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Twin scams of 'Cash for Question' and MPLADS

Mirroring decadence of capitalism

When the revelations beamed live to every household across the country and made headlines the following morning, the people at large were not surprised per se but fulminated in rage, seethed in anger. A band of undercover reporters posing as representatives of a fictitious NGO, the North Indian Small Manufacturers' Association (NISMA) struck deals with 11 members of Parliament (MPs), cutting across party line, to get some questions framed by them raised in the parliament in exchange for hard cash. The amount ranged from Rs.15, 000/- to Rs.1, 10,000/-. Some of the MPs even preferred to have an 'annual fee' of Rs.5 to 6 lakhs to put as many proxy questions as wanted by NISMA. The expose filmed over a period of eight months showed how the elected representatives to the legislatures, the lawmakers of the country, were asking for even paltry sum to subvert the sanctity of the country's "highest democratic institution". What has been exposed is just not the abysmal level of moral standard among some of the MPs but cretinization of parliament. The MPs of various parties who otherwise trade charges against each other to surcharge the environment and boast of maintaining a shiningly clean slate now find themselves strange bedfellows in the revelations.

Sting team comprised Congress, BJP, RJD, BSP

The BJP, claiming to be a 'party with a difference', had six of its MPs involved in the sell out. Mayawati's BSP, so vociferous about championing the cause of the downtrodden dalits, comes next with three of its MPs found making fortunes through shady deals. The Congress and Lalu's RJD, both of whom cry hoarse of secularism and democracy emboldened by the certification and support they managed to muster from

their pseudo-Marxist friends of the CPI(M) and the CPI, have a member each embroiled in the scandal. After initial outcry, all these parties jamming the corridors of power, swung into a salvage operation. A visibly perturbed L.K. Advani, the BJP president and leader of the Opposition, who the other day was so enthusiastically training his gun on the Congress for the Volcker report on Iraqi oil scam, tried to dilute the impact by calling his snared MPs 'stupid' rather than 'corrupt'. Perhaps he was reprimanding them for being so blunt in accepting offers from strangers while the correct course perhaps would have been to discreetly ascertain beforehand the credential of the benefactors as hitherto practiced by the seasoned bourgeois politicians. Mayawati too made a frail attempt to claim that dalits and tribals were being victimized. The Congress refused to initiate criminal proceedings against its member for palpably indulging in corruption. But the exposure were so crude and vivid that the parliament had no other alternative but to expel all 11 members after making a show of formality by way of an eliciting recommendation from the Ethics Committees of both houses. However, these tainted elements are not debarred from contesting elections and who knows, they might stage a come back if their sponsors can play their cards appropriately just like the way arch criminals like Shahabuddin and Raja Bhaiya continue to maintain their membership of parliament despite having committed every kind of criminal acts.

Apart from tossing up the MPs involved in cash for question scam, the BSP also had to expel two more of its MPs for moral turpitude and questionable marital status to contain damage. MPs with

Central Committee on SC ST quota Bill

Strongly disapproving the bill that the parliament had passed on 23.12.05 with respect to private unaided educational institutions disregarding strong public demands for abolition of direct or indirect capitation fees, exorbitant tuition fees and for ensuring admission according to merit in these institutions, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of SUCI in course of a statement on 24.12.05 said that it is deplorable to find that the government in its eagerness to drastically curtail higher education while giving free hand to these institutions to fleece the people as they like is resorting to diversionary and divisive tactics. Instead of creating condition for admission of all eligible students in different courses, it is bringing back governmental quota in these institutions through back-door by making provision for SC, ST and OBC quota power of selection of which will lie with the government. Thus they have thrown into the winds the vital principle admission according to merit sole objective being bolstering their nefarious vote bank politics.

Demanding immediate withdrawal of this anti-people bill, Comrade Mukherjee called upon all concerned to develop powerful movement against this deceptive anti-people move.

SUCI vehemently opposes state funding of elections

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on December 23, 2005, vehemently opposed the decision of the central cabinet to put its stamp of approval on state funding of elections on the ostensible ground of curbing money power in the hustings. He strongly opined that in a capitalist set up like ours where the ruling class in its bid to maintain its absolute sway over the political system is breeding corruption, daily, hourly, it is utterly hypocritical to talk of simple administrative or apparent political measures to stop this menace. These talks, he asserted, are clearly intended to throw dust in the eyes of the people who are extremely disturbed and disquieted today to find money power taking a strangular hold on the entire political set up at a rapid pace. Strongly emphasizing the fact that under the circumstances, only powerful mass movement can act as an effective deterrent to this fast spreading menace, Comrade Mukherjee called upon the people to come out against this hoax, deceptive move so as to prevent colossal wastage from public exchequer for feeding the utterly communal, corrupt, reactionary bourgeois social democratic parties.

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Rogues' gallery spans entire spectrum of bourgeois politics

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such background of unethical livelihood and notoriety abound in other parties as well. Just the other day the BJP general secretary was forced to resign after pixellated visuals of his intimacy with a female were circulated in the party conclave.

MPLADS for self-agrandizement

Before the dust could settle, the spot light was again turned on a fresh batch of seven MPs negotiating kickbacks for sanctioning grants from the 2-crore annual funds they get under MP Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). Once again, the BJP topped the list with three followed by two of Mulayam Singh's SP and one each of the Congress and the BSP. It may be recalled that earlier reported findings of one Era Sezhiyan Committee had been a damning indictment on the scheme that over the years has made a mockery of the funding principles. Almost every rule in the book has been violated. Even funds were siphoned off to give loans and grants for construction of places of worship. The latest telecast recordings on rampant misuse of MPLADS did lend credence to the worst doubts that a large slice of Rs.8000 crores spent in the last 5 years from public exchequer on this account has been diverted to engender grafts, reciprocate 'favours'. Twice in quick succession, it became known to what extent corruption has permeated the ranks of the bourgeois parliamentary parties and politicians and how amazing is the reservoir of their shamelessness.

Corruption devours all spheres

These are no isolated incidents. It would also be silly to assume that the embrace of sting is limited to these 18 MPs only. These are just symptoms or samples of an all-pervading rot. If there were extensive probing, perhaps none of the 540 odd MPs would come out clean. Media is also aware of this. Only when certain incidents cross limit, there is limited exposure of the grubbiness of the dubious politicians confirming how the rogues' gallery spans the entire spectrum of bourgeois politics and system. Nothing moves here without money. Nothings happens without exchange of favours, in cash or

kind, whether it is any government department or municipality office or an office of essential services like electric supply or ration card issue. Graft and palm greasing have extended to the health and education sectors also. Touts and middlemen, mostly connected with the ruling parties, control everything. Administrative corruption has percolated from top to bottom. A recent report says that barely 10 per cent of the funds sanctioned under various public welfare schemes reach the actual needy. The balance 90 per cent is pilfered at various levels by these political touts, ministers, tainted MPs, MLAs and administrative personnel. We are in fact tired of instances where ruling party leaders, ministers, MPs, MLAs, big names in parliamentary politics are found involved in amassing huge disproportionate assets, embezzlement of public fund, distribution of undue favours, extortion, shady real estate business, running sleaze rackets, operating gamble dens, palpable frauds, impersonation, rapes, murders and what not. But hardly any of these errant culpable elements gets caught leave aside punishment. Rather, these blighted elements are often found in the cozy company of the custodians of law and order, sipping a cup of tea and sharing lighter moments.

Corruption stalks entire imperialist-capitalist world

Not that corruption is the jaded theme in Indian bourgeois politics only. The stench engulfs the entire imperialist-capitalist world. In 1994, three Sunday Times journalists posed as businessmen had three members of British parliament accepting 1000 pounds for asking a single question. In the same year, the Guardian published news alleging that a lobbyist had bribed MPs to ask parliamentary questions on behalf of Muhammad Al Fayed, a leading businessman. John Bragge, the leader of the Opposition in Australia, was under the scanner in 2002 for receiving \$ 10,000 from PWC over four years for acting as "consultant" for them and asking at least six questions pertaining to them in the parliament. Randy Cunningham, Republican Party member of the US House of Representatives from California, was investigated for receiving bribes of millions of dollars to swing defence deals. The FBI had

also set up earlier a front company to try bribing public officials including senators for political favours. In Japan, reshuffle of the cabinet, toppling of the ministry or change of the prime minister on the charge of corruption have been regular affairs. But nowhere has corruption been curbed or stymied. Rather, there is dimension added to it, day in and day out. Same is the case with our country. In the last few years, instances of corruption and crime of a much wider scale like the Tehelka Tapes, coffin scandal, Jain Hawala case, fodder scam, Telgi Stamp fraud, Stock-market scams, UTI scam, Bofors kickback, and illegal allotment of petrol pump licenses rocked the polity. But rarely any of the guilty that included quite a number of political bigwigs has been brought to book. Under public pressure, some commissions were constituted to probe into the scams. But the reports of these commissions never saw the light of the day. Many important proofs and documents were reportedly hushed up to shield the culprits. It all shows that a cancer of cynical magnitude is eating the innards of our parliamentary system.

Capitalism breeding corruption

It will be height of folly to construe that only a handful of greedy bourgeois political operators are responsible for this rot. Anyone who serves the class interest of the ruling monopoly in this moribund decadent capitalist set up cannot but be plunged into the mire of corruption. During the days of its advent, the bourgeois parliamentary system, as political superstructure of rising capitalism, was not infested with such corruption. Breaking the shackles of old feudal monarchical system, it then sought to develop a democratic institution as envisaged in bourgeois democracy. But with the passage of time following inexorable rule of social development, capitalism, in its bid to ensure earning of maximum profit through heightened exploitation and oppression, had exhausted all its progressive role, entered the stage of monopoly and imperialism, became utterly corrupt and reactionary. The inner contradiction among the ruling bourgeoisie over market intensified. Haunted by the fear-complex of anti-capitalist revolution, the ruling

imperialists-capitalists, in order to provide extra lease to their life, began systematic curtailment of all democratic rights, values, norms, practices and subversions of democratic institutions including parliament. They now want complete subversion of all democratic norms and conceptions. They consider anything human and civilized, rational and logical, a threat to their very existence. Hence is the ruling bourgeois so keen to dehumanize people, demolish their moral backbone, and make everything, everybody a commodity of the exploitative capitalist market. In order to survive and rule, they are now totally dependent on ruthless coercion, rampant corruption and degeneration of culture. Marx and Engels way back in 1848, gave a naked exposure to this rabid rancid character of capitalism – "It (the bourgeoisie) has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation, hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science into its paid wage-labours." (Manifesto of the Communist Party)

Corrupt nexus ruling the roost

As a concomitant to this, the society is being sucked of its vitality, turned into a rotten dungeon with all its miasma and effluvia erupting with virulence. The savage assault of exacerbated corruption is stemming from this worn out social set up. An utterly corrupt nexus of monopolists-big business-financial oligarchy-power seeking greedy bourgeois politicians-criminals-anti-socials-administration-police is bestriding the country like deadweight to protect the oppressive class rule of the bourgeoisie. Elections based on adult franchise have been reduced to a farce with money-muscle-media power emerging as the determining factor. It is the various industrial houses, business lobbies and monopolists that nominate their candidates from among the corrupt.

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Speech of Ramsey Clark to Anti-Imperialist Convention in Calcutta

[Ramsey Clark, the former attorney-general of US and founder of International Action Centre is a leading exponent of anti-imperialist movement. He has been one of the principal lawyers defending Saddam Hussein in the US-sponsored trial. He gave a short speech in camera to the delegates of All India Anti-Imperialist Convention held in Calcutta on 24 November last. The videographed speech recorded during his meeting with Comrade Manik Mukherjee in New York in September last, was screened in the convention. Appended is the said inspiring and penetrating speech of his.]

I often do not get to do the things I want to do the most. So we are making this film, so that if it turns out that I am not able to be with you in Calcutta, the All India Anti-imperialist Forum, at least you can hear my voice, see my face, our shares and thoughts that I have about our shared purpose. We live in an incredibly dangerous time and in many ways the old forms of imperialism are giving way to new forms. Similarities are great, but there are very important differences. Militarism, of course, is still the way that power forces poor people to do its will and sadly my Government leads the world in militarism by an unprecedented margin. People who want peace, people who want to see the end of poverty, which is possible, have to help the people of the United States overcome the militarism of our Government. The United States spends more on its military than all other countries combined. It sells more arms to others, others being countries and groups which will do its will in suppressing their people, exploiting their resources than any other country, than all other countries. So the United States is the most violent threat on earth. In 1967 when Martin Luther King spoke on, exactly one year before his assassination here in New York, and he said that, and it broke his heart to say it, it is his own country which is the greatest purveyor of violence on earth. But in the thirty eight years that have passed since then, US violence has expanded immeasurably. Our nuclear arsenal exceeds that of all the rest of the world; our rocket technology can deliver nuclear warheads from five megaton to tens of a megaton to any place on the earth quickly, while we have destroyed countries like Iraq, claiming falsely that it was seeking weapons of mass destruction. For, it had to be clear to any person who thought and read and listened that Iraq could be no possible threat to the United States. It was in such a weakened condition, let alone it

could hardly take care of itself. The sanctions had killed a million and half; the Gulf War had killed a hundred and fifty thousand; the daily bombings, and the destruction of the infrastructure and water systems all the way from the reservoirs to the water taps in your own, if you had one, was all gone; the country had been brought to its knees and still we were hammering away. In a way the new form of materialism, I think seeks primarily to unite wealth, to consolidate wealth and to make wealth of other countries a surrogate of our wealth, of the United States. The most tragic figures of statistics that tell us what is going on in the world these days, of a consistently and rapidly growing gap between the rich and the poor, not just the rich countries and the poor countries, but the rich in poor countries and the poor in poor countries, between the rich in

rich countries and the poor in rich countries. So, in our own society here the growth of the population which is poor, I mean really poor, is growing proportionally and in absolute terms, much faster than any other segment of the population. All we had to do is see the film footings of the hurricane Katrina that hit New Orleans, to see it in the city of lights, of music and joy and good food and everything else if you got a little money. We saw that it was huge, helpless dark-skinned, overwhelmingly, the descendants of slaves overwhelmingly, population that lived in miserable poverty. When the storm came they had no place to go and no way to get out. And they died, while the rich fled to their vacation homes and hotels and fancy places around the country! We see the number of billionaires in the United States and the concentration of billions, some would reach a trillion, a trillion dollars. What madness would cause anyone to accumulate that? What sickness? Utter sickness, when children are dying in the assault on Iraq by the United States. They can talk about allies, but there were no allies. They did not come in because

it was to their economic or other advantage, or they had their political leaders who were able to swing their participation, but minor. You look at the military feet on the ground. Ninety per cent of them belonged to Americans, ten percent belonged to all the others put together. And when the going gets tough, it is the United States soldiers who are out there, our young men who do not have much opportunity, pay the price. So many get killed and so many who live the rest of their lives physically and mentally impaired from the brutality of the war. But you can see that we are doing; we are consolidating power over a principal resource that is needed for the American engine and that is oil. And we intend to dominate oil; other countries will be dependent on us, on our kindness. They get oil and they need it and if we consolidate that control, we destroy a country altogether, we occupy endlessly. We talk about getting out, but you ought to remember that since World War II, we had military divisions in Germany, in Japan, in the Philippines and how many other countries? Korea, since the Korean War. And they do not come home, they stay there, shift around sometimes. We are in short of manpower now, so that is one reason we may not be able to attack neighbours of India, or countries that ought to be allowed to live by their own choice—Iran, North Korea, every country. Certainly India is one of the great great hopes for peace on earth.

Poverty that still exists is tragic. It won't be overcome until the last vestiges of imperialism are wiped out. You know we talk a lot about various genocides and there are too many and they are heart-breaking. But surely Gandhi had it right when he said that "Poverty is the greatest genocide", because it blights the potential of the people; they live lives of hunger and sickness. And they are beautiful and they can do anything that humanity is capable of — they have thoughts, they have visions, their labour, they are wasted. Look at Africa now and see that a huge proportion of the children under five are living with neither of their natural parents. It will double in the next ten years,
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All India Anti-Imperialist Forum congratulates Ramsey Clark

[Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Vice President, All India Anti-Imperialist Forum, in a letter congratulated Mr. Ramsey Clark for his brave endeavour. The full text of the letter is as follows.]

Dear Mr. Clark,

On behalf of the All India Anti-imperialist Forum I would like to convey to you our sincere appreciation of your principled stand on the trial of Saddam Hussein. You have very rightly said that USA has demonized Saddam Hussein, stripped him of all humanity to justify any action against him, and this makes any fair trial of Saddam Hussein impossible. We firmly hold that only the Iraqi people enjoying full freedom and democratic rights can decide on Saddam Hussein. This trial by the puppet regime with the country under an army of occupation is only a farce and a travesty of justice. Your stand is in line with the great fighting tradition of the American people to uphold civil rights and freedom. We salute your zeal in fighting for justice.

Incidentally, I would like to mention that your address which was recorded on video and shown at the Anti-imperialist Convention at Calcutta on November 24 won standing applause from the delegates and enthused them in their resolve to fight against imperialist aggressions.

With warm greetings,
Manik Mukherjee
Vice-President,

All India Anti-imperialist Forum

Social climate of intensified democratic movement — sole deterrent

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pliable, criminal elements sheltered by the various bourgeois political parties and social democratic outfits and ensure that they get a safe passage to the Assemblies and Parliament through rigging and manipulations of various nature. Naturally, when these people of dubious antecedents enter the legislature, they are obliged to carry out their masters' dictates and seize the opportunity to make quick bucks by auctioning their services to the commercial houses and quarters of vested interests at a fair price. Posing as people's representatives in a democratic set up, they serve as planted agents of the exploitative bourgeoisie to put stamp of approval to the policies and practices inimical to the people but compliant with the interest of the class in power. Hence, there is a surreptitious attempt as well to tone down the intensity of crime by painting corruption as a global phenomenon and in the process, make people inured to all these paroxysm, shady and murky acts. There ought not to be an iota of doubt that it is crisis ridden moribund capitalism, which is breeding corruption in every walk of life, criminalizing politics, butchering democracy and strangulating the toiling people.

The media game

It will also be erroneous to assume that such media exposure of 'behind the scene operations' of the political crooks is a triumph of democracy. Media, as every one knows, is also owned and controlled by the monopolists and MNCs. Naturally, it is futile to expect such a committed media taking cudgels against the system. Yet, as already mentioned earlier, when things cross limits threatening of a situation that might raise questions in the people's mind about the system itself, media through such select revelations seek to create an impression as if there is an embedded surveillance in the system itself to curb such crafty insidious acts, trends and tendencies. Immediately the spotlight is turned on certain individuals and the system evades exposure and focus. This also generates handsome revenue for the particular media house and enhances their brand equity since dishing out such 'palatable' stories 'sell' like movie blockbusters. Some times such select exposures

are masterminded by one industrial lobby or its subservient political outfit to corner its business rivals and their political agents. In the instant case also, a careful observation would reveal that both the 'cash for question' and MPLADS episodes hit the market when the BJP, upbeat over the Volcker report, was planning to embarrass the Congress in the parliament. As soon as the BJP found most of its members in the net, it informed that it would not raise any further storm over Volcker. In view of this, can any connection between the two be altogether ruled out? So mere occasional strident postures of a section of the media against such perpetual crimes, frauds and swindles do not disturb the bourgeois system breeding all such crimes and aberrations. Rather it cunningly shields the system. Hence, appropriate political awareness, interpretation and conscious remedial action on the part of the people assumes so great importance. Otherwise, such revelations will generate more heat than light, buttress the business motive of some of the media houses and die down with the passage of time while all these devious and dubious operations will continue unabated at the patronage of the power that be. It should be clearly understood that anyone protecting the rotten putrid capitalist system is

bound to be afflicted by the decadence and degeneration spawning from it.

Subservience to capitalism leads to corruption

While the BJP, the Congress and others stand exposed as surrogates of political corruption and institutional malpractices, the pseudo Marxists like the CPI (M) and CPI are out to give an impression as if they are differentiated from the sullied lot. But those who are aware of the state of affairs in West Bengal and Tripura ruled uninterruptedly by CPI (M)-led governments for decades know how hollow and deceptive the claim is. Both the states, like any other state, have now become dens of rampant corruption and fiefdoms of arch criminals, anti-socials aided and abetted by the ruling dispensation. Kerala, where the governance is periodically altered between the CPI (M) and Congress is also no exception. Gradually isolated from the people because of its brazen anti-people, pro-ruling class policies and practices, the CPI(M), like the BJP, the Congress, or the RJD, SP, BSP, is now heavily dependent on the notorious criminals, musclemen and a severely corrupt administration to reign and gain. It could not be otherwise as the CPI(M) and its allies, in order to

secure their berth in the rendezvous of power are now committed to subserve the interest of the ruling capitalists. Hence, the sting of stinking capitalism cannot and is not sparing them.

People's movement can only arrest the slide

If capitalism continues to rule, motive of maximum profit earning governs the economy, conflict among individual capitalists accentuates over market grabbing, all democratic norms, values and ethics get systematically eroded, then all pious wishes of freeing the polity and society from corruption and aberration will go abegging. Seeking respite through the judiciary of the bourgeois system will also prove abortive. Abolition of all these malice and malaise is inseparably linked with the question of overthrow of capitalism. More the democratic mass movements conducive to this anti-capitalist revolutionary movement gain momentum and intensify, brighter is the chance of putting some check on this torrential corruption, of restraining the criminal activities and thereby providing some relief to the people. The social climate, the cultural environment created by the current of this united, organized, conscious, democratic movement of the people can only arrest the menacing slide.

Joint Protest against WTO meet in Hong Kong

Several hundreds of activists of Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI), CPI(ML), CPI(ML)-New Proletarian and All India Nepali Leftist Youth Front jointly demonstrated before the Parliament on 13th December 2005 in protest against the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of WTO in Hong Kong. The protestors assembled at Jantar Mantar and marched towards the Parliament, holding placards, banners and shouting slogans against the sixth ministerial meeting and anti-people policies of WTO and demanding the Central Government to withdraw from WTO and revoke new Patent Act

A public meeting at Parliament Street, was addressed by Comrades Pratap Samal, Secretary, SUCI, Delhi State, Subodh Mitra, member, CC CPI(ML), P. K. Sahi, Secretary, CPI(ML), Delhi State, Shiv Mangal

Siddhantkar, General Secretary, CPI(ML)-New Proletarian and Kamal Khalan, Vice President, All India Nepali Leftist Youth Front. Speakers exposed the exploitation of the common masses by the national and international

monopolist capital through the policies of globalization and liberalization of WTO. The protest meeting was presided over by Comrade Harish Tyagi, member, SUCI, Delhi State Organizing Committee.



Comrade Krishna Chakraborty represents UTUC-LS in the WFTU Congress in Cuba

Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, President, UTUC-LS attended the Fifteenth Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) which was held in Havana, Cuba from 1st December to 4th December 2005. 568 delegates and observers representing 220 trade unions and federations from 77 countries of the world attended the Congress. Besides the presidential address delivered by outgoing President Comrade K. L. Mahendra, Comrade Pedro Ross, the Secretary General of Cuban Trade Council also addressed the Congress. On 2nd and 3rd December, delegates and observers from different countries also placed their opinions in four sessions. In the last session, the 4th December, 28 resolutions on different issues facing the working class movement today including resolutions on North Korea, Iran, Syria and a special resolution for immediate and unconditional release of 5 Cuban fighters arrested in Miami by the US Government were unanimously adopted. A declaration was also passed unanimously. While Michael Maverick of Greece was elected General Secretary for the next term, the presidential post went to Syria. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty addressed the delegate session on 3rd December. We are giving below the full text of Comrade Chakraborty's speech :

Comrade Chairperson, Members of the Presidium, Delegates and Observers,

On the historic occasion of the 15th Congress of the WFTU, I, on behalf of my organization, the United Trade Union Centre-Lenin Sarani, India, convey our fraternal greetings to you all. As the Congress is being held in the heroic city of Havana, I take this opportunity to convey our revolutionary greetings to the valiant fighters of Cuba led by Comrade Fidel Castro, who, despite 45 years of economic blockade and constant threats from the US war-mongers, are continuing their struggle defying all odds and intimidation. In the grim situation of today their struggle is indeed a living source of inspiration to all the progressive and anti-imperialist forces of the world.

Comrades, you know in what critical world situation this 15th Congress of the WFTU is taking place. After dismantling of the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, more particularly the Soviet Union due to the treachery of the modern revisionists, temporarily though, the forces of peace, progress and revolution have been greatly weakened. Because of that only the forces of war, reaction and counter-revolution have been getting an upper hand. And taking advantage of the weakness of the working class movement today, the reactionary ruling class of all the capitalist countries, both developed and developing, have been mounting all-out attacks not only on the working class but also on all sections of the toiling people. From their experiences, the conscious proletariats of all countries have

definitely realized this cruel fact that despite glorification by the bourgeois ideologues, the policy of globalization is a savage onslaught on every walk of life of the working people – economic, political, social, cultural, educational, ethical and moral at global level – sparing none, not even the toiling people of the US, the chieftain of the imperialist-capitalist world. The speeches of all the delegates have established this very fact. All the delegates have dwelt at length on the devastating effects of the policy of globalization as well as of imperialist wars. I would only like to draw your attention to the most significant and vital aspect of the present situation in which the monopoly houses of both the advanced and developing countries had to invoke the policy of globalization and why war has become an indispensable need of the imperialist economy, particularly of the USA.

It is true that the present world situation appears to be very grim. But this is only one side of the picture. There is another side also. At the very beginning of the last century, Lenin showed and proved by leading successful proletarian revolution in the then sickest nation of Europe i.e. Russia that world capitalism, after reaching its highest stage, imperialism, had become reactionary, moribund and the era of proletarian revolution had ushered in. This very truth has been proved again and again by the consciously organized proletariat and other exploited people of China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. The heroic Soviet people and Soviet army not only defeated the fascist axis of Germany, Italy and Japan in the Second World War but also

cornered and weakened imperialism as a whole. As a consequence, world imperialism-capitalism entered into its third phase of intense general crisis from which it has no escape. The capitalists-imperialists made desperate bid including unbridled militarization of economy to come out of the crisis but in vain. Today, the economy of most of the imperialist countries particularly of the USA has virtually become war economy. War has become an imperative need of the imperialist countries to save their economy from total collapse. But that, too, neither could nor can save it. Even restoration of capitalism in former socialist countries including Soviet Union could not rescue imperialism-capitalism from its ever-growing crisis. Rather the crisis has become more intensified. The world capitalism today is passing through a recession much deeper and more prolonged than what it faced before the Second World War. Now, taking advantage of the absence of the socialist peace camp and parallel socialist market, the bourgeoisie is taking recourse to globalization with the hope that it would resolve the crisis and remove the ever-sharpening contradiction among the imperialists-capitalists themselves. But all facts show beyond doubt that it could neither resolve the crisis nor could lessen the contradiction even a bit. Rather the crisis has aggravated much more. The ruling classes of all the capitalist-imperialist countries are passing the burden of their crises on the shoulders of the working class and other oppressed people.

Because of the most savage nature of this policy of globalization and its devastating effects on all sections of the toiling people, more particularly, because of the absence of the consciously organized working class movement, it appears to be a sign of strength of capitalism-imperialism. But in reality it is a sign of its greatest weakness, may be the last attack of dying world capitalism. The material condition of all countries of the world is well-nigh prepared for anti-capitalist proletarian revolution. Capitalism is tottering on its last leg at the threshold of grave. But it will not die of its own. It has to be buried asunder by the consciously organized proletariat under the leadership of its revolutionary party. But this is absent in most of the countries today.

It is true that the revolutionary parties of the proletariat will show the path of revolution to the working class and other exploited masses of their respective countries. The task before the WFTU is to correlate, coordinate and unite the growing movements of the working class and other exploited people of different countries of the world and resist these fierce attacks of the imperialists-capitalists. On behalf of our organization, the UTUC-Lenin Sarani, India, we promise all sorts of cooperation and help to this effort of the WFTU.

Thanking you all, I conclude.

**Workers of the world, unite !
Long Live Proletarian
Internationalism !
Long Live World Federation of
Trade Unions !**

125th Birth Anniversary of Munshi Premchand

The "All Bengal Prem Chand 125th Birth Anniversary Committee" organized a state level symposium on 'The Relevance of Prem Chand's Life Struggle and Works in Present Society' on the occasion of the culmination of the said anniversary on December 20th, 2005 at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta. The symposium was inaugurated by the Chairman of West Bengal Human Rights Commission, Justice Shyamal Kumar Sen. Renowned scientist and former Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University Dr. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, Senator of Bihar

University, Prof. Rabindra Kumar Rabi, eminent literary critique Manik Mukerjee, the Editor of Paschim Bangal, Mr. Mustafa Akbar, the member of All India Save Education Committee, Mr. Arun Kumar Singh were present in the symposium. Dr. Bimal, senior professor of Burdwan University presided.

Messages were received from Eminent litterateur Dr. Vishnu Prabhakar; Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Mr. Gopal Krishna Gandhi; the grandson of Prem Chhand, Prof. Alok Rai and the President of the Committee, Dr. Satyanarayan.

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Citadel of bourgeois democracy seethes in anger against racist discrimination and extreme exploitation

From the last week of October to the end of the second week of November of the last year widespread violent protests rocked France. These were mainly initiated by the Arab-African and other immigrant youths living in France against age-long deprivation, exploitation and racial discrimination by the French government. Sparked off on 27 October last from the death of two Arab-African immigrant youths chased by the police and electrocuted, while hiding by a transformer in Saint-Denis, 10 miles outside Paris, the protest violence rapidly engulfed 300 cities of France. The protestors defying all preventive measures of the police and administration went on burning buses, cars, lorries, government vehicles, banks, police stations etc. Though spontaneous and scrappy, the spread and intensity of the rebellion of these French youths, ethnically Afro-Arabic and others overwhelmed the French capitalist rulers and after failing to contain the worsening situation with all repressive measures like use of rubber bullet, hose-cannons, teargas etc, the French government clamped emergency in the country.

The participants in this nationwide massive protest, the angry youths, belonged to the five million strong Arab-African and other immigrant people who are also French citizens – most of the younger section even by birth. Remarkable is that, it is reported, a large number of white immigrant youths of eastern and south-eastern European origin joined the rebellion against deprivation, exploitation and discrimination. May be 30 to 40 per cent of the rebellious youths were black, according to some reports.

In the sixties of the last century, when there was a temporary boom in French economy, the ruling French bourgeoisie brought these people from former colonies like Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia for their own interest to use them as a source of cheap labour power, and gave them French citizenship. Since then these toiling people are a part of the French people, at present nearly one-twelfth of the whole population but the capitalist rulers of France have never recognized them as French nationals at par with the indigenous

French people. These under-class dispossessed people are ostracized in every walk of life by the French government; the government deceptively calls upon them to 'integrate' themselves with the mainstream of the French society. The French rulers have created and are still maintaining virtually an internal colony of these downtrodden people within France. These people live in run down houses with least civic amenities. Healthcare and educational facilities for them are equally nominal and of worst category. These Arab-African youths constitute ninety percent of the total unemployed youths in the country. Whereas the rate of unemployment in France has officially reached 13 per cent (actually which is much more), the same among these people is twice as much of it. Fifty per cent of the college graduates of this community are unemployed and even if they get any job, it is seldom better than that of a caretaker or airport-porter. Per capita income of this community is 40 per cent less than the national average. These youths are continually harassed and chased by the police, only because they are coloured and under-class and mostly Muslim. Even these days French police can legally demand from anybody to show his identification card. In case he fails, he may be detained right on the spot even up to for four hours for ID check! Such humiliating checking of identity generally and mostly occurs with persons of Arab-African origin. This is one of the measures with which the rulers of the French democracy treat these once-immigrant, now-French citizens humiliating them over the years. Thus ingredients of violent outburst was very much there in the French society; death of two youths on October 27 acted only as a catalyst.

Why such ignition in France, avowedly a land of decency and democracy? To get at it we must first note that racism or racial discrimination is now not a problem of French society alone. In almost all the so-called developed capitalist countries of Europe and America, boasting of democracy and prosperity, racism has appeared as a major problem. Traditionally capitalist-imperialist in character,

these countries have huge number of immigrant workers, whom they have kept subject to age-long merciless exploitation.

Deprivation, discrimination and poverty have given birth to deep-rooted anger and resentment in this section of working people against the respective ruling capitalist governments. Recently the world witnessed the most ugly face of the racist discrimination of the US administration in the Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. In Germany fascist-racism is rearing its ugly head in the form of 'Skinhead' movement. Belgium is already disturbed with 'Copcat' riot. Recently anti-immigrant riot has erupted also in Australia. East European countries, boastfully claimed by capitalism-imperialism to have been liberated and made 'democratic', that is capitalist, are now torn with bloody racial riots and war.

The questions that naturally arise, are : How was it that the countries which still clamour of their sticking to democracy practice or indulge in the worst kind of racism, and discrimination on grounds of colour, language or religion? More particularly, how could such an upsurge of the ethnically minority people against racial discrimination, ostracisation and oppression occur in 21st century in a country like France which once had upheld the three principles of bourgeois democratic ideals, namely liberty, equality and fraternity, for the first time in the world? The answer lies in history.

In the early days of bourgeois democratic revolution which was historically symbolized in the French Revolution, the resurgent bourgeoisie was revolutionary in character. It was then more liberal and humane. In those days, capitalist economy flourished at a rapid pace and the ruling bourgeoisie pooled working people in large number, irrespective of their religious, racial or linguistic identity to employ them in the capitalist production process. At that time, the bourgeoisie was less attached to fomenting fissiparous tendencies in the society like racism, parochialism, communalism, separatism etc. Rather it was more attached to building up cohesion among the people and that way they could then build up modern compact

national states within respective national boundaries. But after capitalism had given birth to imperialism, and thus had entered its moribund stage, the bourgeoisie gradually lost that glorious role to become utterly reactionary. In the present era, world capitalism-imperialism is bogged in its third phase of intense general crisis of market. Slump and boom may appear alternately in capitalist economy, but slump is now rather the order of the day, the general and dominant feature of the world capitalist economy. This crisis of market leads to recession in production. With it rises unemployment sharp and fast. All capitalist-imperialist countries now find it hard to maintain their existing work force, let alone absorbing fresh contingent. Thus closure, lay-off, lock-out and contraction of work force have become the order of the day in them. This tells upon the life and livelihood of the toiling people. Faced with such onslaught, they are also coming out onto the streets and building up movements, strikes and struggles in self-defence. The owners and the bourgeois governments, in retaliation, are not only coming down with all sorts of repression on them and curtailing democratic and trade union rights of the masses and the working class but to weaken the battle for survival of the toiling people the rulers are fomenting divisive trends and tendencies like racism, parochialism, communalism etc. among them. That is why, once citadels of democracy are now stinking with racist, communist and such other vile tendencies.

French capitalism is a proud part and parcel of this crisis-ridden world system of capitalism-imperialism. Hence, controlled by inexorable social laws, it is also bogged into severe recession or market-crisis. The market-crisis halts its economic growth, which in turn generates its acute unemployment problem. Once with the temporary boom of the sixties of the last century, it welcomed a huge contingent of immigrant work force; but the present recession has made it redundant and unwanted to the French bourgeoisie and its system. The government is facing serious

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AIMSS and AIDYO organized massive protest against rape and murder of Pratibha, a call-centre employee of Bangalore and demanded scrapping the policy of night shifts for women. AIDS State president Comrade Manjunath is seen addressing a gathering at Bank Circle in Bangalore on 19 December.



Joint protest of SUCI, CPI(ML), Samajwadi Jana Parishad, Jana Mukti Sagarsh Bahini and Janabadi Chetna Manch in Ranchi on 19 December against acquisition of agricultural lands

SUCI organizing Tsunami Death Anniversary programme in Tamilnadu

On 25th Dec.2005, Tsunami death anniversary was observed in **Pudukuppam Village** (near Parangipettai, Cuddalore district) with deep emotion and people's participation. Around 250 people including 50 women from that village where more than 100 volunteers conducted medical camp and relief work after Tsunami participated in our programme. The list of 102 victims and a photo exhibition of Tsunami relief works were displayed in our memorial tomb, temporarily erected to observe the programme. Pudukuppam Fisherman Village Vice President Shri. Panner presided over the programme. One minute silence was observed and the memorial meeting was observed. Shri. Ganesan, a fisherman worker read out a poem written by him.

Shri. G.Sekar, Secretary, Nethaji People's Forum spoke in the meeting.

Comrade Rajendran, SUCI, DOC (District Organizing Committee) member addressed the gathering. Dr. Prasad, Medical Service Centre also stressed the importance of the unity of the people with his experience in the Bhuj area of Gujarat.

Vote of thanks was extended by Shri. Chettan, a prominent fisherman in that village.

In the programme of **Chinnor North village** (near Parangipettai, Cuddalore district) where immediately after Tsunami a 2 month medical camp and relief activities were conducted on 25th December 2005, more than 150 people participated. Shri. Mathivannan, a village youth presided over the meeting. Candles were lighted as a mark of condolence by the people. Photograph of 8 people who died in Tsunami were displayed in the memorial structure. Comrade Narayanasamy, SUCI DOC member, was the main speaker. In his speech he explained the condition of the fisherman workers after the Tsunami.

Similar programmes were also organized by local units of the SUCI and AIMSS at **Madha Koil** (near Parangipettai, Cuddalore district) Comrade Babu, LOC member presided over the meeting. Comrade Chandra, AIMSS and Comrade Narayanasamy, SUCI DOC member, spoke on this occasion.

On 26th December 2005, Tsunami death anniversary meeting was conducted at **Parangipettai** on behalf of SUCI. To mark the observance of Tsunami death anniversary, a memorial column was erected in the centre of the Town. Comrade Balamurugan, Sathyamoorthy spoke in the meeting. Comrade Narayanasamy, was the main speaker.

great success. I hope you leave committed to greater effort to reaching out. I hope, more of you can visit here, more of us can visit there. And if fortune smiles on me, I will be with you in Calcutta in November. Thanks !!

Speech of Ramsey Clark

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primarily from AIDS, but the poverty and no parents and no hope! So the imperative need is that we study hard, analyse carefully, reach out to each other to organize, to plan, to work to bring peace to earth.

I may not be coming to India. I have been there many times, but not nearly as many times, I would like to be there. It was in the early eighties, I do not know, may be '81. Indira Gandhi was pressing for the Indian Ocean area as a nuclear-free zone and we have to press for the earth as a nuclear-free zone. And we have to remember that the imperialists do not intend to give up their nuclear weapons. While the US has destroyed Iraq on the false claim of it that it was developing nuclear weapons, at that very time the United States was developing three new generations of nuclear weapons. A major difference between the new ones and the old ones is that the new ones will be far more usable, because they do not wipe out a huge population at once which is normally hard to live with, the radiation affects everything. In this way they can start sending marines to Faludja and not lose a lot of lives. You could take out ten blocks, if that did not work, you could take out ten more, till you

think you have flattened everything that might strike at you and the civilian casualties will be 10 to 1 probably or something like that. It does not really matter to imperialist forces. The poor are more or less expendable — a little more than simply something you can throw away to waste, they are undesirable, that is if you want to waste them, because physical labour, as we know that in the past which has produced most of all we have. In most parts of the world in the twentieth century, the majority of all human labour was producing food for people. At least twenty years ago in China, it was still over seventy-five per cent of people toiling all their lives to produce food. Now we see that in the United States you can produce huge surpluses of food with less than 6% of population and probably 30% of the world's potential labour force is unemployed, not likely to be employed. We have to want to share; we also have to overcome the materialism of imperialism. In a way the essence of imperialism is the will to possess, the greed. The means are force, exploitation by any means. But look, for instance, at our country where a tenth of the society are artificial, where toys that mothers are giving to their children, usually to their boys are toy

weapons, tanks, guns. They act like soldiers. But imagine if India began to consume at the rate the United States consumed. The whole joy of life is simply consuming, get more and more; new car, new TV, new house; just get something more all the time. And see what happens to the environment. And you also see what happens to the true joy in life; you are insecure, because you want more and never have quite all you want. It is amazing how these men of a billion dollars want more! And the idea that they are producing something for other people is quite a big joke, bad joke. There are better things in life than simply greed and materialism, like ensuring human dignity for every man, woman and child on earth is respected by all; no child is hungry, homeless; no person is hungry or homeless; where all have an opportunity to grow, learn and live; health care is not rationed and it is abundantly available for all, but the right kind of health care. Beware of pharmaceutical rackets; it does not only kill you, but bankrupts you. We have to be careful how we judge what is good for health; and advertisements of pharmaceutical companies will tell you to buy our products even though it may hurt you!

I hope your meeting will be a

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resentment from both the indigenous and immigrant unemployed youths. To hide from them the root cause of the problem, i.e. the crisis of the capitalist system itself, and to save themselves from the crisis, the capitalist rulers are taking to divisive policies of fomenting or indulging racism. They, themselves, are pointing to the immigrant French as the root of the crisis. As a result, distrust and hatred amongst the two sections of people is on the rise in French society. In such a situation the notorious racist and fascist forces like the French National Front, led by Jean Marie Le Pen, and others may jump upon to cash in on this upsurge of the deprived immigrant youths. It remains with the entire working class of France, indigenous or immigrant, to expose this design of the rulers and resist it by building up their own class battles with a correct working class approach.

To the above end, the immigrant toiling people must not forget that whatever might be the extent and intensity of this protest, this spontaneous, sporadic outburst will not lead them to any real solution of their problem. They have to build up sustained and organised democratic movement and for that they must get greater section of French toiling masses by their side. To compel the government to meet their just demands and achieve their greater object, they need help and cooperation of the French working class as a whole. Without that help and assistance, they cannot advance alone. And to do it they must keep themselves above all sectarian mentality and ethnic complex to forge comradesly togetherness with the indigenous working people. On the other hand, the mainstream French toiling people must keep in mind that their emancipation also lies in the emancipation of the entire French working class including the immigrant section. They themselves

form the major and leading force in the working class movement of the country and thus bear the greater responsibility. In the present context they have to build up not only economic and political, but also social and cultural movement in the country conducive to unification and integration of all sections of working people, on the strength of unified same working class interest — economic, political, social and cultural — as against their common enemy, the French bourgeoisie. This unification struggle will help them alley all apprehension, disbelief and misunderstanding, if any, amongst them and help build up the broader working class solidarity. Free from all bourgeois and petty bourgeois chauvinism, they should keep in mind that the immigrant working people are also exploited and an exploited class never exploit another exploited class and these people form an inalienable part of the French working class. So, the indigenous toiling masses must stand by the cause of the immigrant toiling people to fight jointly with them against the oncoming onslaughts. The tasks have become still more imperative today particularly in the face of the imperialist menace of liberalization-privatization-globalization which is fleecing common toiling masses still more nakedly and fiercely. If the French working people fail to accomplish these imminent tasks, the ruling capitalist class will surely take advantage of any disunity or mistrust inlaid amongst them, will set one against the other, bring cleavage in the working class solidarity and will thus weaken future revolutionary movement in France. Need of this historic hour is thus set before the working class of France to see through this event of youth upsurge from the correct class angularity and close in their ranks for a stronger and sustained fight against the enemy.

Change in the office bearers of All India Committee of UTUC-LS

In the General Council meeting of UTUC-Lenin Sarani held in Calcutta on 27th November, 2005, it was decided that henceforth Comrade Krishna Chakraborty will function as the All India President and Comrade Shankar Saha will function as the General Secretary replacing Comrade Anil Sen and Comrade Tapas Dutta respectively. Comrade Shankar Saha will also look after the fund of the organization.

Red Salute Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta

Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta, member, All India General Council and Working Committee of UTUC-LS and office Secretary and treasurer of West Bengal State Committee of UTUC-LS breathed his last on 16th December night at the Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital after prolonged ailment.



Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta lost his job while organizing trade union movement in late sixties when he came in contact with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat and

one of the founders of UTUC-LS. Since then started a new life of his dedicated to the struggle for developing the self as a whole time worker of the SUCI striving to identify with the cause of proletarian revolution and develop conducive militant trade union movement under the banner of UTUC-LS. His lifestyle, simple and unostentatious, yet emblematic of revolutionary dedication and firmness, was the hallmark of his endearing character. At a mature age when he was holding important position in the organization and functioning as president or general secretary of many workers' unions in various industries, he unhesitatingly, ungrudgingly and unreservedly performed all kinds of jobs, even cooking as well as cleaning the office premises, with a gentle smile on his face. None has ever seen him bereft of this most unassuming smile, whatever difficulties or problems he might have been in. With his demise, UTUC-LS has lost one of its pioneering organizers and revered leaders.

A large number of trade union workers, party comrades, and admirers thronged the central office of UTUC-LS at 77/2/1, Lenin Sarani, Calcutta, where his mortal remains were lying on pyre bedecked with flower. On behalf of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI and advisor, UTUC-LS, floral wreath was placed on his body by Comrade Asit Bhattacharya, Central Committee member, SUCI. President, General Secretary and Treasurer of UTUC-LS, State UTUC-LS leaders, State Secretary and Calcutta District Secretary, SUCI, AIKKMS, AIMSS and leaders of fraternal central trade unions, various workers unions and mass organizations also paid tribute to him by placing floral wreaths.

In the memorial meeting held on 24th December last at Maulai Yuba Kendra, Calcutta, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, President, UTUC-LS drew attention of every one to his exemplary life struggle and revolutionary qualities.

Red Salute Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta !

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee expresses grief at the demise of Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta

Expressing deep shock and sorrow at the passing away of veteran trade union leader and member of the Working Committee of the United Trade Union Centre-Lenin Sarani, Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of SUCI and Adviser of the UTUC-Lenin Sarani in a statement issued on 16.12.05 recalled the exemplary dedicated character of Comrade Ganesh Dasgupta and said that the deep commitment Comrade Dasgupta had to the cause of revolutionary working class movement in India will ever remain a source of inspiration to future generations of revolutionary trade union leaders and cadres.

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