

Proletarian Era

Volume 50 No. 10 Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (COMMUNIST)
January 1, 2017 Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

12 Pages
Price : Rs. 3.00

After weeding out black money through demonetization proved a hoax, next hoodwinking slogan is of Cashless Economy

50 days after Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes ceased to be legal tender are over. As per the claim of the Prime Minister and his cabinet colleagues, all woes of the people were to be over and all stacks of black money would have been unearthed. But that proved to be a big hoax and nothing but a ploy to divert people's attention from the accumulated grievances against the various anti-people policies tearing their life to pieces day in and day out. There was some other axe to grind which has also come to light. Within two weeks from the date of announcement of demonetization, Prime Minister, his Finance Minister, the government spokespersons and

pro-demonetisation economists have shifted gears. They all have now been speaking of intangible "long-term benefits" such as a "move to cash-less economy" and "widening the tax base." On 27 November, the Prime Minister in his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' address on electronic media urged farmers and small traders to go cashless. "Common man will be trouble free if they are made aware of the digital financial transaction options," he said asking youths to lead the change. Incidentally, Prime Minister mentioned "black money" 18 times in his initial speech on 8 November and did not talk about cashless or digital economy. However, in two speeches that he

gave on 27 November, he mentioned "cashless" and/or "digital" 24 times, but black money came in only nine times. Even the mainstream media which gave ovation to the Prime Minister for such a "bold step" against holders and hoarders of black money have also joined in this game of shifting goalpost seemingly with a view to creating another illusion. And as usual, the pliant media have also joined the chorus of going cashless with definite motive of misleading the masses. A smokescreen is being created as if cash transaction is the devil and once the economy is cashless, the system would be cleansed and freed from black money.

Plight of the people

But the obvious question is why is this shift? Is it on account of a late realization or a late revelation of what was up their sleeves so that people could once more be duped and defrauded? Before answering this question, let us quickly go through some facts that the official quarters could not suppress despite all attempts, frequent changes in instructions regarding operation of demonetization drive and conjuring words. First, Union Revenue Secretary admitted on 6 December that the government expected all scrapped Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes

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Comrade Fidel Castro was a valiant communist leader with nobler feelings of heart Tribute of Comrade Provas Ghosh at the memorial meeting

[This is the English translation of the speech delivered in Bengali by Comrade Provas Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C), at the Memorial Meeting of Comrade Fidel Castro, a valiant communist leader of anti-imperialist struggle and architect of Cuban Revolution, on 4 December last in Kolkata. The responsibility of translation error as well as inadequate representation, if any, solely lies with the Editorial Board of Proletarian Era.]

We have assembled here today to pay our homage to Comrade Fidel Castro - a great revolutionary, a tireless, uncompromising and valiant fighter against world imperialism-capitalism, and a vigilant sentinel of socialism in Cuba. He carried out his struggle till his last, keeping profound belief and respect to Marxism-Leninism and remaining firmly committed to socialism, even when world communist movement fell into severe crisis and the world socialist system broke down. When we recall the memories of any departed leader, great character, an eminent personality or even any of our comrades, this has only one purpose. That is how would those who are living should derive lessons

from the life struggles of those departed and apply those lessons in their life. Otherwise such memorial meetings are reduced to mere rituals and hence meaningless.

Most of you have come to know from the media about the remarkable stories of his struggling life which have turned into legends. Our condolence resolution adopted here has also mentioned of some of those glorious episodes. I would not repeat those. At the outset, as the background of my discussion I like to recall that chapter of history which is almost forgotten now. In the Second World War, in the battle against the fascist axis of Germany-Italy-Japan led by Hitler, the fighters in the forefront were Great Stalin,

Soviet Red army and Soviet socialism. Had there not been Stalin leadership and Socialist

Soviet Union, it would have never been possible to defeat Hitler in the war. Even the then die-hard anti-communist personalities had to admit this fact. This was the time when an unprecedented situation had arisen in the world. Red Army had liberated the East European countries, so the banner of socialism was fluttering there. Chinese Revolution, on the other, under the leadership of great Mao Zedong was marching towards victory. Led by Comrade Ho Chi Minh, liberation



Comrade Fidel Castro

struggle in Vietnam was in full steam. The countries of Asia-Africa and Latin America which as colonies and semi-colonies became the open plunder-ground of the imperialists, were in every country with the help from Soviet socialism, freedom struggles like tides had started to sweep. Somewhere the communists were in the leadership while in others, the respective national bourgeoisie were at the helm. This was the situation

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A smokescreen is created as if once the economy is cashless, the system would be cleansed and freed from black money

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to come back to the banking system but that has not happened. Rather, most of the banned currencies have come back to the banking system. On 7 December, RBI Deputy Governor informed that over 80% of the total value of circulated notes had already been deposited. It is estimated of late that over 90% of the invalid currencies have returned. This completely negates the government's earlier narrative that anywhere between Rs 3 lakh crore and Rs 5 lakh crore of black money would not be returned as this would be part of black money hoards. Naturally, the suffering people a section of which was initially misled by the coaxing vocabulary of the Prime Minister and his associates have been questioning why then have they been put to such immense hardship? Why they had to stand in queues hours after hours over days after days to deposit their hard earned money in the banks? Why had the supply of replacement currencies been so poor? Why had there been rationing on withdrawal of their own money because the banks and ATMs were starved of cash? Why the Prime Minister who repeatedly assured of ending all woes after 50 days, is now saying that longer time would be required to make things normal? Informed people are also wondering which law in the country empowers the government to hold one back from drawing money from one's own saving. Even Supreme Court which held earlier that the government "can't have 'surgical strike' against common man" has, of late, questioned if demonetization drive is subversive of section 26(2) of RBI Act as well as sections 300 (a), 14 and 19(1g) of the constitution.

Boundless plight of the common toiling people

This is not just hassle or harassment but a kind of punishment for innocent citizens including old and women, particularly the poor and have-nots. The Prime Minister extolled that "while the rich are having sleepless nights, the poor and common men are sleeping comfortably". But people from experience are coming to know that the reality is just the reverse. Contrary to false assurance by the government, experts say that currency shortage will continue for eight months to one year, forget about 50 days, as printing of new notes would take

more time. In the meantime, it has become evident that so called black money antidote has stifled the economy. Over and above, the ongoing shrinkage in demand because of rapidly falling purchasing power of the people, back-broken by steady dwindle in income coupled with spiralling price line and massive unemployment, there is further dent in demand because of severe cash crunch. The economy is already in the grip of recession—not just recession but stagflation (stagnation or recession because of coupled with inflation—typical in dying capitalist economy). A snapshot of manufacturing from the Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index released on 1 December revealed that demonetisation had slowed production across the board. Cash shortage has hit jobs alarmingly. Job loss and shutting down of running industries are mounting in number. Lakhs of migrant workers are forced to go back home with empty hands. In absence of any bank account or proper identity, many migrant and daily labourers are unable draw their wages and hence forced to leave. Organized sectors like Jute, Tea, Leather, Jewellery or even Engineering are witnessing massive job losses, retrenchment or closure. It is quite evident that jobs would be vanishing in construction and real estate sectors as well. Contrary to the claims of the central government and BJP leaders that farmers would not be affected by demonetisation, the peasants who entirely depend on cash transaction are in dire straits. It is reported that peasants are not able to sell their paddy as the buyers or the procurement machinery dominated by an unholy nexus of corrupt middlemen-government agencies-administration-touts-ruling party leaders are offering to pay in the old currency. So the peasants are forced to distress sale at throwaway price. Being unable to sell, the peasants, are even reported to have been burning their crops. As the peasants, who had to borrow cash at hefty interest from moneylenders because they were running out of time to harvest *kharif* paddy, are unable to repay loan, many are committing suicide. Agriculture, which employs maximum workforce in the unorganised sector, is in the doldrums because there is no cash to pay to the labourer. Over 70% of perishables

are on the verge of rotting and reportedly thrown away as waste. Thus, ultimately the poor peasants are bearing the brunt and bleeding white. The situation is indeed harrowing, akin to the adage - 'heaping sorrow over sorrow'. So, whether it's rural or urban areas, the poor have been hit the hardest.

Who are beneficiaries at the cost of people?

Who are the beneficiaries at the cost of the suffering poor? First of all, not only the peasants and workers, even small traders and daily vendors are in equal peril in absence of cash. Their business volume has come down by 60% as confirmed by the Secretary General of the Confederation of All India Traders. Many of them are on the verge of folding up their business. This is exactly what the giant monopoly retailers were waiting for. They have already been accepting debit or credit cards. So, a sizeable number of urban middle class who normally go to the daily markets to buy items of daily necessities are compelled to go to the big shopping malls like Spencer's, Big Bazar etc. to procure the same and pay by card. Next, there is another emerging business known as online grocery stores like Bigbasket, Groffer or Dailybazar and online retailers like Flipkart or Amazone. Here one can place one's orders through electronic mode and settle the bill also electronically. This is a part of cashless economy which we shall elaborate later. So, when sale volumes of small vendors or local grocery shops have come down drastically, these monopoly-controlled big retailers and online business outlets are making fortunes. As per media report, their business has gone up by around 40% after demonetization.

How corruption, fake notes and terror-funding has been taken on!

Further, the government talked of containing corruption through demonetization. Has that happened? Or, as it has already come in the media, big rackets are operating in making quick bucks exploiting the plight and misery of the people. Either touts are exchanging old notes at hefty discounts or black marketers are hoarding heaps of new currencies or unscrupulous black cash holders are making their wealth white in connivance with corrupt bank officials at the cost of

common citizens. Overnight funding of zero balance *jan dhan* accounts is another instance of economic offence like broad day robbery. Anyone conversant with the conditions of Indian villages and the methodology followed in opening *jan dhan* accounts with intermediation of middlemen knows that the rural poor neither have pittance to save nor have knowledge of operating bank accounts. Moreover, their economic destitution and hapless life condition make them submissive to the rural touts, ruling party satraps, panchayat heads, big moneylenders and holders of large farming lands. So, if any of these 'powerful and privileged' ask them to consent to funding their zero balance *jan dhan* accounts with hefty sums overnight, can they dare to refuse? So, these accounts of the poor became easy conduits for whatever little ill-gotten money was held in cash by those calling the shots in rural society. What then is this arm-twisting other than corruption? The Prime Minister has asked the concerned *jan dhan* account holders to refuse withdrawal of such pumped funds. But again from experience the rural poor know that such utterances are all for playing to the gallery as only those rich and privileged have 'law and order' under their command and the impoverished unprivileged are always at the receiving end. Such highhandedness is also reported from urban pockets. In this period of acute unemployment, every one job-holder is haunted by the fear of losing job. A moneyed businessman asked his car driver to open multiple *jan dhan* accounts in the names of his family members and then parked his unaccounted money in these accounts threatening the driver to lose his job in case he disclosed this arrangement. Is this not corruption? In some places, huge stacks of new currencies have been located. Some of the ruling BJP leaders have also figured in the list of hoarders of new currency notes. Even some bank employees were found involved in this illegal note exchange. How could this happen if corruption is claimed to have been weeded out? In a volte face, the media subservient to the ruling dispensation is now saying that it was incorrect to assume vaporization of black money through demonetization. Corruption

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Common people hit hardest and taken for a ride by demonetization under fraudulent pretext

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is so deep-rooted in the system and its culture that it will refuse to die down whether the currencies change colour or size. Instead of the old Rs 500, Rs 1,000 notes, the corrupt will now seek bribes in the new denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 notes.

Finally, we come to invalidating fake notes and stopping terror funding with fake notes. The Prime Minister has said on 27 December that demonetisation has destroyed "in one stroke the worlds of terrorism, drug mafia, human trafficking and the underworld" and "on November 8, fake notes became zero." With unearthing of counterfeit version of the new currencies at many places, a section of the media confessed that after some time the counterfeit note makers will 'recalibrate' their machines and fake notes will yet again start coming into the economy. And how far the underworld, drug mafiadom and terror-funding have ceased to exist would well be seen in the days to come. Incidentally, some of the countries where cash transaction has long been reduced to minimal have faced bouts of terror attack in recent period. How could it happen if cashless mode would have halted terror-funding? Rather, it is reported that terror-funding, of late, is mostly online. Naturally, all these espousals in favour of cashless transaction are unfounded and deceptive.

Bluff of recovering black stashed in Swiss Bank

Next is about the government's repeated bluff in regard to bringing back black money deposited in Swiss Bank accounts. It is reported in the media that India has signed a joint declaration with Switzerland on 22 November, 2016, for the implementation of automatic exchange of information, agreeing to the release of financial information by Switzerland only from September 2019 onwards, on an automatic basis and that too only of accounts held by Indians in Switzerland for 2018 and subsequent years. This is as per the press communiqué of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, whose chairman signed the declaration on behalf of India. Thus there is ample amount of time for black wealth holders to stash their ill-gotten money in Swiss accounts to move it. What could be a better example of playing fraud with people?

Who would bear the cost of demonetization?

And what is the cost of this whole painful and disruptive demonetization exercise? The transaction cost during the 50-day window till December 30 would be a staggering Rs 1.28 trillion (Rs 1.28 lakh crore), according to a study by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). The cost of printing the new notes, logistics and the like has been estimated at Rs 20,000 crore. CMIE further stated that common households would bear 12 % of the entire cost of demonetisation, largely in loss of wages, during the 50-day period while banks will suffer "overheads and operational costs in terms of recalibrating ATMs". As per his estimates, banks would bear a cost of Rs 351 billion during this stipulated period. Needless to say, the cost borne by the banks and the government would eventually be recovered from the people only by way of debit to public exchequer. Even macro-economic indicators that bourgeois economy highlights to project 'growth' would remain far from being insulated. Ambit Capital, a brokerage firm, has already created shock waves by predicting that GDP growth will fall to 5.8 percent in 2017-18 from 7.3 percent estimated earlier as per revised methodology adopted last year to inflate the figure roughly by 40%.

What is practicability and safety of cashless transaction?

In a cashless economy most of the transaction will be done by digital means like e-banking, debit and credit cards, PoS (point of sales) machines, digital wallets etc. Thus, when workers have been losing wages and jobs and agricultural activity remains in limbo, characterised by a calamitous drop in prices, as the economy moves into a period of severe demand decompression and extreme uncertainty of what the future holds, the latest chatter is that India has entered the stage of cashless economy. How far sound is this proposition? A cursory glance at bare facts would be revealing. Various sources say that only 30.5% of adult Indian have bank accounts. Further, can the banks afford to open bank accounts en masse

overnight? According to RBI report of 2014, banks incur an expenditure of Rs 200 for opening an account. So, the banks need a deposit of at least Rs 7000 for operational viability. Otherwise, they would incur huge loss. Who would compensate that loss? Even after much clamouring about widespread proliferation of banking network, 80% villages have no bank branch. Only, 14.3% of the Indians have deposited money in the banks in 2014 meaning rest had either no surplus to save or are more comfortable in cash transactions given the ground reality. Surely, in last two years, their lot has in no way been bettered, rather worsened. So where is the money to be transacted on cashless mode?

Come to the question of using plastic money or bank cards. Though 22% of bank account holders have debit cards, only 11% of them have used that so far. 4.2% of them only have credit cards. Only 1.8% did online transaction in 2011. In last 5 years, it has at best gone up to 5/6%.

Next is about computer literacy. Computer literacy rate in India is stated to be just 6.15% meaning that percentage of the populace can operate computers. Only 25% of the mobile sets in use are smartphones but all of them do not have internet. In other words, they are not capable of transacting online. A cashless economy is possible only when a country has high internet speeds. But, India is 96th in terms of download speed and 105th in terms of average bandwidth availability. In download speed India is behind even Bangladesh and Nepal. In terms of availability of bandwidth, Sri Lanka, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia and several other countries are far ahead of India. As we know, oppression and pauperization of common people are intensifying in all capitalist countries. More and more people are relegated to below poverty line. How can then one dream of increased bank transactions and that too online in these capitalist countries? How much more duping can be a proposition than that?

Coming to the question of security, risks associated with electronic payment instruments are far more diverse and severe when

compared to cash transactions. If some one loses cash because of theft, he is poorer only to the extent of the value of the cash so stolen. But, if one loses his credit cards or becomes victim of digital hackers, one can face a whole host of problems, including denied payment, card skimming, identity theft (meaning someone can use his identity details to open fake accounts or e-mail IDs etc.), account takeover, fraudulent transactions and data breaches. India also has a record of poor internet security, which is progressively becoming worse. When it comes to cyber crime, India is 6th in the world. The incidence of cybercrime in the country has doubled in just a year. Users and experts alike are worried about growing cyber crime, with almost zero conviction. Cyber experts say the public in India are wary of cyber transaction for fear of falling victim to hacking attacks that steal personal data and in the face of which banks and the police more often than not plead helplessness. The country tops the world in terms of, what is known as, 'ransomware' attacks. These attacks target banks and establishments with sensitive, confidential information. Even cyber experts say that they think twice before doing online monetary transactions. "Pathetically, we don't have deterrence in India as we have a very poor rate of prosecution and conviction of hackers", commented one of them.

There is one more point. At present, we do not incur any additional expenditure for transacting in cash. But, all cashless transactions are chargeable. Whenever a debit card is swiped, either the retailer or the card holders pay 0.5 to 1% commission. Paytm, Jio Money etc., e-wallet companies take 2.5 to 3.5% commission when one transfers one's own money from bank account. According to RBI, 2.5 lakh crore per month or 25 to 30 lakh crore per year are withdrawn from ATM. If bank withdrawals are added, the amount would be 75 lakh crore per month. All these are white transactions. If 75 lakh crores are transacted cashless, the e-wallet companies would reap fortunes. If 2% charge is levied on 75 lakh crores, e-wallets would earn 1.5 lakh crores per year.

And finally, most of the Indians particularly the impoverished and downtrodden lack basic education to understand what e-commerce or e-

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Corrigendum

Please read Rs 8 lakh as **Rs 8 lakh crores** and Rs 2,720 crore as **Rs 2,72,000 crore** on p.3 of P Era dated 01-12-16 (article on demonetization). Error sincerely regretted.

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Our analysis corroborated by fallout of demonetization

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banking is, let alone switching over to these sophistications. Villages suffer from frequent power cut which is disruptive to e-network and transactions. Can all these problems be overcome overnight? Now with insistence on online credit of wages, even daily wage earners and contract labourers including agricultural labourers will be forced to increase bank transactions. Is it feasible?

Who would benefit by this transition to cashless economy?

Why is then so much stress on jumping to cashless mode? Clearly, the government is insisting on that for two purposes. First of all, as the bubble of recovering black money through currency invalidation has burst, it has been necessary to divert people's attention to some other illusion. Second purpose was to promote the monopoly-controlled mobile-wallet and e-commerce companies. As we mentioned above, the farce of black money recovery is now laid bare. In a last ditch attempt to befool people, there is some planted hyperactivity to nab some tiny black money holders or dubious characters. But, it goes without saying that such are all eyewashes as not a single big fish has been disturbed. On the other hand, there is definite reason for raising pitch over transition to cashless. Who would benefit out of it? The big 'mobile wallet' giants like Jio money and Paytm. After creating havoc in the telecom sector with the launch of Reliance Jio, Mukesh Ambani, the richest Indian monopolist, now has his eyes set on lucrative e-wallet industry with the government harping on rapid shift to a digital economy. Mukesh also heaped praise on the Prime Minister's move of demonetization as that opens avenue for minting huge money for him. As per a media report, Reliance Jio money is slated to reap 40 times of profit if the proposed cashless mode gains momentum even within the small faction of internet literate Indians. Another MNC with major share-holding of China-based Alibaba group and a good stake by Tata group is Paytm who is also slated to have a windfall. One would recall that when Paytm announced its launch, it used Prime Minister Modi's face which was indicative of its enjoying the backing of his. Given the nuanced situation of e-wallets as an industry and possibility of forced conversion of a section of bank customers to cashless mode, more and more players are aiming to enter that industry.

Our analysis is proved correct

Finally, let us reiterate what our Party stated in a statement immediately on announcement of demonetization. It was stated, inter alia, that poor peasants selling their produce in the market during the ongoing harvesting season, small traders and vendors selling items of daily use including food articles, contract and unorganized workers receiving periodic payments and common households withdrawing money on occasions and in small tranches for meeting running expenditure are worst hit. Instead of taking stringent measures against the black money holders and recovering black money stashed away in banks overseas, this very step of the government amounts to a cheap stunt designed to befool people, divert their grievances, shield turpitude on its part, reap electoral benefits and push common toiling people to immense hardship. We further showed in the 1 December issue of *Proletarian Era* on demonetization that the whole exercise is a cunning ploy to divert people's attention from the burning issues of life. Neither black money nor corruption can be weeded out in capitalism since the decadent moribund reactionary capitalist system and its philosophy that 'motto of life is to make money at any cost' are breeding corruption and generating black money. We further said that it would not leave a scratch on the black money holders while people already pressed under the grinding wheel of capitalism would be worst-hit. So, it would tantamount to slaying the slain. We mentioned about double standard and duping exercise of the BJP government. We also said that this demonetization drive is a boon to these monopoly houses owning such electronic companies. Through such sustained promotion of e-commerce and mobile wallets as well as multi-brand retail giants, there is a glaring attempt to bring retail sales under monopoly control and phase out the small retailers who are already badly affected because of currency invalidation. And in course of time, through this cashless e-commerce e-banking mode, more centralized control of the Indian capitalist state over the country's economy would be attempted in the interest of the monopolists. One can see for themselves how correct we were in our analysis based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. That is why, ours has been the only political party which immediately demanded total withdrawal of this most deceptive demonetization drive

and gave call to the people to develop powerful organized protest movement against this demonetization which has demonized the entire country.

Cashless does not mean abolition of rule of money capital

Before we end, it is also necessary to address another issue. Raising bogey of cashless economy, the ruling quarters are trying to befool people with another falsehood. It is sought to impress that with abolition of cash, money itself would cease to exist and hence all crimes and aberrations centred on money would be eliminated. Those who are conversant with the basics of political economy are aware that money cannot be abolished in capitalism. Rather, money is the fulcrum of capitalism. Economy-politics-social relations-culture—everything veers around money in capitalism. Even today, we use cheque for money transaction. That is also one form of cashless transaction. Now further extension of cashless mode is sought through electronic mode harnessing latest technology. The comprehensive understanding about appearance, role and process of extinction of money was provided by Karl Marx.

Marx showed based on objective scientific analysis that money appeared at a particular stage of socio-economic development as a medium of exchange. It is also known that the value of a commodity is created by labour in the process of production. In pre-money period, this value manifested itself only through the comparison of one commodity with another in the process of exchange, i.e., through exchange-value. The simplest form of value was the expression of the value of one commodity in terms of another commodity: e.g., 1 piece of cloth = 2 kg of pulse. In this case, the value of the piece of cloth was expressed in terms of grain. The grain served as a means of expressing the value of the cloth piece. It was possible then to express the value of cloth piece in the use-value of grain only because labour was expended both in the production of the grain and in that of the cloth. Behind the equality of these commodities was concealed the concept of equal expenditure of labour in producing them. With the further development of the social division of labour and of commodity production, the form of direct exchange of one commodity for another commodity or a combination

of a number of commodities (one bamboo basket = 1 kg rice, 1 kg pulse and ½ kg of potato) became inadequate. That was known as barter system. However, difficulties arose in the process of exchange, engendered by the growth of the contradictions of commodity production, contradictions between individual and social labour, between the use-value and the value of a commodity. The further growth of the productive forces, the transition to metal tools, the rise of the second major division of labour, the separation of handicraft from agriculture, led to further development of commodity production and the widening of the market. The abundance of different commodities playing the role of universal equivalent came into contradiction with the needs of the growing market, which required transition to a single equivalent. When the role of universal equivalent had become attached to one commodity, the *money* form of value appeared. Under the money form of value, the value of every commodity began to be expressed in the use-value of a single commodity, which thus became the universal equivalent. Money thus arose as a result of a long process of development of exchange and of forms of value.

In course of further development in commodity production money served as: (1) the measure of value, (2) the medium of circulation, (3) the means of accumulation, (4) the means of payment and (5) world-wide currency. But with the advent of capitalism, money assumed another form, that is capital. Money does not in itself constitute capital. When, for instance, independent petty commodity producers exchange their commodities, money plays its part as a circulation medium but does not serve as capital. The formula of commodity circulation is: C (commodity)— M (money)— C (commodity), i.e., the selling of one commodity in order to buy another. Such was valid in feudalism i.e. self-centered localized economy where objective of production was personal consumption. Money becomes capital when it is used to exploit the labour of others in capitalism. The general formula of capital is $M-C-M'$, i.e., buying in order to sell so as to make money. But in capitalism, motive force of production is to earn maximum profit and that profit which accrues to the capitalist owners represents surplus-labour or the value of surplus labour

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So long capitalism-imperialism is in vogue, there is no escape from oppressive 'rule of money'

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power used for producing a commodity or service. Surplus-value is the value created by the labour of the worker in excess of the value of his labour-power and is appropriated as profit by the capitalist without compensation. The production of surplus-value is the basic economic law of capitalism. This is the base of exploitation of man by man in capitalism. The whole sense of the capitalist's activity is that as the result of the operation of capitalist economy or laws of production, he has more money than he had at the beginning. The purpose of the circulation process is an increase in value. Therefore the general formula of capital in its full form is: $M-C-M'$, with M' standing for an increased amount of money or profit. This is how, capital (M) advanced by a capitalist, i.e., put

into circulation by him, returns to its owner with a certain increment (M'). In imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, the process of ensuring of maximum profit for the capitalist owners profit through the exploitation, ruining and impoverishing of the toiling people reaches its peak.

So long capitalism-imperialism is in vogue, there is no escape from this 'rule of capital' or 'rule of money'. Money would eventually be phased out after society attains full-fledged communism through the transitory stage of socialism after revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. In absence of any exploitation of man by man in communism, production would be so abundant as to outpace the growing need of the people. Only then, role of money would be exhausted. Those who argue that economy cannot run without money are wrong. In barter

system, no money was involved. Still the economy did run. Similarly, in communism, economy would run in the interest of the people without involvement of money.

Thus, it can be seen that there would be no respite from the growing economic onslaughts, exploitation and deprivation since cashless or any such other mechanism does not disturb the root i.e. capitalism. Rather, this cashless mode in its different variants is purported to exacerbate the economic oppression using latest technological developments albeit under the garb of modernization and ease of operation. Thinking people should not get carried by the mischievous propaganda of the bourgeois quarters about cashless economy the dangerous sides of which have been elaborated above. Within no time, people would come to know the

hidden agenda behind the over zealotness about cashless economy while black money, corruption, newer form of counterfeiting through cybercrime would make life yet more miserable for common citizens.

[Source : — *First Post*-15-11-16 and 21-11-16 and 24-11-16, *India Today* - 01-12-16, 07-12-16, *Indian Express*, 25-11-16 and 02-12-16, *Times of India*, 25-11-16, 07-12-16, 08-12-16, 2-12-16 and 28-12-16, *Business Standard*- 02-12-16, *The Hindu*- 03-12-16, *The Statesman*-03-12-16, *Hindustan Times* - 08-12-16, *Huffingtonpost* with *PTI* inputs- 07-12-16, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*-08-12-16, *livemint*-09-12-16, 14-12-16, 16-12-16, *The Tribune*-09-12-16, *Business Today* — 02-12-16, *The Wire*-09-12-16, *Ei Samoy*-10-12-16 and *Bartaman*-25-12-16. ABP, *Ei Somoy* and *Bartaman* are in Bengali, rest in English]

Mammoth rally of ASHA Workers at Bangalore



Mammoth rally of 20,000 ASHA workers held at Bangalore City on December 16, led by Karnataka State ASHA Workers' Union (KSAWU) affiliated to AIUTUC in demand of regular payment of monthly honorarium, scrapping of ASHA SOFT, social security measures and settling of the pending dues for the last year etc. A concluding meeting was addressed by Prof. Ravivarman Kumar, former Advocate General, Karnataka State Government, Comrade K. Radhakrishna, All India Vice-President, AIUTUC (inset), Smt. Roopa Hassan, litterateur and social activist, Comrade K. Uma, State Committee member-SUCI(C), Comrade D Nagalakshmi (Secretary, KSAWU) and others, with Comrade K. Somashekar, President Karnataka State ASHA Workers' Union presiding over and Dr Umesh G Yadav (Parliamentary Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Deptt) representing the Karnataka Government. Sri Yadav assured of consideration and action within a month. A memorandum was placed with him by the district leaders of the organization.

November Revolution Centenary observed in Guwahati

At the call of the SUCI(C) Central Committee, the Assam State Committee took up a year-long programme of observance of centenary of the great November revolution. As a part of it, on 5 December a meeting was held at the Guwahati District Library auditorium. Comrade Asit

Bhattacharyya, member Polit Bureau, SUCI(C) and a well known mass leader addressed the meeting as the main speaker. Party workers, supporters and common people from different districts of Assam, including an impressive number of students and youth attended the meeting which was presided over by

Comrade Minhar Ali Mandal, veteran member of the State Committee. Comrade Bhattacharyya deliberated upon different aspects and teachings of the November Revolution. To fulfill the task of accomplishing the anti-capitalist socialist revolution of India in the light of these, the leaders

and cadres of the Party need to equip themselves on the strength of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought to take up required befitting role for the task: Comrade Bhattacharyya urged. Assam State Committee Secretary Comrade Chandralekha Das also addressed the meeting.

Spectrum of effects of demonitization and cashless society

A report from Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) reveals that by the 29C clause of 1951 of the Peoples' Representation Act, a **political party** has to report to the Election Commission any donation above Rs 20,000 from an individual or organization. BJP tops the list among the political parties in earning such income, which amounted to RS 977 crore during 2013-15. Congress, BSP and CPI(M) comes at the 2nd, 3rd, 4th places respectively.

At the call of West Bengal State Committee of the Bank Unity Forum, **bank employees** staged sit-in demonstration on 20 December against pushing common people as well as bank employees into utter confusion and problem through demonitization without taking adequate measures. Deputations were sent on behalf of the Forum to the RBI Kolkata office, and to the chairmen of Allahabad Bank, UCO Bank and UBI who were IBA

representatives too.

MP is ruled by the BJP, the same party which has thrust the demon of demonitization on the country from their government at the Centre. At Gadhota village in that state about 60 km away from Gwalior, all the parents of students of a private primary school are **farmers**. They have their fields filled with paddy, but their homes have run dry of cash. They cannot purchase even their daily essentials. They used to pay school fees for their wards on the money earned from the sale of paddy. But this time they cannot afford to pay in cash Rs 3900 for those fees. They chose to pay it cashless, in kind, with the paddy itself. Bewildered school authority first refused, but with no trace of any solution in sight, they agreed to accept that paddy. The school rooms are now filled with paddy, about 50 quintal. The principal is at a loss. May be this shows the dawn of a cashless India.

AIMSS STATEMENT

Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, President, AIMSS, has informed that Nandini Bhonde of Nagpur (Maharashtra), has no relationship with AIMSS.

Fidel Castro

Castro's emergence has been at a period when modern revisionism was endangering world communist movement and socialism

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immediate after the end of the Second World War. With socialism making bold strides ahead and national liberation struggles gaining from strength to strength, world imperialism-capitalism was trembling, counting their final days. Such a situation had developed in the then world.

As students of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought, we know that man is a product of history, but again, there comes some men who according to the laws of social development, themselves make history by changing the course. In a particular time, in a particular social system, out of the social urge and social necessity for change, a thinker, a leader, a guide to people's forward march, emerges. This happened in the religious movements. Similarly, during the bourgeois democratic revolution against feudalism such leadership emerged as well. But the heights of thoughts, level of consciousness were not exactly the same for all. Each had some specific characteristics. Similarly, in the history of the anti-capitalist working class revolutions guided by Marxism, the heights of thoughts, consciousness and level of realization of all the Marxist thinkers or valiant Marxist fighters, were not identical. Though there remains unity and uniformity in the basic outlook and approach, but everyone bears some definite characteristics.

Secondly, I want to remind all of you about one more thing. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had taught us that in the present era, in order to lead anti-imperialist movements to their logical culmination, the uncompromising revolutionary fighters would have to either embrace communism or be firm supporters of communism. You will get this in his speech. The language is mine, thought is his. We have seen in our country that Netaji Subhaschandra was a strong supporter of Marxism-Communism. He had deep respect for Soviet Union, for great Stalin. He earnestly desired that a communist movement be developed in India. Even in a letter to the then revolutionary Barin Ghosh, he said that communism is the aim of India. Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh had declared himself a Marxist. During freedom movement, almost all the leaders had profound

respect for Soviet Union. Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Premchand, Nazrul, Subramania Bharati—all had paid their respect to Soviet Union. Similar were the views of Dr San -Yat-Sen of China or Sukarno of Indonesia. In other countries also the anti-imperialist uncompromising fighters and leaders had the same opinions.

So, immediately after the end of the Second World War in 1945, tidal waves of Marxist-Communist movement swept across the entire world. We had witnessed that in our adolescence. Emergence of Comrade Fidel Castro and his successful accomplishment of Cuban revolution in 1959 were at a time when world communist



Comrade Provash Ghosh at Fidel Castro memorial meeting

movement had begun to ebb. It is pertinent to mention here that so long Comrade Stalin and after him Comrade Mao Zedong were alive, they as guide to and authority of world communist movement had carried the glory of proletarian revolution and provided correct direction to the revolutionary working class movements of the world as well as the national liberation struggles in the colonies. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had been their ardent student and continuer. In 1956, a crisis came in the world communist movement when Khrushchev usurped power in Soviet Russia and opened the gate of revisionism. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had warned at that very time about grave danger. So far we know, he was the first communist leader who after analysing the documents of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 had said that Khrushchev's formulations would open 'the floodgate of revisionism'. He also said that attacking Stalin was tantamount to attacking Leninism because Stalin

was the authority of Leninism. And attacking Leninism meant attacking Marxism. In this way or course, road to revisionism and counter-revolution was laid bare. As a Marxist thinker, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in 1956 had placed this historic analysis. It needs to be emphasized here that Marxism is not a dogma but a creative science. Lenin had not just memorized the teachings of Marx. He assimilated the essence of Marx-Engels's teachings. Lenin himself had said, "We do not regard Marxist theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists must develop in all

directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an independent elaboration of Marxist theory is especially essential for Russian socialists, for this theory provides only general guiding principles, which, in particular are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia." Lenin himself had

developed Marxism in the post-Marx-Engels period which we call Leninism. Stalin had first shown that Leninism is the Marxism in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. Later, Stalin had also made contributions to the treasure house of Marxism-Leninism. Subsequently, there was the emergence of Mao Zedong as student of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin. He also concretised Marxism-Leninism on the Chinese soil and in the process developed Marxism-Leninism further which we call Mao Zedong Thought. Holding himself to be a student of all of them, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in course of concretizing Marxism-Leninism on the Indian soil had elaborated, developed and enriched Marxism-Leninism in every field—philosophy, ideology-politics-morality, ethics and culture—in keeping with the changing international objective situation, development of modern science and newer problems and phenomena thereby left behind his mark of a creative genius. That is what we call Shibdas Ghosh

Thought.

Revisionist line of Khrushchev leadership

When Khrushchev started attacking Stalin, the capitalist-imperialists hitherto trembling because of the fear of anti-capitalist socialist revolution, grabbed the opportunity and used it as a weapon in unleashing anti-communist tirade. Throughout the world, vilification campaign against Stalin was raised to high. It is continuing even today. This was correctly anticipated by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. So he forewarned that undermining and denigrating the authority of Stalin would mean uncrowning Lenin and attacking Leninism. That in turn would mean mounting attack on Marxism which we had seen later. Thereafter, Khrushchev started to preach many more anti-Marxist ideas. Lenin's formulation was imperialism generates war. That means, so long imperialism is there, it would engender war. In the 1950s, the socialist camp had developed with enormous power, powerful peace movement was developing throughout the world. Seeing all these, Khrushchev from a sense of complacency declared that there was no more any danger of imperialist war. Criticizing such an erroneous view, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh pointed out that so long there is imperialism, there is danger of war. At the same time, he said, the socialist camp and worldwide anti-imperialist peace movement are the forces to prevent war if they move in the correct line. In other words, in the then changed international situation and balance of power, danger of outbreak of wars and the possibility of preserving peace were both equally real. That was the correct interpretation of the then world situation, not what Khrushchev had put forth. Khrushchev further said that revolution could be accomplished in a peaceful way in different countries and the bourgeois parliaments could be transformed into instruments of people's will. This was an out and out revisionist and reformist theory, anti-revolution theory. Further, Khrushchev virtually reduced the policy of peaceful co-existence enunciated by Lenin-Stalin to anyhow preserving peace. So, as per Khrushchev's argument, if the

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Fidel Castro**Castro had unbound affection for oppressed people, spurred on by nobler feelings of heart***Contd. from page 6*

imperialists would have created the danger to launch attack anywhere, there ought not to be any powerful resistance to that because it might trigger war even nuclear war. So, there should be a compromise. This was how he relegated the policy of peaceful existence to a policy of peaceful capitulation. Khrushchev deviated from the basics of Marxism-Leninism. Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong all had placed immense importance on the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Khrushchevite leadership proposed 'dictatorship of the people' and not 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. Like this, they began propagating anti-Marxist revisionist thoughts in many spheres. And revisionist thoughts, as per Lenin's teachings, are nothing but bourgeois thoughts under the garb of Marxism. All such trashes were dished out by Khrushchev. This caused enormous confusion and disruption in unity within the powerful world communist movement as well as in the anti-imperialist movements which were then surging forth worldwide. Subsequently, centring on this question, the difference between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU), began to surface gradually which later came into open. The CPC like our Party opposed the revisionist line of Khrushchev. But they did it much later than our Party. The CPC initially supported the revisionist line of Khrushchev out of confusion. Later, it admitted its mistakes and declared its opposition. The communist camp was thus divided into pro-Moscow and pro-Beijing lines. This was the backdrop of Cuban Revolution and the emergence of Comrade Fidel Castro. The earlier vibrant world situation where world communist movement emboldened by higher Marxist ideology and under the leadership of Stalin and Mao Zedong were boldly advancing was absent during Comrade Castro's struggle. His emergence had been at a time when revisionism had cast much influence.

Correct analysis provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

In this connection, I want to say a few words about the contributions of our Party led by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. The present generation may not be aware of this. Those of us sitting on this dais

and those who are of our age know what the situation in 1950s was. Both French Communist Party and Italian Communist Party had played a big role against Hitlerite fascism. Both these parties were very powerful then. The bourgeois rulers of France did not fight against the fascists. Instead, they fled from the country. The communists launched 'partisan' war. Apart from France and Italy, communist parties were quite powerful in Greece, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma (Myanmar), Iran, Iraq, Philippines, Egypt and some other countries. After revisionism had developed, all these parties faced disintegration. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was first to draw attention to a significant defect or shotcoming in the world communist movement way back in 1948. He then was in the midst of an arduous struggle for building up our Party virtually from nothing, fighting all hurdles and obstacles. He even had no shelter, not assured of even one meal a day. At that time, in a historic essay titled 'Self-criticism of the Communist Camp', he wrote "While acknowledging with just pride and deference, the very many achievements and successes and glorious sacrifices of the world communist movement, we have not failed, even for a moment, to point out the serious shortcomings in it ... These serious shortcomings and defects are largely due to the fact that the present leadership of the world communist camp is to a very large extent, influenced by the mechanical process of thinking ... and the unquestioning blind acceptance ..." He pointed out this mechanical process of thinking and blindness to the leadership instead of dialectical process of thinking world create danger in future. That was exactly what happened. So long Stalin was alive and moving along the correct path, others were blindly following him. But when Khrushchev usurped the leadership after Stalin's demise and started anti-Stalin campaign, although many confusions and questions arose among many, yet one section blindly followed the Soviet party while the others followed the Chinese party. Our Party from the very inception was free from blindness. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh held Stalin-Mao Zedong in high esteem. Till last breadth, he described himself as their student. He never allowed any comparison of his with these great Marxist stalwarts. At the same time, he never followed them blindly. He

used to examine everything on the basis of dialectical methodology. Despite being immensely respectful to great Stalin, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had criticized him on some points as well. Later, he also had some criticism about Mao Zedong while respecting him profoundly. You can see that while many parties in different countries have broken into pieces, our Party is intact. Not only intact, it is growing. Our Party is now developing fast throughout the country. A vast number of workers-peasants-students-youth-women are joining us. What is powering this growth? Our Party is growing based on the enriched and developed understanding of Marxism-Leninism that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has endowed to us. After his untimely demise, it was Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, his close revolutionary comrade-in arms, who guided the Party basing on that heightened understanding of Marxism-Leninism. With the passing away of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, the task of directing the Party activities has fallen on us. And we are also treading along the same path. So long the Party would struggle basing on Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, the Party not only in the country but also internationally can and would play an important role and that is necessary also. I have touched upon this aspect for information of our comrades.

Castro was spurred on by nobler feelings of heart

In any case, one has to understand the worth of Comrade Fidel Castro in the backdrop of this crisis created by the revisionist Khrushchevite leadership. So far I could study him by reading two of his speeches published earlier in *Ganadabi*, our Bengali organ and some of his recent speeches, observations and glimpses from his life struggle, it is clear that he was spurred on by higher and nobler feelings of heart. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had taught us that one cannot be a revolutionary unless one has unbound emotion for the oppressed people. Unless this feeling is preserved and kept live, revolutionary life also cannot be kept alive. If it so happens that once I had emotional feeling for the oppressed but have not been able to maintain that subsequently, not been able to sustain within myself the feel of their tears, woes and wails, not been able to keep myself in ferment

of the blaze of that feeling, then the pace of my progress would gradually subside. In case of some people, it ceases forever. Even if the beginning was spurred on by a nobler feeling of heart, that feeling has to be nourished, nurtured, broadened through a relentless all-embracing struggle. In case of Comrade Fidel, it is clear that this nobler feeling, this emotion had endowed him with tremendous power till his last breadth.

Cuban Revolution was very difficult, arduous

Today it is almost unimaginable how difficult it was to make Cuban revolution successful. It reminds one of the Soviet Revolution. Soviet Revolution immediately after its accomplishment faced severe attack from the imperialists-capitalists. The nascent socialist state thwarted all such attacks under the leadership of first Lenin and then Stalin. At the same time, Soviet Revolution inspired and provided guidance to Chinese Revolution. The revolutionaries of China got help from the Soviet Union. China had a border with the Soviet Union. Under the leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong, a twenty lakhs strong Red Army had to travel 8500 km long route when they were incessantly bombed from the sky by U.S. bombers and attacked continuously in the ground by the army of Chiang Kai-Shek government to retreat to the Soviet border to find shelter. There they reorganized and revitalized themselves to renew the fight. Lakhs of Red Army volunteers died in course of that long march because of either starvation or deadly diseases or being swept away by the strong current of turbulent rivers. The initial number of 20 lakhs got reduced to just 20 thousand at the end. At that point, Mao said, 'Now we shall win. Earlier we had 20 lakhs of soldiers. Now we have 20 thousand tested commanders'. The first meeting to celebrate victory of revolution was organized in Beijing. Mao Zedong rose to speak. But, in front of the microphone, his voice got choked. He could not speak. Tears rolled down his eyes. He was remembering those lakhs of martyrs who laid down their lives in course of the revolutionary battle. This Chinese Revolution received help from Soviet Union through the border. In Vietnam also, a legendary revolutionary battle had taken place

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Fidel Castro

Castro criticized revisionist Khrushchev leadership and revisionism in East European countries

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under the leadership of great leader Ho Chi Minh. They first fought against the French imperialists, then the Japanese imperialism during the Second World War and finally against US imperialism. Thus, they had to fight against three imperialist powers. Vietnam also received help as the country shared border with socialist China. But Cuba shared no border with any socialist country. It received no such material assistance from any socialist country. In a far away Latin America, it is a small island, separated by only 90 miles sea from imperialist USA, which is armed to the teeth with weapons of mass destruction. If the population of Cuba today is 1.1 crore or 11 million, it would have been around 60 to 70 lakhs (6 to 7 millions) during revolution. What deep sense of patriotism, immense emotion for the oppressed populace and firm resolve were required to make revolution successful in that country, that too at a time when the international communist movement was under attack by revisionism and thus weakened! I call upon all to understand Castro's character in this backdrop. But, one confusion needs to be removed. It is true that he started his struggle with just 82

Union in 1991, Castro in his speech delivered on the occasion of commemoration of victory in the battle of Bay of Pigs said expressing hope in future, "all the people who preserve hopeful vision for the world, who dream of progressive ideas, ideas of social justice, ideas of national pride and independence; all the people who dream of making world beautiful; all the people who in one way or another hate with all their souls the thought of a world governed by the Yankee empire with the reactionary and fascist ideas that capitalism has spawned during its development; all the people who know a little of history, who have noble and truly humane ideas, concepts, and values, hope that again there will develop resistance in the world and that the socialist ideology will survive."

Unswerving commitment to the ideal of communism

He said in the same speech: "The tens of millions who live in shanty towns, the tens of millions of homeless children in Latin America, for instance; the tens and hundreds of millions of sick people without access to a single

developed capitalist world is responsible and USA is its chieftain. A few days back I have said this capitalist world has given 4 billion people only hunger and sufferings. Nothing else... Today Cuba is the trench where the most just, noble, and humane ideas are defended. ... History has reposed on us this important responsibility..... a sense of responsibility, not only toward the current and future generations of our country, but toward the billions of people throughout the world. We must resist US imperialism. We must prove that we will resist, that we can resist, and that we can win. If it is necessary to prove this, we will prove it; if someone has to prove this, we are that someone, and we will prove it. We will not disappoint the world; we will not disappoint the emancipation-seeking revolutionaries holding high the banner of revolution; we will not disappoint those who dream about a better world.... The communists, true communists were always loyal to the defence of their ideas and their cause. There have been great examples since the Paris Commune and throughout many years. They fought a lot defending the Spanish Republic and defending Madrid against foreign troops; Hitler's, Mussolini's, or colonial troops; they defended human civilisation after the invasion of the USSR by Hitler's troops. We do not forget those 20 million who died in this battle. Others may forget them but we never will. Who were in the forefront of that battle? They were communists in the most dangerous places, facing the well trained fascist troops. This is the real character of communists; you belong to that category."

This was his speech after collapse of Soviet socialism. What a firm conviction in Marxism, communism, and socialism needs to be there to proclaim like this! It is also understandable how profound was his love and emotion for the poor oppressed people, how deeply was he pained at their predicament. Economy of Cuba was not that strong. It was wrecked by long imperialist exploitation. Faced with the attack from US imperialism after revolution, Cuba had to seek help of Soviet Union for economic

recovery. Cuba had no production other than of sugarcane and tobacco. It had to survive by exporting these two produces. Earlier, these were imported by US. But, after revolution, US imperialist rulers imposed total economic blockade on socialist Cuba with a view to strangulating it to death. At that time, Cuba had to depend on help from Soviet Union. Though Khrushchev was then in power, he could not fully destroy socialist ideology so soon, it was decaying. It was destroyed finally in 1990. The decay slowly began since 1956 when fundamental principles mainly were not disturbed. For example, let me narrate one incident. It was either in 1956 or '57. I cannot recollect perfectly. The ownership of the Suez Canal which passes through Egypt was with a British-French company. The nationalist government of Egypt had nationalized the Canal. Britain and France attacked Egypt militarily with the backing of US. They bombed Egypt and sent ground army there. Though Khrushchev was in power, he could not by that time destroy the tradition of Stalin's Russia. Soviet Union gave ultimatum that if Britain and France did not stop the military intervention within 12 hours, it would bomb London and Paris. Soviet government told the people of Britain and France: We have no enmity with you. Your governments have attacked Egypt. You please come forward and compel your governments to halt that attack. The ultimatum was of 12 hours. But the attack stopped in 6 hours. Frightened at the ultimatum, the British and French imperialists beat retreat within no time. Till that time, Soviet Union commanded that powerful position. Stalin's tradition could not be totally wiped off. So, I have referred to this incident. Hence, Soviet Union had helped Cuba. As a part of that, Soviet Union imported sugar from Cuba and in turn exported all that Cuba needed. Even they provided military aid. But the Khrushchev leadership committed a severe wrong in 1960-62. They secretly set up rocket launchers in Cuba. Castro had difference with Khrushchev leadership on this issue. Castro wanted that Khrushchev leadership should do that by way of open declaration. But Khrushchev did not agree.. US came to know about that. US rulers said that those were nuclear installations and hence

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A part of the gathering at Fidel Castro memorial meeting in Kolkata

compatriots. But it is not correct that he successfully accomplished revolution with that meagre strength only. In pre-revolution Cuba, fire of rebellion against the ruthlessly oppressive utterly corrupt Batista government was suppressed underneath. The moment Castro began his struggle, the entire Cuban people stood by his side voicing protest against Batista and organizing massive strikes. A good section of Batista's official army revolted and supported Castro. Had not the internal situation been so favourable, revolution would not have been successful in Cuba.

After dismantling of Soviet

drop of medicine, medical assistance, or schools and education; those who faced untimely death, even though they might be saved; the 200,000 children who die in Latin America every year who would not die if there was a basic health care system in these countries; ruthlessly exploited women who are compelled helplessly to beg and become prostitute; the millions who are unemployed, the beggars, humiliated – what they got from developed capitalist world? Who are responsible for these unbearable sufferings of the third world countries? Only

Fidel Castro

From revolutionary intuition, Castro could notice that policy of giving material incentive was endangering socialism

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posed threat to them. So, they created military barrier and warned that they would not allow any Russian ship to enter the Caribbean Sea. Soviet also gave threat in return. In such a situation, Khrushchev beat retreat and removed the missile launchers. At that time, there was much commotion over this incident which is known as Caribbean crisis. Khrushchev leadership secured assurance from the US that they would not attack Cuba. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh showed that eliciting such assurance was meaningless because US in any way was not going to attack Cuba. As Cuba then was a member of the UN. So it was not easy for US to attack Cuba directly. The whole of Latin America was on the side of Cuba. The American people were then bursting forth in protest against the military attack of US on Vietnam. So, it was not that easy for US to launch military assault on Cuba. That was why Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said that obtaining such assurance from US was of no value. Rather US had its military base on Guantanamo on the territory of Cuba and Soviet Union ought to have exerted pressure for dismantling that military base and hand over that land to Cuba. Khrushchev did not do that either. He should have also asked for abandoning any step on the part of US rulers to install nuclear set up in Turkey or for winding up NATO. China also criticized Khrushchev for that. All these created a political storm in those days. It was apparent that Castro had difference with the Khrushchev leadership over these issues. One can understand that from the speeches of Castro.

Question of enriching Marxism-Leninism

Though Castro had immense trust in Marxism-Leninism, his position was not of a Marxist philosopher as were of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong or Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. In one of his discourses, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had said that those who have applied or would apply Marxism concretely in a concrete situation have made or would invariably make some contributions to enrich the theory of Marxism. You will get this in his book titled "Why SUCI(C) is the only communist party in India". About Vietnam, he said that though Vietnam Revolution was glorious, it could not give birth to any

Marxist thinker. This was where the weakness remained, he pointed out in one of the internal discussions.

Grasp of how revisionist conspiracy engineered counter-revolution

It is also painful that under influence of Khrushchev, Castro had some misgiving about Stalin. He made some anti-Stalin remarks though elsewhere he had a word of praise for Stalin. He accepted Marx, Engels and Lenin as authority. It does not show that he could understand the revolutionary worth of Mao leadership also. Mao was a powerful Marxist authority. But it is not that Castro came in contact with his thoughts or considered him as an authority. Authority to him was limited up to Lenin. This was a limitation of Cuban Revolution and Castro leadership. This I could not but say here. At the same time, I have to say with pain that had Castro accepted Stalin and Mao as teachers, acknowledged them as authority, then the high standard he reflected could have been much more heightened and could find a place in the history with far greater brightness.

We have learnt from Comrade Shibdas Ghosh how revisionism emerged, what had been the precise reasons for its emergence, how bourgeoisie works in socialism; how after abolition of capitalism to a great extent, from the sphere of economy and despite the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the political set up, bourgeois individualism remains in the domain of mind, thoughts and ideas, how private property mental complex persists in the realm of thought and launches attacks from the superstructure to destroy the base. In various discussions, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had elaborately discussed all these aspects. Those who have gone through his works and listened to his speeches are well aware of this. Guided by his thoughts, our Party had shown how revisionism endangered socialism, how capitalist counter-revolution which was initiated by Khrushchev and culminated in Gorbachev had been orchestrated. But Castro could not understand that way.

Stalin felt the danger of Counter Revolution in Soviet Union

I want to say also that Stalin in his last days of life could visualise that danger of revisionism was looming large on Soviet Union. In

the resolution of 19th Congress of CPSU held in 1952, he had pointed out in the form of apprehension how and from where capitalism could stage a comeback in Soviet Union. Our Party had published that report in the form of a booklet. It was clear that he was preparing for another struggle. But, within a few months after 19th Congress, this great leader breathed his last. Had he been alive for a little more time, perhaps Soviet Union could have averted the catastrophe. That struggle was initiated by Mao Zedong in China in the form of Cultural Revolution. When capitalist-roaders were raising their ugly heads in China, many of the front-ranking leaders of CPC who hitherto were eyes and ears of Mao were degenerating and when physical ailments restricted Mao from leading an active life, this great revolutionary leader unfurled the banner of Cultural Revolution to save socialism in China. But he also did not survive to make it a complete success. The object of his struggle remained unfulfilled. It is not known if Castro was acquainted with Mao Zedong Thought. I have not found mention of Mao's name in any of his speeches. Still I would say that from revolutionary intuition, Castro could notice one thing. While criticizing the Soviet party after revisionist takeover, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had pointed out that if socialist consciousness and ethical moral standard of the workers could be raised relentlessly in socialism, then that would boost production and meet the growing material and cultural needs of the Soviet people. In this way socialism would advance. This is the law of socialist economy which was theoretically enunciated by Stalin. But, by raising slogan of anyhow surpassing the imperialist-capitalist countries in production and satisfying the consumerist needs of the people more and more, Khrushchev introduced the concept of providing material incentive to the workers which is typical of capitalism. It means if one labours more, one would get more wages. In other words, the driving force behind labouring more would neither be the elevated ideological consciousness nor a higher ethical-moral base. It would simply be the greed for more money, just like the way one is paid overtime in our country for working beyond the stipulated hours. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had severely criticized this policy of

providing material incentive and pointed out to the Soviet leaders that they were introducing capitalist laws in socialism. It would endanger socialism. He also explained it from various other angles. Castro had no means to be familiar with these penetrating observations of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. But in his speech delivered on 8 January, 1989 in commemoration of 30 years of Cuban revolution, Castro said, "*The socialist formula of reward is part of the historic process of our revolution, but I believe there are factors—I have said this, and I repeat it, and I will not tire of repeating it—that are more important than material incentives. The entire capitalist society revolves around material incentives and it pays not the slightest attention to moral factors. The construction of socialism cannot follow the capitalist formula of giving the most weight to material incentives. I have a great number of examples here of feats that have nothing to do with material incentives. It is not possible to speak of the construction of socialism without giving the most attention to the moral factor.... this in no way means we will worship that material incentive, or even that we believe it is the fundamental factor. If we begin to believe it is the fundamental factor, this could have negative consequences*" I am struck and overwhelmed by this astonishing observation of Castro. Because, without entering deep into Marxist philosophy, without cultivating Mao Zedong Thought or the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, he could understand from revolutionary intuition that socialism could not be operated with bourgeois system of giving material incentive. Rather, it would put socialism in grave danger. This is really amazing and praiseworthy. That is why I have read it out to you.

Castro had criticized Soviet revisionist line

I shall read out a portion from one of his speeches delivered in 1968. In this, he had indirectly criticized Khrushchev leadership. He delivered this speech when counter-revolution was taking place in Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union as well as the signatory countries of Warsaw Pact were sending army there. The imperialists-capitalists alleged that

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Fidel Castro

Castro was an undisputed communist leader of anti-imperialist movement in Latin America and Africa, source of inspiration to world revolutionaries

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Soviet Union had attacked Czechoslovakia with the intention of occupation. There was a lot of debate over this incident at that time. Castro had defended the action of Soviet Union. So did our Party. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had explained that counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia could break out because of Soviet revisionism and the policy of denigrating Stalin's authority by the revisionist Soviet leadership. But, Castro did not comprehend the issue with so much depth. In Czechoslovakia, slogans were raised for multi-party democracy in the name of individual freedom, for freedom of expressing counter opinions, for abandoning dictatorship of the proletariat and so forth. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had shown that Soviet revisionism was to be blamed for these counter-revolutionary slogans. Condemning this ultra-liberalism, Castro observed, "A veritable liberal hysteria began to develop over there. A number of political slogans began to be aired in favour of the creation of opposition parties, in favour of ideas which were frankly anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist, such as the idea that the party should cease to exercise the function which a party should exercise within a socialist society and that it should play the role of guide, reviewer, and the like—above all, a sort of spiritual director. In short, that power should cease to be a function of the Communist Party. [This was] revision of some alleged fundamentals on which a socialist regime, a transitional regime on the road to socialism and communism, that is to say, the so-called government of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in other words, a government in which power is exercised in the name of a class and against the old exploiting classes, which means that in a revolutionary process, political rights cannot be given away—the right to exercise political activities cannot be given to the old exploiters whose aim is to struggle precisely against the very essence and reason for the being of socialism.... I did not have any doubt that the Czechoslovak regime was developing dangerously toward a substantial change in the system.... The imperialists are waging this

campaign not only in Czechoslovakia but in all East European nations including the Soviet Union." I do emphasise on these very words. To say that the imperialists were propagating bourgeois liberalism in not only the East European countries but also in Soviet Union is an indirect criticism of the revisionist leadership of Soviet Union. He had expressed what had struck him. On the other hand, as I have already said, he had supported the sending of army to Czechoslovakia by the constituent countries of Warsaw Pact. To quote his words: "whether we accept it or not, is whether the socialist bloc could permit the development of a political situation which lead to the breakdown of a socialist country and its fall into the arms of imperialism. From our viewpoint, it is not permissible and the socialist bloc has the right to prevent it in one way or another.... What is not appropriate here is to say that [by Soviet intrusion] the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state was not violated. That would be fiction and a lie. The violation was flagrant ... From the legal viewpoint, it cannot be justified. This is quite clear. In our judgment, the decision on Czechoslovakia can be explained only from the political viewpoint and not from a legal viewpoint." It means that such military intervention could be supported only from the moral point of view of socialist politics, not from the perspective of so called bourgeois legality.

Castro had further said: "The communist ideal cannot for a single instant omit internationalism. Those who struggle for communism in any country of the world can never forget the rest of the world... We can say—and today it is necessary to speak sincerely and frankly that we have observed to what point these ideals and these internationalist sentiments, and that state of alert, that awareness of world problems, have disappeared or have been manifested only in a very subtle manner in some socialist countries of Europe." In other words, he held that the spirit of internationalism was on the wane in socialist countries of Europe. This also was a covert criticism of revisionist Soviet leadership.

An internationalist by heart

On the propaganda of 'peace' by revisionist Khrushchev, Castro said: "there has been the preaching which advocates peace. Within the socialist countries there has been a constant and widespread preaching. And we ask ourselves: What is behind all these campaigns? Do we say this because we are advocates of war? Do we say this because we consider ourselves enemies of peace? We are not advocates of war; we are not advocates of universal holocausts.... We have to say... The dangers posed to the world by the existence and aggressiveness of imperialism is unquestionable.... Those who are incendiaries of war are the imperialists... a great part of the world being dominated by imperialism and the people's desire and need to liberate themselves from the imperialist yoke is unquestionable.... these threats are realities — and these realities are not erased simply by preaching in our own homes, by an excessive desire for peace... because this will only bring about the disappearance of combat spirit, a weakening of the people's readiness to face risk, sacrifices, and all the consequences that the international reality entails." By this he had indirectly criticized the very campaign of 'pacifism' by revisionist Soviet leadership.

Castro's criticism of Soviet revisionism

On issues given by the socialist countries to others, Castro said that Soviet Union was taking money from Cuba in exchange of technical aid. Criticizing this policy of taking money for giving aid, he said that giving such aids and assistance is part of international obligation of a socialist country. Cuba never asked for money for providing such aids or assistance to another country. He also criticised another aspect. According to him, neither Soviet Union nor anyone else had straightway pointed finger at US imperialism for hatching such a conspiracy in Czechoslovakia. It ought to have been done, he felt. By referring to one article published in *Pravda*, the organ of the Soviet Communist Party, he showed that the discussion on bourgeois liberalism was flawed.

On the incident of

Czechoslovakia, he further said: "...in relation to the occurrences in Czechoslovakia, the main promoter of all that bourgeois liberal policy—the main defender, the main promoter—was the organization of the so-called Yugoslav communists. They applauded with both hands all those liberal reforms... this is very closely linked to the entire outlook of the Yugoslav League of Communists. All these political outlook & statement completely deviate from Marxism, those economic approaches, are intimately linked with the Yugoslav League of Communists' ideology. These are all against Marxism. However, (it has happened) recently the communist parties in Europe, including the communist parties of the Warsaw Pact, have begun quite to forget the role and nature of the Yugoslav League of Communists. They began to call Yugoslavia a communist country, and invite the Yugoslav League of Communists to meetings of the socialist countries and this evoked our constant opposition, our constant disagreement, our constant taking of exception, expressed on various occasions... It was this organization that was one of the principal promoters of the deformations of the political process in Czechoslovakia as the agent — that is what this organization is — of the imperialists." This is worth noting. Here also he criticized the Khrushchev leadership. Because it was at the initiative of Khrushchev that Yugoslavia party was again included in the socialist bloc. Supporting isolation and expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Communist International which was done by Stalin's leadership, Castro observed: "The communist movement for a long time—with much justification—kept that party ostracized. Now articles are published condemning that decision. Many parties including Soviet Communist Party are doing that." By alluding to such writings that the various socialist countries including Soviet Union are publishing, he criticized revisionist Soviet leadership without naming it. He said: "The statement by TASS explaining the decision of the governments of the Warsaw Pact says in its final

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Fidel Castro

Castro steadfastly defended and advanced socialism by thwarting all machinations of US imperialism and its associates

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 paragraph: "The brother nations firmly and resolutely oppose their unbreakable solidarity against any threat from abroad. They will never permit anyone to snatch away even a single link of the socialist community." Then Castro posed a question: "We ask: Does this statement include Vietnam? Does this statement include Korea? Does this statement include Cuba? Does it consider Vietnam, Korea, and Cuba as links in the socialist camp that cannot be snatched away by the imperialists... we ask: Will Warsaw Pact divisions be sent to Vietnam also if the imperialists increase their aggression against that country and the people of Vietnam ask for this aid? Will Warsaw Pact divisions be sent to the Korean Democratic Republic if the Yankee imperialists attack that country? Will Warsaw Pact divisions be sent to Cuba if the Yankee imperialists attack our country, or simply if, in the face of the threat of an attack by the Yankee imperialists, our country requests it?" This is how he criticized the anti-internationalist role of Soviet Union under revisionist leadership.

By reading out such observations of Castro before you, I want to establish one thing. Comrade Castro had started as an anti-imperialist movement fighter seeking liberation of his motherland. When he began his struggle in 1959, he did not declare himself as a communist. Though it is known he had some study of Marxism. In course of conducting arduous anti-imperialist struggle, he was attracted towards socialism and Marxism-Leninism and declared himself as a Marxist-Leninist, as a communist. I have already referred to an important teaching of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that in this era, whoever wants to conduct an uncompromising battle against imperialism has to be either a communist or a firm supporter of communism. Life of Castro corroborates that.

Grasp of Marxism presupposes applying it in every aspect of life

Marxist outlook means grasp of Marxist ideology and methodology of analysis, dialectical materialist process of analysis, three principles of dialectical materialism as universal laws, existence of internal and external contradictions in every

phenomenon, understanding the principal contradiction and principal aspect of a contradiction and the ability to apply these principals and methodology in analysing any national or international problem or any incident or any other issues or phenomenon. This outlook cannot be acquired by simply reading books. It can be acquired only by embracing Marxism-Leninism as philosophy of life and applying this philosophy in every walk of life starting from family life, approach to property and love-sex, attitude towards married life and children, individual wants and questions of position and fame, attitude to criticism and self-criticism etc. This enriched, developed and comprehensive understanding of this application of Marxist philosophy covering all aspects of life has been provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in continuation of the teachings of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong. I think Castro could not comprehend Marxism in this way.

People of Latin America feel they are fatherless

In spite of this limitation, his sense of internationalism based on immense emotion for the oppressed people and ardent allegiance to and faith on Marxism-Leninism was indeed commendable. At that time, the thinking of Khrushchev and later Brezhnev was that if Soviet Union extended help to any revolution anywhere, it would trigger war. Castro did not care for such revisionist thoughts. He helped revolutionary struggles in each and every Latin American country. Wherever in Africa, the US mercenary army had mounted attack on the revolutionaries or sought to overthrow revolutionary governments, such a tiny country like Cuba which itself was stricken by acute economic crisis and was not getting any help from Russia after collapse of Soviet Union, had sent volunteers or even armed fighters there. So, he is the symbol of liberation struggle in entire Latin America and Africa. Not only Cuba, the whole of Latin America feels they are fatherless at the demise of Comrade Castro.

On the other hand, Nelson Mandela is another notable figure. No one had spent longer time in jail than Mandela of South Africa. He spent 30 years in jail. Next to him was Frontier Gandhi in undivided India. Another person was Trailokya

Maharaj, a renowned revolutionary and freedom fighter of undivided Bengal in British India. After his release from jail, Nelson Mandela first went to Cuba to greet Castro, the friend of South Africa. He highly respected and appreciated the help Castro had extended in their fight against heinous apartheid regime. Mandela's historic utterance was— "So many foreigners have come to Africa to 'take' from the continent. Only Cubans came to 'give' something to Africa". Right from Algeria to Congo, Angola, Namibia, South Africa and all other countries in Africa—the entire continent is now immersed in grief. Algeria has declared national mourning for 8 days. They are grateful to Castro. Castro held aloft the flag of internationalism which revisionist Russian leadership had thrown away. You are also aware that being infected by the killing disease Ebola, eleven thousand people had died in three African countries. Castro had sent doctors to these Ebola-afflicted countries. So, unbound love for the oppressed humanity, hatred towards imperialist-capitalist oppression, allegiance towards Marxism-Leninism and avid pursuit of internationalism—these all marked his character.

In one place, he said, "in the face of an aggression...our people...are prepared to fight to the very last man.... We will not abandon our work or our development plans." At the end of this speech delivered in 2012, he said, "*This is the time for the Cuban people to declare with extreme pride and firm voice that either 'Socialism, or death, either independent fatherland or death'.*" This was his firm determination.

And you have just heard his famous saying included in the condolence resolution adopted here: "*I am a Marxist Leninist and I will be one until the last day of my life.*"

This was his commitment. He has left an appeal to the Cuban people for protecting socialism. Castro had been a legendary leader of the people of Cuba, Latin America, Africa and for that matter the entire world. Cuban people have secured socialism under his leadership. Today, socialism is virtually absent in the world. Severe economic sanction against Cuba is still continuing. That is why rationing system is in vogue there.

One comrade has sent me a chart of the rationing system there.

I do not know whether it is correct or not. As per that chart, everyone is given 10 kg of rice, 6 kg of white sugar, 2 kg of red sugar, 250 ml of edible oil, 12 eggs, one packet of coffee, 6 kg of meat per month. Apart from these are provided one big loaf of bread every day and one bagful of salt in 2/3 months. Besides, pregnant women and children under seven years of age receive one bottle of milk every day. The patients are provided nutritious food as per doctor's advice. Every citizen of Cuba gets this ration. These apart, there are normal markets from where one can procure necessities as one's capacity. It is evident that they are in acute crisis, not getting any help from outside. Economic blockade is continuing. In spite of that, Cuba tops the list in the world in so far as spread of education and providing high standard medical care to all are concerned.

Cuban people must uphold legacy of Castro

After the demise of Fidel Castro, US imperialism has got a big opportunity to strangulate Cuba further. Fidel has left a fervent appeal to save socialism in Cuba. "Either socialism, or death"—such was his exhortation to the people. Either socialism would exist or all of us meaning the entire people shall die. In other words, human civilization would perish. We can hope that people of Cuba would give due respect to his last appeal. But that would depend on proper cultivation of Marxism-Leninism. We are optimistic that they would successfully shoulder that task. We have a lot to learn from the valiant struggle of this great leader against imperialism-capitalism, his boundless patience, firm resolve and arduous life struggle. This irresistible struggle of this great leader against imperialism-capitalism, his firm determination, unending patience, untiring and arduous fight against all odds & difficulties, his aid and assistance to all oppressed and exploited people fighting against imperialism-capitalism and finally to keep upholding the banner of Marxism-Leninism even in this period when it is faced with crisis and world socialism has been dismantled are all exemplary. We have to take many lessons from all these and we will do so. With this, I end here by offering Red Salute to the departed great leader Comrade Fidel Castro.

Observance of 62nd Foundation Anniversary of AIDSO



Comrade Kamal Sain, President, AIDSO, hoisting red flag at the headquarters in Kolkata on 28 December, 2016.

Kharagpur IIT scholars earn victory, AIDSO congratulates them

Under pressure of sustained movement of research scholars and research students of Kharagpur IIT, the IIT authority has been compelled to slash down the hostel charges, enhanced exorbitantly by Rs 7800 at one stroke. Despite all threats from the authority and braving their unbending attitude towards protest lodged by the students and scholars, the latter did not succumb and continued their movement. At the call of their organization DRSO, students of other institutions observed a protest day on 22 December. More than hundred research scholars of the SN Bose National Centre for Basic Science, about 45 students of Saha Institute of Kolkata, students of Calcutta University and Jadavpur university, as also students of Viswa Bharati University and from Bangalore, Kerala and elsewhere, registered their protest expressing solidarity with the IIT Kharagpur students and scholars. AIDSO staged protest demonstration at Karagpur and Medinipur and submitted memorandum to the district administration on 22 December on the same cause. All this forced the IIT KGP authority to reduce the enhanced hostel charge to Rs 3600. AIDSO congratulated the IIT students and their fraternal forces for their victory and called for organizing united movement in correct path to solve other existing problems of theirs.

Education movement in AP-Telangana

An education convention was held on 30th of November 2016 in Hyderabad on the demand of filling up of vacant teachers and lecturer posts in the state of Telangana. Prof. P.L.Visweswara Rao, President, AISEC, Telangana chapter, presided over the meeting. He highlighted failure of the government in fulfilling the electoral pledge of providing education free from KG to PG level, instead giving way to increasing privatization of the education sector. He called for sustained movement against all such attacks on education. Sri. S. Govindarajulu, Secretary, AISEC, A. P. Chapter said, if Cuba, led by departed leader Comrade Fidel Castro could successfully eradicate illiteracy, unemployment, in spite of limited resources and against all odds why the Government of India and the state governments are failing to achieve the demand of education for all. Sri. M. Madhu, Member, AISEC, as well as representatives from Contract Lecturers Association, B.Ed Students Association, Sri. Gangadhar, President, State AIDSO, and Bharath from AIDYO also stressed upon their respective problems and demands in their speeches.

On 10th of December, a press meet was held at Press Club, Somajiguda, Hyderabad, to oppose the move of the state government to make new legislation to allow Reliance Industries to establish an education campus from KG to PG with a 10,000 cr. investment. The Reliance Industries sought the government to provide 1000 acres of land for that purpose. AISEC was the first in responding to the news that came in the Telugu print media. The press meet was addressed by Prof. P.L.Visweswara Rao, President, AISEC, Telangana, Sri. S.GovindaRajulu, Sri. M.Madhu, Sri.Gangadhar and Sri Teja. The contents of the press meet were given wide coverage by the local media.

SUCI(C) strongly condemns cut in PF interest and demands immediate withdrawal of the decision

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 20-12-2016 :

SUCI(C) severely condemns the most despicable act on the part of the central government to slash interest rate on Provident Fund by 0.15% close on the heels of repeated lowering of interests on bank deposits and the atrocious demonetization drive. This rate cut, it goes without saying, is just the beginning as the capitalist government which is on a spree of granting huge tax waivers, concessions and amnesty to the monopoly houses and big business would continue to be engaged in reducing the rates periodically under this or that fraudulent pretext and divert the PF corpus more and more to the speculative capital market much to the glee of the punters and thus put the PF subscribers to utter risk of losing even their principal.

While demanding immediate roll back of the decision, we call upon the working people to close their rank and rise up in protest against this highly unjust economic onslaught and compel the government to rescind the move under pressure of powerful united organized working class movement.

AIDSO School of Politics for Sikkim students at Ghatshila

At the Study Centre for Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought at Ghatshila, Jharkhand a school of politics for Sikkim students was held on 14-16 December. The school began with Comrade Kamal Sain, AIDSO, All India President hoisting the Party Flag and Comrade Moly Bose, Incharge, Ghatshila Centre, Comrade Sourav Mukherjee, Comrade Prokash Sharma, one of the joint conveners and other leaders of the AIDSO Sikkim State Organising Committee offering floral tributes to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. After observance of silence in memory of the recently departed great revolutionary leader, Comrade Fidel Castro, Comrade Sourav Mukherjee, SUCI (C) organizer, conducted the School proceedings, which included deliberations in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh thought on questions related to the Great Russian November Revolution and lessons thereof, problems of education, unemployment problem, ever-increasing crime in Sikkim, specially sex-related crimes, etc. Students taking enthusiastic part in the school pledged to develop powerful students' movement in Sikkim. A 12-member AIDSO Sikkim State Organizing Committee was formed with Comrade Prokash Sharma and Shankar Sharma as the Joint Conveners and Comrade Bhanubhakt Sharma as the Treasurer. Rendition of the song on Great Leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and the *Internationale*, respectively at the start and end of the school added to the fervour of the participants.

AIMSS-AIDSO-AIDYO protest atrocities on women, liquor sales across the country

At different parts of the country SUCI (C) and its mass organizations, AIMSS, AIDSO, AIDYO organized protests and deputations against atrocities on women, for immediate curb on sales of liquor and the likes, for punishment to the guilty and other demands. In each case people participated with remarkable initiative. In **Guwahati in Assam**, there was a massive rally on 16 December, the Nirbhaya Day. On 18 December in **Ranchi, Jharkhand**, AIMSS-AIDSO- AIDYO held a road block demanding safety for women and strict punishment to the miscreants who had gangraped and burnt alive an Engineering student on 16 December 2016. A delegation met the parents of the victim and on 19 December a State-level Protest Day was called. There was also a joint demonstration with AIDSO and AISA on the same issue. On 19 December 2016 AIMSS, AIDSO, AIDYO and Sharab Birodhi Sangharsh Samity led a gherao and deputation to the district collectorate at Titurdih, **Durg, Chhattisgarh**. On 20 December AIMSS-AIDYO in areas under the **South Port Police Station, Kolkata**, staged protests for immediate stopping of liquor sale in the area.

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