a bid to subvert the women's emancipation struggle developing on the correct lines and in the process to free them from the false illusions that have been created as a result of this sinister campaign.



# Separatist forces thrive in absence of left democratic movement

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simply an illusion can be realized if the Bodos recollect their past experience. Only a few privileged groups have so far prospered as a result of this movement. For the general Bodos this 'success' would bring about one more dose of utter frustration. As a result, Bodoland people would be dragged into yet more fanatic politics of demanding a separatist state. This will not generate anything but confusion and deception. When acute unemployment has gripped whole of the country including the big states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, where the existence of the middle class is at stake, is it possible for the people of a tiny state with whatever autonomy it may have, to survive without depending on the big state or the Centre ?

BTAD will be no different to BAC

We strongly believe that the problems that surfaced afresh after the formation of the Bodoland Territorial Area District will be of serious consequence. We have already mentioned that the Bodos with 30 per cent population are not majority in the BTAD. Creation of this BTAD by denying the rest 70 per cent non-Bodos their rights, aspirations and disdaining their sentiment has naturally caused lots of misgivings and discontent among them. We have the bitter experience of deprivation and discrimination against the minorities in Nagaland and Mizoram which were carved out of Assam and made separate states. There the minority communities have been severely discriminated against over transactions of properties, reservation in education and employment, permission for licence in trade and commerce, etc. The AASU-sponsored chauvinist movement in Assam gave rise to similar misgivings and discontent among the Bodos. The very history repeats itself in case of non-Bodos in the background of the Bodo movement in the autonomous Bodo Council area. Several non-Bodo groups have constituted "United People's Struggle Committee" to demand scrapping of the BTAD. Thus the conflict between the

Bodos and non-Bodos is steadily accelerating to turn into fratricidal clashes. Pointing out this discontent among the non-Bodos, the ruling Bodo leadership in the autonomous council area are busy trying to consolidate their "clan" against the non-Bodos.

Democratic mass movement — only recourse

We are of the firm opinion that these internecine conflicts will not benefit any nationality or community. In order to perpetuate the capitalist exploitation the ruling parties irrespective of colours, banners and hues, both at the Centre and the state, are mounting attacks one after another through their anti-people measures. To thwart this onslaught, the need of the hour is to forge all-out unity and launch intensified mass movement so as to realize the specific just demands of each of these communities. The main concern of the people should be how fast and how could this desired unity could be broadened and sharpened. At this critical juncture when the separatist forces are making all efforts to precipitate mutual distrust and disaffection among various sections of the common people, neither the Bodos nor the non-Bodos or for that matter any segment of the population should raise any demand that would drive wedge in their unity and pit one section against the other to buttress ulterior motive.

In this context, another point is to be understood by both the Bodos and non-Bodos. Lenin, the great leader of the toiling millions, has shown that ours is an era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Analyzing the facts and figures he pointed out that capitalism in this era has lost all its progressive role thereby assuming an utter reactionary character. Not only this, it has acquired the imperialist character by giving birth to monopoly and finance capital. In this age, no progressive movement can develop nor can any aspiration of the people be fulfilled basing on bourgeois values and ideology. Even a national liberation struggle in this age cannot reach its desired goal without the socialist values and ideology. The nationalist ideals which are nothing but the bourgeois

ideals are absolutely obsolete nowadays. They have to be replaced by proletarian internationalism, the ideology of the exploited classes. The reality prevailing in the country justifies that all the separatist movements that have surfaced so far have inevitably led to fratricidal conflicts, have destroyed the unity of the common people. These separatist movements have not lessened the sufferings of the common people. On the other hand we have seen, all such problems — economic, political, linguistic or cultural, of all the nationalities, majority or minority, were solved to a large extent in the socialist countries. All the nationalities there developed uninterruptedly covering every aspect of their life. A person believing in proletarian internationalism always stands by fellow human beings. In practical life also, there is no conflict among the toiling people on economic,

political, social, cultural and linguistic questions. In the absence of correct ideology when the people fall victim to the influence of the bourgeois ideas and values, the conflict begins. The bourgeoisie keeps on dividing the people this way to prolong its decadent class rule.

In this backdrop, if the Bodo people, freed from the vile influence of the separatist forces as also the illusion created on the question of autonomy can be imbued to unitedly fight against capitalist rule and exploitation, which is the correct path for realization of their legitimate demands and rights, they will also be sympathetic to the aspirations of non-Bodo people. And it is only this way that all the legitimate demands and rights of both the Bodo and non-Bodo people can be achieved. This unity of the toiling millions is indeed the crying need of the hour.

## Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer's Message to Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee on the occasion of his felicitation in Calcutta on 1.1.04 by the AIDSO

Dear Brother Dr Sushil Kumar Mukherjee,

The day you cross over to 90 is a red letter day for me and several thousands like me because a great man who has served humanity in several fields of peace and welfare is renewing his tenure on earth for another span of compassionate curative and humanist activity for people the world over. Your tireless work in the field of education, your struggle against imperialism and for the preservation of dynamic democracy have been an inspiration to a wide circle of people in several countries. Your presence in good health, your commitment so profound and your ageless wonder are a sublime contribution to the work, wealth and happiness of mankind. I have been a close admirer and intimate friend of yours for several years and feel passionately that your plan and energy must be dedicated to the alleviation of suffering and promotion of common weal of fellow beings. You are a priceless global asset, a vibrant locomotive of freedom for all to carry on as you have done ever before for years and years and make younger brothers like me to share the challenges. We have been facing as the leadership you have been giving so that imperialist darkness may disappear and the dawn of light, dignity may enlarge life and liberty and extinguish fascism and suppression. Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow we look to you for leadership to the people of India, one billion strong so that they win the right to life in basic needs.

I salute you and wish you years and years and yet of long life for the happiness of human kind.

V. R. KRISHNA IYER

# West Bengal State Students' Conference by AIDS0



The 7th West Bengal Students' Conference organized by All India DSO was held at Burdwan on and from 22 to 24 January, 2004. In the open session Comrade Provash Ghosh, member, Central Committee, SUCI addressing the open session on 22 January at Circus Maidan attended by over fifteen thousand students.

## Victory by Trivandrum AIDS0

Trivandrum :: The AIDS0 activists of Trivandrum after a small battle with the Police blocked the recruitment of contract Teachers as part of the SSA project (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan).

AIDS0 activists started picketing the SSA office by breaking the police barricade. After an hour-long tussle with the police, the authorities had to drop the scheduled interview. "The Government should appoint teachers permanently. The SSA group is trying to trap the teachers by giving negligible remuneration and denying all rights. The dignity of the teaching profession has been thrown away. All these are the part of globalization policy of the government. The appointment of teachers on contract basis, just like slaves, cannot be allowed". While inaugurating the picketing Comrade Shajar Khan, State President AIDS0 said it. He urged the candidates who came for interview to join the movement until permanent appointment is achieved. Comrade Sreejith Sudhakar, state secretary, also spoke.

## Kerala Parallel Movement attains victory

The privately registered students of various universities in Kerala (parallel students) were on strike for the last six months. The movement against the imposition of the service tax upon them attains a partial victory. Last week, The High Court of Kerala has stayed the decision of the Government to collect tax from parallel students, since they are studying in educational institutions.

For the last six months, the parallel students gradually developed this movement. On 22nd of October a huge Rally was organized in Trivandrum, the State Capital, under the auspices of KSPPSO (Kerala State Parallel & Private Students Organization). Dr. V. Venugopal, General Secretary of JPS (Janakeeya Prathirodha Samithy) inaugurated the rally. Comrade Shajar Khan (State President AIDS0), Comrade T. J. Dickson and Comrade Shajil Khan also addressed the rally. In various part of the state thousands of students participated in the movement.

## All India Women's Conference

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way, just like quenching thirst with a glass of water. Lenin asked if any normal human individual in normal conditions would take drain-water to quench thirst. Similarly one should not only look at the crude aspect of sex but must take into account if the mental faculties, emotion centring around it are of higher standard or not. While recollecting these words of Lenin, I advise the organizers of Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan to build up a country-wide massive cultural movement to protect the women folk from all sorts of decadent culture and vices. This warrants a very painstaking and arduous struggle.

The organization should be spread among the exploited masses. Movement will be stronger, if female labourers, who fend for themselves and hence are not dependent on their husbands and face less resistance from their families, are linked with this organization. A mighty women's force will develop, if women from the peasant families — who work

on lands and farms, and earn daily wages, are also drawn into the movement. It is my experience that tribal women too, are very independent-minded; they have in many cases faced and resisted attacks of oppressor police force. If these women are organized and educated with care and patience, they would constitute a powerful fighting brigade in the women's movement for liberation.

The great leader of the proletariat, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, taught us that attention should be paid to these segments of oppressed women. He used to say that they might turn into a viable force in accomplishing anti-capitalist revolution, provided they are equipped with proper education and imbibed true spirit of revolutionary politics. With this in mind, I hereby call upon the workers, organizers and leaders of Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan to march ahead, linking up women from all walks of life with your organization and forming a mighty revolutionary women's army. Victory will be yours!

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