

Cows feeding on dumped onions

Horrific Spectacle of Peril and Penury of Indian Peasants

Cows feeding on dumped onions in Nashik, Maharashtra. The spectacle is horrible but encapsulated in it is the abysmal plight and distress of the Indian peasants. A glut in the production but non-availability of remunerative price have been prompting the farmers to take extreme steps of either discarding or burning their crops. A series of harrowing tales of wanton deprivation of the peasants have come to the fore of late. Shreyas Abhale, a farmer from Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, was reportedly left with just Rs 6 after selling 2,657kg onions at just over Rs 1 a kilogram. This was after deducting his labour and transport expenses. Angered over his meagre earning, the farmer sent the paltry amount to the BJP chief minister of the state. Sanjay Sathe, a resident of Niphad tehsil in Nashik district offered only Rs 1 per kg at the local wholesale market. After prolonged negotiation, he could sell 750 kgs of his produce at Rs 1.40 per kg. What he did with the money

has captured the media glare. As a mark of protest, Sathe donated the entire amount of money to the Disaster Relief Fund of the PMO. Rajendra Bawake, a resident of Sakuri village in Ahmednagar district had claimed that even after investing Rs 2 lakh and energy into cultivating brinjal, he could only manage to receive Rs 65,000 as price at the rate of 20 paise per kg. The distraught and irate farmer, who was upset with the outcome, uprooted all brinjal plants. In Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch mandi, onions were sold for as low as Rs 50 paise per kg which put local farmers in a state of frenzy. Mewalal Patidar, a farmer, reportedly said, "I would like to throw the yield on the road instead of selling it for peanuts." "The ideal price of tur dal would be Rs.7,000 a quintal as that is the approximate cost of cultivating a quintal," said Sunil Jadhav, who owns five acres (two hectares) in the Amravati belt of Vidarbha. But the traders are offering a little over Rs.3,000 a quintal though we were assured of a price at least four times our expenses. Now I am at the mercy of traders," Onion farmers in Karnataka's Belagavi district also staged a similar protest a fortnight ago and even locked the main gate of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) following the sudden decline in prices. Sugarcane farmers in different parts of Karnataka protested demanding minimum support price for cane produce and payment of arrears by factories. Enraged on being forced into distress sale at an unbelievably low price, sugarcane farmers of Uttar Pradesh burnt their crops a year back. But instead of taking any effective step to ameliorate their woes, the state's saffron-clad chief minister suggested them to start growing crops other than sugarcane to "help contain diabetes" in the state. Just a few days back, residents of Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh, woke up to a bizarre sight. Potatoes lay strewn on some of the prominent roads and crossings, including the Vidhan Sabha Marg, the VVIP Guest House and other places as angry potato farmers in UP, which produces about 30% of India's potatoes, abandoned their crops on the streets. Almost similarly, the potato farmers of West Bengal were

also throwing away the produce on the highways translated into cost per kilogram, it is at least Rs 6. But the procurement price they were offered varied between Rs1.3 to Rs 2 only. In Punjab too, potato farmers are facing huge losses as they are getting a price of Rs.1 per kg instead of their expectation of at least Rs.5-6 which could have benefitted them with some margin after covering the cost. While the series of incidents from different parts of the country narrated above show how the peasants who cultivate crops with toil by incurring a substantial expenditure towards buying agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers and



Cows feeding on onions in Nashik

To prevent further erosion pass-fail system must be reintroduced from Class-I — Provash Ghosh

Reacting to the central government's decision to reintroduce pass-fail system in class-V and class-VIII, Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), issued the following statement on 4 January 2019:

'No Detention policy upto class VIII at the school level has caused serious damage to the learning process of millions of students in our country. Since its initiation, our Party SUCI (Communist) voiced strong protest against it. From among the teachers, students, guardians and educationists at large strong resentment has been voiced. Our Pa-loving people at all levels, had launched movement against this disastrous policy which is continuing for the last 10 years throughout the country. The cumulative pressure of this mass anger and the ongoing movements has compelled the central government to reintroduce pass-fail system. But bringing it back only at class V and VIII cannot prevent the rot in education. To prevent further erosion in education reintroduction of pass-fail system from class-I is urgently necessary. We have been organizing movement on this demand and so long as the government does not concede, the mass movement will continue

pesticides as well as other ancillary requirement find the procurement mechanism so manipulative and malfunctioning that they are forced to sell their produce at a throwaway price which often is equivalent to receiving virtually no price at all. But when the crops reach the retail market via procurement set up, storage arrangement and wholesalers, the end price at which those are sold to common people multiply several hundred times meaning the middlemen make it all. So, while the peasants are getting ranging from 50 paise to Re1 per kg for the onion produced by them, the same one is sold in the retail outlets at a price of Rs15 to 20 per kg.

Inherent anomaly and dire strait of Indian agriculture

This stark reality unfolds the inherent anomaly and dire strait of Indian agriculture. India is producing enough food to feed its people, now and in the foreseeable future. But those who have been producing these foodgrains and vegetables are subjected to appalling misery and penury by the obtaining capitalist system which is also

Peril and Penury of Peasants

Peasants are cut on both the sides — rising cost and stagnated income

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forcing the consumers to pay through their nose for buying those from the market. Clearly, it is a flawed procurement system dominated by an unholy nexus of corrupt administration-village touts-storage unit owners-ruling party leaders-panchayat functionaries and an equally faulty, if not manipulative, distribution system gripped by a series of middlemen, hoarders, blackmarketers, middlemen and price manipulators which are causing all these aberrations and bringing wails and woes to both the producers and the consumers. Worse, the monopolistic control of this vicious circle over agricultural markets is perpetuated by law. So, the peasants have no scope for selling directly to consumers. They are compelled to offload their produce to these utterly corrupt and all-powerful middle agencies and middlemen. This kills any chance of farmers getting a fair price, lining the pockets of commission agents instead. Further, in avid pursuit of the prescripts of globalization, the entire production of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides have been handed over to private operators including giant multi-nationals on a silver platter. Consequently, prices of all these inputs have been skyrocketing with every passing day pushing up cost of agriculture enormously. Over and above that, even after 70 years of independence, hardly 50% of the cultivable land has irrigation facility. Even the lands claimed to be under irrigation lack adequate supply of water. According to the Agriculture Census, 38% of the irrigable land uses surface water and 62% from groundwater. Reckless unplanned pumping is also causing fast depletion of groundwater reserve affecting ecological balance and creating also shortage, if rainfall is inadequate, thereby putting the peasants in further distress. Moreover, with diesel price reaching the sky, abnormal rise in the cost of operating shallow pumps are adding to the woes of the poor peasants. Farming still is at the mercy of nature and the ruling circles never fail to utter that crop production is dependent on “good monsoon” and a single season of dry spell was enough to plunge rural economy into distress entailing overall economic downturn. In this way, they cunningly evade the question of poor irrigation, patchy use of technology and rampant corruption behind the growing predicament of the peasants.

A double-edged sword flung at peasants

The peasants are thus cut on both the sides—rising cost and stagnated income. They spend high amounts to produce. Having no money to finance this rising cost, they borrow funds mostly from the money-lenders at exorbitant interest since institutional credit hardly reaches more than 10% of the needy. A recent survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) revealed that nearly 50 per cent of India's farmers are indebted to either banks or money lenders. But when the peasants go for selling their crops, they find prices offered to be far less than what could cover their cost. So, they fail to repay loan. All these problems

have resulted in continuous marginalization of the peasants. As per an official report, between 1991 and 2011 nearly 1.5 crore had quit their profession as farmers, of whom majority have become landless agricultural labourers. This signified a dropout rate of about 2,040 farmers every day. Further, due to soaring peril of agriculture, there is fast transformation of middle peasants into marginal peasants, marginal peasants into sharecroppers and bargadars (tiling land on lease system), sharecroppers and bargadars into landless peasants to agricultural workers. Even a sizeable number of Indian peasants, paralyzed by low productivity, heavy loss of produce and earning, lack of post-harvest storage facilities, inability to hold on to their land, growing pauperization coupled with inability to stand the competitiveness of international market are offering themselves as labour in any manual job. So, a huge exodus of farmers from villages to towns and cities is witnessed. But, there too, in absence of jobs, many of these migrants turn into street beggars, footpath dwellers and die like cats and dogs on the streets. Further, this ongoing eviction of the peasants from land is having devastating effect on agriculture development of which is seriously impeded leading to shortage in production of foodgrains. This in turn is paving way to large scale imports of the same much to the glee of giant avaricious multi-nationals trading in food crops. Alongside growing poverty and endless misery of the peasants, it is also increasing trade deficit (import overtaking export) and putting economy in further stress.

Growing number of peasants' suicide

What is more appalling is that unable to see their families reeling in hunger and bear the ignominy for default, the peasants are pushed to such precarious a mental state as to end their life through suicide. And the governments irrespective of hues who pretend to be so peasant-friendly and do not lack in shedding crocodile tears for their gloom and desolation, are all mute spectators, if not tacit abettors and accomplices to this ruthless exploitation, inhumaness and savage economic assault. Already, over 3.5 lakh of peasants have committed suicide because of being denied remunerative prices and inability to repay loans. The situation has turned so alarming that the government has stopped publishing figures of such suicides for last 3 years. Over and above that, the ministers have been having no qualms even to stoop to the level of making cruel jokes over such suicides. Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh told Parliament on Friday farmers were committing suicide over reasons such as love affairs, dowry and impotence apart from financial crisis. Singh's statement came just months after BJP party colleague and Haryana agriculture minister OP Dhankar called farmers committing suicide “cowards”. The farmers seethed in anger when the Tamil Nadu government told the Supreme Court that not a single farmer committed suicide due to drought in the state and that they died of “natural causes”. It shows how the power that be is playing sixes and sevens with

tragic death of hapless poor. Now another mockery has started. Once any death of any peasant is reported, some of the state governments announce a cash compensation to the bereaved family, shut their mouth, suppress the festering sores of agricultural economy and seek to derive electoral mileage by feigning sympathy with the loss of life. These bear eloquent testimony of the standard and culture of the bourgeois politicians occupying hot seat of power.

Farce of Minimum Support Price

Moreover, every bourgeois government treat agriculture as a source of votes and not an engine of growth. So, when election draws near, promises of increasing Minimum Support Price (MSP) and opening more government outlets to procure crops from the peasants at that price, waiving bank loans etc. are showered. But there is no attempt to strike at the root cause as we know in capitalism today, none of the governments subservient to ruling capitalists can do so. Hence, the hoaxes need a thorough exposure.

Let us take the case of Minimum Support Price (MSP). In its 2014 election manifesto the Modi-led Central government had promised, besides other things, Minimum Support Price (MSP) which would be offered to the peasants and would be 50% more than the cost of production (if cost is Rs 10, MSP would be Rs 15) as recommended by Swaminathan Commission. But soon after coming to power, the BJP government, with a view to serving the vested bourgeois class interest it is wedded to, had cunningly changed the methodology of calculating the MSP. The Swaminathan Commission suggested fixing of the MSP for crops “at least 50 per cent more than the weighted average cost of production”. There are two cost measures for agriculture. The first one (A2+FL in technical term) consists of all expenses paid by the peasants in cash and kind, like the expenses on different heads like seeds, fertiliser, hired labour, fuel, irrigation, insecticides, and above all, an imputed value of the unpaid labour of the family members that went into the farming process. The second one (C2) is the comprehensive cost measure, which includes A2+FL and also includes imputed value of land rentals, interests over working and fixed capital, etc. The budget announcement was for increasing the MSP by 50 per cent using the A2+FL as the base leaving out the other component of C2. Here lies the catch and deception. Under the new method the cost of production suddenly came down to, more or less, half the actual costs of production for most of the crops. This is how they are betraying the farmers' cause! Even this amount announced based on the above calculation is not entirely reaching the needy farmers because the middlemen and middle agencies are pocketing the bulk. Secondly, as per the Commission of Agricultural Costs and Prices 2018, government has announced MSP for 28 items. But the

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Speech of Comrade Mobinul Haider Chowdhury, General Secretary, BASAD(Marxist) at the 3rd Party Congress of SUCI(C)

[This is the speech delivered by Comrade Mobinul Haider Chowdhury on the first day of the delegate session of the 3rd Party Congress of the SUCI(C) on 21 November 2018 at Ghatsila, Jharkhand. He has slightly edited the speech before printing.]

On behalf of our party, the Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (Marxbadi) [Socialist Party of Bangladesh (Marxist)], I greet all the delegate comrades of this 3rd Party Congress of SUCI(C). Comrade Provash Ghosh, your beloved General Secretary, has given to you a brief introduction of mine. I would not repeat the same. I want to say at the outset how I had carried teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat, to Bangladesh with my limited capacity and understanding. You may be aware that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was born in a small village near Dhaka. His political life started from there only. First, he was associated with the Anushilan Samity. Then he tried to build up Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) as a Marxist-Leninist Party. In RSP, there was considerable influence of anti-British imperialist, uncompromising petty bourgeois trend of our freedom movement. The leaders of RSP could notice that the undivided CPI did not grow as a genuine communist party. So, there was an attempt to build up a real communist party. But that party, the RSP, was essentially a follower of the Anushilan Samity and hence turned out to be a petty bourgeois party. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was arrested in 1942. You know all these things better than me. So, let me confine to how did I first come in contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh.

SUCI(C) first started as a platform of action. Then on 24 April 1948, the Party was founded at a Convention held at Jaynagar in West Bengal. Comrade Manoranjan Banerjee, then a member of the Central Committee of the Party who could not later continue to be in political life, was involved in working class movement. I was associated with the Party through him. I lost my parents in my childhood. I was staying with my elder brother at the dock area of Kidderpore in Kolkata. It was during that time that I was acquainted with Comrade Manoranjan Banerjee. He brought me to a study circle that was conducted by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. I was at the time very poor in my school education also. I could study only upto class VIII.

When I came in contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, I was immensely attracted by his talks, discussion and association. My understanding about an honourable revolutionary life grew not that much through study of Marxist literature. It germinated in me through listening to his discussions and mixing with him closely. I was involved in Trade Union activities. Once the police raided our home and searched for me. My elder brother was very much frightened after that. He was scared because he was then a Pakistani (then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh). He told me that I would not be able to stay with him anymore. At that time, SUCI(C) was passing through very hard days.

So, it was not possible for me to stay in the commune where other comrades were living. After leaving my brother's place, I used to sleep on the streets of adjacent Bata area. Kolkata comrades are aware of that place. A few pages of old newspaper made my bed. The police often woke me up and drove me away. This was how those days had rolled by. Notwithstanding all such hassles and difficulties, almost every day I used to walk down around 10 kms to reach our Party Commune at Tallah area of north Kolkata from Khidderpore in extreme southern fringe of the city to meet and get association of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh towards whom I was immensely attracted. I was enthused and inspired by his cultural, ethical and moral conduct. I knew the comrades there had problem in arranging food. My condition was more precarious. So I used to go after lunch time so that the comrades were not embarrassed. In those days of my political life Comrades Provash Ghosh and Ranjit Dhar also passed through very hard days. Comrade Ranjit Dhar used to stay at Haldarpara in Kalighat area of South Kolkata. On many days, myself and Comrade Provash Ghosh went without food and spent nights on the benches of Deshapriya Park in South Kolkata. Both these comrades had immensely helped me at that time. If they could arrange for some food, they kept one portion of that for me. If I could manage to get two annas, I used to look for Comrade Provash Ghosh so that we could share food. Such were the days then. Observing some dedication, courage and militancy in me, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh assigned me some work. But I could not satisfy him with my performance all the time. Because, building up revolutionary character was of utmost importance then. At that time, his main teaching was for releasing arduous all-embracing struggle to acquire higher revolutionary character. I lacked in many aspects of that struggle. That is why, there were many failures on my part. Sometimes he was annoyed with me, but never lost patience. Always he encouraged me. During that time, the goldsmiths who were facing many problems developed a movement throughout the country. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh asked me to organize the goldsmiths. I along with late Madhab Roy Chowdhury, who was also a very close comrade of mine, began organizing the goldsmiths in various places. On behalf of the struggling goldsmiths, an attractive concise but specific charter of demands was handed over to the central government. It was Comrade Shibdas Ghosh who had prepared that charter. One particular newspaper published the entire charter but did not mention the name of the Party. After this movement, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had sent me, Comrade Provash Ghosh and some other comrades to Birbhum district of West

Bengal. There Comrade Protiva Mukherjee had already become very popular by way of conducting peasants' movements. In course of that Comrade Protiva Mukherjee became endeared as 'Didimani' (elder sister) particularly to the lower caste Hindu population whom the landowners used



**Comrade Mobinul Haider
Chowdhury speaking**

to look down upon as outcastes as well as to the downtrodden tribal people. We also tried to organize them. During the election of 1962, we started our work centring on Comrade Protiva Mukherjee. During that period, the situation there was extremely adverse for undertaking Party activity. The landlords or the rural kulaks used to pounce on us and beat us severely. It was difficult for us to arrange food in anyone's house as everyone was scared of them. But Comrade Shibdas Ghosh often sent us there for developing party organization braving all odds. But despite all difficulties and onslaughts, I personally gained a lot of experiences in course of working among these extremely poor people.

A serious communal riot broke out in Kolkata in 1964. At that time, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh wrote an article titled "Communal disturbance in India and Pakistan". In that article published in the form of a booklet, he dwelt on what was the root cause of communal problem and how can that be resolved. With this booklet, I met many intellectuals and well-known personalities belonging to the Muslim community. When I went to Delhi, I gave a copy of this booklet also to Irfan Habib, the noted leftist historian. Everyone said that none had hitherto analysed the communal problem so penetratingly. I organized a few youth as well in Kolkata. Once Comrade Shibdas Ghosh asked me what was my contemplation with these youth? I sought his advice on this. He told me: develop a youth organization. Then I started building up AIDYO. Then once I went to Delhi to attend a conference. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was then staying in Delhi. For a particular reason, he had to go there. One member of AIDYO informed me through a letter that one of his relatives was living in Delhi and he was interested in reading Ganadabi, our Bengali organ. So, I might like to contact him. At that time, Comrade Chitta Roy was an MP of the party. We used to stay at his MP quarter. Our contacts in Delhi used to meet Comrade Shibdas Ghosh there. This is how Party work started in Delhi state. One day, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh told me that I should no more be involved in AIDYO work but shift to

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Comrade Mubinul Haider Chowdhury's speech

My understanding about an honourable revolutionary life grew after coming in contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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Delhi for developing organization there. So I started living in Delhi. I often used to go to Ghaziabad, Moradabad and Saharanpur areas of Western UP. There I could develop quite a number of contacts. One day a person called Mathur came to Delhi for taking Comrade Chitta Roy to a meeting somewhere outside Delhi. The other speakers of that meeting were Bhupesh Gupta, CPI leader and P Ramamurthy, the CPI (M) leader. At that time, the first United Front government was in power in West Bengal. Comrade Subodh Banerjee was the Labour Minister. Throughout the state of West Bengal, 'gherao' movement was going on. This movement had spread in North India also. Even this movement spread across the border into the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Moulana Bhasani, the renowned leader of that country also started developing 'gherao' movement. That is a different part of history. I would not like to enter into that today. In the aforesaid meeting of Delhi, the subject of discussion was the 'gherao' movement. Comrade Chitta Roy was then sick. Bhupesh Gupta and Ramamurthy could not attend because of preoccupation. I went there. There were 50 people comprising doctors, engineers, advocates and such other educated and intellectual personalities. They were waiting for the MPs. When they saw me, they said that since I belonged to West Bengal, I should apprise them of what was happening there. You all know that my English is very poor. Still with my broken English and Hindi, I placed before them how the 'gherao' movement was developed and how Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had provided Marxist analysis of the questions relating to legitimacy and legality. At that time, some people raised objection to 'gherao' movement saying that it was not legal. In reply, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh pointed out that what is legal may not always be legitimate. On the other hand, if something is found illegal on the anvil of prevailing legal framework, it could very well be legitimate. I dwelt on this issue at length. All those who were present in the meeting were highly impressed. They told me—"Comrade we have invited you here and shall definitely arrange for your return to Delhi. But please spend a night with us here." On their request, I stayed there not for a day but for seven days together. I had only one dress with me—the dress I was wearing. They arranged for my clothes. I had a long discussion with them. They were very much impressed. After 15 days, again I went there. Again I discussed various issues. This time also, they were highly impressed. I decided that I must inform Shibdas Ghosh about these contacts. I informed him of the developments over phone. He asked me to go there again and maintain the contacts. He also advised me that a Central Committee member would also go and have a talk with them. Accordingly, Comrade Pritish Chanda was sent to have further discussions with them. For three long days, we discussed on various issues. The main topic which became the pivot of the

discussions was whether the stage of revolution in India was of anti-capitalist socialist revolution or People's Democratic Revolution. A section among those who assembled there had Naxalite-leaning. They had a desire to joining the Naxalites by quitting the CPI (M). I had a discussion with them also. After prolonged discussion, eleven of them decided to join the SUCI(C) and were given applicant membership. One Organizing Committee was also formed.

Because of being in Delhi for a considerable time, I got opportunity to listen to many important discussions of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Some of the incidents are unforgettable. He always conducted discussion on various subjects in front of all of us who were there at that time. The quarter of Comrade Chitta Roy where we were putting up was adjacent to the quarter of Shri Dwijendralal Sengupta, who was a member of the Rajya Sabha and a well-known lawyer of the Supreme Court. He knew Comrade Shibdas Ghosh right from the days of the freedom movement. They were also in jail together. We were not aware that he listened to all the discussions of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh from the next room and was highly impressed. One day, we found that Makhan Chatterjee, a leader of the Port and Dock labour union, one Mr Kulkarni and Pilo Modi, an industrialist, had come to Shri Sengupta's room. Dwijenbabu came and took Comrade Shibdas Ghosh to his room because those present there were discussing about the relevance of Marxism. After Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had come, they all said that Marxism was no more relevant. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in reply that Marxism is a comprehensive philosophy based on science. Could any science till date prove it to be wrong or irrelevant? Then he dealt with certain aspects of Marxism. They all were dumbstruck. Dwijenbabu was so enthralled by that discussion that he began taking initiative to organize sittings of his acquaintances with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Among them was a reputed lawyer of the Supreme Court. I cannot recollect his name now. He often used to come and have discussion on various issues with Comrade Ghosh. One day, names of Rabindranath and Saratchandra featured in the discussion. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh criticized the letter Rabindranath had written to Saratchandra after the latter's celebrated political novel "Pather Dabi" (Demand of the Road) was banned by the British imperialists. That lawyer gentleman expressed unhappiness over this because he was a devout admirer of Rabindranath. But when Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was clarifying the matter to him, two other comrades unnecessarily entered into the discussion. So Comrade Shibdas Ghosh could not convince that person who left being visibly enraged. But what I noticed was that Comrade Shibdas Ghosh did not say anything to those comrades. But he himself became very restless because of not being able to make that lawyer grasp the truth. I had seen earlier also that when he tried to make anyone understand the

truth, he often did not relent, forgetting to have food or take bath, till he became successful.

Our day for returning to Kolkata was drawing near. One day I found the same lawyer gentleman walking up and down outside our quarter. It appeared that he was hesitating to come in. I informed Comrade Shibdas Ghosh about this. He asked me to bring him in. Once we requested to come in, he immediately did so and then caught hold of the hands of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh seeking pardon for his misbehaviour the other day. He also said that he had never come across a wise person like Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Afterwards, he began reading our organs and contributing to the Party fund.

Another incident also created a deep imprint in me. Hearing from us about Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, a student who stood first class first in mathematics, came to our quarter and asked him what is the relation between Mathematics and Dialectics. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh lucidly explained that to him. Highly impressed, that student got himself associated with Party and undertook Party activities with me for some time.

Thereafter, Party work had started in Haryana also. Comrade Satyawan came into the Party fold at that period. Now he is an important member of the Central Committee. Now Party organization is spread throughout the state. After I left, Party organisation had further expanded.

Assembly elections in West Bengal were held in quick succession in 1971 and 1972. I was involved in election work on both the occasions. Incidentally, the liberation movement of Bangladesh had surged forth at that time. There is a very valuable discourse of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on the Bangladesh liberation movement. He drew attention of the Indian people that this was a very important movement for liberation. In regard to this movement, the approach of the working class cannot be on par with that of the bourgeois class. There were various opinions about this movement in the political circle. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh pointed out that the Congress government of India was in favour of dividing Pakistan in the interest of the extending sphere of influence by the Indian imperialist rulers. Following that movement, Bangladesh achieved freedom. At that time, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh told me: "You have not gone to your birthplace for a long time. You can go and meet various forces there with our Party literatures". On his advice, I left for Bangladesh after three days. I practically knew nothing of Bangladesh at that time. I had come to Kolkata from Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) in my childhood days.

As a country, Bangladesh was a bit different. It is very difficult to get people's help and support in India. In comparison, the soil of Bangladesh was very soft. I met quite a number of kind-hearted people there. No, I am not blaming the Indian people. I always tell the people

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Comrade Mubinul Haider Chowdhury's speech

Unity of the Hindu and Muslim people in the liberation movement compelled Sheikh Mujib to raise slogan of secularism

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of Bangladesh about the greatness of Indian people. Yet, I would say that soil of Bangladesh was very soft at that time. They had provided me immense help and support. A students' organization in the name of 'Chhatra League' was there when I was in that country. In fact, it was carrying the legacy of the Muslim League. Previously it was called "Muslim Students' League". Later, the name was changed to 'Chhatra League'. Maulana Bhasani founded the Awami League. First, it was 'Awami Muslim League'. Then he named it as 'Awami League'. But both Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Suhrawardy were out and out communal. They were actively involved in the riot of 1946. Suhrawardy was the leader and teacher of Sheikh Mujib. You know about Mujibur Rehman. During the turbulent days of Bangladesh liberation movement, he was forced to talk of secularism, nationalism, socialism and democracy. The unity of the Hindu and Muslim people in the liberation movement compelled him to raise slogan of secularism. Such slogans were very popular in those days. But he was not a secular person. While explaining the characteristics of Bangladesh nationalism, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, in his speech delivered on 24 April 1971, showed that this grew in the womb of Pakistan though it was alienated from Pakistan. After going to Bangladesh, I met the leaders of 'Chhatra League'. At that time, under the general influence of World Communist Movement, they were raising slogans of class struggle, scientific socialism and social revolution. But they were with the Awami League as its students' front. In fact, they were then representing petty bourgeois revolutionism and were uncompromising in their struggle against imperialism and all kinds of reactionary ideas. At that point of time, it was the most progressive democratic force. I then met Sirajul Alam Khan, known as Mujib-maker. He only conferred the title of 'Bangabandhu' (Friend of Bengal) on Sheikh Mujib. The daughter of Sheikh Mujib is now ruthlessly ruling Bangladesh, trampling underfoot all democratic rights. I told Sirajul Alam Khan that how could socialism, he was talking of, come about without a genuine revisionary party? I tried to convince them all on this question and they all agreed that there ought to be a revolutionary party. Sirajul Alam then made efforts to build up a revolutionary core under the banner of 'Communist Coordination Committee'. On being attracted by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, this very personality met him thrice by coming down to Kolkata. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh told me that Sirajul Alam Khan was a dreamer and good organizer. But his theoretical standard was so low that if he was at the helm of movements, there would be many mistakes and faults. In fact, it did happen. He committed a lot of mistakes. At the request of Sirajul Alam, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh got a thesis prepared for Bangladesh. I carried that to Bangladesh and it was accepted. I always noticed a particular problem in Bangladesh. All were magnetically attracted to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought. Many of the known leaders who

were also leaders of the 'Chhatra League and 'Awami League', responded to my call. But whenever the question about conducting an all-embracing life struggle covering all aspects of life based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought arose, they all backtracked under this or that pretext or argument. They clearly accepted the theory and logic but backed out from implementing the same in life.

Most of those who came with us at the outset were from upper middle class. I told them that in order to build up a revolutionary party of the proletariat, we would have to be in touch with the poor oppressed people. I was then staying in a big slum. Around 1000 people lived there. But there was only one toilet. The oppressed and repressed masses only constitute the advanced revolutionary force. We needed to be with them for organizing them. But others could not agree with me. One of them said that he was the president of Dhaka University Students' Union and is well-known to everybody. Why would he stay with the slum dwellers? I explained to him that no doubt he was a noted student leader, but he was a revolutionary and working for building up a revolutionary party. So it was incumbent on him to go and stay with the oppressed masses. Like this, many people then came forward being attracted by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought and the militancy inherent in it. This attraction was different and unique. But problem arises when the question of applying it in life comes to the fore. This problem is there in all the parties including that of yours. The underlying essence of building revolutionary character implies declaring a revolt against the decadent moribund society one lives in. One has to be revolutionary in maintaining each and every social relation. Revolutionary ideology is prime in every relationship. This revolutionary ideology we have been relentlessly propagating in Bangladesh.

Let me tell you that once I was in a grave crisis in Bangladesh. At that time, my life was in danger. My name was included in the Colonel Tahir case. Colonel Tahir was hanged by Ziaur Rehman, former president of Bangladesh. Ziaur Rehman was the Supreme Commander of Bangladesh Army and also leader of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). He put many behind the bars. Many had cautioned me to go to India as there was a threat to my life. Meanwhile, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had passed away. I did not get that news. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee sent two comrades to Bangladesh to inform me of that. They could not locate me. I was then moving from place to place in Bangladesh for securing my life. With great risk, I managed to enter North Bengal. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had breathed his last a month back. I was totally broken on hearing that. Comrade Nihar Mukherjee consoled me and gave me association. I came to India in 1976. In 1977, my contacts in Bangladesh were insisting on my going back. I told Comrade Nihar Mukherjee that I should go back to Bangladesh. He told me: "You take the decision." I decided to go back. From then onwards, I have been trying my best to develop revolutionary movement there.

I severed my relationship with those who retreated from applying revolutionary theory in life and built up Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BASAD). I highlighted based on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought why the world Socialist Camp had collapsed, how did revisionism appear and how did it prepare the ground for counter-revolution, how to fight revisionism and why socialism despite its temporary setback is the only way to emancipation. The teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh on these issues, his analysis of Marxism, his discussion on communist ethics and morality had attracted many students and youth of Bangladesh even when the international communist movement was in crisis and disarray. Many young boys and girls got associated with us. The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) was split into three separate groups. Many people began to say that communism had no future. When the communists round the globe were in a confounded state of mind, our Party was perceived to be very strong in Bangladesh. It made its mark as a well-organized and genuine communist party. Many honest leaders of the old communist party wondered how could we get so many flowering and fervent boys and girls in our Party. They began to think that when they were lacking in attracting new boys and girls with their arguments and theory, how come we were so successful. Manjul Hasan Khan, one of the veteran leaders once came to me and asked: "Haiderbhai, what teachings do you provide, and how is it that so many students and youth are joining you?" I told him that these were nothing else but Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought. I explained to him how Comrade Shibdas Ghosh fought revisionism; how he had predicted collapse of Soviet Union and how he concretely showed what higher standard of communist character is needed to build up a genuine communist party today. I informed him how in this way Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had provided a new direction to international communist movement and these very teachings of his were the source of our inspiration. He regretted that though they could manage to gather some young forces at times, they could not retain them after some days.

But in our Party also, the old problem persisted. Many could not practise application of ideology in every sphere of life. Initially, they conducted that struggle for sometime but later gave up the practice. Ultimately, one section refused to accept Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as the authority. Our party was divided. We founded BASAD (Marxist). That problem is in existence in our new party also. But we are conducting the struggle and hope that a section would succeed in that struggle.

I had been to Europe at least 12 times and met many leaders there. I found all of them frustrated. Some of them are men of integrity and trying to build up correct communist party. But they lack in direction. I explained to them many aspects of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought. One of them started translating the celebrated work "Why SUCI(C) is the only genuine communist party in India". This was a

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Comrade Mubinul Haider Chowdhury's speech

Struggle is continuing in Bangladesh to build up genuine revolutionary party based on the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh

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new development. Collective life is a very important thing. They all failed because of not being able to lead that collective life. Pride about Europe and a disdain towards the countries of the East come in the way of their acceptance of higher thoughts and culture from us. They all are very individualistic. Once I was travelling from Berlin to Rome. It was a long journey from one end of Europe to the other. One person who boarded the train noticed me. Then he took out a newspaper and a book and remained engrossed in those because he was not inclined to talk to me. It was such a long train journey, but no one would talk to each other. Once I asked Michael Opperskalsky, one of the comrades from Germany, as to what was the reason behind it. He told me that they all were so individualistic that they did not know how to talk to each other. This was not a problem of language but of culture. If you ask anyone: "How are you?" He would be annoyed and reply: "I am well but why are you asking me that?" If you ask him: "What is the name of your father?" He would say, "You are talking to me. Then why are you asking about my father? You cannot ask so." This is a typical individualism. Everyone is an isolated individual. Comrade Wil van der Klift of The Netherlands is a kind-hearted man. He stays at no 18, Mosterhat. He has a lone daughter. She lives in a nearby house. Even that is questioned by his party comrades. "How is it that your daughter lives so close to your residence", they ask. This means that adult children cannot stay with their parents after marriage. They compulsorily need to stay in a separate family. This is the kind of individualism prevailing in Europe. People are highly individualistic. If someone is found crying in the street and I proceed to console that

person, my comrades would prevent me saying: "No, don't do that. He would take offence at it and advise you to leave him alone since it is his exclusive problem. So you need not comfort him" This is a great problem. Comrades, I am trying to place before you my views with my limited knowledge of English.

Our party in Bangladesh was divided in 2013. With great difficulties, our new party, BASAD (Marxist) has been built up. In fact, the practice of old party is creating hindrance. Many of our comrades are suffering from limitations of the old party. But one thing is getting clearer to them that the other faction of the old party is no party at all. Theoretically, our comrades have understood that. But in habit, culture, love, affection and such other aspects and traits of human life, seed of individualism does persist.

We are getting lots of help from your party. Yours is a great party. This party is most advanced among all other parties at international level since it is the finest creation of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. This party has inexhaustible energy and tremendous possibility. This party is developing throughout India. It is participating in every struggle of the masses, providing leadership. It is organizing massive movements of the workers, peasants and students. This is a unique and unparalleled party. This party can provide leadership to international communist movement because it is guided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought. This is the most important thing. The present leadership is powered by that thought. Based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought and the principles of proletarian internationalism, your party and our party exchange ideas, accept advices and extend help and support to each other. But none of us impose anything on each other. Our relationship is dialectical. We all

must develop based on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh thought. We must acquire and practise the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in life, culture, conduct, habits and all kinds of human relationship. Comrade Provash Ghosh helps us in this regard also. I want to say something about him. For long, I have been observing that this party is now in an excellent position. After demise of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, he had to pass through several difficult times. After so many days, Comrade Provash Ghosh could emerge as the true leader of the whole party. It is not that he has become a leader based on popularity. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had provided the overall direction of conducting all-embracing life struggle to acquire higher communist character. Now, Comrade Provash Ghosh has developed Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's teachings and in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought, he has equipped the party in analysing and resolving various newer problems. Through all these things, he, I believe, has been able to become concrete personified expression of the collective leadership of the party under whom the entire party is well organized and cemented today. But Comrade Provash Ghosh has not attained this position through his individual efforts. He has developed himself through conduction of dialectical relationship with other comrades. In this process, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought has been concretized in him. I know that you have accepted it much more than me. Already some of his analyses and speeches have been published. We are also drawing appropriate lesson from this to grow and develop. So, I have profound respect for him. We are childhood friends. But I accept him as my leader. This party has great future. It was Comrade Shibdas Ghosh who founded, reared and steered this party. I could not present my views in a comprehensive and sequential manner. This is my limitation. I could not continue my studies beyond Class VIII. So I have lot of limitations.

Comrades, let me tell you that you have in your hand the invincible weapon of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought and a team of good capable leaders. Let me conclude here. My heart-felt congratulations to this 3rd Congress of your party. My party, BASAD (Marxist) has told me to convey the message to you that we are struggling to build up a genuine revolutionary party in Bangladesh. In many respects, we are in the process of development. Though the path of struggle is arduous, full of complexities, odds and difficulties, still we are confident that we would be able to build up a genuine powerful communist party in Bangladesh based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. I am now 85. I shall live 5 to 6 years more (he said laughing). Comrade Provash Ghosh however does not agree to that. He says I would die after 2 to 3 years. But I have said, no. I shall live for 5 years or more. I do physical exercise every day. I thank you very much for giving me so much of time.

Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Conference

Andhra Pradesh state conference of AIDS was held on 22 and 23 December 2018 at Kurnool amongst great enthusiasm. In this conference around thousand students participated. A massive rally of thousands of students was organized on the day of open session on 22 December at the Municipal open air theatre which was addressed by Comrades

B. S. Amarnath, AP State Secretary, SUCI(C), Ashok Misra, General Secretary, AIDS and other AIDS leaders. A 19-member state committee with Comrades M. Basavaraju, as President and V. Harish Kumar as Secretary was unanimously elected after the delegate session on 23 December.[A section of student delegates below]



China today : Sets a typical example of imperialist hegemonic attitude

Founded in 1949 under the leadership of the great leader of the Proletariat, Mao Zedong, People's Republic of China suffered counter-revolution to become a capitalist country towards the end of the last century. Since then, like other imperialist countries, it has started an aggressive journey to extend its sphere of influence over the weaker countries across the world. Given below instances of this adventure by China today, leaving no doubt about their imperialistic hegemonic character.

In November 2018, the African Stand reported on how Kenya and its government are at high risk of losing strategic assets of the country related to the lucrative Mombasa port over repayment of huge Chinese debt. The Chinese are about to take action in a few months' time, as repayments for the loans are slated to start a few months later on expiry of a five-year grace period.

It may be added here that the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) of Kenya, for the development of which the loans were granted and which is operated by the Chinese, is a miserably loss-making venture. Also at stake is the Inland Container Depot in Nairobi, which receives and dispatches freight hauled on the new cargo trains from the sea port. As per the report of the Kenyan Auditor General this was apprehended because of a lopsided loan agreement that greatly favours the China Exim Bank, which advanced Kenya the loan. The agreement included the condition that any disputes arising from the debt servicing would be arbitrated in China. It was also required that the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) feeds sufficient cargo to the Chinese-built railway project. Failure to provide the requisite cargo would mean Kenya has gone against a critical clause in the loan agreement. Further, the KPA signed the loan agreement as a borrower, exposing its assets to the Chinese grip as a clause states that "...any proceeding(s) against its assets (KPA) by the lender would not be protected by sovereign immunity since the Government waived the immunity on the Kenya Ports Assets by signing the agreement".

Bound by such a lopsided agreement, an audit completed last month indicates that Kenya Ports Authority's (KPA) assets, which include the Mombasa port, could be taken over if the SGR does not generate enough cash to pay off the debts. In that case the China Exim Bank would become a principle in the KPA if the Kenya Railways Corporation (KRC) defaults in its obligations and China Exim Bank decides to exercise power over the escrow account security. An escrow account is a contractual arrangement in which a third party receives and disburses money for the primary transacting parties, with the disbursement dependent on conditions agreed to by the transacting parties. According to the loan agreement, funds generated from the SGR were to be deposited in an escrow account – controlled by an unknown third party on behalf of KRC and China Exim Bank.

In case of such a takeover thousands of Kenyan port workers would be forced to work under the Chinese lenders, as the management would immediately change following the port seizure. Naturally the Chinese would seek to secure their interests which are very likely to go against the Kenyan workers. Besides, revenues from the port would be directly sent to China for the servicing of an estimated Sh500 billion lent for the construction of the two sections of the SGR.

The Kenyan instance is not singular. In December 2017, the Sri Lankan government lost its Hambantota port to China for a lease period of 99 years after failing to show commitment in the payment of billions of dollars in loans. The transfer gave China control of the territory just a few hundred miles off the shores of rival India. It is a strategic foothold along a critical commercial and military waterway. In addition, in September 2018, Zambia lost Kenneth Kaunda International Airport to China over debt repayment.

These are then examples of how China is now using loans and aid to weaker countries to gain hegemony over them and does not hesitate to arm-twist the latter to fulfil its aspirations.

New Year Greetings from North Korea

Warm congratulations on the New Year 2019.

On this occasion, I would like to express my gratitude to you for sending firm solidarity with the Korean people in their just struggle to carry out the building of socialist powerful state and the national reunification in Korea.

Last year was a very significant year for all of us.

The last three historic North-south Summits, and the DPRK-US summit, all of which were held last year, were significant occasions in realizing the reconciliation, unity and prosperity of the Korean nation, and the peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

And also, last year was a significant year for the SUCI and its subordinate organizations to take their good steps with the SUCI's 3rd Congress.

On the occasion of the New Year 2019, which we met after our farewell to 2018, marked as an important and significant year, I sincerely wish you and your family in good health and happiness, and your work in good success.

And on this occasion, I would like to suggest a proposal.

As you know, January 8 is the birthday of Comrade **Kim Jong Un**, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of DPRK.

On this occasion, many NGOs, institutions and personages around the world send their congratulatory messages to him with their deep respect to him even now when I send this e-mail to you.

I would like to believe that you would have such significant plans as the above.

With all best regards,

Ra Myong Song
Secretary of the KCAAS

Letter from North Korea to Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Politbureau member, SUCI (C)

Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Member, Polit Bureau, SUCI(C), General Secretary, International Anti-imperialist Coordinating Committee and Vice-President, All India Anti-Imperialist Forum, sent a message to North Korean government congratulating them for signing a joint Declaration with South Korea as a step towards normalization of relations between the two neighbouring countries. In reply, Comrade Pang Si On, Charge d'affairs a.i., Embassy of the DPRK wrote in a letter dated 29 December 2018: Upon the authorization of the Respected Supreme Leader Comrade Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPR of Korea, Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army, I have the greatest honor to express my gratitude to you for your message to the Respected Supreme Leader Comrade Kim Jong Un on the occasion of the signing of the Panmunjom Declaration and the September Pyongyang Joint Declaration. I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurance of my highest consideration.



Demonstration on 12 January for total ban on liquor in Durg, Chhattisgarh. A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister through the Collector, Durg.

Peril and Penury of Peasants

Both peasants and agriculture are devastated in dying capitalism

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whatever little procurement takes place through government machinery is of only rice and wheat. A survey shows that in absence of receiving MSP for seven kharif crop (like soybean, cotton and peanuts), the concerned peasants' have suffered a loss of over Rs 2 lakh crores. The revelations of the Shanta Kumar Committee report showed that a mere 5.8% of agricultural households in India had sold paddy or wheat to any procurement agency. Even these households sold only a part of their total sales, ranging from 14-35% for different crops, at MSP. The reason for this forced part sale can be had from the observation of the report, "The upshot of this entire evidence is that the direct benefits of procurement operations in wheat and rice, with which FCI (Food Corporation of India) is primarily entrusted, goes to a minuscule of agricultural households in the country. Obviously then, much of the procurement that government agencies undertake comes from larger farmers, and in a few selected states (Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and lately from Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh)."

Issue of farm loan waiver

Next comes the question of waiver of bank loans to the peasants. Of late, a bourgeois economist has shown the audacity of saying that demanding loan waiver has become a fancy with the peasants. Less said about such motivated 'fanciful' comment, the better. They are the murderers and then they shamelessly and perjuringly ridicule the murdered. But for the information of these "fancied" pundits, nearly 70% of India's 90 million agricultural households spend more than they earn on average each month, pushing them towards debt, which is now the primary reason in more than half of all suicides by farmers nationwide, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of various government data.

Another section of bourgeois economists have been expressing that repeated waiver of agricultural loans is costing the public exchequer dearly. But they are deviously mum when the question of granting liberal tax concessions and waivers and condoning wilful tax defaults and evasions to the big monopoly houses and corporate giants is raised. A rough calculation of 2017 showed that the amount of such concessions and amnesties had been nearly Rs10 lakh crores. It has gone further up. Moreover, the government has been merrily writing off the bad loans or NPAs with the banks (meaning allowing the defaulting corporates and super-rich to embezzle the entire loan amount with impunity) and then debiting public exchequer to compensate the banks for the loss. Why no hullabaloo on this? Which amount is more? The amount of loan waiver or the dues condoned to the corporate behemoths?

Next point is that such discriminations and anomalies are surfacing so vulgarly. Because, in capitalism, there can be nothing else than this. It is inevitable in course of all-out exploitation by the ruling capitalists thrust upon the multitudes of

oppressed millions the peasants included. More accentuated would be capitalist oppression, more widened would be the gap between the few super-rich and the toiling masses at large. The entire system is busy in, as goes the proverb, "carrying coal to New Castle" obviously. So, the system goes on rewarding the privileged rich even if that warrants flagrant violation of rules and bending of laws, and depriving, squeezing and marginalizing the oppressed downtrodden at will. It is in this perspective that the demand of waiving agricultural loan is legitimate because of the shattered life of the peasants for which the system and not they are squarely responsible. At the same time, it is also true that the parliamentarian parties use this as a ploy to hoodwink and woo the peasants for riding to or staying in power.

It is pertinent to mention in this connection that the farm loan waiver is no permanent "solution" to farmers' woes as the root lies in the decadent moribund capitalist system. But if one looks at it from a broader perspective, such moves on the part of the power-greedy politicians and their governments, appear to be partly an "atonement" for failed agricultural policies, and partly an "appeasement" measure. For example, the state of UP produces 30 million tonnes (mt) of wheat and about 20 mt of paddy (13 mt of rice) annually. But its procurement levels remained pitifully low, despite wheat prices often hovering at 10-15 per cent below the minimum support prices (MSP) and paddy prices often falling to 15-30 per cent below the MSP because of a slew of manipulations and manoeuvres by the quarters of vested interest. If one calculates the "imputed loss" to farmers for not having received the MSP over a three to five year period, the figure would easily equal the loan waiver amount.

Cash crop cultivation and contract system

There is another aspect which has serious repercussion. With onset of globalization, agricultural produce assumed the character of a market commodity on a much larger scale. As a sequel to that, commercialization of agriculture and tendency to increase the production of cash crops in place of food grains have been becoming a dominant trend. With opening up Indian agricultural market to foreign capital and MNCs, another phenomenon of contract farming has surfaced much to the detriment of the peasants. Besides taking full control of producing and distributing agricultural inputs, the large corporates and MNCs are also extending their paws on procurement as well as mechanism of agriculture. Taking advantage of the fact that small peasants in India are generally starved of capital and cannot make major investment in land improvement and modern inputs, the large corporates and MNCs lure the peasants with promise of higher yields and higher prices in contract farming. Under this mode of farming, they give contract to the peasants for producing cash crops like tomato (used in ketchup preparation), mango and pineapple (for

preparing juice, squash, prickles etc.), potato (for preparing chips and other deep fry varieties of snacks) cotton and even highly controversial GM (Genetically Modified) variety such as Bt cotton or Bt brinjal in the name of promoting food processing and small scale handicraft industries. The wretched peasants immediately fall into the trap and being carried by an assured sale of the produce at pre-determined price and receipt of technological and input support, peasants opt for contract farming. But no contracting MNC or company offers protection for crop failure. Production risk is not covered by insurance most of the time. It is also reported that many companies take advantage of the clauses inserted in the contract by them that in case the harvest is below mark, in either quality or quantity, they have the right to either buy the produce at a lower price or reject it altogether. It happened with Bt cotton producers in Maharashtra where suicide rates among peasants increased because of that. Moreover, abandoning production of essential food grains like rice, wheat or pulses also poses serious threat to self-sufficiency in food and thus runs counter to the one of the basic social necessities.

Hoax of crop insurance

One more deception on the part of the bourgeois government is the much-trumpeted crop insurance. Hitherto, most of such schemes either did not provide adequate coverage or the settlement policies have been so cumbersome and full of hassles that the peasants received no benefit. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana launched in 2016 ostensibly to provide insurance and financial support to farmers in the event of crops failure has turned out to be a fiasco. Private business companies, like Essar, ICICI and HDFC were allowed to loot thousands of crores of hard earned money of farmers, letting them down in times of distress. It is no surprise that Reliance company headed by Mukesh Ambani, a close friend of the Prime Minister, has also been offered a big share of the market! High premiums and stringent conditions proved to be more a problem than a solution. Because of these factors, more than 84 lakh farmers withdrew from the scheme in the year 2017-2018. Moreover, when the flood-ravaged peasants of UP hardly got any compensation from the insurance, it was revealed that neither the state government, nor the Centre had deposited the due premium in time. What could be a bigger mockery and forbidding joke than this! And finally, as per report, 85% of farmers do not have insurance.

Lenin's prognosis of peril of agriculture in capitalism

It bears recall the invaluable teaching of great Lenin in regard to the basic contradiction between agriculture and industry that manifests as conflict between town- and village-life, as Lenin says, "The growth of the urban (more generally : industrial) population at the expense

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Peril and Penury of Peasants

Build up movement in demand for all out state trading

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of the rural population is not only a present-day phenomenon but a general phenomenon which expresses precisely this law of capitalism.” (Coll. Works, Vol-4, p.151) “The separation of town from country, their oppositeness, and the exploitation of countryside by the town — are a necessary product of preponderance of “commercial wealth” ... over “territorial wealth” (agricultural wealth). Therefore, the predominance of the town over the countryside (economically, politically, intellectually, and in all other respects) is a universal and inevitable thing in all countries where there is commodity production and capitalism.” (Coll. Works, Vol-2, p.229) Lenin said, “Can there be a capitalism under which the development of commerce and industry does not outpace agriculture? As capitalism develops, agriculture, always and everywhere, lags behind commerce and industry, it is always subordinate to them and is exploited by them”. (Coll. Works, Vol.-2, p.209) So, it is not the sign of a good civilization that a society develops in industry and lags far behind in agriculture. But it is capitalism, the developed capitalism that gives birth to this contradiction as a necessary evil .

Spontaneous surge of peasant’ agitation

Coming back to the predicament of Indian peasants, the situation has come to such a pass that the peasants in different parts of the country are bursting forth in anger. From 2017, massive peasants’ movement in demand for just and remunerative price of the produce was unleashed in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and other states. The suffering farmers from Tamil Nadu had grabbed national attention when they staged a prolonged 40-day long shocking form of protest dharna near the Indian President’s residence in Delhi by shaving their heads, cutting their moustaches into half, putting mice and snakes in their mouths, conducting mock funerals, flogging themselves, carrying skulls of farmers who committed suicide due to debt pressure and stripping in public. The massive 180-km long seven-day march by the farmers of Maharashtra from

Nashik to Mumbai ended in victory, forcing the State government to concede to the demands of the struggle. Thousands of agitating peasants from different states led a rally to Delhi in November last demanding remunerative price of the crops and waiver of bank loans. Visibly rattled, the government used force to prevent them from entering the capital city. The Madhya Pradesh government opened fire on the protesting peasants in Mandsaur district killing five on the spot and injuring many more. This shook the whole country and became symbolic of the prevailing horrific agrarian distress.

Demand for all out state trading needs to be raised in right earnest

But all these have been sporadic unorganized outbursts. What is needed is a sustained powerful united movement throughout the country over the legitimate demands of the peasants. It is true that so long capitalism would remain, the basic problems of the peasants would not be resolved. Overthrow of capitalism by revolution is contingent upon fulfilment of both definite subjective and objective conditions determined by the scientific laws of social development. But as a revolutionary party of the proletariat, we have imbibed the truth that so long capitalism is not overthrown, people need to continuously develop and intensify class and mass struggles based on higher proletarian ethics and culture over burning demands of life. Such comprehensive principled political struggle under correct revolutionary leadership might not only wrest just demands from the capitalist class and government but also pave the path of revolution gradually by way of developing necessary political consciousness of the toiling masses participating in the struggles. Similarly, an organized mighty principled movement on some concrete demands along correct base political line can beget some definite relief to the suffering peasantry.

At this juncture, such prolonged purposive movement can be developed only by the left-democratic forces. But it is sad to notice that the self-proclaimed big left parties like the CPI (M), CPI are in no mood to take any move in

this regard. Subservience to bourgeois class interest and greed for pelf and power have become so deep-seated in them that they have been conducting these like any other vote-based bourgeois party. Growing distress, pitiable life condition and deprivation of the oppressed masses do not make any imprint on them. So, the imperative need to launch class and mass struggles and gradually stepping them up to send shivers down the spine of the exploitative ruling bourgeoisie, its pliant governments and the quarters of vested interest and thereby wresting legitimate demands of the people, is not felt by them. So, besides making some show of movement solely for playing to the gallery and deriving electoral mileage, they keep themselves away from any serious purposive mass action. Even when news of the plight and destitution of the onion peasants of Nashik has surfaced with strewn crops providing feast to the cows, there is not even a statement of protest on their part, let alone raising the issue inside the parliament. They are now busy calculating electoral arithmetic and tie-up with the Congress and other parties.

But as a genuine revolutionary party on the soil, SUCI(C) is bent upon holding aloft the banner of Marxism-leninism and build up the class and mass struggles with all its might. While dwelling upon the problems of the peasants, escalating prices and distribution of food and other items of daily use, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary of the SUCI(C) and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, had way back in the 1960s raised the demand for all out state trading in food and other essential items of life. This all out state trading implies that these would be private house or operator involved in producing, procuring and distributing these items. The entire operation, both wholesale and retail, should be fully under government control. If this is done, to a great extent, the hardship of the peasants can also be mitigated. We call upon all to come forward and build up that organized all powerful movement on this demand. Our Party stand committed to develop this movement wholeheartedly and steadfastly.

Mobilizing people for the All India Strike of 8-9 January 2018 called by 10 Central Trade Unions



Anantapur, AP



Bhiwani, Haryana



Kerala



Munghyr, Bihar



Kolkata, West Bengal

[News and more photos on page 10]

Successful All India strike observed on 8 & 9 January at the call of 10 Central Trade Unions

In protest against anti-labour and anti-people policies of BJP-led NDA Government, 10 Central Trade Unions, AIUTUC, CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC, jointly gave call for 2-day All India strike on 8 and 9 January 2019 from the National Convention of Workers held on 28 September 2018 at New Delhi. In a joint statement issued on 9 January 2019, the leaders of Central Trade Unions namely Sankar Saha (AIUTUC), Tapan Sen (CITU), P Raju (INTUC), Amarjit Kaur (AITUC), Harbhajan Singh Sindhu (HMS), G. R. Shivashankar (TUCC), Manali Sha (SEWA), Rajeev Dimri (AICCTUC), Sammugam (LPF) and Ashoke Ghosh (UTUC), *inter alia*, stated that as per

WFTU solidarity statement with All India General Strike

The World Federation of Trade Unions on behalf of its more than 95 million in 130 countries of the 5 continents expresses its internationalist solidarity and support to All India general strike on 8-9 January 2019. The WFTU affiliates are taking a leading role in the preparations of the strike which is called by the joint platform of the 10 central trade unions and dozens of independent federations.

The forthcoming "All India General Strike" will be the third and biggest countrywide strike against the neo-liberal policy of Modi's governance which is aligned with the World Trade Organization norms and is variously affecting the working class of India worsening its living and working conditions.

During the last years, the Indian working class has been resisting, undertaking struggles at local, sectoral and national level. The two-day general strike is the continuation and escalation of the previous struggles against the policy which creates a country of unemployment and stagnancy of wages in combination with rising prices, relentless attacks against the worker's rights and unparalleled privatization policy of public sector.

In front of this situation the Trade Unions are rising up, fighting for dignified minimum wages and pension to all, creation of new dignified jobs, curbing of rising prices of essential commodities, universal, social security coverage to all, stoppage of privatization policy, end to the infraction of the labour and trade unions rights, end to contractualisation.

The World Federation of Trade Unions joins its voice with the call of the class-oriented trade unions for militant and massive participation of all the workers of the country regardless their sector or region. The WFTU supports the fair demands of the declared strike, given that the class-oriented struggle for a dignified life and work is the only way out from the capitalist barbarity

report, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Puducherry, Kerala were completely shut down on both the days. Bihar and Goa while on industrial strike on 8 January observed total shut down on 9 January. The district HQs in AP, Telangana, Karnataka, MP wore a look of bundh as the road transport came to a halt. The impact of strike in general was substantive in the states of Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and even Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The BEST - Mumbai city road transport service provided by the Municipal Corporation, recorded a 100% strike. NRC industrial area in Delhi was in complete strike. Even students and teachers participated in strike. Banks, RBI, PSUs and other industrial sectors like power, coal, mining, steel and LPG also witnessed shutdown. Unorganized sector workers - bidi workers, construction workers, street hawkers, domestic workers - participated massively. EPS-95 and government pensioners took part in a big way. Scheme Workers, including Anganwadi Workers,

ASHA, Mid-Day Meal Workers also joined the strike. IT Sector employees expressed their solidarity with the strike in Bengaluru and Chennai. There are reports of arrests of striking workers in Assam, Jharkhand and West Bengal, slapping of ESMA and 'No Work No Pay' notices, break in service threats, dismissals of junior workers in various states. Instances were there of spontaneous blockades by the pro-striking public at road intersections, railway tracks and market places. Yet, Central Government and State Government Employees went on strike in those states once again demonstrating their fighting zeal. Big rallies were taken out in every state capital and even at district centres. Even farmers, who had only recently taken out a mammoth rally in Delhi, marched with the striking workers in their rallies. Across the country more than 20 crore workers and employees observed strike.

The unity shown at the grassroots level by the members of respective trade unions has been praiseworthy. The sponsoring trade unions called upon the working class of the entire country to maintain this unity especially at the grass root and prepare for greater struggle against the exploiters of the working class. The leaders also thanked the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the international trade union organizations for their solidarity with this stupendous strike action by Indian Workers.

SUCI(C) workers and AIUTUC activists had taken all-out effort in different states to make the All India Strike

successful on 8 and 9 January 2018. Below are the photos on that initiative and people's response ; more photos on page 9



Puducherry



Gujarat



Odisha



Bangalore



Uttarakhand



Muzaffarpur

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