

A Fascist Move to Deny Right to Life

Ostensibly to meet the Punjab situation the Central Congress(I) Government has recently taken a series of draconian measures. The operation Black Thunder in the Golden Temple has been followed by promulgation of two major ordinances, one providing for severe penalty for 'misuse' of religious institutions and the second amending the Arms Act of 1959 to tighten its provisions and provide for death penalty even for 'offences' under it. Before this, the Government introduced the 59th Amendment to Constitution which, besides undermining the basic rights of the people, restored to the Centre the power to declare Emergency for 'internal disturbances' in any part of the country.

The agonising situation in Punjab for the last one decade, in particular the spate of killing of common people there every day during the last one year or so, is the deepest concern today of the people of the State and the whole country. But a question arises which we have raised time and again: Has the Central Government ever been genuinely willing to solve the Punjab problem in the interest of the people? Is not it keen on keeping the problem alive instead and, in the name of containing terrorism, arming itself more and more with draconian laws to use the same to crush the people's legitimate democratic movements? Indira Gandhi's Government had launched operation Blue Star in the same Golden Temple, claiming to root out the terrorists. The Centre enacted the National Security Act, the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Court) Act, Terrorism and Separatist Activities Act — all in the name of eliminating terrorism in Punjab in the main. There have been designated courts which can send people to jail on summary trials and on ex-parte hearing. The Army and para-military forces have been called out again and again. Special and extraordinary powers have been delegated to the police. Ultimately the State has been brought under President's Rule superseding an elected Government, and the Rule has been extended beyond its tenure and provisions of the draconian laws have been made more stringent. But the Punjab problem has not been solved in the least and the daily killing of common people has risen alarmingly, plunging the entire State into a reign of terror and aggravating communal tension. All who follow carefully the sordid developments in Punjab

have grown fortified in the belief that the terrorist activities in Punjab could not continue and thrive without acquiescence and direct and indirect patronage of the Central Congress (I) Government.

So, those inclined to approve of such draconian measures by the Centre for Punjab on the argument that the senseless killing of common people by the extremists warrant drastic steps by the Government should probe the issue critically and try to understand the real design and intentions of the Government led by Rajiv Gandhi.

The implications of the 59th Amendment are the gravest in this respect. Originally, when the Amendment was placed before Parliament, it was intended to cover the whole country. Later, due to opposition, it had been restricted to Punjab, but provisions of the Amendment can be stretched to impose Emer-

gency in the entire country. It should be recalled in this context that late Indira Gandhi had assumed similar authoritarian powers by introducing the 42nd Amendment before she clamped Emergency in 1975. In the background of popular discontent against Emergency, the Janata Government had introduced the 44th Amendment which provided that Article 21 of Constitution, guaranteeing protection of life and personal liberty, would not be suspended even during an Emergency. The 59th Amendment has done away with this provision, reintroducing the powers of the 42nd Amendment. It means that if the Government kills a man or tortures him there will be no appeal. There will be no redressal, no right to justice. Can there be a situation darker and graver than this for man in any society? Is it anyway more hopeful than the darkest of fascist regimes?

Imposition of an Emergency will also suspend Articles 14 and 19. As a number of jurists are pointing out, with Article 14 suspended the Government will be above law. Suspension of Article 19 will deprive the citizens of the freedom of speech, expression, including that of the Press, and association. Press censorship could be imposed on news relating to

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BALIAPAL TESTING RANGE

Resistance Movement Gathering Momentum

The people of Baliapal-Bhograi of Orissa have added a glorious chapter to the history of democratic movement in India. They have been fighting an unrelenting war against the dictatorial high-handedness of the Government, both of the State and of the Centre. The region which has been selected as the 'most suitable site' for the proposed National Test Range (NTR), popularly known as the Baliapal Missile Base, is to be got rid of its over one lakh people for making room for the range. It is a thickly populated area, situated in the Subarnarekha basin and is a highly fertile land known as the granary of the State. They made repeated appeals for withdrawing the project but all this fell into the deaf ears on the authority. So, when a notice for eviction was first served in 1985, the ground was rife for waging a united struggle in the locality.

All the people were ranged against the test range and the 'Kshepanastro Ghati Pratirodh Committee' came into being

to combine their protests into a militant resistance movement against the NTR. During the last four years they had to face all

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COMRADE PRITISH CHANDA At Opposition Party Meeting In Andhra Pradesh

Since long our party has been appealing to all Left, democratic and opposition parties and forces to forge a broadest united front on a common agreed programme and a common code of conduct to launch countrywide democratic mass movements against the anti-people fascist policies and measures of the Central Congress(I) Government. To avail of any possibility of building this unity our party joined the meeting of Opposition parties convened recently by the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. T. Rama Rao on the occasion of the Mahanadu of the Telugu Desam Party, Comrade Pritish Chanda, Member, Central Committee and Polit Bureau, attended the meeting on our party's behalf.

The meeting was held on 28th May and Mr. Rama Rao had invited all Opposition parties for a discussion on the question of Opposition unity. Besides the Telugu Desam Party, the Janata Party, the Congress(S), the Jana Morcha, the AGP, the Manipur People's Party, the Panthar Party (Jammu and Kashmir), the Lok Dal, the BJP and our party, the SUCI, participated in the discussion. The CPI (M), the CPI and their allies in the 'Left Front' of

West Bengal did not take part, making a plea of participation of the BJP.

Speakers representing the participating parties included, besides Comrade Pritish Chanda, Mr. Ram-Krishna Hegde, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpaye, Mr. Ram Jethmalani, Mr. Joygopal Sharma, Mr. Devilal, Mr. N. T. Rama Rao, Mr. Bhrigu Fukan, Mr. Biju Patnaik, Mr. P. Unnikrishnan, Mr. Sarat Sinha,

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odds — sometimes alluring proposals of rehabilitation were made, sometimes economic blockade was put-up or they were threatened with severe consequences — all this to frustrate the movement; but nothing could cow down them. Rallies, squads, mass demonstrations now have become daily affairs there. The movement enjoys such a popular support that even the village urchins, in their play-times, take out processions and raise slogans against the NTR imitating their elders. With the passage of time they have cemented the wall of resistance. All the entry points of the locality have been

sealed and a round-the-clock vigil is maintained by volunteers. At the sight of any Government vehicle towards the gate, conch shells are blown and brass utensils are banged and the alarm is relayed to the interior region in no time. Suicide squads have been formed in the name of 'Maran Sena' to face any eventuality. Virtually a parallel administration is emerging there. Any Government official or the local Congress (I) MLA or even a minister is denied entry. A dais erected for a mass meeting to be addressed by the

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ARMS DEAL SCANDAL

J P C Report—A Cover-up

In an article in issue No. 15, Volume 20 of this journal dated 22nd June, 1987 we had shown by detailed analysis how a combination of factors and developments like revelations of serious economic offences of monopoly houses, aftermath of appointment of the Fairfax to investigate the same, institution of the Thakkar-Natarajan Commission by the Central Government to sidetrack, confuse and hush up the whole thing, the growing acrimony between the Prime Minister and the President carrying within it the seeds of a possible constitutional crisis and startling revelations about corruption in high places centring round the two defence equipment contracts for the HDW submarines and the Bofors guns rocked the country, set in motion a sense of instability, uncertainty and apprehension in the public mind symptomatic of unprecedented allout crisis of the capitalist system, and laid bare the system in all its ugliness.

Recent developments connected with the two arms scandals have further accentuated the utterly immoral character and political bankruptcy of the system in general and the Government in Delhi in particular.

About a year back came startling disclosures about the contract for supply of submarines awarded to the West German firm HDW and the contract for supply of 155 mm. howitzer guns awarded to the Swedish firm Bofors which strongly indicated that the two deals had been extremely shady involving payment of very large sums by the supplying firms as pay-offs, or more simply bribes to high-ups in the ruling Congress(I) party and the Indian Government, to secure the contracts. Since then the Government, in a planned way, using every means at its disposal, has been trying to underplay and cover up the glaring scandals through stratagems and subterfuges, deliberate planting of mis-information, half-truths and even blatant lies. When, with the passage of time, the commotion caused by the disclosures subsided somewhat, the Government perhaps felt that the time was ripe for attempt to exonerate itself. This it tried to do through announcing the result of a Government investigation on HDW submarines and through placing the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Bofors contract in the Parliament.

The Defence Minister Mr. K. C. Pant, in a

statement on the HDW submarine deal in the Lok Sabha on the 21st April last, said that the Government, after "thorough and detailed enquiries made by the investigative agencies of the Government", had found no evidence of any law or regulation being violated or of any Indian agent being involved in the submarine deal and "accordingly, the Government has decided to treat the matter as closed."

The JPC, formed in August last year by the Government with B. Shankaranand as its Chairman to "investigate" the Bofors gun deal was designed as a dilatory tactic to keep the lid on the matter by pacifying the public till the commotion subsided and then deliver the coup de grace with a pre-determined "finding" exonerating the Government. Dutifully, the JPC Report, which was presented at the Lok Sabha on 26th April last, made the astounding assertion that although it had not been possible to trace out the identity of those who had received huge payments from Bofors, nevertheless it was sure that there had been no kickbacks or bribes and that no Indians, either resident in India or abroad, had received payments from Bofors!

If the Government hoped for plain sailing

henceforth with the adoption of such stratagems, that was not to be. Unfortunately for them, the Government's own Comptroller and Auditor General (C and A-G), in his Report for 1986-87 relating to defence services reported in the Press in mid-May, recorded his findings which took the bottom off the case assiduously built up by the Government over months portraying the submarine deal as a contract for the cheapest and the best equipment unattended with corruption and torn to shreds the tissue of lies presented by K. C. Pant in the Lok Sabha earlier in the name of "findings" of the Government investigation. The C and A-G Report pointed out that placing the Order on the HDW in preference to another foreign firm whose offer too had been under consideration of the Government resulted in costing the exchequer more to the tune of Rs. 79.23 crores. Not only this. The C and A-G added: "As for the Navy, not only was it denied value for money (a technically less acceptable vessel at a higher cost), it had to give up its necessary right of rejection in case the vessel exceeded specified self-noise levels which are critical in operational terms." So it is clear that an operationally inferior submarine was contracted for at a much higher cost than other cheaper and operationally safer submarines available. Only a simpleton can believe that this arbitrary extension of Government favour to HDW was disinterested and not in consideration of huge pay-offs to the tune of a reported Rs. 30 crores extracted through "commissions" paid by HDW to agents or middlemen as corroborated from many a source.

On the Bofors gun issue, the Government fared even worse. Even before the JPC Report was submitted, it became known that two members of the JPC, Mr Alladi Arun and Mr S. Jayathrakshakan did not agree to the mani-

pulations and deception that marked the JPC proceedings and the cooking up of its Report and they divulged some sordid details of these to the Press. Either they, belonging to the Janaki faction of the AIADMK, who had been originally selected to be JPC members at a time when relations between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK was cordial were, in view of the souring of relation between the Congress(I) and the AIADMK Janaki faction due to developments in Tamilnadu following MGR's demise, were no more under any obligation to ditto whatever the Government prescribed as the JPC Report and condone the manipulations and covering up operation that went into its making; or else, they just could not stomach the manipulations and deceit. Anyway, these two members had started raising questions about the modus operandi of the JPC, which were overruled. Eventually, as they did not agree to the JPC Report, they issued a dissenting note exposing the manipulations and deceit practised by the Government in the name of the JPC. All this laid bare the sham character of the whole JPC exercise and seriously devalued the JPC Report in public eyes even before it was submitted.

But what totally demolished the locus standi of the Government and its JPC Report were the startling fresh disclosures which came like bombshells on the eve of submission of the Report. On April 22, the Swedish radio broadcast that on the basis of documentary evidence including telex messages between the Bofors and two Swiss Banks in Geneva in 1986 dealing with accounts under control of the London-based Indian business family Hinduja, it had been proved that the Hinduja had received 80 million kroners (about Re. 14 crores) in connection with the Bofors arms deal with India. The Hinduja were described by the radio

as being close to Rajiv Gandhi and having financial links with the Congress(I).

On the same date, the daily HINDU of Madras published facsimiles of 5 documents. Two of these relate to transfer of money from Sweden to Swiss bank accounts — one dated 4th March, 1982 for equivalent of Rs. 1.80 crores paid by Bofors to 'Pitco', C/o. G. P. Hinduja, Sangam Limited, London and the other dated 11th November, 1982 for equivalent of Rs. 2.30 crores paid by Bofors to 'Pitco', C/o. Sangam Limited, London. The bank documents clearly state that the payments are as commission and not winding up charges as the Bofors have been making out for the world to believe. The other three documents reproduced in THE HINDU are communications from Bofors to a bank in Geneva dated between October '79 and June '84 which clearly established that Bofors had contractual obligation to pay 8 to 10 percent commission to 'Pitco' that is the Hinduja right from the time when the process of decision-making on which gun to purchase was on in India.

So much for the Indian Government's initial assertions that no commission had been paid or subsequent assertions that no Indian had been recipient of kickbacks in the two defence deals. Whatever data and information have come to light in spite of the Government's efforts to suppress them fully indict this Government of corruption and malpractices. Actually, though, there is no need to prove elaborately that these arms deals have been associated with the highest degree of corruption with complicity of the Government. It is common knowledge that whether in the States or in Delhi, nothing moves at the government level without payment of bribes and no deal or contract can be finalised without very substantial payment being made under the table to the right quarters. When such is the stark reality, any suggestion that huge defence contracts valued at thousands of crores of

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Arms Deal Scandal

rupees were awarded to foreign firms without corruption in high places and huge sums of money changing hands can only evoke derisive smiles. When inferior submarines of a firm are contracted for at higher price than better submarines of another, it is not practice of philanthropy but bestowal of arbitrary favour for a consideration. The contract with Bofors specifically prohibits employing middleman and paying commission to them. The huge payments made by Bofors as commission are not only illegal but were meant to be clandestine too, deposited as these were in numbered Swiss bank accounts. What for were such payments? Such payments made in connection with Indian contracts, even if called commission or winding up charges and even if they are deposited in accounts of A, B or C in countries X, Y or Z, cannot be anything but bribes to be routed back to Indian hands through devious channels.

It may be recalled that in 1980, prior to finalisation of the submarine deal, a defence team including the then Vice-Chief of naval staff went to West Germany and Sweden and after on-the-spot investigation, recommended the Swedish submarine, which was cheaper too, in preference to the HDW ones whose high noise-level made them vulnerable to easy detection and destruction by an enemy. But mysteriously, the order was eventually placed for the inferior and costlier HDW submarines! Bofors guns too were technically not the best available. Years back, NATO had rejected these as unsuitable. In our earlier article referred to hereinbefore, we had given details of the serious operational defects of the Bofors guns. In fact, up to a certain stage while assessing relative merits and demerits of the guns of different makes available, the Indian Army had clearly opined in favour of a French gun in preference to the Bofors', but was subsequently made to amend its stand in favour of Bofors under pressure from the highest quarters!

So, this is what the patriotism and concern for

national security of the Central Government and the ruling Congress(I) boil down to! In this country stricken with appalling poverty where the bulk of the people are denied two square meals a day, they express off and on grave 'concern' for the country's security and hold out the bogey of danger from the neighbouring countries, and on these pleas go on inflating the military expenditure by leaps and bounds on astronomical proportion in each year's budget, silencing voices of protests. And then they squander the vast sums obtained by fleecing the people through imposing ever-mounting tax and price burden in procuring defective, second rate defence equipment throwing all concern for the country's security even in the bourgeois sense to the four winds, filling up their own pockets in the process with wealth created by the people through their toil, sweat and blood!

In our earlier article already referred to, we had shown by detailed analysis how the constitutional democracy, even in the bourgeois sense, was being fast devalued through erosion of the system of checks and balances, of the principles and norms of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Developments centring round the HDW submarine and Bofors gun episodes have glaringly revealed the extent which this process of degeneration has gone to.

During V. P. Singh's tenure as Defence Minister, when the Government in Delhi was exploring a possible reduction in the HDW price through the good offices of the West German Government, Dr. Molitor, a West German Ministry of Defence official, reportedly stated that it was proving difficult to get a price-reduction from HDW as they were committed to pay a 7 percent commission to their Indian agents under an open-ended agreement. A committee set up under the then Defence Secretary Bhatnagar, after investigation, confirmed that because of this 7 percent commission, HDW was not reducing the price

and most probably the Hindujas, believed to be close to Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I), were the recipient Indian agents. The then Indian Ambassador to Bonn also reported of this commission and sent a coded secret telex message to his Government about particulars of the commission arrangement with the Hindujas. Reportedly, even the West German Government had to admit in their Parliament in reply to a specific question that payment of commission in such cases was normal practice but how much commission had been paid in this particular case could be ascertained from the HDW only. Now, in the face of such definite evidence, it was clearly the task of the Indian Government to conduct a thorough enquiry to get at the roots of the matter, to punish the guilty and exonerate itself that is the high-ups in the Government were no beneficiaries of the huge "commission". Instead, when V. P. Singh as the Defence Minister ordered a probe, Rajiv Gandhi was ired, reportedly admonished him and asserted that nothing would come out of the probe as the bribe-payers would never admit of the fact! After V. P. Singh's resignation, to ensure this pre-determined outcome, the Government did not examine Dr. Molitor nor place the telex message from the Ambassador at Bonn and the records of negotiations with HDW before the people but blandly asserted on conclusion of its "investigation" behind the back of the people and the Parliament that there had been no agent middlemen nor any commission paid to them, presumably on the basis of stout denials by the HDW, the prime suspects! Of course, the C and A-G Report was not yet out!

The duplicity practised by the Government earlier on the Fairfax issue may be recalled here. V. P. Singh, as Finance Minister, had ordered the Fairfax organisation of the USA to conduct a probe into serious economic offences by monopoly houses and accumulation of huge sums of black money by them in numbered Swiss Bank accounts. When this became known, there was commotion in the country.

Rajiv Gandhi at first totally denied that such an assignment had been placed on Fairfax. Later on, faced with threats given by the Fairfax chief Hershman that he would divulge all the secrets unless this Government played straight, the Government hastily scrapped the contract with Fairfax!

Let us now briefly recount the Bofors episode. On April 16, 1987 the Swedish radio announced that Bofors had paid huge bribes to Indian politicians and officials through Swiss bank accounts to secure the Rs. 1700 crore contract. On June 1 that year, the National Audit Bureau of Sweden stated in a Report that "winding up costs of 2 to 3 percent of the contract value that is 170 to 250 million Kroner (Rs. 34 to Rs. 50 crore) was incurred" by Bofors. Subsequently, Lars Ringberg, the Swedish Public Prosecutor, started an enquiry which revealed that between 1979 and 1986, Bofors had deposited at least the equivalent of Rs. 64 crore in instalments through Swiss bank accounts in the names of 3 firms—the Svenska Incorporated, the Moresco (constituted of the four firms Pitco, Lotus, Tulip and Mont Blanc) and A & E Services. On enquiry, Ringberg found that these three firms were spurious ones acting as facades for the real operators behind the screen. After five months' effort Ringberg could not trace back to the real culprits behind the facades and called it a day, complaining that he had received no cooperation from the Bofors nor from the Swedish and Indian Governments. But during his enquiry, a statement by Martin Ardbo, former Bofors executive and a key figure in the negotiations between the Bofors and the Indian Government, was recorded where he reportedly said: "If Bofors had ended the relationship with its agents (as the Company and the India Government have claimed), the Company would not have got the contract." Currently, a Constitutional Committee of the Swedish Parliament is conducting investigation on the misdeeds and violations of Swedish laws by Bofors including the Indian deal.

Bofors have been saying that the payments

were made by them not as commission but as winding up costs paid to those firms for cancellation of Bofors' earlier commission contracts with them. But the fact remains that out of the Rs. 64 crore, over Rs. 60 crore was paid out in instalments after finalisation of the Bofors' Indian contract, as revealed by Ringberg enquiry. So there can be no doubt that called by whatever other name, these payments were in reality conditional upon Bofors' securing the contract, that is, these were commissions which in capitalist trading parlance mean pay-offs or more simply, bribes.

The Indian Government could have unearthed the truth, had it chosen to. Normally, Swiss Banking rules do not permit divulging information about numbered accounts to any third party. But if Delhi had signed an agreement with the Swiss Government, the Swiss could and would get the required information from their banks and pass on the same to Delhi. Here the Central Government moved with duplicity. On the one hand, N. D. Tiwari, the Finance Minister, assured the Lok Sabha on August 6, 1987 that the Government would have a treaty for mutual assistance in criminal matters with the Swiss Government for the purpose; on the other, although a draft treaty was prepared in September, Delhi did not follow up and finalise the same. Thus the Indian Government wilfully avoided the only course of action that could have led to the truth.

It now only remained to pull off a gigantic hoax in the name of the JPC. To start with, the JPC was packed with selected Congress(I) MPs, all yes-men to Rajiv Gandhi along with some members of the allies of the Congress(I) like the AIADMK, the National Congress(F) and the Muslim League who were not expected to create any trouble. As in earlier enquiries instituted by the Government for the Antulay and Bhajan Lal affairs, the terms of reference were so tailored as to preclude any possibility of real investigative work, the main

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Bangladesh In Ferment Against Neodespotism Behind Facade Of Islamic State

At long last, following the footsteps of Islamic States, President Ershad has come out with the retrograde step to declare Bangladesh as an Islamic State. Though it was never a question mark for President Ershad to come out with the passage of the 8th Constitution Amendment Bill making 'Islam' the State religion of Bangladesh through a captive Parliament, but what was noteworthy is the fact that even 15 members of such a captive body had the courage to oppose this retrograde measure. This resistance, though of little consequence, may still cause worry to the ruling class particularly when the capital 'Dhaka' is rocked by vehement outbursts of the opposition parties and the toiling people at large.

The people of Bangladesh have now been confronted with a newer situation warranting addition of a newer dimension to the struggles waged by them so long. As a matter of fact, for a long period they have been waging a heroic struggle for restoration of democratic rights in the country during which the people of Bangladesh, no doubt, have been subjected to the grim ordeal of a military rule. Earlier, we discussed in the pages of this organ, in quite a number of issues, how the movement of the people got a new impetus when 22-parties combined in opposition to the military regime: how they put up a 5-point charter of demands, on the basis of the slogans like 'Ershad must step down', 'military rule be ended', and 'democratic functioning be restored' 'elections to the National Assembly be held under an impartial supervisory civil government'. The military regime could not hold the elections as it wished, defying people's violent mood until the then 15-party combination led by Hasina Wazed of Awami League, lured by vague assurances from General Ershad, took part in the elections betraying the people's interest and wrecking the opposition unity.

We cautioned in previous issues dated June 1, '86, and December 5, '87, that all talks of democracy or General Ershad's assurance of presenting the people with a civilian rule were nothing but a hoax to

be fool the people. What General Ershad wanted to achieve out of the elections of 1987 was simply to legitimize his military rule and to perpetuate it behind the facade of parliamentary democracy. When he succeeded in holding the elections, thanks to the role of the Awami League led by Hasina Wazed, we reminded that the Bangladesh people would have to forge unity anew and launch protracted struggles for restoration of democracy there. The totally rigged elections of March, 1987 in which less than 10 percent of the electorate are said to have cast votes and the manner in which the announcement of results in the last parliamentary elections was suspended when it became crystal clear that the Awami League and other opposition parties were faring much better than the expectation of the Government, it confirmed the views of what the parliamentary election was meant for by President Ershad! Our apprehension proved to be true to the word!

Studying the course of movement and people's fiery movement-oriented temperament, Mrs. Hasina Wazed again came forward to forge a united opposition with others which unleashed waves of mighty democratic movements, one after another, which even paralysed almost the entire civil administration in the country. In the face of the mighty movement that in one phase during the last one or two years success-

fully organised continued battles leading to pitched battles between the people and the despotic regime in different parts of the country, the military junta of President Ershad has been relegated to the cantonment area, where, perhaps, lies his real power base!

Indeed, the failure of the army to deal with the mighty movements of the people has pushed the military dictator to take stock of the prevailing socio-political - economic situation.

While taking stock of the prevailing reality in the country, Ershad is quite aware of the fact that his Government has totally failed on the question of giving the minimal relief to the people. Not only that; during his regime, the economic condition of the country and the people has deteriorated from bad to worse. Corruption is rampant, price rise is phenomenal. The poverty and destitution of the people are becoming more and more intense. More and more, the common people are confronted with the problem of maintaining their bare existence. The crisis in the economic field is giving birth to political turmoil resulting in political instability. In such a situation, Ershad is pursuing a tactics which most of the ruling cliques of the countries with crisis-ridden moribund capitalist economy would pursue. In other words, protection of exploitative State and economy from the wrath of the people is a serious problem before the ruling class. They hope that in the prevailing condition an authoritarian despotic military regime behind the facade of rule of Islamic State would provide best protection to their power setup and economy and thereby serve their aggregate interest.

So Ershad's motive is quite clear. Neo-despotism masquerading behind the facade of Islamic State may be the term with which one may like to describe this motive of continuing the army rule for all time

to come. To hoodwink the people, Ershad has come out perhaps with the last of his arsenal's weapons, that is to say, declaration of 'Islam' as the State religion in the hope that the inflow of capital from Islamic world as well as the imperialist countries would create a respite in the economy. Already, he has created a fertile ground for inflow of outside capital by withdrawing the State control on different industries and stopping State financing to different undertakings. Then again, Ershad surely took note of the fact that Islamic State Pakistan under Zia-ul-Huq's regime are recipient of staggering figures of money from the Islamic world in general and Saudi Arabia, in particular. Taking the cue, President Ershad wanted to kill two birds in one stone: on the one hand he seems to have taken it granted that by making Islam the State religion, the people in general in the country would be pacified to a great extent inasmuch as they are victim of conservative religious oriented bent of mind while, on the other, Islamic world led by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, etc., would continue to pour in fabulous amounts of petro-dollars whereby Ershad would be able to give a respite to the crisis-ridden economy in his country.

What is needed, therefore, in such a critical juncture is giving a crushing defeat to this heinous move by unleashing mighty protracted movements of the people under a correct leadership. The wrath of the people is deep rooted. Time and again this has been confirmed by their mighty outbursts against the military rule. The need of the moment is to channelise it in the right direction.

The task of the leadership in the protracted democratic movement that is sure to follow in the days to come is to combine all sections of the toiling people, more particularly, students and youth community, who have a distinct historical role to play. Time

and again, it has been found that the students and youths are playing a vital role in the democratic movements in Bangladesh. Actually, the situation needs such a widest possible broad based unity without any prejudice. People must keep strict vigil that the leadership do not fall prey to any vacillation or compromise or capitulation. Side by side, they have to keep their eyes open that no foreign powers with their hegemonistic machinations can interfere with and thereby jeopardize the cause of their movement.

Lastly, we would like to highlight one vital point. It is a fact that the mighty democratic movements so far waged relentlessly have been conducted by the democratic forces for realisation of only political and economic demands. The tasks of social and cultural transformation have not so far been seriously integrated with the programme of these movements. Never before the democratic movements even with spectacular records to their credit in Bangladesh have to face the susceptible question of the religion, the 'Islam'. It is hightime, the programme of social and cultural tasks instead of being neglected are integrated into the ongoing waves of democratic movements with all earnestness and sincerity. In order to free the people from the bondage of social and religious prejudices and conventions it is very much necessary to integrate it with the democratic movements so as to be able to democratize the society and transform the people of Bangladesh into a homogeneous compact community, not only politically but also socially and culturally. If the twin tasks can be simultaneously pursued in the vortex of mighty democratic movements, the people of Bangladesh have now unleashed, the victory is sure to come and they will then create a new chapter in the annals of democratic movement in the sub-continent.

W.B. ASSEMBLY

A Deception Exposed

As a justification for its open door policy of inviting monopoly houses and foreign multinational corporations to invest in the State, the 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal argues on and often that the policy aims at providing employment to lakhs of unemployed people, trying to meet thus the staggering unemployment problem of the State. The Front is ruling the State for more than a decade and by now the people have begun to realize the deceptive motive behind this oft-repeated slogan and its real aim of covering up this Government's abject failure to meet the people's interest and its policy of subserving the capitalists. A recent statement from Chief Minister Jyoti Basu on the floor of the State Assembly goes to expose the deception again when the CPI-(M) and its allies in the Front have started a fresh campaign in preparation for elections.

To give further exposure to the false claims the 'Left Front' leaders make frequently in the name of creating employment potentialities for the unemployed and job security for the workers, Com. Debaprasad Sarkar, leader of our party's legislative group in the State Assembly had put to the Chief Minister a number of important questions pertaining to the issues. The reply which came forth was clear demonstration that what the Front Government had been throwing from time to time as crumbs to the teeming crowds of unemployed youths by holding out before them a 'prospect' of employment for lakhs in the proposed Haldia Petrochemicals under joint venture and taking out padayatras of youths was actually part of a planned conspiracy to use the youths in electioneering. Mr. Jyoti Basu himself admitted that not more than a thousand people — this handful would be provided jobs in the 9 industries under joint venture with the monopolists. These are the industries about which he and his Government and party have been painting a rosy

picture all these years. The question-answer between Com. Debaprasad Sarkar and Mr. Jyoti Basu on the Assembly floor on 10th May last is revealing in this regard and the same is given below, in order that the unemployed youths may judge the matter on their own and decide their task.

These were the questions submitted by Com. Sarkar in writing :

1. With how many industrialists have the State Government entered into agreement for setting up industries in this State in 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 (upto February))
2. For which industries have these agreements been made ?
3. Who are the industrialists who have taken initiative in this matter ?

In reply the Chief Minister said :

The State Government has entered into agreements for setting up industries with 9 industrialists in all — 4 in 1985, 3 in 1986 and 1 each in 1987 and 1988. These industries are : Haldia Petrochemicals with Mr. R. P. Goenka ; Synthetic Filament Yarn in Bankura with Mr. S. K. Birla ; Acrylic Fibre in Haldia with G. P. Goenka ; B.O.P.P. Film in Haldia with Siddhartha Birla ; TV sets at Taratala with NICCO ; Press Tools and Moulds at Bidhannagar with Guest Keen and Williams ; Push Button Telephone sets and Electrical Private Automatic Branch Exchange at Bidhannagar with Communication Consultancy Service (P) Ltd. Computers at Bidhannagar with Jenson and Nicolson ; Teleprinters with Siemens.

Sarkar : The industries mentioned by the Hon'ble Chief Minister are all capital intensive. My question is : In view of the terrible unemployment problem in West

Bengal why have the Government opted for basically technology and computer based capital intensive industries when it was incumbent to set up labour intensive industries ? Would you please enlighten us on how far this would go to solving the unemployment problem and how many jobs would be provided ?

Basu : I fail to make out what you asked theoretically. As far as I could I am answering it. Both are necessary — capital intensive industries as also small industries which are labour intensive. West Bengal has the largest number of small industrial units in India. We need capital intensive industries. Going through the names of industries mentioned you may realize that these cannot be in the small industries sector. For our economic development we need either.

Sarkar : I asked about the employment potential, I am yet to get an answer.

Basu : Capital intensive industries have very little employment potential. I am not furnished with the figures. But as far as

(Contd. on page 8)

Protest Rally Against Tax-Price Hike

In the aftermath of the fiscal policies of the Central Congress(I) Government during all these years the common people are being burdened more and more with increasing taxation and price-enhancement of essential commodities to be pushed further to the brink of extinction. Whereas, the same policies provide increasingly larger subsidies and subventions to the capitalists to full their coffers with ever higher profits gathered by fleecing the common people.

Call was given from the party Congress of the SUCI held recently in Calcutta to build up united mass movements against the Central Government's anti-people policies and onslaughts. Working to this end the West Bengal State Committee of the party organised a massive rally on 10th June last to lead a mass deputation to Raj Bhavan, demanding that prices of coal, sugar, iron, steel, postal articles, etc. and railway freights and fares be brought down. Signatures of over one lakh seventy three thousand people who supported these

demands were handed over to a representative of the Governor.

The rally started in a procession from Subodh Mallick Square. Thousands of peasants, workers, students, youths and other sections of common people had gathered defying an inclement weather of rains and wind. Raising slogans against price and tax enhancement the marchers moved ahead in a disciplined procession and they were stopped by the police at Esplanade East where a meeting was held. Com. Yakub Pailan, member, West Bengal State Secretariat of the party, presided and Com. Fatick Ghosh and Com. Prativa Mukherjee, both member of the State Secretariat, addressed the rally, appealing to the people to strengthen the movement against the anti-people policies of the Central Congress(I) Government and the State's 'Left Front' Government.



Rally at Esplanade East on 10th June in Calcutta in protest against price-tax hike.

(Contd. from page 3)

stress being laid on finding out the suitability of the Bofors guns. The Opposition parties refused to participate unless the terms of reference included investigation into Swiss bank accounts of Indians and the authority to cross-examine any person and scrutinise any secret papers or documents of the Government. This the Government turned down and thus the Opposition was conveniently excluded from the JPC. Without any qualms, the time-honoured bourgeois democratic norm of including the Opposition in any committee investigating charges against the Government, was given the go-bye.

Chairman B. Shankaranand piloted the business of the JPC with the clear intention of ensuring by all means that truth could be suppressed. Instead of investigating the very serious charges of corruption, most of the earlier sittings of the JPC were utilised by the Government to "establish" the technical superiority of the Bofors guns through testimonials given by Defence Ministry officials before the JPC members who were by no means armament-experts. The members were reportedly flown out to far-flung corners of the country to see the guns in action and further sought to be impressed with audio-visual documentations highlighting the superiority of the gun. While so much time was wasted on such irrelevant matters, the JPC members were allowed very little time in investigating, studying documents and examining witnesses of their choice. The Government decided which witnesses were to be called and when. If the JPC were really out for betting at the truth, it should have called V. P. Singh, Arun Singh, Arun Nehru and even Rajiv Gandhi for examination. This was not done. Martin Ardbo, ex-executive of Bofors who spent several months in 1985 and '86 in India while the Bofors contract was being negotiated and who had gone on record to say: "Nothing moves in India without payment", could have been a key witness. But the Government pleaded igno-

rance about Ardbo's whereabouts even while he was being shown in live broadcasts on Swedish TV! In case of witnesses the Government thought fit for JPC to examine, the members were hardly allowed any time to prepare. Not to speak of the prescribed 7 days' notice, often all that was there was one or two days' notice. Naturally, often many members could not even be located within that time, not to speak of preparing and attending. Sometimes, the JPC was informed that an official would appear before it only a couple of hours later! But the high point of manipulation was surely reached on April 6, this year when Shankaranand notified that Bofors officials had agreed to appear before the JPC for the second time, but the date had not yet been fixed. But when the JPC met next morning to examine some other witnesses, they found instead Bofors, President Morberg and Nobel Industries Chief Jurist Lars Grothlin present to be examined! Date of their visit had been known to the Government, but the JPC had been kept in the dark. And now the members were not allowed time to prepare for examining the witnesses. Prior to meeting the Bofors officials, Shankaranand took the members to a separate room and emphasized that since they were foreign guests, no embarrassing questions should be put to them!

In September, 1987, Bofors had supplied the names of the 3 firms that had received payments from them. But the Government and Shankaranand kept this information a secret from the JPC for over 3 months. The Government investigation agencies were given these clues to "investigate" rather to make sure that they could eventually report back that the real operators of those 3 firms could not be traced! The agencies — the Directorate of Enforcement, the CBI and the DRI — ultimately produced a combined report signifying failure. Only 5 copies of this report were given to the 30 members of the JPC to "study" and return the same within two hours, so that they could not prepare themselves for cross-

examining witnesses on the basis of the Report. The only 'success' achieved by the investigation agencies was to contact at New York Win Chadha, Directed of being a recipient Corporatin, Bofors' administration consultant in India who was also suspected of being a recipient of commission from Bofors and was a fugitive from Indian law on several counts, and to persuade him to come to India to depose before the JPC. A deal appears to have been struck whereby Chadha would be assured of free movement in India and a safe return to the USA in return for which he would tell the JPC what the Government wanted him to — that there had been no malpractices in the Bofors deal. This Chadha did dutifully!

In their depositions before the JPC, the Bofors officials just parried or refused to answer any inconvenient questions about commissions or "winding up costs" paid by them to the 3 firms, who were the real owners of those firms and why they were not traceable, why the payments were made in Swiss Bank Accounts if those had been valid legal payments and why had Bofors not notified the Government about such payments earlier.

Information and documents made available to the JPC were often marked 'top secret' and so, only a few copies used to be made available for the 30 members who were supposed to "study" them within a short time sitting in the Chairman's office! Many important files on the Bofors deal were either given to JPC in utterly incomplete, truncated shape or were simply reported to be missing.

Based mainly on the depositions of the guilty parties, that is the Bofors officials and Win Chadha and the report by the investigation agencies pleading inability to trace out the recipients of huge kickbacks from Bofors, a 330 page Draft Report of the JPC was prepared. It was drafted behind the scene and not with participation of the JPC members. It was scheduled to be submitted

Arms Deal Scandal

to the Lok Sabha on the 29th April and the JPC had obtained extension of time till that day for the purpose. But in the meantime came the startling disclosures over the Swedish Radio and in the HINDU which cut at the very roots of the "finding" in the JPC Report being cooked up. This precipitated things and the Government had to hurry up in an attempt to save its face. When on 22nd April Opposition members in the Lok Sabha pointed out that in view of the documented evidence published by the HINDU it was clear that the Government had deliberately misled the House by denying existence of middlemen and kickbacks and this constituted a grave breach of privilege of the House, the Speaker overruled them and did not allow the matter to be discussed. On the other hand, the submittal of the JPC Report was brought forward from 29th to 26th April. The draft Report was not distributed to the JPC members to take home and study. They were asked to go through it within the confines of the room and "approve" it within two hours! When Mr. Aladi Aruna of AIADMK (Janaki), a JPC member, asserted the right to have his note of dissent recorded and appended to the Report, it was opposed saying this could not be done because of a directive from the Speaker. But the Speaker had to allow this eventually, presumably in view of the purpose that would otherwise ensue in the House. The JPC Report, thus cooked up and finalised, was presented to the Lok Sabha on 25th April.

The sordid drama that has unfolded centring round the 2 defence equipment deals cannot but raise some grave questions about the state of affairs in the Indian parliamentary democracy. Here there were definite charges of corruption, PRIMA FACIE substantiated by even the meagre data and information available to the people, of no ordinary corruption but corruption of the highest magnitude involving embezzlement of crores of pub-

lic money against the highest executive in the Government. The Prime Minister himself is implicated, his integrity is suspect. Even the bourgeois democratic norms in capitalist countries demand that in such situations, the head of the Government should forthwith resign pending enquiry. Facing the Watergate scandal, President Nixon of USA, the arch imperialist country, had to quit. But in this country, faced with grave charges, the Government at first arbitrarily denied that there had been any corruption and subsequently, without taking the people into confidence and placing the papers and documents before the Parliament, instituted sham investigations behind the back of the Parliament with the sole object of producing pre-determined findings to exonerate the Government so that they could cling to power at any cost. No serious attempt was made to investigate and find out facts. From their guilt-complex, they did not make the JPC broad-based, rather created a situation such that the Opposition could be conveniently excluded confirming the JPC to the close circle of Congress(I). In spite of startling disclosures about Bofors bribes being routed through the Hinduja's, the issue was not allowed to be discussed in the Lok Sabha—a glaring breach of parliamentary norms. They even tried to violate the bourgeois norms of appending the dissent note to an investigative report in the case of JPC.

By trampling every bourgeois democratic norm, they have made a mockery of the process of parliamentary investigation, of public accountability itself—reducing the Lok Sabha to a mere appendage, a rubber stamp. And the tragedy is that but for the C & A-G Report, disclosures by the Swedish radio and the HINDU and the dissent by the AIADMK (Janaki) members of the JPC, all unforeseen, they might have carried the day and succeeded in their covering up operation.

(Contd. on page 8)

Baliapal : Movement Grows

(Contd. from page 1)

State's Chief Minister was demolished and gutted, following which the meeting could not be held. The Government now has deployed large contingent of armed police and paramilitary forces in front of the resistance gates to find an opportune moment for a forcible entry into the region. But come what may the people are determined not to concede even one inch of land.

The proposal for NTR was first moved and approved in the period of 1977-79 when the Janata Party was in power both at the Centre and in the State and it was finalised after the Congress(I) had assumed power in 1980. But when the question of eviction arose and people's sentiment rose high, the Janata Party could not but join the movement. The CPI and the CPI(M), either due to Russia's involvement in the project or due to some agreement with Rajiv Gandhi on the plea of national security being at stake, virtually gave consent to it. Our party has been attempting consistently to raise the pitch of the movement such that the authority is forced to withdraw the project once and for all. Taking the opportunity of using the platforms of national as well as international forums, we voiced protest in order to spread out and intensify the movement. The Government is also trying to pursue the different forces of Opposition in favour of the NTR. In a tripartite meeting held on 1st and 18th May 1988 between the State Government, the Opposition parties and the 'Pratirodh Committee', Mr. Biju Patnaik, the State Janata leader, proposed accepting the Government's proposal to withdraw the 'resistance gate', but in the face of strong opposition from the representatives of the 'Pratirodh Committee', he had to retreat. (The Statesman, May 31, '88). In the said meeting when the State Chief Minister referred to the fact that the blueprint of the NTR was drawn by the then Janata Government at the Centre and was approved of by Mr. Biju Patnaik, the latter could not provi-

de any satisfactory answer. The reason behind the absence of the CPI(M) from the meeting is not known. However, Com. Chhabi Mohanty, our party's representative, along with other members of the 'Pratirodh Committee', demanded total withdrawal of the NTR.

Barring the question of suitability of the place as site for the NTR, another very important point that is arising is whether such a densely populated area can be selected as site for sophisticated missiles. Whereas international conventions speak in favour of desolate non-arable land or deserts, for example Cape Kennedy in the USA, the Kourou in French Guiana and Siberia in the USSR, the Government of India is frantically out to have their range at a place like Baliapal and Bhograi against all public resentment.

But the Government is unwilling to honour the interest of the people and is bent down to undermine or crush the protest from the common people. They do not care for the concerted opinion of the people, they do not pay respect to the same. What more anti-people stand a Government may take than trampling the views of the people? Arch reactionary as they are, they bother least for the people's cause. What do the local people want? They desire to remain in their own homeland which is the richest in the State in respect of agricultural and other prospects that they have created so far by their sweat and blood. And what does the Government run after? Out of petty class gain it wants to have them deported into an abyss of dismal future for ever. They raise the oft-repeated question of national security. When the future of the entire people of the region halts before a big question mark, then this security is meant for whom — for the people or for the ruling capitalists? When after forty years of independence flood and drought continue to play havoc with the life of the people in a periodic manner, when appalling poverty poses the main stumbling block in the society, the

Government is ready to spend as high as Rs. 3000 crore for the NTR. Claiming it to be in the interest of the people, they want to confuse the interest of the people with that of the ruling class. They will try to crush the resistance either by misleading or by employing brutal power, may be before or after the parliamentary election, until and unless the protesters become more cautious. The responsibility of the 'Prati-

rodh Committee' becomes manifold. To make the settled fact unsettled, they will have to chalk out programmes of action in a more organised and planned manner. More volunteers should be recruited, who would work as vigilant watchdogs round the clock. Branch Committees should be spread over the region to form a well-knit network. Along with intensification of the movement in Baliapal, it should be extended to the whole of Orissa and even across the State border to the national level. The NTR should

no longer be a regional issue. If it is installed the entire nation will have to face its dire consequences. The opposition parties have a definite role in this regard and we appeal to all of them to launch a united movement on the national plane. The working people all over the country are looking to Baliapal with a new hope. If the pitch of the movement is raised, it is sure, victory will be with the people. The Government will be forced to bow down and their nefarious game will be undone for ever.

59th Amendment

(Contd. from page 1)

Punjab, meaning nothing on Punjab will be allowed to be published nor can any meeting on Punjab be allowed without prior permission.

This is not all. If Emergency is declared in Punjab, the Central Government can, by virtue of the power, suspend fundamental rights in any part of the country and can, under Article 250, take administrative decisions regarding any State; Parliament can pass legislations even on State subjects and issue directives to State Governments even in matters that lay within the purview of the States.

So, clearly, although meant ostensibly to be restricted for Punjab, the 59th Amendment provides the Central Government with the power to bring the entire country under defacto Emergency rule. Its object is to deprive the people, not only of Punjab but of the country as a whole, of the fundamental democratic rights — even the basic right to life, the vestiges of rights still clinging to the people after the host of draconian Acts of all these years have stripped them off. What has this 59th Amendment got to do with solving the Punjab problem? Will the problem be solved by undermining democracy through imposition of an Emergency and running a still heavier steamroller of repression on the people by denying them the right to life? If the object is to root out the

extremist activity, why take away the people's basic rights?

Judged in the context of the growing allout crisis of the ruling capitalist class of the country and the growing discontent of the people against the capitalist exploitation and oppression, one should not fail to realize that as, on the one hand, the ruling class is driving the country more and more toward allout fascism in its bid to sustain its rule, the Central Congress(I) Government headed by Rajiv Gandhi, as the most trusted defender of the ruling class, is arming itself increasingly with fascist repressive weapons. The 59th Constitution Amendment is one of the most dangerous anti-people weapons this Government has wielded after trying to create a favourable atmosphere to secure sanction for it from the people in the name of quelling extremist activities in Punjab. Like its predecessor the Indira Gandhi Government, this Government is fostering, fomenting, aiding and abetting overtly and covertly communalism, separatism, terrorism and all divisive activities and, using all this as a plea, assuming draconian powers actually to disrupt the people's unity and crush their legitimate democratic movements against its anti-people policies and measures. One should not be astonished if one finds this Government postpone the Lok Sabha elections, invoking Article 83 under provisions of the Amendment in a bid to avert the

crisis through which the Government, the Congress(I) and the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi are passing now.

Democratic minded well-meaning people including distinguished jurists have begun stepping out to voice protest against this black amendment to Constitution. A number of protest meetings and seminars have already been held in different parts of the country. Meanwhile an Anti-Emergency Committee has been set up which includes a large number of Opposition parties and forces and our party is an active participant in this Committee. 26th June will be observed throughout the country as anti-Emergency Day under the aegis of this Committee and on 8th July next a convention will be held in Delhi.

Portents of 59th Constitution Amendment can be overlooked only at the peril of the widest strata of our people. For any Left, democratic and Opposition party or force to drag feet on this issue will be both a betrayal against the people and a suicidal course for itself. The CPI (M) and the CPI who are distancing themselves from allout joint action against the portentous amendment should step ahead without delay to join strength with the broad-based united platform. There is cry all around for the broadest unity against the fascist menace and people's cause must come above all other considerations.

Opposition Meeting

(Contd from page 1)

Ajit Singh, etc. Representatives of the other parties, while some of them conclaves and conferences referred to the previous of several Opposition parties to achieve the 'illusive' unity, confined themselves mainly on the need to fight unitedly the forthcoming elections.

Drawing their attention to what should be the objective of the much sought-after Opposition unity, Comrade Prithvi Chanda pointed out that the people needed a real alternative which could be provided only by rallying them behind the banner of a countrywide movement against the anti-people policies of the Central Government. So, the Opposition should seek to build up the people's unity. "Unity simply for election battles would not be able to mobilise the vast masses" — Com. Chanda observed.

Analysing the Congress (I) Government's anti-people fiscal policies, its undemocratic policies to snatch away people's rights and civil liberty, its policies of curtailing education and infringing on autonomy of educational institutions, its criminal negligence in meeting the bare necessities of the people, its onslaughts on democratic mass movements, and overt and covert abetting of communal and parochial forces, and a host of other such anti-people policies, Comrade

Chanda stressed the urgency of building up Opposition unity through united struggles of the people. 'People would trust the Opposition when they would find the Opposition standing by them to protect and defend their legitimate interest.'

Comrade Chanda also pointed out: 'It is wrong to call this meeting a meeting of non-Left or non-Marxist parties. As for our party, we consider ourselves not only a Left party but the only genuine communist party of India.' While criticising the Congress(I) Government and describing it as the main enemy of the people, Com. Chanda also deplored the role of Opposition parties in power in different States which was far from what it should be.

Comrade Chanda also addressed a public meeting held the same day in the evening. Although the CPI(M) had announced its decision not to attend this Opposition meeting, making a plea of the BJP's participation, CPI(M)'s State Secretary addressed the public meeting. The reason is not far to seek because it is well-known that the Andhra Pradesh unit of the CPI(M) moves closely to the TDP without support of which the CPI(M) does not see any chance to get its candidates elected to the State Assembly.

As a follow-up measure, the next meeting will be held in July in Delhi to chart out future course of action.

DECEPTION EXPOSED

(Contd from page 5)

I could gather and from the reports submitted to us, job potential is very meagre. You heard the number of industries, perhaps no more than a thousand jobs would be there.

Sarkar: Going through the names of industries I find that these deal with products ranging from synthetics to computers, which the Government are opposed to verbally. In particular, the Government talk of how our jute industries is suffering from the synthetic yarns. Isn't it strange that you have still entered into these ventures?

Basu: Synthetics are required in some fields. We oppose when synthetic fibres are imported unnecessarily for jute industry here. We are opposed to it. The same applies to computers. We have said that we must consider the pros and cons, we do not oppose introduction of computers blindly. At the same time we cannot accept the computer blindly.

ORISSA

Demonstration by Peasants and Agricultural Labourers

Khetmajdoors and peasants of Sukinda Block held a demonstration on 1st June before the local block office, demanding relief for people hit by drought. The demonstrators, led by AIKKMS, also demanded drinking water, irrigation facilities, employment for agricultural labourers round the year and withdrawal of the missile testing project at Baliapal. The demonstrators handed over a charter of demands to the BDO.

Com. Mayadhar Nayak and Com. Suphal Rohout addressed the rally.

Another protest demonstration was held by khetmajdoors and peasants in front of the block office at Donagadi on 30th May. The demonstrators demanded drinking water and facilities for irrigation, recording of the right of the poor peasants to occupied anavadi lands and taking of adequate steps to ameliorate the condition of those affected by drought. They also demanded withdrawal of the proposed missile testing range at Baliapal. A charter of de-

mands was submitted to the BDO by the demonstrators.

Later the demonstrators held a public meeting which was addressed by Com. Indramani Nayak and Comrade Nrusingh Mohant, respectively president and secretary of the Block Committee of the AIKKMS, Com. Mayadhar Nayak, vice president of Orissa State Committee of AIKKMS and Com. Debendra Sahoo and Com. Purushottam Pradhan. Com. Sudhansu Das presided.

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AIDSO, DYD, MSS and Pathikrit held a joint rally in Calcutta on 31st May, protesting against obscenity, decadent culture and drug addiction. Later a deputation from the procession went to Writers Building to submit a memorandum addressed to Chief Minister. Above is a view of the rally at 'Esplanade East'.

Arms Deal Scandal

(Contd from page 6)

That they have been emboldened to perpetuate this heinous crime against the nation and could well have got away with it is in no small measure due to the inaction of the Opposition. While the need of the hour was to unite against Rajiv Gandhi and his Government embodying corruption and moral

degradation putting them squarely on the dock, lack of concerted action by the Opposition is providing them breathing space and objectively helping them. Taking advantage of this, Rajiv Gandhi and his Government are carrying on non-chalant, brazen-faced. Will the Opposition yet take lesson?

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