

ON PROPOSED ELECTORAL REFORMS

Mr. S. L. Shakhder, the Chief Election Commissioner in course of his address to the Voters' Council and Citizen for Democracy in New Delhi suggested some electoral reforms. These proposals of Mr. Shakhder along with the stringent recommendations of the Election Commission tabled in the Lok Sabha on December 23 last, which inter alia, stated that the security deposit by a contestant in an election should be doubled, that the minimum votes required for refund of security deposit should be raised to a fourth of the total valid votes polled and that a candidate securing less than a specified percentage of votes, say 25% of votes, should be disqualified for a period of six years etc. given with the ostentatious purpose of checking what the Commission describes as the multiplicity of 'frivolous' candidates, needs thorough scrutiny.

At the very outset it must be stressed that when the whole process of electioneering has been reduced to a mockery because of all sorts of malpractices, like impersonation, booth capturing etc. and administrative rigging, like the use of duplicate ballot papers, replacement of ballot boxes by duplicate ones, etc., and also through the massive inflow of black money in elections, electoral reforms, if they are to counteract these evils, must be welcome. But the question is, whether Mr. Shakhder is really serious about checking these evils when he suggests these reforms. Had he been really so, he must have taken certain concrete steps to stop rigging in election. The charge of rigging in election has been labeled by all political parties; the only difference is that the parties that get dividends in rigging in a particular election keep mum. Our party, the SUCI, has been giving a consistent exposure to this aspect of administrative rigging right from the very beginning. But Mr. Shakhder has by-passed this issue and suggested some procedural changes like introduction of identity cards and electronic gadgets in recording votes etc. The question is not of any procedural change only but a change in attitude on the part of the Election Commission and the administration. As a matter of fact, a careful look into the proposals of Mr. Shakhder, which may apparently seem innocuous, will reveal the real class

motive and class design of bourgeoisie. Let us first of all examine the recommendation of the Election Commission regarding the disqualification of a candidate if he fails to secure a specified percentage of votes. This recommendation has been put forward on the plea of multiplicity of candidates meaning thereby multiplicity of mainly party candidates; since it is a common experience now that the number of independent candidates, since long, is already on the decline.

How this sacred task of reducing the multiplicity of candidates devolves on Mr. Shakhder is not known. But this recommendation is the most direct attack at the very root of the concept of democracy. It clearly demonstrates how nakedly the democratic principles once asserted by the bourgeois philosophers and politicians during the period of bourgeois democratic revolution with *Laissez Faire* economy can be trampled during the period of state monopoly capitalism giving birth to financial oligarchy. During the dawn of bourgeois democratic revolution it was proclaimed:

"If all mankind minus one were of one opinion and only one person were of the contrary opinion mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power would be justified in silencing mankind.....All silencing of discussion is an assumption (Contd. to page 2)

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RESIST GOVERNMENT'S DISASTROUS LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION POLICIES CONVENTION CALLS

The Convention on January 24 last at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta, under the auspices of the *Committee to Resist Curtailment of Education and Encroachment on Autonomy* testified to the depth of the people's concern and degree of their resolve to resist the anti-people language and education policy of the CPI(M)-led 'Left Front' government in West Bengal. It is the roots of life where the government has laid its hands on. So, not the educated section alone, but the poor masses, too, are coming to realize the inevitable ruinous consequences on their life due to this government's policy to abolish English at the primary level, reduce the importance of language and literature study and curtail autonomy of the educational institutions.

The premises of the University Institute, venue of the Convention, beamed in enthusiasm as thousands of delegates from all districts of the state started assembling long before the inauguration. Teachers, writers, students, guardians and various sections of people concerned in education and culture had thronged in to join the Convention at the call

of the Committee. A galaxy of intellectuals— eminent educationists, litterateurs and men of thinking—irrespective of their creeds and beliefs, had come to attend the Convention. Their concern for retaining English at the primary level, maintaining the tradition of language and literature study, and preserving autonomy of the educational institutions had gathered them on this platform to resist the government's perilous design.

It was a rare event even for this city of traditional (Contd. to page 4)

Bihar State Committee Condemns Wanton Police Atrocities on SUCI Workers

Patna 25th January 1981: Comrade Shankar Singh, member of the Central Committee SUCI and Secretary Bihar State Committee has issued the following statement:

"Our state office is in receipt of report of wanton police atrocities on SUCI workers and supporters at Haveli Kharagpur (Monghyr) since last Saturday. Police have arrested large number of SUCI workers including some female Comrades and District leaders like Com. Sukdeo Yadav, Secretary Monghyr District Kisan Khet Mazdoor Sangh, Com. Yogendra

Mandal, President, Monghyr District AIDSO and Com. Shashikant Pathak, Advocate, without any rhyme and reason.

"The Climax was the incident of 19.1.1981 at village Shampur when one K. P. Singh, A.S.I reportedly transferred from Kharagpur P. S. a few months back came in civil dress along with four constables and noted criminals of a neighbouring village with a gun in hand and arrested SUCI worker Com. Brahmdeo Paswan and a Rly. worker and set fire to their thatched houses which were completely burnt.

People of the locality went to Kharagpur P. S. in thousands to protest against this heinous crime of the police but they were refused any hearing.

We strongly condemn these police atrocities on SUCI workers and supporters and demand immediate action by the higher administrative authorities to stop this police-goondism. We further demand immediate release of all arrested SUCI workers and supporters of Kharagpur (Monghyr) and adequate compensation for reconstruction of the houses burnt by the policemen at Shampur.

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of infallibility" (Liberty—
J. S. Mill).

Even the bourgeois philosophers and politicians have admitted the necessity of maintaining the general process of social discussion which must include a number of different ideas and therefore plurality of parties. As one of them put it, "When social thought develops more than two trends of opinion it will be necessary to have more than two parties even though the presence of more than two parties may involve coalition and short-lived governments. It will be a pity, if *raison de government* were allowed to have the last word and if the whole rational process of social thought and social discussion were subordinated to that *raison*" (Barker).

So it is clear from the above discussion that during the period of bourgeois democratic revolution when wider democracy prevailed, none thought that the existence of the multiplicity of parties was an obstruction to the democratic process; rather this was considered to be a guarantee for wider democracy by the then bourgeoisie during the days of free competition. It is only during the present era of moribund capitalism that the bourgeoisie who have scant regard for democratic principles and values are finding the existence of multiplicity of parties as disadvantageous to their class interest and so the necessity of restricting the number of candidates with a view to imposing a two party parliamentary system. The class motive and class design of the Indian bourgeoisie will be apparent if the contemporary Indian political scene is analysed. In the third phase of world wide general crisis of capitalism, the Indian bourgeoisie, with a view to protecting their own existence and reaping maximum profit out of their crisis ridden capitalist economy, are bringing about coalescence of private monopoly capital with the state capital, making the state subservient to the interest of monopoly capitalism, the rock bottom

Suggested reforms attempt at bringing two-party parliamentary system

economic foundation of fascism. The symptoms of fascism in the economic sphere that are being reflected in these measures of economic centralisation are also reflected in political superstructure through concentration of autocratic power for ruthlessly suppressing democratic mass movement in the interest of the Indian capitalism. It is because of this deep crisis of capitalism that the Indian bourgeoisie is trying to impose two party parliamentary system which is nothing but a variant of fascism behind the facade of parliamentary set-up.

In our country, particularly since the '70's the elections were not at all free and fair because among others of the role of the big monopoly houses and the monopoly press. Bicked by the support of the monopoly press along with the money bag, both national and foreign, the political party or parties trusted by the capitalist class become victorious and popular verdict is seldom reflected in election results. The bourgeoisie class is enthroning its chosen political party or parties which can best serve its class interest into the seat of power through all sorts of electoral manipulations and malpractices. But crisis in the capitalist economy is triggering off mass movements and in order to suppress these movements the government is resorting to ruthless oppression with declared or undeclared emergency, and as a result, the party in power stands discredited and so the necessity of a viable national alternative to the existing ruling bourgeois party arises before the bourgeois class. So by the imposition of a two-party parliamentary system thereby limiting the choice of the voters between two or three parties chosen by the ruling class and thus denying the people the right of proper representation through the party of their choice on the basis of ideology, policy and

principle, the bourgeois class interest is best served. But unlike the situation obtaining in advanced capitalist-imperialist countries, where with economic concentration, the role of small capital has been substantially done away with, thereby reflecting polarisation in the political superstructure also with the emergence of two bourgeois political parties, the situation in India is somewhat different with small capital still playing a significant role and so the Indian political scene is marked by absence of that type of polarisation between two bourgeois political parties. But the Indian bourgeoisie are feeling the compulsion of the imposition of a two-party model for arresting the democratic mass movement within the ambit of parliamentarism and this they are trying to do through rigged elections.

With this aim in view the Janata experiment started, but it miserably failed. On the other hand, with the deep seated crisis in capitalist economy when the whole society is plunging headlong into a deeper crisis particularly in the domain of values, ethics and culture and when the social fabric is falling apart, symptoms of which are periodically bursting forth in events like Bhagalpur incident Baghat incident etc. etc., the bourgeoisie class is painfully aware that mass fury will inevitably lead to tides of mighty mass movements and the emergence of the real revolutionary party at the helms of all these on-coming mass movements to be triggered by the simmering discontent of the toiling people may become a distinct possibility today or tomorrow. Faced with the deep seated crisis of capitalism, when the so-called charisma of Sm. Gandhi fails and she and her party Congress(I) stand discredited, when the Janata experiment as a

viable national alternative ended in fiasco creating a void in bourgeois politics, when the pseudo-left parties like the CPI and CPI(M) though serving the bourgeois class interest faithfully are not in a position to emerge as an alternative in the all national plane, the bourgeoisie, being confronted with the growing tide of mass movement and constant instability in these bourgeois parties due to squabbles, power conflict, in-fighting, etc., find the Westminster type democracy somewhat unsuitable to stave off their own crisis. So they are trying for a presidential form of government but sensing popular resentment they are also, at the same time, devising a contingency plan of a two-party system by this mechanism of changing the electoral rules.

The restrictions suggested by the Election Commission have the inevitable effect of putting pressure on the splintering bourgeois parties and groups to combine in order to be a viable alternative in the parliamentary system. As a matter of fact, Mr. Shakhder's proposals are nothing but old wine in the new bottle because such electoral reforms as have been suggested by Mr. Shakhder have already proved fruitful in the direction of a two-party system in West Germany. The following extract from "The Search for Legitimacy" by Elmer Plischke (in European Politics-Vol I) testifies to our contention about this bourgeois design under the smokescreen of electoral reforms.

"There were indications of a general movement towards a two-party system in which the Christian Democrats with their Christian orientation and federalist leaning confront the Social Democratic Party with its socialist basis and more centralised conception of the state. While the active major parties are essentially

moderate, the more liberal and conservative parties and supporters have not disappeared entirely. Free Democratic Party emerged as a balancing force.

'The reduction of the number of political parties represented on the national level in West Germany—from ten parties in the Parliament (Bundestag) in 1949 to five in 1953, four in 1957 and three in 1961, indicates a significant trend towards the two party system. The trend was produced by several factors including the elimination of extremist parties under the provisions of the electoral law and by court action.

The Electoral Law prescribes the 'Five percent rule' according to which a party must acquire 5 percent of the votes in order to be represented in Bundestag which tends to eliminate the splinter parties from parliamentary representation. The rule was made more restrictive in 1951 and 1953 which accounts largely for the % percent reduction in the number of parties in the second Bundestag."

The Chief Election Commissioner has been prompted not by any genuine desire to make the election relatively free and fair but by a design to impose two-party system in India through a more rigorous electoral laws. Had it not been so how can it be explained that when there is a consistent demand from the platform of democratic movement to free the election from the grip and tentacles of black money, the election Commission is recommending that the security deposit of a contestant should be doubled and the minimum votes required for refund of security deposit should be raised to a fourth of the total votes polled? As recommended earlier by the Election Commission, the Government of India has already raised the ceiling of expenditure from Rs. 35,000/- to Rs. 1,00,000/- in case of a parliamentary constituency and even this revised ceiling is not adhered to. People have enough (Contd. to Page 7)

Further price hike in oil and oil products spells disaster for the common people

India Government has announced further hike in prices of oil and oil products with effect from 13th January. Only on June 7, last year, the price was raised followed by overall price rise. This time also further spurt in inflationary spiral is coming. West Bengal's 'Left Front' Government led by CPI(M) lost no time in announcing increase in Bus, Tram and Taxi fares. Other State Governments run by Congress(I) are doing just the same. The crushing burden of price rise and taxation on common people has come to a point when for bare survival they are left with no other option than to join the democratic mass movement, our party has initiated. We appeal to them as we have done over again and again to realise that it is the only course to repulse the monstrous onslaughts of the crisis-ridden bourgeoisie.

Rise in oil prices

Before going into the causes, the government advances in justification of its decision, let us note the import of the announcement itself. Whereas on June '7, last year the prices of petrol, high-speed diesel oil and light diesel oil were raised by 65 paise a litre and of lubricants by Rs. 1.10 a litre there was no increase in the prices of kerosene and cooking gas consumed by the poor and middle income people, this time, the government has spared none. The government has raised the price of kerosene by 10 paise to make the official rate Rs. 1.65 per litre, a litre of petrol Rs. 5.48, high speed diesel Rs. 2.67 a litre and domestic gas Rs. 45.28 a cylinder i.e. Rs. 5.03 higher than the previous price. In order to collect more revenue the government has not hesitated to tax the vast masses of poor and exploited by raising the price of kerosene.

The reason adduced by the government in support of its decision relates both to international energy crisis as also the dismal state of India's own energy problem and its handling. The government says that it will fetch additional revenue by this increase in custom duties Rs 1200 crores to make up somewhat the staggering figure of import bill of Rs. 5000 crores (estimated to be 4 p.c. of National Income) for 1980-81 and which is likely to go up to Rs. 6000 crores in the current year.

The government says that the recent OPEC announcement raising the average price of oil by 4 dollars a barrel (10% increase) has enhanced the financial burden by Rs. 600 crores on the exchequer. And so the increase in the prices of oil and oil products. Does the Indira Government speak the truth, the whole truth? No, our later discussion will show that even from the government's own admissions it is seen that Rs. 1200 crores are being extorted from the people when the amount of extra burden for oil import was Rs. 600 crores, that is to say double the amount actually needed, according to the government on oil account. And this is being done when the Budget session is not far off. So a good portion of contemplated fresh tax burden is already imposed on the people before the budget on the plea of global price rise of oil. This is a trickery, worst kind at that that can only be resorted to by a most unscrupulous political party running the government.

It is heedless to the disastrous consequences that further spurt in inflationary spiral is sure to generate by recurrent increase in the prices of oil and oil products, with its consequent chain reaction. It is totally apathetic to the distress of common people who are groaning under the grinding wheel of capitalist exploitation at this third

phase of intense general crisis.

The faithful State Governments run by Congress(I) have already started imposing the burden of increased oil price over the people. But what about CPI(M) led government who try to befool the people by this verbal opposition to Centre's policies?

'Left Front' Government in West Bengal enhances fares of bus, train and taxis

CPI(M) is following the same vulgar bourgeois political ethics. That is why is now agitating in Punjab against fare rise, which no doubt is surely to be fought, but increases the fares of bus, tram and taxis in West Bengal where it runs the government. Does this party mean that fare rise of public vehicles is all right when it is in government but reprehensible when it is in the opposition? If it is not so then why after ritualistic protest against the Central Government's decision it lost no time in announcing fare rise for buses not only under private ownership but buses and trams under state's ownership? Not only this, it's government raised the price of consumption articles supplied through ration shops on the plea of rise in cost of transportation. Like the Indira Government, CPI(M) led government effected the increase in fare from 27th January when the Budget session will start from 16th of February. They avoided debate and disputation over the so-called justification of fare increase. They did not care to examine whether by toning up the administration and eliminating wasteful expenditures and corruption, the annual subsidy of about Rs. 17 crores for both state bus and tram could be brought down and thereby absorbing the rise in oil prices. Not only this, by reducing its taxes on oil and oil

products, the state government could have avoided fare hike. Any government having minimum concern for people's distress would have done so. They did not think it necessary to probe into the economy of public transport system to verify whether the claim of private bus owners that they were operating at a loss was justified or not. This was necessary when the owners themselves were admitting that last time when they made the same plea they were not actually sustaining any loss but their profit margin diminished.

Just six months ago, on the same plea of rise in oil price and accepting the plea of the private bus operators the 'Left-Front' in West Bengal enhanced fare in buses by 25 to 50%. Our party vehemently protested against this rise and organised commuters' movement challenging the plea and contentions of bus operators-government combine. Our party then warned the people that further fare rise within a short time was on the cards. This has come true now. Because of commuters' movement, the tricky manoeuvre of fare increase over and above the declared increase by way of so-called rounding off of fare structure like 61 to 65 paise, 51 to 55 paise etc. could not be given effect to. But this time Mr. Jyoti Basu's government has allowed this over and above the general increase of fare.

By this dispensation of the 'Left Front' government, hike in fare of government buses has been from 25 paise to 30 paise and from 30 paise to 40 paise for L' marked buses. Thus within a brief spell of six months the fares have been doubled. Yet the CPI(M) State Transport Minister, Mr. Amin is now boasting of increased earnings from enhanced fares of bus and tram and he tries to interpret it as

popular acceptance! It shows he has no difference from the Congress ministers who also say to show that people are bearing the burden of increased taxation and prices of articles "cheerfully". It seems CPI(M) ministers are competing with Congress ministers in shamelessness. However, will the minister inform how much extra revenue they will extort from the people by this fresh hike in fares? He will not because that will show that the extra revenue to be collected will be several times more than what they call rise in cost. It will also expose the falsity of their claim that fares have risen only by 10% over the stage of 50 paise, but from the newspaper reports it has already come to light that private bus operators' profit per bus will go up by Rs. 40 or more per day.

But the most astounding feat of the government has been the announcement of fare rise in tram cars by 5 paise. People ask, do the tram cars run on diesel or petrol? Then why this increase? The government's explanation is preposterous. It anticipates the rise in cost of supplying electricity by the British owned Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation although that company had yet to announce that. What a solicitude for the capitalists and businessmen! One wonders whether such a criminal apathy to the sufferings of common people could have been shown by any other government. They say that if by 'people' is meant capitalists, both national and foreign, then this State Government is surely 'pro-people'!

Central Government's plea examined

That the present decision of Indira Government is also to meet the budgetary deficit is obvious. Mr. Venkataraman the Finance Minister assured while placing last year's budget that the deficit would not exceed Rs. 1400 crores only to further assure in the

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Resist Government's Disastrous Language and Education Policies

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Left movement. The auditorium was packed to capacity and thousands of people who could not be accommodated inside stood on the adjoining roads and pavements throughout the proceedings, listening to the speeches conveyed through the amplifiers arranged for them. The intent, disciplined audience whose purposiveness and determination were clearly manifest in their attention to the speakers made a deep impression on the eminent intellectuals present.

The Convention followed the sit-in demonstrations organized by the Committee in Calcutta and the district headquarters on the 8th January last (reported earlier) in protest against the 'Left Front' Government's language and education policy. But logic and appeal, whether by eminent men or the masses, are not the kind of things to which this government is pervious. In view of the government's arrogant contempt for the thinking public's protest, the Committee had appealed to the public at large, especially those concerned in education and culture, to join in the Convention on January 24 to decide on the future course of movement to resist the government's anti-people policy.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Conventions have been held throughout the state and numerous Committees at different levels formed under the All Bengal Committee to acquaint the people with the implication of the government's policy and organize them for the future movement. Side by side, Students' Struggle Committees have been formed.

The Convention, presided over by Sri Premendra Mitra, eminent writer, began with two patriotic songs by Sm. Kalyani Kazi. Dr. Shyamaprosad Bandyopadhyay, General Secretary of the Committee read out the resolution. The speakers emphasized in one voice the importance of English in our people's life, the utility of language and literature study in

moulding life and the need for academic autonomy.

Dr. Sukumar Sen, National Professor of Linguistics, had sent a written statement regretting his inability to attend the Convention owing to unavoidable circumstances and urging the delegates and the public to carry on the movement against the government's policy.

Dr. Rabindra Kumar Dasgupta, former Director of the National Library, observed that in pursuing its policy the State government was getting help from Centre's education policy. This government was against a good education for the people, fearing that a well-educated people might see through its deceptions and turn against its misdeeds.

The 'Left Front' government's bankruptcy in reasoning was pointed out by Sri Sankar Prasad Mitra, ex-Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. 'It is a known fact', he said, 'that a pleader who cannot offer any argument in favour of his client takes to abusive language. This government is doing no more than behaving that way by taking recourse to slandering against the intellectuals.' He also observed that the Chief Minister had made a false claim that the educationists had not protested against the anarchy in education in the early seventies. 'The fact is that all men of thinking had protested at that time'. He cautioned that the government's language policy would close the door of higher education on the people. 'I hope, a leadership would emerge from this Convention which will force the government to change its language and education policy', Sri Mitra said in the end.

Dr. Satyendranath Sen, former Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, reminded that the English education had not only produced clerks and stooges of the vested interest, it had produced

the valiant freedom fighters. He questioned the government's right to dispossess the people of the opportunity for higher education. Pointing to the 'Left Front' government's act of robbing the autonomy of the Calcutta University, he said that the step was something which even the British rulers had not attempted.

Sri Manoj Basu, noted writer said: 'English is no longer the language of Englishmen only. It has become an international language and is our only window on the world outside. This government does not seem concerned at all with the vast multitude of problems plaguing us; it has found in English, an alibi to cover up its misdeeds.'

Stressing the role English plays in this country, Sri Pramatha Nath Bisi, noted writer and former professor of Bengali of the Calcutta University, observed that many of the issues now threatening to break up the country could be resolved if English was accepted as an Indian language. 'I could evade the British jail, but now, at this advanced age and state of health, I am prepared to go to the jail to resist the government's education policy which has dealt a blow at the heart of the people of this state, he declared.

Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray, eminent historian and former Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies (Simla), warned the delegates that a definite motive was at work behind the language and education policy of this government. It was keeping the public in the dark before linking with any measure. 'You will have to think out calmly how you could resist the government's policy'.

Sm. Bani Roy, a noted writer, emphasized that no language could be construed as an enemy of the people. 'Moreover, English is playing the role of a uniting force among

the diverse regions of the country'.

The pseudo-Marxist character of the CPI(M) and its allies in the 'Left Front' came under sharp attack from Sri Dwijendra Lal Sengupta, a former MP. He observed that these parties were maligning the ideology of Marxism by their anti-people misdeeds in every sphere. It was stifling mass movements, too. 'Sectarianism, not Marxism, is their true signboard.' He warned that the government's policy would inevitably bring in two categories of citizens—the English-knowing and the English-denied. It was necessary to build strong movements to force the government to revise its education policy.

In his presidential speech, Sri Premendra Mitra said: 'We are ready to face the situation with firm resolve. We want to learn through the mother tongue, but at the same time we want to learn English which is our link with the world at large. It is a perverted logic to suggest that our peasants and poor masses need not learn English, why should we deprive our poor masses of the right of access to higher education and the vast treasure of culture by denying them English? Why should we debar them from the opportunity of becoming doctors and engineers by taking away English? Undoubtedly, a motive is working behind the government's policy. If taking to the streets to register protest against injustice is a political act, then I submit, I am a politician. The government should take note that the people of this state have never tolerated injustice for long'.

Comrade Manik Mukhopadhyay, Vice-President of the Committee, explained that educationists, litterateurs and all others concerned in education and culture had assembled under the

Committee's banner on a common agreed programme of resisting the 'Left Front' government's policy of abolishing English at the primary level and downgrading the importance of language and literature study as also subverting autonomy of the educational institutions. The previous Congress government too, had encroached on the academic autonomy. The 'Left Front' government's policy was in fact, a continuation of the Congress government's education policy. The Congress had wanted to restrict the scope of higher education through the 'Seat Restriction Scheme' in order to reduce the pressure of the educated unemployed on industry and the state; and the CPI (M) led government had been trying to achieve the same object but through a different scheme—that of denying the people the scope of equipping themselves with the language needed for higher education in our country, that is English.

Comrade Mukhopadhyay also pointed out that the language and education policy of the 'Left Front' government was totally anti-Marxist. This policy would inevitably lead to regimentation of thought and thereby help consolidation of fascism in this country.

'We must try to give defeat to the government's policy. We must try to win back autonomy of the educational institutions. We appeal to the people to participate extensively in the future programme of the Committee and help us in every possible way', Comrade Mukhopadhyay said in conclusion.

Professor Bimal Bhusan Chattopadhyay from Coochbehar pointed out that the government's design behind its language policy was to cripple the power of thinking. Sri Depankar Roy, speaking on behalf of the Students' Struggle Committee, pledged to give as much blood as would be necessary to defeat the government's anti-people policy.

Several other delegates
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Orissa Movement in Retrospect

The popular democratic mass movement in Orissa initiated by the students and taken up by the people in the past four months defying savage police atrocities and repression with indomitable spirit stands out as a glorious example before the entire country in the recent history of legitimate movement of the people. All the more so having come at a time when problems confronting people's life are aggravating day by day and all the ruling parties both at the Centre and in the States are suppressing democratic movements with barbarous police repression besides imposing one black act after another curtailing people's fundamental rights and civil liberty, and even the so-called left parties are not only fighting shy of any mass movement but have become partners too in the heinous attempts of misdirecting people's growing wrath into parochial, communal or cast strifes.

Just to mention the background of the movement: it started following an assault by some anti-social traders on some students who were collecting flood relief material and funds for the floodstricken people of Orissa in September last and the government instead of taking action against the traders involved let loose police attack on the aggrieved students and people. Without repeating the facts, in this context already published in this organ on 15th December, we like to draw attention of the people to some features in this movement.

Forces trying to give this mass movement in Orissa a communal colour or to divert it into parochial conflicts were not lacking. Under such circumstances, as has happened so many times in the recent past in our country, there was great danger of such a movement, which had originated from the spontaneous outbursts of students and people against the government, misfiring into a parochial agitation and conflict. But thanks to the revolutionary leadership of our party SUCI and student wing AIDSO guided by the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh our beloved leader and one of the outstanding Marxist philosopher of the era, the movement was saved. From the very beginning our party organisers and leaders took prompt initiative and spared no efforts to give it an organised shape throughout the State and a right direction based on the genuine and legitimate demands of the people. Thus for example, it was due to the positive Initiative of AIDSO, guided by our party SUCI, that the Orissa Bandh on

December 5, did not take a parochial turn but became a general Bandh, and the All Orissa Students' Action Committee put forward demands in the movement which reflected the genuine and justified demands of the people, like checking of soaring price rise, state trading of all essential commodities, exemplary punishment to all black marketeers and unscrupulous businessmen, permanent solution of drought and flood problem, full compensation to flood and drought affected people, free education to all upto matriculation level, withdrawal of all cases instituted against the students and other sections of the people who participated in the movement, protection of women's security etc. The students in whose ears still rings the call of their beloved leader and teacher Comrade Shibdas Ghosh at the Students' Conference in Cuttack to take active part in the just struggles of the masses, to organise them and help them in creating political power, went to schools and colleges and to the masses throughout Orissa, rousing the students and people

from the prevailing frustration and showing them the way out.

In such a situation full of possibility for developing even greater waves of mighty mass movements sweeping the entire state and greatly advancing the cause of the peoples, the so-called left parties, in particular the CPI (M) and their students wings, on the contrary, did everything in their power to dampen the fighting spirit of the students and the people. Although SFI later when the movement had drawn large support from the people and taken on mass character, associated itself with the 'All Orissa Students' Action Committee' who conducted the movement, SFI and AISF not only discouraged the students and people but actually even helped and supported, be it overtly or covertly, the parallel Committee formed by ABVP (led by BJP) and such forces in order to split the ranks and disrupt the movement. The CPI(M) to malign the movement did not even hesitate to call it: "An Oriya version of the Assam Agitation (People's Democracy, Oct. 12, '80.) When the Orissa Congress (I) State Government accused the opposition parties of encouraging the students in this movement the CPI(M) and its allies were quick in assuring the government that it was falsely accusing them. Not to talk of exposing the cruel police repression on the movement before the people; even the deaths of several persons due to wanton and indiscriminate police firing on December 5, the day of Orissa Bandh, remained unreported and unannounced in the organs of these so-called left parties. That even their association with the 'All Orissa Students' Action Committee' was purely motivated by parliamentary considerations is glaringly revealed in the fact that CPI(M) did not even report these deaths much less condemn them. True to its class character and its tradition of surreptitiously changing its stand and skilful manoeuvres with a view

to public emotions and to cover up their naked betrayal before the public eye CPI(M) gradually changed its tune of propaganda and began to exhort the students at the time when they were conducting street battles to take up serious studies in consideration of the then impending examinations, make good for their loss due to the movement in order to divert the mind of students and guardians from the path of movement. Thus, at this critical juncture, critical for the ruling party defending the crisis-ridden system by any means and hopeful for the toiling people for whom mighty mass movement is the only ray of hope and way out, these social democrats have once again shamelessly come to the rescue of the ruling party, thereby proving itself a most dependable servant of the ruling class and useful ally of the fascist Congress (I) Government in Orissa which has left no stone unturned in its effort to kill the movement, starting from police repression, to malign slander and lastly in efforts to entangle the students in mere talks.

In this connection the role of the press in Orissa needs to be mentioned. Far from objectively reporting the facts most of the dailies maligned and projected the movement as a parochial agitation directed against a particular business community. But when the growing popular mass support enjoyed by movement and its true legitimate character became too apparent to be concealed any longer, the press began to project the CPI(M) and its allies of the 6 party combination who by then had stopped, too, for above reasons in its vilification campaign and begun to associate itself at least in paper statements with the movement, though asking the students to go back to their studies and advocating for a quick solution and an early end to the movement without however upholding or pressing for acceptance of the demands, simply to arrest the movement while

at the same time keeping up an appearance of support. These compromising forces were projected before the people both by the government and the press as if they were conducting the movement. Similarly, the parallel Committee formed by ABVP, NSUC(I) etc. with the sole aim of disrupting the movement was accorded some publicity by the press while the forces actually conducting the movement were completely blacked out by the press. Not to speak of the total blackout by the press about the leading role of the AIDSO leaders and organisers, the attacks on them by the government, the ransacking of the offices of AIDSO and SUCI in different districts and the closing down of the AIDSO, SUCI and UTUC (Lenin Sarani) offices at Rourkela, the mass arrest of thousands of AIDSO workers and leaders, issue of warrant against Comrade Tapas Datta, Orissa State Secretary of our party, SUCI, and against the entire State Council of AIDSO, the imprisonment of Dhurjati Das, the AIDSO State President and the refusal to allow him bail—all these and many other facts remained unreported in the newspapers. From all these events the toiling people in Orissa, in particular, and in our country in general, should draw important political lesson that the bourgeoisie and the press are projecting only those parties which are acting as defenders of the bourgeois crisis ridden system but are blacking out our party and mass fronts who are today the only forces of organised mass movement. What does it signify? Has the press become slaves of the monopoly houses with whose money bag the larger papers are run? Today, in the third phase of intense general crisis of world capitalism when the monopoly capitalist class, i.e. the ruling class in our country is faced with even more acute all-out crisis are they afraid that this movement under the

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Both the Government at the Centre and 'Left Front' Government in West Bengal pass the burden on to the people

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last session of the Lok Sabha that it would be kept within Rs. 2700 crores. But even that assurance was given by manipulating the figure of net borrowing of Rs. 540 crores from IMF Trust Fund to show as capital receipt as is revealed from RBI bulletin, August issue. And even that was not enough, now the government takes the opportunity of raising Rs. 600 crores over and above the additional cost, it says, would be required to meet the rise in oil price.

But the most despicable anti-people attitude of the Indira Government has come to light by another fact. Mr. P. C. Sethi, the Petroleum Minister was pleading for the case of the oil companies, in his briefing to the Forum of Financial Writers in New Delhi, in the early part of January. He was labouring hard to show that the oil companies had been suffering loss because of recurrent rise in oil prices and hinted that Kerosene and cooking gas might have to bear the brunt of the burden of next round of price rise because, in his opinion, loss of the oil companies was maximum on these two items. It at once exposes the falsity of the governments' pleading of helplessness. It shows on the other hand that the oil companies and dealers who have been minting fabulous profits taking advantage of created scarcities and uncertain supply position have been feathered further by the government through this trick and that the present hike is a pre-planned, deliberate blow against the hard pressed toiling people.

It is to be noted that when an utterly reactionary US Government is taxing the oil companies which are minting super profits, this government on our land which raises socialist jargons and verbal sympathy for the poor does not hesitate to

pamper the oil companies and dealers by bringing in the net of taxation, an article like kerosene which is essential for the vast masses of the poor and oppressed. A staff correspondent of the Statesman rightly pointed out (Statesman January 15, 1981): ".....one has to acknowledge that while a rise in the price of petrol affects a relatively small proportion of the Indian population, a rise in the price of kerosene affects the vast majority." Yet the Indian Government does it deliberately and the CPI(M) led 'Left Front' Government toes the line faithfully.

Let alone making a thorough probe into the cost structure of public vehicles like bus, tram, taxi etc. CPI(M) led government also concedes with unseemly haste, fresh hike in fares. It shuts its eyes when oil companies and the dealers fleece the poor people by forcing them to pay the black-market price, Rs. 4 for a litre of kerosene. Yet both Indira Gandhi and Jyoti Basu are running the governments for the people!

Energy problem— Indian context

At a time when the era of cheap petrol and petrol products has long ended the Indian Government started depending on imported oil and oil products more and more, straining its financial resources to the extreme at the cost of untold sufferings of the people and disastrous consequences on the economy. We are coming to the aspect, a bit later; meanwhile let it be noted that since the oil producing and exporting countries formed their 13 member OPEC body in 1960, prices of oil and oil products have been increasing intermittently. Between the short weeks of 1973 and 1974, the cost of a barrel of crude rose from \$ 2.41 to \$ 10.95.

Since then, prices have further swelled to present level of \$ 40 on an average for spot purchase.

In an interview to the American magazine, Time, the Oil Minister of Saudi Arabia warns that the price might be up to \$ 60 per barrel in not too distant date.

The background for the latest hike in world oil prices is said to be the uncertainty of supply caused by the Iraq-Iran war which is being exploited by the multi-national oil companies. They are unwilling to run down their stocks and because of the short supply thus artificially created, there is a further hike. The oil producing countries too did not lag behind, they also hiked the price by 10%. And this is, obviously, not going to be the last hike in world oil price.

Faced with this severe energy crisis which the Americans are calling now "Everything crisis", the capitalist countries, even the advanced ones including the US, have been adopting emergency programme to seek alternative source of energy over and above bringing strict rationing of use of oil and oil products.

American magazine "Time" (Dec. 22, 1980) writes: 'A record 60 000 new oil and natural gas wells are expected to be dug in the US this year.... Meanwhile, engineers are racing to find new and more effective methods to recover the estimated 75% of oil that remains in the ground after conventional pumping is completed.... Washington has been pushing a programme to boost the nation's use of coal by perhaps as much as 50% within the coming four or five years.'

In the research labs. of numerous countries, scientists are struggling to bring down the manufacturing cost and improve the efficiency of so called photovoltaic cells that

convert sunlight directly into electric energy".

—Statesman, January 19, '81)

Democratic mass movement—the only hope

But which government can have the necessary political will and guts to embark on a gigantic programme of allround scientific application of human and natural resources for the progress of the country and the people? Can a moribund and utterly reactionary capitalist order and a political ethos most corrupted and vulgar bring this about? No. It required for the Chinese people to bring in a working class state after the revolution to make a thorough exploration of the natural resources, for the first time, as also to attain self sufficiency in oil production a decade and a half ago. Today People's China is an oil exporting country. For our country we do not know even the potentiality let alone harnessing it. The vital difference lies in two different productive systems and the respective class interests—these two systems guard and uphold.

In our country the most wretched bourgeois parties and their competitors in parliamentary politics, the social-democratic parties, despite difference in vocabularies pamper the same capitalist interest, national and foreign and for this, go on thrusting on the people the evergrowing burden of unspeakable woes and miseries.

This decay of the society and frustrating situation can only be reversed by the organised intervention of the toiling and oppressed people through countrywide democratic mass movement. In organising this countrywide democratic movement people can see from their bare experiences that there is only one party on the soil, the SUCI that is upholding the banner of struggle against moribund capitalism and the crisis-ridden capitalist class. It alone is guarding the fort

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Not only this, even according to a World Bank study, oil importing countries like India that have surplus stock of molasses, sugarcane, cassava and other forms of biomass have good prospects of meeting a significant portion of their gasoline needs from ethanol. In the light of continued rise in oil prices and a slower rise in prices of biomass raw materials—agricultural wastes and fuelwoods—ethanol production from these raw materials could undoubtedly be economically attractive alternative.

('Energy Programme For Developing Nations')

On Electoral Problem

(Contd. from page 2) experience how the black money and even foreign money flow freely during election campaign. This lavish expenditure in election is incurred not only by the known bourgeois parties but even by those parties which are known to the people to be left parties, as will be evident from the letter written by Mr. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the CPI(M) leader, to the Election Commission, protesting against the revised ceiling before the last Lok Sabha election. In the said protest letter Mr. Namboodiripad argued that even if the cost of leaflets, postering etc. are excluded, the expenditure to be incurred for organising meetings only will be one and a half lakh of rupees. People are not so naive as not to understand the source of this fabulous amount of money in case of all those parties. So it is not unknown to the Chief Election Commissioner that because of the role of the black money, people's opinion is not reflected in election result. If the Election Commission was serious about containing the influence of black money it must not have made such a funny recommendation. Moreover, the recent Special bearer bond Ordinance enabling the holder of black money to make it white without paying any tax, not to speak of any penalty reveals the real attitude of the Government towards black money. Under the circumstance, all talks of containing the activity of black money by the Chief Election Commissioner are bunkum.

Judged in this background, it will be crystal clear that the proposals of Mr. Shakder were mooted with two fold objective, viz. to impose two-party system by rigid screening through stringent electoral laws on one hand and to befool the people with false hopes thereby misdirecting their attention from the real problem on the other hand. When

the people are groaning under capitalist exploitation and when they are finding that popular wishes are not reflected in elections strangled by the influence of black money and total rigging, revolutionary politics gaining supremacy over parliamentarism practised by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois pseudo-left parties is a distinct possibility. So Mr. Shakder's proposals are also directed to creating confusion over the mass mind by diverting the attention of the people from the real problem of capitalist exploitation and arresting them within the ambit of parliamentarism as practised by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties.

The foregoing discussion proves to the hilt how correct are the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh an outstanding Marxist-Leninist thinker, our beloved departed leader and teacher. He showed:

"As to form also fascism presents no stereotyped pattern..... Somewhere it has adopted the form of individual dictatorship, somewhere the autocratic rule of military Janta and yet in some other countries, it has been able to usurp power under democratic garb, keeping the parliament still alive but limiting its power by economic and political centralisation. The appearance of fascism in democratic form through two-party parliamentary system of government is, certainly a post-war social phenomenon, having no historical precedent, because of its seemingly democratic appearance it is, at the same time, the most deceptive. And in fact it has been able to deceive many so-called intellectuals who try to recognise fascism by its form only and not by its content".

(On Fascism)

In fine, it must be stressed that mighty mass movement with correct base political line can alone frustrate these type of sinister bourgeois designs. So the Indian people must unite by giving defeat to all divisive forces and launch

RESIST THIS ONSLAUGHT

Both the Central as well as the State Governments, irrespective of their nomenclatures, are engaged in a competition as to how much each can tax the people. Nobody want to lag behind in this race to put the entire burden of capitalist crises on the shoulders of the people, be it the branded bourgeois parties or the parties who day in and day out so loudly proclaim themselves left.

In their bid to earn the blessings and confidence of the capitalist class they have become shameless even. As otherwise how could the Central Government, run by the Indira Congress, despite heavy doses of back breaking taxation, unbridled deficit financing, the entire burden of which is made to be borne by the common people, have within the last six months twice raised the prices of petrol and petroleum products advancing the plea that crude oil prices have been raised by the OPEC. But even if this is accepted could not they absorb this 600 crores of rupees to save the people from this extra burden? They are giving thousands of crores of rupees in subsidies and subventions to the rural and industrial bourgeoisie in various forms! What is more, their utterly anti-people attitude is thoroughly exposed from the fact that whereas due to hike of prices of crude oil the import bill will rise by 600 crores of rupees more the government aims to raise 1200 crores.

The CPI (M) led 'Left Front' government in West Bengal too does not lag behind. They too imposed taxes on kerosene even, one of the people's daily necessities. What is more, on the plea of hike in diesel and petrol, prices they only six months back raised the bus and taxi fares exorbitantly. Now Once again within six months they have raised the bus and taxi fares

mighty democratic movements against the onslaughts like the present one in the name of electoral reforms which is actually nothing but further mutilation of the election laws.

and prices of commodities supplied through ration shops caring least for people's utter hardship. Moreover, what logic could there be behind their raising tram fares?

When such is the state of affairs people have no other alternative but to rise against these onslaughts of both the Central as well as state governments. on January 20 last, the Calcutta District Committee of our party organised a "Raj Bhabawan March" in Calcutta. The protest marchers assembled in a big rally at the College Square, where a short meeting was held, Comrade Moni Chatterjee, member of the West Bengal State Committee of the SUCI, presided. Comrade Badal Pal, an important organiser, was the main speaker. Comrade Sadhana Chowdhury read out to the gathering the memorandum that was to be submitted to the Rajyapal. The procession was led by Comrades Ranjit Dhar, Pravas Ghosh and Fatick Ghosh, all members of the West Bengal State Secretariat of the SUCI and Comrades Sitesh Das Gupta and Moni Chatterjee. The long, well decorated procession traversed the route to the Raj Bhabawan but was stopped by the police of the "Left Front" Government in Esplanade East. Comrade Moni Chatterjee addressed the gathering there. On behalf of the protest marchers, a deputation went to see the Rajyapal in order to place the memorandum. Since the Rajyapal refused to meet the deputation, the memorandum was submitted to his secretary.

The memorandum strongly demanded withdrawal of the fresh central

taxes imposed on petrol, kerosene and diesel, an immediate repeal of the of decision the tram, bus and taxi fare rise and the rise of prices of commodities supplied through ration shops by the State Government and curb on blackmarketing in Kerosene, Petrol, Diesel etc by the State Government to ensure easy flow of supply of these commodities.

From 27th January 1981, the day from which the rise of bus, tram and taxi fares were enforced our workers and organisers organised protest demonstrations at different bus and tram stops and terminuses throughout the day in Calcutta and Howrah. Encouraged by this people at many places refused to pay the increased fares and joined our workers in this active resistance. Naturally, this enraged the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal led by CPI(M) and it engaged its police forces who arrested many workers and organisers of our Party and even made lathi-charge on them in many places.

Condemning this atrocity Comrade Sukomal Dugupta Secretary, West Bengal State Committee in a statement on 27th January 1981 said, "While condemning these atrocities we demand immediate release of all those arrested and repeal of the increased Bus, Tram and Taxi fare. At the same time we demand of both the Central and the State Governments to withdraw all the taxes as imposed by them respectively over Petrol, Diesel and Kerosene which amount to about 50% of their prices. And we appeal to the people to come forward and organise movement against these anti-people decisions of the governments."

Orissa Movement in Retrospect

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leadership of AIDS and SUCI which has assumed a new and different character will inspire the people, also in other parts of the country, who are groaning under the exploitation of capitalism, daily increasing in ruthlessness and are searching in the dark for a way out, to raise against this unjust order of things with its fervent appeal to human consciousness. But truth cannot be suppressed or concealed for long. It is not on the basis of press publicity but on the basis of the appeal of truth that this movement has developed upholding the justified and legitimate demands of the people and students who armed with the in-

valuable teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh the great proletarian leader and one of the foremost Marxist thinker of the era have acquired unshakable confidence and indomitable courage to face any odds.

The students and people of Orissa have risen to the occasion defying police repression, tortures, arrests and even death with indomitable spirit and conviction in the justness of their cause. Our party extends its revolutionary greetings to the valiant fighters in Orissa. However, it is well to remember that each movement has its ebbs and tides. No particular movement can be an end in itself. The

criterion for the success of any movement lies in whether it enables the people to gain the necessary political and organisational preparedness for higher stage of movement. So let all the experiences of this movement be analysed by the people in relation to this question and the gains consolidated for future movement, and imbibe the teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, that for complete emancipation the grasping of revolutionary ideology, higher proletarian ethics and culture and on the edifice of these the building up of people's committees as their own instrument of struggles are prerequisites.

Resist this disastrous Language and Education Policies

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from the districts also spoke pledging support to the programme of movement.

The Convention unanimously resolved to lead a procession of educationists, litterateurs, teachers, students, guardians and all others concerned in education and culture in a Historic March to the Writers' Buildings on February 2 next at 3 PM from the foot of the statue of Vidyasagar at the College

Square as an organized expression of protest of the thinking public and our demand of revision of this anti-people policy of the State Government.

The convention further resolved that, "if this protest demonstration fails to evoke any positive response from the government a programme of civil disobedience and courting arrest on a massive scale covering all sections of the people will be undertaken from February 16 next, the day of opening

of the State Assembly, onwards".

Determination and enthusiasm had seized the delegates and members of the public who attended the Convention. They left the hall to carry the message of struggle to the distant corners from where they had come. February 2 lies ahead, the day when they will meet again in the streets of Calcutta, thousands and thousands of them, to undertake the Historic March to the Writers' Buildings.

Stand up in bold defiance against the onslaughts of both the Central and West Bengal State Government

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of revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism concretised on the soil in the thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great teacher of the proletariat. All other parties using the signboard of Marxism are maligning it and by their treachery to the cause are only providing grist to the mill of slander of bourgeois rouges against the noble ideology of

communism.

The ten point charter formulated by our Central Committee last year pinpointed the attacks that are coming in the economic sphere on the people in the shape of recurrent steep rise in prices of essential commodities, fares and freights as also back-breaking taxes. The government has responded by fresh hike in oil prices and fares. The coming

budget sessions both at the Centre and in the States will do the other part—further dose of higher rate of taxation. The option is wide open. Either to die like mute animals or to take up the fight. The charter is there for the people, let it be of the people and by the people in real action of countrywide turbulent organised democratic mass movement.

West Bengal State Committee's Rejoinder

Calcutta 27th January, 1981: Comrade Sukomal Dasgupta, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee, SUCI, has issued the following statement today to the press:

"While the people of West Bengal are waging a militant mass movement against the anti-people policy of the 'Left Front' Government to abolish English, among others, at the Primary level Mr. Saroj Mukherjee, a CPI (M) Leader, has issued a few confusing and misleading statements viz. 'Left-Front Government recognizes the National and International importance of English language', 'English will not be abolished', 'There are provisions for learning English from the very beginning at the Secondary level'. It is not at all difficult to understand that all these statements have been issued to misdirect and frustrate this mass-movement. If these statements of Mr. Saroj Mukherjee are compared with those issued from time to time by the Education Minister, Mr. Partha Dey, 'The Left Front Government seeks to abolish English gradually from all stages', it becomes amply clear that having been forced to retreat from their previous decision in the face of vehement people's wrath, the Left Front Government has started bemoaning in self defence and at the same time applying all their might to abolish English at the Primary stage.

"Perturbed by the programme of the historic March to Writers' Buildings and continuous civil disobedience to resist the anti-people language and education policy of the Left Front Government adopted by the intellectuals litterateurs and educationists Mr. Mukherjee rose to such a height of audacity as to advise them to go through Tagore's writings on Education. But before doing so, he should have kept in his mind that when Rabindranath Tagore had advocated the need of introducing instruction through the mother tongue, he was actuated by the fact that English and not the mother tongue was the sole medium of instruction at all stages of education, including the Primary stage, throughout the country. But today, when education through mother tongue has very rightly been accepted by all and when there is none to oppose it then it is only possible for the people like Saroj Babu to find the relevance of those old statements of Rabindranath Tagore even in these days.

"Lastly, we congratulate all those people including the intellectuals who have come forward to resist this deadly attack on our education and culture by waging a mighty mass movement and we further appeal to the people of West Bengal to carry this movement successfully to its logical culmination."

READ

1. Some Aspects of Struggle to build up Communist Character (English)
—Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Re : 1.00
2. Communist Charitra Gore Tolar Sangramer Kayekti Dik (Bengali)
—Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Re : 0.75
3. Gandhibad : Ek Alochanatmak Addhyan (Hindi)
—Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Re : 0.75
4. Bam Front Sarkarer Janabirodhi Bhasa O Sikshanitir Biruddhe Durbar Gana-andolan Gore Tulun (Bengali)—SUCI Re : 1.00

Editor-in-Chief—NIHAR MUKHERJEE