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CPI(M) ideologues on economic issues

In Vol.40 No.2 (September 1, 2006) issue of *Proletarian Era*, we had in our article captioned "Real face of latest instance of social democracy of CPI(M)", presented a detailed analysis of the political observations made by top level CPI(M) leaders in the write-ups and editorial, published in the 26th January special issue of *People's Democracy* (Vol. XXX No. 5 Dated 23-29 January, 2006), their central organ, emphasizing on strengthening Indian Republic. We showed in our analysis based on the Marxist-Leninist methodological approach that such a call is nothing but to ask the people to rally behind Indian capitalist state, now treading along fascist path, which is ruthlessly exploiting them, repressing and suppressing beyond limit to serve the class-interest of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie who assumed power after independence.

CPI(M)'s 'realistic new model of Marxism'

In the same issue of *People's Democracy*, there are three articles on certain economic aspects. As we mentioned in our aforesaid article, since their fore-ranking leaders contributed to the volume, it is evident that the CPI(M) leadership laid extreme importance to the publication and the views expressed in the write-ups are the latest views of the CPI(M) itself. In this brief article, we shall try to examine the viewpoints expressed in the three articles on the economic aspects. As everyone knows, the echelons in the hierarchy of the CPI(M) have of late been trying to air a view that "old model of Marxism-Leninism" has become obsolete and hence they, guided by 'practical sense', are pursuing a 'realistic policy'. And one of the notable features of this CPI(M)

brand of 'realistic new model of Marxism' has been to, as far as possible, give up class outlook that governs the Marxists and instead try to explain phenomena purely from a hollow scholastic approach so as to make the issues convoluted. In this backdrop, we need to look at the explanatory economics contained in the articles under discussion.

Contention of Prabhat Patnaik's article

The first article under the heading 'Imperialism And Economic Decentralization' penned

by Prabhat Patnaik whose stature in the CPI(M) circle as an economist is well known, has raised the following points :-

i) "The CPI(M) has argued for economic decentralization for decades.... Its objective in doing so has not been to strengthen the states (i.e. provincial governments –ed. P Era) *at the expense of the Center*, but to strengthen the Center as well as the states, so that the State (in the Marxist sense) which includes both tiers of government, becomes, even within its overall class limitations, a more democratic and development-

oriented State, a State more accountable to the people and sensitive to their demands. (This also provides greater scope for people's struggles to alter the class character of the State and hence the State itself). In short, the Left demand for economic decentralization, for a re-ordering of Center state relations has always been a democratic demand.... So that the State, even within its class limitations, becomes a more effective instrument of anti-imperialist national development."

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Foil conspiracy to bring about disunity in people on the issue of Vande Mataram

Culminating in 7th September and even leaving its deep scar as its aftermath, a controversy recently raged over the country for over a few couple of weeks. It was all about singing the song *Vande Mataram* as the prayer of the day in schools and madrasas on that date with a view to celebrating the centenary of the song itself. The nation apparently stood divided on the issue and the division was not just on whether to sing it or not. It stoked once more the simmering communal frenzy that exists latent in the ambience. Before the caste-based reservation issue could fizzle out, the HRD minister of Congress-led UPA government, Arjun Singh, the same architect who had lit the fire of that reservation controversy, sent out fresh directives to the effect of compulsory singing of the *Vande Mataram* in all schools and madaras across the country on 7th September, avowedly to celebrate the centenary. The directive immediately attracted sharp criticism from the Muslim

community; particularly the Muslim fundamentalists reacted strongly against the move and downright opposed it. They threatened to issue fatwa to prevent madrasa students from singing the song, as its content was anti-Islam; they also gave call to boycott educational institutes on that date, in case it needed. If the HRD Minister's directive were originally meant to pamper the Hindu vote-bank, sensing trouble and prospect of antagonizing the Muslim vote-bank, the Minister and his party, Congress, backtracked and softened their stance. They muttered that the directive was merely a suggestion and singing the song was "voluntary in nature". But the stone was already thrown and the BJP-RSS combine, torn with their own internal strife, rushed out to seize the opportunity. After all, the development gave them an unexpected chance to push forward their Hindutva agenda in full steam. Alleging the Congress for succumbing to the minority pressure and for indulging in

minority appeasement, BJP leaders raised the demand for mandatory singing of the *Vande Mataram* even in madrasas and, that too, not just the customary first two stanzas but the full version of the song. To lend credibility and substance to their demand, they hailed singing of the song as a mark of demonstrating Indian patriotism. In such a situation, CPI(M) and CPI, the proud well wishers of the trouble-shooter Congress-led UPA government, chose to maintain neutrality and urged the states to take decision by themselves. As to the history and 'centenary', a number of historians maintained that nothing relevant to the song happened in reality on 7th September in 1905 or 1906. Even then, on the very date of 7th September, the song was compulsorily sung in the schools of not only BJP-ruled states, like Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and others, but even in states like Tripura, ruled by none other than

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Economic liberalization is not class-necessity of Indian bourgeoisie, but handiwork of few imperialist agents — says CPI (M)

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ii) "...the bulk of responsibility for ushering in economic development in the country has been entrusted by the Constitution to the state governments but the power to raise resources lies predominantly within the domain of the Central government.... This allowed the Center to reduce the states to a mendicant status and also to discriminate between the states.... Finance Commissions, instead of maintaining status of being neutral arbiters... had increasingly tended to become subservient to the wishes of the Center.... in this context... the Left demand for a reordering of Center state relations had acquired particular appositeness."

iii) "With the introduction of neo-Liberal policies... and virtual demise of even such 'planning' the country had had until then... imperialist agencies like World Bank started taking up slogans of 'economic decentralization', but meaning by it something... opposite of what the Left had been demanding.... As ... Parties with divergent ideologies ... leading state governments... to thrust neo-liberal policies down the throats of all... the solution found (by 'liberalizers') was to starve state governments of resources, to impose upon them fiscal crises, and then to make the adoption of neo-liberal policy packages a condition for resource devolution to them... by reducing state governments to penury, the Center forced them to turn to agencies like the World Bank, the ADB, and the DFID... to private, specially MNC... for meeting the infrastructure needs of their states. These agencies in turn demanded their pound of flesh. The World Bank, the ADB etc. demanded changes in 'governance', including, especially, privatization of public utilities, as part of their 'conditionalities'; MNCs demanded tax concessions of various kinds.

iv) "The same imperialist agencies ... joined the chorus of 'decentralization' ... not ... decentralization of resources ... decentralized planning ... (but) decentralization of decision making to lower levels, so that entities doing the negotiations with MNCs became weaker and weaker. ... Left had striven to ensure decentralization of resources and decision- making ...

their aim is to fracture the unity of national economy so that imperialist penetration becomes much easier."

In fine, the contention is that the Left wanted the Indian state to be development oriented, instrument of anti-imperialist nationalist movement by way of decentralization of resources, planning and decision-making. But the protagonists of 'liberalization' in the Central governments did not allow decentralization of resources and hence the state governments are compelled to turn to imperialist agencies for resource raising accepting stringent 'conditions' and to make them yet more subservient to imperialist dictates, the said protagonists are espousing for decentralization of decision making. A careful linking to actual state of affairs would reveal that under the garb of an apparent academic discourse, Prabhat Patnaik has tried to justify the moves on the part of the CPI(M)-led state governments to knock at the doors of imperialist agencies, private monopolists and MNCs for resources (an euphemism for money either in the form of financial assistance or investment) by agreeing to extremely demanding terms.

Argument put forth in C P Chandrasekhar's write-up

The second article captioned 'Liberalization and Economic Sovereignty' by C P Chandrasekhar tried to argue on the following lines :

- i) "India's economic policy today is driven by an indiscriminate desire to integrate the country to the capitalist world system."
- ii) "... domestic pressures to adjust policies to ensure greater integration have been substantial. Part of that pressure is the insidious penetration of international finance into the domestic economic policy-making apparatus reflected in the growing presence in government of those who have internalized policies of the kind being advocated by developed country governments and multilateral institutions like IMF and World Bank."
- iii) "... transformation of the capitalist class dominating industry and services... occurred as traditional monopoly groups

unable to expand during the 1965-80 development impasse, chose to look to subordinate partnership with foreign firms as a means to expansion. These business groups were also keen to move into the space occupied by the public sector or smaller bourgeoisie... through liberalization.... In short, big business which, to start with, was beneficiary of State controls of various kinds, revolted against those very controls when it felt confined for space."

- iv) "... there has been a major loss of policy space since liberalization... In the desperation to integrate indiscriminately with the world system and collaborate with foreign capital even in a subordinate position the Indian state and the classes it represents have chosen to dilute that freedom even if it has damaging effects on the working people and could imply a 'recolonisation' of Indian economy."
- v) To sum up, the writer argues that because there is an urge for linking country's economy with global capitalist economy and the traditional monopoly groups who benefitted in the pre-liberalization economy felt starved of 'space' and so turned to collaboration with foreign capital, there is penetration of foreign capital, either directly or through capital market, threatening country's economy to be in the shackles of colonization afresh.

Salient points of Usha Patnaik's account of agrarian crisis

In her analysis of "The Agrarian Crisis And Importance Of Peasant Resistance", Smt. Patnaik has given an account of the issues involved, according to her, in the following lines :

- vi) After independence, principal contradiction changed to contradiction between the mass of the working peasantry and the labourers on the one hand, and the minority of landlords, traders and money lenders who monopolized control over land and money-capital, thereby exploiting the peasantry through rent, interest and exorbitant

traders' margins.

- vii) "In the agrarian sphere in India the ... principal contradiction implied the need to break land monopoly by means of effectively redistributing land from the landlords to the land-poor and landless, to break the monopoly of credit and marketing through co-operative institutions of the peasant themselves, and state intervention in channeling credit to the credit-starved and setting up non-profit marketing institutions between producers and consumers with the aim of stabilizing prices for both."
- viii) "... investment crowds out private investment' which is the common argument put forward for reducing the state's role in rural development. ... The combination of decline in state RDE (Rural Development Expenditure) and halving of agricultural growth has produced a major crisis of rising unemployment with both fast growing open unemployment and fall in number of days employed of the workforce during the 1990s".
- ix) "As soon as trade was liberalized from 1991 ... 8 million hectares of food growing land were converted to exportable crops ... farmers did not benefit since their exposure to steeply falling global primary prices ... plunged them into spiraling farm debt and insolvency. ... vastly increased grain exports have been coming out of more and more empty stomachs as millions of rural labourers and farmers have suffered job loss and income decline."
- x) When we argue that the principal contradiction is shifting rapidly in the agrarian sphere to that between the peasantry and workers on one side and imperialism with its local landlord and other collaborators on the other, many persons in the left movement who are not familiar with the idea of analysis of contradiction feel alarmed because they think that 'the land question' is being put on the back burner. ... it means that this contradiction is the one, 'whose

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Indulgence in intellectual gymnastics to shield class reality

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existence and development determines and influences the existence and development of all other contradictions' including what was earlier the principal contradiction. ... earlier phase of capitalist development in agriculture marked by rise of capitalist farming from within the peasant classes, as well as the emergence of landlord capitalism, has virtually ended owing to the steeply falling profitability of direct capitalist cultivation. ... Corporatization of agriculture ... sought to be promoted by the Government represents the control of transnational capital over our peasant production, and not 'development of capitalism in agriculture' which has a completely different connotation in Marxist-Leninist literature. The 'development of capitalism in agriculture' ... during 1950-1990 in India, ... led to some prosperity, though very unequally shared, ... by contrast the corporate subjugation of peasant production is nothing but the imperialist domination of the peasantry for the purpose of export production and it pauperizes the peasantry and labourers."

xi) "Thus the land question has now become one of defending the right of peasants including tribal peoples to their land and livelihoods. Not only can it never be separated from the fight against imperialist globalization, this fight is a necessary condition for any advance in the land question.....determined effort being made by the advanced countries today supported by the local compradors, to acquire direct control over our land and water resources through contract farming and corporatization of agriculture ... in this they are aided by the comprador elements in the government and ... support of the comprador elements of the domestic landlords."

Summary is that there is a change in the principal contradiction in the agrarian sector after liberalization and as against 'minority of landlords, traders and moneylenders, it is now imperialism and its 'comprador collaborators in

the government and domestic landlords' who, by way of corporatization of agriculture are pauperizing the poor reversing the prosperity the peasants enjoyed earlier through development of capitalism in agriculture. Hence, while earlier resolution of principal contradiction lay in breaking land monopoly, credit and marketing and re-distribution of land to the poor as well as set up of co-operatives, the fight of the peasants to defend their right to land and livelihood today is inseparably linked to the fight against imperialist globalization.

What a pedagogic demagoguery to obfuscate truth

Now let us proceed to examine on the anvil of Marxism-Leninism, how the economists of the CPI(M) have demonstrated their skill in embellishing the 'new model' of CPI(M) brand of leftism with pedagogic economics that has traditionally been the exclusive domain of the self-styled intellectuals thriving on the subservience to and patronage of the exploiting bourgeoisie now enmeshed in an all out market crisis and increasingly looking towards social democracy as last prop for prolonging its moribund class rule.

We first focus on the arguments of Shri Patnaik's article. He has said that CPI(M), by demanding re-ordering Center-state relations (that is, more allocation of resources or availability of more funds), wanted to see the State notwithstanding class limitations to assume the character of an instrument for anti-imperialist national development. This read in conjunction with his second and principal argument of the cash starved state governments being forced to go to imperialist agencies and foreign capital, means that had the Central government heeded to the CPI(M)'s demand, Indian national state would have developed along an anti-imperialist path. Incredible indeed! First of all, what is a state? Let us recall Engel's teachings, "In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in a democratic republic no less than in a monarchy." (Letter to Bebel, March 28, 1875) Lenin elaborated further; "...in view of the unprecedented widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to re-establish what Marx really taught on the

subject of the state.....the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which can not be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it)...Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." (State and Revolution)

Shri Patnaik, perhaps wittingly, has not been explicit about what is the nature of the Indian state nor has he made it clear as to which class is in power. But he has pedantically mentioned that he is alluding to the term 'State' from Marxist sense. Then on what basis could he envisage an anti-imperialist role of Indian state given some internal policy adoptions? Does he mean to say that by revising the Central government-state government relations, devolution of power and allocation of resources as suggested by the CPI(M), a significant change can be brought about in the character of the State, a class organ? In that case, it is tantamount to saying that there is no necessity to overthrow the class in the State power by revolution to put an end to the plight and misery of the people. Simple decentralization of certain governmental powers to the state governments in a federal structure is enough. If there is unjust discrimination against the state governments by the Central government, then to bring about necessary correction from the people's point of view, there should be democratic mass movement. Obviously, this mass movement within the ambit of democratic struggle to realize just demand is not a struggle for insurrection. Shri Patnaik himself has admitted, "re-ordering of Center-state relations has always been a democratic demand". Then how could that confer an anti-imperialist character and thereby change the nature of the State? If there is correct realization of the character of world imperialism-capitalism in the given period as well as the specific form it assumes in a specific country, then and then only can an anti-imperialist movement be developed on a correct line and under pressure of movement, in an appropriate situation, the bourgeois government can be compelled to take somewhat anti-imperialist stand. But where is that movement under the initiative of the CPI(M)? In fact in the states

they are running the government, theirs is an attitude completely against any kind of democratic movement. Rather its governments like any other bourgeois government are ruthlessly crushing democratic movements by deploying coercive state apparatus and instead preaching class collaboration, appeasing the ruling bourgeoisie and functioning as trusted political managers of the latter. What does Shri Patnaik say about that? By these acts and words, are not the CPI(M) and its leaders, coming out in defence of the state being ruled by the capitalists only in the interest of capitalism-imperialism?

Shri Patnaik has also informed us that if the Indian State becomes "sensitive and accountable" to the people, then it is easier to altar its class character". This is a real 'eye opener' for us. Has he referred to the revisionist theory of the Khrushchovite renegades of 'peaceful transformation of bourgeois State into a proletarian State' or espousing that 'people's wrath is invoked more when the State behaves in more human a fashion? Will Shri Patnaik, the 'Marxist' economist, take the trouble to clear the haze?

Can a bourgeois state today become instrument of anti-imperialism?

We know that Shri Patnaik, being a CPI(M) ideologue can hardly afford it because in that case, the bankruptcy of the theoretical position of the party and its Marxist camouflage will be in serious jeopardy. Let us reiterate that following transference of power through compromise, it is the Indian national bourgeoisie, an inalienable part of moribund decadent crisis-ridden world imperialism-capitalism, which captured the Indian state apparatus. So it is a bourgeois state serving the bourgeois class interest. Any student of political economy knows that in the present era with the growth of monopoly capitalism and finance capital, the bourgeoisie in different countries, in the face of intensive worldwide crisis of capitalist economy, with a view to protecting their own existence and reaping maximum profit even out of their crisis-stricken economy, are bringing about coalescence of private monopoly capital with the

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Ruling Indian capitalism is the main enemy

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State capital, making the state subservient to the interest of monopoly capital and thereby leading to State monopoly capital-the rock-bottom economic foundation of fascism. The symptoms of fascism in the economic sphere are being reflected in more and more economic centralism. Alongside in the political sphere, there is concentration and centralization of absolute autocratic political power in the hands of the state. Bourgeois parliament is also fast losing its utility. History tells us that in a fascist state, generally the legislature either becomes a defunct body or even if for some reasons may be to masquerade fascist despotism as democracy, is kept functioning, it is relegated to a secondary position with respect to the executive and remains under the supervision and control of the executive organ headed by the Chief Executive of the state. Even the judiciary is stripped of its traditional power and made 'committed' to the ruling bourgeois class. With the dismantling of socialist camp, the world imperialism-capitalism, under the slogan of globalization and liberalization, is further accentuating neo-colonial exploitation of the people in the name of integration of economies of different countries on a global scale.

In such a situation, who else other than votaries of muddle-headedness, can expect a fairly developed bourgeois state to pursue ant-imperialist national development? Next is the question of Indian Constitution. We had in our detailed article in the January 1, 2006 issue of *Proletarian Era* shown that Constitution in a bourgeois state can not but be subservient to the bourgeois class interest. More the bourgeoisie is plunging into crisis, more is it drawn towards fascistic course. And in keeping with that, the ruling bourgeoisie is making suitable amendments in the constitution, once eulogized by it as the 'basic structure', the 'soul and spirit' of bourgeois republic, or taking recourse to other measures to subvert many of its clauses to concentrate and centralize political power in the hands of the fascist state. Because the bourgeoisie apprehends that the existence of the said 'basic structure', the concept of federalism, of the era of *Laissez-*

Faire would create hurdle in realization of their class interest and class motive. That is why even in the US, whose constitution was once hailed as most liberal and doctrine of federal state structure, there is, keeping the federal structure in tact, total concentration of power in the hands of the federal government brought about by using the Apex court. India is no exception to that and there is disparity in resource allocation and other matters between Central and state governments. How can then one expect that the Indian ruling class of its own would grant 'decentralization' as aspired by the CPI(M)? Had the CPI(M) leaders been so keen to realize their 'democratic demand', why they did not and are still not building up people's movement and instead remaining confined to only war of words, legislative measures and the path of entreaties and solicitations? The answer is simple. The CPI(M) does not mean struggle. What it means is a show of movement, certain verbiages with the aid of bourgeois media to pretend to the people how they are seized with the matter. Similarly, even if short of adequate resources, it is the endeavour of any pro-people government to seriously plan, depending on people's movement, the best possible utilization of available resources for whatever little relief could be provided to the masses. What is the justification of a kind of belly-crawling before the domestic and foreign monopolists, perpetrators of all crimes on the people, with a begging bowl under the pretext of 'anyhow garnering resources'? If the imperialists-capitalists could be so 'generous and kind-hearted' as to rescue a 'Left' government of its financial crunch and force open the path of 'development and prosperity' of the downtrodden as the CPI(M) leaders are claiming so boastfully, then, in the words of Lenin "capitalism would not have been capitalism".

New-fangled theory of 'pressure to integrate with capitalist system'

C P Chandrasekhar has come out with an entirely novel 'Marxist' interpretation of rapid penetration of foreign capital in Indian economy. At the outset, he says that India's economic policy is to get integrated to world capitalist

system. Who is seeking this integration and for what? Is it a latest development unearthed by them after conducting painstaking research or they had expected 'Indian economy' to move in any other direction? What has been the class character of Indian economy since independence? Shri Chandrasekhar has preferred to keep that question aside perhaps because that 'disturbs' the kind of scholastic discourses economists like him are adept in to flaunt their pedantic credential. But the hard fact is that India's has been a full-fledged capitalist economy right from the day the Indian bourgeoisie was saddled in state power. Since then, this economy has tried to develop along the capitalist path not on isolation and naturally integrated to world capitalist system. With the establishment of a bourgeois national state, conditions for relatively freest, widest and speediest development of Indian capitalism possible in the prevailing international and national situation had been created and the ruling Indian bourgeoisie has been since then making all-out efforts to develop a powerful capitalist economy in the shortest possible time. In the process, Indian capitalism did not only grow and developed to such a high stage that it created monopoly, through merger of banking capital with industrial capital and on the basis of that finance capital gave birth to a financial oligarchy that established its dominance over the entire economy of the country, began export of capital, albeit on a small scale, as distinguished from export of commodities to foreign countries and thus increasingly showed its imperialist features. Over the years, Indian capitalism has consolidated its strength so much so as to emerge as a junior partner of the imperialist block.

Naturally, when world imperialism-capitalism embarked on the policy of globalization-liberalization-privatization in a frantic bid to stave off the third phase of intense general crisis marked by the absence of relative stability of the market despite appearance of a new market in the erstwhile socialist countries, the Indian bourgeoisie, in the grip of same deepening crisis, too followed the same course to buttress its class interest. So there was, so to say, no 'domestic pressure to adjust policies

to ensure greater integration' as observed by Shri Chandrasekhar. Moreover, to talk of 'insidious penetration of foreign capital into domestic economic policy making apparatus under domestic pressure', is akin to saying that but for infiltration of some foreign agents, country's economy would not have embraced the path of capitalist globalization. What a novel way to shield the class character of Indian capitalist economy and the class aspiration of the ruling Indian monopolists! It was just the scheme of things, inevitability in any capitalist system in the world. Moreover, what has he sought to mean by the words 'domestic pressure'? Whose pressure is it, of the people or of the bourgeois class? Why has he not clarified it? Or is it that deliberately the language has been so chosen to indirectly provide a sanction to the inherent class aspiration of the ruling bourgeoisie? Likewise, what is meant by 'capitalist class dominated industry and services'? The question of domination arises when there is more than one owner. Who other than the capitalist class owns the industry in our country? Even state sector in a capitalist country is virtually under the control of the monopolists today following coalescence of private monopoly capital with state capital. Why then to use all these confusing terminologies? To hesitate in pronouncing this plain truth and instead veering around camouflages of varied nature is, we are sorry to say, is nothing but a cunning endeavour to mislead people and shield the real character of the Indian bourgeoisie and Indian capitalism. When Shri Chandrasekhar uses expressions like "the Indian state and the classes it represents", it becomes clear that the objective is to project a vague supra-class character of the Indian state. But lest such an analysis fails to pass as a "Marxist" one, it becomes necessary to tag the word 'classes it represents' to it.

Queer theory of 'space' solicitation by monopolists

Next is the so-called 'space' solicitation theory. Shri Chandrasekhar states that the traditional monopolists who could not develop during the late sixties and seventies craved for a space. So

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Isolate reformists-revisionists, hold aloft banner of genuine Marxism-Leninism

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they wanted all fetters to be removed in securing the desired space in the public sector and small industries. Hence they demanded liberalization and found unanimity with the similar demands of the imperialist agencies. Alas! We are unable to share the hidden compassion of the writer for the 'traditional' monopolists constrained by non-availability of 'space' nor can we make out how does one distinguish between a 'traditional' and a 'non-traditional monopolist'. Sorry sir! What the 'traditional' monopolists were looking for was not space but market and enlarged scope for squeezing the people to maximize profit. Hence was the advance towards grabbing the PSU units and collaboration with foreign capital and their agents. In order to make forays in the overseas market, the Indian monopolists had to open domestic market for loot and plunder of the foreign imperial capital, the MNCs and the international funding agencies propped up by the imperialists headed by US imperialism. There is no chance of fulfilling the pious wish of stalling 'predatory influence of foreign capital'. If one fails to understand the process in which foreign capital is entering the country, how can one determine the right course to stall it? To parade in some apparently intellectual but delusive phrase mongering is deceit of the highest order. Perhaps that is CPI(M)'s exclusive domain of embellishing rightist policies with a 'leftist' colour.

Iconoclastic discovery of change of principal contradiction in agriculture

We are, however, dumbstruck at the "agrarian Marxism" being vended by the CPI(M). Smt. Usha Patnaik, evidently sunk upto the neck in the sea of her brand of 'Marxist' formulations, has claimed to be authoritatively familiar with the idea of analysis of contradictions. Otherwise, how could the Marxists of the world be wiser(!) imbibing the iconoclastic teaching that the principal contradiction in a particular sector in a country could be different from the principal contradiction in the prevailing society and even if the state structure remains unaltered, the principal contradiction in agriculture can undergo a change? And then

Smt. Patnaik has taught us that after independence, the main enemy before the peasants and agricultural workers, was the landlord-trader-moneylender combine and at that time, when the landlord-traders dominated agriculture was developing in a capitalist path bringing prosperity (though unequally shared — one may wonder among whom!), the task was to break the monopoly of this combine by undertaking some land reform measures. But after liberalization, imperialism and its comprador collaborators have emerged as the main enemy.

Genesis of peasants' problem

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader, teacher and guide and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, in the process of concretizing Marxism-Leninism on the soil to chart out the course of revolution, had showed that though the life of the rural poor is plagued with many a problem, the principal among them is that of getting jobs round the year. In the light of his teachings, we know that notwithstanding the task of recovering benam (land illegally held in fictitious name) land from the possession of *jotedars* (rural kulaks) or former *zaminders* (feudal landlords) and distribution of the same along with vested land to the poor and landless peasants as well as conversion of fallow land into arable land for allotting to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants being extremely important on the agenda of peasants' movement, yet that would not solve the basic problem. Because based on the quantum of land available vis a vis the total population in rural economy as well as average size of the families, it would not turn out to be an economic holding. Almost half of the village people would remain unemployed. Moreover, with productivity of land being not infinite coupled with increase in the size of the families, the peasants would not be able to retain their holdings and would be forced to sell that. It is not possible for the bourgeois government in a relatively underdeveloped capitalist country like India to buy all these land and set up large scale state farming because mechanization and modernization of agriculture would at one stroke throw millions of rural poor out of job and with the urban

sector teeming with ever soaring number of unemployed and semi-employed, there was no scope for absorbing this vast army of evicted rural populace. Rather, it might create a situation that might pose serious danger to the capitalist system itself. And who by the by was giving rise to this ever spiralling unemployment? No one else but the crisis-ridden decadent moribund capitalist system bestriding the country like a dead weight. It was impossible for capitalism in this third phase of intense general market crisis to go for unfettered industrialization. But unless road to full scale industrialization could be opened up and agriculture modernized and mechanized with ancillary and auxiliary agro-based industries coming up side by side, there can not be rapid growth of agricultural production nor can the rural poor be absorbed in gainful employment. Thus, though the demand of land reforms and the slogan of 'land to the tillers' are vital in the democratic phase of peasants' struggle, they can not eradicate the plight and penury of the rural poor. Resolution of the basic problems of peasants' life is inextricably linked up with the task of anti-capitalist revolution. To remain blindfolded to this stark reality and instead directing attention towards a few money lenders, traders, alien imperialism and non-existent feudal lords as well as compradors is nothing but to conceal the real enemy and misguide the struggle of the toiling masses. We are reminded of a famous quote of Voltaire, the great renaissance personality, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

Character of Indian agriculture

Next is the question of determining the character of Indian agriculture from genuine Marxist point of view which presupposes class-based analysis. If Smt. Patnaik admits that development of capitalism in agriculture took place from 1950 to 1990, how could she deny that the principal contradiction in agriculture is anything but that of labour and capital? While it is the rural bourgeoisie which stood as the principal enemy in the villages after independence, Smt. Patnaik, in typical CPI(M) style, projected

some imaginary enemy in the form of landlord (obviously in the feudal sense), traders and moneylenders. And now when the Indian bourgeoisie in its class interest is, in pursuance of capitalist globalization, opening up agricultural sector to foreign capital, Smt. Patnaik is identifying imperialism as the main enemy to bail out the Indian ruling monopolists, part and parcel of moribund decadent world imperialism-capitalism, root of all evils. Following Leninist principles, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had shown that the "features of concentration of most of the lands in the hands of a few, continuous decline of most of the village people to the level of proletariat and semi-proletariat, transformation of land into a means of capital investment, agricultural production taking place on the basis of owner-wage labour relation (irrespective of the form of the same differing from place to place depending upon specificities of localities and regions, peculiarities of the people) and, above all, transformation of the agricultural produce into commodities of the national market— go to demonstrate that the Indian capitalist economy is wholly capitalist." (SW. Vol.III. p 215) It is the capitalist production relations that are governing the rural sector. On introduction of capitalist globalization, this ruthless capitalist exploitation of rural people is further aggravated with newer ploys like contract farming etc. being in operation. Foray of foreign capital in agriculture is concomitant to globalization that the ruling Indian bourgeoisie has adopted and hence it remains as the main enemy. So the so-called discovery of change of principal contradiction in agriculture is a complete hoax.

It is interesting to find that in her attempt to give us a cooked up view of the problem, Smt. Patnaik has held that the peasants are to defend their right to land against imperialist acquisition. On the contrary, it is her own party which is forcing the peasants to surrender their land to foreign monopolists and MNCs in West Bengal. While Smt. Patnaik smelt foul in replacing food crop production by cultivation of exportable produces, the CPI(M) chief minister of West Bengal is advocating the contrary. Also Smt. Patnaik seems to be against

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Vande Mataram issue, the latest move to rip apart people's unity

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CPI(M)-led front government. The nation, however, stood divided on the issue.

It is no denial a fact that the *Vande Mataram* was a fond phrase with the freedom fighters, even the revolutionaries of the anti-British imperialist independence struggle of our country. They greeted each other with that slogan; they gallantly walked to the gallows chanting *Vande Mataram*; they marched in files for civil disobedience singing the song *Vande Mataram*. Certainly, the song and the slogan based on it, had a tremendous contribution in imbuing the Indian people with patriotic fervour. And so quite understandably, the present unwarranted controversy has raised questions in one and all right-minded people. They seem to wonder, what on the earth happened to use one of the memorable epithets of our history to such heinous communal ends, that only cleaves the nation, while the song contributed to uniting the freedom fighters for independence of the country! To get at the right answer, we must seek through the history of our independence movement with a proper scientific and rational outlook. But before that we may need some diversion.

History of human civilization has proved that modern ideas and concepts of democracy, liberty, equality and fraternity and such others were born with what we know as democratic revolutions. The French Revolution was a typical early example. The prime task of these revolutions was to free people from the bondage of feudalism and church or religious supremacy and to unite them into the integrated whole of modern nation irrespective of divisions and cleavages based on caste, community, religion, language and such others. The concepts of secularism, secular humanism were also born at this stage of history. As Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the eminent Marxist thinker of the present era, explained, "It is this humanism which brought along, for the first time in human society, secular and democratic concepts, thoughts and values against the sense of values which grew out of religious beliefs and belief in a supernatural entity. Secular means

worldly, pertaining to this world. Therefore, all secular concepts start from non-recognition of any supernatural entity... the concept of secular state developed with the object of freeing the state, the social and economic life, the political and cultural movement from the influence of the church and religion." (Selected Works, Volume II, p.289) Accepting religious belief and activities to be confined to personal life, the secular state thus united people, hitherto divided on various grounds.

In India, these democratic concepts came to rise during the independence struggle against the British imperialists. Freedom for Indians, democratic rights of the people of this land were the cries of that very struggle. Modern education, which the British rulers introduced plainly with a motive of training up a section of the population to serve them and work for their administration, did definitely produce a band of 'servants' of the imperialists. But at the same time, it carried the messages of scientific, secular and democratic thoughts to many others. It was from amongst the latter that were born the freedom fighters of the country, the great personalities of the Indian Renaissance. It was this modern education which thus helped trigger the renaissance movement in India around early nineteenth century and went on to give birth to nationalism and national liberation movement later on. Incidentally, the Muslim community in the main, stayed away from the western education from their strong reaction against the British rulers, to whom the Muslim rulers had suffered defeats and had to lose the power of ruling over India. They remained confined within their religious tutelage and were thus alienated from the ensuing nationalist movement. It is true that later, many well meaning, right thinking Muslims did come and join the independence movement in their right earnestness. But there had developed a yawning gap by that time. Right from its start, the Indian nationalist movement based itself on organizations like the *Hindu Mela* and such others that sought to delve into the glorious past of the Hindus to crystallize and rouse the

nationalist feelings in people. Vivekananda, who emerged as a disciple of Ramakrishna and was himself a powerful religious personality with his thoughts based on his deep faith and conviction on the Hindu scriptures like *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, however, made a great contribution towards the growth of nationalist thoughts and fervour on this soil, leaving deep imprints on the youth, the freedom fighters, even the revolutionaries of the days to come. At the other end of the country, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the front-ranking leaders of the freedom movement, drew his inspirations from Shibaji and his dream of the Hindu Empire. Even the fervent revolutionaries of the independence movement took oath of freedom struggle with the *Geeta*, the sacred Hindu religious scripture in hand. Thus, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh pointed out, "Indian nationalism, was basically religion-oriented" manifesting itself "in the form of Hindu religious revivalism", and there too, an Hinduism of the upper castes. In result, the leadership of the movement failed to draw the Muslims, even the dalits closer into the mainstream of the nationalist movement; the latter remained apprehensive and sceptic, and hence alienated.

The song *Vande Mataram* had its origin on this background. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the famous Bengali Novelist, wrote this song in 1875 or around. He included it in his novel *Anandamath* which was published in the periodical *Bangadarshan* in 1881-1882. It is reported that an anonymous person did sing this song, rendering it his own tune, during the lifetime of Bankim Chandra himself. (vide Bankim Works : volume 1, p.23). Bankim Chandra died on April 8, 1894. In 1896, Rabindranath Tagore, the world renowned poet, sang the first two stanzas of the song in his own tune at the Calcutta Conference of Congress, while his niece Sarala Devi provided tunes to the remaining part of the song. Again on October 16 in 1905, on the date when the partitioning of Bengal was effected, there was a massive movement against it. The song was sung en masse as a part of that movement. Hence, by no account,

the date of 7th September 2006 can be regarded as marking the centenary of the song first sung. As to its content, Bankim Chandra wrote the novel *Anandamath* on the background of the '*Sannyasi* (hermit) rebellion' in North Bengal that broke out against the British (East India Company) rulers at around 1772-73. No doubt the novel was meant to lend voice to the aspiration of countrymen to fight for independence from the domination of alien rulers. However, in the song, Bankim Chandra conceived his motherland India as the Hindu goddess and explicitly paid his devout homage to her. Soon, the song became the symbol of, rather synonymous with the anti-British independence struggle. As mentioned earlier, a man of Rabindranath's stature, sang the two stanzas of the song in 1896 at the Calcutta Congress session. Later in 1937, he wrote in a letter to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose : "The core of *Vande Mataram* is a hymn to the Goddess Durga; this is so plain that there can be no debate about it ... no Muslim can be expected patriotically to worship the ten-handed deity as Swadesh." At this advice from him, the then Congress Working Committee with leaders including Gandhiji, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Kripalani, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad decided to accept only the first two stanzas of the song as the national song, since they had less explicit references to *Durga*. Subsequently, when Subhas Chandra formed his Indian National Army, he adopted *Jai Hind* as the salutation, instead of the much prevalent slogan of the *Vande Mataram*. Hence, it is clear that whatever be its glorious role in inspiring the freedom fighters, the song *Vande Mataram* and its source *Anandamath* both bore strong overtones of Hindu religious beliefs.

The pertinent question that comes up at this stage is : was this emergence of Indian nationalism as a Hindu-religion oriented nationalism inevitable for the country ? We know of many other countries even around ours in the Far East Asia and elsewhere, in which the nation-building process

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Vande Mataram issue

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could overcome this religious orientation and people of different communities were successfully united into the nation. But in India, the divisions persisted, based on religion, caste, languages and such others. Politically we emerged as a nation, but socially and culturally the Indian people remained divided on those grounds. To this was added the divide-and-rule policy of the British rulers, who could successfully play upon this weakness of our independence movement and could instigate the Muslim fundamentalism to emerge and take their community away from the united nationalist movement. The vicious cycle further took its toll with the emergence of the Hindu fundamentalism in reaction, through the organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha, RSS and others. Bitter enmity and more and more cleavage between the two communities, drove their roots into people's life.

We then confront the burning questions. Why did it happen? Why could not the emerging Indian nation develop completely merging its people irrespective of caste, religion, language and such others into it? Why did the emerging Indian nationalism come out to be Hindu-religion oriented nationalism? The answers lie in the background on which the democratic revolution took place in this soil, the background on which the Indian nation emerged in history.

Democratic revolution and the nation-building processes took place in India, at a time when as a world social force, capitalism had lost its revolutionary character and had become mortally afraid of the working class revolution. The Indian bourgeoisie which came to lead the anti-British imperialist independence struggle in India definitely wanted to drive the imperialists out, but with a view to establishing their own rule instead. But being mortally afraid of revolutionary mass struggles that might have prevented them from coming to power, they took to a compromising reformist oppositional role against imperialism and feudalism. Elaborating this particular characteristics of the Indian situation, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in his brilliant analysis submitted

thus : "Antagonism with imperialism on the one hand, and mortal fear of the revolutionary struggle by the people against imperialism on the other hand, made the nationalist section of the Indian bourgeoisie maintain a reformist oppositional role against imperialism. Its role against feudalism was equally compromising ... The result of compromises with feudalism was that the Indian bourgeoisie could not and did not carry out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions essential for the democratization of the society and complete merger of different nationalities speaking different languages and different communities professing different religions, into a nation." Thus, in course of the political movement against the imperialists, the Indian people became a nation politically, but for the failure of the leadership they remained socially and culturally divided on religion, caste, language and such other traits.

Under the circumstances and added to it, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh explicitly summed up : "The

nationalist leadership which ought to have risen above the religious complex and carried out the tasks of social and cultural revolutions could not do so because of its reformist oppositional role against imperialism and feudalism. Faced internally with this weakness and externally the necessity of developing the Indian people as a nation, it turned it face backward and tried to integrate different communities professing different religions into a nation on the basis of the tolerance and broadness of Hindu religion." The Indian nationalism thus rose as Hindu-religion oriented nationalism, leaving the scope open for the British imperialists to play upon this weakness and the fundamentalist forces to make their harvests.

The above account will help, we hope, to understand how the present unfortunate situation centring round the song *Vande Mataram* could develop and make headway. It also leads us to how we can thwart and prevent such situations from developing further.

As we have already indicated, the issue of the *Vande Mataram* was not merely confined to singing the song on its supposed centenary. In

reality, it was made to divide the country sharply, to create a totally unwarranted communal polarization, adding fuel to the fire of persisting communal hatred in the country. It brings us to the vital question: how such heinous attempts, perpetrated by our rulers themselves, can be prevented from recurring. Here we must realize that such polarization does only disunite the common people, who face every day, every hour the bitter and cruel exploitation of the Indian capitalism in all spheres of life, food, shelter, education, even social-cultural-ethical fields and so on, standing on the same dock of the receiving end. Such attempts, as it came with the issue of the *Vande Mataram*, at driving cleavage into the unity of people merely weakens their united fight against this exploitative capitalist rule of the country. So the message is clear. We can get rid of such debacles in our life, only by joining and strengthening the ongoing struggle against the capitalist rule of the country, which is bringing down the all-out crisis in people's life, the all-pervading exploitation and oppression of the vast majority of people. This is the singular choice people have in their hand.

CPI(M) ideologues on economic issues

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corporatization of agriculture, her polit bureau leaders' have been exuberant in inviting private owners and big business to the sector. This is bound to happen when a shrewd endeavour is made to weave a concocted theory mounted on gymnastics of intellect.

Why this arduous intellectual exercise to twist reality

On a close look, it will be clear that through the spate of rigmorales interspersed with a sort of twaddle camouflaged as 'Marxist economic analysis', an impression is sought to be given as if undertaking some administrative reforms like restructuring of Centre-state relations, distribution of recovered land and removal of a few agents of imperialism from the government and policy-making bodies would change the fundamental character of the exploitative torturing capitalist State and spare the people of destitution and degeneration in every sphere of life. This is how reformists-revisionists masquerad-

ing as Marxists confuse the whole issue, muddle the line of thinking and protect the ruling class from being exposed before the masses. Deliberately they avoid the State question and instead keep the Government in sharper focus so that all attention is concentrated on reforms and revisions as ultimate panacea. We all know that government is nothing but a caretaker of the bourgeois State. No such government, whether at Centre or in the states can, under the so-called influence of a few touts of imperialism, take any major policy decision like adoption of globalization-liberalization or opening up domestic market to foreign capital unless it is desired or approved by the ruling monopolists in State power. Over-emphasis on the government without getting into the class reality or State question is glaringly aimed at diverting attention from the main enemy and impeding the process of development of anti-capitalist revolutionary class and mass struggles. When it is as clear as daylight that it is the ruling Indian

bourgeoisie who in its class interest is liberalizing economy, subjecting the toiling masses, both urban and rural, to savage economic assault by foreign imperial capital and MNCs, can there be any anti-imperialist struggle without training the gun against the domestic ruling class? This is where the CPI(M) is at its best as rabid reformist-revisionist and out and out anti-Marxist. Moreover, if the CPI(M) thinks that certain agents and 'comprador' collaborators of imperialism in the government are calling the shot, why is it not forcing the UPA government, surviving on its crucial support, to get rid of them? And if it be so that the "government is not listening to them" as the CPI(M) leaders are of late regretting in media glare, what compels them to shoulder the sacred duty of running this pro-imperialist government? We know that if this embarrassing question is asked to Shri Prabhat Patnaik, Shri C. P. Chandrasekhar or Smt. Usha Patnaik, they would observe the code of silence since they are constrained by the oath of

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Comrade Swapan Bose Memorial Meeting

SUCI staff member, a distinguished member and office secretary of the West Bengal State Committee, Comrade Swapan Bose, after a prolonged suffering from Cancer breathed his last on September 6, 2006 at the Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital. Under the auspices of the West Bengal State Committee the memorial meeting of Comrade Swapan Bose was held at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta on September 16, 2006 with Comrade Anil Sen, veteran member of the Central Committee presiding over it.

With the hall filled with mourning party comrades, supporters-sympathizers, friends and relatives of Comrade Swapan Bose, leaders of the state committee, district committees and different mass organizations paid their floral

tribute to the departed comrade. Thereafter Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member and office secretary of the Central Committee, paid tribute on behalf of our beloved General Secretary Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, followed by other Central Committee Members and staff members including Comrades Anil Sen, Sukomal Dasgupta, Provash Ghosh, Ranjit Dhar and Manik Mukherjee, placing wreaths at the portrait of Comrade Swapan Bose. Thereafter Comrade Manik Mukherjee read out the homage sent by Comrade Nihar Mukherjee. In his homage, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee emphasized that one can acquire a character like Comrade Swapan Bose only when one can conduct struggle to identify oneself with the interest of the party and revolution in the correct scientific

way as taught by our teacher and guide Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Comrade Swapan Bose rose to such a height. Comrade Anil Sen recollected that, Comrade Swapan Bose's every deeds and dealings with others always reflected the high standard of culture and values, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh told us to acquire. Comrade Provash Ghosh said that Comrade Swapan Bose performed his duty as the office secretary with a calm composure and happily with a high standard of responsibility and patience, fully aware of the importance of even the mundane office duties. His whole life-struggle shows how deeply the essence of proletarian culture and values was ingrained in his character. With *The Internationale*, the meeting ended.



Leaders paying Red Salute to Comrade Swapan Bose and a section of the audience at the Memorial Meeting

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not revealing the compulsion of the CPI(M).

CPI(M) needs this twaddle and rigmarole to shield subservience to ruling class

As one is aware, the CPI(M)-led governments particularly in West Bengal is now, in the name of 'development' is openly hobnobbing with domestic and foreign monopoly capital as well as imperialist agencies like World Bank, ADB, DFID etc. and extending to them a plethora of concessions including allotment of huge fertile agricultural land at throw away prices by forcibly evicting the peasants. The CPI(M) is merrily propagating that it is only by surrendering their cultivable land for 'industrialization' under the aegis of private monopolists and foreign imperial capital that the peasants could change their lot. In view of the foregoing discussions, it will be evident how derisory and deprived are all these postulates. Having capitulated to the ruling

class for pelf and power, the CPI(M) today has no alternative to nakedly subserve bourgeois class interest. No amount of 'leftist' vocabularies and hourly renewal of 'leftist' credential even the trumpet blowing of election victory with the help and backing of the bourgeois media is in a position to hide this fact from the toiling people who are increasingly taking umbrage at this treachery and betrayal of these pseudo-Marxists. So while one section of the CPI(M) leaders like Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and his ilk is trying to distort Marxism and propagating rabid reformist-revisionist views to hoodwink the people, another section is engaged in procuring 'academic and intellectual' material to prove that the current practices of the CPI(M) are ordained by the circumstances and handiwork of others. So are brought the theories of so-called 'decentralization', 'compulsion of resource mobilization' by genuflecting before the forces of imperialism. On the one hand, the CPI(M) leaders are

taking recourse to surfeit of counterfeit arguments to make people believe that private monopolists, embroiled in all-out crisis endemic of capitalist system, would, given 'congenial' environment (i.e. avalanche of concessions, tax benefits, allocation of land of their choice, absence of trade union movements, spree of contract appointment, no imposition of any labour law etc.), set up employment-generating industries in the truest sense of the term. On the other hand, the intellectual bandwagon of the party is out to establish that denied adequate resources by the Central government and following string-pulling by the protagonists of liberalization as well as agents of imperialism, the 'Left' is fully justified in seeking imperialist finance for the welfare of the state.

No true Marxist indulges in such despicable camouflage

Those who are serious to make people aware of the hard reality of

ruthless capitalist exploitation in every sphere of life, the various ploys and machinations of world imperialism-capitalism including the domestic rulers, can not spread such distorted vulgarized analysis of the savage economic oppression of the people. They would instead get to the class reality, organize the people on the basis of correct base political line, accentuate class struggle, develop intense united mass movement over the burning problems of life stemming from rotten repressive capitalist system and integrate these movements with the anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. Alongside they should conduct an all-embracing ideological struggle to elevate the level of political consciousness of the people by, among other things, undertaking a literary campaign on various economic-political-social issues from proletarian class outlook and following true Marxist methodology. One should judge for oneself what truth is and what is travesty of truth.

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