

RED STAR

PLATFORM FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARIES

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Challenges in New Year



**On the Question of
Building Revolutionary Left Alternative**



**Appropriating
People's Anti-Globalisation Offensive**



**Indian Agricultural Crisis :
Demands Quitting WTO**



**All India Democratic Convention Calls for
United Alternative Against Communal Fascism and Globalisation**



Withdraw Changes to Contract Labour Law

PRESS STATEMENTS

CPI (ML) Red Flag's Fifth All India Conference

The meeting of the Central Reorganising Committee of the CPI (ML) Red Flag held in the last week of August decided to hold the fifth All India Conference of the Organisation from 28th December, 2000 to 1st January 2001, at Raichur, northern Karnataka. The draft Party Programme, draft amendments to the party Constitution and draft Political Organisational Report were finalised by this CRC meeting and the Conference process was initiated.

Based on these decisions, the Conference process was started from Local Committee level Conferences from the beginning of October in the nine states

(Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Chathisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi) where the Organisation is working in organised form. Alongwith the draft documents put forward by the CRC, the draft political organisational reports of the state level committees and lower level committees are also taken up for active discussion at concerned levels.

The allround political centralisation achieved within the organisation based on the ideological-political-organisational orientation adopted in the Fourth All India Conference and the successful struggle against the sectarian tendencies, alongwith

the struggle against other alien trends is reflected in the consolidation and expansion of the Party and class/mass organisations and in the development of the various forms of struggles against the globalisation and the comparador bureaucratic bourgeois - landlord classes led Indian state. These qualitative and quantitative changes are reflected in the conferences already held.

The lower level Conferences and then the state conferences are proposed to be completed by the third week of December. The All India Conference will start on 28th December at com. Souren Bose Nagar, Raichur, after the rally and public meeting being organised on 27th November mobilising the forces from North Karnataka. The whole Party Organisation is engaged in the successful completion of the Fifth All India Conference which will adopt a new programmatic approach for completing the New Democratic Revolution and evolve plans for carrying forward the party reorganisation uniting all the genuine Communist forces in the country. ●

National Convention Against Contact Labour System

In a meeting held on 26th November 2000 at SNDT University Churchgate Campus, Mumbai, all Central Trade Unions, and other unions resolved to unitedly oppose and defeat the proposed changes to the Contract Labour Act by the Central & Maharashtra Governments. The unions not only passed a joint Resolution condemning the proposed amendments, but drew up a common action plan over the next couple of months to ensure their defeat.

The Central Government is preparing to make drastic amendments to the Contract Labour Act, 1970. The Government intends to restrict the scope of Section 10 of the Act. This is the section under which a contract labour system can be prohibited. Surging ahead, the Maharashtra Government published in September of this year the amendments which it intends to make to the Act. These include removing huge areas of work from the ambit of the Act itself. For example, all so-called 'auxiliary activities' (security, dusting & cleaning, transport, canteen work, etc.), part-time jobs and export order related jobs. The State Government further intends to reduce the coverage of the Act from the present 20 to those establishments employing at least 50 workers - or 100 in backward areas.

Such amendments if passed would amount to a devastating reversal in the hard won rights of contract workers to be made permanent.

It is in this context that a National Consultation of Trade Unions Against Proposed Amendments to Contract Labour Law, hosted by the Thekeadri Padathi Virodhi Manch, was held on 26th November 2000.

The meeting on contract labour attended by all central trade unions from right across the political spectrum and irrespective of party affiliations. Among those who attended were K.L. Mahendra, National General Secretary, AITUC, Dr. M.K. Pandhe, National General Secretary, CITU, Dr. Shanti Patel, National Vice President, HMS, Rajabhau Kulkarni, veteran INTUC leader, Shashikant Deodhar, General Secretary (Maharashtra)BMS, Shanker Salvi, General Secretary (Maharashtra)HMKP, M.K. Thankappan, Vice President, TUCI; Dada Samant, President, Kamgar Aghadi, Jaywant Chavan, President, Sarva Shramik Sanghatana, M.A. Patil, President, Sarva Shramik Sangh. Also present were representatives from

IFTU and the railway, LIC, airports, State Government employees, MSEB, BSES & TUSC unions, as also from the 45 constituent unions of the Thekedari Padathi Virodhi Manch.

Not only did all these unions pass a joint resolution condemning the proposed amendments and calling upon the Central & Maharashtra Governments to withdraw them, but a joint action plan was drawn up. It is decided by the meeting that:

(i) State wide conventions on the issue of contract labour will be held throughout the months of December and January

(ii) A national "Anti Contract Labour Protest Day" will be observed by all unions.

(iii) A joint and huge mobilisation of workers from all the unions will be staged in Delhi. ●



Challenges in the New Year

THE new year is dawning at a critical time. Internationally and at home the euphoria created around globalisation by the imperialists and their lackeys are over. Even the World Bank president is not ready to own its parenthood. Though formal declarations are yet to come, like the earlier neo-Keynesian policies of the post - World War II decades with their welfare state concepts, now the neo-liberal policies of globalisation - liberalisation-privatisation put forward as the answer to all problems of humanity at the "end of history" are also on the way out. Imperialist think - tanks are busy to introduce yet another survival policy for yet another prolongation of the perennial cycle of crises from which the imperialist system can never survive. This has led to further intensification of the contradictions at international and national levels. If Seattle to Prague was one side of the fight back mainly by the toilers in the imperialist countries against the consequences of globalisation, working class, peasantry and even middle classes in the neo colonies are also waging numerous struggles in various forms against the ruling systems in their countries which are imposing the imperialist globalisation with increasing speed. Even the unity among the exploiters are under stresses and strains. The New World Order years are over. It is in this context Vajpayee government, especially the leading party of NDA, the BJP, and its leader Vajpayee is coming out with their real agenda which they had never hidden. When his government is going ahead with the globalisation policies hated by the vast masses, when he is engaged in enslaving this country to make it a 'Hindu Rashtra' under RSS Parivar's fascist rule for serving imperialist masters better, Vajpayee and company are aware that even eunuchs can defeat their candidates in coming elections, as happened in the mayoral election at Gorakhpur, UP. Because he is the leader of a bunch of traitors, a 'swayamsevak' of the fascist RSS, Vajpayee can never go against imperialist masters. As he is absolutely loyal to them, he is duty bound to go ahead with the imperialist globalisation. So the crucial problem before him is, how he can go ahead with globalisation, and still hoodwink and divide the people so that he can continue to be in the seat of power, how he can manage satisfactory results in the elections to UP

and other states shortly. So Vajpayee coming out with the theory of innocence of his three ministers who physically led demolition of Babri Masjid, his repetition of the building of Ram temple at Babri site as national sentiment and RSS chief's 'great bang' theory about Babri demolition are all intended to put forward the Hindutva agenda as the agenda in coming elections in the most effective way. In this way, once again BJP and RSS Parivar is consciously trying to divert people's attention from globalisation, which is projected as a 'nationally accepted' agenda, and focus the coming election especially in UP on the Hindutva agenda. It is a well calculated move. Vajpayee and company know very well that if the elections are fought on globalisation as central agenda, as the party in power at centre, they are going to loose the most. That the communal fascists have done their home work about their main opposition forces well is proved by consequent developments. From Congress to CPI(M) all are now getting united against Vajpayee government on Hindutva agenda. They also like it this way, as none of them are ready to face the election fighting against globalisation as they themselves are more or less votaries of globalisation in practice, whatever they may say in public platforms. Thus, as election dates come nearer, both sides will become eloquent on Hindutva agenda, more blood of innocents will be shed, and the people will be divided more and more on casteist and communal lines. Whichever party may win or lose, the ultimate winner will be globalisation and other economic policies of the imperialists. It is becoming once again clear that neither the Congress nor the Third Front mooted by V.P.Singh, Jyothi Basu and company are ready to reject globalisation basically by projecting a self-reliant national development policy fighting against the hegemonic efforts of imperialists. Like BJP, they are also reflecting the preferences of the comprador ruling classes. It is in this context, the building up of an anti imperialist, anti-fascist alternative capable of fighting against globalisation and communal fascism becomes the challenge before the revolutionary left and democratic force in the new year. Only by taking up this challenge, they can give a positive turn to Indian political scene. ●

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On the Question of Building Revolutionary Left Alternative

- K.N.Ramachandran

There is nothing unusual or new in what Vajpayee has done. During his Station Islands speech in US itself he had made it clear that he is a disciplined Swayam Sevak, and that including the construction of Ayodhya temple the whole agenda of BJP will be implemented once it gets two-thirds majority. He has only repeated it now, in more clear terms, in a planned way, as ex-BJP chief Kushabhau Thakre said. And he said it in the most provocative way possible showing what he really is. It was in the Iftar party organised by the only Muslim member in his cabinet he declared that he endorsed the Ram Mandir movement, declared that the mandir will be constructed where Babari Masjid was, and repeated that L.K.Advani and the two other ministers who gave leadership to demolition of the masjid in 1992 are innocent. He also repeated that RSS sentiments are the national sentiments. It will be foolish to expect anything better from a man who had shamelessly betrayed his hostel mates to the British Police for their anti-British actions during his college days. Vajpayee has changed very little from that role of a traitor. In course of time with RSS he has become a die hard communal fascist. Even when functioning as the best possible mask for the Parivar, Vajpayee has repeatedly proved that he is every inch a Swayam Sevak. That such a provocative statement will lead to further growth of communal hatred and increasing communal clashes was well aware to him. He really wanted them. Vajpayee, BJP and the RSS Parivar very well know that like their ascendance to power, the retention of power is possible only by dividing the people through most barbarous and criminal moves

to spread Hindutva, the politics of fascist Hindu Rashtra. This provocative statement, unmasking his real Swayam Sevak's face took place after the set backs BJP has suffered in UP local bodies elections is not accidental. Vajpayee and company is really afraid of coming assembly elections to UP and few other important states.

When people's opposition to globalisation policies is intensifying leading to many struggles, as the party in power at Delhi, BJP is really afraid. They have to somehow or other divert the attention of people from globalisation policies and their consequences in various sectors,

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during the elections. BJP wants to dictate its own agenda and drag the all opposition behind it. An election focused on Hindutva agenda, with the opposition concentrating on BJP's communal approach is exactly what is cherished by BJP. As far as economic policies are concerned, BJP wants to show that imperialist globalisation is implemented since all major political parties ranging from Congress to CPI(M) have a consensus on it. So BJP alone cannot be blamed! So if the globalisation is implemented at great speed, BJP alone is not responsible for its consequences. It is proved repeatedly

that the Hindutva card is helping the Vajpayee government to use it as an effective weapon to conceal the way the globalisation policies are implemented at break neck speed.

If Vajpayee government gave sanction to Enron project in Maharashtra hurriedly during its thirteen day tenure in 1996, and Maharashtra government is now facing the impossible situation of paying Rs. 1000 crores per year if the electricity from it is not used, and Rs 2000 crores per year when the electricity is purchased at Rs 5 and more per unit from it. It is escaping by saying Congress is equally responsible to it. Similarly, when the government equity in nationalised banks are now brought down from 51 to 33 percent in a hurry, denationalising them, the sole justification Yashwant Sinha, the finance minister, is repeating is that earlier it was Congress that brought down the government shares from 100 to 51 percent in 1994. In short the all out efforts of Vajpayee government is to convince all that globalisation is implemented based on 'national consensus'. Like in all other matters, in this also BJP is repeating what Congress was doing all these years to serve imperialist and native ruling class interests. For example, in 1991 the Congress leadership unleashed a propaganda blitz krieg to create a national consensus first before launching the 'New Economic Policy' based on imperialist globalisation. It will be useful to recall what Narasimha Rao - Manmohan Singh team and the whole Congress leadership was propagating those days in order to reverse the Nehruvian policies in the name of saving the country from foreign exchange crisis. In line with

the imperialist propaganda to impose neo-liberal policies every where and popularise globalisation regime advocated by IMF - WB - GATT, the institutional economists and comprador intellectuals were eulogising NEP as the way to real progress.

But now the situation has changed. The neo liberal policies initiated from second half of 1960's and globalisation promoted aggressively during 1990's are now opposed by vast masses not only in the neo-colonies, but also in the imperialist countries. The consequences of these policies are compelling increasing number of people to come out in the streets to oppose the imperialist and comprador regimes every where. India is no exception. Congress suffered its worst setback's in 1996 and 1999 elections for implementing globalisation. The parties forming the UF and projecting Deva Gowda and Gujarat governments during 1996 - 1998 also suffered severe setbacks in 1999 elections. In every sector workers, white collar employees, peasants and middle classes are joining numerous struggles against the devastating consequences of globalization policies. A condition is being created that at least in words all parties have to say something against globalization, at least against its negative consequences, even when all of them are implementing it faithfully while coming to power at centre or in the states. That is, Vajpayee government, even while selling the vital interests of the country to imperialists and enslaving it in all respects, cannot go to the people with it as its agenda. In order to hoodwink its own cadres and the general public the RSS chief Sudarshan, BJP's ideologue Govindacharya like prominent leaders of RSS Parivar are trying hard to project themselves as the most ardent advocates of Swadeshi and opponents of globalisation. But, the intensifying opposition to globalisation from the people has convinced RSS Parivar

that it alone is not sufficient to retain the Vajpayee government. So VHP, Bajrang Dal like forces are pressed in to service to declare 2001 as the year of construction of Ram mandir. Utilising every possible opportunity communalisation of all issues are resorted to. Communal hatred and division are promoted by all heinous means. It is as a part of this general Hindutva offensive, now Vajpayee has come out openly for Ram mandir construction at Babri Masjid site and to defend the three accused ministers. In the coming days he will put forward BJP's agenda more aggressively,

With the agenda of total opposition to globalisation and communal fascism, projecting a self reliant national development policy for building a secular democratic India, the revolutionary left really reflect the aspirations of the vast masses of people who are opposed to imperialist globalisation and to BJP's communal fascism and the communal appeasement of Congress.

knowing very well that most of the NDA constituents can be kept within it, in spite of their occasional pseudo secular claims. Now the vital question in front of all progressive, secular, democratic forces should be that how this globalisation-communal fascist offensive of Vajpayee government and RSS Parivar behind it can be faced. The maximum that can be expected from Congress in this situation is all forms of its already notorious political maneuvers in order to replace BJP with its own brand of globalisation and communal appeasement. There is very little chance for Congress to win over sizable sections with this opportunist agenda which is basically not different from that of BJP.

What about the 'Third Front' mooted by the CPI(M)-CPI parties and all centrist forces? Can it be anyway different from the Congress alternative? The 1996-98 UF government slavishly depending on Congress support has already exposed the opportunism of this sort of alliance. The 'Third Front' now talked about is not going to be anyway

different from the former UF. Though CPI(M) leadership and VP Singh like leaders are talking about a non-BJP, non Congress Third Front, for all practical purposes, what is going to materialise once BJP is defeated, is a Congress government with Third Front or Third Front government with Congress or something more opportunist in this line. Except opposition to open communal fascist agenda of the BJP and RSS Parivar, it will have nothing much to offer.

This is the real challenge before the revolutionary left forces today. However small their organised strength may be at present, with the agenda of total opposition to globalisation and communal fascism, projecting a self reliant national development policy for building a secular democratic India, the revolutionary left really reflect the aspirations of the vast masses of people who are opposed to imperialist globalisation and to BJP's communal fascism and the communal appeasement of Congress. The vital question today is can the revolutionary left forces come together based on anti imperialist, anti-fascist programme to mobilise the masses against globalisation and communal fascism. However small this effort may look like at present, only such an initiative can provide a real alternative to the people in the coming years. CPI(ML) Red Flag is committed to bring together all revolutionary left forces with this orientation as the core of future mobilisation of all toiling masses and the progressive secular democratic forces. ●

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Appropriating People's Anti-Globalisation Offensive

P.J. James

FOR the first time since the global campaigns against the American atrocities in Vietnam during the 1960s and early 70s, today the world is witnessing an un-precedented wave of protests against imperialist globalisation. These protests from various quarters with varying manifestations and intensities have already resulted in much trouble and sleepless rights in imperialist think-tanks. In fact, a couple of years ago, nobody including even the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen in imperialist headquarters even thought of such mass upheavels against corporate globalisation as we witness now. It is now widely held that the two more concerted protests at Washington and Prague within less than a year since Seattle have done much damage to the so called "Washington Consensus" mindlessly pushed forward by the US treasury, IMF, WB and WTO. These and other global developments have prompted even the WB to willy-nilly accept in its World Development Report for the year 2000 that globalisation would meet with stiff resistance from world people.

As a result of this wholly new situation, some of the imperialist mouthpieces and a section of the imperialist theoreticians themselves have started appropriating the very same language used by global people. A best illustration is that of the anti-globalisation rhetorics used by the Business Week (Asian Edition, November 6, 2000), an imperialist journal with substantial readership in various countries. It says: "The view

that the developing nations must quickly lower import barriers, and states role in industry is being challenged". To substantiate its contention that "globalisation disrupts whole societies" and that "market liberalisation has caused severe damage to poor nations", the Business Week has doled out a few statistics too. Accordingly, Latin

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America's growth rate came down by "over 90 percent after it opened up", the number of global people living below poverty line "has increased 1.3 billion in the past decade" while "sub-Saharan Africa and old Eastern Block have actually contracted". According to the Business Week, the uproar witnessed in Seattle, Washington D.C. and Prague has helped, "to kick-start a profound re-thinking among governments, main stream economists, and corporations". "A serious discussion on globalisation has begun"; it concludes.

Devil Preaching the gospel? Certainly! For, as all serious-minded people know, the high-sounding rhetorics and apparently progressive posture on the part of imperialism's own propaganda machinery are part of a wider imperialist strategy to de-ideologise and confuse the global people. A close look at these

imperialist mouth pieces, no matter whether it is Business Week, or Amartya Sen or even Joseph Stiglitz (who was recently dismissed from the post of chief economist, WB by US government for criticising IMF), will reveal that none of them is prepared to touch the politics of globalisation. In spite of their informative and apparently radical critique of the effects and consequences of globalisation and liberalisation, they are very much reluctant to pinpoint the laws of motion of global capital which form the core of imperialist globalisation. As a general rule, it can be seen that most of the criticisms that originate from these quarters are directed at the implementation level, i.e. the manner in which globalisation is accomplished. Quite often the criticism is levelled against the government's failure to impart what they call "a human face to globalisation". The implicit argument is that it is possible to humanise or democratise globalisation by applying proper correctives.

The aim of this new imperialist strategy is obvious, i.e. to

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cash in the rising political consciousness of world people on account of the ever-intensifying globalisation, thereby diverting peoples attention away from the much-needed political solution. Of late, this imperialist diversionary tactic has formed the objective basis for the growth of a number of NGO's movements and groups in various parts of the world apparently fighting against globalisation. Most of these organisations extensively depend on imperialist funding especially from Dutch and American foundations for their sustenance. Such NGOs often speak of "a return to nature", "basic needs and livelihood issues", "strengthening the United Nations Organisations", "managing globalisation" and so on. Ofcourse, some of the NGO coalitions are concentrating on specific issues. The Jubilee 2000 coalition, for example, is a network of NGOs with Christian orientation drawing intellectual and financial resources mainly from institutions like the world council of Churches. It has been organising world-wide campaigns for cancellation of third world debt. Certain, "Islamic" NGOs are also coming forward with the slogan of "interest-free society".

This global scenario has its repercussion in India too. Though the Sangh Parivar's Swadeshi posture is a ridiculous and much discredited one, as more and more sections of the vast Indian masses are coming forward fighting against the traitorous and anti-people policies of the NDA government, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, the so called Swadeshi arm of the Sangh Parivar is once again preparing for a high-profile campaign. As the Vajpayee government, which is nothing but a pawn in the hands of US imperialists, has become a national shame and liability, the Indian people are seething with discontent. This has prompted the RSS/Swadeshi Jagaran Manch combine to revive its Swadeshi campaign which was lying dormant for the last several years. The objective is clear : to appropriate the space created by Indian people's fight

against globalisation. With this view, the RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan has called for a 'second independence movement against foreign economic powers' at the recent Agra meeting. Sudarshan, Gurumarthy and Similar stalwarts of Sangh Parivar have put forward their prognosis of "second freedom movement" with the explicit purpose of capturing the space created by peoples' growing anti-imperialist struggles. On the contrary, the imperialists are doubly sure that

The aim of this new imperialist strategy is obvious, i.e, to cash in the rising political consciousness of world people on account of the ever-intensifying globalisation, thereby diverting peoples attention away from the much-needed political solution.

this pseudo 'freedom movement' of the Sangh Parivar notorious for its neocolonial servitude will in no way harm their interests in India. Nor will it adversely affect the hundreds of Hindu voluntary organisations in India who are liberally funded from imperialist countries. No doubt, the innumerable Hindu godmen and women who are nurtured by US imperialism as well as the affluent members of the Sangh Parivar located in imperialist countries have little interest in this so-called "second independence movement" of the Sangh Parivar. In the same vein, this pseudo Swadeshi will have little contradiction with the Vajpayee government's naked sell out of the country to imperialists.

Almost in similar fashion, a section of the Catholic Church in Kerala has now firmly stood up against the unprecedented collapse of coconut prices. By appealing people to boycott palm oil and by pushing tender coconut water into the soft-drink market, the proponents of this movement hope for a better bargain for the coconut farmers in the state. According to the clergy who leads

this struggle, their movement is "a non-political, non-politician peoples' movement without any central organisation or coordination". It is very revealing that at a time when the Kerala State Committee of the CPI (ML) Red Flag is spearheading a massive and militant peoples' struggle including a blockade of the Cochin Port against the import of duty-free palm oil into Kerala that pushes down coconut prices, mainstream media give emphasis only to the struggle by the above mentioned clergy. As is obvious, the crisis confronting coconut farmers in Kerala is part of globalisation and liberalisation enforced on India by US-led imperialists. And the Church in Kerala has not yet spelt out its position with regard to imperialist globalisation. Here also, the objective is to grab the domestic space for opposition to globalisation. The apolitical position taken by the clergy shows that it is reluctant to grasp the politics of import liberalisation. Ultimately, this will weaken the political struggle against globalisation. It is with this perspective and to divert peoples' wrath against new economic policies from a correct political path that it is projected as the only alternative. ●

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Impact of Angels : NGOism in Africa

- Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem

IN the last few years international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become part of the landscape of Africa. They are as present as the tropical climate of the west coast of Africa, the biting sun and dry soils of the Sahel region, the thousand hills of Rwanda and south-west Uganda. One can even say they are not just part of the landscape anymore; they are the landscape itself, with their Land Cruisers, Land Rovers, Pajeros and other assorted four-wheel drives equipped with radio phones, advertising their endless projects.

So pervasive is their presence that there is virtually not a single district in most parts of Africa that does not have some sort of contact with them. They come as private voluntary organisations, development agencies, religious groups and so on. What unites them is the fact that they are all controlled, financed and executive staffed by Europeans and North Americans. Wealth and direct or indirect backing from their governments put them above the local community groups and NGOs the 'host' countries.

Today if you want to know the economic fortunes or otherwise of an African country you are better off talking to the country representative of the IMF or World Bank who, to all intents and purposes, is the modern equivalent of a colonial governor. The difference is that unlike the governor who was sent by the colonial power (and therefore ultimately accountable to some public opinion in the parent country), these new governors are bureaucrats, accountable to nobody

but their faceless superiors and peers in the Bretton Woods system. They come with a ready-made solution called structural adjustment which is supposed to be a cure-all. Governments that have run down their countries through systematic graft, kleptomania and state robbery have no choice but to do the bidding of their new masters.

However, the operation of

Far from delivering their promised gains, liberalisation, privatisation and technocratic management have only increased the poverty of the people and further indebted the countries concerned. The more they have adjusted, the deeper they have sunk into the abyss of poverty, joblessness and socio-economic crisis.

structural-adjustment programmes has demonstrated that economics is not just a technical matter to be resolved by 'experts' and other eggheads sent in from Washington. Far from delivering their promised gains, liberalisation, privatisation and technocratic management have only increased the poverty of the people and further indebted the countries concerned. The more they have adjusted, the deeper they have sunk into the abyss of poverty, joblessness and socio-economic crisis.

Structural adjustment threw up new social contradictions as the already poor condition of the people worsened. Workers were up in arms, civil servants no longer had job security and rural farmers encouraged to produce more, got even less money for their goods

because of the slump in the global prices for commodities.

Soon it was discovered that while structural adjustment removed the state from all areas of the economy, cutting public expenditure on education, social welfare and health, there was a need to police the resulting crisis. So it was not a weak state that was needed but a very strong one and an uncaringly wicked one at that. It is only such a state that can impose these draconian measures. So the police, paramilitary and intelligence services had to be strengthened to crush strikes, demonstrations and popular uprisings. The African state was thus restored to its colonial role as the bodyguard of imperialism.

Liberal and social democratic forces in the West began to have qualms about the social effects of adjustment. Their liberal consciences sought a palliative to relieve the pain without curing the disease.

The answer was a new-found religion : NGOism. The new catechists joined the right-wing chorus about the inefficient state and declared their newly discovered civil society (often inappropriately used to mean NGOs) to be the new angels. Refugees, civil wars and other calamities created an immediate need for this humanitarian industry. And African governments were glad to co-operate by handing over responsibility for education, water, health-whatever-to NGOs. A myth developed that because these organisations are based 'among the people' they are best placed to deliver services to the people. In the right-wing climate that followed the Thatcher and Reagan years: it all seemed to make sense. Government was bad and NGOs were good.

What this fails to recognise is that much of the influence of foreign NGOs in Africa derives from the power of their governments, embassies and companies. Some of the most powerful NGOs get the vast majority of their money from their own governments, whether for

emergency operations or for development projects. In effect, these NGOs are the civil arm of their governments' policies and the ideological cousins of the IMF and World Bank. One slaps us in the face and the other offers us handkerchiefs to wipe the tears.

The first problem with NGOs is that they have become sacred cows that cannot be touched. Anyone who wishes to criticise Western NGOs is likely to meet accusations of ingratitude, churlishness, inhuman cynicism or lack of sympathy for the victims of disasters. How dare you talk ill of these selfless missionaries who have come to help you? This sacredness has encouraged arrogance and strengthened their feeling of superiority and we-know-best attitudes. No doubt many are involved in the charity business out of moral and political commitment. But it is also true that there are many who are doing it only for career purposes. Our misery is their job. If you are a disaster manager, what will you do if there are no more disasters?

This is particularly true at a time when more and more NGO money is going into emergency operations rather than long-term development work. There is even a danger that emergencies will be converted into permanent situations. A typical case was that of post-genocide Rwandese refugees in former Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi. The Ngara refugee settlement became the second-biggest city in Tanzania after Dar-es-Salaam. Yet it was not under the control of the Tanzanian government. It was controlled by NGOs. A trip there would have shocked any liberal conscience. Flags of different NGOs were hoisted in different compartments, with the obvious suggestion to rival organisations: "Keep off my refugees and I'll keep off yours". Many of the NGOs did not wish the camps to be closed because their jobs and influence would go too. The pressure to make the camps habitable was turning them into permanent cities with amenities that the refugees were never going to get if they went back to their hills in Rwanda. Yet if you suggest to the

NGOs that long-term development work in Rwanda itself will actually persuade refugees to go home, they plead that it is not their mandate.

A second major problem arising from the mushrooming of NGO work in Africa is the internal brain drain. The external brain drain from Africa is a dismal phenomenon which has been exacerbated by the economic crisis. Thousands of Africans with university degrees or professional qualifications end up in

In effect, these NGOs are the civil arm of their governments' policies and the ideological cousins of the IMF and World Bank. One slaps us in the face and the other offers us handkerchiefs to wipe the tears.

dreary jobs in Europe or America, from cleaning the streets to working anti-social hours that would be refused by the natives. Meanwhile NGO employees, almost all of them white, head back in the opposite direction. One might ask, if the NGOs genuinely wish to help, why could they not send African skills back to Africa with the same fantastic salaries and perks as the European experts?

But the internal brain drain is a less recognised problem. The few skilled people left behind in Africa and tempted away from public institutions by the NGOs who can afford to pay ten times what governments can afford. Furthermore, the same NGOs that drain this local expertise away get consultancies to train and build up local capacity. Go to any university in Africa and you will find that the professors who are doing well are those with access to the foreign NGO community as consultants and researchers. In effect they spend more time chasing or performing these jobs than they do teaching their students.

The pervasive presence of NGOs is even changing the social geography of African cities due to the high-spending life-styles of the 'expats'. Wherever there is a big expatriate community there is invariably sex tourism. One cannot blame prostitution on expatriates but there is a particular twist that the

dollar power has imposed on the exchange. A lot of African women and men now hope to do better for themselves by hooking an expatriate partner. They can pay much more and if you are lucky they may even take you back to the West!

As if this were not bad enough it has now become fashionable to hear Western journalists, humanitarian 'experts' or even some Africans advocating a return to some kind of colonialism (probably under UN mandate) as a remedy for Africa. Actually colonialism never really left Africa. Like the deadly AIDS virus, it merely mutated.

The choice facing Africa is not between chaos and recolonisation, as propounded by so many, but between Pan-Africanism and recolonisation. The African Unity agenda remains the only basis upon which Africans can reclaim their dignity and become equal partners with the rest of humanity. It is not that Africa does not need help but at the moment it is too weak to determine where this help should be and how it should be used.

Hope is not what somebody else bestows on you. It is what you give to yourself. Only a union of African states can create the enabling environment for Africa's hope to be realised.

(Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem is the General Secretary of the Pan-African Movement, based in Kampala, Uganda. This is abridged version of an article first appeared in African Agenda Vol 3 No.4. Reproduced from Third World Network -RS) ●

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ARTICLE

Women and the Political Process in India

- Reena Phillip

IN a bourgeois democracy, the term political process is often equated with electoral politics. It is supposed to represent the conflicts in the society and their resolution through consensus, though in reality the so-called consensus is a mere illusion and the basic contradictions remains unresolved. Nevertheless, while examining the role of a social group or section in the political process, the role they play in the elections and their percentage of representation in the elected bodies is an important indicator of their overall position at all levels of the society.

The level of participation of women in the political process of a country is to be seen not in isolation but in the larger societal context. The status of women in the political sphere is reflection of her status, in the socio-economic spheres of the society. And her socio-economic conditions are the result of a long historical process. It is invariably linked to the changes in mode of production and relations of production. Any attempt to understand the issue of womens participation or non-participation in politics has to be premised around these basic factors.

Going by the size and population, India is the largest country that follows a bourgeois parliamentary system of governance. From the time of transfer of power in 1947, elections has been conducted periodically and representatives elected following

the principle of universal adult franchise. In the background of the struggles for voting rights for women in the west and the acceptance of the right by Soviet Union as early as in 1917 itself, the ruling class in India also constitutionally guaranteed the right to vote for women. But inspite of this, the role of women in Indian politics has ben minimal. The country

The status of women in the political sphere is reflection of her status in the socio-economic spheres of the society. And her socio-economic conditions are the result of a long historical process. It is invariably linked to the changes in mode of production and relations of production.

had, and still have many women political leaders. But their representation is symbolic rather than real. The reality is that women as a social group was never anywhere near the power structure. Infact the percentage of female representation in the parliament has always remained a single digit number.

What are the factors that curtail the advancement of women in the Indian society and prevents her increased participation in politics? The problems faced by the women all over the world are basically the same. But still, the particular historical development that each nation has undergone through adds certain specificities to the issues the women over these addresses. For example, in the western countries where the bourgeois democratic revolution was complete, women could pocket

certain limited social and economic benefits. Again, USSR, China and other East European countries laid the basic foundation for the emancipation of women after the success of revolutions in those countries. All those advantages, though with limitations, enjoyed by the women in the west and the erstwhile socialist countries were denied to their counterparts in the underdeveloped Afro-Asian countries where the transformation was directly from feudalism to colonialism, then to neo-colonialism, and of late Globalisation - the newest and more exploitative manifestation of imperialism.

The fact that India neither had a complete bourgeois democratic revolution nor a socialist revolution doesnot mean that the society did not advance at all. Colonialism preferred to keep the feudal structure intact since it served their needs better. Whatever reforms, they introduced, it was either for their own convenience or under public pressure. Increased economic opportunities and western education helped only a very small section of women. It was the independence movement that helped the mobilisation of vast masses across the country and the communist movement played an important role in the acquiring of some democratic rights by the society as a whole and the women in particular.

The Communist Party, in its early days of formation succeeded in organising the workers and peasants and other sections of the society and launching anti-colonial, anti-feudal struggles like Telengana, Tebhaga and Punnapra Vayalar. The womens organisation of the party did a commendable job in organising the women and making them conscious of the need of fighting for their rights. The comparador ruling class to whom the power was transferred in 1947 was forced to concede many rights to the women as a result of these struggles. But the movement could not carry forward the work due to its failure in evolving a correct Political

line based on the concrete analysis of the concrete situation leading to the lack of any basic change in the society. The result is that women, already deprived under feudalism and neo-colonialism has gone further down under globalisation. These general conditions has its impact upon their level of political participation also.

The New Economic Policy introduced in India as a part of the drive for globalisation is squeezing the breath of all the oppressed masses. Market is projected as the ultimate arbitrator and profit the primary aim and sole driving force of human actions. But the fact is that market has no morality nor is it 'neutral' as the ruling class would like its people to believe. It always sides with the privileged and the powerful. Women, already victims of centuries old exploitation and oppression are now struggling for their very survival in this system based on mindless competition and legitimisation of the principle of survival of the fittest. The worsening of her socio-economic conditions has severely affected whatever little prospects she had in taking part in the political process of the country.

All sorts of fundamentalism has always come in handy for imperialism to implement their sinister designs. So they promote it everywhere in every possible way. In India, it is the Sangh Parivar who has taken the contract from imperialist to fascise the whole nation. Thus while on the one hand they sell the country in chunks to MNCS at a rate much faster than any other government, on the other hand in the name of 'nationalism' they are trying to impose a monolithic culture, and prescribe norms and values that are exclusively uppercaste for the entire society to follow. Here the women are the worst hit. Now, even though in actual practice majority of them are kept away from politics and are made to take care of only household duties, atleast legally and constitutionally, he is entitled to enjoy all the rights and privileges enjoyed by men. But RSS has an open agenda for confirming the women to the kitchen forever and are demanding

for a separate system of education for girls which could train them for becoming good house wives. They are dead against women joining politics, since according to their version, it would lead to the degeneration of the existing family system. The issue of women's participation in the political process of the country has to be taken up at the back drop of all these developments.

At this point of discussion it would be informative to have a look at Kerala politics where inspite of better socio-economic conditions of women, her representation in the elected bodies is not better compared to the other states of the country. Kerala was a state well know for its left tradition and high level of political consciousness. The Communist movement played an important role in raising the standard of living of the people and democratising the society. During this period, large number of women were mobilised and they took an active role in the political struggles. As a part of these struggles women advanced socially, economically and educationally. In Kerala, the female literacy rate is 86% compared to the 39% at all India level and the life expectancy, 74% as against the 59% at the national level.

But due to later degeneration of the party to social democracy the party could not carry forward their struggle against neo-colonialism effectively. In the absence of any basic change in the economic structure of the country the state has degenerated into a consumer society where feudal values co-exist along with neocolonial structure. The political apathy that has come to dominate the society due to the lack of radical left oriented politics and the other attendant problems of the consumerist culture explains the reason why women folk are discouraged to join politics.

The Women Reservation Bill that was introduced in 1996 as the 81st constitutional amendment, if passed, ensured 33% reservation for women in the parliament seats. The ugly scenes that the parliament witnessed when the bill was taken up for discussion once again exposed the

lumpen face of Indian comparador ruling class, who irrespective of their political coloration, has always united to conspire against the oppressed masses. Every party, with the exception of left, tried to block the passing of the bill in one way or other. Some 'people's representatives' even went to the extent of exhibiting their muscle power. BJP, the 'Obedient Child' of RSS, under the pretext of lack of consensus, happily coldstored the bill.

While certain forces are opposed to the bill in total in the name of what they call democracy and 'Equality' some other so-called champions of the rights of backward castes and emancipators of womens has come up with the demand for caste reservation and economic reservation within the bill. All these gimmicks need to be seen only as efforts to hoodwink the masses, some thing which they have always done in the past, and sabotaged the bill. The fact is that women as a social group needs reservation to fight these centuries of deprivation. In this era of globaliation, which has always been against all types of reservation, it is the duty of the left, progressive forces to come together and defend reservation as a democratic right of the people.

Reservation, though a progressive step within the limits of the system, is certainly not panacea for all ills of women. The struggle for the emancipation of women at all levels of the society including the political level has to be part of a larger struggle of all the oppressed masses to overthrow the blood sucking imperialism and create a better world based on equality, justice and human dignity. ●

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SPECIAL FEATURE

Indian Agricultural Crisis : Demands Quitting WTO

Five years after the World Trade Organisation (WTO) came into existence, the anticipated gains from trade liberalisation process in agriculture are practically zero. In spite of it, this negative fallout from the implementation of the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture is aggressively pushing for the second phase of reforms.

But faced with the intensifying peasant agitation, it had to admit that the hopes from an international regime that talked of establishing a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system have been belied. Baram Jakhar, a former minister for Agriculture, and in whose time the WTO accord was pushed through, has lamented how politically incorrect he was in accepting the free trade agenda for Indian farmers. "It is now clear to me that we are fast heading towards economic re-colonisation". He is not the only one to have realised or appear to realise the mistake. NCP leader, Sharad Pawar, too is critical of the global trading system which is hitting the sugarcane growers, tea producers and even grape farmers.

Former Prime Ministers Narasimha Rao, VP Singh, Chandrashekhar, HD Deve Gowda and Gujral have at different platforms already expressed their anguish at the visible assault on the Indian farming community. Punjab's chief minister, Prakash Singh Badal, Haryana's Om Prakash Chautala and Bihar's former chief minister Laloo Prashad Yadav are some of the other political leaders who have been crying hoarse over the WTO's hidden agenda. Though none of them is still ready to give the call Quit WTO, all of them are compelled to speak out because

of the intensifying crisis in the agricultural sector, and to escape from the people's wrath. But the establishment economists, who didn't leave any stone unturned to force the nation to believe that the WTO was in the interest of the Indian farmers still continue to repeat their discredited arguments.

The WTO's Agreement on Agriculture had incorporated three broad areas of commitments from member states, namely in market access, domestic support and export subsidies. The objective claimed was to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets.

The WTO's Agreement on Agriculture had incorporated three broad areas of commitments from member states, namely in market access, domestic support and export subsidies. The objective claimed was to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets. Five years later, it is now established that these measures have only protected the farmers and the farming systems of the developed countries. On the other hand, the trading regime has ensured that developing countries take time-bound initiatives to open up their domestic markets for cheap and highly subsidised imports of agricultural commodities.

A recent FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation) study concludes that there has been hardly any change in the volume of exports. Tariff peaks continue to block exports from the developing countries. Tariffs still remain very high, especially in the case of cereals, sugar and dairy products. Sanitary and

phytosanitary measures continue to be a major barrier in diversifying exports in horticulture and meat products. Selective reduction in tariffs by the developed countries has also blocked the exports from developing countries. And on top of it, only 36 countries (all developed) have the right to impose special safeguard provisions if agricultural imports distort their domestic market ! In spite of it Vajpayee government has phased out or eliminated the quantitative restrictions (QRs) on agricultural commodities and products latest by 1 April 2000. What is remaining will be removed on 1 April 2001. Thus it opened Indian market and in turn made the farming community vulnerable to the imports of highly subsidised products.

Already, cheaper imports of skimmed milk powder, edible oils, sugar, tea, arecanut, apples, coconut, etc have flooded the market.

Clever manipulation of their subsidy reduction commitments has in reality increased the support to farmers in the developed countries. In the US subsidy to a mere 90,000 farmers has increased by 700 times since 1996. In the past one year, the US has provided an additional US\$26 billion to its farmers. In absolute terms, the farm support in the OECD countries increased by 8% to reach the staggering figure of US\$363 billion in 1998. But under WTO regime, India is committed to do away with agricultural subsidies under the Structural Adjustment Programme of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In any case, India provides only \$1 billion worth of indirect subsidies to 550 million farmers ! It was anticipated that due to a reduction in domestic support in developed countries, cereal production would shift from developed countries to developing countries. Empirical evidence, however, shows that such a trend is not at all visible. Moreover, with such massive subsidies intact, and with the QRs being lifted, India is sure to be inundated with food imports.

Crisis in Plantation Sector

The plantation sector is in a crisis with the removal of quantitative restrictions (QR) on imports of 714 of item on 1 April 2000 with the QR on remaining 725 items going to be abolished on 1 April 2001. Though WTO provided opportunity to abolish these till 2004, US administration was pressurising Vajpayee government to do it earlier. In order to please Clinton, before his visit, without even a mention in parliament, Vajpayee government kowtowing to the Yankee chief abolished the QR on 714 items and provided the ground for 'dumping' to the MNCs. As a result, the MNCs-Indian big traders/exporters nexus have manipulated the

tea prices, bringing down export prices, and causing a crisis. It would be further aggravated from April 2001 when the WTO agreement would come into full operation.

The future of natural rubber is even more ominous. It is not considered as an agricultural product under WTO agreement. So the rate of import duty is limited to 25% compared to 40% for synthetic rubber. The situation can become alarming if the agreement is renegotiated and the maximum permissible bound rates are not raised to 150% for all these products, and rubber is listed as an agricultural products.

Indian Agricultural Crisis : Continuation from page - 12

The kind of export subsidies that need to be pruned is not provided in India. Whereas the WTO enables only 25 countries to provide export subsidies for their agricultural products and commodities, India is keen to support the Cairns Group (Food-exporting countries), which demands the elimination of export subsidies, not realising that joining such a group will invite problems on various other fronts. The Agricultural Ministry is compelled to acknowledge that despite the rules being defined, the expected gains have eluded the developing countries. It was expected that with the removal of trade-distorting measures, agricultural exports from the developing countries will increase. This did not happen. In fact, India has seen a massive increase in the imports of agricultural commodities and products - from about Rs 50,000 million in 1995 to over Rs 200,000 million in 1999-2000 - a four-fold increase. Nor has the so-called fair trading system helped efficient producers in realising a higher price for their products. On the contrary, prices of most agricultural commodities are declining in the world markets.

The rulers can hardly say that they were not warned. A number of critical analyses of the WTO paradigm and its implications for India's food security had concluded that the entire effort of the free trade initiative is to destroy the foundations

of food self-sufficiency so assiduously built over the years. When food production is increasing in the US and in the European Union, their focus is on how to find bigger and reliable markets for exports. In the US, for instance, food production is slated to multiply in the years to come. And agricultural exports are the second biggest export earner for US and Canada.

Still the Vajpayee government continues to express confidence in the studies and analysis from the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy (CMIE), Institute for Foreign Trade (IFT) and the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, which are already sold out to foreign interests. In spite of the devastating effects of WTO regime to Indian farmer, the central agricultural ministry has constituted a task force, under the chairmanship of the known votary of the free trade paradigm, Sharad Joshi, to submit a report on the implications of the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture on Indian agriculture by February next. India's march to complete dependency on food imports is no longer a hidden agenda.

This challenge can be met only through organised countrywide peasant movement with the demand: Quit WTO, and for food self-sufficiency by developing domestic agriculture. (Contributed) ●

Already the plantation sector has observed a strike and small producers are compelled to stop production. The interesting aspect about tea and coffee sector is that even with the decrease in export prices, these items are still sold at 100% more prices in Indian market. As a result, though the producers are affected, the traders are not. They continue to reap huge profits. Besides, the MNCs and their local accomplices like Nestle and Tata Tea have even raised the prices.

This is a common phenomena in all areas. The agricultural production has stagnated or gone down at all India level. At the same time when under the WTO conditionalities the import restrictions are removed, the export prices are going down. This has aggravated the crisis in fields production. In the name of this crisis plantations managements have cut down prices and are cutting down work force. Planters are demanding that wages should be reduced and many of the workers' rights also should be cut down. Thus the plantation managements are shifting the burden of the crisis to the shoulders of the workers.

On the other hand, as a result of WTO imposed abolition of QRs, though the foreign trade earning from the plantation sector is affected, there is no benefit to the native consumers. Dumping has its impact only on retail prices of consumer luxury items. As the operations of *State Trading Corporation* and *FCI* are cut down and they are on the way of getting abolished besides the drastic cut down of state welfare measures including the near-abandoning of public distribution system, the big trader/exporter lobby is cornering all the benefits alongwith the MNCs. So the powerful trader/exporter lobby behind Vajpayee government is egging it on to go for total implementation of the WTO conditions. As a result, the burden of the crisis and dumping is shifted to the shoulders of the working class, the peasantry and the common people who are burdened with increasing prices rates of essential commodities and services.

All these reveal the extent to which the agriculture and small scale sectors alongwith the livelihood of the vast majority are getting severely affected as a result of globalisation regime. What is happening in plantation sector is only a part of it.

On the New Upsurge of Peasant Movement

K.N. Ramachandran

THE peasant revolt in Punjab during October was phenomenal. As paddy continued to pile up in the mandis of Punjab and FCI refused to take it at market support price (MSP) alleging it to be of inferior quality, lakhs of farmers come out in protest blocking road and rail traffic for days, and gheraoing the central and state ministers and bureaucrats. Road and rail traffic was disrupted for days. The administration become paralysed in rural areas in many districts. The agitation was called off only when central government released sufficient funds and asked the FCI to procure the paddy fully.

Though not reaching such massive forms, farmers are on the path of agitation in other states also. In Andhra Pradesh they are participating in large numbers in the struggle against the hike in electricity tariffs and increasing prices of agricultural inputs. In Uttar Pradesh they are agitating for remunerative prices for agricultural products and for payment of the amount due to them from sugar mill owners. In the tea plantations, even planters joined the strike demanding changes in import policies under WTO dictates.

In Kerala a major agitation is developing against the WTO dictated import policies which is ruining the agriculturists. They are organising siege of Cochin Port and blocking the sale of imported palm oil.

In almost all other states also the farmers are on war path. Numerous big and small agitations are breaking out. Millions of peasants, from rich to middle to poor sections are participating in them. What is being witnessed is a new upsurge of the peasant movement all over the country.

The target of these agitations is very clear. All of them are focused against the consequences of the export-import policies dictated by WTO, against WTO itself, and against globalisation in one way or other. As a decade of opening up, liberalisation and privatisation under imperialist globalisation regime is devastating their livelihood, the peasantry is left with no way out other than waging struggles against the central and state government which are faithfully implementing the globalisation policies enslaving the country to market system and MNCs.

The basic question confronting the vast majority of the world people today is whether they should surrender to globalisation and get devastated or reject globalisation regime and opt for national, self-reliant development policy.

As discussed in detail in these columns quite often from the very beginning of Narasimha Rao government's "New Economic Policy" and earlier the imperialist agenda is not difficult to understand. Alongwith industrial and service sectors, it wants to take agricultural sector also under the total control of MNCs and market forces. Imperialists wants to put an end to even whatever food self sufficiency is presently enjoyed by the 'undeveloped' countries. They want these countries to produce the cash crops, fruits, vegetable etc. Required by the imperialist countries and MNCs in ways dictated by them. Side by side the food grain production is sabotaged in a planned way, so that US, Canada, Australia like countries which are often dumping foodgrains in the oceans to maintain international market prices high, can find lucrative markets for their surplus food grains. It is also intended

to utilise food as a weapon of neo-colonisation, and for imposing imperialist hegemony.

The present decades of globalisation from 1970s have exposed the imperialist intentions to the people of the oppressed countries as well as to the working class in the imperialist heart lands themselves. Globalisation in its present *avathar* utilising the latest achievements in the fields of science and technology is devastating the vast masses and impoverishing them, while concentrating the wealth universally and in all countries in fewer and fewer hands. It is plundering the peasantry ruthlessly while incorporating sections of rich peasants to the global system as agricultural bourgeoisie. It is increasing the cost of all agricultural inputs, make the prices of outputs uncertain, making farming also speculative, and

leading the marginal and even lower-middle peasants to commit suicide. What is taking place under neo-colonisation is a thousand times more barbarous, driving billions below poverty line. So the unfolding peasant movement in India is a part of the world wide movement of the toilers and oppressed against imperialist globalisation in which even the working class and oppressed masses of the imperialist countries have started participating increasingly.

As this new upsurge in the peasant movement is taking new dimensions and spreading to new areas, there are numerous efforts from various political forces to capture its leadership. The ruling class parties as well as bourgeois leaders like V.P. Singh are engaged in race for it. Ex-prime minister from V.P. Singh, Chandrasekhar, Narasimha Rao to Dewa Gowda and Gujral, during whose regimes liberalisation

gained momentum, globalisation became a state policy and subservience to GATT/WTO became a reality are trying to project themselves as new messiahs before the peasantry. They are shedding tears for the peasants committing suicides and for those who are getting increasingly pauperised. VP Singh and Dewa Gowda are rushing to Kerala to lead a march to Cochin Port to protest against the WTO dictated import policies which have devastated the coconut growers after the ruin of rubber growers. They are even speaking against globalisation and WTO. They even go to the extent of condemning IMF-WB-WTO regime and MNCs. But are these exercise anyway different from Sudarshan, Govindacharya & Co of RSS who project themselves as *Swadeshi* leaders, while its Parivar member BJP is leading the NDA government which is implementing globalisation at increasing speed?

The basic question confronting the vast majority of the world people today is whether they should surrender to globalisation and get devastated or reject globalisation regime and opt for national, self-reliant development policy. The only choice before them is either surrender to the capitalist imperialist system and its globalisation, or go for socialist alternative, no third way is possible. While trying to take leadership of the peasant upsurge, VP Singh and company including those like Mulayam, Laloo Prasad, Jayalalita or their likes refuse to answer this basic question. They have made clear in different forms that they are not for rejecting globalisation and coming out of WTO. They are critical of Vajpayee government's handling of globalisation. But they do not give a categorical answer to the question whether they will come out of globalisation and WTO if they or their front comes to power. In this there is no basic difference between Congress and these parties.

Almost same is the case with the social democratic parties. While being more vehement in their criticism of globalisation, they are

also not for throwing out globalisation and coming out of WTO. They are also for finding 'better space' within the globalisation regime. The record of their rule in the states they are in power prove this.

So the vital question today is whether those forces should be allowed to take over the leadership of the growing anti-globalisation movements of the working class, peasantry and oppressed sections. Already the people's upsurge of 1970s and Jay Prakash Narayan's leadership to it has amply proved the fate of the movements led by JP like forces. This is more relevant, especially when those trying to take over JP's role today have not assemblance of even JP's integrity.

It is on the vital question of who should lead the independence movement, and later the movement to throw out the Congress regime, the Communists failed, and CPI and CPI(M) and most of their splinter groups landed in social democratic path or in the lap of ruling class parties.

Instead of trying to take lessons from past experience, even those who claim themselves as revolutionaries tail behind these forces. They have not taken any lessons from parading George Fernandes like 'yellow' forces in their mass gatherings for long, or from tailing behind Shard Joshi, Tikait like forces. The 'hottest' news some reformists spread now a days is that VP will lead a massive peasant movement incorporating even some 'naxalite' led peasant organisations.

These developments show that even many among the revolutionary left have not studied anything from the bitter experience of the past. It is on the vital question of who should lead the independence movement, and later the movement to throw out the Congress regime, the Communists failed, and CPI and CPI(M) and most of their splinter groups landed in social democratic path or in the lap of ruling class parties. Once again, the great challenge before the revolutionary left is of coming to the leadership of the growing people's movements and leading them towards basic transformation of the society.

This is equally true and include the task of leading the anti-globalisation, anti-communal fascist movement towards building a secular democratic India. History will not excuse the left if they once again fail in this historic task.

This does not in anyway mean a sectarian path of keeping away from numerous possibilities to build up issue based united activities on the broadest possible scale, and joining hands with diverse forces to take up people's issues. From local level to countrywide level such movements are required increasingly. But, all these moves should be with the basic orientation of establishing the leadership of the working class in all fields including the peasant movement. This is the cardinal point which is forgotten by many of the revolutionary left sections even after so many setbacks.

The upsurge of the peasant movement calls for broadest possible united actions targeting globalisation and the central - state governments on the one hand, and linking with it, conscious efforts to establish the leadership of the working class over the movement on the other. ●

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The Narmada Question

The latest Supreme Court decision refusing to examine the public interest, social justice and environmental issues connected with the construction of Narmada Dam, and its granting permission for raising the height of the dam show that the Supreme Court like all other arms of the state has decided to dance to the tunes of globalisation.

The Majority decision of the Chief Justice A. S. Anand and Justice Kripal Singh in the Narmada case that the water tribunal's judgement of 1999 prevents it from examining the public interest aspect is ridiculous. It smells of Emergency Days when the SC had ruled that under emergency a citizen has no fundamental right to life. These are days when High Courts and Supreme Court are ruling against organising bandhs or hartals in the name of public interest and ordering strict action against those who violate it. So organising a hartal by the toilers and oppressed is illegal and against public interest. But throwing out millions from their traditional homelands in the name of a dam or a so-called developmental project is legal, and none can question it in the name of public interest! This order exposes the extreme degeneration of even the highest level of judiciary.

It is a naked fact that not even 25% of already displaced people in the Narmada Valley are not yet rehabilitated. Raising the level of the dam further means that many more lakhs of households will be displaced. If the state and central governments could not rehabilitate already displaced families even after a decade, what will be the fate of those who are going to be replaced again? Does the Supreme Court wants to say that it is not concerned with this problems of such a magnitude? Then, what is public interest in its opinion? If a hartal affects the elite classes, it is against public interest, but if millions are displaced for constructing a dam, no public interest is involved according to the SC!

Though the dissenting statement of Justice Bhorucha pointed out that "the SC cannot place its seal of approval on so vast an

undertaking without first assuring that those best fitted to do so have had the opportunity of gathering all the data on the environmental impact of the project and of assessing it", the majority turned it down with silly arguments, exposing their sham concern about environment expressed in other cases like the issue of withdrawing vehicles from roads in the name of pollution.

Regarding social justice to the lakhs of families who are displaced by the dams and canals system, and who are not yet settled, plus the many more lakhs who will be displaced as a result of the new order, it seems the Supreme Court is least concerned about them. When the question of displacing a few or even a single member from elite classes comes up, we have seen how concerned the courts become about their difficulties. If millions of adivasis,

dalits and other oppressed section are uprooted for dams or 'Sanjay Gandhi Parks' as in Mumbai, the SC turns blind eye towards them. It is seen that according to the SC there is no harm if a few lakh families are thrown out for 'developmental projects'? 'Development' for whom?

When political leaders have criticised the courts for class bias, the Supreme Court had no hesitation to punish them. But what about the verdict on Narmada and earlier orders on Bhopal Gas Massacre like cases? Are they not cases of clear class-bias?

Opposing the governmental approach to Narmada cannot be dubbed as opposition to development. The vital question is development for whom and how? What is needed is a developmental policy which serves public interest, social justice and environmental protection. The government and the Supreme Court are indulging in gross anti-people acts in the name of development. It should be opposed uncompromisingly. ●

US Voters Clueless Two Weeks After Presidential Elections

More than a fortnight after voting in US to elect a new president, even when this comment is written on 20 November there is total confusion about who will be the future incumbent to the White House in Washington. Americans are left clueless who the winner will be.

This was an election when the expenses reached unprecedented levels. The media trumpeted that the race is very close. Everyday the fortunes of Gore and Bush went on Changing according to 'opinion polls'. It was reported that it is the closest ever fight and voters are really interested. But the voting figures show that the turnout was one of the lowest.

And when the counting machines started working confusion broke loose. Rigging and malpractices are accused by both contestants as the counting is disputed first in Florida and then in many other states. As manual counting is progressing in Florida, the process is challenged by Bush, and the whole process in turmoil. It is quite uncertain when the results will be published and who will be the winner.

These developments expose the much acclaimed elections process in US. Already we had pointed out how all other

forces other than Republican and Democrats are kept out of the election process by a manipulated system. It was also pointed out that Gore or Bush, it does not make any difference as all fundamental policy matters are concerned. The only dispute is who should adorn the super-inflated post with personal attacks creating lot of heat and passion.

With transformation of capitalism in to imperialist system, the bourgeois democracy is much devalued. Neo fascist tendencies are getting strengthened. All bourgeois democratic institutions are facing challenge from within. All dissents are ruthly suppressed. 'Democracy' like capital is reduced to a commodity to be exported, for the imperialist.

It is in this background the farce taking place in US to elect a president should be seen. Whoever is elected, Gore or Bush, there is not going to be any change in the barbarous hegemonic policies of US imperialists. But like in other fields, the presidential election has exposed the hollowness of the real 'democracy' in the 'greatest democracy' propagated by the imperialists. ●

NATIONAL SCENE

Shiv Sena Champions more Aggressive Hindutua

During the two days mega camp organised at Amaravathi in Vidarbha region on 11-12 November Shiv Sena has put forward its electoral strategy to consolidate and expand its vote focusing on two issues: One, strident espousal of aggressive Hindutua, and two, steadfast opposition to carving out a separate state of Vidarbha.

The five year rule of SS-BJP government has already exposed the socio-economic policies of SS which is basically same as its ally BJP and opponents, Congress and NCP. During the five years of SS-BJP rule Maharashtra became the foremost area to implement neocolonisation, globalisation policies, continuing the anti-people rule of Congress alongwith spreading communal/fascist terror. It could escape from total rout during last election only because of the split in the Congress. Even after going out of office SS has not opposed the speeding up of liberalisation-privatisation under IMF-WB-WTO dictates by the Congress-NCP rule. As a result, in front of mounting opposition to the globalisation policies from the working class, peasantry and the vast masses, like the parties in power, the SS and BJP are also getting increasingly isolated from them. So both SS and BJP are in search of new electoral policies to return to power by hoodwinking the masses.

The new slogans of SS are 'Hindutua is breath, United Maharashtra is goal'. It has given strident calls based on militant saffron positions attacking the minorities and all secular-democratic values. It has ridiculed BJP for diluting Hindutua. It has promised that it will construct Ayodhya Temple. Through these it is trying to become foremost champion of 'Hindurashtra'.

Alongwith this it is trying to become champion of Maharashtra's unity also. Bal Thackeray and his cronies made strident attempts to appropriate the great struggle of people of Maharashtra under the banner of Sanyuktha Maharashtra and the sacrifice of the martyrs for their vote banks.

The left and democratic forces should expose this gameplan of the SS, Bereft of electoral planks, in coming days SS is bound to whip up communal frenzy. Repeating the carnage of 1993 it may provoke attacks on minorities on bigger scale. Broadest possible unity should be

built up to defeat this nefarious move. At the same time, the united Maharashtra card of the SS also should be exposed. As far as SS is concerned it is only an opportunist move to win over all sections who are opposed to the BJP, Congress, NCP support to division of Maharashtra to form Vidarbha.

When the Sanyukta Maharashtra agitation took place SS was not even born. Besides the forces who formed SS were opponents of this great mass movement led by the left and democratic forces. So SS has no right to talk in the name of this movement and the martyrs who laid down their lives for this cause.

It is the responsibility of the left and democratic forces to expose the heinous move of SS to intensify communal discord and distort history to expand its electoral base, while joining hands with BJP, Congress and NCP like forces to enslave the country to the imperialist offensive to colonise the country in new forms.

Bank Strike Paralyzes Finance Sector

Banking sector throughout the country come to grinding halt on 15th November all over the country as more than a million of employees and officers of public sector banks went on a daylong strike at the call of *United Forum of Banks' Unions* (UFBU). The strike was almost a 100% success.

The strike was against Vajpayee government's moves to privatise the public sector banks beginning with introducing a bill in winter session of the parliament to reduce government's stakes in public sector banks from present 51% to 33%. As the central cabinet in its 16th November meeting has agreed to go ahead with the bill inspite of total opposition of bank employees and officers, besides overwhelming opposition to it from the common people, the UFBU has called for intensifying the struggle against the privatisation. ●

Next Target Qutub

After Babri Masjid, Mathura and Kashi, the VHP, Bajranj Dal and others belonging to Sangh Parivar has included the centuries old Quwwatul Islam Mosque inside Qutab complex in their 'must be demolished' targets. The VHP planned a 'Dev Mukti Yagna' at a spot where a Ganesh icon is 'discovered' by the parivarists on 16 November. Though it did not materialise the communal fascists are intensifying their efforts to rewrite history through demolitions and false propaganda.

The interesting aspect of these Sangh Parivar moves is that while they are expressing their hatred towards Islamic monuments and places of worship, they are silent on the service they once rendered to British colonialists and present Vajpayee government's hectic efforts to enslave the country. All secular democratic forces should uncompromisingly oppose and fight the heinous moves of Sangh Parivar. ●

STATE REPORTS

Maharashtra State Conference Oppose the Division of State

The two days Maharashtra State Conference of CPI (ML) Red Flag held at Kalyan near Mumbai on 18-19 November has called for opposing the heinous move by vested interests to divide Maharashtra and form Vidarbha. While it is a fact that Vidarbha is denied even the economic development of other regions in the state and there is one-sidedness in allotting funds to the most developed region, western Maharashtra, formation of Vidarbha is not the answer to it. The post-1947 experience of different states where the unevenness in development has only accentuated prove this. Uneven development is an inherent character of present exploitative system. The very same reactionary forces who are advocating and implementing the imperialist globalisation policies which are intensifying uneven development are diverting people's attention from basic issues by calling for smaller states as a solution. So the advocacy of separate Vidarbha by BJP, Congress, NCP like parties should be exposed as it is nothing but a conspiracy to hoodwink the people.

The comrades participating in the discussion pointed out that how the left and democratic forces uncompromisingly thought for Sanyukta Maharashtra when Congress and other reactionary forces opposed it and Nehru government tried to drown it in blood. Dividing Maharashtra is a conscious plan of the reactionaries to split Marathi-speaking people and to impose religion as the basis for nationality formation. So the left and democratic forces should once again fight for consolidation of Sanyukta Maharashtra. They should also fight for removing the backwardness of Vidarbha and Marathawada. This struggle should be linked to the struggle against imperialist globalisation and communal fascism.

The State Conference passed resolutions condemning the anti-worker policies pursued by Maharashtra government, supporting the peasants' struggles against WTO dictated government policies, condemning attacks on women, dalits and adivasis, and on reservation, against environmental destruction, against imperialist cultural offensive to degenerate democratic progressive values, and against the

Massive Turnout for Morcha and Rally on 15th November in Mumbai

Mumbai, 16th November: There was an impressive turnout at the morcha and rally organised in Mumbai yesterday against the New Economic Policy and the proposed amendments to the labour laws. The rally was organised by the Trade Union Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) which is a committee comprised of 28 central trade union organisations, including TUCI, AITUC, CITU, IFTU, Sarva Shramik Sanghathana, AIIEA, NRMU and others. About 20,000 people attended the rally.

After many years various trade union centres in Mumbai have put aside their sectarian and economist policies and have come together not on an economic question but on the political basis of opposition to the New Economic Policy. The Maharashtra Government has recently stated that it wishes to amend the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970. These changes are aimed at making it easier for owners to close down their establishments, to employ contract labour and to increase the exploitation of workers. The TUJAC has also accepted uncompromising opposition to this move as one of its demands.

communal fascist attacks on minorities and on existing secular, democratic rights.

After active discussion and putting forward many positive suggestions the Conference adopted the draft Party Programme, Amendments to Party Constitution, and Political Organisational Report put forward by the CRC and passed the draft Political Organisational Report put forward by the State Leading Committee. The Conference elected a State Organising Committee with com. Sanjay Singhvi as secretary and elected delegates to the All India Conference.

The Conference reflected the consolidation and slow, but steady, expansion of the organisation during last three years. ●

The morcha started from Kamgar Maidan in Parel at about 5:30 in the evening and wound its way through the predominantly working class area of Parel to culminate at the Maharashtra High School grounds by around 7 p.m. The residents of Parel were treated to the sight of a sea of red flags after many years. At the Maharashtra High School grounds, the morcha was converted into a huge rally which was addressed by representatives of the various trade union centres present. Com. K.L. Bajaj of CITU presided over the meeting. Resolutions supporting the struggles of the Municipal workers and the state government employees for Bonus were moved by Com. P. R. Krishnan, CITU and seconded by Com. Abhyankar of Hindustan Levers Employees Union. Com. Damle (AITUC), Com. Dev (AIIEA), Com. Pravin Nadkar (IFTU), Com. Joshi (NRMU), Com. Sanjay Singhvi (TUCI), Com. Singh (Central Govt. Employees), Com. Jayant Chavan (Sarva Shramik Sanghathana), Sharad Rao (HMKP), Dada Samant (Kamgar Aghadi) and others addressed the rally. The gist of the speeches was to carry on the struggle to oppose the anti-worker policies of the government and to oppose the New Economic Policy tooth and nail. ●

STATE REPORTS

Karnataka State Conference Declares Solidarity with Peasant Struggles

The Karnataka State Conference of CPI(ML) Red Flag held at Koppal, North Karnataka on November 14-16 has declared solidarity with the intensifying peasant struggles and pledged to give it a conscious leadership in the coming years fighting against the WTO dictated anti-peasant policies of central and state governments. During discussion on the resolution passed by the Conference it is pointed out that the revolutionary left forces should take initiative at all India level for this.

The Conference also passed resolutions condemning the anti-worker policies and contract labour system imposed under globalisation, calling for fight against globalisation and communal fascism, against attacks on women, dalits, adivasis and other oppressed sections, against commercialisation of education and mounting unemployment, against

environmental destruction under imperialist dictated development policies and other issues.

The Conference reflected the ideological political consolidation and organisational expansion achieved during the last three years after the Fourth Conference. After lively discussion it adopted the draft documents put forward by the CRC, and passed the Political Organisational Report of the State Committee. The new state committee elected by the Conference elected com. R. Manasayya as secretary once again. The Conference also elected delegates to the All India Conference.

The Conference concluded in a militant atmosphere on 16th November with all comrades expressing firm resolve to make the Fifth All India Conference of the Party to be held at Raichur a big success. ●

Second State Conference in Orissa

The Second State Conference of CPI (ML) Red flag in Orissa as part of Fifth All India Conference was held on 5,6,7 December at Bhubaneswar, attended by delegates from four districts. At the beginning red flag was hoisted and martyrs were remembered by the veteran communist and president of the Reception Committee Com. Halibandhu Hali, who also welcomed the delegates explaining in detail his experience in the communist movement, and the deviations which weakened it. Com. K.N. Ramachandran, All India Secretary, in his inaugural speech, called on the comrades to strenuously work to build up a Bolshevik style revolutionary Communist organization surrounded by active class/mass organizations.

The presentation of CRC's draft Party Programme, Amendments to Party Constitution and Political Organisational Report was subjected to detailed discussion at group level followed by general discussion. After explanations and reply to discussion the drafts were

adopted. The state leading committee's report was also adopted after in depth discussion. The conference elected State Organising Committee which re-elected Com. Sivaram as its Secretary. Delegates to All India Conference were also elected.

Resolutions calling for fighting against growing threats of globalisation and communal fascism, attacks on peasants and other sections as a result of WTO dictated import policies, growing attacks on dalits and oppressed sections even taking away the reservation rights through liberalisation, commercialisation of education and unemployment, attacks on women etc. The conference reflected the significant development the party could make during the last three years.

The conference was followed by a well-attended public meeting at city square presided by Adv. Rebatil Ballabh Mohanty, SOC. member. It was addressed by Comrade K.N. Ramachandran, Sivaram and Damodar Senapathi. ●

Peasant Agitations Spread in Karnataka

On 10th November thousands of peasants organised Rasta Roko at Sindhanur main circle in front of Taltsil Office for more than four hours under the leadership of Karnataka Ryot Coolie Sangram Samithi (RCSS). CPI (ML) Red Flag volunteers participated in large numbers.

It was organised against the police suppression of agitating peasants at Raichur, Koppal and Gangavathi district centres. Peasants were mobilised in thousands at all these places demanding higher remunerative prices and immediate lifting of paddy by the APMCs. Police lathi charged the peasants and arrested large number of them.

The RCSS has called for intensifying the struggle for higher remunerative prices and for withdrawing the WTO dictated import policy which is ruining the peasantry. CPI (ML) Red Flag Karnataka State Committee has called for statewide agitations to compel the government to raise procurement prices and for immediate lifting of the paddy at approved rates. It has called for intensifying the struggle against WTO dictated import policies and the imperialist globalisation.

The Third State Conference of CPI (ML) Red Flag held at Koppal from 14 to 16 November has called for intensifying the fight against the *New Economy Policies* based on globalisation which is ruining the peasantry. ●

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Orissa

Tamil Nadu State Conference

The Third TN State Conference of CPI(ML) Red Flag was held at Annur, Coimbatore on 10,11,12 December as part of fifth all India Conference. The Conference hall was named after Com. Appu, member of the first central committee of the CPI(ML) and who became martyr in the course of revolutionary struggles. Com. Neendapayanam Sundaram, the veteran communist, raised the red flag amidst revolutionary slogans and remembered the martyrs, at the martyr column erected in front of the conference hall. Com. K.N. Ramachandran, all India Secretary, in his inaugural speech, briefly explained the glorious heritage of the

communist movement in TN and called on the comrades to rebuild the party uniting all communist revolutionaries fighting not only against both right and left deviations in the communist movement, but also against the reactionary trends from Dravidian Movement and the castiest, communal fascist and national chauvinist forces. Delegates from different districts actively participated reflecting the growing influence of the party in the state. A presidium led by com. Sundaram and steering committee led by com. L. Govindaswami conducted the conference. Com. M.M Somasekharan, CRC member participated. The draft CRC documents including Party

Programme, Amendments to Party Constitution and Political Organisational Report and then the State Committee's report were subjected to in depth discussion at group level to be followed by general discussion. After clarifications and replies to the points raised by the comrades all the draft documents were adopted. A new State Committee was elected with Com.L.Govindaswamy as its secretary. Delegates to all India Conference was also elected. Resolutions calling for fighting against increasing threats of imperialist globalisation and communal fascism, the consequences of WTO dictated import policies which are devastating the peasantry and working class increasingly, calling for supporting the struggle of plantation workers who are facing twin threats of globalisation-import policies and attacks of managements in their names, calling for struggling against still prevailing untouchability and other attacks on dalits, against commercialisation of education and increasing unemployment etc. were adopted after discussion. The Conference concluded with the lowering of Red Flag amidst revolutionary slogans followed by singing of international. ●

Chhattisgarh State Conference Demands Immediate Relief for Draught Affected People

The two-days first Chhattisgarh State Conference of CPI(ML) Red Flag held at Abhanpur (Raipur district) on 21-22 November has called for immediate relief to the draught affected people in the state. In spite of the formation of the state and coming to power of Congress-led ministry, in the absence of effective relief works people are still fleeing from affected areas. The Conference demanded immediate steps including food for work programme, writing off peasants' debts and compensation to crop losses.

In other resolutions, the Conference demanded formation of autonomous councils in adivasi-majority areas, called for intensive people's struggle with the slogan 'new Chhattisgarh in a new India', condemned the increasing attacks on working class and introduction of contract labour system in all fields, called for reversing the commercialisation of education, demanded immediate steps to provide employment to the unemployed and unemployment wages, condemned increasing attacks on women, adivasis and dalits, called for struggling against the onslaughts of imperialist culture, and demanded punishment of

the murderers of Shankar Guha Neogi.

Delegates and invites from six districts attended the well organised Conference which started with raising the red flag amidst singing of International and raising of revolutionary slogans, and with remembering martyr comrades. The draft Party Programme, Political Organisational Report of the CRC and Constitution amendments were adopted after active and healthy discussion. The state political organisational report was passed after lively discussion. The Conference elected the State Organising Committee with com. Niranjana Lal Yadav as its secretary and elected delegates for the All India Conference.

After the conclusion of the Conference a public meeting was organised at bus-stand maidan which was addressed by the all India secretary com. K.N. Ramachandran, new state secretary com. Niranjana and other comrades. The successful completion of the State Conference has given a new fillip to the party building and developing of people's struggles in Chhattisgarh. ●

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AIDF REPORT

All India Democratic Convention Calls for United Alternative Against Communal Fascism and Globalisation

THE All India Democratic Convention organised in Delhi on 2nd and 3rd of December, 2000, with the objective of putting an effective counter-offensive to the rising tide of communal fascism and failing democratic polity in the country initiated by the Sangh Parivar and loyally carried out by its political organisation BJP, succeeded in bringing together progressive democratic and secular forces as well as political, social, cultural and trade union organisations and activists on a single platform to seriously deliberate on Constitutional Review, Criminal Law Amendment, and the attacks on the secular democratic rights and minorities. The convention upheld the slogans: Defeat Communal Fascism and Stand for Secular Democratic India.

The two-day convention was inaugurated by Justice H.Suresh. Speaking on the occasion he said that the Constitutional Review is being done to take away whatever Democratic Rights has been enshrined in the Constitution to the people of India and to change the very character of it. A conspiracy to fashion the Constitution as authoritarian and fascistic is being hatched by the Sangh Parivar. Citing recent Mumbai High Court judgements he described the judiciary "anti-poor people". "People are thrown out of their houses and factories, their settlements are demolished and their factories are closed on the charges that they are a menace and a polluting factor in the city" he said. The recent demolition drive and the ban on the hawkers from selling their goods are compelling

people to flee the city. "People are being throttled by the State, including the judiciary, and the people are left with no voice and justice," he added. Looking at the situation of poor people getting displaced from both village and city, he said that it is the immediate consequences of globalisation. The very idea behind the Constitutional Review proposed by the BJP is to increase the power of the state and the institutions as well as suppress the resistance of the people coming up against the government and its oppressive regime. By bringing in laws like TADA, the government intends to give excessive and unbridled powers to the police and the para military to repress people's movements and workers' and peasants' unrest.

Earlier, in the welcome speech, Adv. Sanjay Singhvi, the convener of the All India Democratic Convention, made it clear that the convention is an initiative to form the broadest possible alternative by uniting all the democratic, progressive and secular sections of the society who are already fighting the state and its repressive regime on various counts. The rallying point of the convention, he said, is to "defeat communal fascism and to stand for

Contd.... page -22

First State Conference in UP

The First UP State Conference of the CPI(ML) Red Flag as part of its Fifth All India Conference was held at Lucknow on 26, 27 November. Delegates from Unnao, Varanasi, Gorakhpur region and Lucknow participated. The conference started after raising the red flag and remembering the martyrs. Com.K.N.Ramachandran, All India Secretary, pointed out the significance of this conference during his inaugural speech. The task in front of the Communist revolutionaries is to reorganise and rebuild the communist party at all India level making it capable to give leadership in order to fight back imperialist globalisation and intensifying communal fascist threats, and build a secular democratic India, he pointed out.

After active group level and general discussion, and reply to the discussion the draft Party Programme, Amendment to party constitution and draft Political Organisational Report of the CRC were adopted. The state leading

committees' report was also adopted after thorough discussion. The Conference elected a State Organising Committee with Com. Lakshminarayan as its secretary. It adopted resolutions calling for intensifying the struggle against globalisation and communal fascism, against the WTO dictated import policies which are devastating the peasantry, the working class and small scale industries, against contract labour system and other attacks on working class, against attacks on dalits and other oppressed classes, against commercialisation of education and unemployment and on other important issues.

The Conference concluded with the election of delegation for All India Conference and lowering of the red flag amidst revolutionary slogans. The First State Conference of the Party in UP will definitely provide a new enthusiasm to party building and launching of people's struggles in coming days. ●

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secular democratic India". The challenge today is to fight both globalisation and communal fascism with equal importance as both are two sides of the same coin. Increasing poverty, rising unemployment and falling living standards, which are the impact of globalisation, are forcing people to rise against the state. Anticipating bigger workers' movements and agitations against anti-poor policies of the government, the state is bringing back draconian laws like TADA by instilling its provisions in criminal procedure code and targeting even existing democratic rights. On the other side, it is bolstering communal and fascist trends and forces like Sangh Parivar.

In the presidential address Advocate K.K. Singhvi termed the changes mooted in the Constitution as totally undemocratic and intentionally done so as to aggravate fascism in the country. The government is scheming to speed up the process of globalisation by paving the way for the smooth entry of foreign capital unopposed by the working class of this country through suitable legislative changes.

On the topic of Globalisation and Constitutional Review, Justice Rajindar Sachar, expressed his apprehension about Constitutional Review as a Sangh Parivar conspiracy to cement the Hindutwad in the country. While calling for an all out resistance against globalisation, he said Market philosophy is being wrongly propagated as the answer to all the ills of the society. Commenting on the topic, Com. Mahadevan, deputy general secretary of AITUC said that while globalisation has dawned total economic enslavement of our country, the ruling class is changing the laws of this land and trampling the rights of the workers to suit plunder of the MNCs and G-7 countries shamelessly. Sharing the views on the topic, Prof. Ninan Koshy said that with WTO a new global constitutionalism has emerged in the world powered to enforce its harsh rules and

conditions on the member countries. The international trade body is enslaving the developing countries and its resources to the dominant economies. Our own constitutional review, he said, need to be perceived in the globalised and fascisised environment of our country. Expressing his displeasure on the media, Prof. Intiaz Ahmed of Jawaharlal Nehru University, said that it is important for the media to defend the democratic rights and secular aspirations of the people when it is being attacked instead of "lulling the people with opium like Kaun Banega Crorepati".

The very idea behind the Constitutional Review proposed by the BJP is to increase the power of the state and the institutions as well as suppress the resistance of the people coming up against the government and its oppressive regime.

In the session On Criminal Law Amendment Advocates K.G. Kannabiran and Aurobindo Ghosh of PUCL spoke at length on the dangers involved in bringing back the provisions of TADA-like draconian laws. They condemned the move of the state to repress the peoples' movements by arming the police and the para military with black laws.

The second day of the All India Democratic Convention deliberated on Attacks on secular democratic rights and minorities. Different aspects of the topic were initiated by Prof. Ninan Koshy, Dr. George Mathew, Dr. Abubaker and Mr. Niranjana Mahavar. In the keynote address, Prof. Koshy said that the attacks on the secular democratic rights and minorities are a part of the Sang Parivar programme, politically represented by the ruling party, BJP. The very character of the nation embedded in secularism and democracy is being fundamentally redefined by BJP at the behest of Sangh Parivar, he pointed. Pointing to the remarks made by Atal Behari Vajpayee about his indebtedness to the RSS for fahning up jingoism as well as

enlivening the Ayodhya issue, a crucial factor for the BJP to come to power, he said that it is quiet evident that BJP is playing into the hands of the Sangh Parivar and its Hindutva agenda. Prof. Koshy accused bankruptcy of the Congress and its total degeneration as reason for the rise of BJP and Sangh Parivar. Speaking in the same vein Mr. Niranjana Mahavar, noted anthropologist, said that the Sangh Parivar is targeting the diversity of our country in terms of culture, language and tradition. The cultural nationalism propagated by the Hindu fundamentalist organisation like VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS is synonymous with religious fascism, he observed. The slogans Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan of these communal forces make obvious their fascist agenda.

Reflecting on the increasing assault on the minorities and their institutions Dr. George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, said that what Sangh Parivar is interested in is the militarisation of the society rather than its democratisation. Calling the attention to the various incidents of blatant attacks on the social, secular and democratic polity of the country, Dr. George Mathew said that RSS looks at secularism as foreign and the secularists as anti-nationals. Through vandalism and aggression they are carrying forward their Hindutva agenda openly and shamelessly.

Expressing shock over the way the secular and democratic fabric of our educational system is maliciously being reformed and redesigned to suit the communal agenda of the BJP, Dr. Abubacker, educationalist and retired Professor of Jamia Milia University, said that the very essence of democracy is being destroyed. The link between communal fascism and globalisation, he opined, is not generally understood. He also warned of the imperialist interests being pushed through communal programmes. The recent move of the Sangh Parivar to communalise

the education system of this country is to be dangerously viewed and resisted. The efforts of Murali Manohar Joshi to redesign the educational curriculum and rewrite history pose grave threat to the secular and democratic polity of this nation, he opined. Only through mobilising larger and different sections of the society can one face the threat of communal fascism and build a secular democratic India, he added.

In the valedictory session Com. K.N. Ramachandran, general secretary, CPI (ML) Red Flag, Com. Chittaranjan, president, AITUC, Com. W.R. Vardarajan secretary CITU, Com. Suneet Chopra vice-president AIAWU, Mr. Sangeeta Rao general secretary Shoshit Samaj party, Com. Aparna Delhi state secretary CPI (ML) New Democracy, Com. Kavitha Krishnan CPI (ML) Liberation expressed their views on issues taken up at All India Democratic Convention. Generally all the speakers supported the call for unitedly opposing the Hindutva Agenda and the Sangh Parivar's attempt to redesign the secular and democratic fabric of the country.

Speaking in the concluding session, Com Ramchandran pointed out how the BJP-led NDA government is fanning communal fascism in every field particularly when the workers, peasants middle class and even the small industrial owners are coming out in the streets to fight against the impacts of globalisation. He said that Fascism may not repeat its old ways or methods but, would take different ways to establish itself in the present century. The real challenge before the left and democratic forces, he said, is to develop an alternative. "Learning from the experiences of the socialist forces in twentieth century how to build up an alternative to the capitalist-imperialists systems which is giving birth to neo-fascist like forces is the task before us" he said.

Vociferously attacking the present government for its communal and anti-people agenda, Com Chittaranjan accused the BJP-led NDA government of surrendering the rights of this country bit by bit to the multinationals, and thereby endangering sovereignty too. He did not spare the Congress on this account; and said that, it was Congress who raised the demand for Presidential rule first and by asking for constitutional review BJP intends to reverse the parliamentary system to Presidential system. Concerned

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over the state of affairs he called for an alternative path at the behest of the left and democratic forces of this country. But the challenge, he said, is to "coordinate all the sectoral struggles and to transform it to an all India struggle" as well as to "unite for that irrespective of our political differences" and "unitedly chalk out an alternative policy".

Complementing the efforts for unity Com.Vardarajan said though the left forces are fighting against communal fascism they are not fighting it in an organised manner. "Unless we get organised against our common enemy - the fascist and imperialist forces, the coming generation will not forgive us. However, the success of this democratic convention lies in uniting against communal fascism" he said.

Com. Suneet Chopra emphasised that the attack by the communal forces on culture should be fought seriously. How recent incidents of violence and vandalism unleashed by Bajrang Dal and VHP goons on cultural activists and institutions pose danger to the freedom of cultural expression in the country as well as abroad is well reflected through the destruction of MF Hussein's paintings and how Sahmat's exhibition against

communalism in Canada was disrupted with the help of Indian Embassy in Canada. Communalism and casteism can be defeated by class struggle and struggle for development and progress.

Reflecting on the issue of globalisation Com. Aparna said that efforts should be initiated by the left and progressive forces to compel the government to come out of the WTO. Expressing dismay over the attacks on democratic rights and institutions, Com Kavitha Krishnan strongly felt the need to organize agitation against the criminalisation of the state forces as witnessed in Bihar where private armies like Ranbir Sena is given a free hand by the state machinery to run a virtual goonda raj at the expense of the poor people.

Concluding the two-day convention, Com. Sanjay Singhvi, the convenor, remarked that he would consider the All India Democratic convention a success if the need to unite and initiate a broad front to combat communal fascism alongwith globalisation were understood by the participants and also the grave necessity to carry forward the fight to defeat communal fascism and stand for a secular and democratic India. ●

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Withdraw Proposed Changes to Contract Labour Law

This Resolution was Adopted by National Consultation of Trade Unions held on 26 November 2000 at Mumbai

We express our serious concern over the dangerous trends of curtailing and reversing the hard won rights of contract workers. These trends include:

(i) The Air India Judgement has been referred to a Constitutional bench of the Supreme Court for reconsideration of the issues therein, including the historic right laid down in the original judgement for contract workers to automatically become permanent on the abolition of a contract labour system.

(ii) There are reliable reports that the Central Government is preparing to amend Section 10 of the Contract Labour Act to exclude from the scope of prohibition all so-called non-core activities and restricting the scope for prohibition to only so-called 'core' activities.

(iii) In September of this year the Maharashtra Government published the proposed amendments which it plans to make to a whole host of labour laws. These include drastic amendments to the Contract Labour Act / Rules, which include:

a) Reducing coverage of the Act by increasing the minimum number of workers from 20 to 50 and to 100 in backward areas.

b) Excluding from the scope of Section 10 of the Act wide areas of work such as so-called 'auxiliary' activities (canteen, security, cleaning, transportation etc.), part time jobs, export order related jobs etc.

Other state governments are also considering similar amendments to the Contract Labour Act / Rules. These proposed attacks on the hard

won rights of contract workers are coming at the behest of the World Bank, WTO, IMF and MNCs. The Indian public and private sectors, State and Central Governments are also parties to this proliferation of contract labour.

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, it has been stated as follows:

"The system of employment of contract labour lends itself to various abuses. The question of its abolition has been under the consideration of Government for a long time. In the Second five Year Plan, The Planning commission made certain recommendations, namely, undertaking of studies to ascertain the extent of the problem of contract labour, progressive abolition of the system and improvement of service conditions of contract labour where the abolition was not possible. The matter was discussed at various meetings of Tripartite Committees at which the State Governments were also represented and general consensus of opinion was that the system should be abolished

wherever possible and practicable and that in cases where this system could not be abolished altogether, the working conditions of contract labour should be regulated so as to ensure payment of wages and provision of essential amenities."

The First Labour Commission set up by the Government of India in 1967 recommended with regard to the contract labour system that "the general direction of policy (should be) its abolition altogether in due course".

The proposed amendments to the Act / Rules by both the Central and State Governments fly in the face of these stated objectives.

The proposed amendments are nothing else than a complete reversal of national policy with regard to contract labour. They attempt to give a legal framework to the widespread exploitation which is inherent in the system of contract labour. The amendments are designed to drive a wedge between workers, thereby weakening the trade union movement. The Indian working class will never allow such attempts to succeed, nor the retrograde amendments to the Contract Labour Act.

We resolve to defeat these and other moves to weaken the legal rights of contract labour, including the attempt to overturn the judgement of the Supreme Court of India in the Air India judgement. We strongly oppose the proposed amendments to the Contract Labour Act / Rules by the Central and State Governments and call upon them to withdraw these proposals immediately. ●

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