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Rout of CPI (M) in West Bengal parliament election

An appeal to right-thinking people and honest rank of the CPI(M) to come forward and revive militant leftism

It has indeed been a debacle for the CPI (M) in the last parliament election. The party could not have any of its candidates returned in West Bengal and Tripura, the states it has ruled for decades and boasted of being its definite vote bases. In Kerala where the CPI (M) is still in power, it had to remain satisfied with just one of its nominees emerging victorious. It is only in Tamil Nadu where the CPI (M) and its associate CPI bagged two seats each riding on the DMK, the regional Dravidian party. Naturally, the CPI (M) leaders are in frantic search for a suitable explanation as to why has there been such a poll debacle for them. As regards trouncing in Tripura, the CPI (M) leadership held that the reign of terror let loose by the ruling BJP was responsible for their decimation, without albeit clarifying how could such an 'empire' of theirs built up over the years crumble overnight like a pack of cards. In Kerala, the CPI (M) leaders argued that though they could "successfully propagate the danger posed to society if the Modi government returned to power, the benefit of this campaign went to the UDF." (*People's Democracy* 02-06-2019) Why did this happen? Because, they clarified, "Different sections of society cast their votes in favour of UDF on the

basis of their understanding that only Congress can form an alternative government at the centre." (*ibid*) They also admitted that "Preliminary finding is that there was an erosion in the traditional vote base of the Left in the state. The figures show that the right wing forces succeeded in misleading a section of the believers among them." (*ibid*)

West Bengal scene

— transfer of CPI (M) votes to BJP

But when it came to the question of complete rout in West Bengal, a state the CPI (M) considered to be the strongest hold of theirs and where they ran the government for 34 long years uninterrupted with brute majority, the CPI (M) leaders have been in a quandary. Because, already it was revealed in all mainstream media that the much-trumpeted vote base of the CPI (M) was melting away into the BJP with many of its leaders, workers and supporters shifting their votes to the BJP with a view to 'teaching the ruling TMC (Trinamool Congress) and its leader-cum-chief minister Mamata Banerjee a lesson'. When such reports were gaining ground and whispering campaign of the CPI (M) leaders and workers for transferring vote to the BJP remained no secret to the discerning people, Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary of the party made one last attempt at clearing the air by saying that the CPI(M) cadres were not helping the BJP in any way as some news reports suggested. He also added that "The Left remains the last hurdle against the BJP in West Bengal and rest of the country." (*The Hindu* 18-05-19) Even, Mohammad Salim, the CPI (M) Polit Bureau member also dismissed the reports as "fictitious and manufactured". "None of the media reports in regard to the CPI (M) seeking refuge in BJP's Lotus could quote any CPI(M) leader or ground worker to substantiate their claim", commented Salim. (*People's Democracy* 20-05-2019) But was he making an honest statement? Perhaps not.

In fact the confirmation about flight of the CPI (M) votes to the BJP came from none other than the CPI (M) top brass themselves both just before and after elections. 'Even mistakenly don't ever consider to defeat Trinamool Congress (TMC) with the help of the BJP', said Biman Bose, the Left Front Chairman and the veteran CPI (M) Polit Bureau leader in an election meeting in West Bengal on 16 April last. (source: *Ganashakti*, Bengali organ of the CPI (M) dated 17 April 2019). Manik Sarkar, another Polit Bureau member and former CPI (M) chief minister of Tripura, also said in a meeting: "To

gain freedom from the TMC, don't make the mistake of choosing the BJP. It will be a blunder. It will be self-destruction" (*The Hindu* 16-05-19 and *The Wire* 08-05-19) A few days before the election, Suryakanta Mishra, the CPI (M) Polit Bureau leader and West Bengal State Secretary advised his party cadres not to "taste poison". Breaking his long silence, Buddhadeb

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SUCI(C) accuses the BJP-led Central and Bihar governments for the pathetic death of kids

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 22-06-2019 :

It is highly deplorable, shocking and sad that more than 150 children have so far died due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in the state of Bihar and the death toll is still continuing. It is due to sheer negligence of the BJP-led central and state governments which are busy in celebrating their victory in the recent poll and did not find time to save the lives of the children by taking timely action. This brain fever has afflicted more than 600 children across 16 districts of Bihar since the beginning of this month and it is spreading.

We demand of both the central and state the governments to give topmost priority to provide all necessary medical support like adequate number of doctors, nurses, equipments etc. and take up immediate measures to prevent the spread of the disease, if necessary by taking help from concerned international organizations. We also demand that enquiry should be held to find out who are particularly responsible for this tragedy and stringent punishment be meted out to them.

The death of the children is heart wrenching. Though no amount of grief can bring them back to life, and compensate for the loss, we demand that the government pay a compensation of Rs 10 lakhs to each of the bereaved families.

Our Party is going to observe protest day on 24 June 2019 in all state capitals and submit memorandum to the respective Governors on this issue. We call upon the people of the country to participate in this protest in a big way in order to pressurize the governments and concerned authorities.

SUCI(C) vehemently opposes BJP Government's move to privatize Railways

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 19-06-2019 :

We vehemently oppose the reported out and out anti-people move of the BJP-led Central Government to invite bid from private operators to run passenger trains in select routes with a view to providing scope for unbridled exploitation of passengers by the capitalist operators. After outsourcing many functions of the Railways for being operated on commercial basis, the process of eventual complete privatization of Railways has now been rolled out with this sinister move. The government is also reported to be mulling abolition of whatever little subsidy is provided now to rail ticket, meaning a steep rise in passenger fare is on the anvil.

We call upon all democratic-minded right-thinking people, organizations and other bodies to unite and assert powerful voice of protest to compel the government to reverse its aforesaid move.

Rout of CPI (M) in West Bengal

CPI (M) unleashed a whisper campaign to transfer votes to BJP

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Bhattacharjee, ailing former CPI (M) chief minister of West Bengal, in an interview to the party mouthpiece, *Ganashakti*, on 10 May 2019, urged people not to vote for the BJP. "Is it a good idea to jump from the Trinamool frying pan into the BJP fire?" he asked in that interview. When questioned if he thought the BJP was making inroads into Bengal, he said, "Yes, there is that danger. Some inroads have been made." (NDTV-10-05-19) His rhetorical comment was viewed by the informed circle as a warning to not just the voters, but also the CPI (M) cadres and supporters who have sought shelter with the BJP to ward off TMC attacks. Even many of the investigating journalists have written articles in various print media quoting a few CPI (M) workers, supporters and even lower level leaders about migration of CPI (M) vote to the BJP.

CPI (M) leaders confirm shift of CPI (M) votes to BJP after declaration of result

And significantly, after publication of the election results, the CPI (M) leaders including its General Secretary have also admitted in public that their voters shifted allegiance to the BJP in West Bengal. While speaking to journalists after a state committee meeting on 4 June last in Kolkata, Yechury confessed that "a sizeable amount the Left Front's vote had gone to the BJP." (*Ganashakti*, 05--06-19) He argued that those who prioritized immediate relief from TMC's terror tactics might have voted for the BJP and those who wanted to safeguard the secular democratic organizations would have voted for the TMC. Because of this polarization between the TMC and the BJP, the democratic space of the leftists has been squeezed and much of the left votes have gone away. (*ibid*) In course of his aforesaid press briefing, the CPI(M) General Secretary also echoed the same view by commenting that "the people in Bengal reposed faith in the saffron party to save themselves from the 'repressions and terror' unleashed by the TMC during its eight-year rule in the state." (PTI *Ganashakti* archive 04-06-19) A senior CPI(M) state committee leader is reported to have said that a large section of Left Front supporters and a section of workers may have voted for the BJP "to

teach the TMC a lesson". (*Deccan Herald* 04-06-19) Even the BJP poll managers readily admitted before election that they were banking on help from "unexpected quarters" - ground level CPI (M) workers. These foot soldiers, squirming at the ruling regime's harassment and growing might, would love nothing more than giving a bloody nose to Banerjee, even if it means joining hands with the growing saffronites. (*Times of India*-09-05-19) Those who had their ears open to the whisper campaign of the CPI (M) leaders know that the rank and file was given a go ahead to vote the BJP to defeat the TMC. The CPI (M) leaders sought to impress on their cadres that once the TMC, which ousted the CPI (M) from government, is dethroned and the BJP takes over, it would pave the way for the CPI (M) to regain power by knocking out the BJP. And this is indirectly corroborated when the CPI (M) General Secretary said that "the 'Agey Ram porey Baam' (First Ram and then the Left) slogan doing the rounds in the state itself is an indication that our supporters will come back to our fold," (*ibid*) as per media report. This vote transfer to the BJP is reported to have been admitted by the CPI (M) leaders in their recently held central committee meeting in Delhi. One CPI (M) leader is also quoted to have said: "left supporters fail to understand that if the BJP comes, the condition of the CPI (M) would be more pathetic". (*Ananda Bazar Patrika* 09-06-19) This also shows how the CPI (M) in order to settle score with the TMC gravely underestimated the immense danger posed to not only West Bengal but the entire country following this menacing rise of arch communal fascist forces like the BJP and the RSS, its mentor, which are enjoying unstinted backing of the top monopoly houses.

How could West Bengal soil be opened up for rightist invasion

The CPI (M) General Secretary hastened to add that no CPI (M) worker has voted for the BJP. But a large section of its supporters have. He also sought to sound optimistic by commenting that "in West Bengal it is the CPI(M) who has been ensuring that the BJP and the TMC's competitive communalism will be ended". (*The Hindu* 18-05-19) But he offered no plausible explanation how the state of West

Bengal hitherto known as the bastion of left-democratic movement and carrying the glorious tradition of the uncompromising revolutionary trend of our freedom movement represented by Bhagat Singh, Netaji Subhas and other venerated leaders and martyrs like Kshudiram, Masterda Surya Sen, Pritilata, Benoy-Badal-Dinesh, Bagha Jatin and their fighting compatriots could be so spoiled that the people here are now feeling no qualm in rallying behind arch communal extreme rightists like the RSS-BJP. According to the CPI (M) leadership, "If anyone has to be blamed for the rise of the BJP and its electoral success, it is Mamata Banerjee and the TMC, its lumpenised politics and systematic suppression of democracy" (*People's Democracy* 02-06-19) Is it a fact? Can the CPI (M) leaders by saying so disown their responsibility in opening up the soil of West Bengal to communal-fundamentalist invasion? It is true that the TMC has been pursuing anti-people policies and subverting democracy in many respects. Even then, how could the people choose the BJP as alternative to the TMC in West Bengal which has been a traditional stronghold of leftism?

West Bengal was once respected for flourishing of enlightened thoughts, higher ethical-moral values and human essence. No sectarian communal-casteist or such other divisive thoughts could really find space here. Despite all attempts, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the founder of arch Hindu communal extremely right wing Bhartiya Jana Sangh, a predecessor to the present BJP, could not take root in this soil. Similarly, there was no place for other communal-fundamentalist forces like the Muslim League etc. either. What provided the deterrent? The deterrent was provided by the fervour of powerful united left-democratic movement which surged forth in continuation of the ferment of anti-British imperialist freedom struggle. The ambience of these people's struggles with, in the main, a left orientation, created a cultural milieu which prevented ingress of any divisive thought or religious fanaticism-revivalism-bigotry. Common perception was that this state would rise up firmly against any injustice, any oppression, repression, persecution or any vile attempt to peddle in divisive

politics. When there was a wave of left-democratic movements, leaders and cadres organizing those as well as the left-minded people of this state stood as vigilant sentinel against all bourgeois conspiracy to pollute both culture and politics. The cadres of left-democratic movement had character, reflected higher values and political ethics. Even the CPI (M) workers then had a certain standard and they sincerely dreamt of revolution.

But then what was the reason the soil was stripped of its essence and yielded to the polarized politics of bourgeois parliamentarism? The CPI (M) had ruled this state for over three decades. Its leaders still contend that they are the biggest left force. If that be so, how can they shun the responsibility of the soil of West Bengal being made to shun leftism and gravitate towards right reaction? Did the CPI (M) leaders try to take struggling leftism forward by encouraging class and mass struggles? In that event, could any reactionary thinking creep in so easily making room for rightist politics to assume domineering role? Fact is that once they tasted power, they systematically abandoned leftism and the line of struggle, ran the government just like any other bourgeois party, drifted more and more towards bourgeois vote politics to eventually find their moorings in it and ultimately opted to become a part of the establishment. But, even when they decided to spurn leftism and embrace bourgeois parliamentarism, they pretended to be professing 'leftism' because they knew that the people continue to view leftism as a higher ideology and epitome of progressiveness. So unless they feign themselves to be leftists, they would be rejected by the people. But what is noteworthy is that though the CPI (M) leaders continue to claim themselves as accredited "lefts" in the country and the media too project them to be so, the CPI (M) leaders never cared to make it clear to their leaders and cadres what does the term 'leftism' actually mean. Today, a bulk of the CPI (M) workers are found to have no inkling of what leftism stands for, let alone Marxism-Leninism. It is not their fault. They have not been groomed along leftist line by their leaders but were only tutored to have expertise in bourgeois vote politics, function as the frontal

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General Secretary Comrade Provash Ghosh addressing and members of Polit Bureau and Central Committee are on the dais

Remembering a life-long revolutionary leader with deep pain and firm resolve to be equal to the task his living memory now adjures us to fulfil

The smiling face embodying the affectionate and caring nature which made him endearing to all, was lively in the flower-bedecked portrait on the dais. Comrade Provash Ghosh, beloved General Secretary, Comrades Manik Mukherjee, Asit Bhattacharyya, Sankar Saha, Gopal Kundu and Saumen Basu, all Polit Bureau members, garlanded the portrait in sequence to pay their revolutionary tribute to Comrade Ranjit Dhar, the departed veteran Polit Bureau member of

the Party. Then all the available Central Committee members and State Secretaries paid their homage. After that, song composed on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, great leader of the proletariat, was presented by the music squad. Then Comrade Provash Ghosh dwelt at length on the various educative aspects of the life struggle of Comrade Ranjit Dhar and how from a freewheeling youngman from erstwhile East Bengal having no support or resource to eke out a bare living turned out to be a leader

of such a stature through arduous struggle once the enlightened thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh dawned upon him. (Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh will be published later). After Comrade Provash Ghosh, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya who presided over said a few words. Then the memorial meeting convened by the Central Committee, SUCI(C), on 21 June 2019 at Sarat Sadan, Howrah, West Bengal, ended with rendition of the *Internationale*.



A part of the huge gathering at the Sarat Sadan Hall, Howrah, West Bengal. An almost similar gathering was outside the hall.

US War Machine emits enormously high amount of harmful gases

The rising global warming and resultant climate change is posing immense threat to the very existence of mankind. But the US imperialists have always been dodging the question of signing the protocol to combat this danger. But now the veneer has come off.

Media reports (vide *The Times of India*, Kolkata Edition, 23 June 2019) reveal that actually "America's war machine is filling up the atmosphere with carbon dioxide", which is responsible for global warming. The US war machine "spewed over a billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere" over little less than twenty years. Of these, 24,621 tons of emission was from the Pentagon itself. US arms and ammunitions manufacturing units and processes

caused yearly 153 million tons of emissions. Between 2011 and 2017, greenhouse gas emissions by US military amounted to 1,212 million tons. In 2017 itself, as huge an amount as 85 million barrels of petroleum was consumed by the US war machine comprising military ships, aircrafts, combat vehicles and contingency bases to cause emission of 59 million tons. In short the US military emits as much CO₂ as 15 million cars.

It is now common knowledge that the war-monger US imperialists, in the name of counter-terror operations, are engaged in warfare of different versions affecting around 80 countries of the world. Not only these warfares help the US military-industrial complex to make immense

financial gains, the increasing militarization of economy also is a desperate attempt to somehow stave off a crisis-ridden sinking imperialist economy. The US imperialists, in the military interventions and wars sponsored by them in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, have been using all kinds of weapons of mass destruction including depleted uraniums recording a toxic emission of around 400 tons. The figure will assume most ominous dimension if the actual facts about the rest are found out. Thus, the Pentagon rulers as the chieftain of world imperialism- capitalism thriving on the hunger and ruination of the global people have been ensuring that any tangible proposal to effectively combat the menace of climate change does not materialize.

AIUTUC demands “Right to Work” for all citizen to be included as a fundamental constitutional right

Comrade Sankar Saha, General Secretary, All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC) attended Pre-Budget consultation meeting convened by the Finance Minister, New Delhi on 15 June 2019.

While responding to the query of the Finance Minister as to how the interest of the workers who lost job could be protected, Comrade Sankar Saha said that in our country the workers do not enjoy the right to work. The government has to enact a law giving constitutional right to work to everybody. In that case, government shall shoulder responsibility of providing jobs to all unemployed and in the event of anybody losing job, the government should compensate by paying subsistence allowance at the rate of 100% of wages. This is in addition to cover every citizen under the social security net.

As to another query, Comrade Sankar Saha said that the governments irrespective of all colours and shades have been trying to make another point. That is, due to absence of requisite skill of our people, they remain unemployed. This is a blatant lie. It shows as if the exploitative economy which the government has been pursuing is not the root of unemployment. I like to give 2/3 instances to prove how deceptive is this view of the government. It is known to the government that in Uttar Pradesh 23 lakhs of graduates, post-graduates and doctorates applied for 368 posts of Peon. Similarly in Tamil Nadu for 14 posts of Sweepers, 4600, most of whom are rank holder engineers, had filed applications. In addition, it is known to everybody that the shutters are being downed in many engineering colleges because lakhs of passed out engineers have been remaining unemployed for years. Now the principals of the colleges are asking the teachers to either bring students or go home. In actuality, this reflects the degree and dimension of unemployment of our country, definitely not due to want of skill. Before I conclude, I like to request

the government as to what has influenced it to introduce “Fixed Term Employment”. This has been wreaking havoc in the life of working people of our country because, by dint of this, their employment is completely insecure. Once they are employed for fixed term i.e. for one or two years they will compulsorily lose their job on expiry of the agreed period and will be compelled to go to the street under way for another job here and there. This would make their life a hell. This concept of ‘Fixed Term Employment’ has already been implemented in Government/Semi-Government /Private Sector and the day will soon come when every citizen will stand insecure. I like to ask is there any worker requesting the government to introduce Fixed Term Employment. I can emphatically say no worker desires such employment. It is only the corporate sector who are bent upon to continue earning maximum profit had asked the government to bring this amendment in the Labour Laws.

At the end, I lend full support to the most legitimate demands which were included in the joint memorandum submitted to the Finance minister by 10 central trade union organizations. That memorandum *inter alia* included the demands for minimum wages, employment generation, social security, 7th Pay Commission, stop disinvestment and strategic sale of public sector units, prevent dumping, extend MGNREGA, stop contractization and casualization, stop FDI in crucial sectors like defence production, railways, financial sector, retail trade etc., stopping privatization and/or outsourcing of the defence sector production, regularize the workforce employed in the various schemes of Government of India including ICDS, NHM, Mid-day Meal programme, National Child Labour Project, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, etc. The memorandum demanded of the government to ratify the ILO Convention 189 and enact a central

law and create support system for domestic workers, create a National Fund for Unorganized Workers to provide social security for all unorganized workers including contract, casual, migrant workers etc., direct all state governments to frame rules under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act and allocate funds for developing street vending as livelihood model. Management of cess under the Building and Other Construction Workers’ Welfare Board, Beedi Workers Welfare Board, etc., should be made the responsibility of Ministry of Finance, which should ensure its proper collection, stoppage of evasion and utilisation. The Memorandum also demanded to rescind from the proposed labour law amendments which would curtail the

basic and trade union rights of workers and provide unhindered ‘hire and fire’ facilities to the employers. The Memorandum sought finalization of Code on Wages Bill, at present before the Standing Committee on Labour and on the draft Code on Industrial Relations Bill on the basis of the opinions of the central trade unions expressed unanimously. No labour law amendment should be undertaken without the consent of the trade unions and workers who are the main stakeholders and the most affected. Besides, the memorandum demanded extension of EPF benefits to all raising the contribution of the government and the employers to provide a minimum pension of Rs 6000 per month, make it sustainable and stop deploying the corpus in speculative capital market, withdrawal of New Pension Scheme and calculation of gratuity based on 30 days wages instead of 15 days per completed year of service.

Tunisian health minister resigned over 11 baby deaths, but what about our country?

Tunisia’s Health Minister Abderraouf Cherif had resigned following the deaths of 11 new-born babies at a hospital in the capital, Tunis. All of the babies died of septic shock at the Rabta maternity hospital between 7-8 March. Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said investigations had been launched into the state-run facility’s medical, pharmaceutical and hygiene practices. The Tunisian paediatrics society said the infection might have been caused by an intravenous feeding product. The group also called on the authorities to “shed light” on the case and criticised the “precarious conditions in which health professionals work”. Tunisia’s public healthcare had a reputation as one of the best in North Africa, and medical tourism is a source of considerable revenue for the country.

But in our country, the ministers, administrative authorities and ruling party leaders remain unfazed at the spate of children’s death due to non-availability of rudimentary healthcare. Instead of owning the responsibility for such tragedies, they are found busy in searching scapegoats. As one well-known columnist has written in a mainstream daily after the recent tragic incident in Muzaffarpur, Bihar: “All of a sudden, a bunch of politicians woke up to the horror of the tragedy, and started an aggressive campaign — no, not to save the kids or prevent further deaths — but to cover their own backsides. In a staggering show of callousness, they gave multiple interviews to media professionals, pointing fingers at one

another and blithely passing the buck even as news of more deaths kept coming in, while citizens gasped at their shamelessness. Soon, this heartless lot discovered the perfect alibi for their own lapses — lychees! The delicious fruit associated with Muzaffarpur. Once the culprit had been identified, the same men patted themselves on the back for their expert diagnosis of the crisis and went on to discuss the medical emergency over heaped plates of biryani and gulab jamuns. These are our worthy elected representatives, ladies and gentlemen. We pay their salaries. We also pay for that biryani they were enjoying while innocent kids were dying around them. Dying. Not because of the lychees. Oh no! The poor lychees were being defamed and given a bad name because these men were lying to us. Lying to the nation. Those kids were dying of something far more lethal than lychees. They were victims of India’s most widespread, but unnamed disease. And that disease is called poverty. It is not restricted to Muzaffarpur. Kids across India succumb to it on an hourly basis. There are no reliable statistics in place to tell us exactly how many children we lose per day to poverty and its offshoot — malnutrition. We also lack convincing answers about our inability to provide basics for survival. We passively allow thousands to starve to death while we focus on grandiose projects that don’t fill stomachs.” That is the stark reality. (Source — *BBC News* 10-03-2019 and *Times of India* 23-06-2019)

Gujarat SUCI(C) demands roll back of Amul milk price hike

Gujarat State Committee of SUCI (C), in a statement issued on 21 May last severely condemned the raising of the price of Amul milk stating that even before publication of the election results, anti-people measures are being taken by the corporates and big business obviously with support of the pro-capitalist government. Amul though outwardly a co-operative, is in fact akin to a profiteering corporate. Its excuse of increasing the milk price because of fodder price rise and for giving relief to the farmers is just an eye wash. This hike in milk price rise will be a big blow for the drought affected people of Gujarat. SUCI(C) demands immediate roll back of the hiked price.

Rout of CPI (M) in West Bengal

Communal RSS-BJP could secure a foot-hold in West Bengal mainly because of renunciation of leftism by CPI(M) leadership

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brigade specially trained to anyhow secure vote for the party and presume winning election to be the sole objective. Any other bourgeois party including the extreme rightists also have the same objective. Then what is the difference between leftism and rightism? Just by claiming that "I am a leftist", does one become leftist? When the CPI (M) leaders claim that "The Left has the strongest ideology", do they ever explain to their workers what that ideology is? What are its socio-political import, cultural-moral values and tasks?

Leftism vis a vis deeds and conduct of CPI (M) leaders

In this connection, it is pertinent to mention that Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), was invited by the CPI (M) leaders to address the inaugural session of their party congress held in Vishakhapatnam in April 2015. Comrade Provash Ghosh, in course of his short speech, spelt out in clear terms that "the parties who regard themselves as Marxist in spite of their fundamental differences in understanding and applications of Marxism are to be considered as leftists." Referring to the teachings of great Lenin, he also categorically pointed out that "the real strength of a proletarian party does not lie in number of members in Parliament but only lies in the fire of class and mass struggles." Have the CPI(M) leaders followed this Leninist teaching during the last four decades? It is true that the TMC has been flexing muscle nurturing and marshalling anti-socials, politicization of police-administration, giving indulgence to extortion and money-making through unlawful realty promotion business (come to be known as 'syndicate raj'), freely distributing sops and freebies from public exchequer and above leaving no stone unturned to rig elections in order to stick to power. This is nothing unexpected from a rightist party like TMC which has its bread and butter in power politics and exclusive vote-orientation. But whose shoes the TMC has stepped in? Is it not a fact that the CPI (M) leaders wearing a cloak of leftism also did all these things, overtly or covertly, while in power? Had they not adopted one after another anti-left, anti-people policies to curry favour with the ruling

capitalist class and send to it a clear signal of committed servitude if allowed to remain in power? Relevant to mention here for information of the CPI (M) workers and supporters of present generation that since the SUCI(C), strictly adhering to the Marxist-Leninist principle of unity- struggle-unity within the joint left movement and trying utmost to preserve left unity, had repeatedly criticized this discernible distancing of the CPI (M) from leftism and gradual drifting towards opportunist bourgeois vote politics, the CPI (M) leaders expelled SUCI(C) from the platform of joint movement. Not only that. Late Jyoti Basu, the CPI (M) leader, had, immediately after taking over as the chief minister of the state in 1977, sent clear message to the industrial houses and big business in his radio speech that as the SUCI(C) was no more in their 'front', there would be no more disturbance (meaning impetus to class and mass struggles). And the 34 years of the CPI (M) rule did prove how correct and timely was our pointer which, for obvious reasons irked the CPI (M) leaders then dreaming of a longer innings in governmental power. In a phased manner, the left heritage of West Bengal has been considerably whittled down and the CPI (M) rank and file, instead of being in the field of movement and acquiring leftist values, became indoctrinated in bourgeois parliamentarianism and went on thundering about riding on governmental power. Can one forget how the CPI (M) leaders trampled all democratic norms and values, how they used to capture booths by force, send white sarees (which are worn by Hindu widows) to various families as an indication of what grave consequence would be there if they did not vote for the CPI (M)? Did not the SFI, the student wing of the CPI (M), capture college unions by sheer force with the backing of the CPI (M) government? Is it not that most of the trade unions were compelled to have affiliation to the CITU, the CPI (M)'s trade union wing? Did not the CPI (M) government crush legitimate democratic movements with bullets and batons not even hesitating to kill participants of the movement and then lampooning the movement and the martyrs? When Madhai Halder, a 17 year old boy from a poor family fell to the bullets of the CPI (M) government, late Jyoti

Basu, the then CPI (M) chief minister sarcastically commented that "vegetarian movement had turned non-vegetarian". Has the horrific memory of worst state terrorism let loose during the Singur-Nandigram movements been erased from public mind? "We shall encircle the people of Nandigram and make their life hell", "they have been paid back in their own coin", "We shall not allow to touch even a hair of the Tatas", "a new sunrise has taken place in Nandigram (after indiscriminate firing on a peaceful unarmed rally of the villagers of Nandigram in November 2007)—such were the brags and blusters of the CPI (M) leaders then. Without being able to break through the organized resistance, the CPI (M) leadership taking a cue from what the US imperialists and their allies did with countries refusing to submit to their dictates, imposed an economic blockade on Nandigram. Select police officers and administrative officials having proven track record of masterminding and executing despotic attack on the common people as well as branded criminals were pooled from other places to constitute the brigade of uncouth predators. The CPI (M) leaders went to the extent of engaging notorious criminals to gang-rape women so that they bent down disgraced, their morale was lost and they did not dare to come forward in any mass movement anywhere in future. Such inhuman sexual assault to break any mass struggle was unprecedented in the history of this country. Did all such words and deeds represent 'leftism'? These are serious issues that the honest rank and supporters of the CPI (M) need to seriously ponder over and then decide who have been primarily instrumental in opening the gate to the RSS-BJP.

Line of militant struggling leftism steadfastly upheld and pursued by SUCI(C)

While the CPI (M) leadership moved away from the line of leftism and sought refuge and fortune in the cozy confines of bourgeois vote politics, the SUCI(C) founded, reared and steered by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat, has remained unflinching in its resolve to accomplish anti-capitalist socialist revolution by way of building,

sustaining and strengthening class and mass struggles on the burning problems of life and based on higher proletarian ethics and culture. Upholding people's cause, the SUCI(C) steadfastly pursued the base political line of militant and struggling leftism. Even when the CPI (M) leaders, with a view to breaking the morale and organization of the SUCI(C) in West Bengal, were killing over a hundred and a half of its leaders and cadres, slapping false cases on them and eliciting court verdict of life imprisonment based on those fake cases, the SUCI(C) leadership, in keeping with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought and driven by the historic necessity of developing united left movement, continuously urged upon the CPI(M) to respond to the call of building that united struggle. But they did not listen. Gravely concerned about the anti-left sectarian politics of the CPI (M) leaders and their gagging any voice off reason, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, during his lifetime, had time and again pointed out that "...fascism fosters all sorts of spiritualism, age-old superstitions, irrational mindset and blindness...When this happens in a country the reasoning faculty itself dies out in the country. So, speaking about the state of leftist movement I sounded a note of caution that the leftists who close the door of polemical discussions and resort to the practice of using physical force to increase their strength, get dividend for the time being because of their strength and numerical superiority; they do not allow anybody to express his opinion, do not pay heed to any reasoning, their cadres themselves lose all inclination for reasoning and destroy the reasoning faculty in others too. Do they know the deadly outcome of this? it may yield some results for the time being, but that will surely turn out to be the road to their own burial in future." (*Selected Works Vol IV p 457-59*) He even warned that "In this situation, the fissiparous groups and religious fundamentalists like Jana Sangh (forerunner of the present day BJP) are waiting in the wings. As soon as whatever attraction the people still have towards left movement evaporates, they would come out in the open. The ruling CPI(M) leaders are not conscious of this danger." (*Selected Works Vol III p. 153*) Does not the present situation

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Rout of CPI (M) in West Bengal Upholding people's cause, SUCI(C) steadfastly pursues base political line of militant and struggling leftism

Contd. from page 5

prove his warnings to be prophetic? Though the CPI (M) leaders pose to be a devout fighter against the RSS-BJP and communalism, have they ever sought to rebut such malicious policies ideologically and philosophically? Even their understanding of secularism is so flawed that driven by the exigency of securing some seats, the CPI (M) leaders did not hesitate to brand the Congress and some other casteist-parochial regional parties as 'secular' so as to come to an electoral understanding with them. Like any other bourgeois party including the TMC they are so inimical to, the CPI (M) leaders have also reduced secularism to 'encouragement to all religions' while, in reality, secularism means 'independent of religion', presupposes 'non-recognition of any super-natural entity' and keeping the socio-political arena out of any religious influence. On the contrary, the SUCI(C), in right earnest, has released an intense ideological-philosophical struggle to expose the hollowness of Hindutva doctrine of RSS-BJP and their self-imposed credential of nationalism and patriotism. Alongside unveiling the treacherous role of the RSS- BJP during the freedom struggle, their branding of the anti-imperialist freedom movement and their leaders as 'reactionary', their full cooperation with the British imperialist rulers in suppressing the freedom movement and their connivance in partition of the country based on religion, the SUCI(C) has also shown how fake is

their so called allegiance to Vivekananda, Ramkrishna, Chaitanya and others who preached exactly opposite of what the RSS—BJP now espouse. Then who is firmly holding aloft the noble banner of Marxism-Leninism-militant and struggling leftism and who is bartering away self-styled leftism to remain afloat in the corridor of power? It is upto the right-thinking left-minded people including the rank and file of the CPI (M) and its associates to decide.

Time to bring back glorious legacy of West Bengal as bastion of left-democratic movement

There is still time. One electoral setback is not the end of the world. Faith on people cannot be lost. It is the job of genuine leftists to rouse the people and bring them in the fold of struggle. We once again call upon the CPI (M) leaders to draw appropriate lessons from their mistakes, admit those mistakes before the people, shun the path of bourgeois parliamentarism and come forward to develop united left-democratic movement to thwart menacing rise of the BJP and other dangerous and divisive forces allegiant to the ruling ruthlessly oppressive capitalism, the heartless monopoly capitalism. Let the state of West Bengal come back to its original glory and provide beacon to the multitudes of toiling masses round the country who are on a desperate look out for the right course to get some relief from the ever-increasing strangulation of capitalist onslaught.

Record seventy per cent of Russians say Stalin played a positive role in their country's history

A record seven in 10 Russians now view Joseph Stalin positively, a poll has found. An annual survey by the independent Levada Centre showed that 52 per cent thought the architect of the Great Purge had played a "more positive" role in the country's history and 18 per cent an "entirely positive" role. The 70 per cent approval of Stalin is 21 per cent higher than a decade ago. Busts of Stalin have been appearing ever more frequently, including several at

the initiative of the Russian military historical society led by the country's culture minister. The major Siberian city of Novosibirsk will allow a monument to Stalin to be placed in front of the local communist party headquarters on Victory Day next month. The head of one nearby village has already named all 25 of its streets after the leader, producing addresses like "5th side street of Generalissimo I.V. Stalin". (The Telegraph UK 16-04-19)

MEDIA SAYS SO

BJP spent nearly 45% – or Rs 27,000 crore – of total expenditure for 2019 Lok Sabha polls: Report

The Bharatiya Janata Party spent close to Rs 27,000 crore in the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections, according to a report by the Centre for Media Studies released on Monday. The amount was 45% of the total expenditure of Rs 60,000 crore. The report has called the 2019 General Elections the "most expensive election ever, anywhere". The amount the BJP spent during the Lok Sabha polls is about one-third of the country's education budget, 43 per cent of the health budget, 10 per cent of the defence budget and about 45 per cent of the MGNREGA budget.

At this rate, expenditure in the 2024 General Elections could cross Rs 1 trillion, said CMS chairperson N Bhaskara Rao, according to *Business Standard*. "Mother of all corruption lies in the spiralling election expenditure," said Rao. "If we are not able to address this, we can't check corruption in India. The scale of the expenditure should scare us and compel us to think of taking corrective steps to build a stronger democracy." The report, based on secondary information, field studies and analysis, calculated that Rs 700 was spent per voter. This came up to nearly Rs 100 crore in each parliamentary constituency.

Poll Expenditure according to the report—

Voters Directly – 20-25% –	Rs 12-15,000 crore
Campaign/Publicity – 30-35% –	Rs 20-25,000 crore
Election Commission expenditure—15-20%—	Rs 10-12,000 crore
Logistics – 8-10% –	Rs 5-6,000 crore
Miscellaneous – 5-10% –	Rs 3-6,000 crore
Total –	Rs 55-60,000 crore

The report described the 2019 Lok Sabha polls "a watershed election". The major source of poll funding is now corporate. "Crowd funding where citizen and community contributes for campaigns is no longer a sought after source," said the report. (*Deccan Herald*- 03-06-19, *scroll.in*-04-06-19 and *New Indian Express*- 07-06-19)

Average taxpayer will need to work over 300 years to match an MP's assets

The gap between Members of Parliament (MPs) and their constituents may have just widened. The average assets of an MP are now 345.8 times that of an annual income of a tax-filing individual. This means it will take the average taxpayer 345.8 years to earn the equivalent of the assets of the average Lok Sabha MP. It was 299.8 times in 2014. The asset details are based on the latest affidavits for MPs, collated by non-governmental organisation Association for Democratic Reforms though its campaign National Election Watch, in periodic reports.

The average MP's assets rose from Rs 14.7 crore in the previous LS (2014) Rs 20.9 crore in the latest one (2019). The growth of an MP's assets may be faster than the growth of the average salary of the income tax-filing individual. (*Business Standard* -28-05-19 and *Smart investor* - 27-05-19)

India May Privatise or Shut 46 PSUs in Coming Months, Says NITI Aayog's Rajiv Kumar

In the first 100 days of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second term, a slew of 'big-bang' economic reforms that should please foreign investors are likely to be pursued, according to a top official at the government's main think-tank. The reforms will include changes in labour laws, privatisation moves and creation of land banks for new industrial development, said Rajiv Kumar, vice chairman of NITI Aayog (National Institute for Transforming India), who reports directly to Modi. Kumar said that the government will focus on fully privatising or closing more than 42 state-controlled companies in the coming months. The government is even mulling lifting the foreign direct investment cap on Air India, the loss-making state-owned flagship carrier, to make it easier to sell. "They (foreign investors) will have reasons to be happy. You will see a slew of reforms I can assure you of that. We are going to pretty much hit the ground running," Kumar told Reuters in an interview. Modi is the chairman of the think-tank. Kumar said that reforms in India's complicated labour laws will see the light of day as early as the next parliamentary session in July, when the government will place a new bill before the lower house for approval. It will aim to combine 44 central laws into four codes – wages, industrial relations, social security and welfare, and the fourth – occupational safety, health and working conditions. (Reuters quoted in *The Wire*- 31-05-19)

Toiling people round the globe burst forth in movements against growing onslaught of capitalism

URUGUAY (LATIN AMERICA)

On May 22, thousands of workers from different sectors mobilized in Montevideo, Uruguay, in solidarity with the gas workers of the Montevideo Gas, who have been fighting against Petrobras, a Brazilian oil and gas distribution company who owns Montevideo Gas, since the last week of April. The mobilization was carried out as a part of four-hour partial general strike, called for by the *Plenario Intersindical de Trabajadores – Convención Nacional de Trabajadores* (PIT-CNT), a national trade union centre in Uruguay. Since April 30, Maximiliano Camaño and Óscar Castro, gas workers of the Montevideo Gas, have been on an indefinite hunger strike in defence of their jobs and the public service of natural gas. The hunger strike was initiated by three workers as a part of the 24-hour gas workers strike called for by the Autonomous Union of Gas Workers and Employees (UAOEGAS), but on May 11, 42-year-old Ernesto Sasías, had to quit the measure due to deterioration of his health. Alejandro Acosta, the leader of the UAOEGAS declared that an indefinite general strike of gas workers would begin on May 27. While the company claimed that its gas distribution activity in Uruguay was in deficit, the trade union leaders explained that Petrobras wanted to leave the country for a long time and as such it had been cleaning out and divesting. The workers also denounced the company's systematic deterioration of services. They said that a reduction in the workforce would lead to the loss of quality of services and have repercussions such as withdrawal of services by more users. "When Petrobras got the license there were around 45,000 users and now there are 37,000 users," they highlighted. The conflict between Petrobras and its employees intensified when the company dismissed seven of its workers, on May 9. "We are not going to accept any dismissal," told Acosta to local Radio Montecarlo. He also said that they want the Executive Branch to take care of the matter and "ensure that during the transition period in which Petrobras leaves (the country), there are no dismissals". (*People's Dispatch* 24-05-19)

NETHERLANDS (EUROPE)

A strike by public transport workers on Tuesday has led to long

traffic jams as commuters turn to cars and taxis instead to get to work. By 8 am there were 520 kilometres of slow-moving vehicles on the Dutch roads, and traffic had ground to halt around Alkmaar and Rotterdam, motoring organisation ANWB said. Hashtags such as #meerijden and #liftaangeboden have become popular as people seek to share rides. And in Amsterdam officials have opened the IJ tunnel to bikes and mopeds, because there are no ferries over the IJ.

Regional bus services and the metro in Rotterdam and Amsterdam have also been halted by the strike, which will run until midnight. There are, however, very limited train services between Amsterdam's central station and Schiphol airport – ordered by a court on Sunday to stop unsafe situations developing. The strike is part of a campaign to have the state pension age frozen at 66 and to ensure pensions rise in line with inflation. The unions want the cabinet to commit to keeping the state pension age at 66. It is being gradually increased in three-month increments and will hit 67 years and three months by 2024. (*Dutch News* 28-05-19)

NEW ZEALAND (OCEANIA)

As many as 50,000 teachers across New Zealand went on strike on May 29 to demand a pay hike and better working conditions. Members of education unions NZEI Te Riu Roa, which represents primary school teachers, and the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA), which represents secondary school teachers, voted to jointly call the strike when negotiations with the Ministry of Education reached a deadlock earlier this month. In order to avoid the strike, the Ministry of Education offered the unions a 1.2 billion deal which would have raised wages by 9% over the next three years. However, the teachers overwhelmingly rejected the offer, stating that it only provided a makeshift solution to the underemployment issue and failed to address their soaring workloads and the need for extra resources.

New Zealand's education sector has been reeling under a shortage of teachers and special educators. Nearly 52% of primary schools claim that they do not have enough applicants for their vacancies, and 28% have had to increase class sizes because of this, according to a survey by the NZ Educational Institute. This

has pushed many schools to recruit teachers from abroad. Unions say that low pay and lack of equity are significant contributors to the escalating teacher shortage.

The strike has received sweeping support from the public, especially parents, many of whom intend to join the teachers. "I think teachers deserve more than what they're getting. It is an inconvenience for parents having to organise staying at home with the kids but I think teachers deserve to fight for what they want," said one parent. (*'People's Dispatch'* reproduced in *NewsClick* 29-05-2019)

SAUDI ARABIA (WESTERN ASIA)

Would the Saudi-flagged ship be able to load weapons in France or Italy bound for use in the brutal war against the 30 million people of Yemen?

The events of mid-to-late May gave an excellent example of the potential of international solidarity among European workers, which is also an act of solidarity with the oppressed Yemenis.

First in mid-May, dockworkers, human rights activists and anti-war organizations prevented the Saudi cargo ship from loading at Le Havre, France. The protests there had prevented the loading of weapons on the ship, the Bahri Yanbu.

They then warned Italian dockworkers that the Bahri Yanbu would soon be docking at Genoa, an industrial and port city on the west coast of Italy. The dockworkers there, called "Camalli," have a history of internationalist and union activity. That dates from the anti-Fascist resistance during World War II to the militant struggles of the autumn of 1969, to refusal to load ships bringing weapons to the US occupation in Vietnam.

When the authorities refused a request from the dockworkers union to inspect the ship, they refused to load the ship. They instead demonstrated in the dock area carrying the banner: "Stop arms trafficking, make war on war." "Even if we are far fewer today and we want to defend our jobs, we do not want to do it at all costs: The war in Yemen is one of the greatest humanitarian catastrophes of recent years: 60,000 killed, 90,000 children dead from malnutrition, one million people affected by the cholera epidemic. We explained these things to our members and they all agreed on the

boycott." (*Il manifesto*, May 17) The French and Italian workers have cooperated in solidarity with the embattled people of Yemen. (*Workers' World*-07-06-2019)

HONDURAS (CENTRAL AMERICA)

A national strike began in Honduras on May 30 protesting a series of reforms announced by the government. The strike was called due to a series of decrees signed by the president on May 28 ostensibly aimed at restructuring the health and education sectors. The demonstrations, which continued into the next day, suffered brutal police repression. It is a scene repeatedly seen during the administration of President Juan Orlando Hernandez (JOH). According to the teachers and doctors who called the strike, the restructuring would lead to massive layoffs and privatize these essential sectors. Under pressure of movement, the President was forced to declare that there would be neither mass layoffs nor privatization, and the presidential decrees were not ratified by the National Congress of the Republic. However, organizers of the actions have indicated they will continue protesting until the reforms are completely discarded.

When the right wing took power in Honduras in 2009, it immediately began to implement the typical neoliberal program. The current attack on health and public education would be the final blow against these services. School salaries were frozen from 2010 to 2016, and since then there have been only small increases. Investment in school infrastructure is almost completely suspended. Hospitals lack all kinds of supplies, but the budget continues to be cut, pushing up prices for families in need of medical services. (*Source: Workers' World*-06-06-19)

BRAZIL (LATIN AMERICA)

More than one million people hit the streets in defence of public education in Brazil on 15 May last. The protest continued with students and workers holding demonstrations on 30 May. The rallies were in protest against 30-percent budget cut announced for federal universities as well as the pension overhaul proposed by the far-right Jair Bolsonaro government of Brazil. (*Brasil de facto* 30-05-19)

AIDSO statement on junior doctors' movement in West Bengal

Comrade Ashok Mishra, the General Secretary of AIDSO in a press statement dated 15 June 2019 urged upon the West Bengal government to concede to the demands of the agitating medicos and arrive at an amicable resolution of the impasse. He also demanded a safe and secure working environment and adequate infrastructure in all the hospitals. The statement mentioned that on the midnight of 10 June last, some hooligans unleashed lethal attack on the doctors of NRS Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata centring on an unavoidable death of a 85-year old critical patient. In this attack, many interns and PGT doctors were grievously injured. Head injury to Dr Paribaha Mukherjee, one of the internees, was of serious nature necessitating immediate medical attention and a complex brain surgery with due expediency. Getting the news of this gruesome incident, junior doctors of all the medical colleges of West Bengal hit the streets in protest. The state government instead of considering the legitimate demands of the agitating doctors sympathetically, threatened them of dire consequence. This provocative

attitude of the government led to the intensification of the movement further. Doctors, nurses and health workers supported the movement. More than 800 senior doctors tendered resignation. Different associations including International Medical Council expressed their solidarity with the movement. The movement also spread to different hospitals in various parts of the country and led to a nationwide cease work. Needless to say, common people of the country were immensely suffering due to the obstinate attitude of the government.

The AIDSO General Secretary further aserted that it was not an isolated incident. Due to the callousness of both the central and state governments, 'healthcare delivery system' has become a neglected sector. The abysmally poor infrastructure of the hospitals and paucity of doctors, qualified nurses and skilled technical hands, many patients are denied adequate medical attention and deaths are also increasing in number. Taking an advantage of the situation, hooligans enjoying backing of the vote-based bourgeois parties have been physically assaulting the doctors and nurses so that a favourable condition is created for

more and more privatization of the healthcare sector and mushrooming growth of private nursing homes and hospitals run on commercial basis. Also these political parties subservient to bourgeois class interest are also trying to gain public support by targeting the doctors, creating an impasse and thereby cunningly shield the root of all problems i.e. inadequate health infrastructure in government hospitals and health centres. When the doctors are rising in protest against such vandalism and murderous attack by the miscreants, then the governments of different states are resorting to the repressive measures including imposition of black acts like Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA).

While extending full support to the just strike of the medicos, AIDSO urged upon the government to immediately accede to the demands of the agitating doctors and also demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to the guilty, guaranteeing a safe and secure working environment and adequate infrastructure in all the hospitals by way of recruitment of required number of doctors, nurses

and health workers. AIDSO also firmly held that the process of privatization- commercialization of the healthcare delivery system should be stopped immediately.

Afterwards, under pressure of movement, the state chief minister had to sit with the doctors, accept all their demands and assured them of speedy implementation of the demands. Thereafter, the strike was withdrawn. Victory of this movement once again showed that it is only by building up united powerful movement that common citizens can realize their just demands.

Hailing that victory, AIDSO in another statement issued on 17 June said that had the state government not been rigid and taken steps to solve the problems with sympathy, then the movement would not have gone this far. Due to the belligerent attitude of the government, the common people had suffered so much. AIDSO expressed gratitude to the common masses, doctors of different states and of foreign countries and all the senior doctors who stood by the agitating doctors as well as the eminent doctors of this state who mediated and arranged the meeting with the state government.

Countrywide demonstration on 24 June 2019 in protest against tragic death of over 150 children in Bihar



Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Bengaluru, Karnataka

Hyderabad, Telengana

Rewari, Haryana



Patna, Bihar

Kolkata, West Bengal

Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

Pillani, Rajasthan

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