

Proletarian Era

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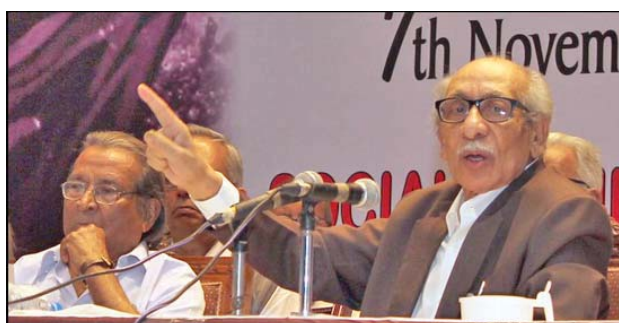


Hoisting Red Flag in Delhi, Comrade Provas Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), inaugurates the year-long programme of observance of Great November Revolution Centenary

Historic November Revolution : Yearlong Centenary Observance Inaugurated in Delhi

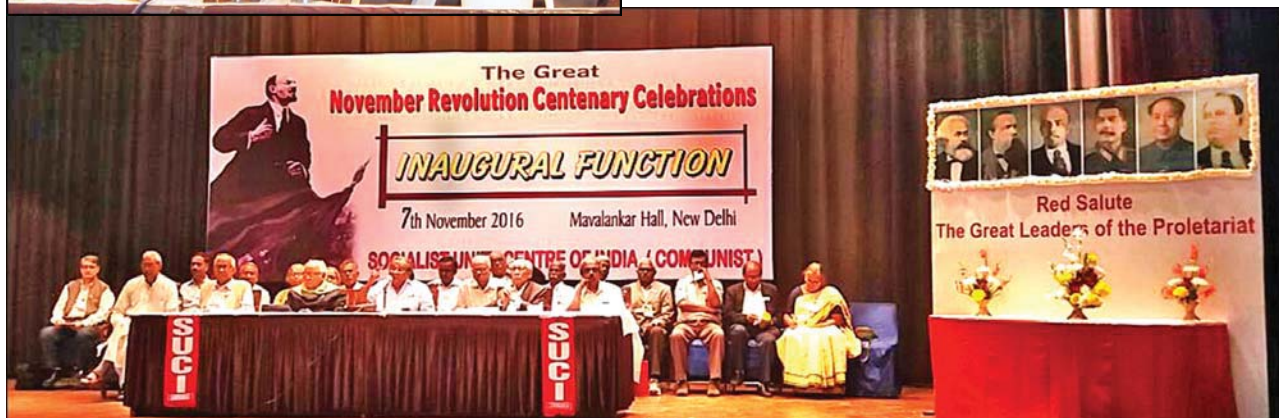
Those were the ten days that shook the world. Those ten days of the month of November in 1917 from 7th to 17th, created a new history which marked the beginning of the end of exploitation and oppression of man by man. So, these were the days that sent chill down the spine of the reactionaries all over the world, the capitalists-imperialists and their henchmen. Those were also the ten days that generated a worldwide surge of emotion in the deepest corner of toiling people's heart. Birth of socialist Soviet Union, first working class state in the world, generated new enthusiasm among the struggling working class and fighting people round the globe. It also proved the invincibility of Marxism as a comprehensive creative science. The genuine revolutionaries in every country need to imbibe the valuable lessons of historic November Revolution to make proletarian revolution successful in their respective lands.

This being the hundredth year of such a great historic event, our Party, the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), the genuine communist party on Indian soil founded, reared and steered by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the country and worthy continuer of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin-Mao Zedong, has decided to observe it through a year-long programme with befitting honour, revolutionary zeal, enthusiasm and resolve. The observance started with an august meeting of hundreds of people at the Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi on the 7th November last. The venue including the gateway of the auditorium was gracefully decorated with red flags, banners and festoons. To add to the solemnity, an attractive exhibition was set up displaying photos and posters with quotations from works of the great Marxist authorities. It brought back the memories of so many unknown or little known facts and incidents centring round the Revolution. Along with that, it reiterated the invaluable teachings of the great leaders of the proletariat, the indelible guidelines they provided for the world communist movement to emancipate the oppressed people from the yoke of oppressive imperialism-capitalism.



At eleven in the morning, Comrade Provas Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C) hoisted the Red Flag amidst thunderous slogans of "Long Live November Revolution", "Workers of the World Unite". The dais of the auditorium shone bright on a backdrop with the much familiar picture of Comrade Lenin addressing a workers' meeting on one side and the portraits of the six giant leaders of world Proletariat, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Shibdas Ghosh on the other. Taking chairs on the dais were the leaders of SUCI (C). Alongwith Comrade Provas Ghosh, those seated on the dais were Comrades Ranjit Dhar, veteran Polit Bureau member, Krishna Chakraborty, also Polit Bureau member and Comrades Gopal Kundu, K Radhakrishna, Saumen Basu, Satyawan, Sankar Saha, and Chhaya

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*Dais of the inaugural function : [Above] Comrade Ranjit Dhar, veteran member, Politburo delivering his presidential address .
(Top) Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, member, Politburo. addressing as main speaker*

Inhuman triple talaq system

How can oppressed Muslim women get rid of it

Anyone conversant with social reality in India knows how heart-rending is the plight, misery and social bashing of the *triple talaq* slapped Muslim women particularly those belonging to extremely poor and downtrodden families. Deserted by their husbands mostly on flimsy pretext and unilateral narrow self-serving decision, these hapless penury-stricken women, often with small children, are just left in the lurch to fend for themselves. The cruelty and inhumanity of this patriarchal society in ruthlessly exploitative capitalist set up is writ large on their face just the way mercilessness of misogynist heartless Hindu priests and headmen was etched into the features of *satidaha*. Of late, the long overdue demand has been raised from among the Muslim community particularly the women to banish this inhuman *triple talaq* (instantaneous unilateral divorce) system. In April last, Shayara Bano, a 35-year-old housemaker from Uttarakhand grabbed headlines when she went to the Supreme Court seeking a ban on *triple talaq* given by her husband through a letter. She also challenged the practice of polygamy and *nikahhalala* (a practice where a woman given *triple talaq* has to marry another man and consummate the marriage if she wants to get back with her divorced husband). *Times of India* reported that over 50,000 Muslim women and men have signed a petition seeking a ban on *triple talaq*. The petition, spearheaded by the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), has sought the intervention of the National Commission for Women to end, what they held, a “un-Quranic practice” like this. Earlier also in 1986, similar demand was raised when Shah Bano, a 62 year old lady, knocked at the door of Supreme Court for justice when her husband divorced her by pronouncing *triple talaq*. But, while the emerging demand from the oppressed Muslim women should have been viewed from the perspective of liberating women from the shackles of patriarchal domination and religious bigotry and searching for correct remedial course, there is a heinous conspiracy on the part of the quarters of vested interest and reaction to fuel fundamentalism-communalism on the issue, shift attention from the merit of the issue and blunt the healthy thinking process and kill rationality with the weapons of religious blindness and obduracy. Hence is our fervent appeal to the democratic-minded

people of all sections of the toiling masses who possess and respect humanitarian view and empathise with the oppressed persecuted womenfolk to rise above all sectarian and partisan view and examine the demand of abolition of cruel *three talaq* system on the touchstone of reason and legitimacy.

Fundamentalist-communal conspiracy to twist the issue

Only those bereft of rudimentary human essence can have the shamelessness to oppose the pressing need of liberating the *three talaq*-whacked women from such predicament. But, what is most disquieting is that as soon as a voice against the pathetic practice has been raised again in all righteousness from the oppressed Muslim women consequent to growth of desired consciousness among them and their laudable courage to express that explicitly, the Muslim fundamentalist groups and clerics who have arrogated to themselves the sole authority to pronounce “good or bad”, “dos and don’ts” of the entire Muslim community based on their own interpretations of the holy Quran have upped their ante. All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has been claiming that “Muslim personal law is based on divine law and hence cannot be altered.” On the other hand, with the demand for abolishing an anti-woman practice like *triple talaq* gaining ground, the arch Hindu communal-fundamentalist RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar who, in the name of upholding holiness of Hinduism abet a thousand and one anti-woman practices and customs like ‘honour killing’, bigamy, polygamy and even long banned ‘sati’ system, foment and justify all kinds of religious backwardness, blindness, bigotry, fanaticism and glaring misogynist mindset, have seized this opportunity to intensify their motivated anti-Muslim hate campaign. Shedding crocodile tears over the appalling distress and haplessness of the Muslim women, these vendors of Hindutva who consider ruling of “Manusamhita” (Manu’s Laws) about ‘nastreeswatantra-marhati’ (the woman does not deserve independence’) as ‘sacrosanct’, have, in order to hoodwink democratic-minded thinking people, been talking of introducing Uniform Civil Code in the country, not from the perspective of true democratization of the society, but from the ulterior motive of pointing finger at the religion of Islam and

thereby exacerbating communal divide and polarization from nasty electoral interest. Such advocacy for Uniform Civil Code by the apologists of Hindu communalism-fundamentalism-fanaticism is akin to the proverbial saying of ‘the devil quoting the scriptures’. By raising a hue and cry from outside the Muslim community and unnecessarily dragging the issue of Uniform Civil Code at this juncture, they have dealt a blow to the surging, though belated but just, movement of persecuted Muslim women and saner section of Muslim males by way of giving handle to the Muslim clerics in shrewdly rallying the Muslim masses behind them shouting aloud about “Islam being in danger” and alleging “infringement on the constitutionally granted right to profess religion of one’s choice”. Thus, the efficacy of the demand for abolishing *triple talaq* system and the wails and woes of oppressed subjugated women in patriarchal society in capitalist set up have been relegated to the back and instead the mockfight of and trading charges and counter-charges by the two groups of vested interest and anti-woman mindset has been riling up the water. This is how the Hindu communal-fundamentalist RSS-BJP has convoluted and twisted the whole issue much to the advantage of their counterpart among the Muslim community.

Recapitulating certain basic postulates and a bit of history

At the outset, it is pertinent to mention that any problem, any socio-cultural issue needs to be examined in the context of and in relation to the given socio-economic-political backdrop. Correctness or incorrectness should be decided not based on any closed or one-sided view but based on legitimacy from the perspective of overall good and benefit of the broader masses of the suffering people rising above all narrow sectarian outlook or stagnancy. Any student of ancient history or sociology or political economy who is well-conversant with the history of onward march of civilization and progress of the society through various transformational phases knows that all laws, customs, practices, rituals and behaviours either emerged in recognition to the social urge or need for betterment or were thrust upon by the oppressive rulers to suit their narrow sectarian interest, more precisely their vested class interest in the class-divided society. In other words, all such rules, practices and

customs were and are man-made and have definite socio-cultural roots. As the society has been changing, laws, social practices and customs also altered, modified or totally replaced by new ones in tandem with and in recognition of the necessity of the change. So, the very concept of anything being eternal, immortal or perennial is unscientific, unreal and travesty of truth. While the social need and purposiveness herald the desired change as mark of progress, the rulers mortally afraid of being dethroned cunningly propagate immutability or perpetuity of certain laws or social practices which suit their class need and sinister class design. This happened during slave-master society, in feudal-monarchical regime and is happening today as well in decadent moribund capitalism. One can recall how the American slave owners, almost all of whom professed to be followers of Christianity, boasted that they were carrying out God’s order by buying and using the slaves. Roman Emperors pronounced themselves as descendants of god, and used that to persecute the slaves and doomed them into a sub-human life in bondage. When Jesus Christ’s teachings openly challenged that claim, the Roman power perceived that to be a threat to their monarchic rule and crucified him on the charge of rebellion against ‘divine directive’. Similarly, when the exponents of renaissance and bourgeois democratic revolution during the days of rising capitalism against feudal obsolescence and monarchic autocracy, espoused secularism that called for keeping politics, social relationships and practices above religion or free from the interference of any religious faith, the monarchy and feudal lords as well as Churchdom serving their class interest who hitherto imposed their command over the people by projecting themselves as accredited representatives of god felt threatened of being deposed. Renaissance or enlightenment upheld reason and not blind religious faith or bigotry as the basis for deciding legitimacy and course of progress. Obviously, as a last ditch attempt to prevent dethronement, the feudal-monarchic rulers cried hoarse about ‘divinity to be under attack’. As can be seen in the history of the Western European, the Pope, using a forged document called the ‘Donation of Constantine’, claimed that he had the authority to appoint and depose kings, and

Contd. on page 3

Inhuman triple talaq system

Fundamentalist conspiracies relegating legitimacy of abolishing *triple talaq* to the back

Contd. from page 2

would excommunicate those who did not obey him. David Hume, the renowned Scottish philosopher and historian, of eighteenth century whom Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of bourgeois democracy, often referred to, once said that "monarchies receiving their chief stability from a superstitious reverence to priests and princes have almost abridged liberty...as a result of this...men voluntarily submitted to their moral and political authority, thus abridging the use of their own reason in morals and politics leaving them dependent for moral knowledge on churches and state." (Macpherson, the political theory of possessive individualism) But all these vile and cunning attempts of the floundering Churchdom to save the outmoded tyrannical feudal-monarchic rule proved abortive. And with new democratic social system in place, all the then existing social customs and practices mostly based on religion and incompatible with, if not obstructive to, the desired reforms that championed equality, liberty and fraternity, women's freedom, freedom of love—of course all in bourgeois sense—were sought to be banished. Just like the Western church, when enlightenment dawned upon Indian soil in nineteenth century, alongwith the feudal lords, Hindu clerics and headmen of the then feudal society staunchly opposed all social reforms. They called Rammohan Roy's efforts for abolition of monstrous *sati* system (immolation of the widow on the burning pyre of the husband) as an affront to Hindu religion and circumvention of the 'will of god'. Same resistance with same line of argument was faced by Vidyasagar, another stalwart of Indian renaissance, from the Hindu priesthood when he launched the movement for widow remarriage and women's education. Both Rammohan and Vidyasagar proved conclusively that no Hindu *Shastras* or so called divine scripture has any sanction for these medieval systems. That obviously proved that such were all imposed outside the dictums of the *Shastras* and hence could in no way be claimed as divine decrees. As exponents of Indian renaissance, both Rammohan and Vidyasagar tried to bring in the reforms spurred on by the need of democratization of the society which, among other things, included the task of freeing women from

patriarchal domination, subjugation and persecution and recognizing their freedom as well as equality.

Fallacy about immutability of any custom or practice

So, it can be seen that all laws, customs and practices are man-made, either in people's interest or in the interest of the rulers. Further, any study of science or sociology would reveal that nothing is permanent, unchangeable and immutable in this changing world. Since motion is the mode of existence of matter, as undisputedly proved by science, change is a natural phenomenon in this material world. Progress is always through change, from the old antiquated obsolete to the new rising advanced. If any of the old practices, customs or laws is found to have outlived its utility, become outmoded and hindering social progress, it has to be rejected and replaced. Hence, claiming any law, any custom, any practice or ritual as immutable or eternal under whatsoever a plea is in complete disregard of the scientific law of evolution, transformation and progress of human civilization. It is akin to clinging to a stinking corpse howsoever beautiful might have been the person when alive.

In this backdrop, if any custom is claimed to be unchangeable because of being 'divinely ordained' or such other reason, would it not stand invalid on the anvil of logic and reason? Can it then be accepted by any right-thinking conscientious person? If viewed from this perspective, futility or imperviousness in justifying invidious practices like *triple talaq*, *nikahhalala* (where a woman given *triple talaq* has to marry another man and consummate the marriage if she wants to get back with her divorced husband), bigamy, polygamy, child marriage, female foeticide or infanticide, abandoning wife for either being barren or giving birth to girl child, social ostracism of barren women, compelling barren woman to consent to a second marriage of the husband, asking women to find solace in sacrificial tokens like not eating for hours to pacify angry god in expectation of longer life of the husbands, mandating widows to stay out of any auspicious ceremony, debarring women from going to kitchen during menstrual periods, disallowing women to enter places of worship to prevent 'desecration' of 'god's abode', the practice of

santhara (euthanasia as per Jainism) and any such other practice or custom or ritual being observed in the name of religion, 'parampara' (lineage), 'riwaz' (practice) and 'sankriti' (culture) etc. would be glaringly manifest. So, when a good section of Muslim populace, more particularly the Muslim women, are raising demand for banning *triple talaq* which they consider to be a high-handedness of patriarchal society, subversive of woman's freedom and dignity, and an extremely cruel and regressive system warranting immediate termination, one needs to be dispassionate, objective and rational and free from any bias, preconception, warped mindset, blindness or obstinacy in judging merit of the demand. If in that course, it is found to be a legitimate demand, it has to be supported staunchly overruling all counter-attempts to misrepresent or distort its righteousness.

History of democratization of society

Before we proceed further, let us recall, in brief, the history and necessity of democratization of society. In feudal society, people were made to blindly follow religious beliefs, customs and injunctions as ordained by the ruling clergy. The clergy propagated that human beings are nothing but projection of a supernatural entity. So, they cannot go against the 'will of that' that the monarchy-clergy convey to them. Against this was raised the voice of secularism during the advent of capitalism by dismantling feudal structure and freeing the enslaved human mind from obscurantist thoughts. A genuine secular democratic state structure had no room for religion in state or public affairs, because following inexorable course of history religion had already become obsolete and hence regressive in every respect. All legislations and functions as per secular democratic idea were viewed independent of religion. Secular principles held that religion was to be a personal affair and would have no place, no interference in socio-political-cultural spheres. A long sustained campaign, a relentless struggle was waged in Europe to separate the Church from the State, in other words, to free the State from the clutches of the Church, and thus delink social customs and practices from religious bondage, to ban religious directives and rituals that

weighed heavily against individual liberty and in particular against liberty of women. This demand in the form of religious reformation movement emerged from within the Christian community with reformist like Martin Luther in the forefront. As a result, fetters of outmoded obscurantist ideas and bigotry were broken to invoke democratic concepts of life based on advancement of science and the transition from feudal to democratic society was smooth. Likewise, with Indian renaissance movement surging forth in early nineteenth century, demand for weeding out obsolete unkind rituals and practices hitherto professed and abetted by Hindu priests and headmen in the name of religion also found expression in the religious reformation movement that stirred the Hindu society. This was the story of democratization of society which presupposed uncompromising battle to recognize supremacy of human beings as against all supernatural beliefs.

Any avid student or scholar of Islamic history is aware that when one turns to the Arab world, one would find a different picture. Unfortunately this democratization of society would be found to have not taken place in most of the Arab countries as renaissance movement or enlightenment did not surge forth there because of definite socio-historic reasons. So, the task of abolishing age-old religion-based customs and practices which ought to have surfaced from among the Muslim populace much earlier in keeping with the emerging social need and urge for progress remained unfulfilled there. So backwardness and obduracy in many respects continued to prevail and held back the rein of desired progress and enlightenment of the suffering Muslim masses. This has been, so to say, a travesty of history and something that ought not to have happened. As a result of this most unintended twist of history, the fundamentalists could succeed more in keeping the oppressed Muslim masses arrested in the labyrinth of religious bigotry, superstitious beliefs and illogicality and be dispossessed of rational thinking. Hence, truth remained and remains elusive from most of this section of toiling humanity whose hardship under ruling capitalism is no less than other sections of suffering people. This is an objective reality which no one can ignore.

Contd. on page 6

Centenary of Historic November Revolution

Contd. from page 1

Mukherjee, all members of the Central Committee, SUCI(C), as also the leaders of different states and mass organizations. The proceedings were initiated with the rendering of the song on Great Lenin. Then floral tribute was placed by Comrade Ranjit Dhar, the President of the meeting to the portraits of the six great leaders of world proletariat.

In his brief presidential address, Comrade Ranjit Dhar said that everything in the material world is unflinching and the changes take place following some natural laws. Human society also changes and that too being governed by inexorable laws of development. So to accomplish the revolution, one will have to know these laws, the course of changes set thereupon and act accordingly.

The main speaker Comrade Krishna Chakraborty said that the November Socialist Revolution had opened a new vista in the history of

fundamentally essential: a correct revolutionary theory and genuine communist Party to concretize it on a soil. He also taught us that economic condition or production relation in agriculture or the extent of development of industrial sector is not that important in the ultimate analysis for deducing the strategy of revolution. Rather, it is important to ascertain which class is in the state power, to decide the character of the revolution and its strategy because ultimate question of any revolution is the question of state power i.e. which class is in power and which class in alliance with which classes will provide leadership to revolution. Comrade Lenin differed from Trotsky on the question whether a single socialist country surrounded by capitalist-imperialist countries can retain power for long. Trotsky had maintained that to do it a permanent revolution is necessary which implies revolution in all countries of the world to guarantee



Comrade Debaprasad Sarkar, member, Central Committee, hoisting the Red Flag at the Party Central Office in Kolkata on 7 November, 2016

Europe and began to compete with the USA within two decades of revolution.

When the Second World War broke out, it was socialist Soviet Union and the red army under the leadership of Great Stalin which could defeat the highly mechanized, technologically advanced military machine of Fascist axis forces Germany, Italy, and Japan. Soviet people made enormous sacrifices to safeguard not only their motherland but also the humanity against the savage attack of fascists and saved civilization as such. It is to be noted that it is after the defeat of fascism only, liberation struggles of all colonies and semi-colonies gained tremendous momentum and became victorious in many countries. For this reason alone Stalin should be considered as the saviour of the mankind. But the imperialists paint such a great man as a dictator. After total devastation in the Second World War, Russia was rebuilt within a short period of 7 years again into a super-power. The Soviet citizens were given food, shelter, clothing, education, health, transport and sports free of cost

Continuing, Comrade Chakraborty said, victims of the anti-communist tirade of the capitalists-imperialists sometimes question us why should we observe the November Revolution of Russia in our country. They should be answered that this Revolution did not just bring about a radical change in Russia, but created a wave that swept across the whole world, forced open the door to emancipation and strengthened revolutionary and national liberation struggles everywhere. So in our struggle for emancipation, we shall have to draw lessons and inspirations from such a magnificent event.

Some people ask why, in spite of its spectacular achievements, socialism failed in Russia. We shall have to make it clear to them that

this sad dismantling of socialism happened due to the counter-revolutionary conspiracy of renegade Khrushchev and his followers aided and abetted by world imperialism-capitalism. People were swayed away by the revisionist propaganda because of their lower standard of understanding of Marxism-Leninism since ideological struggle faced a setback consequent on outbreak of Second World War in which almost ninety percent of the leaders and advanced cadres of Russian Communist Party were killed. Comrade Stalin correctly identified this problem of lowering of standard and mentioned that in the report of the 19th Congress of CPSU. But, before he could initiate necessary remedial steps, he breathed his last. Comrade Chakraborty said that it is not true that in a socialist country, democracy does not exist. On the contrary, democracy exists for the 90% of people while dictatorship of the proletariat prevails upon the bourgeoisie who comprises 10% of the masses. But in capitalist countries the picture is reverse: it is democracy for the 10% and dictatorship for the rest 90%. It is socialism which only can solve the strangulating problems the people in every capitalist-imperialist country are devastated by. The November Revolution showed the way for the emancipation of exploited millions. He made fervent appeal to the people to draw lessons and inspirations from the great November Revolution and strengthen the SUCI(C), the genuine communist party on this soil, so that the uphill task of revolution are properly shouldered and revolution expedited.

Following the meeting there was a cultural programme which included screening of clips from the film *Fall of Berlin* and running a speech of Comrade Stalin. The programme ended with the rendering of the *Communist Internationale*.



Comrade Mobinul Hyder Chowdhury, General Secretary, Bangladesh Socialist Party (Marxist) addressing a meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 7 November last to observe the Centenary of Great November Revolution

movements of exploited people of the world. This revolution took place in Russia, but it has world significance because it has broken the weakest link of the imperialist chain which has chained all the countries throughout the world. November Revolution has proved beyond doubt the correctness of Marxism-Leninism. In 1848 Great Marx and his worthy revolutionary compatriot Engels, wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that workers will put an end to capitalism by overthrowing the bourgeoisie from the state power and establishing socialism. At that time, most people did not believe it to come true. But Great Lenin, the worthy disciple of Marx and Engels, by concretely applying Marxism in Russia had successfully accomplished the first Socialist Revolution in Russia and proved the correctness of Marxism. Lenin said, Comrade Chakraborty continued, that for accomplishing the revolution two things were

the safety and security of socialist countries. But Lenin said that even a single socialist country can withstand the attacks of imperialist countries and hold on to power. Lenin, and after his death his worthy student, Stalin, proved it true and made a long stride towards building socialism in the newly founded USSR or Soviet Russia.

Before November revolution Russia was the sickest nation of Europe but it developed into super power within a short period of time eradicated all the problems like poverty, unemployment, prostitution etc., and gave free education to all up to the highest level without any help from other countries rather in the hostile encirclement of bourgeois countries. Unthinkable advancement in science and technology was achieved in Russia in a short span of time. Socialist Russia developed so speedily that it surpassed all the countries of

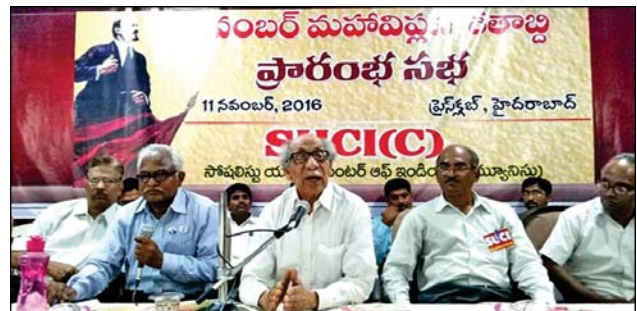
Centenary of historic November Revolution



Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, member, Politburo, addressing in Kolkata on 14.11.16. Seated are Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, Comrades Ranjit Dhar and Manik Mukherjee, Politburo Members, Comrades Debaprasad Sarkar, Soumen Basu, Sankar Saha and Chhaya Mukherjee, all Central Committee members, and other West Bengal state leaders



Comrade Radhakrishna, member, Central Committee, addressing in Chennai on 14.11.16. Comrade Rwnagswamy, Tamil Nadu State Secretary on his left



Comrade Krishna Chakraborty addressing in Hyderabad on 11-11-16



Comrade K Uma, member, Karnataka State Committee, addressing in Bangalore on 12-11-16



Bike rally on 7-11-16 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Part of the audience at a discussion on Historic November Revolution on 9-11-16 at Sikkim



Durg, Chhatisgarh, rally on 7-11-16



Kozikhode, Kerala, rally on 7-11-16

Inhuman triple talaq system

In absence of democratization of society, old feudal thoughts, customs, religious blindness, bigotry continue to exist

Contd from page 3

Reforms in Turkey

The only exception has been Turkey where legendary social reformer Mustafa Kemal Ataturk who, after successfully leading Turkish war of independence and establishing new democratic republic of Turkey, boldly initiated democratization of the society. Among the measures he took were deposing of the caliph (the recognized spiritual leader), closing of all religious courts and schools, prohibiting the wearing of headscarves among public sector employees, abolishing the ministry of canon law and pious foundations, forbidding the wearing of fez hats, espousing industrialization and adopting new law codes based on democratic models of European countries particularly most progressive Swiss code. For the first time in history, Islamic law was separated from secular law, and restricted to matters of religion. Mustafa Kemal declared: "We must liberate our concepts of justice, our laws and our legal institutions from the bonds which, even though they are incompatible with the needs of our century, still hold a tight grip on us." He introduced a new civil code under which women gained equality with men in such matters as inheritance and divorce. According to his view, society marches towards its goal with men and women united. During a meeting he declaimed:

To the women: Win for us the battle of education and you will do yet more for your country than we have been able to do. It is to you that I appeal.

To the men: If henceforward the women do not share in the social life of the nation, we shall never attain to our full development. We shall remain irremediably backward, incapable of treating on equal terms with the civilizations of the West.

The bourgeoisie can no more undertake desired social reform

Now what needs to be understood is that following the normal course of history, the bourgeoisie who once heralded dawn of a new era by overthrowing obsolete reactionary feudal-monarchic system, upholding scientific logic and reason as gateway to truth, fought against all age-old creeds, superstitions, regressive practices and tyrannical customs and brought in its wake

sweeping socio-cultural reforms to democratize society, has itself turned reactionary, regressive and ruthlessly oppressive after attaining its stage of decadence. So, it itself is posing main obstacle before desired social progress and like the previous rulers, trying every possible step to prolong its worn-out exploitative rule. Prominent among such steps is the frantic effort to retrograde the mental process, blunt thinking faculty and thereby shut the passage to truth. The ruling bourgeoisie fears that if people are allowed to possess scientific bent of mind and pursue scientific methodology to arrive at truth and decide things, the obsolescence of the capitalist system would at once be revealed. It would be unfolded for them that the decadent moribund capitalist system is breeding all evils, aberrations, maladies, discriminations and deprivations and emancipation lies in revolutionary overthrow of this decrepit system. Once this truth is imbibed and correct process of demolition of the capitalist system unravelled, toiling people would gear up for a united conscious upsurge against oppressive capitalism and thereby expedite accomplishment of the anti-capitalist proletarian revolution. Hence, the ruling bourgeoisie is not only compromising with all feudal remnants, religious blindness and bigotry but itself fomenting various regressive thoughts and espousals, fuelling fundamentalism-communalism as well as backing theocratic proposition of immutability of religious commandments and decrees. The sole objective is to keep people arrested in the mystic alley of blindness, religious fanaticism, prejudices, inflexibility, unreasonableness and fatalism. In this circumstances, democratization of the society in any country can only be completed by way of incorporation of all unaccomplished tasks of bourgeois democratic revolution like fostering secular scientific outlook as against religiosity and irrational thoughts in the programme of anti-capitalist proletarian revolution under the leadership of the working class historically poised to lead progress of civilization as the most advanced class based on Marxism-Leninism, the highest ideology of the time.

Weakness of our national liberation struggle

Now, if we turn to India, it would be revealed that for specific socio-historic reasons, as Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, elaborately

showed in course of concretization of Marxism in the concrete situation of India, complete democratization of Indian society has not taken place. Instead of coming out from all sorts of religious complexities, our nationalist leaders advocated cultivation of Hindu religious values preached in mythological epics for building spiritual basis of national liberation struggle. This Hindu religion-oriented nationalism alienated the broader Muslim masses from the freedom movement and prompted them towards preservation of Islamic religious customs inconsistent with the principles of democratic society further widening the gulf between the Muslim masses and the nationalist forces. Thus the foremost task of integrating all the different communities of people professing different faiths into a homogeneous nation remained unfulfilled and old feudal thoughts, customs, habits, beliefs, religious blindness, bigotry still continue to exist in the Indian capitalist society as feudal remnants. It was for this reason, our constitution was also not born secular and various clauses and articles are found to be self-contradictory evidencing various undesired compromises during its framing. The communal-fundamentalist forces in their narrow sectarian self-serving interest have been using this weakness and vestiges of feudal fads even today and as mentioned above, with the backing and indulgence of the ruling bourgeoisie. This background is to be understood to have a correct insight into the demand for banning *triple talaq*, opposition to the demand by Muslim clerics-fundamentalists and compounding of the problem by the Hindu communal RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar with their spewing of anti-Muslim venom.

The practice of triple talaq

Now we have a few words on Muslim personal law and the *triple talaq* system in India. As is known to all, in India, there are separate personal laws for different religious and even ethnic communities. There are also state-specific acts in this regard. A Hindu in Goa does not marry under the Hindu Marriage Act. Same is the case in Puducherry. Similarly, Muslim laws in Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh differ from each other. Christians have their Christian Act. Parsis have the Parsi Act. Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 in India allows a man to divorce his wife by uttering

the word *talaq* thrice in one sitting. He can also send a letter writing *talaq* three times, or an email, telegram or even a SMS for the same purpose. *Talaq* or opting for divorce unilaterally is thus an exclusive unquestionable right or prerogative of the husband which is binding on the wife no matter how trivial or cruel may be the reason. Despite the desolation, wretchedness, maltreatment and social abuse of such *triple talaq*-slapped women are heart-rending, this custom continues as a 'sacred religious practice' in 'secular' India with fundamentalist organizations like AIMPLB as the protagonists. But if the law has really been 'divine' and hence 'unalterable', then how is that confined to only the Sunni Muslims and not the Shia Muslims? Both profess Islam. How could many Islamic countries have codified and reformed Muslim personal law? How *triple talaq* has been banned in many more than 20 Muslim countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Iran. Why in Egypt, the rule mandates a husband divorcing his wife to hand over the flat or house in which he is residing along with all furnishings etc. to his separated wife which as is learnt, has brought down the divorce rate there? Almost similar is the tone of clause 72 (1) of the Syrian law. Polygamy has also been either banned or severely restricted in Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, Iran, Azerbaijan, Tunisia or even Pakistan. After promulgation of Muslim Family Law Ordinance, payment of alimony on divorce is compulsory in Pakistan. In some countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Sharia applies to all walks of life. In India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, it applies only to personal laws. In some other countries like Turkey, Sharia is not part of the legal system at all. Turkey and Cyprus have adopted secular family laws. In Iran, *triple talaq* doesn't have validity under its Shia law.

Secondly, even on *triple talaq*, there are varied opinions in the *Shariat*. For example, if an inebriated husband pronounces *three talaqs*, it is valid as per *Hanafi Majhab*. But *Shafai Majhab* does not approve of this. Many scholars of Islamic history have also shown that the *Shariat* is not replica of the version of the holy Quran but interpretations provided by various Hanifas. The fact is that with spread of Islam beyond the Arabian soil and

Contd. on page 7

Inhuman triple talaq system

Demand for abolishing anti-woman practices should be integrated with broader democratic movement on burning problems of life

Contd from page 6

with the passage of time, thousand and one problems cropped up in the social life of the followers of Islam. In order to solve these problems as per Islamic doctrine, people used to seek the opinions of eminent personalities who were known for their deeper understanding of the sacred scripture, virtuous reflections and moral character. All these personalities confronted with the emerging problems had given rulings based on their own realizations of the religious thoughts and directives. These are all summarized in the *Shariat*. But there are further differences in interpretations since such were all subjective. Though the Sunni group of Muslims follow the interpretations of four Imams compiled as *Majhabs* in the *Shariat*, opinions of these four Imams differ on various issues. There are sects within the Muslim community such as the Ahle Hadees who do not recognize the validity of instant unilateral talaq. A commentator on Islamic history has shown that "the unilateral *triple talaq*, which Muslims are made to believe is based on divine revelation, is nothing but a legal evasion devised by an acquiescent Muslim clergy at the behest of the Omayyad monarchs. This happened during the second century of the Muhammadan era much after Prophet Muhammad had passed away". (Hanif Murad's article in the Times of India, dated 4 November, 2016). He further added that "marriage, according to Islam, is not a sacrament but a civil contract. Pakistan Supreme Court has said, "Among Muslims, marriage is not a sacrament, but is in the nature of a civil contract. Such a contract undoubtedly has spiritual and moral overtones and undertones but legally, in essence, it remains a contract between the parties." (ibid) Another commentator writes that, "Once, two persons wanted to finish their marriage as early as possible. And they uttered the word talaq thrice. The Prophet was infuriated. It is an authentic tradition, recorded in six books of *hadiths*. His words were, "I am still alive and you people are so mocking the Quranic law?" He annulled triple talaq. He considered it single divorce. The marriage continued.... Triple talaq has no sanction in true Islamic law, no existence in Quranic law. The word triple has not been used anywhere in the Quran. It is all concoction, it is *biddat*. Even the *maulvis* agree it is innovation, it is *haraam*. They say it is bad in theology but good in law.

It is ridiculous." (Prof. Tahir Mahmood, former NCM chief, 'Frontline' dated 11 November, 2016) All these references refute the very claim that *triple talaq* is divine and hence cannot be changed.

Religion and codes, customs, practices are different

It is extremely relevant in this regard to recall the invaluable teachings and guideline provided by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh as to how to view such issues and related controversies that might crop up or be precipitated particularly in our country disunited by caste, religion, language because of non-fulfilment of the task of democratizing the society. He said, "the programme for the democratic movement should.... include the tasks of social and cultural revolution in our country, which remain unaccomplished even today. Unless these tasks are completed and our people freed from the bondage of social and religious prejudices, conventions and institutions and unless the barrier separating them socially and culturally are demolished and they are transformed into a homogeneous compact community, not only politically but also socially and culturally, communalism cannot be done away with in reality. I like to emphasize once again that this is not a movement directed against religion as such. Rather this movement bases itself on equality and freedom of both believers and non-believers.... Religion and religious customs are two different things. Customs had changed in the past and will change in future as well to fit in with changed social conditions. So, anyone fighting for a change in the existing religious customs cannot be accused of hostility to or renunciation of religion. Did not Kemal Ataturk, even remaining a true Muslim, fight against the Islamic religious customs which were retarding the democratic process of Turkey? Is not Nasser a Muslim, even though he is liquidating many of the Islamic religious customs and institutions in his country? Will any Muslim brand Jinnah a non-Muslim for his non-observance of practically all Islamic religious customs? Have not the Hindus given up many religious customs which they used to observe earlier? The democratic movement will certainly wage relentless struggle against all sorts of religious customs, inconsistent with present social requirements but not against religion as such." (On Communal Problems, SW Vol. II p. 181-83)

Real question is of desired emancipation of women

So, while formulating our view or stand on the issue of terminating *triple talaq* or any such other practice in any religion, what should get primacy: Is it the irrational inflexibility over the question of immutability of enunciations once made based on religion and the motivated commotion raised by the arch Hindu communal RSS-BJP or the desired emancipation women from the thralldom of archaic fiats and impositions of patriarchal oppression? Which one a true human outlook would attest to? Which one would force open the door of social progress?

Surely, every right thinking person who is appalled at the distress and destitution of the women deserted by their husbands based on *triple talaq* would give primacy to the question of emancipation of all women. But how that desired emancipation would come by? First of all, the cry for reform ought to emerge from the Muslim people in fraternity with other sections of the oppressed masses. Intended purpose would not be served or the reform would not find acceptance among the Muslim community if non-Muslim masses raise the demand or the government intervenes in the form of bringing legislation. Rather, it might prove to be a boomerang and help unwanted developments like tilt towards fundamentalism or widened communal divide as is happening now. It bears recall that Raja Rammohan's historic effort to ban bestial practice of *saidaha* or Vidyasagar's tireless endeavour to introduce widow remarriage could have never been successful if the demand was raised by non-Hindu masses and the then government prohibited it through legislation based on that demand. Both Rammohan and Vidyasagar could succeed only because they could get the demand raised from among the Hindu masses and in the process corner and isolate the Hindu priesthood from the broader section of Hindu people. Then, the desired emancipation of women can come by only if correct consciousness dawns upon both Muslim women and men and they realize that their cause is inseparably linked with the emancipation of all other sections of the oppressed toiling masses groaning under the yoke of ruthless capitalist exploitation. It needs to be emphasized that the demand for banning *triple talaq* has common

cause with the demand for stopping diabolic practices like 'honour killing' or female foeticide within Hindu community. Both are anti-women, regressive and hence barbaric. So, while demand for reforming or terminating regressive social practices like *triple talaq* should legitimately be raised from within the Muslim masses, that demand ought to be crystallized and concretized in the form of a mighty movement in such a manner and based on so impeccable a logic that the fundamentalist forces get no scope to divert that movement along wrong track or create confusion by branding such just movements as being sponsored by anti-Muslim forces. Such legitimate reform movements or movement of Muslim women for abandoning barbaric customs and practices would receive further momentum only if a powerful united organized sustained democratic mass movement involving all sections of toiling people irrespective of caste, creed, religion or ethnicity on the burning problems of life surges forth under correct revolutionary leadership rising above all artificially precipitated divisiveness and based on higher proletarian ethics and culture. In the cultural ambience of such a movement in which every oppressed person, male or female, Hindu or Muslim or Christian, resident of Bihar, Gujarat or Kerala, Urdu-speaking or Tamil-speaking, would be involved in a conscious struggle with a common cause, all mutual mistrust, disaffection, suspicion as well as blindness, bigotry, obduracy that the quarters of vested interest deliberately inject and sustain to disrupt people's unity, would gradually be wiped away. When the atmosphere is surcharged with communal tension and conflict as fallout of conspiracy of the forces of reaction, the democratic forces must build up and intensify anti-communal movement as conducive to the broader mass democratic movement as described above. Even the Muslim men and women should realize that unless their struggle against injustice gets due support of the toiling masses belonging to other communities based on the justifiability of the demands, it cannot meet with success. We call upon all conscientious people belonging to both Muslim and Hindu community to seriously ponder over all these extremely important aspects and ensure that the legitimate demand of the oppressed Muslim women is not led astray by the impish fundamentalists and other forces of reaction.

SUCI(C) vehemently protests BJP government's decision to invalidate Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 09-11-16 :

SUCI(C) vehemently protests the decision of the BJP-led central government to invalidate currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 overnight without making appropriate alternative arrangement, thereby putting the entire economy in chaos and making common people suffer immensely. Poor peasants selling their produce in the market during the ongoing harvesting season, small traders and vendors selling items of daily use including food articles, contract and unorganized workers receiving periodic payments and common households withdrawing money on occasions and in small tranches for meeting running expenditure are worst hit. On the contrary, black money which owes its origin to the decadent moribund capitalist system and accumulates in the hands of the big shots rearing and steering the system, with punitive machinery remaining infructuous, would continue to be generated through various means and protected in multifarious forms like moving it outside the country through hawala and such other illegal routes, stashing it in Swiss banks, converting it into real estate property or gold or holding it in banks in various benami (fictitious) accounts by submitting forged documents obviously with covert indulgence by utterly corrupt administration. Hence, the very claim of unearthing black money is a hoax. In the past also, governments run by the Congress feigned to take measures like demonetization of currency notes. But all these proved to be utter failures in arresting generation of black money as the ruling bourgeoisie and its

servitors are generators and beneficiaries of black money and naturally the governments subservient to them are precluded from taking any effective steps. While fake currency notes alleged to have been pumped in the system by criminal forces might be immobilized for some time, question that rightly arises is how could such counterfeit notes enter the country escaping notice of such a sophisticated intelligence system and vigilance network? Moreover, how is that so many safety marks imprinted on the currency note during printing are so easily hacked by the miscreants unless there are unplugged loopholes and leakage routes?

Clearly, the government, unable to check and control organized tampering of the monetary system by reprobates and offenders both within and outside the system, is now passing on the entire burden of its incompetence and ineptitude on the common people already back-broken because of rising economic assault on them. The real cause of corruption lies not in circulation of fake notes but in the rapid fall in ethical and moral standards of the people in highest echelons of the capitalist system who by dint of their position indulge in and abet corrupt practices with impunity. Instead of taking stringent measures against them and recovering black money stashed away in banks overseas, this very step of the government amounts to a cheap stunt designed to befuddle people, divert their grievances, shield turpitude on its part, reap electoral benefits and push common toiling people to immense hardship. We demand that the government take immediate steps to relieve people from shouldering this additional burden of enormous suffering imposed on them by the power that be.

SUCI(C) demands high level enquiry into the Bhopal jailbreak killing to bring truth to the fore

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 04-11-16 :

The contradictory versions, inconsistencies in statements and leakage of some video clippings have rightly raised question about the correctness of the official version of the incident in which eight undertrial prisoners of Bhopal jail allegedly trying to flee were killed on 31 October last when a special task force of Madhya Pradesh police opened fire on them. Many are apprehending, and so also are we, that this has been another case of orchestrated fake encounter which like custodial deaths has, since long, become a common routine affair in the country and regularly defended by the 'democratic' rulers in power. We, along with all democratic-minded right thinking people of the country, strongly condemn this barbaric act.

We demand a high level impartial enquiry into the incident, in accordance with the guidelines of Supreme Court which, of late, has clearly stated that society and the courts obviously cannot and do not accept such extra-judicial deaths caused by the state, since it is destructive of the rule of law and plainly unconstitutional. If, on enquiry, it is found to be a case of stage-managed fake killing by trigger-happy policemen at the behest of some vested interest, then the guilty should be meted out exemplary punishment.

SUCI(C) strongly condemns Maharashtra rape case of minor school girls, demands stringent punishment of the guilty and calls for powerful movement to protect dignity of women

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 05-11-16 :

One runs short of language to condemn the barbaric incident of rape of 12 minor tribal girl students by the principal and teachers of a government-aided private boarding school in Hivarkheda in Buldhana district of Maharashtra. At least three of these girls are reported to be pregnant following this bestial crime on them which occurred surprisingly without being noticed by the local administration and came to light only when pregnancy of one of the victims was diagnosed in her native place following her complaint of stomach pain. Undoubtedly, this is a shame on the entire country and reveals once more how diabolic crime on women is spiralling despite all tall talks of 'beti podao beti bachao' by the government which, in fact, is remaining a passive onlooker to every attempt towards objectification of women and is inexplicably reluctant in taking stern action against the rapists and the



SUCI(C) rally in Kolkata on 14 November in protest against immense hardship and harassment people have been facing from Modi's sudden demonitisation move

misogynists. This ghastly incident once again brings to the fore how fast even the last vestiges of human essence are getting eroded from the society and process of dehumanization taking firmer root with overt and covert indulgence of power that be.

We demand stringent punishments to the guilty and call upon the suffering countrymen to immediately close their rank rising above all divisiveness that the motivated rulers are precipitating to disrupt their struggling unity and develop a powerful organized conscious socio-cultural movement under correct leadership to force the government take appropriate steps to protect safety, honour and dignity of women.

SUCI(C) strongly condemns fascistic attack on freedom of press and demands immediate revocation of the despotic order

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 05-11-16 :

SUCI(C) strongly condemns the most despotic step on the part of the BJP-led central government to slap one-day ban on NDTV which is nothing short of a fascistic attack on the freedom of the press and reminds one of the dark days of emergency clamped by the then Congress government in 1975. Clearly, the sinister design of RSS-BJP is not only to muzzle the voice of protest and criticism but clandestinely foist a fascistic rule on the people.

We demand immediate revocation of this fascistic move and call upon the democratic-minded people to unitedly rise up in vehement opposition to such autocratic fiats and orders.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH