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War threat to North Korea (DPRK)

Foil sinister conspiracy of US imperialists to overrun, under false pretext, a country that refuses to bend before their dictates

For quite some time, the US imperialists have been trying to bully socialist DPRK popularly known as North Korea into submission by slapping one after another stringent economic sanctions and continuously strengthening military encirclement of this tiny state. In fact, for long the US imperialists were escalating war tension along

the Korean peninsula by arraying a huge arsenal. Right now, there are about 30,000 US troops in South Korea and 50,000 US troops in Japan. Giant US warships fitted with nuclear weapons have been patrolling the South China Sea. The US B-1B supersonic bombers, which are nuclear capable, have been making regular sorties in the

Korean peninsula. Evidently, the whole design of the imperialist US war-mongers has been to overpower this tiny country by launching full scale military offensive at an opportune moment. But, their conspiracy is not seeing the light of the day as North Korea refused to fall in the trap of the US imperialists and, unlike Iraq or Libya, did not abandon its programme for development of armaments, including nuclear bombs and missiles in self-defence. So, it has been a thorn in the flesh of the US imperialists in their hegemonic pursuit of making the entire world their fiefdom of reckless loot and plunder. Of late, North Korea has successfully tested a series of long range inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and powerful nuclear bombs. In the wake of that, the US imperialist regime, now under President Donald Trump has raised their pitch of hostility against North Korea, both in words and deeds. Making counter-charge against North Korea of "begging for war" and "threatening peace", the Pentagon rulers and their allies with UNO in tow have imposed draconian sanctions on this tiny socialist country and thus launched a virtual war of attrition against it. They have warned North Korea of witnessing "fire and fury ... the likes of which the world has never seen" unless it capitulates to them and abandons development of sophisticated nuclear armaments. Just a few days back, US President Trump in his first speech at the UN minced no words in saying that they would "destroy North Korea". The entire bourgeois media have also been pressed into action to continuously propagate that North

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SUCI(C) denounces BJP-led Rajasthan government for shielding killers and calls upon people to rise in vehement protest

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 15 September, 2017 :

That the so called cow vigilantes who have been carrying out ghastly killings of innocent citizens with alacrity are abetted and shielded by the RSS-BJP is once more nakedly revealed by the latest move of the BJP-led Rajasthan government to protect murderers of Pehlu Khan, an innocent citizen, killed on 1 April last in Alwar. The victim Pehlu Khan was attacked by six miscreants allegedly owing allegiance to arch Hindu communal RSS-Bajrang Dal for so called allegation of "illegally" transporting cows and there is a cell phone video footage of how he was yanked by the neck, thrown to the ground and mercilessly kicked by those goons. The killers were named by the victim in his dying declaration as well. Yet, the CID police in its

investigation report said that the culprits were not present on the spot and set them free. What could be more of a wanton mockery of investigation and justice and how glaringly it proves the hollowness of the diatribes of the Prime Minister and other ministers and leaders of BJP against the self-styled *gau rakshaks* thus licenced to brutally lynch innocent people particularly the Muslims and Dalits just out of communal hatred.

We vehemently denounce this out and out pro Hindu communal move of the BJP government of Rajasthan and its brazen connivance in shielding culpable murderers. All right-thinking democratic-minded people are called upon to rise in protest and force the BJP government to recede from the path of protecting criminals as well as meting out exemplary punishment to those guilty of this barbaric killing.

On explosive situation in Darjeeling Hills

Wherein lies the way out

Hills of Darjeeling, the district in the northern part of West Bengal, are once again boiling over the demand of a separate Gorkhaland state. Bandh with total shutdown has been continuing for months. Sentiment runs so high! Masses of people have been coming out in huge rallies. They have been braving all difficulties to continue the stir for a prolonged period, despite their sufferings. In fact, common toiling people of Darjeeling, the overwhelming section of the population, have been living, for all practical purposes, from hand to mouth, as life has tended to come to a grinding halt from the bandh continuing for over three months. People's existence is in peril. The situation, therefore, demands certain immediate steps to save people from complete ruination.

Background of Gorkhaland demand

At the same time, it needs to be noted that since independence, no significant efforts have been made to solve the burning problems of people's life and livelihood in Darjeeling just as everywhere else in the country, by any government, either central or state. Nor have there been powerful mass movements launched and developed on people's burning problems of life embracing all sections of toiling people of Darjeeling and uniting them on the basis of genuine leftist outlook and approach.

Thus deep sense of deprivation and discrimination generated over the years among common people of the hills persisted with full

sting. Taking advantage of this situation, sections of power-and pelf hungry crazy bourgeois groups began fomenting dangerous separatist ideas, with a view to catching the imagination of the hill people and thereby gaining some political mileage in parliamentary politics. There has been a posing that a separate Gorkhaland state would bring people out of all problems. The bourgeois petty-bourgeois parties who have been in power either at the Centre or in the state of West Bengal, have, in their turn, continued to nurture, overtly or covertly, these bourgeois separatist forces to use them for furthering their parliamentary gains. In the middle part of the last century, the then undivided CPI had set the ball rolling, which was

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North Korea

US President has warned North Korea of witnessing “fire and fury ... the likes of which the world has never seen”

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Korea is a recalcitrant country and hence needs to be taught a lesson. Alongside is unleashed a false propaganda that North Korea is developing its military might against the wishes of its people and keeping them hungry. Concocted stories of human rights violation by North Korean government and character assassination of the North Korean President are also part of this orchestrated vilification campaign. Most despicable is the role of the United Nations Organization (UNO) which once was formed to maintaining international peace and friendly relations among countries based on the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Renouncing all its declared objectives, UNO has long taken recourse to the practice of bluntly rubber-stamping all the piracy, war, subversion of autonomy of other nations, illegal occupation of foreign territory and flagrant violation of human rights by the US imperialists and their cohorts world over. In keeping with that ongoing practice, it has shamelessly endorsed increasing belligerence of US imperialism against North Korea with an ‘emblem of justice’. Both Russia and China, which are now capitalist countries after counter-revolution, have joined the bandwagon of denouncing North Korea for firming up its nuclear capabilities and thereby virtually consented to Pentagon’s war threats and sanctions, albeit with some riders not from any comradeship with their socialist neighbour but out of the contradiction they have with the US imperialists centering on market and political ambition of extending sphere of influence. In this unipolar world with bared tooth and claw of the US imperialist sharks, what alternative North Korea then has to defend its motherland and socialism, other than developing capabilities to confront the US war machine?

Reality check on war and peace

The question that arises at the outset is what has been the history of both socialist North Korea and US imperialism in so far as war and peace is concerned? Has North Korea ever attacked any country under any pretext? Has it invaded or subverted sovereignty of any country on a false plea? Has it used nuclear and chemical weapons on any country and killed millions of innocent citizens? Is there any precedence of DPRK setting up

military bases across the world or stationing its army in any other country to launch attack on foreign lands? Has it sent naval force studded with deadly nuclear weapons to patrol along the shores of other countries, violated the airspace of any sovereign country, strafed and raided others’ territories with unmanned drones, threatened other countries of armed interventions, star wars and nuclear warfare if they dared to disobey its whips? Has it overrun the integrity and freedom of other countries? Has it assassinated or abducted any elected head of any country or orchestrated regime change anywhere through either military intervention or planting civil war with its espionage agencies and fifth columnists? Has it been engineering coups and internal disturbances to destabilize the elected regimes of other countries? Has it brought down any economic-military onslaught on any country branding the latter as ‘ill-disposed to its interest’? The only answer to all these questions is an emphatic NO.

On the contrary, the US imperialists are guilty of each of these horrendous crimes. They have orchestrated 70 wars after the Second World War, killed more than 20 million people in 37 “victim nations”. Imperialist US has been the only country to drop atom bomb on a foreign land killing around 2 lakhs innocent citizens in a flash of a second, and crippling generation after generations with radiation-borne diseases. Based on documentary evidence, the US rulers are also accused of using weapons of mass destruction first in the Korean war of 1950s, then in Vietnam in the 1960s and ‘70s and of late in Iraq and Syria. They have so far installed 800 military bases in more than 70 countries and territories across the world and kept every country within their missile range. In South Korea, it has as many as 38 military bases. US military with all its artillery and modern weaponry are posted in more than 150 countries around the world, with nearly 3 lakhs of its active-duty army personnel serving there. The US imperialists have openly declared that any country “is an enemy country, unless proved otherwise”, meaning, unless it consents to be subservient to their economic-political-military interest. The Pentagon rulers have been the chief perpetrators of localized and partial wars, wars of aggression, armed hostilities and military

invasion of foreign lands. They have an ‘enviable’ record of indiscriminately killing innocent people, bombing foreign territories into rubbles, arm-twisting, sabotages, secret assassinations, engineering coup d’états, abduction of the elected heads of other countries and large scale espionage with the help of their notorious secret services [i.e. the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA)] in the name of ‘exporting democracy’ and ‘civilizing the uncivilized’. The list of their ghastly acts and war crimes is so big that space falls short of accommodating.

In view of this, who is to be called a war maniac? Who is a threat to peace? Who is buttressing a heinous agenda to keep everyone under its feet by flexing brute military muscle? Who is holding the entire world into ransom? Is it tiny socialist North Korea or imperialist kingpin USA? Who has its military arsenal stacked in various countries round the globe by travelling thousands of mile away from its own territory and has long been weaving ploys and making all possible efforts to enslave people of the targeted country at gunpoint? North Korea or USA? To be familiarized with facts, let us recall the heinous role of the US imperialists in launching the 4-year long Korean War (1950-53) and division of the country.

Historical background of Korean War

After the crushing defeat of the fascist axis of Germany-Italy-Japan at the hands of the valiant Red Army of Soviet Union in the Second World War, credibility of socialism and appeal of communist ideology spread fast throughout the world inspiring the oppressed global humanity to tear apart the chain of bondage. While the entire East Europe turned socialist, Chinese Revolution was on the verge of achieving victory. Anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist struggles in the colonies and semi-colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin-America gained tremendous impetus and found in the socialist bloc headed by USSR under leadership of great Stalin a dependable ally and source of inspiration. Also, with one-third of the world turning socialist, the global capitalist market shrunk considerably.

These post-war developments struck great consternation into the hearts of the established imperialist

powers. A noteworthy feature was that while the giant European imperialist powers were war-ravaged, US imperialism virtually remained unscathed. The US mainland did not suffer any bombing damage nor did it face any military casualty. Exploiting the advantages, the US imperialists began nurturing aspiration to dominate the world by flexing both economic and financial muscles and soon emerge as the ring-leader of the imperialist-capitalist camp. Moreover, as many war-devastated smaller countries begged for US “aid and assistance” for rebuilding, US imperialist regime found in it an opportunity to pursue neo-colonial domination (colonial domination without direct rule over the colony) on as many countries as possible by virtually controlling their economies with finance capital and installing puppet rules. Alongside, the US imperialists continued their crusade against socialism, branding the socialist states as ‘autocratic and totalitarian’ and projecting US as “the defender of liberty, democracy and humanism” and an “apostle of peace”. Also they had embarked upon the infamous “blockade policy” aimed at cordoning the socialist countries in an all-round way under the pretext of confronting “threat of international communism” and left no stone unturned to curb growth of the forces of socialism and national liberation, disrupting, undermining and wherever possible destroying the people’s struggles for emancipation.

The Korean War and division of the country

Korea bordering both Soviet Union and China was a colony of Japan. When the Red Army inflicted crushing defeat on the fascist axis in 1945, Japan surrendered and withdrew from Korea. The jubilant Korean people then were enthusiastically ready to embrace socialism and foster progress. Korean communists fought alongside the Chinese communists in the 1930s and 40s against Japanese occupation. Kim Il-Sung, the first President of North Korea and one time member of the Chinese Communist Party, had emerged as an accepted, revered leader of the Korean people.

This development visibly rattled the US imperialists. Already upset because of the growing admiration for socialism, they could realize that a unified socialist Korea would shut the door of not just north-East but

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Life after the USSR : Buying the Dream, Living the Nightmare

Eric Draitser

(Published below is a recent write-up by the columnist Eric Draitser highlighting some facts about the plight and peril in post-Soviet Europe. On consideration of some space constraint, the write-up is slightly abridged: Editorial Board, P Era)

Standing in front of the Berlin Wall in June 1987, then President Reagan famously proclaimed: There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace ... General Gorbachev, if you seek peace - if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe - if you seek liberalization: come here, to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.

Despite the neoliberal talking points about “freedom,” “democracy,” and “peace,” the reality of life in post-Soviet Eastern Europe is not at all what was promised. Consider the abstractions employed by people like Reagan who framed the end of the Soviet Union as an event that would usher in “peace” and “prosperity.” And then consider the fact that neither peace nor prosperity has come to fruition in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc.

NATO has further attempted to pull both Belarus and Ukraine into its orbit, with the former remaining non-aligned, and the latter now in the throes of an ongoing civil war which is the direct product of a US-backed coup against the Russia-allied former government of Viktor Yanukovich. The US-backed neocon-aligned

government of Mikhail Saakashvili in Georgia is responsible for waging the unprovoked 2008 war with Russia over the breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, a war that undeniably was started by NATO partner Georgia. As an EU-commissioned independent report concluded in 2009, “An investigation into last year’s Russia-Georgia war delivered a damning indictment of President Mikheil Saakashvili today, accusing Tbilisi of launching an indiscriminate artillery barrage on the city of Tskhinvali that started the war.”

From the perspective of war and peace, no one could say that the post-1991 period has been particularly peaceful, especially when compared to the relative stability of the Cold War era. The United States has rapidly expanded NATO right to the doorstep of Russia, having subsumed most of the former Soviet Republics of Eastern Europe, including the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, as well as Poland and Georgia. In that time, NATO has waged multiple vicious wars in the Balkans, including the criminal bombing of Yugoslavia which itself accounted for numerous war crimes, as concluded by Amnesty International at the time.

Aside from wars in Europe,

Western hegemony has also brought death and destruction to the Middle East and Africa, resulting in an exodus of refugees who are now being scapegoated by economically devastated countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. And while one might understand the socioeconomic factors leading to an anti-refugee backlash, it is unmistakable that the phenomenon is more a product of U.S.-NATO war-making than anything else.

According to a comprehensive poll conducted by leading polling organization Gallup in 2013, “residents of [11 of the 15] former Soviet republics are more than twice as likely to say the breakup hurt (51 percent) than benefited their countries (24 percent).” Think about that statistic for a moment: twice as many residents of the former Soviet republics think the breakup of the Soviet Union did more harm than good. That is a rather devastating indictment of the supposed era of freedom and prosperity that the likes of Reagan & Co. promised in the years leading up to the breakup. And, of course, the most significant driver of public opinion is the standard of living or quality of life. Embedded in this abstract indicator is everything from employment opportunities, relative purchasing power, access to health care and education, and much more. Seen in this way, much of Eastern Europe longs for the halcyon days of the Soviet Union and

communism, not because they were without problems – far from it, in fact – but because the kinds of problems people faced were markedly different from the ones they face today.

And while many neo-liberal apologists hold up the fact that younger generations are more positive about the future, this fact is something of a distortion as part of the reason for such feelings is the ability of young people to simply leave their home countries. As economists Michael Hudson and Jeffrey Sommers concluded after studying the situation in Latvia:

“Neo-liberal austerity has created demographic losses exceeding Stalin’s deportations back in the 1940s (although without the latter’s loss of life). As government cutbacks in education, healthcare and other basic social infrastructure threaten to undercut long-term development, young people are emigrating to better their lives rather than suffer in an economy without jobs. More than 12 percent of the overall population (and a much larger percentage of its labour force) now works abroad.”

In essence, the neoliberal policies of the EU-aligned former Soviet republics have created deep crises in nearly every aspect of social and economic life. From plummeting birth rates to an exploding orphaned population, the notion of a brighter future should certainly give any observer pause. Additionally, the post-Soviet period has given rise to a dangerous wave of ethnic politics in which the governments of these countries are often made up of the ethnic majority which is aligned to Brussels and the Washington Consensus, and which demonizes ethnic minorities, especially Russians.

In fact, economic decline and its inevitable effects on society have been seen in just about every former Soviet bloc country. In Romania for example, a country which joined the EU in 2007, “the most prosperous districts are dotted by dozens of unfinished building projects abandoned by bankrupt developers. And the small inner circle of prosperity is surrounded by areas of the city of 3 million that are little changed from the crumbling squalor of the Ceausescu era.”

And this is a country that received an IMF bailout akin to the albatross around Greece’s neck. Romania has experienced neoliberal-

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COMMENTARIES

INDIA MOST CORRUPT COUNTRY IN ASIA –PACIFIC

India has been named the most corrupt country in Asia-Pacific region with 69 per cent bribery rates. Almost seven out of ten people had to pay a bribe to access public services, said a Forbes report while quoting a study by Transparency International, a Berlin based NGO. Around 58 per cent and 59 per cent bribery rates were seen in education and healthcare sectors in India respectively. Times when people paid a bribe was also seen to be almost equally high for police, identification documents and basic amenities, the report stated. The report also showed how poor sections of the society are more affected by the menace of corruption. 73 per cent of the bribes paid in India came from the low economy groups, who had to pay money due to unavailability of other options, or less influence to avoid paying bribes. (Business India 01-09-17)

1 in 5 children in rich countries lives in relative income poverty– UNICEF

1 in 5 children in high-income countries lives in relative income poverty, according to the latest Report Card issued by the UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti. An average of 1 in 8 children in high-income countries faces food insecurity, rising to 1 in 5 in the United Kingdom and the United States,

“Report Card 14 is a wake-up-call that even in high-income countries progress does not benefit all children,” said Sarah Cook, Director of UNICEF Innocenti. “Higher incomes do not automatically lead to improved outcomes for all children, and may indeed deepen inequalities. Governments in all countries need to take action to ensure the gaps are reduced and progress is made to reach the SDGs for children.”

Neonatal mortality has dramatically fallen in most countries. 1 in 4 adolescents reports two or more mental health issues more than once a week. Even in the best-performing countries, around one fifth of 15-year-olds do not reach minimum proficiency levels in reading, mathematics and science. Income inequality, adolescent self-reported mental health and obesity in majority of rich countries are causes of concern. (UNICEF press release)

Explosive Darjeeling

Creation of separate states has not solved but exacerbated penury and misery of people

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revived vigorously with the call of Gorkhaland in the mid-eighties by Subhash Ghisingh, GNLFF leader, close on the heels of separatist movements that rocked Assam then. At that time, a 2-year long Gorkhaland movement saw about 1200 lives lost in police baton charge or firing. The then Congress-led Union government and the CPI (M)-led Front government of West Bengal, both keen to create and exploit a vote-bank of the hill people, finally acceded to the demand partially by forming the DGHC (Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) in 1988, and sought to diffuse the tension. A few years later, in 2004, the then CPI (M)-led state government made Ghisingh the chief administrator to have a stronger grip on the hills vote-bank. This only fanned up power struggle between Ghisingh and his detractors and ended in driving Ghisingh out of the hills. Thereafter, GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration) led by Bimal Gurung, once a follower and later turned critique of Ghisingh, was set up in 2011 with the support of the new TMC-led state government. Subsequent events brought out the worthlessness and cunningness behind the move. Darjeeling people would definitely agree when Bimal Gurung himself admits that "...in Darjeeling, the creation of autonomous bodies first as the DGHC in 1988 and then as the GTA in 2011 has failed miserably". In fact, in no time after formation, first the DGHC and then the GTA, both in their own ways, produced a set of highly corrupt, power-seeking political leaders fighting among themselves. The bodies themselves as autonomous centres of power became dens of corruption and intense squabbles among different leaders on the question of who would control the power to gain unhampered access to the huge funds available from the Union and state governments in the name of development.

Quite naturally, deep resentment developed among people against such misdeeds and misdemeanours of the corrupt bourgeois elements who had become the functionaries of those autonomous bodies. Sensing brewing public discontent, these aspirant bourgeois elements in their bid to misdirect people's grievances against them, once and again raked up the demand for formation of Gorkhaland and revived the separatist movement. Thus, for

arriving at a long-lasting solution, the demand, or rather the question of formation of a separate Gorkhaland state needs to be examined in the context of all these developments and different types of experiments in Darjeeling which have continued for a long time, taking also into consideration the overall socio-economic political situation of the country.

Growing plight and penury of the Darjeeling people

It must be recalled that Darjeeling was once show-cased to the world as the queen of the Himalayas with its beautiful snow-capped hills at the horizon, rich forests, vast tea gardens, toy-train, etc. But when the ruling bourgeoisie and their governments sought to hard-sell Darjeeling as a tourist destination and earn revenue, the common people of these hills were made, even from before independence, to live within the tight grips of unemployment, poverty, high prices, virtual absence of any development projects, cruel exploitation of the owners of the tea-gardens, fruit orchards or associated industries, miserable lack of essential services for public life, even dearth of safe potable water and so forth. Even after independence through which the Indian national bourgeoisie captured the state power, things changed fast and only for the worse for the already back-broken people, as it happened anywhere else in the country.

As is well known, the seven decades of independence of India have only consolidated the exploitative system of this capitalist state, in which the heartless rule of monopolists has given birth to unthinkable discrimination and abominable inhumanity. Throughout the country, the gap between the rich and the poor has only widened as years passed by. On the one side has been produced a handful of rich and affluent constituting a minuscule of the entire population but floating on wealth and submerged in corruption-treachery-deception. Some of the super-rich Indians amassed so much of wealth that they have been featuring even among the richest in the world. On the other side, there are the vast masses of toiling people, workers, peasants, middle class employees, small businessmen etc., who are facing growing uncertainty of life and livelihood, intense stagnation in industry, sky-high price rise, acute lack of employment, appalling poverty, rampant attack on democratic rights of people as well

as on trade union rights of the working people, cruel eviction of the peasants from their home and hearth, even by opening fire on them and killing them like street dogs, so as to hand over their cultivable land to the monopolists, domestic and foreign. Going on unabated alongside are heartless atrocities on women and children with brutality beyond conception, dark life devoid of proper education and filled with superstitions, obscurantism, irrationality, unscientific bent of mind, abject degeneration destroying all human values even affecting human relations and so on. This rule of limitless exploitation and oppression, giving way to ever-increasing discrimination-deprivation has come down heavily upon the common toiling people of the entire country, regardless of their religious-regional-linguistic-ethnic or any other such identities.

Evidently, as an integral part of this capitalist country and its constituent state of West Bengal, Darjeeling people too have been the victims of this sustained ruthless exploitation. There has been no economic development utilizing the huge natural and forest resources of the region, neither have any concrete plans and programmes been made for developing agriculture there. Traditional industries particularly the flourishing and widespread tea estates and associated industries, well known fruit processing and dairy units, are all either gasping or shut down because of capitalist crisis throwing the hitherto neglected and exploited workers out of job only to die out of starvation. There is no effective step on the part of the governments to either open the tea gardens or the closed industries or give minimum subsistence-level relief to the homeless jobless workers. Even the much-trumpeted tourism industry from where the local people could make some earning to eke out a bare livelihood is now being pushed into the grip of big corporate houses which are employing trained professionals leaving the locals in the lurch. The poor locals have to remain content with a few jobs as drivers, hotel attendants, porters or the likes, that too mostly on casual basis at minimal wage. Well-known private-run residential educational institutions remain exclusive preserve of the rich. The government schools, meant for students from poor and middle class families, are languishing from negligence like anywhere else in the state. Equally bad is the healthcare

system. For any routine surgery or proper medical treatment, the hill people still have to spend a lot of time and money in coming down to the hospitals in the plains. Most of the important government departments are located in the plains. To avail of these facilities, the hill people have to depend on the rickety road transport system risking even their life. Darjeeling-Himalayan railways, popularly known as toy-train once provided an important life-line to the hill people as a means of conveyance for people and as well as freight transport. It is now being presented as a heritage icon of UNESCO with access to only a handful of rich.

In this background, a section of the Darjeeling people, again as elsewhere in the country, amassed vulgarly fabulous wealth and carved out a space in the corridors of power making use of the administrative positions in the DGHC and GTA, while the common toiling masses of the hills remained extremely backward even by the standards prevailing in different parts of the country. With these basic problems of life and livelihood deepening every day, Darjeeling people were further gifted with the present TMC government decision of making Bengali compulsory in Darjeeling. It generated tremendous adverse reaction among the Hill people, who are mostly Gorkhali-speaking. They saw in this move a ploy to bring down attack on their language and culture. Sensing further trouble in case this mounting discontent was allowed to crystallize further, the West Bengal government retreated a bit and made Bengali 'optional' as against 'compulsory'. But the damage had already been done. The Gorkhaland demand, which had remained on the shelf to be reused conveniently, was again brought out to draw people into the present movement. Problems of Darjeeling people are continuing to deepen and constantly deteriorating conditions would only generate stronger resentment among the hill people.

Why the call for separate states in capitalist India

Under such circumstances, it was urgent and necessary in Darjeeling, as it is expected anywhere else in the capitalist country of India, that all sections of toiling people, irrespective of region-religion-language-ethnicity, who are totally devastated in life and fleeced to their skin by the heartless capitalist

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Explosive Darjeeling

Hill people need to examine Gorkhaland demand on the anvil of calm, considerate reasoning and experiences of history

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exploitation should have been united and organized into powerful mass movements to wrest maximum possible relief on the questions of minimum basic demands of life and livelihood. It is to be understood that in any capitalist set-up, when this essential task remains unfulfilled, it is the communal or divisive separatist forces which take advantage to confuse and mislead people with their venomous ideas only to sow the seeds of disunity among toiling people. This disunity engenders cleavage among the oppressed people, equally pressed under the grinding wheel of capitalist exploitation, and divides them into mutually distrusting, even warring groups, based on, may be, religion, language, ethnicity or any other separatist divisive idea. The net effect comes down to weakening, even foiling any prospect of united democratic struggle aimed at bringing some relief from their burning problems, that stem from the reigning capitalist system, the ruling monopolists and their subservient agents. The exploiters, the rulers are left assured that they could run their grinding wheel of exploitation and oppression without any hindrance, without opposition since people have been made to be locked in fratricidal feuds and exhausting their strength in internecine clashes. And the bourgeois petty bourgeois parliamentary political parties, including their counterparts raising separatist slogans win some political mileage in their rat race for power and pelf.

And this has been the common phenomenon throughout capitalist India. In the seven decades of independence, the ruling capitalist class has consolidated its strength and arsenals by exploiting the common people to the hilt. In absence of the desired surge of organized powerful mass movements against the onslaughts of capitalism, the accumulated grievances of the people have not been channelized along the right track. So, it is often misdirected to self-defeating ends. Hence, in different parts of the country, there have been calls for separatist movements of different nature. And in some cases, these moves have led even to formation of a bunch of smaller states carved out of larger ones. Once a separate Andhra state was created for Telugu-speaking people, only to be divided again within a few decades into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Bihar was divided based on the demand of separate statehood for the tribal people of Jharkhand region. Uttarakhand was carved out of Uttar Pradesh. Assam was divided into so many states on ethnicity, with cries for still more division remaining in the air. But have these separate states brought any succour to the common people? Or their plight and poverty have been multiplying?

Darjeeling, no different

Darjeeling did not have a separate state, but there have been two successive semi-autonomous bodies of the DGHC and the GTA. Have they been able to solve any of basic problems of Darjeeling people's life, including those which are particular for the area? No, they have not been, neither can they. Barring creation of new sets of 'creamy layer' that is a few privileged who belong to the same ethnicity, just like what is being seen in the other carved out states, these bodies ended up in sustaining and fanning up separatist ideas and outlook, only to create strong hindrance for developing united mass struggles in Darjeeling hills, the only way out for people to wrest some of their pressing demands. Such democratic mass movements of the Hill people alone as an integral part of and coupled with surge of such struggles all over the country, rising above all divisions and cemented with solidarity of all sections of toiling people sharing common cause of emancipation from the shackles of gruelling oppression of man by man, can bring some relief to the suffering masses, realize some of their legitimate demands and thereby give them some reprieve.

The question of separate identity

There is another vital aspect to note with regard to these separatist movements. Over and above fomenting different confusing and misleading thoughts and ideas, the separatists first silently raise and then whip up carefully designed campaign on identity. They try to confuse people with the argument that concerned suffering people have a distinct identity which is being denied to them. It is for this identity that a separate state is necessary.

In fact, this is a typical cunning bourgeois propaganda that may hinge now on harping on identity on the basis of separate state, or on religion or on ethnicity or some such other particularity, whichever is found

suitable by the campaigners for any particular case. The points to examine are: First, has ever in a modern state based on democratic principles, any of these so-called identities brought any good to people? Second and the most vital one is that when a powerful, remorseless grinding wheel of exploitation and oppression of the capitalist state machine with its thousand and one tentacles is being run by the ruling capitalists and their subservient agents on the oppressed people, or to be precise, in all class-divided societies, countries, states or provinces, is there any other identity other than the two distinct identities of the ruler and the ruled, the oppressor and the oppressed? The rulers, the exploiters and their cohorts take every means to keep the oppressive system running since it deals out enormous benefits to them. The other identity is of people, the exploited-deprived-discriminated-persecuted, fleeced to the skin, frantically looking ahead for overthrowing the oppressive system. What other identity do the exploited people have? To speak of any other identity is to step in to the trap led by the rulers, the trap of disuniting and cleaving the entire masses of toiling people into mutually distrusting groups and pitting them against each other. Is there an iota of truth in saying that the exploiters, the few rich and the exploited, that is the vast multitudes of poor oppressed people, share a common identity or in claiming that they have no conflicts of interests between themselves? Surely it is a travesty of truth, a blatant denial of and shameless trampling of what man have experienced through the entire course of history.

And here is the second very important point. The history of development of human civilization, the history of development of mankind, has clearly indicated that the main process of evolution with respect to everything related to human life has been the process of unification, and not the opposite; the latter is an aberration, never the dominant aspect of the process. So digging out so called identity in exploitative class-divided capitalist system would only lead to disunity and division and hence go against the course of history. It is, therefore, not in accordance with the law of development of society either. Really speaking, existence on such a formulated identity is an impossibility too.

In the next place, if this identity is understood as being linked to a breakaway state, then the first pertinent question the exponents would have to answer is, what kind of heaven would such 'identity' bring to people inhabiting such new born states? Why and how would the strangulating effects of capitalist exploitation disappear in such states? Can any of such states be effective in solving the basic problems of people's life there? Can these reduce there the ever-widening gap between rich and poor? Can they help people to get even minimal relief from unemployment, poverty, lack of proper education or health facilities or such other basic amenities? Instead, have not these new-born states proved themselves as plain and simple hoax, except creation of a privileged creamy layer identified with the ruling bourgeoisie and causing hindrance to the process of development of united struggle of oppressed people demanded by the situation? So raising a demand for something from which people have no economic-political-cultural gain to expect, is bound to turn into an exercise in futility and would only pave way for falling into the trap laid down by the enemies of the oppressed toiling people, that is the capitalists and the capitalist-roaders. One must therefore ponder why on this idea of identity demands for carving out new states are being raised and in whose interest?

Surge of united democratic mass movement—need of the hour

Under the circumstances, we would like to urge the toiling people of Darjeeling to realize that the demand for formation of a separate state, carved out from an existing one anywhere in the country, can, in no way, bring any relief with respect to the burning problems of people's life arising out of ruthless exploitation of the ruling capitalist class. Instead, and surely, it is a ploy in the hands of the rulers and their subservient agents to destroy the unity of working people living in different parts of the country. We reiterate once again that development of powerful united democratic movements of people, in surges and one after another centring round their burning problems, is the only course for them for redresses to their just and legitimate demands.

North Korea

US imperialists so far orchestrated 70 wars, killed more than 20 million people with nuclear bomb and weapons of mass destruction and installed 800 military bases around the world

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entire Asia to them. So, they rushed to occupy a large territory in the southern part of Korea with the help of their deployed military force in the pacific region on the pretext of "disarming the Japanese troops in the south of the 38 degrees north latitude". Though, it was agreed at the Cairo Conference on November 22, 1943 that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent", the US imperialists did not relent from pursuing their imperialist objective and unilaterally fixed the 38th parallel as the imaginary demarcation line between two Koreas. Backed by the US imperialists, South Korea declared separate statehood in May, 1948 and a pliant regime of US headed by Syngman Rhee was established. Then, in September 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established in the North as a socialist state. This was how Korea was divided into two parts after the Japanese surrender, because of imperialist machination of the Pentagon rulers. It is the US imperialists who thus impeded fulfillment of the aspiration of the Korean people of living in a unified strong socialist Korea and blatantly trampled underfoot the fundamental right of the people of any land to choose the kind of social system or governance they intend to have.

But that was not all. The US imperialists as part of their imperialist design and expansionist policy converted South Korea into a forward base and a logistical hub for their war machine to mount armed assault anytime on DPRK. From 1949, the US imperialists had begun making full-scale preparations for war in the Korean peninsula using South Korea as the pawn. As a provocation for generating war in the region, the US imperialists conducted frequent airstrikes inside Chinese territory between August and October, 1949 and moved its notorious Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait obviously to threaten nascent socialist China of armed intervention if it dared to come in the way of their sinister design of overrunning North Korea and extend their sphere of influence on the entire Korean peninsula. In his speech on 10 January, 1950, the then US President Truman openly said: "We needed two big wars and a period of thirty years until we

realized that we ourselves assumed a leading position in the world. Today we want to maintain this dominant position." Finally, on the pretext of 'protecting' South Korea from 'communist aggression', the US launched full scale armed assault on DPRK. More than 5.7million US troops were sent to war in Korea. The object of the US aggressors was to frighten the Korean people and bring them to their knees by reducing Korea to ashes and slaughtering the Korean people at random. By indiscriminate bombing, the US pirates destroyed factories, schools, hospitals, houses and eventually made as much as 20 percent of the country's population perish within months. Using lethal bacterial and chemical weapons, strictly banned by the law of nations, the US aggressors killed over three lakh Korean people. They even threatened of using nuclear weapons in the war. This was the extent of their barbarity and war crimes to annex North Korea as imperialist aggressors. But their dream of "complete annexation of the peninsula", as spelt out in 1949-50 by General Roberts, the then head of US occupation forces, was not allowed to materialize by the anti-war peace-loving socialist camp which declared strict allegiance to the principle of peaceful co-existence. But at the same time, it stated that in case the imperialist forces attack any socialist country, it would not hesitate to retaliate. The USSR and China, led by great Stalin and Mao Zedong respectively, had taken due note of the sinister gameplan of the US imperialists of forcibly occupying DPRK through military intervention. Both USSR and China spurred on by the ideology of proletarian internationalism pledged to stand by DPRK in case the US imperialists launched any military offensive. So when the US imperialists pounced upon North Korea with their artillery and weapons of mass destruction dishonoring the principle of peaceful co-existence, China, though then at the incipient stage of socialism, viewed this as an attack on its own motherland. So, it immediately sent socialist volunteers to DPRK to fight the mercenary army of the US aggressors. USSR too lent all necessary help and assistance. Grit and determination of the ideologically imbued valiant socialist

fighters of Korea and China succeeded in repulsing monstrous US. Finally, the US imperialists were brought to their knees by the valiant Korean people, and the Korean War that lasted three years and one month ended in a great victory for the Korean people the conflict ended in 1953. But the US imperialists did not allow South Korea to sign any peace treaty and both DPRK and South Korea continued to exist as two separate countries. Thus, the aspiration of the Korean people of getting united remained unfulfilled because of interventionist and expansionist policies of the US imperialists.

The ignominious military defeat suffered by the US aggressors in the Korean War proved the complete bankruptcy of the myth of their "mightiness" built on military and technical superiority and exploded the myth that the nuclear bomb decides the outcome of war. The whole history clearly reaffirmed that US imperialism was and still is the most heinous war igniter, a vicious enemy of peace and democracy, a shameless strangler of freedom and national independence and a blood-thirsty cut-throat. The Korean War also proved the truth that if the people of even a small country rise up in the fight for freedom, independence and progress guided by the most advanced ideology of communism, they can frustrate any imperialist conspiracy.

Unbridled gangsterism of the US imperialists in unipolar world

So long a powerful socialist camp was in existence, it served as a deterrent to the war manoeuvring of the imperialist-capitalist powers headed by the US imperialists. But after revisionist Khrushchevite leadership of USSR succumbed to nuclear blackmailing of the imperialist bloc and resorted to appeasement of imperialist camp in the name of peaceful co-existence, socialist China under the able leadership of great Mao Zedong was compelled to develop nuclear weapons to keep war threats of US imperialism under check. So long as Mao Zedong was alive, China provided the shield of defence to all socialist countries against imperialist aggression and intimidation. But when China also fell to revisionist grip after Mao's death (that finally brought the counter-revolution to

completion in 2004), there was once more a discernible tilt in the balance of power in favour of the imperialists.

Finally, when the socialist bloc was dismantled due to revisionist conspiracy backed by the imperialist-capitalist world, the US imperialist sharks in particular became unbridled in pursuit of their hegemonic design, overlordism and brigandage. Theirs has been a policy to bring the entire world under their domination through either the neo-colonial route or militarily overpowering the countries refusing to bend before their dictates, orchestrating planted revolt to change disobedient regimes with the help of infamous CIA and DIA, and generation of full-fledged wars. It has thus become extremely difficult for the weaker countries to hold out against US threats.

Why should not US imperialists and their allies give up nuclear arm production?

There is another height of audacity on the part of the US imperialists. While they have been asking other countries to give up nuclear programme, they themselves have not abandoned or even restricted their own production of sophisticated lethal weapons including nuclear arms. They have been continuously upgrading their nuclear armoury and regularly coming out with innovations in the category of mass destructive weapons. US so far has conducted as many as 1,054 tests by official count, which far exceed the number of similar tests by others taken together. The US imperialists were the first to manufacture atom bomb and flaunt their military supremacy by dropping nuclear bomb to descend upon the world an era of horror and holocaust, destruction and devastation on an unprecedented scale. Lethal weapons like napalm bombs, agent-orange have all been their inventions which have been used by them in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries to kill millions of innocent people and leaving many more millions crippled with radiation-borne diseases. 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (MAD) is the name of the military doctrine that has been guiding US nuclear weapons development since at least 1962. The US at present maintains a

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North Korea

Every country has inalienable right to defend itself against any foreign attack or invasion

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nuclear arsenal of almost 7,000 warheads. The Arms Control Association of US estimates that the total cost of the ongoing “nuclear modernization program” now on full-throttle under Trump would be between \$1.25 trillion and \$1.46 trillion. The US government has also earmarked over a trillion dollars to upgrading its nuclear arsenal. What does it prove other than the fact that the US imperialists are putting forth a gangster’s logic in support of their unfettered right to nuclearize themselves. While negotiating at the United Nations a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, they and their allies advanced a queer argument. They said that nuclear weapons are not safe in anybody’s hands other than themselves. So, while asking others to abandon production of nuclear weapons, the eight states—US, UK, Russia, China, France, Israel, India and Pakistan— that are known to possess nuclear weapons—are averse to apply such ban on themselves.

US imperialists rejected legitimate demand of total disarmament

It is relevant to mention that after the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the socialist camp under Stalin’s leadership, to free the earth from the horror of war, gave call for complete and all-out disarmament including full nuclear disarmament (once USSR had quickly produced atom bomb itself against looming US imperialist threat). The peace loving people of the world stood up and lent total support to the proposal. But the imperialist bloc led by US imperialism did not pay any heed to this world people’s opinion and instead stuck to developing yet more sophisticated nuclear weapons and pursued all sorts of nefarious activities. However, spate of anti-imperialist struggles inside various countries and wave of international communist movement did produce some countervailing effect in abating to some extent the imperialist tyranny and war mongering. It was gradually prevailing on the toiling masses that more the movement would intensify, more cornered would be the imperialist brigands. But then with revisionism creeping into the world communist movement after Stalin’s demise and further strengthening its grip after Mao’s death, this militant

peace movement round the world was considerably enfeebled and the pressure on the imperialists to yield to the legitimate demand of total disarmament was considerably eased. Ultimately, this legitimate demand for total disarmament was relegated to the back and the US imperialists were boosted to shoot up their international gangsterism with renewed enthusiasm. It bears recall that immediately after the Korean War, there were US backed military interventions and coups in Cuba, Guatemala and Iran, and the long war in Vietnam was initiated.

Thus, every fact goes to prove that the US imperialists and their allies have decided to make the domain of nuclear weapons an exclusive preserve of theirs and a forbidden territory of others. Is it not ridiculous that there are two standards for two sets of countries—the ones who have nuclear weapons and sophisticated arms and others not in possession of the same? While those possessing nuclear teeth would enjoy unfettered right to continuously upgrade their capabilities, the others would be forcibly debarred from carrying out nuclear programme. Is this a civilized move to preserve peace or brazen overlordism to turn the world as an exclusive dominion of theirs?

Draconian imposition of economic sanction

Apart from the threat of direct military intervention, the US imperialist fiends are on a spree to strangulate the countries ‘disobedient’ to them by slapping one after another draconian economic sanctions on them. Who has given them the authority to rob anyone of the right to live? How would their own countrymen feel if such inhuman economic embargo is imposed on them? Would they give it a seal of approval as a highly ‘democratic’ act? People of every country have unfettered right to decide what kind of socio-political system and pattern of governance they should have. Every country has inalienable right to defend itself against any foreign attack or invasion. How can the US imperialists arrogate to themselves the absolute and unquestionable power to intervene in the internal matter of any country, arm-twist them and force it to bend before them by flexing their economic and

military might? If, in the face of continuous arm-twisting and constant threat of being attacked any time, any country builds up its capabilities for self-defence, on what ground can that be called a threat to world peace? Clearly, the biggest threat to world peace, democracy and right to live is the US imperialist regime. The US imperialists are the biggest enemy of the mankind.

North Korea branded as part of the ‘axis of evils’ by US imperialists.

The US imperialists had declared long back that North Korea, Cuba and Iran are constituents of an ‘axis of evils’ meaning their prime targets of attack and arrogated to themselves the unchallenged “righteousness to triumph over evil.” And in discharge of that “righteousness”, they, using UNO as a tool, have embarked upon a cunning policy of forcing other countries to give up production of nuclear arms in the name of so called one-sided Non-Proliferation Treaty. Once any country yielded to that pressure, it became easy for the US imperialists to overrun that country militarily or overpower it or browbeat it to capitulation. Ukraine, Libya, Iraq and, of late, Iran have been glaring examples of that.

From all these developments, events and direct threats, North Korea could realize that the US imperialists would any day overpower it with their brute military might. And if attacked, there would not be a single country to come to its rescue as because almost all have meekly surrendered to the Pentagon regime. North Korea has never refrained from exploring all diplomatic channels for keeping the war threats of US imperialists at bay and ensuring peace. But for 64 years since 1953, the US has refused to sit down with the DPRK and sign a peace treaty formally ending that war. In such a situation, there are two alternatives before North Korea, to either submit timidly or face boldly the threat by developing deterrents and once more set an example of courageously and doggedly repulsing imperialist attacks. North Korea has justifiably chosen the second alternative. Hence it began developing military strength including nuclear capacity as an ‘equaliser’, to deter constant US threats. The present DPRK President has made it amply clear that “North Korea

loves peace more than anybody...The US and the puppet forces are seriously threatening and harassing the peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and the region. They are war fanatics obsessed with provocation and aggression...The army and people of the DPRK will bolster up the nuclear deterrence for justice in every way to foil the US high-handed and arbitrary practices and thus more reliably defend the sovereignty of the country, the right to existence of the nation and the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the region”. It is worth mentioning that Moon Jae-in, present South Korean President, could win the elections recently because he promised to improve relations with the DPRK. But US President Trump has taken umbrage at Moon’s pro-dialogue policy and compelled him to abandon the move. It is US imperialism who is the offender and DPRK is only exercising its right to defend itself.

Imperative to develop worldwide anti-imperialist movement

So, North Korea is not just building up its own defence but defence of the anti-war right-thinking people against dreaded imperialist attack on humanity. As per media reports, the toiling people of South Korea are increasingly developing fraternity and solidarity with North Korea. Just the other day, the aggrieved South Korean people vehemently protested installation of ‘Terminal High Altitude Area Defence’ (THAAD), advanced missile defence system, by the US imperialists on their soil. Clearly, the Pentagon rulers are caring a fig for the desire of the South Korean people. It is, therefore, incumbent on all democratic-minded right-thinking people to unitedly and unwaveringly stand by North Korea. The imperative need is that toiling people of each country close their ranks, build up powerful anti-imperialist particularly anti-US imperialist militant peace movements, integrate such movements globally and prevail upon their respective regimes to staunchly oppose US war threats to and sanctions on North Korea so that there is effective assertion of world people’s opinion on the imperialist sharks and the heinous conspiracy is frustrated. Unitedly and firmly raise the slogan, ‘US imperialism, Hands off North Korea!’



Comrade A Rengasamy, Tamil Nadu State Secretary, SUCI(C), addressing Kisan Mukti Yatra in Chennai on 19 September.



Protest rally in Gana, Madhya Pradesh, on 17 September against inauguration of Sardar Sarovar Dam displacing and devastating 40,000 poor people of 142 villages



November Revolution Centenary observance across the country [From top] Narnaul in Mahendragarh District Haryana on 9 September, Boipariguda in Koraput District, Odisha on 12 September, and Kota, Rajasthan, on 11 September.

Life after the USSR

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imposed austerity which has seen public sector wages slashed, a massive hike in sales tax, and the cutting of social services such as unemployment, maternity, and disability benefits. A similar picture exists in nearly every country in Southern Europe and Eastern Europe, as well as in Germany itself where millions long for the days of the GDR (East Germany) before countless German professionals and academics were left without jobs and without benefits.

And so, equally unsurprising is the fact that a significant portion of the people of the former Soviet republics look longingly at the days before the fall of the Soviet Union. They remember all the hardships, the lack of consumer goods, the police state, and more. But they equally remember the month-long summer vacations with family, the guaranteed employment and income, the free and universal health care and education, etc. These are the aspects of life under the Soviet Union that have been systematically erased by the narrative set forth by the West where capitalism reigns supreme and must remain unchallenged, as if it were the word of God himself.

Striking income inequality and inflamed ethnic tensions may have brought an American-style feeling to Eastern Europe, but it's clearly not what most people want. Add to that the rise of far-right fascist parties capitalizing on the economic hardship and complete failure of the Left to challenge the neoliberal consensus, and it should be no surprise that today Eastern Europe faces a very dangerous historical moment, one which could have major implications for its long-term future.

But no, capitalism is not a cure-all for the ills of life. Western-style capitalism (neo-liberalism) has imposed on the people of Eastern Europe a new kind of hardship in the years since the Soviet Union collapsed. No longer are consumer goods restricted by an imposing state apparatus, they are now available to all who can afford them; unfortunately for the vast majority of people, they can't.

Instead, they must work more for less in hopes that their children won't have to flee the country in search of better opportunities. Such is the reality of the American Dream in post-Soviet Europe. (Source: TelesurTV:19 August 2017)

Protest meeting in Agartala

On 8 September, a demonstration was organized by SUCI(C) in front of municipality office in Agartala, Tripura, on an 8-point demand for ensuring necessary civic amenities. A memorandum was also submitted to the Deputy Mayor by a delegation led by Comrade Arun Bhowmik, Tripura State Secretary. In his address before the demonstration, Comrade Bhowmik called upon all to build up a united organized movement to realize the legitimate demands.

In observance of Great November Revolution Centenary Mass Meeting

at Saheed Minar Maidan, Kolkata
on 17 November 2017 at 2 p.m.

Main Speaker : Comrade Provash Ghosh
Speakers : Comrade Satyawan (Haryana)
Comrade K Radhakrishna (Karnataka)
President : Comrade Manik Mukherjee

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH