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No-detention Policy

A disastrous and discriminatory policy to spell total doom to education : Resist it

School education in India is currently plagued with a no- detention policy, also referred as abolition of the pass-fail system, between classes I and VIII. The pass-fail system is traditionally in vogue for granting promotion to higher classes in schools on the basis of results of end-examination of a session. Its abolition amounts to granting students automatic promotion without judging how nicely and thoroughly they have acquired the knowledge they were catered with during the session or how little they were prepared for the next higher class. It must be added that the measure pertains only to government schools where the bulk of students from common, particularly poorer families study. Rest of the schools, private-run, known as better or best schools in which expense of studying is becoming quite high for even middle- class families continue to run the examination and pass-fail system in accordance with their requirements and practice.

This policy of no-detention came in the wake of repeated attempts of effecting so-called reforms in education carried out since independence of the country. In the run of the day, these reforms have come out to be repeated attacks which had meant on one hand curtailment of education, with particularly the common people more and more losing access to education. On the other these measures have told miserably upon quality education and robbed education of its character building essence. The no-detention policy has turned out to be disastrous and discriminatory as well, for the

entire school education of the country. Widespread resentment is mounting fast among conscientious people associated with the process of school education: teachers, students, guardians, educationists, even people at large with their children currently engaged in school studies or looking for to be. The situation is coming to such a pass and the devastating nature of the move is being exposed in such a way notwithstanding the justifications offered, that it requires a thorough look-back at how this system generated, who vouched for it and why,

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Draft National Health Policy 2015

Outlines eventual all-out privatization-commercialization of healthcare in India

The BJP-led union government has circulated a Draft National Health Policy on its website inviting suggestions and comments. On perusal of the draft, it is clear that though the government is posing to be serious about 'Health for all', the roadmap laid is towards eventual handing over of the entire health sector to private operators for running on commercial basis. Healthcare, for all intent and purpose, is reduced to a mere commodity just like education and electricity. A glance at the salient features of the Policy will be revealing.

Spectacle of Healthcare in capitalist India

Every discerning person in India knows that healthcare system is in shambles. While a handful of rich and affluent receive modern treatment in sprawling posh private hospitals, the rural and urban poor, the pauperizing middle class who constitute bulk of the population cannot afford medical care. They are virtually starved of rudimentary healthcare because of absence of adequate number of hospitals and

proper infrastructure, paucity of qualified doctors, skyrocketing of the cost of medicines, investigation methods and treatment. Thus, access to rudimentary healthcare is eluding the vast majority of the population to whom even eking out a bare living is proving impossible because of ruthless capitalist oppression. As a result, lots of precious lives are lost, a huge number of people become crippled forever. There is spurt in the death of children and mothers. Even epidemics are on the rise what to

Comrade Provash Ghosh on surveillance upon the kin of Netaji

On Nehru Government's surveillance upon the kin of Netaji, Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C), issued the following statement on 11-04-2015 :

Though painful, it is not surprising that the Nehru Government had put the family members of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose under intense surveillance in independent India.

We know that because of Netaji's line of uncompromising struggle against British imperialists, he was not only a danger to the British rulers, but also to the compromising Gandhite leadership of Congress and they were opposed to him. Because of this, Netaji had to resign from the post of the president of Congress, even after getting elected in the Tripuri session. Yet Netaji stuck to his uncompromising line of struggle, which led to his suspension from Congress.

In independent India the Congress rulers were well aware of the deep popular feelings towards Netaji and hence were afraid of his name and even his memory. It reflects the utter right reactionary character of Congress.

But the BJP has no moral right to raise fingers at Congress. BJP's parent body RSS not only not played any positive role in the Indian freedom struggle, they actually opposed the anti-imperialist freedom struggle of the people. RSS advocated Hindu nationalism. Netaji stood for secularism and condemned the idea and propaganda of Hindu nationalism. So, taking advantage of the misdeeds of Congress, BJP's attempt to pose itself as follower of Netaji is nothing but sheer hypocrisy.

speak of availing treatment for terminal illnesses like AIDS, cancer, etc. All this cuts a sorry figure of a country that boasts of development and high growth rate. It is expected that a modern civilized welfare state would shoulder the responsibility of providing necessary medical assistance and hygiene to all its citizens. But the bourgeois government of independent India irrespective of which party ran or runs it did not make any effort whatsoever to discharge that responsibility. Immediately after independence, under public pressure, some initiative was taken to set up hospitals and primary health centres

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**Observe 24 April
SUCI(C) Foundation Day with due solemnity**

Access to rudimentary healthcare is eluding vast majority of the population

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under the aegis of the government. The historic recommendation of the Bhoré committee (1943-1946) to take all out measure to serve health for all “from womb to tomb”- which was framed on the eve on our independence reflecting dreams of our great martyrs and freedom fighters has been totally forgotten. As the days rolled by, negligence on the part of the government towards providing necessary healthcare through government hospitals and health centres went on soaring. Side by side, there has been mushrooming growth of private hospitals most of which run on pure commercial basis, at times even glaringly and defiantly deviating from basic medical ethics. The trend simply sprang up after adoption of the policy of globalization-liberalization in the 1990s since when there has been virtually a spree of privatization of healthcare. Even the governments, both at centre and in the states, no matter which of the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois parties run them, are all, in the name of public-private partnership, liberally allowing private players to take over various activities of the government hospitals. And as the capitalist system of the country, in tandem with world capitalism-imperialism, is becoming more and more reactionary and corrupt, notwithstanding all the mouthful promises by the governments and ruling party leaders, there is marked penetration of corruption in every sphere of healthcare which the common man seeking medical attention in the hospitals experiences day in and day out. Touts freely thump around in the hospitals with impunity obviously with indulgence of the authorities and extract undue money from the patients. Taking all together, hardship of the toiling Indians in obtaining medical treatment has become unbearable, leaving them helplessly to reconcile with the fact that healthcare is only for the rich and affluent while they themselves are destined to suffer and die without any treatment.

Propositions of Draft National Healthcare Policy—Funding

In this backdrop, we now proceed to have a look at the propositions of Draft National Health Policy 2015. First question is how much of monetary resources are to be allocated towards healthcare. Though in the Draft

Policy the government has acknowledged that public health expenditure of the country is the key to improve its health parameters as well as comprehensive health care services, it stands at present at just 1.2% of GDP. The Draft Policy only talks of scaling it upto 2.5%, but no definite target is set for achieving that. Rather, in the budget, allocation for health and family welfare has come down from Rs. 35,163 crores last year to Rs. 29,653 crores. Moreover, even if this bragged about 2.5% is achieved it is miserably low in comparison to the expenditure incurred by other countries towards health. WHO and UNO guidelines, incidentally, stipulate allocation of at least 5% of GDP towards health for the developing countries. If the government talks of paucity of funds, facts will go against it. In the last one decade, the government has liberally granted relief of an estimated amount of Rs 40 lakh crore rupees to the industrial houses and monopolists in the form of various waivers, exemptions and concessions. Amount of non-performing assets of the banks on account of loan default by industrial houses and capitalists has been to the tune of Rs 6 lakh crores as per figure published in the media in last November. The Economic Survey 2015 admits that projects worth 8.3 per cent of the GDP are investment in “suspended animation” means locked in unfinished or pending projects. Just for travel, the BJP government has spent as high as Rs 317 crores from public exchequer. The mega-2G spectrum scam has cost the government a revenue loss close to Rs. 1.76 lakh crore. The Comptroller and Auditor General’s draft report titled ‘Performance Audit of Coal Block Allocations’ says the government had extended “undue benefits” of a mind-boggling sum of Rs 10.67 lakh crore to commercial entities by giving them 155 coal acreages without auction between 2004 and 2009. Every year, as high as Rs 28.30 lakh crore of black money is estimated to be generated in India. Thus, the government is lax and benevolent to capitalist corporates, willful defaulters of bank loans, swindlers of public money and holders of unaccounted money. But when it comes to increased spending towards healthcare, the government shows an inexplicable strict and skinflint attitude.

Propositions of Draft National Healthcare Policy—Increased privatization

Next is about inadequacy of infrastructure and manpower in delivering medical services through government facilities. It is stated that even after 68 years of independence, it falls far behind even of the requirement as per Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS). The Draft Policy indicates that instead of meeting the shortfall by bettering the government facilities on both the counts, there will be more dependence on private or non-government hospitals to cater to the need. The Policy also states that there would be provision for 100% FDI in different health care services. The Policy proposes that alongside government facilities, health care services to all citizens will be made available through contracted private facilities (including NGOs and non-profit organisations). In other words, people at large languishing in abject poverty and misery would be left to knock at the doors of exorbitantly costly private hospitals for treatment—a proposition that would make even a donkey laugh. Giving extraordinary weightage on private health facilities for catering secondary and tertiary healthcare service to the people, the Draft Policy proposes direct assistance to private health industry thereby ensuring its growth and flourishing. Side by side public facilities including tertiary care-giving medical college hospitals are left to surreptitious peril due to utter negligence and mismanagement and under-funding. Not only that, proposal for outsourcing or handing over even primary health care facilities in totality or partially to private agencies is a clear indication of encouraging development of private set-ups and gradual destruction of public set-ups. It is thus clear that the whole design is to hand over the entire health sector to the domestic monopolists and multi-nationals reducing the role of the government to a mere supervisory one. Thus there is every possibility of drawing on public exchequer to fill the coffers of the private health corporates turning healthcare into a roaring trade. The Draft Policy intends that the government absolves itself from the responsibility of providing healthcare to people and instead assumes the role of running and sustaining the fast growing private healthcare industry even by liberally spending public money. The seed of

privatization-commercialization-commodification of health was sown in the first National Health Policy (NHP) floated in 1983 and the floodgate was opened in the second NHP in 2002 under the clout of capitalist globalization. Now the cycle is on the verge of completion once this Draft Policy of 2015 is implemented.

There is another dangerous proposition. We know that the insurance industry was opened up in the 1990s allowing private operators to enter the arena in the name of modernizing and customizing insurance business. Of late, the government has increased limit of FDI in insurance to 49% thereby luring foreign insurance giants to make decisive inroad into Indian insurance sector. In order to make the sector more lucrative for foreign investment, there is a definite move on the part of the government to enlarge the insurance pie. Already in the last budget, there have been quite a number of proposals to this effect. Now the Draft Policy in the name of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) talks of linking the healthcare entirely to insurance by way of introducing ‘Health Entitlement Card’. In other words, the citizens would have to obtain this card by paying a stipulated premium by the name of Health Tax from all citizens and Health cess from direct tax payers. All national and state health insurance schemes need to be aligned into a single insurance scheme and a single fund pool reducing fragmentation. The Ministry could now compare the relative costs per patient for alternative routes of financing viz. purchase through insurance, or direct purchase from private sector and from public sector or free care by public sector as a form of tax based financing. Government would ensure only regulatory and supervisory work only. Thus Government will ensure the patient flow and private profit of private hospitals against making payment by public money. All the expenses towards medical treatment would then be reimbursed against that card.

It may be mentioned in this connection that a system of obtaining medical treatment through insurance route prevails in the USA and the perils of the US citizens were glaringly exposed in a documentary film called ‘Sicko’ by Michael Moore. Moore showed with evidence how the insured individuals

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Cycle of privatization-commercialization-commodification of healthcare would complete once Draft Policy is implemented

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are denied care and how the profit-greedy insurance companies, pharmaceutical industry and private hospitals fleece and deprive the people. The consequences for the individual subscribers range from bankruptcy to the unnecessary deaths of loved ones. The film also depicted how the government of imperialist US openly pursued policies to support the private health corporates and sacrifice sound health care in favour of super profit of the capitalist owners. It also showed how corrupt politicians received bribes to facilitate business of the health corporates. The film also showed how a group of US citizens who became ill from volunteering at 9/11 Ground Zero were refused health coverage for their illnesses. But when they could be managed to be ferried to socialist Cuba, they received top-rate, free and proper medical attention with due empathy and got cured. The Draft Policy seeks to replicate in India this disastrous practice prevailing in USA.

Propositions of Draft National Healthcare Policy—Manpower

Extending proper healthcare service needs qualified doctors and adequate number of health personnel including nursing staff. If one takes into account the AYUSH graduates, the doctor: population ratio is 1:700 which is much below the requirement. To shield the real picture of lack of proper planning, absorption and distribution policy, there is a customary plea of deficiency in the number of qualified doctors in major part of the country. The government argues that the need to produce more qualified doctors is catered to by the increasing number of medical colleges and paramedical institutes mostly in the private sector. But that alone would never resolve the issue of availability of adequate manpower unless some realistic approach is taken. Already in most of the private colleges, right from admission to clearing examination and obtaining degree, the whole process is virtually bought in exchange for huge sum of money. Naturally, what is compromised with is the standard of medical education. The pass-outs may hold a degree but discernibly lack in professional competence. Not only that. After having spent huge sum of money for obtaining a degree, they

try to get it back using their profession. Hence, medical ethics which is a part of social ethics is also eroding fast. Further commodification of medical education will practically destroy the noble ethos of medical ethics. The profit-seeking monopoly houses and giant corporates are only concerned to reap maximum return on their investment in medical education as expediently as possible caring a fig for social values, obligations, medical ethics and professional responsibilities. Doctors, medical students and all categories of health workers as well as citizens will have to bear the brunt of disastrous consequence of this on the society.

The framers of the Draft Policy, for reasons better known to them, have reflected glaring ignorance about the fact that development of health manpower is a highly complex research exercise based on clear understanding of the requirements of various categories of health personnel for running public health services starting from ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) to doctor to the highest level of health personnel at the State and Central levels. It is known to all that poor infrastructure and immense scarcity of minimum diagnostic equipment dissuade qualified doctors from going to rural areas. On several occasions, various governments had introduced many new health cadres like CHG, TD, VHSC, Link Person, Barefoot doctor etc. And today, everyone knows what has been the outcome. None of these cadre personnel have been properly trained and nurtured to take up the required responsibility. Thus all those efforts turned out to be a farce. Nowadays, the ASHA perform under the scheme of 'safe motherhood', a job of motivating women to give birth in hospitals, bringing children to immunization clinics, encouraging family planning (e.g., surgical sterilization), providing first aid, keeping demographic records, and improving village sanitation against payment of very poor remuneration. The Draft Policy envisages a greater role of the ASHA workers expecting them to perform every health activity starting from immunization, normal delivery and treatment of common diseases and controlling outbreak of any type of epidemics. But the Draft neither speaks of arranging adequate training for them nor recommends recognizing them as a permanent

health worker with proper wage and amenities, for which they have been struggling since long. So, the very proposition of assigning higher responsibility to ASHA workers most of whom are poor women from rural areas is a misnomer.

Proper utilization of AYUSH doctors

The Draft proposes preventive and promotional aspects of health to be conducted under the leadership of AYUSH doctors. AYUSH is an acronym that is used to refer to the non-allopathic medical systems in India. Created in March 1995 as a Department of Indian Systems of Medicine, it includes the Indian medical system of Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and also Homeopathy. It is known to all that different national disease control programmes as well as immunization drives are built on the fundamentals of preventive health care on the anvil of modern scientific medicine. As preventive and promotional aspects of health care are dependent on modern scientific concept, it can never be a sound proposition to assign the job to AYUSH doctors who lack proper expertise in that. The BJP, in its election manifesto, stated that it would increase public investment to promote AYUSH and start integrated courses for Indian system of medicines and modern science and ultimately the department has been elevated to an independent Ministry with effect from 09.11.2014. But the Draft Policy has not outlined any definite programme including sufficient funding to achieve proper evaluation, research, utilization and scientific integration of AYUSH system thus neglecting the need to have age-old practices to be integrated with the modern medical science. Pending this, there will be unscientific, irrational overemphasis on traditions and indigenous practices and that will not help achieve scientific approach to health issues, rather encouraging superstitions, outdated thoughts and methods, obscurantist ideas and beliefs (like sorcery etc.). In such a scenario proposal of the Draft Policy that preventive and promotional aspects of health to be conducted under the leadership of AYUSH doctors, will virtually jeopardize the health care of the people. Hence, to handle healthcare scientifically, AYUSH doctors need to work under the leadership of at

least an MBBS doctor with proper knowledge of scientific concepts of disease-host-environment. AYUSH doctors and other workers would be important members of the integrated team. The role of AYUSH doctors would thus be supplementary instead of substitution. That is the best way of utilizing and absorbing the AYUSH practitioners. In this connection, it may be added that such attempts have been successfully made in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba etc. So, there is no reason why it should not be done in India.

Similarly, we know that in absence of appropriate healthcare facilities in the country particularly in the vast rural areas, the hapless villagers are compelled to depend on unqualified non-registered local practitioners known as village doctors or quacks for medical assistance. The Draft Policy admits that as per NSSO, 40% of private out-patient services are provided by them. Counterparts of such village doctors are found in some urban pockets as well. There is no denying a fact that despite being often humiliated and even ridiculed by the administration, these unqualified practitioners do play some role in providing at least first aid services and elementary medical care to the poor and downtrodden. To that extent, they serve some purpose. But this quack system cannot be an alternative to full-fledged healthcare system. What is needed is an effective step on the part of the government to train such unqualified practitioners, empanel them as designated health workers and incorporate them within the broader mechanism of catering medical service to the impoverished under the aegis of the government. They could also effectively compliment the ASHA workers.

Propositions of Draft National Healthcare Policy—Infrastructure

Proper healthcare also needs appropriate infrastructure. The Draft Policy is conspicuously silent about huge shortfall of SHC (Sub Health Centre), PHC (Primary Health Centre) and CHC (Community Health Centre). It is mentioned that SHC will be incorporated under Primary Health Care institution. But, the fact is vast number of SHC, PHC, and CHC are remaining underutilized

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Bourgeois government pursuing policy of all-out privatization of health sector in utter neglect of public interest and by giving medical ethics a decent burial

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and unutilized due to absence of health care providers. How then will it be possible to run SHCs as primary health care centres? The Draft policy did not propose massive engagement of MBBS doctors as cornerstone measures to cater primary care services at the grass root level. The landmark proposition of Bhole Committee was to post highly skilled doctors at the grassroot level whereas the Draft Policy talks of posting only AYUSH doctor, Nurse practitioner, persons with B.Sc degree in Community Health Care, ANM, ASHA personnel etc. at the very ground level. It cannot be the solution of providing primary health care services. For appropriate rendering of health services, as mentioned above, it is necessary that AYUSH graduates work under supervision of and in collaboration with skilled MBBS doctors at this level.

Moreover the Draft proposes that CHC will be converted into secondary tier hospital. This is nothing but creating illusion. What will be the infrastructure of such hospitals? It is mandatory that a secondary tier hospital should have separate Medicine, Pediatric, Gynecology & Obstetrics Surgery, Eye, ENT, Dental, Orthopedics, Skin, SNCU etc. departments. How can a hospital with provision of just 30 beds cover all such specializations? Moreover, as per the suggestions of existing health norms, there should be 30 beds in each CHC per 1 lakh population. In reality maximum block level CHCs exists on an average cover more than 2.5 lakh population. Therefore, the requirement is of minimum 100 beds in the CHC with all requisite disciplines and facilities. Otherwise there is no meaning of claiming upgradation of the CHC into second tier hospitals. It will be mere change of name only. Similarly miserable is the condition of SHC and PHC also. Draft Policy does not spell out how these can be improved. There is huge shortfall of SHC, PHC, and CHC according to IPHS. The Draft Policy has been silent on fulfilling this gap. It is imperative that required infrastructure as per existing IPHS stipulation is set up based on Government funding.

Propositions of Draft National Healthcare Policy—Medicines

Last is the question of availability of medicines either free

or at affordable price. It goes without saying that essential and life-saving drugs having proper quality are equally essential for making of a pro-people health policy. In earlier national health policies as well as in the present Draft Policy, it is stated that the generic quality medicines would be supplied free of cost through government outlets. Let alone the quality, even adequate quantity of generic medicines including those prescribed in National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) are not produced by the manufacturers. There is no law on the strength of which the government can compel them to such production. Nor there is any move to amend the law. Following implementation of the disastrous policy of capitalist globalization-liberalization, the pharmaceutical companies in the public sector have been made sick

Medical Service Centre, a well-known all-India voluntary organization of doctors, nursing staff, health workers and activists, committed to develop an organized movement in demand for adequate healthcare for the countrymen sent on 6 March, 2015, a detailed note with well-thought out comments and suggestions to the Union Health Minister on the Draft National Health Policy, 2015.

by design and the field opened to private operators who have even daring to ignore the DPCO (Drug Price Control Order—an order issued by the government under the Essential Commodities Act which enables it to fix the prices of some essential bulk drugs and their formulations) to keep prices of most of medicines higher. In fact, almost all the bulk drugs and a large number of essential life-saving drugs are out of price control measures at present. It may be added that despite the little control on the prices of life saving and essential drugs that the previous Congress government had to introduce under public pressure, the drug prices were beyond the means of the people in our highly poverty stricken country and as a result thousands of sick people in every year were being pushed to death for want of medicine and medical treatment. Children have been the worst victims in numbers. But the BJP government within months of its riding to power had by one stroke cancelled even that little price-control in life saving and essential drugs in order to pave the way for the giant pharmaceutical multinationals and the monopoly-

owned domestic drug companies to raise drug prices astronomically at will and reap super profits at the cost of the lives of the poor, lower middle class and sick people of India. This move triggered hefty rise in the prices of 108 essential medicines. A cancer drug available at Rs 4,000 earlier is stated to have increased to nearly a lakh of rupees. Thus instead of government taking responsibility of making essential drugs available to the people through a well-knit drug production-supply-price control and quality control mechanism, a task any civilized government is supposed to take up, such an important area is entirely left to the whims and designs of the private houses. Likewise, manufacturing of medical and diagnostic equipments and appliances is also completely at the disposal of the private houses making those exorbitantly costly. All

government is on a spree to raise the prices and allow pharmaceutical behemoths to make a kill.

Need to intensify a countrywide health movement

So, it is evident that the whole move is to confuse people with some sweet talks while commodifying healthcare full-fledgedly underhand and leave the arena to the private houses for being run on a commercial basis. Entry of private operators into government hospitals is also increasingly facilitated through PPP and other routes. The proposed PPP route is of a special type where Government has no responsibility except discharging some supervisory function. Obviously, the private sectors would merrily use all facilities of a government to buttress their commercial interest which is sure to be against public interest. Thus, such a policy is going to prove extremely ruinous for the countrymen doomed to utter destitution and privation. This is how the BJP's "health for all" election slogan is being implemented. It only proves that the parties serving the ruling capitalist class will promise one thing before elections and do exactly the opposite after settling in power. Why so? Because, with every passing day, ruling capitalism is getting more and more enmeshed in deep insoluble market crisis which is endemic of the very system. So, the ruling capitalist class is trying to locate alternative avenues from where it could mint fabulous profit by squeezing people even to the last drop of their blood. Doctrine of liberalization-privatization which is floated as an inalienable part of the imperialist agenda of globalization to provide oxygen to gasping capitalism prescribes more and more dissociation of the government from essential public utility services and hand over those sectors to the capitalists. Hence, the government which subserves bourgeois class interest is following a policy of all-out privatization of health sector in utter neglect of public interest and by giving medical ethics a decent burial. We call upon all doctors, health workers and right-thinking people to rise up and protest against this disastrous health policy and build up an organized powerful health movement in the country to frustrate the sinister design of the vested interests.

SUCI(C) severely condemns Shiv Sena MP's rank communal statement, demands his disqualification from Rajya Sabha and prosecution

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 13-04-2015:

We severely condemn the most atrocious and rank communal statement of Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut that Muslims should be disenfranchised to end vote bank politics. Such a highly provocative and glaringly motivated utterance of knavish politicians like Raut brazenly militates against the basic tenets of democracy, subversive of the fundamental constitutional right of electing and be elected and is tantamount to eroding even the last vestiges of democratic principles. Raut's audacious statement is reflective of the Hindu fanatic and fundamentalist politics that the arch reactionary RSS-BJP-Shiv Sena-Sangh Parivar is pursuing with impunity to derive electoral mileage by polarizing people along communal line and driving a wedge among people based on blind religiosity.

We demand that Sanjay Raut be forthwith stripped of his Rajya Sabha membership and be prosecuted for having committed an unpardonable crime of deliberately precipitating disaffection and hatred against a particular community of Indian citizens and thereby endanger social harmony and fraternity among the countrymen.

GHMC Sanitary Workers rallied demanding hike in wages

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Sanitary workers organized a rally followed by a dharna at GHMC Zonal office at Hyderabad on 31 March 2015 under the banner of United Sanitary Contract Workers' Union affiliated to AIUTUC and demanding hike in their salaries in accordance with the 10th PRC of the state Government employees with a minimum wage of Rs. 15,000 with D.A.; timely supply of appliances and other requirements to carry out the work efficiently; hike in petrol allowance

to Contract Sanitary Field Assistants as par with the permanent employees etc.. Comrade K.Sudheer, State Incharge of AIUTUC addressed the gathering. Deputy Commissioner, while receiving the memorandum from the union leaders assured settling of some issues within their purview and referring others to the relevant higher authorities. that some of the demands which are in their purview will be settled, and other issues will be taken to the higher authorities.

West Bengal State Conference of AIUTUC

21st conference of West Bengal state AIUTUC was held at Moulali Juba Kendra, Kolkata, on 29 March last. Comrade A L Gupta, State President, AIUTUC, presided over. In his brief inaugural speech, Comrade Sankar Saha, Member, central Committee, SUCI(C) and General Secretary, AIUTUC, emphasized on the immense importance of united uncompromising working class movement in the prevailing situation. He said that in the current phase of decadent moribund crisis-ridden capitalism, the bourgeois governments have been trying to snatch away all the hard-earned rights of the working class so that the workers are emasculated from rising in protest against the economic-political-cultural onslaughts. The activists of

AIUTUC will have to shoulder the responsibility of guiding the working class movement based on the thoughts of comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Member, Polit Bureau, SUCI(C) and President, AIUTUC, was the main speaker. In conclusion of his inspiring and analytical speech, Comrade Chakraborty said that unless united sustained powerful militant working class movement is developed along the right track, the attack of the bourgeoisie cannot be thwarted. Full speech of Comrade Chakraborty will be published later.

At the end, a 49-member state committee with Comrades A L Gupta and Dilip Bhattacharyya as President and Secretary respectively.



Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), addressing the Party workers meeting at Chennai, that was held on 26-27 March, 2015

SUCI(C) denounces Modi's ridiculous claim that ancient India had known trees have life much before Jagadish Chandra Bose discovered that

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 07-04-2015:—

When the entire world admirably acknowledges the path-breaking discovery of scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose, based on proven scientific evidence that trees have life, BJP Prime Minister Modi has shown the audacity to renounce this iconoclastic achievement of the celebrated Indian scientist. Instead he in continuation of his previous gospels like ancient India knowing modern aviation, stem cell technology, interstellar movements and so forth, has now claimed ludicrously that Indians knew plants had life long before Jagadish Chandra Bose since the time of the Gita and the Mahabharata. Such an utterance which brazenly subverts science and hence truth, is, let not there be an iota of doubt, a part of a deliberate design of the communal-fundamentalist doctrine of Hindutva, whose political mouthpiece is Modi, to blunt thinking and enshroud the thought process with blindness, obscurantism, revivalism, fanaticism and irrationality so that the preachers of Hindutva could ride on and stay in power encashing on the ignorance of the countrymen. To buttress that agenda, Modi and his Sangh Parivar mentors and colleagues do not care if there is outright affront to the renowned scientists who made India proud by inventing scientific truths that had stirred and stunned the entire world. It is relevant to add here that attack on science and hence knowledge is orchestrated by the oppressive ruling capitalist class to prolong its decadent moribund class rule and hence carried out by all its servitors, whether Congress or BJP. The reactionary doctrine of the BJP-RSS is also such an attack perpetrated by the ruling capitalists.

We firmly believe that not only the scientific community and rational-minded persons but the right-thinking people at large would not tolerate such motivated distortions of science and history. They would rise up and defeat such calamitous thought and expose its vendors by intensifying a science movement round the country.



The gathering of West Bengal State Conference of AIUTUC at Moulali Juba Kendra, Kolkata, on 29 March, 2015.

Teaching-learning is never completed without evaluation-examination

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and who held the post of opposing the measure right from its introduction apprehending its disastrous and discriminatory outcome.

Examination is an inalienable part of education : truth that governments refuse to accept

In teaching-learning process examination is considered an inalienable part. It not only checks progress in learning, it judges and ascertains as well, how far teaching is being effective and efficient. It may be simply a case of a teacher examining his or her class students. Or, beyond that, it may also be a principal or head examining or interviewing applicants seeking admission to the institution for learning as also for teaching; the government taking examination for recruitment of teachers or holding joint entrance examination or the sort for admitting students to courses of higher studies, engineering, medical or else; the concerned authority picking up suitable candidates for studies abroad through GRE etc.; corporate CEOs setting up boards to screen, that is pick or eliminate, the lot they may take in as suitable for their purpose. The examination may vary in form and substance with different course content, purpose, character of the target population being examined or interviewed, technical and infrastructural facilities available, social-cultural ambience and requirements and such others. But for any such serious effort in different walks of life, examination is essential and universal.

The governments, at the centre or in the states, the policymakers and their adjutants, all working largely and effectively in tandem with each other, however, chose to decline. As said, they are hell bent upon doing away with the current pass-fail system in the name of bringing overhauling reforms to the examination system at schools, which also include their attempt to scrap examination even up to the end-secondary stage. It is further intriguing that none of the mainstream parliamentary parties that were or are in power seem to be opposing it. Interestingly the first move towards abolition of pass-fail system came during the rule of a force that goes with the banner of leftism. Soon after it had come to power in 1977 the CPI(M)-led

Front government in West Bengal in a meeting of the Syllabus Committee set up by the Congress a few years back, mooted the idea of abolition of pass-fail system, and then decided for and finally gave effect to it in 1982, closely at heels with the decision of abolition of teaching English. Both the measures pertained to the primary stage of schools, that is upto class IV and only to the government run or aided schools. Immediately, following the West Bengal model, the then Congress-led Union Government advocated, adopted and extended the same policy. In the National Policy on Education (NPE'86) adopted during the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress rule in 1986, abolition of pass-fail system from the primary stage was prescribed in section 5(6) on p.11; in section 2(14) of the programme of action, it was extended upto class VIII. Under pressure of adverse public opinion, the then CPI (M) chief minister of West Bengal plainly admitted that they were simply implementing the policy of the Union Government. So it was clear that there was only one band and a single bandmaster; the different governments were the different hands of the same band. Then finally in 2009, when the Congress-led UPA government ceremoniously enacted the Right to Education Act for students between classes I and VIII, rather of ages between 6 and 14 years, they also made it compulsory that the policy of no-detention must be strictly followed for them. Its violation would be considered a punishable offence. So, that completed the official process of implementation of the policy giving a legal sanction to it. In the meantime, be it the BJP-led government at the Centre for a few intervening periods or the state governments run by national or regional parties including that like the TMC in West Bengal, none of the governments deviated from continuing with the same policy; nor are the present Modi-led BJP government doing otherwise. It further elucidates that all of them were giving effect to one and the same set of policies meant to serve the interest of the apparently invisible hand of the bandmaster, the ruling capitalist class.

Proponents of no-detention base themselves on flimsy logic, defy reality

The exponents of this policy would have people believe that

students drop out for fear of examination, fear of failure and of not being promoted to the next upper class. In that event more years are added to their length of study, putting extra burden to the budding minds. To relieve students of this fear and burden, the best way is to offer them automatic promotion with no detention for failure. Sensing people may cry foul at this queer theory of theirs, they add palliatives; they prescribe chopping out the end-session examination and introduction of the method of Comprehensive Continuous Evaluation (CCE). A grand example of prescribing a course of treatment without the disease being diagnosed! One may only tend to ask: Is it a naivety or hypocrisy! The CCE method might have been effective in some countries where adequate infrastructure is in place. But in a country like ours with so many variations and students coming from so varied social backgrounds with different social and personal problems, in a country which is infested in every walk of life with rampant corruption, dishonesty, clashes of petty interests even in educational institutions, in a country where many-a-school run with a miserably low teacher-student ratio without adequate number of teachers and adequate infrastructure, in such a country a total dependence on 'grade system' and continuous internal assessment of the CCE will always lead to varying standards in checking and will remain more susceptible to flawed evaluation, corruption, nepotism. Results thus obtained would be hardly accepted as reliable measure in any broader field. Even it will ultimately lead to no-detention policy.

Next is that, promotion from one class to another or from one level to another on the basis of an examination is no more than a certification of that evaluation, which, again, is a time-tested method accepted not only in educational institutions, but even later in all spheres of life and profession. Generally students, teachers and guardians appreciate its worth, with that also the worth of examinations. Students do not fight shy of the process of being checked in case they are taught well with the purpose of genuinely educating them, in case the infrastructure (including classroom, toilet particularly for girl students, playground, library facilities, easy

communication from residence, etc.) they find around, is adequate, in case the ambience including teacher-student interaction is congenial. Can the proponents of no-detention policy vouch for any instance otherwise?

If students abhor examinations who stands responsible?

Yes, students may feel terrified with examinations. When and why? What do they themselves find in reality? Hundreds of teaching posts lie vacant in schools and colleges; teaching is hampered from disruption in routines often on flimsy grounds; syllabus for examination, itself largely unscientific and burdensome, is left uncovered adding to the woe; libraries are left uncared for or depleted; laboratories are insufficiently equipped; despite all pompous projects like DPEP, SSA or the likes, infrastructure is crumbling down fast; authorities fall heavily upon teachers and students voicing any resentment; all the major political parties use the student-teacher-employee forces to their petty sectarian party interests, thus leading to unwanted vitiation of the campus ambience, even academic affairs; rampant commercialization –privatization since the NPE'86 (National Policy on Education introduced in 1986 during the prime ministership of Rajiv Gandhi) continuously and painfully add fuel to the fire by creating a self-seeking commercial outlook bereft of moral-ethical values in teachers as well as students; even guardians in face of the stark reality of bleak future ahead for their children with soaring unemployment, suffocating stagnation of industry and economy, back-bending poverty, crumbling infrastructure in schools and abysmal cultural-moral degeneration in the society fall victim to the dog race for anyhow getting their children passed in examinations and thus help them even to take to unfair means.

These and many more similar factors dampen even crush students' studies, and hence may cause them to abhor examinations. But who is responsible for all these? Are these problems negotiable by students, teachers and guardians only? Who appoints teachers and who do not? Who engages the single or few teachers available in schools in thousand and one mundane work other than

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No-detention policy is class design of the ruling capitalists to curtail education and rob it of its essence

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teaching, that include arranging for or even preparing mid-day meal for students, running after students to bring them back to schools, keeping daily accounts and reports, undertaking census campaign of the region, performing periodical election duties and what not? Who announced it as a part of the national education policy that 'education is a unique investment that ensures lucrative return as guardians inevitably stretch their back to get their children educated'? Who did all the drum-beating to take people into their head that nowadays education must meet the needs of the market, forgetting about its man-making character building role? Who catered the theory that henceforth government will not be looking after education and who curtailed the funds for schools and colleges, causing their infrastructure to collapse and forcing those to take to 'self-financing mode' asking for private money to run them? Who allowed and introduced the projects like DPEP, which emphatically declares that it is the duty of parents not the government to arrange for education of their children? Who sanctioned the shamelessly discriminatory theory of dividing education in two types, MLL (Minimum Level of Learning) for vast multitudes of common students coming from poorer families and OLL (Optimum Level of Learning) for a handful of privileged students from richer families to grow up into well-groomed personnel fit enough to face global competition?

It may be added that when the earliest proponents of the policy, the CPI(M)-led government of West Bengal, withdrew the state-level end-primary scholarship examination as a part of their agenda of doing away with examinations, our Party SUCI(C), in a counter move, took initiative to build up a public body of leading educationists including teachers to hold the examination. The effort met with phenomenal success; in a few years time students took part enthusiastically in lakhs; even in face of stiff opposition going to the extent of threat-intimidation from the party in power and their cadres in schools, teachers and guardians came out with a massive support; primary teachers as examiners and college or university teachers as supervising head examiners rendered voluntary non-remunerative service; people at

large extended unhesitating cooperation including the scores of donors providing the scholarship sums. Do not these facts on record build up into an indelible example of people's positive attitude towards examination that really means the purpose?

All these questions and many such others lead to one single answer: It is the government that is responsible for all these. Governments of any major parliamentary party national or regional, rightist or going by as leftists are all working as subservient political managers of the ruling class, and have ruined the field of education through all these years since independence. They have shattered the zeal and dreams of students to study as they should be expected to do, have frustrated teachers who took up this noble profession for making future 'men' for the society worth its name, and belied the hopes of guardians who expect their children grow with a character strong, rational, courageous and confident to face their life and its struggle. And now forgetting about all these maladies created by them, the same governments are posing as the saviour of students, as their well wishers to relieve them of the burden and fear of examinations.

No-detention brings in fast downfall in quality of education : a design of ruling capitalist class

Thus as the matter stands, without examination, students do not have any scope to check how far he or she has learnt, what are the defects and gaps and how those can be remedied. On the contrary, with class promotion granted automatically year after year the studies have become fruitless, a fun-making exercise to them. And it has wiped out any urge to develop him or her self. Teachers, in their turn, are also robbed of any scope to find out how his teachings are being received by the student or not, which of the students may need more care or which have the potentialities to rise to brilliance. For any teacher it has simply not just been dampening his initiative, but even disheartening to perform a meaningless, unpurposive exercise for days, months, years together. It has also paved the way for the less-committed members of that community to find easy means of further evading his or her duties and responsibilities. Besides, as mentioned engaging teachers in all

sorts of mundane work and injecting market-oriented commercial outlook in teachers as well as students, has only increased the apathy, inefficiency, frustration and insincerity of teachers and students alike. Thus teaching goes on, learning as well; but none of the two has the depth, intent and seriousness adequate to make it a really meaningful, purposive exercise, to make teaching a process for genuinely equipping students with knowledge, or to make learning a process for truthfully and seriously acquiring knowledge. Thus while many-a-factor ingrained in the entire education policy is continuously bringing down standard and quality of education, the no-detention policy itself, has been instrumental in making this downfall fast and devastating for school education all over the country which even the rulers themselves cannot deny any more.

But why the ruling capitalist class, the bandmaster is so keen on no-detention? It is, because it serves its nefarious class need. Lest there should be a voice of conscious opposition to its ruthlessly exploitative class rule, it has been a persistent effort on the part of the ruling class to keep people uneducated, bereft of thinking power, by diluting the standard of institutionalized learning and progressively curtailing access of the toiling masses at large to formal education. Moreover, as the capitalist system, because of its own law of operation, is getting more and more entrenched in acute market-crisis, unemployment is rising by leaps and bounds even among the educated. So, the design of the rulers has been to lower the number of educated unemployed by scuttling the scope of entry into higher education. Needless to mention that in higher education and in all competitive examinations pass-fail system exists. Alongside raising the tuition fee through the roof, the abolition of pass-fail system in school education comes handy in restricting students ticket to higher education. Because, without having learnt the school syllabus appropriately a proof of which is evidenced in passing examinations, most of the students would find them starved of adequate competence to go for higher studies. We find here a clear case of discrimination. Further tremendous downfall of standard brought about with no-detention

policy is creating a band of dehumanized robotic population of students to whom social consciousness, social commitment, in short, man-making character building role of education remains alien. This is, in its entirety, the sinister class design behind the no-detention policy. And, naturally the election-based political parties, irrespective of their hues, who want to curry favour with the ruling class for riding to power or remain visible in the corridor of power could not but gleefully endorse the policy of no-detention giving shape to the design of the ruling class.

Only the revolutionary party took up the cudgel to resist no-detention; veteran luminaries take lead

It is, therefore, obvious that only the political party which does not dance to the tune of the ruling class, is not a part of the dirty bourgeois politics of pelf and power could only dare to expose the sinister design of the ruling class to scuttle scope of education and dilute the standard of education. Only that party views politics as nobler feelings of heart that spurs one to shoulder the task of bringing about revolutionary transformation of the society and thereby free it from the yoke of exploitation of man by man. It cultivates higher culture and seeks to enlighten the entire masses of the people with rational scientific knowledge. So, when all the vote-based parliamentary parties were busy playing second fiddle to the disastrous education policy of no detention, it was only the SUCI(C), the genuine revolutionary party of the Indian proletariat, founded, reared and steered by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, that, armed with Shibdas Ghosh's teachings, took up the fight for upholding the cause of a free, universal, secular scientific education for people and spearheaded a countrywide powerful save education movement providing its ideological - organizational structure and involving the Party and its frontal or mass organizations, as well as eminent educationists, teachers, students, intellectuals and all sections of the education-loving people, even the toiling masses to whom education had always been an aspiration and dream for their children. From the platform of that movement was raised the voice of

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Turn people's rejection of no-detention policy into massive resistance to foil it

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annulment of the pernicious decision to abolish pass-fail system right from the day the government had announced it, underlining and exposing the fallacy of and design behind the arguments. Here a summary may be provided to trace back that historic struggle.

Since the late seventies the SUCI(C) had already launched a movement, with eminent intellectuals of the state of West Bengal in the lead, against the policies of the CPI(M)-led Front government of the state towards reducing importance of teaching of language and literature in schools and colleges and curbing of autonomy of educational institutions. Since 1981 people's committees were set up for the purpose. Initially there was the Siksha Sankochan Birodi and Swadhikar Raksha Committee (Committee against curtailment of education and for protecting autonomy). There was also the Chhatra Sangram Committee (Students struggle committee) which organized students and youth. Finally there developed All Bengal Save Education Committee (ABSEC) to take up the rein to step up the movement when the government proposed and finally announced abolition of English teaching and pass-fail system at primary stage. Veteran front-ranking educationists, litterateurs, writers, professionals like Sukumar Sen, RK Dasgupta, Sailesh Dey, Saibal Gupta, Premendra Mitra, Pramathanath Bishi, Satyen Sen, Manoj Basu, Dr Nihar Ranjan Roy, Shankar Prasad Mitra, Pratul Gupta, Santosh Kumar Ghosh, Bani Roy, Manik Mukherjee, Subir Basu Roy and others came down to join ranks with common people, many of them for the first time in their life, for the cause of education. Of them, the eminent linguist –educationist-litterateur Sukumar Sen in his usual style brought out the vital role of examination in education. While participating in mass squatting on the streets of Kolkata, succinctly he pointed out that when a teacher examines the script of a student he not only makes out what the student has learnt, but also he as an examiner can find out how far the student could comprehend the subject from what he or she had taught. That way the teacher can judge whether 'he or she has passed the examination of successfully teaching his or her students, or whether failed in doing that'. So examination is not just meant for the student, it is equally

meant for teachers too.

The movement included different forms, namely rallies, mass squatting, civil disobedience, signature campaign and such others involving people of different sections of life and society, students, intellectuals, women, even workers and peasants. With such a gamut of luminaries of the state bearing the brunt of leading it, the statewide movement gathered momentum to force the government to appoint Asoke Mitra Commission in 1992. However, it was an eye-wash as the recommendations it made came out to be virtually a replica of the NPE'86, that was earlier propounded by the Congress-led union government. It was even fraught with contradictions. In clause 3(11), page 40, The Commission report admitted that abolition of pass-fail had been causing anarchy in teaching – learning, damaging even whatever primary education that was there. Yet it recommended that abolition of pass-fail system to be sustained.

Sensing the nonchalant, evasive, arrogant and even deceitful attitude of the government, people's resistance to the policy of abolition of pass-fail system and English in primary stage of schools gradually became more and more massive. On 17 December 1996, the All Bengal Save Education Committee staged a mass deputation to the Chief minister with 1 crore 12 lakh (11.2 million) signatures and with eminent scientist Prof Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, along with Prof Arabindanath Basu, Gitanath Ganguly, Prof Sunanda Sanyal, Prof Subir Basu Roy and many others in the lead. On 10 March 1997, a huge rally of students and youth was organized by the ABSEC. On 3 February 1998 the country witnessed the unique phenomenon of a bandh (general strike) called to save education by none other than a political Party, obviously the revolutionary Party of the soil. The bandh was a total success throughout the state. People, from all sections of life, the toilers or the intellectuals, the young or the old, men or women, all rose with final determination to make the government bend down from their arrogant high-handed position. Eminent personalities of the state including veteran revolutionaries of the independence movement like Bimal Dasgupta, poured in messages expressing their heart-felt approval and support for the cause and the movement.

A 19 year long people's struggle

initiated and organized by SUCI (C) finally earned glorious success. The government came down from its tower, setting up a one-man commission agreed for reintroduction of English at the primary stage, but evaded scrapping of the policy of abolition of the pass-fail system. The path-breaking movement in West Bengal once again established invincibility of people's power. Similar movements have been organized by the Party, particularly as a part of the movement against the NPE'86 in different other states of the country against the same policy being materialized by the successive union governments, irrespective of their political brand.. From the All India Teachers' Rally and convention held with teachers of schools, colleges and universities on 12 and 13 October 1987 in Delhi at the initial stage, the movement was subsequently carried on by the All India Save Education Committee (AISEC) which was formed in February 1989. The AISEC had drafted *Towards a People's Policy On Education: An Alternative to NPE'86* as a mark of concrete and constructive protest in May 1989. Eminent personalities like Justice V R Krishna Iyer, the Former Justice of the Supreme Court, Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, renowned scientist – educationist- Vice Chancellor, Dr. HN Prasad of Ranchi University, and others were in the stewardship of the movement in its different phases.

Various levels of local save education committees were formed in different parts of the country, thus adding impetus to the countrywide movement. The AIDS0 played an important leading role in carrying forward the movement among the students as well as teachers and guardians in different states to make people understand what remains the cause behind the drastic fall in the quality and level of education in government primary schools. The need for abolition of no-detention policy became evident day-by-day, thus thrusting pressure upon the respective state governments.

People need to rise up to resist and rescind the policy

All the major political parties that had been in power have contributed their mite towards this disastrous effort of implementing the policy of no- detention. Presently the BJP, a political force that clamours of Indian heritage, glory and tradition is treading the same path. Proving all our

apprehensions right it is being established that the policy of no-detention has brought in unthinkable devastation to our education system, has tended to ravage the edifice that has been built through untiring efforts of thousands of self-less educationists, teachers, guardians and others, has tended to shatter the glorious tradition of the country known for its scholastic and academic brilliance.

During the last Congress –led UPA regime at the Centre, the review report of implementation of RTE 2009 (253rd Report of the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD) that was placed in Lok Sabha on 26th April 2013, expressed grave concern commenting "The Committee feels that a student may not be motivated to work hard to learn if he/she is aware that his promotion to the next grade is guaranteed." It categorically recommended the reintroduction of the pass-fail system at the elementary schools. This year too, the day-long consultation between the union HRD ministry and representatives of different states on the currently mooted new education policy saw a frantic appeal and overwhelming demand by states to do away with the no- detention policy till class VIII. There was general concern about the poor quality of education, with some representative helplessly submitting: "We do not fail children till Class VII and they cannot pass Class IX". Other representatives also came out with the same tone and tenor. It shows that the sustained movement that our Party, its students' wing AIDS0 and the people's committee named All India Save Education Committee built over time did succeed in creating a massive people's opinion that exerted pressure even upon the governments to think twice of the catastrophic consequence of the no-detention policy. This discernible pressure acting on the government also tends to force it to beat a retreat in the face of organized public protest based on the anvil of logic and reason.

In such a situation we earnestly call upon people to step out and further strengthen our efforts towards building up a massive countrywide resistance movement to force the governments, union or state, to withdraw this disastrous and discriminatory no- detention policy and help people of the country obtain at least the minimum basic education.

Massive Demonstration by ABECA-DECA in Delhi

Thousands of electricity consumers from Delhi, Haryana, MP, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal marched in Delhi towards Parliament on 7 April demanding scrapping of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2015. The march was organized jointly by the All Bengal Electricity Consumers' Association (ABECA) and the Delhi Electricity Consumers' Association (DECA). On reaching Jantar Mantar the protest march turned into a public meeting which was addressed among others by the convener of the programme, Comrade Sanjit Biswas, President, ABECA, Comrade Satyawan, Member Central Committee, Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) and a renowned mass leader, Comrade Pran Sharma, Delhi State Secretary, SUCI(C) and Comrade Prodyut Chowdhury, General Secretary, ABECA.

Addressing the gathering Comrade Sanjit Biswas said that the experience of the last 12 years since introduction of the Electricity Act 2003 by the then BJP government has been bitter as it has failed to

protect the interests of electricity consumers of the country and now, the present Narendra Modi government, instead of repealing this anti-people Act, is going to further amend it to sub-serve the interests of private companies and corporate entities.

Comrade Satyawan showed how the Haryana government in pursuance of the 2003 Act was trying to hand over the distribution of electric supply to private companies in total disregard to the interests of the poor and middle class strata of the society. He stated that this Act and the subsequent amendments now proposed in the form of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2015 are the concomitant evils of the globalization-privatization policies pursued by the government since the 1990s. In fact, he stated, the need is to build up an organized powerful peoples' movement against these very anti-people policies of the bourgeois governments. Comrade Pran Sharma showed following implementation of the Electricity Act, 2003 the tariff in Delhi, has shot up by a whopping 300% in last 12 years and how the people's



At Jantar-Mantar, Delhi on 7 April

attention is being diverted by certain political parties like AAP from the real issue of privatization-commercialization by providing subsidy upto certain levels of consumption. Comrade Prodyut Chowdhury appealed to people to strengthen the country-wide peoples movement on the issue to force the central government to scrap the 2003 Act. A delegation led by Comrade Sanjit Biswas later submitted a Memorandum to the Central Power

Minister, Shri Piyush Goel.

On the same demands, a convention was held on 8 April at Rajendra Bhawan hall, New Delhi. While Comrade Sanjit Biswas presided over, the convention was addressed among others by Justice Rajendra Sachar, Journalist Sumit Chakraborty, SUCI(C) Polit Bureau member Krishna Chakraborty, Tumul Katare, Ashok Kumar Singh, Balendra Katiyar, Ramesh Shrama, Prasen Meher and others.

SUCI (C) strongly protests exorbitant rise in railway platform ticket and freight charges

Strongly condemning exorbitant increase in the rate of platform ticket by 100% and also in freight effective from 1 April 2015 SUCI (C) staged countrywide protest. In West Bengal at **Howrah station** a squad marched through the station premise to submit a memorandum to the station superintendent addressed to the union railway minister. Protests were also held at **Bardhaman** station and at different stations of

East Medinipur district in West Bengal. At **Ballari** in Karnataka the protest demonstration was held led by Comrade Somashekar, member Karnataka state committee SUCI (C) and Secretary Ballari District. At **Muzaffarpur** in Bihar the protestors burnt the effigy of the railway minister. Demonstration was also held at **Bhubaneswar** station in Odisha.



Bellari, Karnataka



Bardhaman, West Bengal



Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Howrah, West Bengal

IACC strongly condemns the atrocities of the Japanese Police against Korean residents in Japan

Comrade Manik Mukherjee, General Secretary, IACC issued the following statement on 01-04-2015:

The International Anti-imperialist Coordinating Committee (IACC) condemns in strongest terms the atrocious behavior of the Japanese police in searching the houses of Ho Jong Man and Nam Sung U, Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of Chongryon (Central Standing Committee, General Association of Korean Residents in Japan). This barbaric act was carried out on completely fabricated charges and the officials of Chongryon were humiliated by treating them as criminals. Similar acts were perpetrated in the past also and they violate the Japanese Constitution, the international law and natural justice. Such acts of ruthless oppression would cause deterioration of Korea-Japan relations and heighten war-tensions in the Korean Peninsula. Condemning these acts of violence, the IACC demands apology from the Japanese authority for their barbaric acts and assurance that such acts would not be repeated in future. IACC calls upon all peace-loving people of the world to rise up in indignation and register their protest against the ruthless barbaric acts of the Japanese authority and police against Korean residents in Japan.

Movement in demand of scrapping of semester system

Led by the AIDS0, Madhya Pradesh Students community's Semester Hatao Yatra, a students' jatha demanding scrapping of the Semester System, has stirred the whole state. The Semester System has been responsible for degrading standard of education and augmenting education expenditure. The jatha held in phases started on 16 March at Vikram University in Ujjaini district and successively went through Ahilya Bai University in Indore district on 20 March, Jibaji University in Gwalior on 27 March and Jabalpur on 30 and 31 March, in Sagar district on 6 April and finally

ending at the state capital Bhopal in a massive students rally. Finally the jatha ended at the state capital Bhopal with a massive students rally. All along, the jatha carried out a thorough campaign on the anti-student anti-education semester policy, through a variety of means like street meetings, leaflet distribution, raising funds from people, street dramas and songs, respectfully paying tribute to past luminaries of the country by garlanding their statues that came on the way and such others. Appeal of this movement reached far into the heart of local people;

clubs and social welfare organizations arranged food and shelter for the jatha participants. The jatha thus left a lasting impact on the people and students community in particular inspiring them to build up further movements. All India Secretariat and Council members of AIDS0 lead the programmes along with district and local leaders. 231

In Gujarat the movement against Semester System was launched by the AIDS0 Gujarat unit. Since February this year the movement has been gradually picking up mainly based on a mass signature campaign on a

memorandum to the chief minister of the state. On 10 March one day hunger strike was organized. Both signature campaign and hunger strike were enthusiastically and whole heartedly supported and joined by students despite there being ongoing internal examinations. AIDS0 also appealed to the students to SMS 'SCRAP SEMESTER' on the mobile number of the Education Minister of Gujarat (M. 9909018303). It also appealed to parents, teachers, principals and education loving people to come forward united against anti-education Semester System.



Against Semestar System: In MP



Against Semestar System: In Gujarat



On 27 March in front of Odisha Assembly, AIUTUC affiliated Sukinda Valley Mines Workers Union led mine-workers of privately owned Saruabil Chromite Mines in Odisha and their family members to protest against illegal retrenchment

Observance of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Martyrdom

(In the 1st April issue of Proletarian Era reports of observance of the martyrdom of the great martyrs Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad and SukdevRajguru in certain parts of the country were published. In this issue we publish a few more reports)

With due honour and dignity was the martyrdom of the great martyr Bhagat Singh observed in different parts of the country on behalf of the AIDS0, AIDYO and AIMSS. In Tripura, garlanding at the photo of the martyr, wearing of badges and holding discussions were among the various programmes held at Agartala Post Office Choumuhani and at Dharma-

nagar's Motor Bus Stand. AIDS0 also organized an exhibition on the martyr in front of the gate of Ramthakur College.

At Kanpur, U.P. the commemorating programme was held jointly by Peoples' Resistance Movement Samity and DSO. The attempt to spread the martyr's reflections against imperialism and on secular humanism highly impressed several right-thinking personalities.

In many a districts of West Bengal including Uttar Dinajpur, Nadia, Kolkata and others innumerable programmes were held to observe the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh-the martyr.

Seminar on Left Unity in Hyderabad

MCPI(U) organized a seminar on "Left Unity" on 26th March 2015, at Hyderabad on the occasion of its 3rd all India Party Congress and invited all the left parties to address the delegates and speak on this subject. Setting the tone of the seminar, Comrade Rajan, Politburo Member, MCPI (U) said that "It is the failure of united left movement in India which created conditions for BJP and Sangh Parivar forces to capture power at the centre. There is urgent need of developing "Left Unity" and building up movements on burning issues of the people."

Speaking on the occasion Comrade K. Radhakrishna, Member, Central Committee, SUCI(C) besides showing how fascism should be viewed as a counter-revolutionary upsurge of the forces of reaction and secularism should be understood as independent of religion and non-recognition of any supernatural entity, said that "Left Unity" on common minimum agreed programme and a code of conduct is the prime need of the hour, especially when impending danger of fascism is looming large. Today Indian capitalism has entrenched very deep in the power and it has acquired characteristics of imperialism. Imperialism means moribund capitalism. A mighty militant movement is required to overthrow this imperialism – capitalism. And that can be done only by united left democratic mass movements. So left unity is the prime need of the hour."

Others who spoke were Comrades B.V Raghavulu, politburo member, CPI(M), Janaki Ramulu, Central Committee member, RSP, and K. Venkateshwar Rao, Secretary, ML Committee

Summing up the whole discussion the All India General Secretary of MCPI(U) Comrade Kuldeep Singh called upon all left parties to come together and fight on the burning issues of the people. He also endorsed the opinion of the SUCI (C) that while fighting against communalism one should not harbour any illusion that Congress is a secular party.

SUCI(C) demands immediate reversal of BJP government’s decision to scrap central scheme for free drug and diagnostics

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 05-04-2015:

Once again Modi-led BJP government has bared its anti-people pro-capitalist face. The Health ministry in a document titled ‘Free Essential Drugs Scheme’ brought out in September last stated that “Government intervention for better access to essential medicines is urgently required as expenditure on drugs constitutes about 67 per cent of out of pocket expenditure on health care and out of pocket expenditure is one of the leading causes of impoverishment”. The Finance Minister in his budget speech said that “to move towards ‘Health for All’, the two key initiatives i.e. the Free Drug Service and Free Diagnosis Service would be taken up on priority.” But now the government has gone for a complete somersault by scrapping the central scheme for free drug and diagnostics as a further step towards complete withdrawal of the state from public health and leaving the arena exclusively to the private operators for running on commercial basis. As a result, rudimentary medical care will elude the downtrodden impoverished countrymen.

We demand immediate reversal of this most unjust decision and urge upon the people that in order to thwart such one after another attack the ruling dispensation is bringing out on every passing day, they need to do whatever is necessary to develop a powerful united sustained movement on burning issues of life including availability of proper healthcare either free or at affordable cost.

SUCI(C) strongly opposes draconian Gujarat Control of Organized Crime Bill

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 01-04-2015:—

When there is persistent demand from the people for repealing the existing black acts like UAPA, POTA and AFSPA which are glaringly subversive of the basic human rights of the citizens and deny them access to constitutional safeguards and remedies, the BJP-led Gujarat government has come out with a new draconian Act called Gujarat Control of Organized Crime Bill (GUJCOC) which confers unbridled and autocratic power to the government-police-administration to intercept phone calls of any person, submit confessions before a cop as an admissible evidence in court and extend period of detention without charge upto 180 days. The Act also stipulates that offences under the Act would be non-bailable and provides immunity to the State government from legal action through an ambiguous idea of “good faith.” Though the government talks of using the Act for controlling increasing crime and curbing the activities of organized syndicates of terrorism, the people know from their experience that while the criminals and the terrorists would evade any prosecution with impunity, the Act would be used against political opponents and muzzle the voice of legitimate protest against the ruthless capitalist oppression. And once promulgated in Gujarat, enactment of similar fascist laws in other states as well as at central level would only be a matter of time.

We strongly oppose this most tyrannical Act and call upon all right thinking democratic-minded people not only of Gujarat but of the entire country to rise up in protest and force the government under pressure of powerful united movement to withdraw the Act.

SUCI(C), AP and Telangana on encounter killings

In a statement issued on 08-04-15, SUCI (C), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana State Organizing Committee severely condemned the encounter killings resorted to by the Andhra Pradesh police and the Telangana state police on different occasions in the early hours of 7th April 2015. While in the Seshachalam forest of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, twenty people who were woodcutting coolies hired by the red-sander smugglers were shot dead by police, five suspected terrorists who were

in judicial custody were killed by the Telangana police near Alair in the district of Nalgonda while taking them from Warangal jail to Hyderabad. Instead of finding out from the woodcutters which mafia gang is involved in smuggling, the police killed them all. Both these encounter killings are giving rise to many questions. SUCI(C) demanded high power judicial enquiry into each of these encounter killings, unearthing of facts and adequate compensation to the families of those who were killed.

Movements against atrocities on women



AIMSS Tripura held a demonstration (above) on 20 March at Agartala, Tripura to protest against the ever-increasing atrocities, rape and abduction of women, obscene exhibition of female bodies in mass media and rampant spread and use of liquor and drugs etc., and demanding ensuring honour and safety of women in the state. State and district leaders addressed the gathering.

Also, a whole-day long squatting (dharna) and submission of memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister of Chattisgarh, through the district collector was organized by SUCI (C) at Durg, Chattisgarh on 20 March demanding tracing out a missing girl, punishment for the culprits for rape and murder of a nine-year old girl of Vijaynagar, and compensation for a needy girl of Gayanagar who had died in an accident etc.

Protest against Land Acquisition Bill in Odisha



Demanding annulment of the abjectly anti-peasant anti-villager Land Acquisition Bill of the union BJP government AIKKMS Odisha held demonstration and through a deputation lead by state president and secretary of the organization submitted a memorandum to the President through the state Governor on 20 March at Bhubaneswar.

Youths in Odisha agitate for employment,



Youth demonstration, led by AIDYO, Odisha, including burning of effigy of the state power minister and submission of charter of demands, was held at Bhubaneswar in front of the Assembly House on 27 March in demand of employment for all, withdrawal of false power charges, strict dealing against communalism etc.

FACTS SPEAK

Myth-buster of much-hyped Gujarat model

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has slammed the Gujarat government on a wide range of issues including social and education indicators, agricultural growth and industrial sector besides fiscal discipline, observing there were “deficiencies” and cast doubts on the Gujarat model of development.

Gujarat’s GDP in agriculture recorded a negative growth at -7.17 per cent and -6.96 per cent in 2008-09 and 2009-12, respectively. The growth was again negative at -6.96 per cent in 2012-13, the first year of the 12th Five Year Plan...fiscal deficit increasing from Rs. 15,153 crore in 2009-10 to Rs. 18,422 crore in 2013-14. The CAG noted that a portion of expenditure was wrongly budgeted under a different head, resulting in “understatement of revenue expenditure and overstatement of revenue surplus to the tune of Rs. 1,633.5 crore.” ... Though Gujarat government prides itself of being a ‘revenue surplus’ state, the CAG pointed out that unpaid power subsidy of more than Rs 3,300 crore can make a huge dent in the revenue surplus of Rs 4,717 crore...The CAG also found a major loophole in the way the state government has calculated revenue surplus. It observed that the state government violated the Indian Government Accounting Standard (IGAS)-2 and tried to show more revenue surplus. audit of five Adivasi-dominated districts found that “no separate account of expenditure incurred under general and Tribal Sub Plan [except for the mid-day meal scheme] were maintained...In two districts, SarvaShikshaAbhiyan funds were diverted to ashram schools and Eklavya Model residential schools of the Tribal Development Department... In the five audited districts, the requisite teacher-student ratio was not maintained. School buildings were found to be lacking in basic facilities...out of 43,176 government-run schools in the state, 64 schools having 5,698 students run without any teacher. Further, 874 schools function with merely one teacher as on March 2014...

CAG found “significant deficiencies” by the Gujarat government in implementing schemes for protection and welfare

of female children... the Gujarat State Child Protection Society (GSCPS) had not formulated its State Child Protection Policy and State Plan of Action, as a result of which the state government failed in setting goals and establishing accountability of the departments meant for child protection and welfare services... CAG report expressed dissatisfaction on the steps taken by the Gujarat government to stop female foeticide in the state...Out of a total 181 cases filed under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act, only 49 cases were finalized as on March 2014 and out of these 49 cases finalized, the accused were convicted only in six cases... CAG also noticed ‘deficiency’ in functioning of blood banks in Gujarat, pointing out that 87 per cent of state talukas do not have a single blood bank...20 Gujarat state government-run public sector undertakings (PSUs) incurred losses of Rs 1,111.85 crore...(Indian Express 01-04-15 and The Hindu 03-04-15)

BJP-RSS wants to banish Newton, Pythagoras, Akbar

Ever since the formation of the Narendra Modi government, RSS has been consistently engaging with it over shaping its education policy, as an attempt to saffronize the education system. According to a report in the *Indian Express*, primary and secondary education minister, RSS member Vasudev Devnani is set to oust names like Akbar the great, Pythagoras and Isaac Newton from state textbooks in favour of ‘local’ heroes. “Why should we not tell our children about the PushpakVimaan? If there was an Indian scientist before Newton who did similar work, shouldn’t we credit him,” said Devnani. “We keep calling Akbar ‘The Great’. Why is he ‘The Great’? Let me tell you, he is not ‘The Great’. MaharanaPratap is ‘The Great’. Akbar was merely a ruler,” he added. (First Post and Indian Express 10-04-15)

CIA funds used to refill al-Qaeda coffers

In the spring of 2010, Afghan officials struck a deal to free an Afghan diplomat held hostage by al-Qaeda. But the price was steep—\$5 million—and senior security

officials were scrambling to come up with the money.

They first turned to a secret fund that the CIA bankrolled with monthly cash deliveries to the presidential palace in Kabul, according to several Afghan officials involved in the episode. The Afghan government, they said, had already squirreled away about \$1 million from that fund.

Within weeks, that money and \$4 million more provided from other countries was handed over to al-Qaeda, replenishing its coffers after a relentless CIA campaign of drone strikes in Pakistan had decimated the militant network’s upper ranks.

“God blessed us with a good amount of money this month,” AtiyahAbd al-Rahman, the group’s general manager, wrote in a letter to Osama bin Laden in June 2010, noting that the cash would be used for weapons and other operational needs.

While refusing to pay ransoms for Americans kidnapped by al-Qaeda, the Taliban or, more recently, the Islamic State, the United States has spent hundreds of billions of dollars over the last decade at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of which has been siphoned off to enemy fighters.

Details of the CIA’s previously unreported contribution to the ransom demanded by al-Qaeda were drawn from the letters and from interviews with Afghan and western officials speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. The CIA declined to comment.

(New York Times 16-03-15)

Water running dry for Palestinians as Israel turns off taps

In the northern Jordan Valley last week, Israeli forces destroyed a 1,000 metre pipeline built to provide water to Palestinian communities. In East Jerusalem, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been cut off from a regular supply of running water for nearly a year. In Gaza, the water infrastructure has been decimated and in the homes that do receive water it is still undrinkable. Water and who controls it has become a key part of Israel’s occupation, with the Palestinian territories; West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, in a constant struggle for the vital resource.

Jamal Juma, coordinator of the Stop the Wall campaign, an organization which is part of a network of groups challenging Mekorot, said: “The real water

problem in Palestine is not about scarcity of water. There is more annual rainfall in Ramallah than in London and per capita consumption of water in Israel is higher than the average consumption in Europe. The water problem in Palestine is created by Israel, through systematic theft of water and denial of access to water. Mekorot is the core player in implementing what we call Israel’s water apartheid.”

In Gaza, the water infrastructure is in pieces as a result of repeated wars and a blockade which has prevented repairs and maintenance. By the end of the latest bombardment over the summer, around 26 water wells had been completely or partially destroyed, while 46 kilometers of the water supply networks had been damaged, according to a statement by the Palestinian Water Authority. The water distribution network suffered an estimated \$34.4 billion worth of damage.

Prior to the recent attack, 97 per cent of residents in Gaza were connected to a public water system. However, 90 per cent of this was undrinkable and so residents were forced to buy water treated in governmental or private factories, or factories run by charities. The public water system means households can have running water; however electricity and fuel shortages prevent the water from being pumped through the system.

Access to water is a highly politicized and manipulated resource in Palestine. As Palestinian communities suffer - albeit through the destruction of their wells, through water that doesn’t come through the taps, or sewage that flows into the street - it is clear that, in Palestine, water is not a right. (Middle East Monitor)

US faults Ferguson cops for race bias

Probe led by PIO Attorney Vanita Gupta shows blacks singled out for punishment. Blacks in Ferguson, Missouri, make up about two-thirds (67%) of the population, but they accounted for 93% of those arrested in the city, 88% of victims of use of police force, and 85% of vehicle stop and search over the past two years.

They also made up 95% of the arrests for jaywalking (where police have discretionary powers), and 90% of all traffic tickets issued. All 14 cases of police dog bites involved blacks, and blacks were 68% less likely to have cases dismissed by Ferguson municipal judges.

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