

Join 15th July Parliament Dharna Struggle
against neocolonialism and fascist threats

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Join 15th July Parliament Dharna Struggle against neocolonisation and fascist threats

Through the Vajpayee government the RSS-led Hindutva Parivar is implementing its fascist agenda in a hurry. The state machinery and various departments and institutions are being hastily infiltrated with its cadres. Whipping up of chauvinistic campaign against neighbouring countries, It has conducted the nuclear tests leading to arms race and provoking the danger of another Indo-Pak war. Jingoistic moves are being made to put up Ram temple at Babri Masjid site. In short, during the last three months the Vajpayee government was pushing forward the RSS agenda for a fascist Hindurashtra. Our country is thus facing the gravest challenge of a fascist take over in all fields.

Simultaneously, alongwith this Hindutva offensive and under the cover of its pseudo-Swadeshi utterances BJP government has further accelerated the implementation of the IMF-World Bank-WTO package. The grave consequences of these policies in the East Asian countries making many of them totally bankrupt and the people utterly destitute are not given any consideration at all. That the euphoria created by the Rao-Manmohan team while launching the liberalisation has disappeared as proved by this year's economic survey which speak of negative growth in all fields is also concealed. The newly declared Export-Import policy and the budget proposals are naked surrender to neocolonial slavery.

As a result, millions of workers are thrown out of jobs. The number of unemployed and under-employed is increasing phenomenally. The new agricultural policies have driven thousands of peasants to commit suicide. While the Hindutva forces are boosting about national pride, about half of the people under poverty line, and minimum basic amenities are denied to vast majority. In the absence of even drinking water in more than half of the villages during this summer thousands perished. Thus under the twin threats of fascist take over and neocolonial slavery the country is getting devastated, and the vast masses are impoverished more and more.

In spite of this gravest challenge the parliamentary opposition from Congress to UF par-

ties are not ready to launch any serious struggles for people's cause as they themselves have no basic differences as far as the socio-economic policies are concerned.

In this critical juncture It is being repeatedly proved that only the revolutionary forces can give leadership to the struggle against intensifying neocolonial plunder and growing fascist danger. It is this awareness which has led to the joint move of six organisations, CPI(ML) Red Flag, CPI(ML) New Democracy, CPI(ML) Liberation, COI(ML), MCPI, and COC-CPI(ML) Janashakti based on five slogans paving the way for the all India campaign and parliament dharna on 15 July. This is going to be the first step towards the united all India people's struggle against the BJP government.

We appeal to all progressive, democratic, patriotic and secular forces all over the country to join this anti-fascist, anti-imperialist movement and to extend all co-operation so as to make the campaign and parliament dharna a great success.

- * **Quit-WTO; Reject imperialist dictates on patent laws.**
- * **Scrap privatisation-liberalisation-globalisation; Withdraw New Exim Policy.**
- * **Withdraw new agricultural policies leading to peasant suicides; Provide full protection against crop-damages and usury.**
- * **Implement land reforms; Oppose their reversal; Smash Ranvir Sena like gangs.**
- * **Fight increase in prices of essential commodities.**

New Delhi, Central Reorganisation Committee,
25 June 1998. C. P. I. (ML) Red Flag.

EDITORIAL

New Situation and New Challenges Demand New And Different Responses

The first three months of the Vajpayee government has clearly revealed the real agenda of the Sangh Parivar, which is the driving force behind it. From the very beginning it started with the hawkish statements of defence minister George Fernandes and home minister Advani whipping up chauvinistic feelings against China and Pakistan. These were soon followed by the Pokhran nuclear tests exposing the aggressive nuclear weaponisation of the RSS, and jingoistic statements by the different government and RSS leaders clearly intended to provoke national fanaticism.

Advani is repeating the calls for sweeping constitutional changes including a presidential system of government. These moves are intended to destroy whatever federal character is left in it and to make it more autocratic to serve fascist intentions of Sangh Parivar. In the name of fighting all 'pseudo-liberals' Advani has clearly targeted the left forces as a whole. This is followed by his latest statements on Naxalism, on class struggle and class ideology. He is whipping up anti-Naxalite, anti-left hysteria calling on the state governments to enact black laws in line with TADA to 'exterminate' the so-called left extremism.

At the same time Gulam Ali and M. F. Hussain were attacked. Now the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) is packed with 'historians' who 'discovered' remnants of Ram temple below Babari Masjid. The electronic and print media are manoeuvred to project the views of Sangh Parivar. Sweeping changes to serve saffron interests are being made in the fields of education. RSS men are posted to key posts and infiltration of the state machinery is carried out in a hurried manner. In this way in all fields, by all av-

ailable means the BJP government is engaged in frantically carrying forward the implementation of the fascist agenda of RSS. For strengthening this fascist drive it will not even hesitate to allow hasty erection of Ram temple at Babari Masjid site or to provoke war with Pakistan.

While asserting this, we are not in any way minimising the internal problems faced by the BJP government including internal squabbles within BJP itself. But these must not lead us to an underestimation of the grave fascist threat posed by Sangh Parivar through BJP government. History repeatedly teaches us that how perilous it shall be.

The Sangh Parivar's fascist agenda in this neocolonial phase of imperialism is integrally linked with the intensifying neocolonisation of our country. Its 'Swadeshi' is a mask to cover up its naked and shameless servitude to imperialist interests. It is replacing Congress as the principal political agent of the comprador ruling class. During the last three months through BJP government it has revealed this agenda of perpetuating national slavery. Even the remnant welfare measures are taken away. The country is getting increasingly devastated, and the people pauperised more and more.

With the coming to power of Sangh Parivar through Vajpayee government we are now facing the two menacing threats of intensifying fascist offensive and unprecedented neocolonial slavery. As in many other neocolonies these two aspects are inter-related. International capital is utilising the fascistisation of the neocolonies through various forces like religious fundamentalists, racists etc to make them their safe havens for unlimited plunder.

Advani's hysterics against naxalites

L. K. Advani, the BJP home minister is a very busy man nowadays. Few days back he was extremely busy alongwith defence minister George Fernandes in finding out India's enemy No. one across the borders. They did the job well. In that process BJP government declare India a "nuclear weapon state" and RSS with its tentacle organisations whipped up chauvinistic jingoism and war hysteria. As a result Advani and company could provoke tension along all borders, intensify arms race all over South Asia, and even pose the threat of another round Indo-Pak war.

Having played a key-role in launching this part of the Hindutva agenda, now Advani has turned his attention to the home-turf. His first announcement was that *psuedo secularism* is no more the topmost threat within the country, but the *psuedo-liberals*, by which he meant all brands of Communists. Now after presiding over a meeting of the chief ministers and bureaucrats of the so-called Naxalite infested states at Hyderabad he has become more specific in his attack. According to him 'the perversion created by Naxalism had its roots in the ideological concepts like class-struggle and class-violence.' He warned all those "who give it a certain kind of legitimacy that it does not deserve." He was angry that "Naxalism frequently tends to be romanticised in certain intellectual and media circles." He concluded that "naxalism is the enemy of the Indian dream." So it should be vanquished, banished.

What Advani has aimed at is a very cunning game. In the name of attacking the sectarian

Recognising this new situation is of paramount importance for the genuine left forces to chalk out their immediate tactics. Only when the grave threat of fascism posed by Sangh Parivar is recognised the broad masses and all progressive, democratic, patriotic, secular forces can be organised against it on a radical platform.

At this critical juncture in the history of our country, immediate steps by the revolutionary organisations to come together against the menacing threats of fascistisation and neocolonisation spearheaded by the Sangh Parivar are the need of the hour.

acts of People's War group, he has attacked the revolutionary movement as a whole, and its ideological positions.

The picture is very clear. The sectarian acts and work-style of the PW group is utilised to attack the revolutionary movement as a whole. So he is talking about National Security Act and all other available black laws including the one created by TN government, Prevention of terrorist Activities Act (POTA) to put down naxalites. At Hyderabad he has elaborated his war on psuedo-liberals as the war on naxalites.

It will be a folly if the revolutionary forces interpret Advani's hysterics only as an attack on PW group. It is aimed more against the revolutionary forces as a whole, especially against those who are engaged in reorganising the Communist movement on Bolshevik lines and in developing class struggles then against the PW group which is already on the path of decline.

Fully realising this the revolutionary forces should expose Advani's fascist intentions. They should be challenged. All progressive forces should be mobilised for it.

This is Swadeshi

The new Export-Import (Exim) Policy put forward by BJP government brought 340 more items under Open General License (OGL). This is to help the MNCs and their native collaborators to increase their loot further. On 14 May the Finance minister approved counter-guarantees to three power projects in Tamilnadu, AP and Maharashtra to MNCs from US, UK and Japan. On 15 May production sharing agreements for exploration and production with MNCs for 18 petroleum fields, eleven of them with US companies which are given contracts for 33,510 sq. km was signed. On 13 May contract for copper mining was signed with Phelps Dodge, the biggest US company in this sector. Further mining leases are given to 38 MNCs in Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat for mining in 50,000 sq km area. On May 27 BJP government banned sale of non-iodised salt in the name of saving people like goitre like diseases. But these diseases affect less than 0.5% of the people. So this order is not to save people but to make them pay Rs. 5 per kilo or more for 'iodised salt' of Tata or Captain Cook.

On the split in the CPN (UML)

The split in the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), or CPN (UML), calls for a serious analysis by the Communist forces. In the beginning of this decade when Soviet Union had disintegrated and the imperialist camp had unleashed a fierce onslaught against the socialist forces, the formation of CPN (UML) in Nepal uniting different splinter groups, and it becoming the biggest party in Nepalese parliament during next elections and forming the government was projected as a *model* by many, especially CPI (ML) Liberation like forces who repeatedly calling for a similar 'left confederation' with CPI and CPI (M) here. Elated by their quick gains the CPN (UML) leaders started theorizing their concept of multi-party democracy as a new addition to Marxist theory. They began writing on the international significance of the theory and practice of multi-party democracy also. UML leaders started becoming important participants in various international conferences, besides hosting some such conferences in Nepal. But within a short time of few years this party has vertically split into CPN (UML) and CPN (ML), both section claiming majority of the total membership and almost half of the parliament members. What went wrong and why did this split take place calls for serious discussion especially when so much was earlier written glamourising the unity process leading to the formation of CPN (UML) and its quick gains, and since it was projected once as a model to be emulated.

According to com. Vinod Misra, general secretary of CPI (ML) Liberation, who was "a close comrade-in-arms" of CPN (UML) and whose organisation was having close relations with its leading members from early 1970s (see Liberation, June 1998): "The ML had turned into UML and it began equating its experience in concrete Nepal condition with the CPI (M)'s experiment in Bengal. Its relations with CPI (M) became quite close and Jyoti Basu became the model personality. The CPM leaders began making frequent visits and the impression here in India gained ground that CPM had a crucial say even in cabinet formation and allocation of portfolios". Explaining what happened after the first government led by UML fell he continues: "...soon the government fell but the passion for staying in the government started pushing the

party towards a series of unprincipled compromises. A government that could have been the means for advancing democratic reforms in the society gradually degenerated into an instrument of ministerial careerism, scrambling for posts, luxurious lifestyles and eventually of corruption. Means became the end and in a poor country like Nepal leaders began moving around in foreign cars worth Rs 50 lakhs each. Naturally all these led to serious erosion of credibility among the masses. Many anti-people elements and persons having vested interests made their entry into the party and seized important positions in the party and the government. The party's ideological hold had already weakened. Hence it could not take timely initiatives against these deviations. Multiple centres began emerging and personality clashes became rampant.... The bubble had to burst some day and by the advent of 6th party congress the conditions had ripened for it."

There is a saying that history first repeats as a tragedy and then as farce. After the history of what happened in Soviet Union from the time Krushchevites came to dominance there, this history was tragically repeated in all erstwhile socialist countries and in almost all the Communist parties formed during Comintern period. What happened in CPN (UML) like parties as explained by VM is nothing but farces which shall only gladden the imperialist camp and its compradors. These are effectively utilised by the enemy classes to discredit the Communist movement as a whole. So it will be doing injustice to the movement if one consoles like VM does by saying "rays of hope are still there" since the faction led by Madhav Nepal emphasised on ideological consolidation, and "appeared quite concerned over unprincipled alliances in parliamentary struggles" Facts disprove this type of unfounded optimism.

For, this faction on which VM reposes his faith to rebuild the Communist party in Nepal (which is still called CPN (UML) within a very short time after sixth congress started supporting the minority government of Nepali Congress led by Girija Prasad Koirala. And what is the history of this Nepali Congress and its leader? Like the Congress in India, as the leading political party of the comprador classes it has pre-

sided over the transformation of Nepal from a colony to a neocolony. It is serving not only the interests of the imperialist powers and the local compradors, but has surrendered vital national interests to the Indian comprador state through unequal treaties. By supporting the government led by such a party how can it help CPN (UML) to lead Nepalese people to New Democratic Revolution, or save itself from the rot it has fallen to? Calling for expecting "rays of hope" from such a degenerated social democratic outfit amounts to nothing but misleading the people. It shows a refusal to self-critically analysing the developments which has led to this degeneration.

The basic causes for the degeneration of CPN (UML) to a social democratic party were there at the time of its formation itself. On international questions its appreciation of Gorbachovian positions and upholding of the Dengist line in China showed its total refusal to take lessons from the setbacks suffered by the international Communist movement. There was basic deviation from Comintern and 1963 Great Debate positions on all vital issues. It also refused to go into the ideological basis of the 'left' deviation which dominated the 1969 Ninth Congress of the CPC which in turn paved the way for the emergence of the sectarian line in all newly emerged ML parties, and ultimately to helping indirectly the Dengist take over immediately after Mao's death. As a result from the beginning itself, it was dominated by alien theories like 'theory of productive forces,' and parliamentary reformist illusions. These ideological deviations along with the failure to grasp the changes in approach and tactics adopted by the imperialist camp in the post-Second World War period, or in short failure to make a concrete analysis of the world situation and in continuation to this and as a part of it of the Nepalese situation, and of the experience of the ICM led to an erroneous ideological - political - organisational line. That is why it adopted "a liberal approach on unity matters", included "national capitalists and well-to-do peasants" discarding proletarian class line, and tried to theorise its anti-Leninist approach towards "multi-party democracy" as a contribution to Marxism.

Long back Lenin had pointed out that the bourgeois parliamentary system had become historically obsolete. So the Marxists should not create the illusion that basic changes can be brought about through it. Based on Lenin's Co-

lenial Thesis Comintern taught that in the countries under colonisation the working class should be prepared to lead democratic revolution to victory and establish the "people's Democratic Dictatorship", which in turn should be developed into "dictatorship of the proletariat" as the revolution advances to socialist transformation.

At the same time Lenin also pointed out while bourgeois parliamentary system is historically obsolete, it is still politically relevant and should be used where conditions demand as a tactics to develop the class struggle. This Leninist approach clearly differentiates between surrendering to parliamentarism or to parliamentary illusions and utilising all forms of struggle including parliamentary struggles for developing class struggle. CPN (UML) went against Leninist teachings and surrendered to Krushchevite theory of "peaceful transition" which they theorised as the strategic role of so-called multi-party democracy. So in its ideological-political line, in its class line and in its strategy and tactics CPN (UML) followed a basically social-democratic line right from its beginning. That is why it degenerated to such heinous levels within a very short time. (One should remember that what VM has written now appeared even in Indian papers two years back).

As VM points out in his article it is this degeneration of UML which has paved the way for the surfacing of the arch-sectarian 'Maoist' trend in Nepal, however small it may be. But VM has omitted to mention one important development in Nepal. Apart from the faction of CPN (UML) led by Madhav Nepal which in spite of its claims to take up "ideological consolidation" has become the tail of the arch-reactionary Nepali Congress ministry, and the other extreme, the Maoists', all the other ML factions and left forces have joined together to fight against imperialist interests as well as the expansionist interests of the Indian state, and for democracy. This is a positive development. Let us hope that these united struggles and search for a correct ideological-political-organisational line will pave the way for the reorganisation of a genuine Bolshevik style Communist party in Nepal.

- Karthik -

P. J. James

BJP's Regular Budget: Fulfilling the Unfinished Tasks of Globalisation

At the time of presenting his Interim Budget, Finance Minister Yaswant Sinha had reiterated that "economic reforms will be deepened, broadened and accelerated" in the forthcoming Regular Budget as per the National Agenda for Governance. And now, it is to his credit and to that of all leaders of Sangh Parivar that the BJP government has fully succeeded in so assiduously fulfilling this promise. As a matter of fact, the seriousness with which the BJP government was pursuing this task became very clear in the Exim Policy, the second major economic policy initiative promulgated in the meanwhile. Obviously and in continuation of the initial policy formulations, in an unprecedented and well-calculated move of nuclear explosions, an effective smokescreen was also created to cover up this biggest-ever sell-out of the country to global finance capital as implicit in the Regular Budget presented to Parliament on June 1. No doubt, the "Economic Survey 1997-98" presented to parliament on the eve of the budget which identified slow downs in the growth rates in agriculture, industry, exports and similar other vital sectors had unequivocally indicated a quantum jump in foreign direct investment and inflows of portfolio finance as the only major instrument for accelerating the so-called economic reforms. And this is to be accomplished through a series of concessions and incentives to facilitate the free flow of imperialist capital into the country in the name of overcoming the apparent economic sanctions imposed by imperialists led by USA and Japan coupled with a further shift of the burden of adjustment to the shoulders of vast majority of common and working people. Each and every aspect of this year's budget makes this point amply clear.

Swadeshi in Words, Videshi in Deeds

Various leaders of the Sangh Parivar have eulogised their maiden budget as a "momentus"

one since transfer of power. For instance, Gurumurthy, leader of the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch after congratulating Sinha for presenting such a "land mark" budget went on identifying it as "a broad continuation of the Pokhran spirit" and particularly stressed its people-centric approach in contrast to the "foreigner-centric" approach of all previous budgets. However, a glance at the budget instantly reveals that this pseudo swadeshi rhetoric of Sangh Parivar pales into insignificance especially with regard to the eye-catching headlines relating to the opening up of the insurance sector and the disinvestment of government's stake in public sector units and full dismantling of several public enterprises altogether. In fact, if the United Front government's CMP had stood for partial opening of the insurance (ie health insurance) to private sector, as a manifestation of its extreme servitude to global capital, the BJP has brought the entire insurance sector under full-fledged privatisation and liberalisation as part of the commitment made to WTO. Under the existing circumstances where several leading global insurers have teamed up with Indian counterparts or Indian companies which are looking to the insurance sector have varying ties with foreign insurance companies, this step will directly make the entire Indian insurance sector as mere captives of global finance.

Coupled with this, the most clear-cut policy of disinvestment of public sector equity including Indian Airlines, IOC, GAIL, VSNL and similar other very prestigious and strategic public undertakings envisaged in the budget will have far reaching consequences as far as the broad masses of people are concerned. The government's intention to reduce its stake in all the so-called "non-strategic" units by disinvesting 74% of their equities is quite unprecedented and very sweeping in nature. That too, for a paltry sum of just Rs. 5000 crores indeed! The Government has declared a reduction in its holdidg In Indian Airlines and Indian Oil Corporation to just 49%.

These are directly going into the hands of global companies. Same is the case with VSNL, a fast growing public sector unit which had made spectacular progress in 1997-98 with an increase in profit by 25%. As is obvious, there is no justification for this traitorous move other than Sangh Parivar's abject servility to foreign capital. Of course, along with this, there is a grand programme of closing down the so called "sick" or "loss-making" public enterprises including a most heinous policy of retrenchment.

Sangh Parivar's Swadeshi (ie, Videshi) has other dimensions too. For instance, as per government estimates presented to parliament, the non-performing assets of public sector banks have reached an alarming figure of Rs. 44000 crores as on March 31, 1997. Out of this, as indicated in the budget, the BJP government is going to unravel a programme of writing off Rs. 39000 crores which are solely held by comprador big businesses. This was on the basis of the pre-budget discussions that Sinha had with various comprador business and commercial associations. This give-away exercise in the budget is manifested in other ways also. A decision has been taken to divert 10% of all new accretions to Provident Fund (composed of hundreds of thousands of crores) to private sector securities in the stock exchanges thereby giving a 'Swadeshi' boost to this speculative sector of the economy. To cap it all, the budget enlists several moves to activate the inflows of global finance into highly money-spinning sectors like infrastructure (see Enron agreement), real estate currency and stock markets. Special incentives such as full tax holiday for three years to MNCs entering infrastructures, entry of foreign speculators in domestic debt market, facilities for repatriation of their earnings abroad through dismantling of FERA, and the creation of a nodal agency to coordinate and expedite all clearances required by MNCs are all features of Sinha's budget.

Dual Citizenship for NRIs

As a matter of fact, under the cover of its swadeshi, BJP seems to be the only political party which has been consistently espousing the need for granting citizenship to the most degenerated middlemen and commission agents who act as mere fronts of MNCs and who already enjoy foreign citizenship. At present majority of these traitorous elements led by infamous Hinduja's is now operating under the safe label

"Overseas Friends of BJP." Quite revealingly, the 'more patriotic' BJP finds more patriotism in NRIs which lies in routinely espousing Hindu-tua even while engaging in all kinds of economic offences such as smuggling, drug trafficking, under invoicing exports and over-invoicing imports and similar other illegal and criminal acts. In his budget speech though Sinha announced only a watered-down version of the dual citizenship ie; a half-way measure to accommodate NRI demands by issuing Person of Indian Origin (PIO) cards bestowing Visa-free entry status to them along with various economic and cultural benefits, in one of his post-budget briefings he unequivocally declared that there would not be any going back away from BJP's long-cherished goal of granting full citizenship to NRIs. In the mean while, a series of special incentives are offered to NRIs to increase their investments in various sectors. NRI investment limits have been raised not only in companies but even in speculative portfolio investments. For instance, in one of his post-budget announcements Sinha raised the portfolio investment ceiling in the paid up capital of a company from the existing level of 1% to 5%. Now it is an open secret that the proposed repealing of the Urban Ceiling Act is clearly intended for the NRIs who are already on their onward march to highly speculative urban real estate development including housing and construction. Accordingly, the biggest-ever far concessions and incentives are made available to construction activities. No doubt, the country is moving towards a Thailand-type scenario as revealed by the South-East Asian turmoil. In this context, it is to be reiterated that regarding its content and character NRI capital is the same as today's imperialist capital.

True Essence of Budgetary Allocations

From the above sketch of sell-out to global capital, let us turn to the budget estimates though serious minded people do not attach much sanctity to such figures for, as Sinha himself has said, after all "the budget is not the last word". Still these figures are helpful to grasp the basic trends operating in the economy. Out of the total expenditure of Rs. 2,67,927 crores almost a quarter (exactly 24%) is set apart for interest payments, ie, almost 75000 crores. In fact, total liabilities of the central government as on March 31, 1998 were Rs. 773541 crores and the interest payment envisaged in the 1997-98 budget had been Rs. 65700 crores.

This year's rise in interest payments indicate a further gallop in total debt of the government as officially estimated. On the other hand, the total budgeted amount for debt servicing (repayment of debt plus interest payments) for 1998-99 is a staggering figure of Rs. 175253 crores which is very much higher than the total revenue receipts of Rs. 161994 crores. The second biggest leakage, ie; another way of wasting the national product, is the outlay on defence which is being raised to Rs. 41200 crores with promises of further escalation in the context of the war psychosis and arms race initiated by the BJP government at the behests of imperialists. Allocation for atomic energy department alone has been raised by 68%. An enquiry into the details of defence expenditure reveals that a sum of Rs. 10360 crores from this year's allocation is earmarked for immediate purchase of arms equipment from abroad.

A major part of the budget document and much time in post-budget discussions are used for explaining the increases in the allocations to various sectors from the central plan outlay of Rs. 105187 crores which is higher by Rs. 24154 crores from the revised estimates for 1997-98. In fact Sinha was very much eloquent while giving the proposed expenditures for agriculture and rural development, education and infrastructure development, in order to prove that his budget is growth-oriented. Now let us have a brief look at each one of them. In reality the much trumpeted 58% higher expenditure on agriculture over Rs. 1805 crores spent in 1997-98 amounts to only Rs. 2854 crores in 1998-99 which is very meagre, ie, just 27% of the total central plan outlay. This is so because agriculture is a state subject and central expenditure usually forms an insignificant part of total public investment in that sector. As a matter of fact, after reiterating an allocation of 40% of the central plan to agriculture and rural development in its National Agenda, the BJP was accomplishing a duplicity, as the total central expenditure in this largest sector comes to only 11.8% in 1998-99 which is even marginally lower than the 11.9% share last year. The case of investment in education is more revealing. After all, along with its declaration to achieve universal primary schooling from roof-tops, the BJP has also promised an increase in educational expenditure by 50%. And now the central plan outlay on education has been raised to Rs. 7043 crores from Rs. 4716 crores last year. However, the biggest item in this increase

of Rs. 2300 crores is due to the provision of Rs. 950 crores for payment of the Fifth pay Commission salaries to university teachers alone. In this context certain World Bank observations on India's primary education are worth quoting. According to World Bank, for India to achieve the goal of universal primary education an additional 7.5 lakh teachers are to be recruited urgently. For this, at least Rs. 40000 crores are to be expended during the 9th plan itself and in the subsequent plans the amount has to be increased. In fact, World Bank estimates are very modest as according to independent observers India need additional 44 lakh teachers to achieve universal primary education. BJP's aim of reaching this goal by setting apart a paltry sum is to be compared with these estimates. And finally, to revive industrial growth, the budget proposes a 35% increase in public investment in infrastructure-energy, transport and communication. However, 60% of this outlay is to be funded exclusively by resources from the public sector itself. The budget actually expects public enterprises to come up with a 32% increase in investible funds over and above their present contribution to the exchequer. The upshot of the argument is simple, ie, much trumpeted increase in public investment will remain only on paper while stagnation in agriculture and industry will continue to intensify. As is obvious, rather than ensuring higher budgetary support, the BJP government is aiming at mobilising resources for infrastructure through extra-budgetary sources.

Resource Mobilisation Efforts

This first Regular Budget of the BJP government expects a net tax receipt of Rs. 1,16,857 crores and non tax revenue of Rs. 45137 crores. So that the amount to be borrowed during the year 1998-99 is a whopping Rs. 91025 crores which is exactly equal to the fiscal deficit amounting to almost 34% of the total expenditure of Rs. 2,67,927 crores. While the revenue deficit which is the difference between the net revenue receipts and revenue expenditure of the year amounts to Rs. 48068 crores. The most striking feature associated with this year's additional tax receipts is the near total dependence on indirect taxes, while application of the Laffer principle (widening the net and lowering the rate) is going to further reduce the role of direct taxes in resource mobilisation effort. Every increase in indirect taxes will be passed

on to the consumers and will be highly inflationary. The hike in excise duties in particular will further aggravate the recessionary trends in domestic industrial sector.

An interesting dimension to the tax proposals is the new levy of 8% on one-third of imports in responses to specific pleas by specific industries and even specific firms. Obviously, it is part of the give away exercise for those comprador sections that form the bedrock of Sangh Parivar. By this act, the BJP expects that it can enlist the support of the entire Bombay club which was clamouring for a level playing field vis-a-vis the MNCs in the context of the unprecedented demolition of import tariffs at the behest of WTO. It is also ironical that the protagonists of liberalisation whose usual reaction to any tax proposal is to criticize it, have wholeheartedly welcomed this move. However, import taxes on several agricultural products such as rubber and intermediate products such as caprolactum which are produced by domestic industries still being very low or nil, this so called 'protection' is not going to give any positive effect on domestic production.

Stagflation to Intensify

An interesting feature of the budget is that it hides much more than it reveals. Everybody knows that the increased allocations on food subsidy (which will be absorbed in the form of enhanced minimum support prices to farmers and other storage costs of foodgrains), rural development, agriculture, education, etc are mere eyewash. Coupled with this price rise and inflation will further erode even the limited purchasing power of the masses, while reduction in government's capital investment in vital sectors will aggravate the recessionary trends in real productive sectors of the economy. Persisting down trend in agriculture and industry and decline in employment will adversely affect the resource mobilisation efforts of the government especially from indirect taxes. The concessions and special give aways offered to comprador business houses, urban middle classes and other pressure groups will also exert much pressure on government finances in the days to come. These measures enacted in the name internal liberalisation and swadeshi will be at the expense of working people and broad masses of people. Together with this the inflationary trend of the budget combined with increased railway, postal and petrol rates will make the life of the people

very horrible. The likelihood is for an uptrend in the rate of unemployment and percentage of people below poverty line. To be precise, the budget is definitely a "stagflation-prone" one.

Under monetarism, the budget does not occupy a pre-eminent position in economic policy-making as was the case with Keynesianism. Quite often, several of the major economic decisions including resource mobilisation efforts (eg. hike in administered prices of essential items) are taken outside the budgetary framework. Deliberate moves to devalue the rupee under the guise of finding out a market-responsive exchange rate, industrial and trade policies, all of which have deeper and broader inter-connections with the economy are not all incorporated into the budget document nowadays. To get a comprehensive picture of the ongoing globalisation, one has to take all these instruments of economic policy together along with their inter-connections. In the specific case of the budget, usually several modifications are added to it in course of time or the government can come forward with a supplementary budget if the situation so warrants. As a matter of fact, after the formal presentation of the budget in parliament on June, the Finance Minister himself has added several modifications and amendments to the earlier document. In the same vein, as the stagflationary trends aggravate and if the resource mobilisation efforts collapse altogether, there is every chance of the government coming with a supplementary budget within a few month's time. ●

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of bombs, bread and water

(The nuclear debate is now dominated by the RSS lobby as all parliamentary opposition have taken apologist stand. This article published in 'The Hindu' of May 24 like few others are exceptions—RS)

As children there was that observation of Gandhi which we used to be constantly reminded of. Before taking a decision, we should ask ourselves how our action would benefit the poorest of Indians. One wonders if this question even crossed the minds of the Prime Minister of India and his entourage when they decided to explode three nuclear devices on Buddha Pournima day.

One also wonders what the old half-clad and bare-footed woman who the same day was photographed lugging cans of kerosene on a hot summer morning (*The Hindu*, May 12, page 3 of the Chennai edition) would have felt if she knew of the explosions. 'The Government has decided that if we do not have bread, we can make nuclear bombs,' is what she quite legitimately might have said.

The BJP-led Government has acted much like a weak dictatorship that needs a diversion to drum up public support for a regime that is falling apart. And by its laudatory response, the Indian elite has demonstrated that it is second to none in its love of power and self-destruction. As the Government crows over the explosions, as the defence experts applaud the decision, as the influence-makers in society endorse the action, the mask of our heritage of non-violence has finally been ripped off our faces. The blind celebration of the explosions that has bordered on jingoism has shown up our 50-year-old policy on nuclear weaponry in the world for what it really was: sanctimonious posturing to the rest of the world. The (nuclear) arms race that will now be unleashed in South Asia is going to threaten the lives of the 1.2 billion people of the subcontinent. It is a frightening thought that the much feared nuclear Armageddon may actually happen. And not in West Asia or in Europe but here in South Asia.

Whatever our Government, defence establishment and the political class may say, it was a horrendous decision to take. It was in any case

an open secret after the 1974 explosion that India had the capability to make nuclear weapons. Indeed, that the explosions were conducted less than two months of the BJP-led Government assumed office shows that the nuclear establishment was in fact ready for years to conduct the tests at short notice. And Ghauri or no Ghauri, Mr. George Fernandes or no Mr. George Fernandes, there is no immediate "threat" to our borders. So why these explosions? Not one but three, and not "simple" tests, but including one on the road to making a hydrogen bomb.

The only reason for these tests has to be that the BJP-led Government wanted to cover up its ineffectiveness, squabbling and drift during the first two months in office. A party that promised so much found that it had nothing to offer for improving the lives of people. So it chose instead to take a decision that will temporarily revive its image among its traditional supporters but which will eventually turn out to be a reckless decision to have been taken.

In the two months since the coalition was cobbled together, the Government has spent the larger part of its time and effort fending off attacks from within. It has not taken a single major decision on the many very important issues that need to be addressed. It has not made a single major policy pronouncement. And it has not announced any plan for a major new initiative save the vague talk of Mr. L. K. Advani of the need for a Presidential system of Government and why the working of the Constitution should be reviewed.

There has been no sign of a fresh approach to the problems of Kashmir or the crisis in Assam. There has been no sign of the Government having something substantive to offer for the economy, so far it has only regurgitated the proposals of the past. There has been no sign of a major new programme for agriculture despite the suicides of farmers across the countries and the promise to expand production by eight percent a year. There has been no sign of any major programme to tackle unemployment explicitly mentioned in the National Agenda as one of the priorities of the coalition. The list is endless. Whether it is in housing, drinking water or inter-State river disputes, the Government

Left at Crossroads

In his *column* in April 17 *Frontline* Praful Bidwai has correctly observed that "the left parties are best placed to reform Indian politics radically. To achieve this goal the left must alter its strategies profoundly."

But his analysis to find reasons for the 'collapse of UF' which the 'left' had projected as the answer to counter BJP and Congress, shrinking of the 'left' votes from 12% in 1957 to 7 in 1998 etc. do not touch upon the basic ideological-political questions which have reduced CPI (M)-CPI to tailing behind the ruling class policies. As a result the rectifications he suggest in the second part remain superficial.

has maintained a remarkable silence in the first two months. The image has been of a Government that does not work.

Now the Government has suddenly acted. It has shaken off its stupor on a issue that did not demand any immediate decision, on what by no stretch of imagination is a priority subject and without any sign that it has thought through the consequences of the action. That the possibility of going nuclear was mentioned in the BJP manifesto is no argument. So too was education, sanitation, housing etc., or which the silence continues.

The decision to conduct the nuclear tests was a master stroke to revive the BJP's sagging political image. The TV picture of the tricolour quite deliberately placed next to the Prime Minister as he read his brief statement on the explosions filled the middle classes with pride about their nation. This bastion of the BJP's base has always loved anything that is nuclear and anything that conveys power and glory. In all the self-congratulation that has followed the tests, there have been few critical voices. While we are proud to have a President who was showing a remarkable sensitivity to the issues demanding national attention and has not fought shy of expressing his concern where it has mattered, the President chose to congratulate the scientists for the success of the three nuclear tests. It is an accomplishment but not something that the country should be proud of.

It is not the international reaction to the tests that should concern us. The hypocrisy in such criticism has always been known. And as

Yes, as he says the left should go for "serious mass mobilisation around real issues" like, 'land reforms, security of employment and fair wages, access to safe drinking water, health and education, women's rights, transparency in governance and a clean government.'" And there is a "need to co-ordinate short-term goals with, and fuse them into, long-term strategies." But these and all the remedies like unity of all left forces as he suggests can be put into practice only when there is a basic rectification of the right opportunist policies like becoming apologists of the IMF-World Bank dictated neocolonial economic policies and becoming advocates of parliamentary cretinism. This is possible only

often has been pointed out, China and France have pursued an independent nuclear policy without being concerned about what the world's press or the governments may say. What should concern us is what the first major decision of the BJP-led coalition tells us about the Government's priorities. It is not a crude simplification to say that with this action, the BJP is telling us that bombs are more important than bread.

Of course, there is the argument that without security we cannot get on with the job of nation-building. The hawks and the so-called defence experts also tell us that India had no option, that a nuclear deterrent is the best protection against our hostile neighbours and that a message must be conveyed that India cannot be pushed around. Since we have demonstrated our nuclear capability, the tests will quite possibly be followed by India even signing on to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

No nuclear deterrent ever solved any problem. The nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union did not prevent the country's collapse. The threat is always from within. Irrespective of the support Pakistan gives to the terrorists of Kashmir, the main cause of the violence in Kashmir as well as in Assam and the North-East has always been our own. Even half-a-dozen nuclear tests will not address the roots of insurgency in the border States. Our dominant political class seems incredibly blind to something as obvious as this. A strong India is not one which has demonstrated that it has the capability to put together a nuclear arsenal.

Multinationals and the Seeds Business

The world seeds business is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful multinationals who also dominate the global chemical and pesticide market. An essential part of the strategy of these multinationals in penetrating the world seeds market is their take-over of government research institutions under the privatisation philosophy prevailing in the west. The most significant has been the take-over of the prestigious state-owned Plant Breeding Institute (PBI) in UK by Unilever in 1987. It is no mere accident that these companies are today controlling good part of biotechnological research efforts to develop improved varieties of seeds, aimed at multiplying the companies' profits. An immediate marketing strategy for these multinational companies is to increase the use of herbicides and pesticides by developing pesticide and herbicide-tolerant varieties. Twenty seven corporations are researching on all major crops to develop adaptability in them to particular brands of chemicals. For instance, Soya beans have been made resistant to Ciba Geigy's Atazine herbicide and this has increased the annual sales of the herbicide by \$120 million. Plants and germplasm constitute the base mat-

erial for such research. It is in this context that the multinationals have been lobbying with their governments to press for a universalised system of patents in plants and plant varieties. With a strong patent protection for anything that can be produced in their labs and removal of regulations on their unhampered investments in the Third World, the multinationals are preparing for an aggressive take-over of the world agriculture and food markets through the control of seeds business.

Patenting of life-forms would ensure that farmers return to the company selling seeds, year after year, as saving seeds from the previous years harvest would become illegal. The companies do not even make a secret of their sinister designs. John Hardinger, Director of bio-technology at Dupont, a US multinational says "the increasing application of molecular biology techniques is allowing the various segments of the world's largest industrial sector to form logical linkages that were never before practical. To win the game in the end, you have to be able to manage bio-technology."

when the day to day struggles, all tactical approaches including utilisation of parliamentary struggles are linked with the long term strategy of completing anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution. Instead of it what the CPI (M) led left is doing today is 'hunting with the hunter and running with the hare', that is even while claiming to lead the left and talking about socialism, it is implementing the very same ruling class policies in LF ruled states and thinking of opportunist alliances even uniting with Congress in the name of fighting Hindutva forces.

It is already proved and is going to be proved further in coming days that today Hindutva Parivar or any other religious fundamentalist forces are not mere revivalist forces, but effective tools for neocolonisation. Only by taking firm anti-imperialist stand, mobilising all progressive democratic patriotic forces in a countrywide movement against privatisation-liberalisation-globalisation policies, for quitting WTO and for effective land reforms the imperialist

forces, their native collaborators and communal fascists can be effectively combated. Only in this way the conditions for real left unity and for the emergence of a people's alternative against the ruling class political forces, now being polarised around BJP and Congress, can be created.

-Karthik-

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Indonesia: After Suharto?

While the anti-Suharto riots were spreading in Indonesia the IMF officials left Jakarta in a chartered plane in the night like thieves. Even the organ of imperialists, the *Wall Street Journal* had to admit "last autumn Indonesia turned to the IMF as an economic life-saver. Instead the IMF programme contributed to the turmoil now wrecking the country. Instead of taking back even a *rupiah* from the \$46 billion family wealth amassed by Suharto during his three decades of totally corrupt dreaded fascist rule, in return to the \$43 billion package announced by IMF and finance ministers of major imperialist countries last year end, price rises of food and fuels, cuts in all state subsidies to the poor and into areas of social spending were demanded. As these price rises were announced 70% of people took to the streets to rebel.

The IMF package only created a fall in gross domestic product of 5% in last few months which later increased to 15-20%. Inflation was 7% in January, 13% in February and by now 100%. Exports fell by 60% in last three months while local currency *rupiah* lost 70% of its value. Factories are continuously closing throwing out many more lakhs while real wages are falling day by day. In the agricultural sector also stagnancy is phenomenal demanding import of more and more of all food items. Thus the *Asian Tiger* is left bleeding by IMF and its imperialist backers.

Imperialists have played the familiar game as they have repeatedly done in numerous neo-colonies when the hated ruler there serving their interests is asked to step down so that another imperialist agent can replace him with the repressive ruling system intact. In spite of release of a few political prisoners and promising elections next year, new president Habibee has made his intentions clear. The ruling system will be preserved while all imperialist dictated policies will be continued.

When the revolts were spreading, according to available information, the opposition leader Megavati Sukarnoputri did not come forward to lead with an alternate agenda. Another leader Amien Rais who claims support from Muslim organisations called off a proposed million strong protest march just before Suharto fell. None of these leaders are for changing the repressive ruling system. They do not even talk about reforms in the dreaded military and police, and electoral reforms. They are afraid of a movement which

is a threat to private property and existing social order.

What is required is confronting the power of state machinery, the army, police and the bureaucracy, who are still in almost total control, the power of capital in work places, and the landlord class in command of agrarian sector, and creating conditions to overthrow them. Only a Communist party built up as the vanguard of the working class can give leadership to this mighty social revolution. Present indications are that only splintered Communist groups exist. As in other countries the prime task is to build up a party capable of taking off from the popular revolts and completing the overthrow of the rule of imperialists and their compradors, and the ruling system which serves them.

Ban on common salt

The union government has banned the use of non-iodised salt from May 27 in spite of strong protests by all progressive forces. As a result the cost of salt produced by Tata and Captain Cook like companies has gone up to Rs. 7 per kilo. Already these monopolies have cornered the sale of 25% of the 52 lakh metric tonnes required in the country per year. The government spokespersons themselves have admitted that the cost of iodisation per kilo of salt will be only 10 paise. As the manufacturers, mostly small-scale, are only paid roughly 50 paise per kilo of salt, it is not difficult to calculate the fabulous profit cornered by these companies. Because of it many more monopolies have entered the scene threatening the take over of whole of salt iodisation and sale by them. To further increase the profits these monopolies have started large scale manufacturing units of common salt, which is making many lakhs of the workers already employed in this field.

This is another naked effort by the government to favour the large salt companies and MNCs. The alarm raised by the government agencies about incidence of goitre and other diseases caused by iodine deficiency is a totally false one as very few regions have reported this.

So this ban on non-iodised salt is an invitation to the monopolies to loot the people by selling so-called iodised salt at exorbitant rates.

P. J. James

D. P. E. P: Imperialist Vice-grip over India's Primary Education

The District Primary Education programme (DPEP), funded and implemented by the World Bank and European Commission has already spread to 150 districts in 14 states including Kerala which is even reported to have already achieved the goal of universal primary education. DPEP, which is totally overhauling the entire primary education ultimately aims at demolishing India's formal education system catering to the poor through a 'deschooling' process. To assess it correctly one need to have a critical look at the primary education as a whole in India today, as DPEP is being introduced as a solution to the crisis that the primary education is facing today.

Primary Education Over the Years

Just as in the case of other democratic rights the idea of universal primary education also gained popularity during the national movement and the freedom struggle. In the beginning of this century, Gopalakrishna Gokhale though didn't disagree fundamentally with Lord Macaulay, in the primary education bill introduced in the viceroy's legislature declared universalisation of primary education as one of the important objectives of the freedom struggle. As opposed to the colonial policy of "gradualist and restrictive" approach to primary education the nationalists wanted an "expansionist" approach so that primary education cover all the children in all parts of the country. Universal primary education that is formal, compulsory and based on the mother tongue was considered as one of the basic duties of the national struggle. There are enough indications to this effect from the observations of the national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Zakir Hussain. According to the programme put forward by the colonialists in the 1940s, the universalisation of education was to be achieved in forty years, i.e. by 1984. Contrary to this colonial attitude considering the democratic aspirations as well as the objectives of the freedom struggle formal and compulsory education upto the age of 14 was included as a government responsibility in Article 45 under the Directive Principles of the Constitution. While accepting primary education as a government responsibility the rulers also accepted the basic

premises of the Macaulay's education system. In other words other concepts of education that came forward during the national struggle like Gandhi's concept of basic education were rejected. Though the new education policy seemed to indicate the integration of the colonial and the nationalist approach soon it gave way to elitisation of education based on the colonial tradition. For example, the rulers went back on the objective of achieving universalisation of primary education within ten years of writing the constitution (i.e. by 1960s). Later the approach of the rulers was worse than that of the colonialists. (For details; J. P. Naik, Elementary Education in India: Promise to Keep, New Delhi, 1975). Though many commissions like the Kothari commission which included experts from the UNESCO produced many reports no moves were initiated other than declarations to remove the pitiable conditions of the primary education. In the first five year plan 56 percent of the total budget on education was allotted for primary education as if to show the sincerity to the objectives of the freedom struggle. But by the third five year plan the amount declined to only 24 percentage. The effect of the negligence of the primary education was that by the beginning of the 1970s more than 50 percent of illiterate of the world were in India. At the same time we observe that China which was more populated and had a situation much worse than India in 1949 removed illiteracy and achieved universalisation of education by the 1970s.

In the beginning of the 1970s quoting the Kothari commission the Planning commission claimed universalisation of education will be achieved by the end of the sixth plan. The commission also released figures to show that 40 percent of total fund for education is allocated for primary education in the sixth plan. But noted economist and educationist Asok Mitra has pointed out that govt. did not release funds thus set aside for primary education. At the same time the actual expenditure for education as a whole fell from seven percent of the total plan expenditure in the first plan to a mere 1.5 percent in the eighth plan. According to the World Bank publication "India; Poverty, employment and Social Services", [1989, page. 125-126],

India has one of the lowest per capita expenditure on education. For example in 1986-1987 Kenya's per capita expenditure was 16 dollars while that of Thailand and Egypt were 34 dollars each and that of Malaysia's was 156 dollars as compared to the mere 10 dollars of India. (Many poorest countries of Africa were ahead of India on this). During this period expenditure on higher education increased from 9 percent to 16 percent. The latest report by the ministry of Human Resource Development agrees with these facts. (Human Resource Development Ministry, 'Education For All'). According to a recent study by the UNESCO on the primary education in India, 13.5 percent of primary schools do not have buildings; in 28 percent of them there is only one teacher, 40 percent have no blackboards; and 59 percent has no drinking water. According to the census of 1991-92, 10.16 crores of children were admitted into 5.658 lakhs primary schools. (According to the fifth and sixth Educational Survey of NCERT about 90 percent primary schools are funded directly by the government). The Human Development Report of UNDP for 1994 shows that in India there are 34.5 crore children below the age of 14. What this tells us is that a lions share of the children have not reached the schools at all. The government statistics tell us that four out of ten children joining schools drop out in the primary school itself. Some other statistics tell us that 10 crores of children who do not go to schools are employed as child labourers in different sectors [EPW editorial: Jan 4-11, 1997]. What all these statistics reveal is the inability of the present education system which is a continuation of the colonial period to provide primary education to the majority of our children. Some studies show that to reach all the children of India to schools some 44 lakh teachers have to be recruited. (Frontline, April 18, 1997). The calculations of the World Bank which has been lately intervening actively in primary education in India is more moderate. According to them to reach all the children between the age of 6-10 to schools 7.5 lakh teachers are required. For this in the ninth plan at least 40000 crores of rupees have to be expended and in subsequent plans the amount have to be increased. [For details refer to World Bank, Primary Education in India 1997].

The New Education Policy of 1986 and the New Tendencies

As part of the New Economic policies introduced in India from the mid eighties by Rajiv

Gandhi government under pressure from the international capitalist forces, a new education policy was declared in 1986 to regulate the field of education. Just as in the case of economic policies in the field of education also the policies and influence of the international funding agencies including the world bank began to reflect in a significant way. The basic ideas of the policy of the 1986 came from the world bank study of 1986 'World Bank Funding Education in Developing countries' (Oxford University Press, London). The basic position of this study was that in the coming days it is not possible to remove illiteracy by only formal education and since poor countries like India is facing a resource crunch it is not possible to provide all people of these countries formal education. The world bank study gave a shot in the arm to the informal educational program being put out globally by the UNESCO, Ford Foundation and other funding agencies through the different non-governmental agencies. World bank itself sponsored many informal educational programs in Latin American countries which had as its ideological basis the 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' developed by the Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire. This was the background of the new education policy of 1986 in which the earlier position of formal education for all was abandoned together with a return to the pre 1947 colonial position of restricting formal education to the elite few and mere literacy to the majority through non-formal education. An example from the new education policy statement will show that this policy tries to establish non-formal education in place of the formal education. "Before 1990 all children below the age of 11 years should be put through either 5 years of school education or equal amount of informal education." (We can see that the 1986 Bangkok Conference on Education held under the auspices of the World bank, establishes, considering the shortage of funds in the poor countries, informal education in place of the formal education and higher education in place of the primary education). Based on this the National literacy Mission came into existence and under its leadership many efforts at literacy campaigns were organized through district administration and non-governmental organizations by giving grants to the latter.

Another important objective of the education policy of 1986 was to reform the formal education at the all India level. In selected places Centers of Excellence and in every district Navodaya schools were established with the

aim of raising quality and standard of education and to have profitable returns on the money spend on education. This was nothing but an informal declaration that in the changed circumstances the rulers are following the same policy of elitisation of education followed by the colonialists. (This is not to forget that for the elites the Central and English Medium schools had already been there). At the same time at the all India level in the name of strengthening the primary education the Department of Human Resource Development initiated a number of programs. Among them the most important was the Operation Blackboard (O.B.) project started in 1986 itself. The objective of this program was to provide for every primary school in the country with at least two classrooms, the necessary number of black boards, maps, charts, toys etc. This program which resulted in the expenditure of about Rs. 800 crores by 1993 is supposed to have benefited 4.69 lakhs schools, as claimed by the Human Resource Development Ministry. However, other studies contradict these claims. According to these studies O.B. was a program only on paper. Not only that the drop out rate also increased from 40 percent to 46 percent after the O.B. was introduced. According to two studies in the early 1990s (Usha Rai: Operation Black Board, Literacy for All Remains Elusive; Sanjeev Sreevastava: Operation Black Board Bonanza for Firms, Curse for Students) corruption and extravaganza were the only leftouts of the O. B. program. Along with the O. B. some other reforms were also introduced. One of them was the conversion of the existing teachers' training institutes into D. I. E. T (District Institute of Educational Training). The argument was that to make the school education successful the teachers require professional training and support. Still another reform was the introduction of the Minimum Level of Learning (MLL) program. This came out of the realisation that the cause of the increasing drop out rate was the present curriculum and the textbooks. (However it may be noted that this realisation was not applicable to central and English medium schools). The MLL was introduced after the suggestions put forward by the R. H. Dave Committee in 1989. Textbooks that are expected to provide a minimum level of knowledge in language, mathematics and social sciences were prepared and experimented in a number of schools. The MLL was also part of the O. B. program introduced from the 1986 in the primary education.

World Bank Tightens Grip Over the Primary Education

In consonance with the ever-intensifying policies of globalisation and liberalisation the process of the retreat of the state from social welfare activities that includes education is also getting intensified. These policies were implemented in the name of structural adjustment programs being implemented by the IMF - WB combine in the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries including India. In all the poor countries undergoing structural adjustment programs the WB had put forward micro sectoral adjustment in educational sector to regulate it. The details of these are available in the Country Economic Memorandum that the WB signs with the country that undergoes SAP. The adjustments oblige the governments to drastically cut down the expenditure on education, and cut-backs in entry into the primary schools and teacher-student ratio as part of the new economic policies. Studies show this as the general condition in the 86 countries that has undergone the WB sponsored adjustments in education. For example closing down primary schools and retrenching teachers under the excuse of not being viable is or uneconomic is part of the WB's education program. (In fact WB had pointed out in its 1978 publication "Investment in Indian Education Uneconomic?" that the money spend in Indian schools is uneconomic). UNDP study also shows that following SAP government spending on education fell sharply in India. According to its Human Development Report of 1994 among the 116 states it has studied India ranks 82. The ranking was done on the basis of expenditure on education as a proportion of the national income. Until the 90s before globalisation-liberalisation policies were widespread the generally accepted view was either 'universal elementary education' or 'school for all'. But after the 1990 Jomtien "Conference of Education for All" in Thailand conducted under the auspices of the WB a more attractive slogan 'Education for All' came to be associated with education. The 1991 WB publication "Primary Education: A World Bank Policy Paper" makes clear the role and responsibility of the WB in this matter. From 1990 onwards many governments in countries like India is spreading this attractive slogan as a smokescreen to hide the anti-people education policies pursued by them. In the 1990 Jomtien 'World Conference on Education for All' besides

(Contd P 22)

Reports from states

Farmers' and Agricultural workers, demonstration in Orissa demanding Compensation for Crop loss

Hundreds of farmers, agricultural workers and share croppers staged a mass demonstration in front of Tihidi Block office on 1st of June 1998 demanding adequate compensation to croppers due to unprecedented pest attack and irresponsible attitude of irrigation department.

The irresponsibility and carelessness from the part of Orissa Irrigation department have contributed much alongwith other factors to inflict heavy blow upon the farmers of Tihidi block area in the form of massive crop loss. Instead of supplying irrigation water through Dasmanja canal during the month of December the irrigation department released the water only after a lapse of more than one month time. Alongwith the unseasonal rain this delay in watersupply caused heavy damages to the crops of Talapada, Kubera, Mukundapur, Guamala, Achaka, Palia, Bhatapada, Saya, Sindol, Kohla and other panchayats of Tihidi block. The peculiar weather conditions contributed to the unprecedented propagation of insects and pests and the crops of vast areas were got damaged. Even after the application of heavy doses of pesticides the crops were not saved. It is suspected that many of the pesticides have become ineffective and new pesticide-resistant varieties of insects have emerged. Many of the farmers have lost the whole crop. More than 50 percent of the peasants of the affected area didn't even tried to harvest their crops and those who have harvested got the maximum of 10% of what was available normally.

The crop loss has created a serious situation in which even the survival of the poor peasants has become difficult. Most of the poor peasants who cultivated high yielding paddy varieties were depending heavily on loans taken on high interest. What was left of the income from their previous crop was invested in the present crop and the damages left them even without a grain to survive on. Due to scarcity of food many peasants were compelled to leave their village. Not only the paddy crop but other cereal-pulses crops were also damaged due to non availability of irrigation water and pest attack.

It was in such a situation the Orissa Agricultural worker's Association organised peasants, share croppers and agricultural workers and staged a mass demonstration in front of Tihidi Block office. They demanded, (1) adequate and immediate compensation to the affected farmers and share croppers of Dasmanja canal area, (2) to ensure crop insurance to all croppers and share croppers. (3) to write off the bank loans, dues and irrigation taxes of affected farmers, (4) to repair and to properly maintain the Dasmanja canal and to ensure adequate and timely water supply, (5) to make fertilizers and pesticides available at controlled prices, (6) to ensure loans to peasants and share croppers from co-operative and scheduled banks at nominal interest, (7) to fix remunerative price for agricultural products before harvest, (8) to scrap new agricultural policies and to reject the imperialist dictates on patent laws and (9) to investigate properly the agricultural scams of Orissa involving crores of rupees and to book the culprits.

The peasants and agricultural workers participated in the demonstration assembled at the Purunahat square of Tihidi and a memorandum with the above demands was given to the Tahsildar. A mass meeting was held in front of the Block office after the rally and that was presided over by Com: Ratnakar Jena. CPI (ML) Red-Flag Orissa state secretary Com: Sivaram spoke in the meeting along with other comrades.

After the meeting a delegation led by Comrades Retnakar Jena, Prabhat Behera, Sasibhushan Behuria, Dinabandhu Das, Jagabandu Mohanthy and other met the Block Development Officer and gave a memorandum. The memorandum addressed to the Chief Minister was also handed over to the BDO. The delegation informed the BDO that the organisation will be compelled to intensify the struggle in case the just and legitimate demands made by the peasants are not considered favourably.

The rally was led by comrades Janjali sahu, Jatani Mahalik, Gauranga Sahu, Subhash Mahalik, Bhagirathi Ramesh, Raghu Jena, Narahari and others.

Campaign and Rally against the Govt. policy on PDS

As in other parts of the country, in Tamilnadu also the central and state Govts. are im-

plementing policies dictated by the imperialist institutions like IMF, WB and WTO denying the basic rights of the population. As a part of the policy to reduce food subsidy the whole public distribution system is being wound up or cut short or rearranged. As a first step of implementation of the new policy many of the ration shops and provisional stores are shut down or relocated from their original points in residential areas.

The Jananayaga Ilainjar Ani (Democratic Youth League-DYL) has started a campaign uniting with likeminded democratic forces against this policy denying the basic rights of people like food subsidy. The Ashok Nagar committee of DYL in Chennai distributed thousands of leaflets as a part of the door to door campaign and collected thousands of signatures. Propaganda teams with placards, posters and notices contacted hundreds of families and held corner meetings to take the issue to the people. The main slogans of the campaign were; (1) Resist the central and state Govts, move to wind up PDS and (2) Bring back the closed ration shops to their original points in the residential areas.

As the culmination of the month long campaign which attracted thousands of people a public rally was organised on 1st of June '98 from Panagal Park Chennai to the PDS Maintenance office. Hundreds of men and women took part in the rally held under the banner of DYL. Com V. Natarajan, secretary of DYL Committee led the rally alongwith others.

Successful struggle against Price hike in hotel Charges

The month long struggle under the leadership of revolutionary youth organisation, Yuvajanavedi against the price hike of food items served in hotels of Trichur town in central Kerala found its success overcoming the attacks of hotel owners' goonda gangs and arrests and torture in lock-ups by police.

It was on 25th of April 1998 that the association of more than one hundred hotels of Thrissur town decided to rise the prices of food items served in hotels unprecedentedly. The hotel owners had no legible reasons to justify the price rise. They were in a hurry to reap maximum profit from consumers including workers, employees, and other common people who visits the town everyday for various purposes. Even-

though none of the ruling class political parties or youth organisations having allegiance to them who are reportedly capable to mobilise tens of thousands of people were not ready to register at least a formal protest to the price like Yuvajanavedi demanded to withdraw the unjustifiable price rise and to introduce class system to hotels according to the facilities available. But the municipal authorities, the government machinery and the hotel owners were not ready to initiate any meaningful measures or to withdraw the price hike.

It was in such a situation Yuvajanavedi decided to launch the struggle against the price hike. Being a very vital issue and as the brunt of the price rise was to be borne by common people the struggle has got wide support. The conciliatory meeting convened by the District Collector served no purposes at this stage.

On 15th of May, the volunteers of Yuvajanavedi picketing hotels as a part of the struggle were brutally attacked by goonda gangs of hotel owners and four comrades were admitted in hospital in serious condition. The police who refused to charge any cases against the hotel owner who masterminded the attack implicated twelve Yuvajanavedi comrades in false case instead.

Next day, ie on 16th May Yuvajanavedi picketed the very same hotel the owner of which attacked the comrades the previous day braving the heavy police presence. Police intervened for the hotel owner and tried to prevent comrades from coming near to the hotel area. As the comrades tried to resist the police intervention the police resorted to lathicharge and the glass panel of two hotels got damaged in the clash ensued. Seventeen comrades were arrested. Many of them were injured seriously. In the police lock-up also five of the comrades were tortured brutally. They were implicated in more false cases and remanded to judicial custody. They had to undergo 13 days of imprisonment before getting bail from higher courts.

The hotel owners tried to make a hue and cry that Yuvajanavedi was attacking them under the pretext of struggle against price rise the people did not give any attention to them. All the hotels in the town were closed for one day reportedly to protest in the 'attacks' against two hotels by Yuvajanavedi volunteers. But the people refused to give any kind of support to the hotel hawks who hiked the prices steeply to reap maximum profit by squeezing the common masses.

Yuvajanavedi started indefinite relay hunger strike before the municipal office to pressurise the authorities to initiate necessary action to withdraw the price hike and to implement classification. Thousands of leaflets explaining the reality of price hike were distributed among the people. Propaganda jathas were conducted in the municipal area and corner meetings were held to explain the matters.

Alongwith this struggle to get the criminal police officials responsible for the torture of volunteers in police lock-up was also taken up. Telegrams were sent to National Human Rights Commission to look into the matter of lock-up torture and of denying medical aid to the victims. A one day mass fast was organised before the office of District Superintendent of police demanding action against the Circle Inspector of Police who presided over the torture session.

As the struggle against the price rise was getting intensified and as more and more organised sections were coming forward to support the struggle openly the Thrissur municipal council was compelled to adopt a unanimous resolution requesting the District Collector to intervene to enforce classification of hotels and to reduce the increased price of food items.

Later the District Collector invited Yuvajanavedi leaders for a meeting and it was decided in the meeting that all the major demands put forward by VEDI in this regard would be accepted. Accordingly the food development Committee which was in a state of hibernation for a long time was revived and the same will look into the prices of food items served in hotels. A special team under the leadership of Taluk Supply Officer was constituted to work out modalities for classifying hotels according to the facilities available. A three step action programme was also formulated to implement the decisions.

As all the demands put forward by the organisation was accepted by the authorities and concrete steps to implement them were also initiated Yuvajanavedi withdrew the struggle on 28th of May. It was for the first time in last 14 years that a struggle against price hike in hotels of Thrissur town has become successful. It was the strong determination of the organisation and enthusiastic support from common people which enabled Yuvajanavedi to make the struggle a success.

Kerala Convention against Communalism

The anti-communal convention held at Kozhikode Town Hall on May 5th under the auspices of Yuvajanavedi called upon all progressive, secular and democratic forces to build up the broadest unity of secular forces and to rally in the struggle against all communal forces taking into account the gravity of the present situation. It was pointed out in the resolution unanimously adopted by the convention that as the Hindu communal forces have succeeded in getting into power, the possibility of communalisation of the society with the help of administrative machinery is increased.

The massive participation of people of different walks of life in the convention was an indication of the popular concern and resentment against the communal politics which tries to get a foothold in the state.

Com: K. A. MohanDas, state president of Janakeeya Kala Sahithya VEDI presided over the convention. Com: K. T. Kunjikkannan, state president of Yuvajanavedi pointed out the dangers caused to the society by communal forces and stressed on the necessity of united struggle against them in his welcome speech.

Com: K. N. Ramachandran, All India secretary of CPI (ML) Red Flag inaugurated the convention. He pointed out that religious fundamentalism and communalism are instruments of neo-colonial forces to weaken the contradiction between imperialism and revolutionary working class. He cited the examples of Indonesia, Mozambique and other countries where communal and racial forces were utilised by neo-colonial forces to organise sabotages and to overthrow governments. Many of the intellectuals studying communalism refuse to analyse its relationship with the contemporary economic and political realities. The friends belonging to the 'leftist' parties who think that communalism can be combatted effectively by joining hands even with Congress are not ready to see the role of Congress in the growth of communalism. Congress have never put forward a secular position. Now we can see some intellectuals denying secularism under the pretext that secularism is not an 'Indian' concept. They are denying the fact that secularism emerged as a concept alongwith democracy.

Now, congress is being replaced as the major ruling party by the communal BJP. No part of their agenda is 'hidden'. Almost all the commissions appointed to enquire the communal clashes in various part of the country have pointed out the role of RSS and other Sangh Parivar organisations in those atrocities. Now the imperialist institutions and think tanks have given good certificates to the Sangh Parivar and its political arm BJP. Communalism can only be defeated only through the unity of genuine secular and progressive forces: Com. K. N. said.

Prof. M. N. Karassery, noted writer and cultural activist pointed out that the ugly face of religious terrorism has already appeared in the social scene of Kerala and that must be resisted with utmost seriousness. He said that religious terrorism is not mere communalism, but a most reactionary force with its own organisations, philosophy, financial resources, committed cadres and suicide squads ready to wipe out opponents physically. He used the occasion to declare his solidarity with the forces struggling against religious terrorism and communalism.

Com: Ajitha who spoke next said that it is the women folk who are to suffer more from the menace of every kind of communalism Dr. C.D. Radhakrishnan stressed upon the necessity of a longterm and consistent political position against communalism. Noted poet Kureepuzha Sreekumar, Com: P. J. James, Com: V. Vijayakumar, Com: P. J. Baby, K. E. N. Kunjahammed, Com: P. K. Venugopalan, K. S. Hariharan, Adv: Manjeri SundarRaj, Prof. A. Soman also spoke.

Messages and greetings from Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan, Dr. P. K. Sukanaran, Kakkanadan, Thirunalloor Karunakaran, K. G. Sankarapilla, Dr. N.A. Kareem and Pazhavila Ramesan all writers, poets and intellectuals were presented. Com: K. A. Mohandas summed up the discussions. Com: K. T. Kunjikkannan presented the resolution and it was adopted unanimously by the convention.

A gazal concert was organised as a part of the convention to register the protest in the attack against the noted gazal singer Ghulam Ali at Bombay by Siva sena-Bajrangadal criminal gangs. Dr. Mohammed Shakeel and Najmal Babu led the concert. Gazal is not a form of protest but of universal love, said Dr. Moham-

med Shakeel. It is highly deplorable that Ghulam Ali, a singer loved and respected worldwide is attacked and humiliated by communal forces in India, he said.

The convention attended by hundreds of people was a remarkable success not only in terms of the number of participants but in terms of the unity of secular, progressive forces got expressed also.

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at the global level was entrusted to the WB.

The Advent of D. P. E. P

We referred to the OB project initiated to modernise the primary school education under the education policy of 1986. By 1990 it was amply clear that this project has utterly failed in its objective. It is then as part of showing solidarity with the Jomtien Conference (India being a signatory to the Jomtien declaration is obliged to implement them) and bringing about timely reforms in the 1986 education policy the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) formulated programs that will decentralise educational planning to the districts (WB: 'Primary Education in India', p. 22-23). This new project envisioned the ending of the OB program and replacing it with a District-level integrated approach that will include formal and non formal methods in primary education. As far as the WB was concerned, the 1992 Indian constitutional amendments that gave more responsibilities to the panchayati raj institutions regarding primary, secondary, adult, vocational and nonformal education prepared conducive material conditions for formulating the new education programme. Considering all these things the WB approved the CABE special report whose basic foundations are actually the Jomtien declaration. Accordingly the OB program was wound up and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was initiated in India in 1993.

[Contd. to next issue]

26th Anniversary of Martyrdom of Com. Charu Majumdar

July 28 is the 26th Martyrdom day of Com: Charu Majumdar. In 1972, this day, Com: C. M. was brutally killed by the state repressive forces by removing him physically, the ruling classes and imperialists, their masters, expected that they can erase his memory and wipe out the movement easily. But the history of last 26 years has proved them totally wrong.

The contributions of Com: Charu Majumdar who provided the theoretical basis for great Naxalbari struggle and led the fight against all kinds of revisionist and class collaboratorist trends will ever be etched in golden letters in the history of our country. Even though the revolutionary movement got severe setbacks because of the left sectarian trends that came into the dominance in the ICM in 70s, the relevance of the great and historic role played by Com: Charu Majumdar in the history of our revolutionary movement will never fade. It is the responsibility of communist revolutionaries to take lessons from the positive and negative experiences of the part to analyse the concrete situation today and to develop the ideological - political - organisational line and revolutionary practice accordingly.

On the occasion of this 26th anniversary of the martyrdom of Com: C. M., let us pledge



ourselves to pursue the great tasks of completion of the NDR in right earnest fighting against all kinds of alien trends.

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WB, other organisations like UNDP, UNESCO, representatives of various countries and non-government organisations had also participated, (for details refer WB publication: 'Primary Education in India' p.7). This conference decided in the changing world conditions the primary education in the poor countries need to be reorganised according to the model of 'participatory development' that has been developed by the WB and other funding agencies. As integral part of the globalisation and structural adjustment the various projects that the imperialists initiate in different sectors of the economy are formulated in the garb of 'decentralised planning' and 'local level development'. In fact this has become the regular feature of all WB loan projects. Efforts are being made

to give a 'human face' to the reforms and thus divert the attention of the suffering people from the misery caused by cutting down drastically the social welfare activities by the government. Various international organisations and voluntary agencies are working in close collaboration in order to develop various projects that have a colour of 'participatory development' and decentralised planning suitable to the peculiar conditions of a particular country. It is in this backdrop that the Jomtien conference decided to formulate various programs based on both formal and non-formal approaches to replace the "single track" formal education in those countries where it has failed to universalize primary education and is incapable of doing it in future. The responsibility of implementing it

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Press Statement

Build united struggles against fascist threat from RSS led Hindutua forces and against intensifying neocolonisation

The RSS led Hindutua Parivar and its collaborators are implementing their nefarious agenda through the BJP government in a hurry. The nuclear tests and the arms race and war hysteria jingoistically created will only gladden the imperialist powers and their agents eventually, not the common people of this subcontinent. Like a possible confrontation with Pakistan, the threat of building Ayodhya temple is whipped up to create chauvinistic, communal tensions in order to push ahead with the fascist agenda of the saffron forces. Already Vajpayee government has started infiltrating all spheres of the state machinery and the various departments with RSS cadres.

While this fascicisation process is being intensified in all fields, all the policy decisions of this BJP government during last three months including the budget proposals like privatising insurance sector and selling of 74% of the shares of PSUs, the new Exim Policy, providing new openings to MNCs, the monopolisation of even the sale of salt in the name of iodisation etc are open surrender to the dictates of IMF, World Bank and the WTO. As a result the economic crisis including depreciation of Rupee has further intensified. The devastating of the country and the pauperisation of the masses are reaching unprecedented levels. The arms race and deterioration of relations with neighbouring countries are worsening this situation further. In short, under Vajpayee government the country is facing the double threat of fascicisation and increasing neocolonial slavery.

What is required at this critical juncture is a countrywide united movement against these twin threats. But the Congress and the UF parties are only giving attention to build an alliance in the name of secularism with the aim of temporary electoral gains sidetracking the basic issues as they themselves are supporters of the imperialist dictated liberalisation policies. So it is the task of the revolutionary left forces to give leadership to the building up of an anti-imperialist, anti-fascist front against the RSS

led fascist forces.

In this context the all India campaign already started by six organisations including ours based on five slogans like Quit WTO, Scrap Liberalisation, Implement Land Reforms, Fight Price-Rise etc, to be culminated with July 15 Parliament Dharna is a positive step in the right direction.

Any complacent attitude towards the grave threat posed by the RSS led forces will be suicidal. So we appeal to all progressive, democratic and patriotic forces to get united against the twin threats posed by these forces, and to come forward to join countrywide struggle against them.

New Delhi
June 20, 1998

Secretary,
CPI(ML) RED FLAG.

Bihar Procession against Nuclear explosion

In the two steel cities of Bihar, Jamshedpur and Bokaro, campaigns against the nuclear explosion of BJP coalition govt. were organised. At Jamshedpur a procession of workers, youths and intellectuals under the banner of Paryavaran Samrakshan Jana Abhiyan was taken out on 5th June, 98 with placards bearing slogans like 'we need bread and democracy, no bomb, no war mania, after 1974 explosion was emergency, after 1998—, No more Hiroshima and save environment' etc. After the procession a street corner meeting took place. The speakers on the occasion said that there was no danger and the threat to the security of nation from neighbours and the explosion was a mask to conceal government's failures at different levels and divert people's attention from their basic needs by creating chauvinism and war mania. They also warned against fascism, taking its shape in the womb of the system. The BJP led government intensified the process.

At Bokaro posters bearing above slogans were pasted in the different areas of the city.

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- Withdraw Exim Policy
- Implement Land Reforms
- Bring down prices of essential Commodities
- Protect peasants against crop-damages, usury



Farmers demonstration in front of Tihidi Block Office in Orissa on June 1st '98 demanding compensation for crop loss and full protection against crop damages.

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