

Proletarian Era

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Manipulation of key data to hide the reality

As per the prescripts of capitalist economy, every nation's economic output moves up or down along a long-term trend, fluctuating in accordance with seasonal patterns, business and financial cycles and random shocks. The economic output and allied information in regard to economic performance are normally captured in terms of numbers arrived at through laid down norms and principles of data collection via research. But of late, what has surprised, if not annoyed many economists and statisticians of India is the deliberate attempt on the part of the government to manipulate and manufacture data to present a false picture of reality, obviously with a view to highlighting how spectacularly it has performed in its tenure. As we know, there are some economic parameters like GDP growth, job creation, index of industrial output (IIP), inflation rate,

etc. which are acknowledged as indicators of economic performance. There are accredited institutions comprising experts in the subject who publish the figures of these broader indicators. Now, both the published figures as well as role of such institutions are under question.

Questions raised by eminent economists and statisticians

Visibly enraged over such tampering with the system, 108 economists and social scientists from leading institutions across the globe issued a joint statement on 14 March 2019 asking the government not to hide or fudge the data and figures generated by the established institutions like the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). Since the signatories include academics of different ideological persuasions, and many of them are among the best in the discipline, it would be

preposterous to attribute ulterior motives to the statement. They have not argued for or against an economic policy or viewpoint. Rather, the statement has been issued under the fear that the emerging controversies and doubts raised over authenticity of the published figures, suppression of uncomfortable data and undermining access to and integrity of public statistics and institutional independence and integrity of the statistical organisations might lose their gravitas in the future. From this perspective, this statement marks a watershed moment of sorts in India's economic history.

Economic-political backdrop in which such alleged forgery is taking place

The statement also reiterated the fact that economic statistics have a public good character — their use is non-rival and non-

excludable. Such information is necessary for evidence-based policy making and informed discussion in democracies where citizens seek accountability from their government. The use of scientific methods for collection and estimation and their timely dissemination are, therefore, vital public services, as correctly held by informed circles. Hitherto, the practice had been that publicly-funded institutions with professional independence and external oversight would perform these functions so that the data so collected remains insulated from uncalled for political interference. This ideal practice was stipulated in bourgeois democracy which is the political superstructure of capitalism or capitalist economic base. These stipulations were codified and socially and professionally accepted during the rising period of capitalism when it

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US imperialists indulging in worst crime against humanity to overpower Venezuela

Never short of victims fiendish war-monger US imperialists have now trained their guns on the Latin American country of Venezuela, reportedly having the highest oil reserve in the world. Earlier, the US imperialists did undertake their felonious activities in Latin America also to extend their sphere of influence. They had conspired to dethrone and kill Salvador Allende, democratically elected President of Chile, spearheaded subversive and naked interventionist activities in Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Guatemala and Mexico. But they could not make much headway as there had been a wave of anti-imperialist particularly anti-US imperialist movements throughout Latin America. The victory of Cuban Revolution under Fidel Castro also exerted an influence on this region. So, in most of these countries, anti-imperialist left-leaning

forces were installed in power. Hugo Chavez, the legendary President of Venezuela and a staunch anti-imperialist fighter saw himself as a modern-day Bolívar, vowed to continue the work of Simon Bolivar, the 19th century statesman who had led the fight for Latin America's independence from Spain and advocated the creation of a league of Latin American states. Combining Bolívar's vision of a unified Latin America, free from the interference of foreign powers, Chávez, after being elected President in 1999, defeating all US-backed machinations and die-hard attempts of the pro-US Venezuelan elites to install a reactionary right-wing rule through a coup, worked hard to create a Latin American alliance powerful enough not only to expel US influence from the region but also to compete politically and economically with the United States and the European Union. In

December 2012 Chávez who was suffering from cancer, had designated Vice President Nicolás Maduro as his successor. After the sad demise of Chavez in March 2013, Maduro stepped into his shoes and continued to follow the policies of Chavez. Initially, the US imperialists thought that they would be able to destabilize Venezuela in absence of Chavez by executing their imperialist design afresh like orchestrating coup, plotting to dethrone Maduro and threatening direct military action. Also, a good number of Latin American countries were by then having right-wing governments since left-wing movements which surged forth so powerfully could not be led to their logical culmination in absence of correct revolutionary leadership. So, the US imperialists decided to step up its long-continued hostility and onslaught upon the small country of the Bolivarian Republic of

Venezuela. As scripted in virtually all cases, here also the demand is regime change, ousting a democratically and second-time elected President Nicolás Maduro on concocted charges of violation of human rights and intimidation and attack on opponents. Not only that. Making mockery of the barest precepts of democracy, the US imperialists unilaterally declared Juan Guaidó, a stooge of theirs as the interim President of that country. Who has ever heard of a foreign power arrogating to itself the arbitrary right to foist a state head on another country and declare the elected President as having been so replaced? Donald Trump, US President, even went to the extent of first trying to create a fissure in the Venezuelan army obviously with lure of lucre and power to some of its top-ranking officers. But when that did not materialize, he ordered

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Data Manipulation

To prolong decadent moribund capitalist rule, the bourgeoisie have no option but to peddle falsification, manipulation, suppression and distortion of reality

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was a progressive force. But with passage of time, following inexorable course of history, it was markedly evident that capitalism was getting obsolete. With obsolescence of capitalism, the process of degeneration of bourgeois democracy had also set in. So, the democratic norms, codes and principles hitherto practised began to erode progressively. Now when capitalism has entered its dying phase, has been ridden with acute insoluble crisis endemic of the system, turned utterly reactionary and become extremely corrupt, increasing rot in the democratic structure is vulgarly manifest. The very phenomenon of either manipulating or suppressing data is part of that rot. Since the capitalist system itself has become rotten and reactionary, the caretakers of this worn-out system cannot but be equally putrefied. So, in order to provide extra lease of life to the decadent moribund capitalist system, they have no other option but to peddle in falsification, manipulation, suppression and distortion of reality. The legitimate commotion over and disapproval of the con game over statistics are to be understood in this backdrop.

What are the allegations?

It has been mentioned in the statement referred to above that "India's statistical machinery enjoyed a high level of reputation for the integrity of the data it produced on a range of economic and social parameters. It was often criticised for the quality of its estimates, but never were allegations made of political interference influencing decisions and the estimates themselves... but lately ...the Indian statistics and the institutions associated with it have however come under a cloud for being influenced and indeed even controlled by political considerations." It is true. They have referred to the period immediately after independence when the ruling Indian bourgeoisie had to abide by some of the democratic principles and norms including relative autonomy of the various institutions. Otherwise, it would have faced questions from the people still fermenting in the fervour of freedom movement. The

growth of India's vast national statistical infrastructure dates back to its first decade as an independent country. These years had seen the establishment of the office of the Statistical Adviser to the Government, bi-annual National Sample Surveys (NSS), the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), and National Income Committees (that made the estimates similar to GDP measurements). The moving spirit behind these developments was Shri Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, the renowned Indian mathematician and applied statistician. Way back in 1931, he had founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Kolkata. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) was established in 1950 under the Ministry of Statistics of the Union Government to act as the nodal agency for planned development of the statistical system. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) was set up as a government agency in 1951 with the declared objective of compilation of National Accounts Statistics (NAS), co-ordination of statistical activities and evolving and maintaining statistical standards. As the aforesaid statement has mentioned, collection and dissemination of statistics by CSO and NSSO hitherto enjoyed credibility. But lately, "the Indian statistics and the institutions associated with it have however come under a cloud for being influenced and indeed even controlled by political considerations", added the statement.

Row over GDP and job creation figures

The primary concerns of all right-thinking citizens, cited in the statement as well, have been the surging debate around credibility of latest GDP figures which the BJP government has been highlighting to elicit credit of taking the country to new horizon of economic growth, and the BJP government's refusal to release the results of the latest NSSO survey on employment. As is known to all, in early 2015, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) issued a new GDP series (with the revised base year 2011-12), which showed a significantly faster growth rate for 2011-12 to 2013-14 compared to the earlier series (with base-year 2004-05). For example, in

2013-14, GDP growth under the old methodology was 4.7 per cent. But, under the new methodology, GDP growth shot up to 6.9 per cent (later revised down to 6.4 per cent). Similarly, in 2014-15, growth was revised from a projected 5.5 per cent to 7.4 per cent. These revised estimates baffled many as they did not square with related macro-aggregates. In August 2018, a draft report on the GDP back series was put in the public domain by a committee set up by the National Statistical Commission (NSC). The growth rates shown in NSC report widely differed from that published by CSO. NSC report further indicated that under the new methodology, growth under the erstwhile Congress-led UPA was much higher than that under the current BJP rule. This created a firestorm as the BJP leaders found that it would give a handle to the Congress in the ensuing electoral battle for power. So the BJP government promptly removed the NSC report from its website. Then, the CSO in January last furnished a revised estimate of GDP growth rate for 2016-17, the year of demonetization. This revised rate was found to have magically shot up by 1.1 percentage points to 8.2 per cent, the highest in a decade. Again the informed section of economists and statisticians were taken aback as this quantum jump was found incompatible with marshalled evidences. For example, Latha Venkatesh, a business journalist noted that if one were to believe the new numbers, India's GDP grew 6.7 per cent in 2006-2012 (down from 8.9 per cent in the old series) while growth was 7.3 per cent for 2014-18, then how could loan growth average 20-30 per cent in 2006-12 and only 10 per cent in 2014-18? How could corporate earnings per share grow an average 20-25 per cent in 2006-12 and a mere 4 per cent in 2014-18? (*The Print* -29 Nov 2018) What she wanted to point out was that even as per the formal indicators acknowledged in bourgeois economy, the quantum jump in GDP growth was weird. Not only such business journalists, echelons in the ruling hierarchy like Arvind Panagariya, NITI Ayog Chairman, Raghuram Rajan, the then RBI Governor and Arvind Subramanian, the then Chief

Economic Adviser to the government, had expressed their surprise at the UPA era numbers under the new methodology as well as reservations about the new data. Kaushik Basu, a former chief economist of the World Bank and staunch protagonist of capitalist economy also recently bemoaned the declining credibility of India's official statistics.

Obviously, in the face of such growing dissents and wide variance in the figures of two competing back series (of the last decade), separately prepared in 2018 by the NSC and CSO respectively, the BJP-government needed some face-saving and damage-control exercise. So, it removed the NSC numbers from the official web site. The CSO numbers were later presented to the public by the NITI Aayog, an advisory body which had hitherto no expertise in statistical data collection. Stating these facts, the aforesaid statement of 108 noted experts rightly observed that "All this has caused great damage to the institutional integrity of the autonomous statistical bodies".

Suppression of job creation figures

A similar story is now playing out in the fracas over suppression of job creation figures. The count of people being without a job has been on the rise in capitalist India as economic slowdown and slower business expansion activities cast a shadow on employment generation. Let alone job creation, even existing jobs are lost in huge number with every passing day. Vacancies created on account of retirements are extinguished. It is not that such a glaringly anti-labour policy is followed only in the private sector. There is virtual moratorium on fresh recruitment even in the government departments and PSUs including banks. More than 10 per cent of the 3.6 million-strong central government positions are lying vacant for years. In Indian Railways, more than 150,000 security-related positions are vacant since years. Everywhere, appointment of labour on contract and casual basis at a throwaway wage has become the general practice. The government departments, nationalized banks,

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Comrade Lukose lives undying in our hearts — K Radhakrishna

[Speech delivered by Comrade K Radhakrishna, Member, Polit Bureau, SUCI(C), at the memorial meeting of Comrade C K Lukose departed Polit Bureau Member, organized by the Central Committee of the Party at SaratSadan, Howrah, West Bengal, on 25 February 2019.]

Beloved Comrade Secretary, Members of the Polit Bureau and Central Committee on the dais and Comrades,

We have all gathered here to pay homage to Comrade C K Lukose. Already Comrade Venugopal has placed some of the aspects of the struggle of Comrade Lukose, and how he became the backbone of our Party, the genuine communist party on the soil, in



Comrade K Radhakrishna addressing

Kerala, and he was first among the few who carried the banner of SUCI(Communist) and thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in South India. Not only that, I think he was one of the very few from the south who could meet the great thinker Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Maybe he had occasions to meet him once or twice. But among the few who were transformed by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Comrade Lukose was one. Already Comrade Venugopal has said that Comrade Lukose was an engineering student in the late 1960s and later he became a totally dedicated revolutionary whole-timer. In the year 1988, when the first state

conference was held in Kerala, he became the State Secretary of the Party. Comrades all these have already been dealt with in details. My point, what I want to place before this house, is the struggle that he conducted uncompromisingly against his disease. He was afflicted with this disease about eight to ten years back. Later, whenever there used to be a Central Committee meeting, he was not able to travel alone from Kerala to Kolkata. So he used to come to Bangalore and both of us travelled together in the train. Again, we used to return to Bangalore by train and from there he used to go back alone to Kerala. As the years passed by, at times it became difficult for him to travel alone.

So some junior comrades of Kerala accompanied him up to Bangalore and to go back. And then I accompanied him to Kolkata, and during the days of CC meetings, I used to stay with him. But Comrades during the entire period he never sought any help for himself. I found him having difficulties. But he performed everything himself. While going to bed or when he wanted to lie down on the bed for rest, he had difficulties because of his ailment. Even for getting up from the bed, he faced problems. But still he never sought any help and determinedly tried to do everything himself. Even, he carried his own luggage. He was

so independent. At times I helped him. I did try. I could not keep quiet. But I understood the medical advice was that he should perform his work himself. He should not become dependent. So unless it was very indispensable, I did not help him. I only watched him performing his task with a lot of difficulty. But never I found in him any disappointment or frustration. But I used to get agonized. And in the last few years, as Comrade Venugopal has said, he not only lost his mobility, he started losing his ability to speak also. And many times, he would write his opinion and then send it to the General Secretary, Comrade Provash Ghosh. Whenever he wanted to write something, he used to call me. I used to go to Ernakulam, or to Trivandrum. There was a particular time when, after taking medicines, he could talk with a lot of difficulties. Maybe for half an hour he could sit and it was extremely difficult to understand the words he was speaking. With a lot of difficulties it could be made out what he was saying. But he never lost heart. And it was a great effort on my part to pick up his words, word by word. Maybe, he could finish one paragraph in half an hour. Then he got exhausted and he went to take rest. Again, after some time, he came back and completed the entire letter. Comrades, in this course, I had seen that he needed assistance of two comrades for keeping his mobility. It could be day time, night time or for walking a few steps. It was impossible for him to walk alone. But even when he was in such a torturous condition, I found his thinking was intact, so uncompromising, always guided by the thoughts of Comrades Shibdas Ghosh. At least I could not detect anything else. Even when he debated

on any issue, he remained very scientific and precise. But Comrades, during the last few years, at least in the last one year or so, even that ability of speech also was going away. It was truly agonizing. I could only recall the famous scientist Stephen Hawking who was affected with motor neuron disorder. He was also not able to talk for years together. He passed away recently. But at least he was able to convey his ideas and emotions with the help of his fingers. He used to type something and thus was able to convey his ideas, thoughts and feelings. What was most agonizing in case of Comrade Lukose was that he was not able to convey his thoughts or emotion also during the last phase of his life. He could not write. He could not speak. Only at times, I found his eyes were speaking. Normally, hardly something was seen in the eyes. But when he wanted to convey something, we could find his eyes despite all difficulties, expressive. And now Comrades, I can tell you that his spirit was very undying. As Comrade Venugopal has aptly told, his age was not of death. 71 years today is nothing. His was indeed an untimely demise. The disease took away his life — a very, very valuable life. It is not only a loss for our Kerala Party (unit) or at all-India Party level but a great loss for the entire working class of the country. But then there ought to be a very hard struggle by all of us to fill up the void, the gap created by his death. The Kerala Party has to stand up and face the challenge of the time. Comrades, as taught by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh it is our pledge to fulfil the dreams of Comrade Lukose who lives undying in our hearts. With these words, I conclude here.

Long live Comrade C K Lukose !

Turning grief into determination, we shall continue to hold aloft the banner of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought

[This is the speech delivered by Comrade V Venugopal, member, Central Committee and Kerala State Secretary, SUCI(C), at the memorial meeting of Comrade C K Lukose, departed Polit Bureau Member of the Party, convened by the Central Committee, on 25 February 2019 at Sarat Sadan, Howrah, West Bengal]

Comrade President, Comrade General Secretary, Members of the Polit Bureau and other leaders on the dais,

Comrade Lukose had been suffering from Parkinsonism for quite long, the symptoms of which was found about eight to ten years back. And of late it took a very serious turn. He became almost immobile and unable to speak,

unable to gesture even. But still in Kerala our party had been taking all care to nurse him, to keep him in good spirit. And he also, his thinking or concepts not having been affected a bit was mentally very active in day to day activities in the Party as well as the day to day political development. That on 13 February his demise will come — actually nobody was able to gather.

But it happened. In Kerala as well as on the national plane, we had to lose him at this age. He was 71 years old. But it is not a very old age to die in these days. Anyhow we have to reckon with the fact. The whole Party, including thousands of supporters and sympathizers of the Party and thousands of workers who are organized by the Party and with whom the Party has always shown solidarity in each and every of their movements was put to grief very much. Comrade Lukose had a distinctive role, distinctive as well as leading role in establishing the Party

of the proletariat in Kerala, particularly, and also South India as a whole. Actually, in Kerala we lost, so far as the state alone is concerned, not only a leading figure but also a guardian under whom hundreds of cadres and activists of the Party wholeheartedly took up their revolutionary activities for our beloved Party, trained and geared by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. It is about fifty years since our party SUCI(Communist) has been working in Kerala. The initial years in the late 60s and early 70s were

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Comrade Venugopal's speech

We shall continue to carry the flag of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought as Comrade Lukose did

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very telling because an entirely new brand of communism was introduced in the state, which was unknown to the type of communism prevailing in Kerala for a long time then, that was represented by CPI and CPI(M) and also in the late 60s by Naxalite CPI(ML). A few students of Quilon Engineering College came and took up the task and being inspired by the great thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh



Comrade V Venugopal addressing

they started a struggle not on intellectual plane only but in their life, which was then a new attempt in Kerala at developing into a revolutionary. Comrade C K Lukose was one among them. It was really a great struggle, an intense struggle and painstaking struggle. So far the South was concerned it was a struggle which did not shape up anywhere before that. They tried to even organizing poor people and workers also, but more than that to build up a communist character was the focal point of the struggle. Being imbibed by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's idea of professional revolutionary, they undertook in their life — giving up everything — to organize the revolutionary party of the proletariat, which is essential in organizing revolutionaries in any country. Many of them were not earlier connected with politics. Rather, being attracted by the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism which was enriched and developed by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, a new struggle was taken up. That was the most important thing. Young people came and gave up their career, education and everything, taking up revolutionary struggle. I must say that several comrades tried it, and in the following years several comrades came and tried their best to continue the struggle. Everyone could not continue, so some of them went back, some of them failed, some of

them stumbled and fell. But Comrade Lukose was gradually coming up and taking up the struggle very persistently and continuously for the necessity of the Party at each moment. He took decision on giving up whatever personal he had got and ultimately he became successful in developing as a full time and professional revolutionary. This I said because not that he was the only man who came to the Party then, but he was the only man who persistently pursued the struggle. By the time he decided to join the party he was a married man. Very patiently as well as with due regard and respect he made his family also to take to and recognize the Party and brought them to the Party as comrades and companions. Gradually the party

expanded in Kerala. Comrade Lukose provided leadership in formulating the party line and in analysing the political situation in the state. You know the development of a party body was also dependent on his struggle. The Kerala State Committee of the Party which we have now is the product of decades of struggle, where day-by-day the committee was enriched. The committee was brought up on the principle of Democratic Centralism with Comrade Lukose as leader, and actually in Kerala the number of cadres that we could build up almost every year without fail increased, new cadres came and took up activities for the Party. It was all because of the model struggle which was shown by Comrade C K Lukose. He, in my experience, what I felt, was: he cared for his colleagues, he respected his colleagues and he was very much particular to train his colleagues on so many scores. So what happened was that a band of very efficient political cadres were built, political leaders were built by Comrade C K Lukose. And also he was mainly responsible to bring out our political organ *Unity* in Malayalam. The editorial committee was led by Comrade Lukose, and we developed a band of relatively good writers, political writers. Similarly, he was the man who took the lead to organize children in the state. Particularly, a Komsomol wing was

organized in Kerala, and also a broader children organization, called 'Prachodana', was organized in which hundreds of children enrolled every year and a new culture, character, a new knowledge, understanding about great people, scientists, and a scientific mind was created. He began to be called by children as 'Valyappa' (grandfather). He was very endearing to hundreds of children in the state. In the same way he gave guidance to build our women's organization also. He was able to influence his own family, his wife Lalitha Mathew became a very good activist until recently when affected by rheumatoid arthritis she could no more freely move at all. She became the member of the Party and she took the responsibility as the President of our women's wing AIMSS. He also tried to involve children in our Party activities. Now they are very good well-wishers and supporters of the Party. Similarly, his life so far as those aspiring to become real communists are concerned could very well be an example. He was a model. So, comrades, no doubt our whole Party has lost a very good leading cadre. But Kerala has lost the very backbone of the state. But daily by his own endeavour Comrade Lukose has produced the band of comrades who can come up, take over and carry forward the movement further.

In Kerala when the Party was constituted initially in the early seventies, it was not at all a known party. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh or SUCI(C) were unknown names even for other parties of our state. CPI (M)'s attempt to attack us or resist the growth of our party was to brand SUCI(C) as terrorists and Naxalites. In the initial phase, to some extent, they could successfully do it also. But gradually in Kerala when the type of Marxism presented by CPI (M) and CPI are in such a pathetic condition, the really left minded people could understand our Party and we are now having a large section of well-meaning people supporting our Party.

It was Comrade Lukose's idea upon which we that is, the Kerala State Committee took initiative to form 'Janakeeya Pratirodha Samiti'. That was an organization above caste or community, or even political party basis also, to fight for common cause. With the idea some of the

leading figures of the state were impressed. For long 25 years Justice VR Krishna Iyer remained its President and under the banner of People's Resistance Committee very big movements, several movements were conducted in the state of Kerala. Some of the leading figures came and participated in the movements on the street. It was very well thought out idea by our Comrade C K Lukose. Today, SUCI (Communist) is a countable force in Kerala. Wherever genuine people's movements are there, people know that SUCI(C) will be there. Whenever any section of the people will come to us and ask our advice or our leadership we are ready to offer it.

The prestige that we have gained is tremendous as a Party of people's movements. All these achievements we made with Comrade Lukose in the forefront. Even when he was bedridden, even when he could not move at all, he had valuable and living ideas which he would convey to us. For about two years he became totally immobile. For this period our party developed a band of comrades to nurse him round the clock, 24 hours. They worked day in and day out to care for him and nurse him. All this time it was found whenever leading comrades went and visited him, many of our central leaders including our General Secretary in the meantime visited Kerala and met him, it was a very inspiring occasion to him. He never thought that his illness is to affect his thoughts. Rather, even while he was in his last days — when nobody actually supposed that he is going to be no more so soon — but whatever issues were there, whenever we could somehow apprise him of an issue, convey the issue to him, he used to give his analysis, he used to give his explanations which were very much valuable for us. So until the last he never thought that his illness has become a block in the path of responsibility he has to fulfil. Rather, even while he was immobile almost, he tried to regain his lost abilities through whatever little movements he could do; with that he used to exercise and all. He is an all-out example, so to speak. He was an example of permanently active, permanently active means he could not be seen a single second passing without work, activities; he was a workaholic, so to say, and cult of

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On the eve of election, an insight into the socio-political situation of Andhra Pradesh

On the eve of upcoming assembly elections in the state of Andhra Pradesh, as usual, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties both regional and national, are trying to woo the people by performing a motley of stunts and gimmicks. It is known to all that the united Andhra Pradesh, once carved out of erstwhile Madras Residency as a separate linguistic state of Telugu-speaking people in 1956, was further bifurcated in June 2014 into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh after the then Congress government at the Centre conceded to the separatist demand of Telangana Rashtriya Samity. Our Party at that time had shown that fragmentation of the states would bring no relief to the people at large since all their plight and penury is stemming from the ruthlessly oppressive capitalist system bestriding the country like a deadweight. Only a few career-seeking regional bourgeois party leaders would benefit by being

saddled in power. Now after five years, the people of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh find that to be true in every respect.

Growing misery and pauperization of AP people

On the eve of the next assembly election, what is the economic condition of the people of Andhra Pradesh, particularly the peasants and workers? Agriculture, the sector which majorly provides employment to the people along with its ancillary sectors, is in severe crisis. Partial loan waiver in three phases could not better the lives of farmers in any way. Due to lack of remunerative price for their crops, farmers are caught in a debt trap and those who are humiliated for non-repayment of loans are committing suicide. The irony is that the farmers are often no longer working on their farms but hovering around banks, tahsildar's office, xerox centers to become eligible for alms thrown at them by

the government in the form of insurance and subsidy. They are unable to lead a dignified life. Suicides are unabated. Drought hit districts like Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, Prakasham, Vijayanagaram, and Srikakulam witnessed large scale migration of farmers to other states in search of livelihood as their crops failed. Even fishermen are affected as their source of livelihood; the coastal areas are being handed over to the monopolists.

The promise of industrial development that was made by Chandrababu Naidu, the incumbent Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Chief Minister, has expectedly proved to be a big hoax. Foreign trips to attract foreign investments and the annual investors' meet held with pomp in Vijayawada are full of sound signifying nothing as even 5% of all the MOUs signed have not been realized. However a few industries like Kia Motors have been set up being granted astronomical subsidies to the tune of thousands of crores, which are feeding on the cheap labour of the hapless youth under severe job crunch. On the whole the plight of the unemployed youth is beyond description. As per the government statistics, there are three lakh job vacancies in different government departments. Lakhs of unemployed youth are going out of the state in search of jobs and livelihood and even for better higher education. Like other states, the government is resorting to contractual and outsourcing methods of recruitment which are nothing short of bonded labour system as the workers are paid low wages and treated like slaves. The plight of migrant workers is still bleaker, as they are forced to work like beasts and their living conditions remind us of the concentration camps. They are made to work in extremely risky conditions; their lives are of no consequence at all. TDP government has taken away the right of workers to form trade unions by making the process complicated. On the plea of making AP investor friendly, there is growing police oppression on the workers' movements which are erupting for non-redressal of their genuine problems.

Same is the scenario of education and healthcare. Corporate educational institutions like Narayana and Chaitanya have taken commercialization of education to new levels. The competition among the corporate colleges for marks,

ranks, and grades in order to attract the parents has led to all kinds of corrupt practices. To this money minting educational business, innocent students are being sacrificed. Many students are suffering from severe psychological problems and a good number of them are committing suicide due to the inhuman pressure built up in these institutions. The condition has come to such a pass because of the anti-people educational policies taken by the successive governments of Congress and TDP, creating out and out unscientific, undemocratic and non-secular education system. On the other hand, private educational institutions are being given priority over government institutions by the parents of students as the latter miserably lack the basic amenities. Using dwindling admissions in the government institutions as a plea, the TDP government has closed down schools, colleges and social welfare hostels in thousands. The number would have been much higher had there been no public outcry. The government universities are in a bad shape due to political interference. The Private Universities Act was passed undermining the very objective of education.

The condition of government hospitals is perilous. The prescribed medicines are to be bought from outside and the patients are forced to go to private diagnostic centres. Arogyasri, a much-touted government medical reimbursement scheme for white ration card holders, has become a "kamdhenu scheme" for private hospitals. With the increasing commercialization of medical education, mushrooming of corporate hospitals, profit mongering of monopolists in pharmaceutical industry, medicines have become unaffordable to the poor and middle class. Attacks on hospitals and doctors have become common. As people are becoming more and more distrustful of modern medicine, so they are relying more on the outdated, unscientific, pseudo medical methods and superstitions to their own disadvantage.

Politics of sops and freebies

TDP came to power in 2014 Assembly elections with the promise of ushering in new golden era (Swarnandhara and Navyandhara). As A.P was allegedly reeling under severe losses due to division of state and loss of the capital city,

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Comrade Venugopal in Memorial Meeting

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knowledge that he created in the party was also very big. We had a set of comrades, or generally in the whole party there was a good atmosphere of theoretical cult, where comrades would read not only Comrade Shibdas Ghosh's works but classics also, right from Marx, Engels. Many comrades used to read out such works to him till his end. He handled a column in *Unity*: 'Theoretical Lessons' where every month he would bring out this or that chapter or life of a revolutionary and discuss on that. All could, particularly, children and lady comrades could go to him whenever some difficulties arose in life. They could go with satisfaction. So when in his last journey, we could see that even very small children could not console themselves. And those people from outside who came and attended the funeral they wondered: what is the relationship that this man has been maintaining with the many hundreds of people assembled who broke out in tears. Actually, he was very close to all of us. He is a very good model for how one can win his family members also if you persistently try. Some not really close he made come to take some responsibilities in their own capacity with love, regard and all. He was a leader who could interact with ladies most democratically giving everybody her due share of

respect. Inside the party the democratic atmosphere in which women were given their due and due respect, stands out. Comrade Lukose was very particular about that. In short, in Kerala the party has lost a very leading figure creating a void which it is very difficult to fill all on a sudden. But again, there is one thing that we have developed a very good State Committee guided by Comrade C K Lukose which can take up the challenge also. At a national level we lost a very good national leader. He used to look after Tamil Nadu also on behalf of the Central Committee. Comrade C K Lukose was the pioneer in South India who took up Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought and transformed his life entirely into that of a working class leader, a revolutionary and set an example to all of the working class in our area, at least in the South. This you can say certainly. The life of his was very precious. As Comrade Shibdas Ghosh taught us, there is only one way i.e. turning grief into determination. In Kerala we are trying for that. We are sure that we will win in the struggle. His life and struggle will be permanent examples before us. We shall continue to carry the flag of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought as Comrade Lukose did.

Long Live Comrade C K Lukose!
Long Live Revolution!

Socio-Political Situation of Andhra Pradesh

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Hyderabad, the centre of development, people expected that a veteran politician like Chandrababu Naidu would steer it onto the path of development. The unemployed youth were also taken in with the promise of jobs. But now everything is in a fiasco save and except fomenting regional sentiment for securing vote. Since TDP came to power, their leaders, followers, capitalists, big contractors have appropriated people's money through government schemes and projects. Creating an artificial real estate boom, particularly in Vishakhapatnam, Vijayawada, etc., land is being grabbed through trickery or force. They are plundering the sand quarries and attacking the officials who question them. The CM and his family reveal their assets annually to project their transparency and honesty. However they remain silent on the wealth their MPs, MLAs, leaders, and their relatives have amassed. Budgetary allocations to caste based corporations leading to caste animosity and divisions among the exploited masses is another practice typical with such bourgeois forces. Alongside, they are misleading people by saying that the cause of their misery is due to denial of special category status to the state—a deception of the highest order which only those subservient to bourgeois class interest and experts in shielding the oppressive capitalist system breeding all the evils, peddle. But now in order to veil its anti-people exploitative rule and renege on promises, the ruling TDP has started customary

doling out of fake promises and sops. After hoodwinking people for years, the TDP is now out to show 'love' towards people by announcing enhancement of unemployment dole. For each member of the self-help groups ten thousand rupees was announced in the name of 'pasupu – kunkuma' (turmeric and vermilion).

YSR Congress Party no different from TDP, so are BJP and Congress

YSR Congress, a split faction of the state unit of the Congress and another regional party drooling for pelf and power, is also following suit. It has been conveniently tilting towards either the Congress or the BJP with an eye on electoral gains. Y S Jaganmohana Reddy, the YSR Congress leader is also known for large scale corruption. The BJP and the Congress, who do not feature in the imagination of the Andhra people because of their prolonged misrule and crass opportunism, are also busy in giving promises and still exploring scope for forming opportunist alliances." But they are not able to make any headway as AP people hold them responsible for their undemocratic rules and in implementing AP Reorganization Act.

So called "alternative" of Jana Sena-CPI (M)-CPI

Jana Sena is another regional party led by Mr. Pavan Kalyan, a film star. Its predecessor, Praja Rajyam Party, floated by Chiranjeevi, Pavan's elder brother, in 2009, later merged with the Congress. These

are all splinter groups trying to make electoral fortunes by exploiting regional sentiment as well as glamour of cine stars. Strangely, the CPI (M) and CPI, who are officially projected by the bourgeois quarters as Marxists-leftists to confuse people,

have now joined the Jana Sena and posing this alliance as a "new alternative". This is another instance of how the CPI (M), CPI who have long abandoned the path of struggling leftism are now not feeling any qualm in uniting with any and sundry just for buttressing petty electoral interest. The Congress, DMK, AIADMK, SP, BSP, NCP, RJD – everyone's door is knocked at by them just for managing to secure one or two seats. Earlier, after persistent efforts, a 10-party alliance of leftist parties could be formed in the state for developing left-democratic movements on people's issues. Along with the CPI (M) and CPI, our Party, SUCI(C), which is always trying to build up such a struggling left unity, was also a constituent of this combination. But now when the election bell has tolled, the CPI (M) and CPI did not hesitate to desert the 10-party combination and in a demonstration of sheer opportunistic electoral politics, join hands with Jana Sena. It may be recalled that in 2004 election also, they similarly left the then 9-party combination and



Comrade M Naganna filing nomination for Kurnool Constituency in Andhra Pradesh

aligned with the Congress.

Make victorious the candidates of SUCI (Communist)

As against this opportunist utterly deceptive bourgeois vote politics, SUCI (Communist) guided by Marxism-Leninism-Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought and holding aloft the banner of genuine struggling leftism, has been building up legitimate democratic movements, based on higher proletarian ethics and culture, throughout the country. Repeatedly, our Party is emphasizing that the oppressed deprived people have no alternative but to depend on organized united powerful class and mass struggles along the right track for wresting their legitimate dues. We are participating in the election as a part of that continuing struggles we are building up with all our might to firmly uphold people's cause. So we fervently appeal to the people to elect SUCI(C) candidates, both in the assembly and parliament elections, for strengthening democratic mass movements and struggling leftism.

Observance of International Women's Day

Kanpur, UP

International Women's day was observed by Anganwadi Workers' and Assistants Welfare Association, Kanpur Chapter, UP, by organizing an impressive meeting at Budha Park on 8 March. Comrade Lata Sharma, State president of the organization addressed the meeting and called upon the Anganwadi workers to draw lessons and inspirations from the history of struggles of women to uphold their rights and cause and thereby strengthen their own movement. She also appealed for linking their

movements with the struggle for revolutionary transformation of the society.

Madhya Pradesh

The Day was also observed in 11 districts of Madhya Pradesh including Bhopal, Gwalior, Guna, Indore, Jabalpur, Katni, Ashok Nagar, Shivpuri, Sagar and Vidisha etc.

Tamil Nadu AIMSS condemns ghastly incident of gang rape

In a press Statement, Ms Hilda Mary, Convenor, Tamilnadu State Unit of AIMSS strongly condemned the gang-rape of hundreds of young girls in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, and exposed the condemnable role of the Deputy Superintendent of Police

who gave a clean chit to the ruling AIADMK despite there being reasonable proof of connection of its functionaries with the culprits.

Sit-in Demonstration of Bank Employees' Unity Forum in Kolkata

Bank Employees' Unity Forum (West Bengal) organized a sit-in-demonstration on 16 March in front of Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata on the demands of stopping outsourcing and contractualization of permanent jobs, filling up permanent vacancies, withdrawing termination notice served on and restoration of original enhanced wage to the ATM guards, conclusion of 11th bipartite settlement in banking industry etc. Leaders in their speeches called for sustained movements on these issues and exposed the compromising role of the so called big organizations AIBEA, BEFI, etc.

Collect and Read

From the perspective of people's interest, how should election be viewed

Provash Ghosh

CORRIGENDUM

Please read Shri Amraram as President of AIKS and not AIKKMS on p 7 of P Era dated 15 March 2019. Mistake regretted.

Venezuela

US imperialists wanted Venezuelan people to suffocate from want of even water, food and electricity unless they submit to dictates of Pentagon

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the Venezuelan army to abandon its support for the democratically elected president of their country and rally behind the planted US stooge. The US President also bombastically stated that “We are all over the world and we have troops all over the world in places that are very, very far away. Venezuela is not very far away, and the people are suffering and dying. We have many options for Venezuela, including a possible military option, if necessary.” And the sheen of ‘overflowing concern for restoring democracy in Venezuela’ has now been worn off with John Bolton, the US National Security Advisor acknowledging in an interview to *Fox Business* that “humanitarian crisis” is a business opportunity. Simultaneously, the moneybags of Venezuela who are serving as spokespersons of the US imperialists began to plead for ‘humanitarian aid’ for the beleaguered Venezuelan population ‘suffering under Maduro’s rule.’

But when all these attempts to cower Maduro and Venezuelan people failed, the US imperialists who had already imposed economic sanctions on Venezuela, now made it more stringent and severe, so much so that it was destined to strike the country’s financial sector and massively impact its revenue. Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director of the ‘Centre for Economic and Policy Research’ in Washington DC openly said that, “It’s basically very severe sanctions, the kind that I don’t remember ever being used, ... and there really isn’t any justification for them, ... In the case of Venezuela there isn’t anything except (that) the Trump administration wants to overthrow the government... I mean there’s no ambiguity anymore. Anyone who’s been paying attention knows that the United States has been trying to get rid of the Venezuelan government for the past 15 years, ... Any sanctions will make things worse ... it will mean more shortages, more scarcities of food and medicine ... and it’ll be much worse if these sanctions really stick.” The latest sanctions banned the trading of Venezuelan debt and prevents the country’s state-run oil company, *Petroleos de Venezuela SA*, or *PDVSA*, from selling new bonds to U.S. citizens or financial groups. Imposition of such a draconian sanctions has invited

criticism even from right-wing governments of Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Brazil who are hostile to the Maduro government. To confuse and hoodwink global people, the US imperialists along with the plotters of a coup from the Venezuelan oligarchy released a misleading propaganda that Venezuela under Maduro is in a serious ‘humanitarian crisis’ and hence needs ‘humanitarian aid’. The total amount of aid being planned to be delivered from the US was estimated at \$25 million. It was stated to include enough food and hygienic products to last for several thousand people for 10 days. What a neatly crafted show off! On the one hand, imposition of inhuman sanction is making life miserable for the Venezuelan people while on the other hand, there is begging for humanitarian aid from the same very imposer of sanctions. The stringent and prolonged US sanctions upon Venezuelan oil production and export and even on using global financial market was enormous; alone the latest sanctions announced by Bolton in late January was estimated to cost working and poor Venezuelans \$30 million a day. Such was the US and rightist politics of humanitarianism! It does not end there. After Guaidó popped up, the Bank of England froze \$1.4 billion worth of Venezuelan gold, which the bank said it would release to Guaidó. Washington also froze \$7 billion assets of Citgo, a subsidiary of the Venezuelan state oil company, under the latest sanctions. This means that in one month, Washington and its allies stole \$8.4 billion, or more than a few hundred times the promised “aid.” And still they were crying for the Venezuelans to let them offer humanitarian aid! 23 February was fixed by the US and his Guaidó ‘company’ as the date for the ‘humanitarian aid’ of food, medicine etc., to enter the land of Venezuela from the Colombian border. Trump’s special envoy to Venezuela, a hard-core right-wing war-maniac, Elliott Abrams, led a US delegation by military aircraft to the Colombian border. There US officials joined Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó near a bridge in Colombia to send ‘desperately needed aid to the masses’ and challenge the rule of Nicolás Maduro. Some exiled soldiers were stationed there for the convoy. Obviously the Venezuelan opposition sought to sow blood and chaos.

Video footage showed Venezuelan troops standing in a single line behind riot shields on the Venezuelan side. On the Colombian side, masked opposition protesters hurled molotov cocktails toward them. When two “aid” trucks suddenly burst into flames, Guaidó and most of the media immediately blamed the fire on Maduro. But unfortunately for them, the trucks had never reached the Venezuelan side, and were ignited by those same molotovs. Thereafter three defecting Venezuelan soldiers hijacked armoured personnel carriers and drove them at full speed into the border barriers in order to defect to the Colombian side. By that they struck a crowd of civilians that included Nicole Kramm, a Chilean photojournalist. Kramm, was narrowly saved with her camera on and called it ‘an attack on civilians’. The Opposition also reportedly burnt a warehouse where subsidized food bundles were packaged and distributed under CLAP, a Venezuelan government project. In any case, the entire drama of humanitarian aid ended in a fiasco for the US and the Venezuelan opposition.

This became particularly painful for them as international relief organizations like Red Cross and others called this delivery of ‘humanitarian aid’ as politically motivated. The Red Cross even denounced the border charade as “not humanitarian aid” and rebuked the unauthorized use of Red Cross insignia by the opposition forces. Among others who refused to work for the ‘aid politics’, the UN spokesman said in New York “Humanitarian action needs to be independent of political, military or other objectives”. The International Monetary Fund avoided taking sides; the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), of which Venezuela was a founding member, said nothing. Even the Colombian government did not find it wise to get involved in an act which would take shape of an overtly hostile aggression against its neighbour country. On the other hand people of more than 40 cities of the world, including Kolkata from India and Dhaka from Bangladesh staged protest rallies or other programmes on 23 February 2019 against this so-called humanitarian aid drama

But when the ploy of delivering so called ‘humanitarian aid’ did not work, the US imperialists towing their allies behind them jumped upon the disgusting idea of not just cutting off the route for ‘humanitarian aid’, they wanted the Venezuelan people to suffocate from want of even water, food and electricity. What would one call this? Championing human rights and democracy? Would the drum-beaters of US democracy who are busy spotting human right violation and subversion of democracy in various parts of the world offer their comments on this issue?

Cyber-experts, nowadays unambiguously say that the imperialists, led by the US imperialists have made cyber-attack on power system legitimate and legal tactics to undermine another country, they may be at war with. These include interrupting power and water supplies, disrupting traffic patterns, slowing or interfering with internet access, and even remotely triggering meltdowns at nuclear power plants. They hold that in case of Venezuela, with its outdated internet and power infrastructure it was made relatively easy to interfere and intervene, as well as remove the traces of intervention. Besides, from behind their longstanding hostility and attack against Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and an insatiable desire for grabbing and exploiting its huge oil reserve, the US rulers have already had enough scope to make a penetration in the national infrastructure grid of Venezuela. It was thus relatively straightforward for a technologically advanced country like the USA to interfere with the Venezuelan power grid. And that is what they have done.

A nationwide black-out for five days in early March (7 to 11 March) led to calamities, even patient death (26 in public hospitals) in hospitals, rotting of food in the tropical heat, disruption of water supplies, or shutting down of businesses, even intense looting of businesses; a “terrorist attack” ruptured storage tanks at a heavy oil processing plant in eastern Venezuela, in which 3 tanks caught fire. The power outage was caused by an electromagnetic attack on the Guri hydroelectric complex, which supplies 80% of Venezuela’s

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Venezuela

Democratic-minded peace-loving people need to rise unitedly against this fiendishly criminal attack by the US imperialists on Venezuela

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electricity. Though the opposition squarely blamed maladministration and corruption of the government for the outage, President Maduro said in a television address, "Here I have the evidence of the investigation, how they did it, who did it, and how they continued it," unambiguously holding the US imperialists and the Venezuelan opposition chief Juan Guaidó, responsible. In a tweet on 8 March last, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo framed the electricity outage as a pivotal stage in US plans for regime change. Surprisingly immediately after the outage, US Senator Marco Rubio, who led the public charge against the Venezuelan government took to Twitter to announce the blackout and claim that "backup generators have failed." An hour later Guaidó declared: "the light will return when the usurpation [of Maduro] ends."

Power returned in many parts of the country on 12 March, though service was not restored. Capitalizing on public anger over the blackout, Guaidó, obviously under advice of the US imperialists, vowed to enter the presidential palace and occupy the chair of Maduro. But he could not make that plan materialize. Rather, life in Caracas was on as usual. Nobody looked starving. They were cordial. Mountainous neighbourhoods were connected after the Bolivarian Revolution by cable car metros to Caracas, also in the mountains. The horrible power outage affected plumbing, elevators, gas lines and more. Yet it was overcome just in a week based on the collective determination of their local community councils. A remarkable feat!

So this is where imperialism has degraded today. To forcibly grab

and exploit the natural and human resources of other countries, the US imperialists and their cohorts not only weigh military option or conspire to bring about coup d'états, they do not feel any qualm in building up economic-political blockade, in shutting routes of supplies of power, food, water, the minimum basic necessities of human life, so that the victim countries are squeezed and coerced from all sides to kneel down before them. This is the kind of 'democracy', 'human rights', 'civilized conduct', 'anti-terror crusade' and 'message of peace' the US imperialists are promoting in the unipolar world. Their gangsterism in Venezuela ought to be an eye-opener to all. They have been daring to pursue such brigandage because of absence of a worldwide powerful anti-imperialist militant peace movement which alone can work as the deterrent against such a wanton crime on humanity. The democratic-minded peace-loving people of the world need to rise unitedly against this fiendishly criminal attack by the US imperialists, build up that desired united anti-imperialist movement and stand firmly behind the struggling Venezuelan people.

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2. IN THESE TIMES- 6 March 2019.
3. Reuters, 6 February 2019 4. New York Times, February 2019.
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Comrade Sitaram Tudu passes away

On 22 March 2019, at around 3 am in the morning, Comrade Sitaram Tudu, a life-long revolutionary and Member, Jharkhand State Committee of SUCI (Communist) suddenly breathed his last. Comrade Tudu was attracted into the revolutionary movement through his close association with Comrade Hiren Sarkar and Comrade Prithish Chanda, both members of the founding Central Committee of the Party and highly respected leaders of the SUCI (C) among



the toiling people of the region including the tribals and mine workers. Comrade Tudu also came to be widely known as a militant leader in workers-peasants movements not only in Singhbhum district, but all over the Jharkhand state. He was Vice-President of Jharkhand State units of both AIKKMS and AIUTUC. At the same time, he contested Ghatsila Assembly Constituency several times between 1977 and 2009 as also once from Jamshedpur Parliamentary constituency.

Several years back, when the state government, conspiring to evict the tribal people from their home and hearth in the forests brought in the CNT-SPT Act, Comrade Sitaram Tudu took initiative to organize the tribals to build up a mighty movement, under pressure of which the government had to step back from its move. Toiling people of the state also recalls with great appreciation and regards Comrade Tudu's leading role in organizing struggles against forced eviction of poor forest-dwelling tribals at Potka of Asanboni areas for handing over the vast forest land to the Jindal and Bhusan group, for setting up steel plants. Comrade Tudu was also known for his leading role in Blusters' movement as the Secretary by the Copper Mazdoor Union in the state. This movement compelled the authorities to change the system of life-long night duty the workers were compelled to undertake at the furnace. This commendable role of Comrade Tudu was appreciated even in the media. Comrade Tudu was also associated with a number of social-cultural organizations. At the inspiration of Comrade Prithish Chanda, Comrade Tudu took initiative to build up Sidhu-Kanhu Disha Samity, a social platform for tribal movement. Since then, Sidhu-Kanhu Day is observed annually as Martyrs' Day by the tribal communities in the state. Comrade Sitaram Tudu also played a significant role in founding a Santhal University in the state which is in the process of being set up. All these activities, Comrade Tudu undertook guided by his realization that the movements of the tribal community need to be intimately linked up with and developed as conducive to the anti-capitalist revolutionary movement of the country being developed based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. Spurred on by this realization, he associated himself with the SUCI(C) and discharged all his responsibilities as a leading organizer of the Party till his last breath. He also inspired his daughters to join the Party. Respectfully acclaimed by all, even the leaders of other parties, for his ever-smiling, modest and sociable, yet militant character, large masses of people came from afar to pay their last tribute to the departed leader. They knew here was a living icon of protest against opportunism, careerism and corruption that pervades the political arena these days. His last journey was joined by hundreds of his comrades and admirers who also bid adieu to their beloved leader at the crematorium at his native village in Dhalbhumgarh.

Red Salute Comrade Sitaram Tudu!

BJP has most number of legislators with cases of crime on women against them

A study released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) shows that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has the most number of MPs/MLAs with cases of crimes against women. The party has also been giving more tickets to these candidates as compared to others. Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Mamata Banerjee's All India Trinamool Congress (AITC)

also gave tickets to candidates with such criminal cases pending against them. ADR analysed 4,845 out of 4,896 election affidavits of current MPs and MLAs to arrive at these startling figures. These include 768 of 776 affidavits of MPs and 4,077 out of 4,120 MLAs from all states. The study says that of 1,580 (33 per cent) MPs/MLAs analysed with declared criminal cases, 48 have declared cases related to

crimes against women. Among various recognized parties, BJP has the highest number of such MPs/MLAs, 12, followed by Shiv Sena with 7 and AITC with 6. Among the major parties in the last 5 years, 47 candidates with declared cases of crimes against women were given tickets by the BJP. The second highest number of candidates, 35, were given tickets by BSP followed by 24

candidates from Indian National Congress (INC) who had contested Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and state Assembly elections. Even leaders who have heinous crime charges against them were preferred for tickets. The study says that in the last 5 years, recognized parties have given tickets to 26 candidates who had declared cases related to rape. (India Today-19-04-18)

Data Manipulation

Time to rise against such bourgeois deceptions and rally behind forces engaged in anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle

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Post and Telegraph, Ports, Railways— everywhere this highly objectionable practice is going on, often under the sanitized term of ‘outsourcing’ or ‘PPP model’. Though the government agencies earlier used to publish the figures of employment generation or rate of increase/decrease in unemployment, albeit not without a slew of manipulations, those figures never reflected the true picture. Anybody with minimum intelligence knows that the term employment means permanent gainful engagement. But the official figures used to count pseudo-employment (say part-time temporary jobs on contract or self-employment like hawkers or small *kirana* shop owner) as well as under-employment (the condition in which people in a labour force are employed at less than full-time or regular jobs or at jobs inadequate with respect to their training or economic need) as employment. So, the official figures released did not mirror the objective reality. One would recall that even Pranab Mukherjee, former President, once said in an open meeting that more than half of Indian population was unemployed. But after the BJP rode to power, publication of official figures of employment or rate of unemployment was stopped. Obvious question is why? And the plain and simple answer is the job scenario has become so acute that even all kinds of extensive manipulations and distortions would not be able to cover the festering sore. For 368 posts of peons in UP, over 23 lakh jobseekers including a sizeable number of post-graduates and doctorates had applied. When under public pressure, the Railway authorities were forced to advertise to fill up 90,000 odd vacancies, 2.5 crore applications were received. 18 lakh applications including those from post-graduates and doctorates were received for 5,400 Group D posts in West Bengal. 4600 engineers, and MBAs applied for 14 sweepers’ job in Tamil Nadu assembly. These facts bear eloquent testimony to the harrowing job scenario in the country. Why is it that unemployment is soaring and job loss is mounting? Because, oppressive despotic capitalism cannot create job. Continuous pauperization of common toiling people and working class because of reckless squeezing of their purchasing power for profit

maximization of the capitalist owners is creating growing market crisis. More the crisis, more is recession. More is recession, more shutters are downed on existing industries let alone setting up new job-creating industries. This is the cobweb created by capitalism and it itself is enmeshed in this.

Surely, the political managers and apologists of capitalism in the government or its ancillary corridors of power cannot afford to expose this truth before the people. So, they all are engaged in hiding this reality. But, the crisis and job scenario has assumed such an alarming proportion that even old method of customary release of selective carefully constructed employment related statistics is no more proving to be safe for the bourgeois government. All vote-seeking power-greedy bourgeois parties and their leaders have now expertized themselves in hoodwinking people with surfeit of counterfeit promises and gimmicks so as to corner votes and enjoy both pelf and power. The BJP and its government is out-and-out subservient to bourgeois class interest. So both the BJP government and the BJP leaders like Narendra Modi or Amit Shah belong to that category of polluted bourgeois vote politics. They had promised during electioneering in 2014 that if the BJP would come to power, 2 crores of jobs would be created per year. But shortly this bluff was exposed. Moreover, the fact of abolition of substantial jobs at cash-based lower end of economy following demonetization could not be kept hidden. All attempts to befool the countrymen about job creation such as increase in PF accounts, presumption of *ipso facto* generation of jobs because of claimed spurt in economic growth etc., proved futile. The Prime Minister also took a dig at the opposition by saying that, “Rather than the so-called failure of this government to create jobs, I believe the shortcoming lies in the absence or lack of a streamlined database of jobs.” But fine words butter no parsnips. So, the BJP government finally decided not to publish data on the unemployment rates and creation of new jobs by National Sample Survey Organization, CSO and even by the Labour department of the government. This visibly annoyed Shri PC Mohanan, and Smt. JV

Meenakshi, two members of National Statistical Commission (NSC) who had finalized the “First Annual Survey on Employment and Unemployment for the year 2017-18” in the beginning of December 2018. This was the first economy-wide employment survey conducted by NSSO after 2011-12 and was therefore deemed important. It was also likely to reflect job losses in the wake of demonetisation. But when the government refused to make it public lest it should harm the prospect of ruling BJP in the forthcoming elections, these two members of NSC tendered resignation in January last which also created a commotion among all those connected or conversant with such statistical researches. But, to the utter embarrassment of the BJP government, the report was leaked in a section of the media. It was revealed that as per the report, rise in unemployment in 2017-18 was unprecedented. Over and above, data published by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economics (CMIE), another non-government organization of reckoning, showed that the country is facing the highest unemployment rate in the last 45 years, which is contrary to claims of the BJP government about employment generation. CIME report released in January 2019 further showed that unemployment progressively rose during the last four years and nearly 11 million jobs were lost in 2018 after demonetisation. It also came in the media that the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of the NSSO of 2017-18 might be scrapped altogether by the government.

Commendable dissent by responsible dignitaries

In view of all these undesirable developments and reluctance on the part of the government to refrain from either fudging vital statistics or suppressing key data, the wrath and concern expressed by the well-known specialist personalities in a joint statement is totally justified. Indian statistics were “under a cloud for being influenced and indeed even controlled by political considerations ... Any statistics that cast an iota of doubt on the achievement of the government seem to get revised or suppressed on the basis of some questionable ideology,” the statement mentioned. The onus of addressing these

concerns lay squarely with the government. So far, nothing has been done to assuage the fears which have been articulated unambiguously by the signatories. Instead, the BJP government managed to get a rejoinder issued on 18 March last by a bunch of chartered accountants who so far had never logged their heads with any of the past economic or otherwise any national controversy ever. Countering the allegations and concerns of the 108 economists and social scientists, these chartered accountants comprising, among others, nominees of the BJP government in the various PSU and companies, bluntly defended the BJP government without any concrete evidences in support. They questioned the “political motivations” of the 108 signatories and wanted all “to come together to portray the progress made by India in recent years”. So like doctored data, even support is also manufactured with the help of the pliant groups on the pay-roll by the BJP government. Such is the extent of political bankruptcy of the BJP and its government. Does not this trend smack of fascistic move? Publication of administrative data is credible only when it is complemented by rigorous independent studies and evaluations free from undue political interference and ulterior motive of distorting reality for buttressing vested interest. Otherwise, by all the so called data-driven speeches and publicity on the part of the government, the citizens are none the wiser about their government’s performance. Rather they are misled and cheated. It is here that the civil society, the socially responsible erudite and professionals need to play a critical role by demystifying and communicating data, thus empowering citizens with relevant information. From this perspective of discharging due social obligation, the statement by 108 dignitaries deserves appreciation. It is also an eye-opener for the people at large as to how they are taken for a ride by the dishonest corrupt bourgeois parties and politicians. Time has come to rise against such bourgeois deceptions and rally behind forces who are seriously and sincerely engaged in their struggle against this oppressive depraved capitalist order and its bootlickers of different hues.