AFTER THE RIGGED ELECTIONS

FACE THE ORDEAL WITH COURAGE AND DETERMINATION

COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)
WEST BENGAL STATE COMMITTEE

Dear Friends.

The people of West Bengal are now faced with an ordeal—far more difficult than before. The Congress Government, using the whole State power and with the help of unprecedented gangsterism and swindling, has turned the whole election in West Bengal into a complete farce, destroyed whatever parliamentary democracy existed and simultaneously made their armed attacks on the people unbridled.

After murdering hundreds of workers of the democratic movement and throwing into jails thousands, the Congress Government ultimately agreed to hold general elections in West Bengal. To ensure free and fair election, it was necessary to restore democratic rights, but that was not done. It was expected that even within this terror, the Government would at least abide by the elementary election rules like allowing voters to go to polling booths and vote, maintaining the safety of the ballot-boxes and ensuring proper counting of the votes. But in order to turn their sure defeat into an artificial victory, the Congress Government has thrown overboard all such rules and turned the whole election into a complete mockery.

From the facts gathered so far, it is clear that in about fifty constituencies in the strongholds of the democratic movement in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Burdwan and other districts, the Congress-Right Communist armed gangsters occupied most or many of the polling booths with the help of the police; armed with knives, pistols and bombs, they did not allow polling agents of the Left Front candidates to enter the booths or drove them away; they drove away the voters also and themselves stamped and cast bunches of ballot papers in the boxes. These gangsters did not trust even Congress voters. For bogus voting in the past some persons had to be found to stand in the queue. But this time there was no need of even that. The gangsters themselves stamped the ballot papers. In most of the booths, the Government appointed trusted men of the Congress as presi-

ding officers. Those who were neutral were forced by the gangsters to keep mum and act according to their dictates. A few of them who had sufficient courage have complained in writing of such intimidation and stamping of ballot papers. A few examples will suffice to prove such stamping of papers.

In many polling booths, by 12 noon, ninety to ninetyfive and even hundred per cent of the ballot papers had been cast into the boxes which was impossible had there been any genuine voting. This happened among others in booth No. 91, 92, 93, 94 of Baranagar constituency; in one of them 1080 votes were polled out of the total votes of 1090. By 9 or 10 a. m. the gangsters had occupied about a hundred booths in this constituency alone. For this reason Jyoti Basu declared at 11 a. m. that there was no election in that constituency. This happened in many other constituencies also. In booths No. 1, 3 and 8 of Pandua constituency 100 per cent of the votes were "polled". In the CIT Road Boat-House polling booth, the eligible voters were 801, but votes polled numbered 810. In their enthusiasm for swindling, the gangsters lost their heads. Had there been any free and fair election, even partially, it was impossible to defeat Jyoti Basu in Baranagar but he has been defeated by a margin of 39,000 votes. The defeat of our candidate in Dum Dum by a margin of 76,000 votes shows to what length gangsterism and fraud have gone. The defeats of our candidates in Kalna by a margin of 61,000, in Nadanghat by 59,000, in Monteswar by 48,000, in Panihati by 47,000, in Memari by 41,000, in Kharda by 41,000, in North Beliaghata by 39,000, in Burdwan South by 28,000 are telling examples of such gangsterism and stamping of ballot papers. In all these constituencies our candidates had won the elections again and again and they had won by securing more than fifty per cent of the votes polled.

But the Ruling Congress conspiracy was not confined to such naked gangsterism alone. It is now clear that in a far greater number of constituencies ballot-boxes and ballot papers were tampered with on an unprecedented scale and other methods of fraud were also practised. Just now it may not be possible to state clearly all the methods of tampering, but it is

definite that apart from using other scientific methods of swindling, ballot boxes were changed, more boxes added, boxes opened and ballot papers changed. A few examples will prove them. Gangsters, however clever they may be, leave certain traces behind when they work on a big scale.

In the ballot boxes of Ballyganj, Dhakuria, Shyampukur and many other constituencies, a large number of ballot papers have been found folded together and even crumpled together. It is impossible to insert them in that condition unless the boxes are opened. Ballot papers of Tapan have been found in the boxes of Rajganj (Jalpaiguri), of Chinsura in Balagar, of Tollygunj in Dhakuria, of Mainaguri in Kharda, of Englishbazar in Gazol, of Mainaguri in Kalchini, of Kumarganj in Tapan, of Champdani in Chinsura, etc. Ballot papers of Kulpi and Magrahat West duly stamped on the symbols of the Left Front candidates have been found on the banks of the River Hooghly at Diamond Harbour.

In booth No. 55 of Domkal constituency, total votes polled were 550, but 685 papers were found at the time of counting. In the same constituency, in five ballot boxes that came from one of our strong areas, not a single ballot paper was marked in our favour, not a single paper was invalidated, all had stamps on the cow and calf symbol. All these could not have happened unless the boxes were changed or the boxes were opened and the papers changed.

But the conspiracy did not end there. Swindling on a big scale was done at the time of counting also. Gangsters were collected both inside and around the counting halls. It was done with the connivance of the police. Section 144 was not for them in areas where such restrictions were imposed on others. When counting of Purbasthali was going on in Kalna, one counting officer was found putting the stamp on the cow and calf symbol on ballot papers marked in our favour with a rubber seal attached to his thumb in order to invalidate the papers. When our agent objected he was attacked with knives and revolvers by Congress goondas within the hall. The Returning Officer did not give any protection to our agents and hence they had to leave the hall for the safety of their lives. In

Uluberia South, after finishing the counting on different tables, when the figures were being tabulated it was found that our candidate was winning. But the Returning Officer just decreased our figures from the different tables and proportionately increased the figures of the Congress candidate and declared the Congress candidate elected with a small margin. Our protest was ignored. Both these methods are reported to have been adopted in Kamarhati and the Congress candidate was declared elected. In the Bishnupur West constituency, bundles of ballot papers marked in our favour were being counted as papers in favour of the Congress. One of the counting officers objected and checked some bundles. Somehow our candidate could not be defeated.

By using all these methods of naked gangsterism, occupation of polling booths, stamping of ballot papers by gangsters, tampering with ballot boxes and ballot papers and even swindling in counting, the Ruling Congress and its agents have turned their sure defeat into the so-called "great victory". The Congress Government came to know beforehand from police and Central Intelligence reports in how many constituencies they were in danger of being defeated with margins of approximately how many votes. On that basis they prepared a master plan as to how many booths would have to be occupied and where that would not be possible, what other methods of tampering would have to be adopted. More than two hundred constituencies were involved. Without a conspiracy at a high level of the Central Government and without utilising the whole administrative machinery, all these could not have been done.

In a vain attempt to hide their ugly conspiracy of gangsterism and rigging, the Congress rulers and their despicable agents are trying to put forth the theory that there has been a great swing of the people towards the Congress. It is nothing but another kind of swindling. It is no use referring to the cases of such constituencies as Baranagar, Panihati, Kharda, Dum Dum, Kalna, Nadanghat, Memari, Monteswar, Beliaghata, Burdwan, etc. There were no elections in many of these constituencies, but just stamping of ballot papers by gang-

sters. None except the devil can try to explain in any other way our defeats with such fantastic margins as 28,000, 41,000, 48,000, 59,000, 61,000, 76,000 in our strong constituencies which we had won again and again with big margins.

That, apart from such open gangsterism, large-scale tampering and swindling were practised very cleverly in a far larger number of constituencies, is also clear from the election results. None except the despicable agents of the swindlers can try to explain away our defeats by margins of 15,000, 20,000 or more in those constituencies where we had defeated the Congress by margins of 5,000 to 20,000 or more votes in 1971 when there was no Left unity and elections were held also under President rule. It will also be seen that in those constituencies where in the 1971 election, the combined votes of the Congress and Right Communists were much more than the Left votes and where there was little danger of the Congress losing the seats, our votes this time have generally gone up and the Congress-Right C. P. votes have come down. It is evident that the Congress Government had planned and worked out the conspiracy very cleverly. It may be that their calculations went a little wrong in a few cases as a result of which we won the Uttarpara and Bishnupur West seats. Similarly in Garden-Reach and Hariharpara, the Congress could not possibly imagine that it might lose because its vote was much higher than ours in the 1971 election and, hence, these constituencies were possibly left out of their conspiracy. We have won these seats. No pro-Indira swing but pure and simple gangsterism and swindling have created the "magic" of the so-called election results. The whole election was rigged.

Had there been the slightest relation between the people's verdict and the Congress victory, there would have been spontaneously great enthusiasm among the vast masses with the declaration of the election results. But just the opposite has happened. Disbelief, hatred and sadness have gripped them. Only a small number of Congress-Right Communist gangsters are making noises and resorting to gangsterism. Had there been real mass support behind the Congress "victory", there would not have been such lack of mass enthusiasm. The mark of

criminals are on the faces of the Congress leaders and their agents.

Friends, the rule of gangsters and swindlers has been established in West Bengal in the true fascist way. The people have been cheated and insulted. Their right to vote has been taken away by gangsterism and rigging. The people were not trusted at all. They are further being insulted by the slanderous propaganda that the so-called election results are a reflection of the people's verdict. The democratic rights of the people have been totally destroyed. West Bengal has faced such naked suppression of democracy, gangsterism and total rigging of the elections, because it is here that the Congress faced inevitable defeat at the hands of the Left and democratic forces. In similar conditions in other States, such methods will be adopted on a similar grand scale. This poses a serious danger to the whole country.

The enemies of the people know that the people of West Bengal will not accept this rigged election as valid. Even if they have to pass through very difficult and hard conditions, they will continue their struggle for democracy. Hence as soon as the election was over, the Government-backed Congress and Right Communist gangsters with the active help of the police and the CRP have launched new attacks in Hitlerite fashion in different areas of West Bengal, particularly in the strong areas of the democratic movement. A number of comrades have since been murdered and many more By launching armed attacks in different areas, wounded. the gangsters are driving away thousands of workers and supporters of Left parties, not sparing even women. Such ferocious attacks are going on in Baranagar, Belgachia, Maniktala, Kasba, Haltu, Dum Dum, Tollygunj, Noapara, Burdwan, Durgapur, Raniganj, etc. Lenin Colony in Garulia in Barrackpore sub-division has been burnt to ashes. A sinister conspiracy is on to terrorise the minority people. In different places in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Burdwan, Murshidabad, Midnapore, our party offices and offices of mass organisations have been attacked and some have been forcibly occupied. The houses of many leaders and workers of Left parties, particularly of the

CPI (M), are being attacked. It is evident that the police has been directed not to take any action against the gangsters.

Keeping pace with such gangster attacks, the police have also intensified their attacks on workers of the democratic movement; more arrests are being made daily. To provide a cover as well as justification for such brutal attacks, hundred per cent false stories in the Goebbelsian way are being propagated, as was done after the assassination of the respected leader Hemanta Basu. It is apprehended that in the coming days such attacks will be further intensified. Fiercer attacks will be launched to destroy and seize trade unions and other mass organisations. The gangster Congress leaders and their despicable Right Communist hangers-on are taking the country a step further towards a fascistic butcher raj.

This situation has confronted the people of West Bengal with a hard ordeal. But the people of West Bengal, steeled in the fire of many democratic and heroic struggles will have to face it with cool determination. The silent hatred and agony that are evident in the eyes and faces of the people make it clear that this election is nothing but a total fraud and a farce. The people will never accept it as valid. They will never bow their head before this total fraud and insult. Neither will they accept the destruction of democracy as inevitable and final. They will unitedly stand for restoration of democracy and for blocking the road to complete fascism.

Friends and comrades, you are to organise your silent hatred into vocal protests. You are to defend your day-to-day movements, your organisations and cadres in face of fiercer attacks. Trade unions and other mass organisations will have to be saved. You are to regroup your forces in the new situation. It will be wrong to succumb to adventurism getting agitated and provoked by brutal attacks, but at the same time there can be no surrender to the ruling classes in the face of brutal attacks; with cool heads and with courage and determination the people have to conduct their united movements.

We know that this is a very difficult task. Compared to the past, the people have to advance through more sacrifices and oppression. This is not easy. But it is just this condition

to which the people are being pushed by the Congress rulers and their gangsters. To the working class, working peasants. employees, intellectuals, students, youth and all democratic people of West Bengal, we appeal: Face unitedly the attacks of the ruling classes. Stand firmly with brothers of the minority community and help them. Forge greater unity and face the challenge of fascistic butcher rule. Whatever danger comesin the way, our Party will always stand by the people, will safeguard Left unity as the apple of the eye and will try to forge broader unity against the fascist danger.

The attack of the ruling classes is directed against all Left and democratic parties, but it is most concentrated against our Party. Thousands of our cadres and sympathisers are faced today with a great danger. But we Communists are persons of a special mould. Nobody could make us deviate, nor can anybody make us deviate from the path of struggle shedding our blood. We cannot offer any easy consolation to and thus insult those of our brave comrades who have become victims of the attacks of a ferocious enemy, whose blood is being shed, who are being oppressed, who are being driven away from their areas with families, whose living is being snatched away and who are behind prison bars for years together. We convey to them the revolutionary greetings from co-fighters.

In this period of trial we call upon our workers and sympathisers, have faith in the masses and calmly face the situation, reorganise your forces in a way suited to the new situation, strengthen at all levels Left and democratic unity and organise united movements of the vast masses of the people.

Declare this rigged and illegal election as invalid! Down with fascistic attacks! Left unity Zindabad! Communist Party of India (Marxist) Zindabad!

West Bengal State Committee, 16. 3. 72 Communist Party of India (Marxist)