

Forge Left and Democratic United Front as instrument of struggle

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Appeal

[In a letter dated 31st December '80 addressed to CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML), Forward Block, RSP, Workers & Peasant League, RCPI, Workers' Party of India, Marxist Forward Block, Communist Workers' Party of India, Biplabi Bangla Congress, Bolshevik Party, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of our Party, SUCI, reiterated the proposal for forming a political united front as an instrument of struggle of the toiling people. Below we give the full text of the letter—Editor, Proletarian Era]

Dear Comrade,

You will surely agree with us that the country's situation is very grave. The crisis in moribund capitalist system in this third phase of intense general crisis has not only become daily, hourly but it is now an all-out crisis covering every aspect of people's life—economic, social, political, moral and Cultural.

The crisis-ridden bourgeoisie is shifting the entire burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of toiling exploited millions. As a sequel to bourgeoisie's desperate attempts to sustain the system somehow, more and more tax burdens are being thrust on the people and along with this, there is the high rate of inflation. The cumulative effect of high inflation and mounting tax burden is pushing the overwhelming majority of the toiling people, poor and middle class, down to the subsis-

tence level. The capitalist class faced with this great crisis is extracting more and more subsidies from the government budgets, the increasing cost of which is being met by the tax money obtained by fleecing the people. This is the capitalist fraud that is going on in the name of country's development.

Not only the bourgeoisie is thus bringing down unbearable financial burden on the people with the help of the ruling parties but the same help it is getting in ruthlessly crushing the mass movements spontaneously growing up against the exploitation. What is more, taking advantage of the communal, parochial and other divisive feelings and sentiments still persisting among the people due to the failure of our freedom movement to bring about democratisation of society

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COMRADE NIHAR MUKHERJEE

On the recent Ordinance on Black Money

Calcutta 15th January '81:

"The height of deception of Indira Gandhi Government is amply clear, once again, in the promulgation of ordinance of 12th allowing black money to be white with so many concessions. Apart from the government's direct encouragement to the black money holders and operators by helping them to legitimize their ill-gotten gains earned at the cost of people's unspeakable sufferings, the exercise itself is nothing but an eyewash. For, the black money operators are minting fabulous super profits

with the direct aid and assistance of the governments and their bureaucracy and can therefore hardly be expected to respond.

We will remind the people that immediately after assumption in office, Indira Gandhi and her party revived preventive detention act and later brought draconian measures like National Security Act on the plea of containing the economic offenders whom the present ordinance patronises. Our party, on each occasion reminded the people that

the real target of attack of the government's measures was nothing other than legitimate democratic movement of the people, notwithstanding the pretensions and pretext of the Government.

We demand of the government to withdraw the ordinance as also to take stringent measures against the black money holders and operators and urge upon the people to build up strong democratic movement in support of this demand.

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Language and Education Policies of the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal

A people has to experience many attacks in its life. Some affect its life most directly and quite openly. Naturally there is nothing vague about them and the people can rise in protest in order to resist them. But there arise occasions in a people's life when mischiefs are wrought, bringing about a trail of disaster; for, they act so imperceptibly that it takes much time to understand the evil effects, accompanying these mischiefs. When the real purport of such attacks and the grievous consequences, following them, are understood in their true perspective, it becomes too late to remedy them—everything is then lost. Such is the danger which the education and specially the language policy of the present 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal portend.

The new scheme

To state briefly, the language policy of the

West Bengal Government is characterised with the abolition of English at

primary level and making the language study including the mother-tongue optional in the degree courses, marked with the complete banishment of literature. Such a policy brings into forces three prominent characteristic features: first, discouragement to language study as a whole including the mother-tongue; second, curtailment of the scope for learning English, and third, undermining the importance of literature.

The leaders of the 'Left Front' in order to (Contd. to page 2)

An Exercise in Futility!

Madurai, January 5: A public meeting under the auspices of Madurai Unit of the SUCI was held on January 5 last. The meeting was presided over by Comrade M. Ramachandran. Comrades K. Chakraborty, R. Gopalakrishnan and R. Baskar addressed the gathering.

In his speech Comrade R. Baskar dealt in detail the importance of Orissa student's movement. The leading role of the DSO, Orissa was emphasised and opportunist policy pursued by others including the petty-bourgeois forces like CPI and CPI(M) was unmasked. The meeting was attended among others

by a number of match factory workers.

In connection with this meeting the role of the CPI(M) was nakedly exposed. All the Comrades of the Sivakasi Unit of the SUCI were previously in CPI(M), but they were totally disillusioned at the behaviour of the CPI(M) leaders and at the opportunism and corruption of the trade union leaders of CITU and so when they came in contact with the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the eminent Marxist thinker and our leader and teacher they joined the SUCI. So the CPI(M) was bitter about them and when these

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Denigration of Language Study is an Affront to Educational Objective itself

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persuade the people with their contention have raised many points the mention and discussion of all of which is not possible in such a short space, and we have also elaborately dwelt upon them in many of our previous issues. So let us concentrate here on only a few important arguments which they have put forth.

According to the spokesmen of the State Government the students' brains should not be unnecessarily taxed with the burden of language study. Of course, one having linguistic knack should have the opportunity to study language. Each and every student is not expected to have mastery over all the subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Philosophy etc. Same is the case with language study. For, to them the importance of language study is no more than that enjoyed by any other subject. So, it should better be kept to the discretion of a student whether or not to study language as he has been made free to choose in case of other subjects too. They say that such an option concerning language study should be left to the students more so for the fact that if so much time is spent on acquiring efficiency in language, how can one cope with the ever-advancing realm of science and epistemology?

Specially from this attitude toward the importance of language study as a whole is derived the crux of their arguments against the retention of English if, of course, they are taken to be true to their words. They argue that it is due to the retention of English that the further development of our mother-tongues is being seriously obstructed. Furthermore the overriding importance of English at the primary level is shutting the doors of education to the people at large. Hence, the cry

against English as being responsible for elitist education in place of universalisation of education. What is the use of learning English by our poverty-stricken millions?—they ask. For, they are not meant to be doctors, barristers, administrators or leaders. Naturally, a little bit of knowledge in language, and that, too, in the vernacular, will do for them. Why will they waste their valuable time then for learning English? It is absolutely redundant.

On similar grounds they ought not to expend much energy on the study of literature in their educational curricula. Still, if any one becomes fond of either English or literature, one may easily learn them, cultivate them privately—there is no bar. Why then to make the syllabus awfully cumbersome?

In fine, these are the main logical propositions with which the 'Left-Front' is trying to prove the 'justification' of its decisions. Let us probe deeper into whether these arguments are tenable at all.

Object of education

It should be remembered that in any society education acts as one of the most powerful means to frame up the social mental makeup. For this reason both to the exploiting and to the exploited classes it is of immense importance according to the respective class interests. So, those who want to abolish exploitation altogether are expected to decide the syllabus in such a way as would help in generating a process through which people will have the opportunity to nourish a spirit against injustice and to nurse ever-growing discontent against the social maladies by going deep into their causes and the way out. Any other consideration as to whether or not the students like a particular subject or what

percentage of failure is incurred in a particular subject should in no way be allowed to interfere with this criterion of judgement in forming the educational syllabus. In case of any difficulty to accommodate any subject in the educational curricula, the one and the only question to be judged is whether the teaching of that particular subject is necessary so far as the question of forming a scientific bent of mind is concerned. So, the task will be only to see to the removal of these difficulties. One more word in this respect: a responsible and pro people government can by no means deny its responsibility to provide education to the people, irrespective of their financial status, nor can it leave a particular subject, if it is deemed really necessary, open to an affair of private study. These are the fundamental premises to be taken into due cognizance of in giving the education system a correct pattern and orientation as is useful and purposive in the interest of the exploited masses. Now, let us see how far on closer scrutiny, these objectives have been fulfilled in the education and specially the language policy of the government.

We believe that in our above discussion we have been able to make it clear that the pivot round which centres this language policy is belittling the importance of the language study as a whole. From now on, language study will practically lose all its importance to a student. Furthermore, the language course in the degree level has been prescribed in such a way as the students will have to be satisfied only by parroting some dry grammatical formulations and with a smattering of composition. They will be deprived of the study of literature altogether in their educational syllabus. Barring the vital role it

plays in moulding and remoulding social life which we shall discuss later on, it is an admitted fact that literature claims to have paramount importance in learning and acquiring efficiency in a language. For, if grammar is taken to mean the skeleton of a language, literature is its life blood. Without studying literature one may well be able to write application but cannot express one's thoughts and ideas freely, spontaneously, in a most flexible manner and in precision. So, if this be the language course, is there any importance at all left to the study of language?—No. The government's plea to reduce the language to the status of a mere subject does not also stand to reason because language is the vehicle of thought, the gateway to knowledge. One may well manage one's life without at all cramming the formulations of Chemistry or Physics and without entering into the 'puzzles' of philosophy. But how can we think, dream either, how to have free access to our feelings and emotions, if robbed of the right to learn language in our academic career? This importance of language study holds good not only for the students of arts, but also for those of science even. This is why the bourgeois humanists in the dawn of the Renaissance movement recognised the importance of language study. They never confined the scope of language study only to those having special interest in language as the 'Left Front' is doing today. Acting as the torchbearers of truth and progress in those days they deeply realised that in order to cultivate truth one must have free and open entry into higher thoughts and ideas. Now, if the vehicle, meaning thereby the language, becomes crippled, if one's language capability is too impotent to convey those

higher thoughts and ideas, how can one get at truths, let alone realising them. So, at that time the educationists like Vergerio, Erasmus and others were so keen in giving due importance to the study of language in the then educational syllabus. But today when capitalism as a world system has become completely moribund having nothing to render further service to the people rather more and more accentuating their miseries and sufferings, when it is out to suppress all movements of the people, gagging the voice of truth itself, it cannot but naturally plug all the avenues of higher thoughts and ideas to the people. Hence, the negation of the role of the language study in all the advanced capitalist countries of the West. Viewed in sharp focus against the background of the out and out decadent character of Indian capitalism as the part and parcel of crisis-ridden world capitalism, such cold shoulder to the study of language will reveal to have similar class objectives.

That with days passing our education is becoming more and more technical providing little opportunities, much to the detriment of the enrichment of the power of thinking of the students; while jamming their brains with drab and unnecessary facts and data, cannot escape our notice. Hence, it is not too difficult to understand how much of honour and dignity may be given to the language study in such an educational arena! The Congress as the known and faithful political representative of the capitalist class had long been striving to implement a policy, inimical to the growth of thinking faculty of the students, not without any purpose and achieved partial success in this regard. Now, the 'Left Front' Government has shown them the way, the best one

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Brezhnev's Visit—Its Implications

The Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev came to India on 8th December last on a four day visit. After discussions between the Indian and Soviet leaders, a joint Indo-Soviet declaration was issued on December 11, at the end of the visit. Several agreements and protocols were also signed. After the visit, the press reported that the Soviet Union would supply the advanced MIG 25 warplanes to India. Prime Minister Smt. Gandhi announced in the Parliament on 15th December that the Soviet Union had agreed to extend a credit of 520 million roubles (Rs. 520 crores) for India's power, coalmining, oil exploration and steel plant projects, to increase crude oil supplies from 1.5 million tons to 2.5 million tons and oil products from 1.9 million tons to 2.25 million tons annually for the next five years. In his speech to the Indian Parliament, Brezhnev proposed a five point "doctrine of peace and security" with regard to the Persian Gulf countries. The joint declaration also reaffirmed that India and Soviet Union would cooperate for the establishment of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

The Bargain

Before dealing with the outcome of this visit and its implications, let us examine the background of the visit. What was the situation in which this visit came? What were the points at issue?

On the Soviet side, the Afghan question must have figured as a prime consideration. Soviet troops have been in Afghanistan for a year now, and they number about a lakh. Military victory has eluded them so far and from all accounts, is not likely in the foreseeable future. It has not been possible for Babrak Karmal, the Soviet-installed Afghan President, to muster requisite popular support which would have enabled him to tackle the situation and the Soviet troops to leave Afghanistan. Karmal tacitly admitted as much when, speaking on the 27th December last on the first anniversary of the Soviet backed coup that brought him to power, he acknowledged serious damage to the economy by anti-government forces and had to announce a new "fatherland front" in a bid to attract popular support. As things stand, short of a political solution the Soviets do not have much chance of extricating themselves in the near future from the protracted war in Afghanistan. They proposed sometime back

with fanfare that their troops would leave once international guarantee were extended to the Karmal government. No doubt this could have been an expedient which would have allowed them to leave Afghanistan without losing face, but there have been no takers ready to provide such guarantee. The conference of the Warsaw Pact countries last year revealed that several of the East European allies of the Kremlin were uneasy at and actually critical of the Soviet armed presence in Afghanistan. We have shown in a recent article how the USA, in the context of the Iraq-Iran war, has been gaining ground in Iraq, Iran and other countries of the middle east and Arab world at the cost of Soviet Union through skilful manoeuvres. That the USA has been able to take such advantage of the situation is at last partly due to the Soviet discomfiture over Afghanistan which has reduced the elbow-room for the USSR to launch diplomatic military moves vis-a-vis Iraq-Iran conflict. The situation in Poland is in a flux and may develop any time into a crisis at the very door steps of the USSR. But the present international situation has restricted the Soviet manoeuvreability and

choice of action and certainly made active intervention difficult. What with the Soviet interventions in Africa, the Soviet role in Kampuchea and sending troops to Afghanistan, the stock of the USSR with the comity of nations is low. The Soviet Union's isolation was strikingly demonstrated at the latest voting on Afghanistan at the U. N. Today, India perhaps is the only major country in Asia friendly to the Soviet Union.

In the circumstances, the Soviet objective was, through the Brezhnev visit, to ensure that India remains close with the Soviet Union and does not bring into open its objection to Soviet armed presence in Afghanistan and take up an antagonistic position on this issue. The Soviet aims to strengthen their position through closeness with and support from India and gain in the superpower rivalry with the USA in this part of the globe, to retard the process of normalization of India-China relation that has begun and to prevent friendliness between India and Pakistan, the country that they think is helping the Afghan rebels, if necessary by playing on the Indian apprehension that the Reagan administration of the US would support and back Pakistan. The government led by Smt. Gandhi serve the aggregate interest of the ruling class of the country, the Indian bourgeoisie. Accordingly, it had several considerations to take care of.

Indian Bourgeoisie's Predicament

The Indian capitalist state started consolidation of capitalism in the country at a time when the world was divided into two blocs of countries led by the USA and the USSR confronting each other. In such a situation, the best course of action for the bourgeoisie of a sovereign developing nation was to assume the stance of neutrality between the two blocs which enabled it to

take assistance and aid from both the blocs and made for a better bargaining position and greater leverage while dealing with either of the two big powers, the USSR and the USA. This was the objective reality providing the basis of neutrality in the cold war and formation of the neutral bloc, and under the stewardship of Pandit Nehru, India became one of its leaders. With passage of time and with its development, growth and maturity, Indian capitalism has acquired the traits of imperialism and become expansionist. It must find markets abroad for exporting produces and finance capital in order to bolster up its crisis-ridden economy. Over a number of years, India has been exporting even capital and setting up factories and enterprises on a significant scale to many a country and especially the countries of Asia and Africa. These represent a growing interest and stake, and the Indian bourgeoisie must try to safeguard these by attempts to gain political and even military leverage and ascendancy in the regions surrounding India, which they have come to regard as the Indian sphere of influence. Soviet armed presence in Afghanistan has a destabilizing effect, is in contradiction to this policy and is therefore contrary to the interest of the Indian bourgeoisie. That is why, although the first Indian Government reaction to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was not adverse, it revised its stand within a very short time and started criticising the Soviet action. It realised that mere condemnation would not get the Soviets out of Afghanistan and there was no question of the regional countries putting military pressure on the USSR. The Indian Government, therefore, launched intense lobbying and diplomatic activities through emissaries and ambassadors to all the

countries in the region aimed at putting diplomatic pressure on the Soviets by trying to develop a regional consensus against the Soviet troop movement into Afghanistan and at the same time pleaded with the USSR to opt for a political solution instead of the military and also tried to work out a via-media acceptable to both the USSR and the USA, with India in the role of the mediator between Afghanistan and its antagonized neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Iran. These efforts have not succeeded so far. The Soviet armed intervention in the region is a sore point with the ruling class of India. It is against their interest. Moreover, India can keep mum about the Afghan question only at the risk of further weakening its prestige among the non-aligned and the ASEAN nations, which is already at a low ebb as a result of the Indian stand on Kampuchea.

Impact on Sino-Indian normalisations

For some years, the Indian bourgeoisie, and as their mouth-piece, the successive Indian Governments have been trying to gradually normalise relations with China, the Indo-China border question notwithstanding. They consider this important and necessary, for they assess China to be potentially a significant market for Indian commodities. Further, bi-lateral relation with China could provide them some flexibility and leverage in dealing with either the USA or the USSR.

Again, there are constraints the Indian bourgeoisie are subjected to. The crisis in the Indian capitalist economy has further deepened during the last one year or so and there has been unprecedented rate of inflation during this period. The Iraq-Iran conflict has affected two-thirds of Indian import of crude oil with telling effect upon the economy. Indira Government has resorted to massive deficit financing

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to balance the budget. This is sure to create further inflationary pressure and may lead to galloping inflation. The people, suffering under the crushing burden of crisis-ridden capitalist economy, are growing restive and giving vent to resentment. If the present state of affairs continue, there is chance of them rising up in revolt whereby the very existence of the capitalist system would be in peril. The Indian capitalist economy is direly in need of relief measures. The attitude the Reagan administration of USA will take up in regard to India vis-a-vis Pakistan in the context of super power rivalry with the USSR in the region and especially in view of the Afghan situation, is yet unknown but chances are that it will be favourably disposed towards Pakistan. In order to bolster up the crisis-ridden capitalist economy and order, the Indian bourgeoisie have no option but to lean heavily upon Soviet support.

The considerations, constraints and compulsions on both the sides must have come into play, acted and interacted during discussions between the Indian and the Soviet leaders. The resultant joint declaration, agreements and protocols reflect the adjustment and compromise arrived at.

Difference on Afghanistan no longer a secret

A study of these show that an important difference between the two sides remain on the Afghan question. This is implied in the omission of any reference to Afghanistan in the joint declaration. Incidentally, there is no reference to Kampuchea either. On the other hand, the agreements and protocols provide for supply of sophisticated military hardware, a massive credit and substantial increase in Soviet supply on very favourable terms of repayment through additional Indian exports to the USSR, of crude oil and oil products for five

Indo-Soviet Joint Declaration a Marriage of Convenience

years at a stretch. That there would be no agreement on the Afghan issue must have been assessed by New Delhi beforehand. Even so, the Indian refusal to toe the Soviet line was made clear both before and during the Brezhnev visit.

The statement at the end of President Suharto's visit to India implied disapproval of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Smt. Gandhi's speech at the AICC (I) meeting a few days before the Brezhnev visit expressed India's disapproval explicitly. As if to drive the point home, President Reddy, at the banquet hosted by him in honour of President Brezhnev, stated forcefully the view point of the Indian bourgeoisie that India was against any form of intervention, covert or overt, by outside forces in the internal affairs of the region. These were meant to clearly state and restate India's stand of disapproval of Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan which reflects the aggregate interest of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie, and were also aimed at allaying the misgivings about the Indian role on the issue among the non-aligned and the ASEAN countries, especially with an eye to the meeting of the foreign ministers of non-aligned countries to be hosted by India in February. Also, these served to put some pressure on the Soviets at the discussions during the Brezhnev visit.

Difference on Afghan issue—a bargain counter

There can be no doubt that the Afghan issue figured prominently in these discussions. But the joint declaration did not register this disagreement between India and the Soviet Union on this question. This, coupled with the large concessions gained from the Soviet in credit, trade and procure-

ment of armaments, strongly suggests that the Indian government used the Afghan issue and the Soviet discomfiture over it as a powerful bargaining tool and in exchange for silence on that issue in the declaration, settled for gaining advantages on the other points.

The Indian government obtained much needed assistance to strengthen the crisis ridden capitalist economy and system, while the Soviets, at a particularly awkward international situation for them, succeeded in drawing India closer to them in their bid to strengthen their hegemonistic design in this part of the globe in the context of their super power rivalry with the USA. This is bound to intensify the cold war between the USA and the USSR in the region and in relation between the countries in the area. Brezhnev's new fangled "doctrine of peace and security" notwithstanding. While pursuing the policy of non-alignment and securing aid from both the USA and the USSR and hob-nobbing with both, at one stage closeness with the USSR became the major feature of Indian foreign policy. Climax of this phase was reached in the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty which was thrust upon India taking advantage of the situation. Morarji Desai, while he was the Prime Minister, effected some toning down, but now as an outcome of the Brezhnev visit, the old position and arrangement has been reverted to.

The outcome of the Brezhnev visit represents an adjustment and compromise on the basis of the considerations and compulsions of the two sides, a marriage of convenience, so to say, between the hegemonistic Soviet revisionist leadership and the Indira Government acting in the interest of the ruling Indian bourgeoisie and has nothing in common with the aspirations of the

toiling people of the country.

CPI(M) competing to earn the blessings of Soviet revisionist leadership

It is interesting, therefore, to note the manner in which the pseudo-communists here have reacted to the event. That the CPI and the Dangeites who are avowedly pro-Soviet and are identified in the mass minds as lackeys of the revisionist Soviet leadership, should have welcomed the Brezhnev visit is not surprising. What is revealing is the manner in which the "revolutionary" party CPI(M) has hailed the visit and gone all out to please the Soviet leadership. Five politbureau members of the CPI(M) headed by its General Secretary E. M. S. Namboodiripad went to the airport to welcome Brezhnev. A reportage in the CPI(M) journal *Peoples' Democracy* of 14th December said that "Some elements wanted to mar the occasion by hostile demonstrations, but they were only a handful." In the same issue, in a prominent newsbox on the front page headed "A false report" it was specially pointed out that some newspapers had reported that DYFI, the CPI(M) youth organisation had participated in an anti-Brezhnev visit demonstration but this was totally false as the DYFI had heartily welcomed the visit! The next issue of the *Peoples' Democracy* dated 21st December published a statement by the CPI(M) politbureau hailing the Brezhnev visit and its outcome. The statement, inter alia, says that "the visit of L. I. Brezhnev to India and the Joint Declaration...are a positive factor in favour of the peace forces in the world.....". After noting favourably that efforts at making India take up an anti-Soviet stand on Afghanistan had failed, welcoming the various agreements and protocols

signed and noting with satisfaction that attempts to mar the occasion by hostile demonstrations failed, the statement concludes that "The Polit Bureau is confident that the Joint Declaration will be welcomed by the people of India as a document which advances the cause of anti-imperialism and world peace....."

All these show to what length the CPI(M) has gone in eulogising the Soviet revisionist leadership and in currying favour with it. The reason is not far to seek. Apart from showing the closeness between the revisionist Soviet leadership and the revisionist social democratic party that the CPI(M) is, this also reveals the CPI(M)'s desire to please the CPSU leadership to obtain their support and backing in its bid to gain in the parliamentary politics and emerge as an alternative force on the national scene within the framework of the bourgeois system. It is no secret that the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties often seek to enlist support of the USA or the USSR in order to gain manoeuvrability and strengthen position in home politics.

CPI(M)'s eulogy of Soviet revisionist leadership is for benefit in parliamentary politics

The CPI(M) is striving to emerge as a force in Indian parliamentary politics in opposition to and in competition with bourgeois parties like the Congress(I) headed by Smt. Gandhi and is now seeking support of the Soviet leadership for the purpose. This is clear from some passages of an article by the CPI(M) leader B. T. Ranadive in the issue of *Peoples' Democracy* dated 21st December last. In this article which is full of praise for the Brezhnev visit and the Joint Declaration, the only points Ranadive finds fault with are the effusive tributes Brezhnev paid to Smt. Gandhi since these may

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CPI (M) Outbids CPI and Dangeites in eulogising the Soviet Revisionist Leadership

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help Smt. Gandhi in parliamentary politics to the detriment of the CPI(M). Says Ranadive: "It is a profound mistake for the Soviet leaders to identify friendship between the two peoples with effusive friendship for the ruling party. The forces of Indo-Soviet Friendship are far wider than the circle of the ruling party and its leader". Is not Ranadive here trying to tell the Soviet leadership that it is a mistake to shower praise and support to Smt. Gandhi since there are other forces like the CPI(M) who are better friends of the Soviet Union and should therefore be encouraged? Understandably, Ranadive is very sore at Smt. Gandhi's using the platform of civic reception to Brezhnev "to attack the opposition, especially the left". His party has no quarrels with Smt. Gandhi when she strikes a deal with the revisionist Soviet leadership to arm the forces of the capitalist state machine with deadly weapons, compromises India's stand of neutrality by drawing it near the vortex of superpower rivalry and arms race and in the process undermines vital interest and aspirations of the toiling people of the country, but of course she becomes very bad when she speaks ill of them to the Soviet leader whose patronage the CPI(M) is soliciting for!

Both the Soviet revisionist leadership and CPI(M) gave overt and covert support to Emergency

Ranadive is distressed at Brezhnev's calling Smt. Gandhi an outstanding leader of Asia and says in the article: "May we inform the CPSU General Secretary that this outstanding leader of Asia had five years ago brought the country under Emergency, imprisoned thousands without trial and made a mockery of the Indian Constitution." We

understand Ranadive and CPI(M)'s opportunistic necessity to utilise and exploit the justified anger and resentment of the Indian masses against Smt. Gandhi because of the draconian authoritarian measures she foisted on them through the Emergency, for the purpose of scoring points against her in parliamentary politics. But may we ask Ranadive what was the role of his party during the hated Emergency? May we request him to go through the text of the conciliatory memorandum that five members of his Party's Polit Bureau submitted to Smt. Gandhi at the height of the Emergency, which was published in People's Democracy dated 25th April 1976? May we remind Ranadive that by writings in the party journals and utterances of its leaders, the CPI(M) accorded tacit approval to Emergency? Just a few excerpts will suffice. In the report on the above mentioned memorandum published in People's Democracy of 25th April, 1976 it was stated that "...The party's (the CPI(M)'s—Ed. P. Era) record, the memorandum asserted, is one of consistently carrying on a political-ideological fight against rightist policies, whether pursued by internal or external forces and against policies of the extreme left... The CPI(M) has a consistent record of fight against imperialism and particularly against US imperialist machinations and we have never hesitated to support the government whenever it took an anti-imperialist anti-colonial stand. ...The party is of the opinion that if these points (relating to Smt. Gandhi's 20-point programme announced during Emergency—Ed. P. Era) relating to peasants and agricultural labourers are honestly and sincerely implemented they would give some relief to these sections." Again, when the CPI charged that the CPI(M)'s

main aim was to bring down Smt. Gandhi from power, the CPI(M) hastened to correct this misconception: "It is therefore a canard spread by interested quarters and repeated by the Right C. P. leaders that our only aim and objective is to pull Mrs. Gandhi down from the Prime Ministerial gaddi" (People's Democracy, 12.12.76) and "We had...no hesitation to give our support to Indira Gandhi and her colleagues when a confrontation developed between them on the one hand and the Syndicate Congress supported by the non-Congress rightist parties like the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra" (People's Democracy, 19.12.76). Right at the beginning of Emergency, the CPI leader Rajeswar Rao who was hand in glove with Smt. Gandhi, correctly grasped the CPI(M) approach and said appreciatively: "The CPI(M) has not passed any resolution on the present Emergency. We think that is an improvement. The CPI(M) leaders are now in contact with Siddharta Shankar Roy and the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi" (report in Statesman dated 19.7.75). May we also remind Mr. Ranadive in this connection that Mr. Brezhnev or for that matter the Soviet revisionist leadership, to whom he was appealing, not only gave enthusiastic support to Emergency but endorsed all that Indira Gandhi did during it? Then whom he was trying to fool?

Fact is this that the CPI(M), as a social democratic force, has become a party of the establishment and has no basic contradiction with the present exploitative social order. It has a contradiction with Smt. Gandhi because of the different respective positions of the CPI(M) and the Congress (I) in parliamentary politics. Its criticism of Smt. Gandhi is the typical stock in trade of a parliamentary party in opposition, used against the party in government while

both the parties remain committed to the existing system. The CPI(M)'s stand is the same as that of Brezhnev or of Indira Gandhi as embodied in the Joint Declaration. The contradiction arises because, if the CPI(M) does not protest against the plaudits to Indira Gandhi paid by Brezhnev, its position in parliamentary politics is relegated in the eyes of masses and it suffers in comparison to Indira Congress. Otherwise, who does not know that there exists today closeness, identity of interest and collaboration between the CPI(M) and the Congress (I) on the question of safeguarding the bourgeois order. This has been revealed time and again, the CPI(M)'s occasional mockfight against Indira notwithstanding. Both the parties crush mass movements with the same ferocity from governmental seat and are very anxious to protect bourgeois law and order. Governments run by both the parties have enacted provision for detention without trial. The position today is such that the CPI(M) speaks out against Smt. Gandhi only if it gets worried that she is plotting to topple the CPI(M) led ministry in a state. It may then give a call for one day Bundh, as it did for a Bangla Bundh on the 27th November last, but the CPI(M) leaders were at great pains to explain to Indira Gandhi and the public both before and after the Bundh that it would not sour the Central-State relation, would not lead to confrontation with Smt. Gandhi and was just a formal protest! Anti-authoritarianism indeed!

At the time of its origin, the CPI(M) practised the ruse of posing, itself as a fighter against Soviet revisionism in association with the CPC, with the aim of confusing the militant cadres of the undivided CPI and attracting them towards itself. At that time, our party, the SUCI, guided by the brilliant

analysis of Comrade Shíbdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, unmasked this deception and pointed out that the CPI(M) under the cover of mock revolutionary verbiage, and later on, the slogan of 'equi-distance' was moving closer to the revisionist Soviet leadership. The correctness of this reading has been proved by history. Today, the CPI(M) has fully and openly aligned itself with the Soviet Party. Last year, on the occasion of anniversary of the Chinese revolution, the CPI(M) polit bureau sent a message to the CPC. But lest this might be misconstrued as developing closeness with the CPC, the CPI(M)'s message contained a quotation from Smt. Gandhi's congratulatory message sent earlier on the same occasion so that the party's credentials were not harmed! Again, very recently, the CPI(M) leaders Samar Mukherjee and Vasavpunnaiab, on return from China, reportedly told the press that it was no use establishing party-to-party relationship with the CPC until the two governments solved the outstanding problems between them. Or in other words, until the bourgeois government normalised relations with China, the CPI(M) finds nothing useful in establishing ties with the CPC, presumably because it would not thereby gain any advantage in parliamentary politics! This from a party calling itself 'communist' and 'Marxist'!

We request the honest cadres, supporters and sympathisers of the CPI(M) to deeply ponder. Is there any real difference between the CPI(M) and the CPI or even the Dangeites in approach and attitude to the international questions, the Soviet revisionist leadership and the exploitative social order of India? In its concern for a ny how improving its position in parliamentary politics, the

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Stand up in Defence of Democratic Rights, Values, Morals and Ethics

— Comrade Nihar Mukherjee

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and all out integration among the people, the different bourgeois parties, in absence of a united strong democratic movement, indulging in filthy and most unethical politics are fanning up those in their evil desire to reap dividend in parliamentary politics. The ruling parties too are using the police and administration to engineer communal or parochial riots and disturbances. These together serve the bourgeois design of misdirecting toiling people's wrath, indignation and grievances against exploitation and oppression to fratricidal, communal and parochial strifes, and are also trying to lead it to the blind alley of parliamentarism. Not only this, on the plea of these disturbances the governments are concentrating most autocratic powers in the hands of police and other administrative officials. Black acts like National Security Act, Disturbed Areas Act, Special Tribunal Act besides the Essential Services Maintenance Act are coming in a series one by one to divest the people of their fundamental and democratic rights including the inalienable right to organise strikes and movements. And now on top of all, the talk of bringing constitutional dictatorship in the form of presidential type of government is very much in the air.

All these developments took place not all of a sudden but over years, moves have been to the direction of bringing all out fascism in the country under whatever form of constitutional dictatorship, be it the presidential form or two-party system.

The Central Committee of our party making a clear political reading and assessment of the situation from a consistent and principled working class

outlook has, for some years in the past, persistently urging upon the left and democratic parties to unite in a political united front to build up a mighty democratic movement in defence and protection of the rights and legitimate demands of the people. Our party is of the firm and considered opinion that the mounting onslaughts of the capitalist class at this hour of its grave crisis and toiling people's helplessness and sufferings on the other hand, make it a bounden duty for the parties and forces who want to stand by the cause of the exploited people to unite in resistance to the bourgeois offensives and design. They are to unite on common minimum agreed programme and a code of conduct, if they are really eager to discharge their responsibility to the people.

Our party has, therefore, approached and appealed to the left and democratic parties who are working as all-India parties or even in regions. By left and democratic parties, our party means those parties who still have a role in fighting back the bourgeois class offensive, joining with people's cause and their movements and do not suffer from anti-communist bias as such. By 'left and democratic' we do not mean those bourgeois parties and groups who cash in on people's discontent to refurbish their image and improve their position as contenders for bourgeois alternative whether singly or in combination in parliamentary politics.

However, our repeated approaches and appeals having gone unheeded, we had to take the initiative of building up democratic mass movement on some pressing issues tormenting people's life. Since 15th June, last year in Calcutta,

our party has observed several programmes in most of the States in measure to our organisational strength and the people's support we could draw.

The programmes observed in the month of September including the All-India People's Protest Day in the first week of September, protest rallies, mass squatting, mass deputations, etc. in the month of October and the historic All India People's Protest March in Delhi on 4th November, 1980 against Central Government's anti-people price, food, unemployment, tax, education, language policies and anti-democratic authoritarian acts and measures, prove, if proof was at all needed, that the exploited toiling people want movement of their own and their readiness to fight the class offensives of the ruling capitalist class. Our party has been organising on their most legitimate and urgent demands like:—

1) Bringing down the prices of all essential items of consumption by introducing all-out State trading, including both wholesale and retail trade in these products;

2) Revamping of the fiscal policy to curb inflation;

3) Withdrawal of increase in the fares of rail, bus, taxi and other vehicles;

4) Giving employment to the unemployed or in lieu of, adequate unemployment allowance; banning of lock-out, lay-off and retrenchment;

5) Introduction of secular, democratic, scientific and free education and banning of obscene films, magazines, literatures hoardings, etc.

6) Distribution of land to the landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants on the basis of economic holding, ensuring just wage

in kind to the sharecroppers, as also remunerative crop price to the poor and middle peasants who are the real growers;

7) Protection of the legitimate demands and aspirations of different linguistic, religious and racial minorities to help consolidating the unity and cohesion of the people;

8) Containment of communal, parochial, and other divisive forces;

9) Taking firm attitude towards the criminals and offenders of justice whether in uniform or not, corrupt police, rapists, blackmarketeers, hoarders and adulterators; and

10) Withdrawal of all anti-democratic and authoritarian acts like the National Security Act, Special Tribunal Act, Disturbed Areas Act, the preventive detention measures under different names and styles introduced in the States, the Essential Services Maintenance Act, etc.

The crowning success of 4th of November has given tremendous enthusiasm to the people to raise their movement to still higher phase.

The Central Committee of our party feels that the task of not only defending the common people's inalienable fundamental and democratic rights and interests but also for their further extension has assumed paramount importance and utmost urgency especially in the perspective of the looming danger of constitutional dictatorship in the form of presidential type of government as also to carry forward the democratic movement of the toiling people on their pressing problems.

Taking serious note of the reality, the Central Committee of our party reiterates its appeal to you and through you to your rank and file members to take the urgent tasks of building up united democratic mass movement in hand. This alone, in our opinion, can be a powerful counterweight against all the conspiracies and offensives of the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie.

Brezhnev's visit—Its implications

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CPI(M) leadership has outbided the CPI and even the Dangeits in supporting and trying to create mass sanction for a deal between the revisionist Soviet leadership and the Indian Government that runs counter to the peoples' aspirations. Has not the CPI(M) leadership virtually reduced themselves to lackeys of the revisionist Soviet leadership?

CPI(M) has hailed the Brezhnev visit as it, in its view, will auger well for peace in the sub-continent. But with the Soviet intervention by proxy in Kampuchea and direct armed intervention in Afghanistan continuing, how can one move towards peace? The starting point of peace move should be vacation of foreign troops from these lands. In the circumstances, drawing closer to the Soviet Union by India will provide a fillip to the Soviet hegemonistic policy in the region. Fresh Soviet supply of sophisticated military hardware to India can only promote an arms race in the subcontinent and surrounding regions. As a result, tensions will grow, possibility of war will increase and the country and the people will be more and more drawn into the vortex of Soviet-US rivalry and war. The Brezhnev-Indira deal is an unholy anti-people alliance that will rather tend to take the people and the country away from peace and towards war.

In absence of this powerful united democratic mass movement the bourgeoisie is bringing down untold repressions on the people; people are languishing in despair, basic human and moral values are being eroded alarmingly, recurrent instances

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Because he is Chief Minister's son ?

In course of a statement issued to the Press on 26th December last Comrade Fatick Ghosh, General Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) said: 'The management of Eastern Biscuits Company at Durgapur, an enterprise owned by Sri Chandan Bose, son of Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, most illegally terminated the service of construction workers belonging to the union affiliated to UTUC (Lenin Sarani). While the workers in protest were staging hunger strike in front of the factory gate, Sri Chandan Bose, the managing director of the company with a view to crush the movement of the workers engaged some anti-socials led by local CPI(M) leaders to mercilessly beat up Comrade Bidhan Chanda, leader of UTUC (Lenin Sarani) union on 14. 12. 80 in an attempt to murder him.....'

'Later Comrade Chanda was picked up by police from the street and admitted to hospital and he is still in a precarious condition.

'Despite diaries being lodged naming the culprits, the local police have not yet taken any action to arrest them. As a result the culprits are moving in

broad daylight threatening the workers and the family members of Comrade Chanda.

The police is hesitating to take any action against the company of the Chief Minister's son". We ask, is it because the anti-socials are in the service of the Chief Minister's son?

Bangalore City Committee's Statement

Bangalore, 30th Dec :

Protesting against the recent city bus-fare rise, the Bangalore City Organising Committee of SUCI issued the following statement to the Press on 29.12.80:

"The Bangalore City Organising Committee of SUCI strongly protests against the indiscriminate rise in bus-fares by the State Government in the City Transport Services. This is a shocking news to the public who were only a few months back burdened with a steep fare hike in the BTS and KSRTC Services.

"The constant plea of the government that the rise is necessitated as a result of the losses incurred in the operation of transport services is untenable, because the responsibility for this state of affairs also lies with the government and the BTS management which have remained silent over the increasing corruption and maladministration through the years. The government is now conveniently passing the whole burden on to the

shoulders of the innocent commuters.

"Under the circumstances, the people cannot but take to the path of struggle against this alarmingly high bus fares combined with unbelievably low level of services offered in return. The SUCI calls upon all sections of the general public to give up inaction and raise their voice of protest through organised movement all over the State against this government's economic onslaught over the people."

In another statement on 27.12.80, the Bangalore City Organising Committee said:

"The Bangalore City Organising Committee of the SUCI fully supports the struggle of the workers of the public sector industries in Bangalore on their legitimate demands.

The Socialist Unity Centre of India congratulates the workers for their firm solidarity against the Management's breach of earlier agreement and calls upon them to sustain their legitimate struggle till the demands are met."

Rise in protest against further increase in Kerosene, Diesel etc.

The Central Government has again taken the decision to raise the Prices of Petrol, Diesel, Kerosene etc. By the decision of the government the increase will be given immediate effect from 13th January. By this decision, Kerosene, the poor man's daily article of consumption will cost Rs 1.65 per liter i.e. 10 paise more. In case of Petrol, the increase is of 37 Paise, and other lubricators will cost 15 paise more per liter and cooking gas cylinder Rs 5.03.

The Central Committee of our party has severely condemned this decision which will again give rise to chain reaction in the economy and accelerate the pace of upward trend in prices. The Central Committee has stated that it is now known that the Central Government will collect additional revenue to

the extent of Rs. 1200 crores, according to the Financial Minister's calculation that has come out in the Press.

That shows how shamelessly Indira Government at the Centre is serving the interests of the capitalist class, on the one hand by providing subsidies and various other fiscal concessions to the industrialists and jotedars and on the other-hand shifting the burden of crisis in the economy on the people by itself giving the lead in increasing the prices of essential commodities. The increase in oil products will stoke the fire of inflation by simultaneous increases in fares of public vehicles and prices of other products on this plea.

Regarding the West Bengal State Government, the Central Committee alerted the people of the state not to miss the same deceptive tactics taken by the State's Transport Minister who

just like on the previous occasion himself came out first in the press in justification of probable hike in fares by saying as much that state transport system would be hardput to maintain its service. The cue has since been taken by the Private Bus and Taxi owners. The State Government, just on the previous occasion, has 'appealed' to them for giving a weeks time for consideration of their difficulties.

About poor man's essential item, kerosene, the situation in the state is scandalous to say the least. Kerosene is available in the market only at the price of Rs. 4 per liter. The government is evading the main issue of containing rampant black marketing. The Calcutta District Committee has decided to stage a protest mass deputation to the Governor on 20th January '81. We urge upon the people to join it.

All India Orissa solidarity Day Observed in Calcutta

Calcutta 5.1.81.

Today at 8 p. m. a student rally has taken place at Calcutta University Lawn under the auspices of the West Bengal State Committee, AIDS O on the occasion of the "All India Orissa Solidarity Day" at the call of the All India Committee of DSO. Dipankar Roy, President, West Bengal State Committee of DSO, presided over the meeting. A resolution was moved by Com. Rabin Samajpati and was unanimously accepted to express the solidarity of the Students of West Bengal with the legitimate student movement of Orissa. The resolution hailed the students and masses of

Orissa for waging this historic movement. Chhabi Rani Mohanti, an important member of the All Orissa Students' Action Committee, narrated the history of the glorious struggle of the student and masses in face of continuous brutal police attack. She appealed to the students of West Bengal to come forward to stand by the cause of the movement. Dhurjati Das, a leader of the present Orissa movement and president of Orissa State Committee of DSO, related how DSO organisers have played a historic role to build up this movement. He said that more than 500 DSO workers were

arrested and severely injured. Chhaya Mukharjee, General Secretary AIDS O, asked the entire student community of India to take lesson from this movement and build up a mighty student movement in their own states on the basis of the burning problems confronting their lives.

After the meeting a large procession marched to the 'Utkal Bhaban' and handed over a copy of the resolution to the representative of the Orissa Government.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's Appeal

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of indignities on women, murderous assaults on the poor backed up by police and administration and medieval barbarities like blinding of poor people and under-trial prisoners by police, vested interests and criminals, shielding of all those guilty persons by the ruling parties-all this indicates a grievous crisis

of civilization.

The situation calls for an urgent response from all right-thinking and democratic minded persons to stand up in defence of basic human values, morals as also political code and conduct essential for a civilised society.

We, therefore, solicit your response once again to our proposal for forging

a left and democratic united front as an instrument of people's struggle on the basis of minimum agreed programme and a code of conduct.

Expecting an early reply,
With fraternal greetings,

Comradely yours,
Nihar Mukherjee
General Secretary
SUCI

Anti-People Language and Education Policies

(Contd. from page 2)
of course, to carry this partial success to its fullest completion by striking at the root of the very thinking faculty of our people through the adoption of such a language policy.

Judged from the backdrop of this negative attitude of the CPI(M) led Government of West Bengal toward the importance of language study, the real intent and purposes of its plea against the retention of English will be crystal clear. It should be pointed out in this context that the retention or abolition of a language in no way depends on whether one likes it to remain or wills it to go but on the historic role, if any, it plays in the specific situation prevailing in a given country. This is the sole criterion and other considerations are absolutely immaterial. Who can deny the historic claim English held for long and still is holding in our national life starting from the sphere of trade and commerce, technology and nuclear research and employment down to that of higher education, of cultivating higher and intricate thoughts in the realm of science and epistemology as well as in cementing the bond of unity amongst the people, specially in a country like ours divided with so many castes, religions, languages and nationalities, while keeping abreast of the everchanging international situation? Is it a matter of mere might that such an all important role played by a language for a long time in the history of a country can be denied overnight?

That the British came to India and ruled here for many years is a historical reality. It matters little and it has nothing to do with whether any one likes it or not. In a situation like this with a country being a colony of another for so long, mutual exchanges in many planes are quite likely to take place. Language is perhaps

the most vital of them. French or Russian might have had the similar claim as English has come to enjoy in our national life, would that our country were the colony of Russia or France instead of the British. But as it is the British who succeeded in colonising India, so fortunately or unfortunately our country had been much more intimately linked up with English than either with French, Russian or any other language. So it will be height of folly to understand the role of English in our country by simply drawing parallels and analogies with that it enjoys in other countries.

Moreover, it is really an irony of history that it is not the British rulers who wanted the people of our country to learn English which is their own mother-tongue. What is more, they took recourse to every kind of possible opposition to the introduction of the teaching of English in this country and what is still funnier, the same trend of opposition to the teaching of English seems to be handed down by them to our political leaders after independence right from Nehru to Mr. Jyoti Basu and his colleagues at present.

Thanks to the luminaries in the days of the dawn of Renaissance in our country who made no mistake in advocating the diffusion of English language all over the country in order to lift our hunch-backed nation from the stupor of religious superstitions and bigotry she lay in for centuries past into a new world of democratic concepts, individual freedom, emancipation of womanhood by opening up newer vistas of science and knowledge. They were never blind to the fact that as the relatively far developed language English has the immense potentiality to convey higher and intricate thoughts of modern knowledge so, through the dissemination of the

teaching of English they wanted to open the windows to the people at large of the world of science and epistemology. Now, this affront on the study of English will simply disarm us as regards cultivating developed and intricate modern thoughts of science and philosophy for our regional languages have not yet become so much developed as to properly convey those ideas to us.

The proponents of the abolition of English try to mislead the people into believing that the retention of English will jeopardise the development of our vernacular languages. But does such an argument have any leg to stand upon? True, everyone of us has strong and deep feelings for our mother-tongues, everybody should have it. But if we have true love for our languages can we shut our eyes upon the present state of affairs prevailing in our regional languages and the process which may lead them to rank with any other advanced language like English? No, we cannot do it. Then what is that process? Everyone having the modicum of knowledge about the development of language should know that it is through constant and continuous contact, intermingling and intercourse with a relatively developed language that a less advanced one can be immensely benefitted. None can deny the contributory service English went on rendering to the development of regional languages. Take for instance the case of Bengali. Prior to Rammohan Roy and Vidyasagar by Bengali was meant a language, bereft of any potentiality to produce tracts and articles, prose and fictions, epics and dramas. Nor was there a well knit system of punctuations like coma, semi-colon; note of exclamation and interrogation etc. so that none could have free play of expressions according to one's liking. It is only after coming into close association with English language that Bengali succeeded in reaping these

benefits. Same has been the case with the other regional languages in our country. So, will the abolition of English help or hinder the development of our vernaculars?

Here, we cannot but draw the attention of the reader to a misleading propaganda of the 'Left-Front' Government. In order to confuse the real point at issue the government says that the medium of instruction at the primary education should not be any language other than the mother-tongue. Everyone knows in our country the medium of instruction at primary level is the mother tongue at present. None has questioned about its continuation as such. So what is the use of taking recourse to such logic other than confusing the people at large?

But is the much vaunted claim of the 'Left-Front' Government to uphold the cause of the mother-tongue a true reflection of their minds? How can a government, opposed to the study of language as a whole, be serious and sincere to the development of mother-tongue even? Had they been at all serious in this regard, how did they go so far as to make the mother-tongue optional in the degree courses? How could they banish study of literature? It proves then to the hilt that not only are they opposed to the promotion of the vernaculars, they do not even want that the people learn their mother-tongues perfectly well.

It has been proved beyond doubt that the government is keen in killing the thinking faculty of our people by reducing the importance of language study. Now, this will help us understand why it is opposed to the dissemination of the teaching of English among the people at large. Its argument that it is quite unnecessary for the poor peasants and workers to waste time for the study of English language, reminds one of the mischievous designs of the British imperialists to confine the teaching of

English only within a handful of people, required for the running of their administration. Those, championing the cause of social progress in different ages, cannot but recognise the truth that it is not the social fortunates in the higher echelons of life but the so-called ill-fated, poverty-stricken starving destitutes, the exploited millions who out of an intense yearning for emancipation from the yoke of exploitation have been cultivating science and epistemology, inquiring into ever newer truths of life and thus enriching the treasure house of knowledge and civilization. So, if the peasants and workers of our country really mean to lift themselves from the utterly humiliating situation this capitalist society has forced upon them, then is it not of primary importance that they must have the capability to know truth, a cruing through experiments and observations in the realm of science and epistemology? So, to shut the doors of learning English in face of the peasants and workers on any score tantamounts to keeping them in a perpetual state of ignorance and humiliation.

But is the 'Left Front' Government not at all alive to those realities? It seems quite impossible. Furthermore, do they themselves really believe that the abolition of English will do good to the people? Equally difficult is to stick to this notion. That they are conscious of the importance of English and that they are not at all sincere to their utterances have come to light from their positive indulgence in and direct encouragement to the parasitic growth of highly expensive English medium schools and more so, from their unethical conduct like sending of their children to these institutions—a queer specimen of hypocrisy indeed! Everyone knows that Indian capitalism, run by the law of earning maximum profit, lies tottering at its feet in face of the

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Intelligentsia rise against 'Left Front' government's disastrous education-language policies

The city of Calcutta, a witness to many a memorable mass struggle for furtherance of legitimate democratic demands and rights, witnessed another historic one on 8th January '81 last, under the auspices of Siksha Sankochan Birodhi O S w a d h i k a r Raksha Committee (Committee to Resist Curtailment of education and Encroachment on Autonomy) in protest against the anti-people education and language policy of 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal which has no parallel in post-independence era in our country's democratic movement. The 'Sit-in' protest demonstration organised on the occasion deserves to be recorded as unprecedented not because of its massive character embracing diverse cross sections of the people, but because of association of galaxies of luminaries in education and literary fields with the movement and its firm determination and purposiveness as well! Never before anywhere in the record of our country's democratic movement the great exponent of philology, historians, litterateurs, educationists including former Vice-chancellors and intellectuals in diverse fields of epistemology came down to the 'Street' to participate in a 'Sit-in' protest demonstration the like of which was held in Esplanade East, Calcutta on 8th January.

Among those who joined in Sit-in-protest demonstration were the eminent litterateurs like Sri Premendra Mitra, Sri Manoj Bose, Sri Pramatha Nath Bisi, Sri Sailesh Dey and Dr. Sukumar Sen, the eminent philologist, Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy, the eminent historian, Dr. Hemchandra Guha, Dr. B. N. Dasgupta, Dr. Pratul Gupta, Dr. Arabinda Bose, the former vice-chancellors of different universities of

the state and Dr. Shyamaprasad Banerjee, Dr. K. P. Sensbarma, Sri Manik Mukherjee, Prof. Subir Basu Roy, Sri Sudhir Bhattacharyya and hosts of distinguished citizens like Writers, Journalists and Principals, Head masters, Professors and Teachers of different academic institutions. Not only did they take part in this unique 'Sit-in' protest demonstration programme, but all of them spoke unequivocally on the disastrous effect, the ill-conceived language and education policy of West Bengal Government would cause in its wake.

It is worth mentioning that along with the 'Sit-in' protest demonstration at Calcutta, similar programmes were observed in districts throughout West Bengal on the same day the 8th January '81, in the midst of tremendous enthusiasm.

In course of his speech, Dr. Sukumar Sen observed that he had come down to the Street and joined in this massive protest demonstration simply because he thought that the language and education policies adopted by the State Government would spell disaster in the educational and cultural field and ruin the future generation. Reminding his vast audience the history of development of Bengali literature Dr. Sen said that without the invaluable contribution of English, it could not attain its present stature. And in the very interest of further development of our mother-tongue the continuance of study of English down from primary level to Degree stage along with mother-tongue was very much essential. The octogenarian philologist and an outstanding personality in a rare mood of bantering exclaimed. "Do the Chief Minister and his Government want the sons of common people to remain 'Cows' to be tended by them, the Cow-boys"?

Dr. Nihar Ranjan Roy said that since language was the vehicle of thought, it would be meet and proper to retain a rich and advanced language like English, the gateway to higher education, in Humanities, Science, Technology, Medicine Engineering etc. "It is the bridge between us and the higher thoughts and ideas." Referring to the dig at the intellectuals made by the Chief Minister Mr. Jyoti Bose, the previous day, Dr. Roy reminded him that such cheap tactics would not pay to shift the focus of attention to the blind alley. Such utterances, in light vein, could not help deterring those who had stood against the wrong and dangerous education and language policies of West Bengal Government.

Referring to the dig at the intellectuals made by the Chief Minister Sri Premendra Mitra, the President of the 'Committee' observed that the speech of the Chief Minister was an affront to the educationists, intellectuals and litterateurs alike. "And who does not know that in a democratic society, to voice opposition to any wrong policy of the government is a fundamental right?" The Chief Minister on his part he thought also deserved the right to reply. "But why this hurling of invectives? Does it reflect his respect to democratic principle and norm?" he exclaimed.

Prominent litterateurs Pramatha Nath Bisi, Monoj Bose, Sailesh De also joined in with others spoke in one voice, condemning the anti-people education and language policies of 'Left Front' Government. They counselled the Chief Minister to see to reason and give serious thought to find out the reasons for the determined and opposition that is coming from the people withdraw the wrong policies in the fields of language and

education.

Throughout the period of eight-hour demonstration, the erudite speakers, one after another, stressed, in their characteristic style of expression on the richness of English, which they said is still serving as the vehicle of knowledge. It would be a hindrance to fostering of knowledge among the people if out of sheer foolishness any minimization of importance of study of that language was made. Some of them illustratively showed how the language policy of the 'Left Front' Government, if implemented, would restrict access to higher education for the student coming from poor and middle class families. This exposes the design of containing the problem of acute educated unemployment that lay behind the language cum education policy of the government. They added that the supersession of all the universities including the premier university of Calcutta and of innumerable managing committees of educational institutions most undemocratically, was a glaring example to show how fake was the slogan for Autonomy of educational institutions which the Left Front was found once to raise. They demanded restoration of autonomy of educational institutions.

Among the different mass organisations who came forward to fraternize the demonstrators were the West Bengal Headmaster's Association, Civil liberties committee, Mahila Sangram Committee, STEA (Secondary Teachers and Employees Association), BPTA (Bengal Primary Teachers Association) etc. Sri Manik Mukhopadhyay one of the Vice-Presidents of the Committee announcing the next programme, struck a note of caution to the government that if it fails to hear the voice of reason, the people would not be lagging behind to take up the challenge to mount an all-out movement against this anti-people education and language policies of 'Left Front' Government.

A drama styled as Bet (the Cane) was staged at

the end by the Drama Squad of 'Pathikrit' symbolising the protest against the evil design of the State Government.

Post Script: The Committee decided to hold a convention on the anti-people language policy of the State Government on the 24th January next, as a part of its future course of action. It was scheduled to be held at the Calcutta University Institute Hall. The Hall had been booked long before and the convention date was announced from the venue of Sit-in demonstration. But after the Sit-in demonstration the authorities of the Hall which was under the governmental control cancelled the permission which was previously granted to hold the convention at the said venue.

This created strong adverse reaction among the educationists, intellectuals, lovers on education, litterateurs, and the people at large.

The authorities of the hall had to yield to the pressure of public opinion and the PWD minister of the State, the Chairman of the Managing Committee of the Hall had sent a letter to the committee granting the permission to hold the convention on

(Contd. to page 10)

An Exercise in Futility

(Contd. from page 1) comrades of the SUCI were making preparatory works for the meeting of 5th January like-postering, collection of fund and distribution of leaflet, they were severely assaulted by the CPI(M) hoodlums and were taken to the CPI(M) office and mercilessly beaten. These Comrades were, later on, warned not to report to the police and shadowed upto the SUCI office so that they cannot go to the police station. Does the CPI (M) leadership think that by this gangster method it will be able to arrest the outflow of the struggling elements from their party to SUCI? An exercise in futility indeed!

LANGUAGE POLICY

(Contd. from page 8) ever increasing market crisis, both within and outside which leads to the inevitable outcome of ever-growing unemployment. Hence the slogan of the restriction of higher education in order to check the further growth of educated unemployed has become a practical necessity to the capitalists of our country which the 'Left Front' Government is faithfully serving

When the West Bengal Government declares its 'no detention policy' upto class five it is not difficult to understand what it is aiming at other than to reduce the entire primary education to a sheer mockery. On the one hand, due to no question of success or failure in the examination the students will not at all bother to learn anything, on the other they will not be able to learn English either due to its abolition at the primary level. And this is the specimen of their much-trumpeted slogan of universalisation of education—what can be more double faced? The 'Left-Front' Government may be given the best credit for introducing universalisation of ignorance!

Now something about the importance of study of literature. It is through the medium of literature that higher values and sentiments are instilled into the minds of the people. The truths which we get to know through constant cultivation of science and philosophy may appear to be more or less unintelligible and incomprehensible to the vast masses of the common folk. Herein lies the importance of literature which while playing upon the diverse layers of finer human sentiments and emotions and creating artistic sensibility, seems to percolate through those truths, the essence of ethics and values within us, inspiring and imbuing us with ever newer sense of dignity and nobility. Here let us pause and ponder over the invaluable teachings of the great

leader of the proletariat Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, an outstanding thinker of the day, our beloved leader teacher and guide. While evaluating the great Bengali litterateur Saratchandra Chattopadhyay he said—"The necessity of literature lies precisely in making a niche even within the subtle sensibilities and delicate feelings of men, by making the realisation of truth and higher thoughts acquired through theoretical analyses sublime in the form of stories through the medium of rasa beautifully blossomed in a multitude of forms of channels with super-artistic excellence. Necessity of literature lies in imprinting these lofty ideas, even if partially, by evoking pathos and compassion through aesthetic creation even in the minds of those who are unable to grasp through reasoning and intellectual exercise due to lack of educational base and critical power of observation."

How far this is true can be best understood from the glorious historic role literature has long been playing indifferent ages and in different countries in moulding and changing, mobilising and inspiring people's minds. We can hardly forget the epoch-making contribution rendered by Gorky's Mother in the Russian Revolution. What could not have been done by a lot of speeches was achieved by the literature of Tagore, Saratchandra, Premchand, Naztul and others in our freedom movement. But our sons and daughters will no longer be allowed to go through literature in their courses. How can such an important subject, having so much to do with the life of a people, be left to simple individual choice of the students? This assault on literature in the syllabus has become much more alarming in view of the rising wave of obscenities in all spheres of our public life emasculating the very backbone of our nation

sucking up through and through the very sap of our youth. And everything is going on under the nose of the ministers themselves. Is it not then quite natural to believe that whatever may be the name and claim of the government, today the 'Left Front' is contesting with the known parties of the bourgeoisie to perpetuate the existence of this capitalist society only by gradually eroding the character, morality, values and ethics of our people?

It is high time to become conscious of these mischievous designs of the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal because it is doing anything and everything under the garb of leftism. The people owing to their low level of understanding as to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism are taking their designs to be the real manifestation of this noble ideology. Thus the nobility of Marxism-Leninism is at stake to-day. And there is going on a well calculated attempt on behalf of the known bourgeois parties to take full advantage of the situation. Hence an all out tirade against Marxism-Leninism.

But this is only one aspect of the thing. On the other, it will not only suffice to understand that this language policy robs the students of their rights to learn English. What is more, through such a scheme the government is slowly but most skilfully on its move to replace English by Hindi which the known bourgeois parties have long been trying to introduce. It must be categorically stated here that we are not opposed to the development of Hindi, nor are we against the development of any of our regional languages as well. What we really mean to say is that no language can be benefitted simply by being forcibly imposed upon the people. Each and every of our regional languages should be provided with the equal right to develop without any obstruction. But Hindi has not yet attained the height to express the higher and

intricate thoughts of modern knowledge. So even the Hindi speaking people should now realise that in the interest of their own language English should still be retained. To downgrade the teaching of English and to substitute it with Hindi means to obstruct the development of Hindi and to ostracise the people at large, out and out, from cultivating advanced thoughts and ideas.

No right-thinking people can allow its nation to be sent to its doom. The right to protest ceases to be a mere moral obligation and becomes almost instinctive the moment an all out conspiracy is being hatched in this regard by making man forget the very fact that he was born a man, an existence out and out distinct from that of all the foul and brute in the animal world. History of different nations and of different countries is replete with the hallowed memories of many a heroic battle, bathed in profusion of blood, waged not to let others drain the very consciousness of man as man. This onslaught at the very root of human dignity is an effrontery, far surpassing those a people had to suffer in the field of economy and politics. Coming as it does in disguise at first, eating into the very vitals of a people like a slow poison, it is the most deadly mischief, far, far deadlier than others, easily recognisable, quite intelligible at a glance.

It is as a result of this dire threat posed by the language policy of the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal that the fate and future of our people is going to be at stake. Confined though as it is within the geographical territory of the state of West Bengal, there are reasonable grounds to believe that in no time will it be followed suit in other parts of the country by Indian Capitalism, as a whole, rendered morally bankrupt as a social force which can never survive today even for a single moment without constantly and continuously levelling down the consciousness of

man to the status of a simple beast.

So none can remain a silent spectator in such a situation. Every one of us should immediately rise to the occasion. And so did the students, youths, teachers, guardians, litterateurs and men from all fields of intellect. The towns and villages of West Bengal are vibrant with protest and condemnation today. The government pretends to be unyielding to the pressure of public opinion. The people are displaying rare mettle and grit to face all the villification campaign, onslaughts of the government. Any one visiting the state of West Bengal today will find an iron strong determination, writ large on the face of the people not to allow in any way the implementation of such an anti-people policy aimed at dehumanisation of a nation, till the last drop of their blood is left. We appeal to all concerned to shake off their passivity and play the role of active soldiers in the grim battle ahead by organising broadest possible public opinion by all possible means paving the way to resistance struggle—organised, conscious and disciplined—of such magnitude and dimension that can force the 'Left Front' Government to desist from implementing this anti-people policy.

Intelligentsia Protest

(Contd. from page 9) the previously appointed date i.e. the next 24th January 1981.

The committee has urged upon the educationists, litterateurs, writers, journalists, and lovers of education at large to participate in the convention and record their protest against the anti-people language cum education policy of the State Government.

Editor-in-Chief—NIHAR MUKHERJEE