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Surge of powerful mass-movements in Bangladesh

Heroic people win one victory after another : leave lessons to learn

Massive movement of democratic minded people of all sections once more rocks Bangladesh. Since the days of erstwhile Pakistan, before the emergence of the nationhood of Bangladesh itself, on several occasions people of this small country did have the courage to rise en masse against oppression and injustice. Presently, for the last few months, movements are again bursting forth in surges with such momentum that could wrest one demand after another from the reluctant, rather brute rulers and achieve victory.

The recent phase of movement started with the demand for a timely and free-fair election to the Jatiya Samsad (national parliament), which was due with the end of the five-year term of the BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party)- Jamaat-e-Islami coalition government led by Khaleda Zia and Nizami respectively on October 28. The demand was natural, as people of the country had the bitter experience of rigged elections on

almost all earlier occasions, when rampant use of threat, intimidation, money and particularly the administration, including the election commission and the election personnel and the whole election machinery, invariably vitiated the election process in that country. It was to prevent such rigging and ensure a free and fair election, at least as far as possible, that a constitutional provision was arrived at by both the BNP and the Awami League(AL), in sequel to a pro-democracy uprising, which both of them together, along with others, waged against the former military dictator Hussain Muhammad Ershad. The constitution thus prescribed to hold election under a caretaker government to be headed by the last-retired Chief Justice, (as it was the case subsequently, in 1996 and 2001, when in both the cases the election was held by the caretaker government headed by former Chief Justices), or if he declines, his immediate

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Peasants' struggle intensifies from Singur to Nandigram

West Bengal on the threshold of surge of mighty people's movement

After Singur, it has been Nandigram. As dark dropped its shroud of darkness on the night of 6th January, the criminal and anti-socials of the CPI(M) armed with all lethal weapons entered Nandigram from outside and pounced upon the villagers who drawing inspiration from the struggle of the courageous Singur peasants stood ground against forcible snatching of fertile agricultural land under smokescreen of industrialization and hand over the same to the domestic and monopolist sharks. Seven villagers including a 16-year old boy, all soldiers of the anti-land grab movement, were killed on the spot and several sustained grievous injuries following indiscriminate firing and hurling of bombs by the CPI(M) stormtroopers who continued this mayhem till 7th morning in connivance with the

police-administration. Our party called upon the people of the state to rise in protest against macabre assault and vent their ire and indignation by observing total strike on the 8th January. The people responded wholeheartedly and there was all round condemnation against the CPI(M) leadership who prior to launching such a dastardly attack had openly threatened the Nandigram people of dire consequence for opposing the government's move to seize sizeable stretch of arable land.

Backdrop of Nandigram incident

In Singur, it was a brutal savagery of the armed police and CPI(M) hoodlums raving wild on the agitating peasants when they came out to resist fencing of the rich multi-crop land they so

SUCI demands stringent punishment of Noida killers

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in a statement issued on 3rd January, 2007 expressed deep shock and grief at the brutal and systematic slaughtering of several innocent children and teenagers for more than one year by condemned killers in Noida, UP. Such a horrendous crime of unthinkable dimension, Comrade Mukherjee categorically said, could not occur over such a long period if the local police had not fobbed off the parents of the victims who approached them for help and refused to investigate specific complaints. This criminal refusal on the part of the local police clearly indicates existence of a powerful nexus between the serial killers and state police administration, observed Comrade Mukherjee. He also emphatically stated that this ghastly killing shows to what abysmal a depth the law and order situation has deteriorated in UP.

Strongly asserting that the SP led state government can in no way be absolved of this unpardonable monstrous crime, Comrade Mukherjee demanded of it to immediately constitute a high-powered judicial commission to identify, haul up and stringently punish all those, high and low, linked with this gruesome killing. Comrade Mukherjee also indicted the Congress-led central government for its conspicuous silence on and total indifference to such a horrid incident and urged to discharge its due responsibility of nabbing and booking the perpetrators of such a bestial crime. Comrade Mukherjee expressed heart-felt sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and demanded adequate compensation and appropriate long term rehabilitation package to all those plunged into an insecure future on account of this irreparable loss.

badly depend upon to earn a livelihood, for handing over to the Tatas. This was followed by the ghastly murder of Tapasi Malik, an 18-year old girl and activist of the resistance movement by the CPI(M) goons deployed as security guards of the grabbed land in collusion with the police. Taking no cognizance of the massive protest from all walks of life which had its express manifestation in the overwhelming success of the two statewide

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Awami League exposes no real difference from BNP-Jamaat combination

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predecessor in office, or if none of them agrees to hold the chair, by someone known for his non-partisan attitude to be selected by the President.

But this time, to ensure a definite yes-man of theirs as the caretaker government's chief, the ruling BNP-Jamaat coalition extended through an administrative order the term of office for the incumbent Supreme Court Chief Justice, J R Modassir, by two years, to keep him tagged to his office at the election time and thus prevent him from assuming the charge of the head of the caretaker government. Instead it wished the last-retired Chief Justice, K M Hasan, one of the BNP's founder members and a former secretary of its International Cell, to assume the post. In addition, the BNP-Jamaat coalition government also appointed ardent BNP supporters as the Chief Election Commissioner and other members of the Election Commission, as also the entire band of personnel of the election-machinery.

Undaunted people fought unflinching for victory

People's demand for free and fair election was thus directed also against these moves, obviously partisan and unfair as they were. Led by all the opposition parties, they burst out in protest. They laid siege to Dhaka, the capital, and in all districts and sub-districts from October 27. The siege brought everything in the country to a standstill and paralysed the transport network, offices and courts, business centres, industrial establishments, in short, the entire life in the country. Pro-government forces aided by the police attacked the movement-activists, even resorted to firing at several places. However, people's upsurge reached such a height as to compelling the rulers to trace back their own deeds in face of people's wrath, to withdraw the army they had deployed to crush the movement. In face of relentless pressure of vehement objection of people to Justice Hasan being appointed as the chief of the caretaker government, he was forced to withdraw himself, marking the first

victory of the movement. Fighting people had raised voice against the partisan current Chief Election Commissioner and other members of the Election Commission, Attorney General and chiefs of the intelligence agencies, as also the officials engaged in the electoral process in districts and subdistricts. In face of that pressure, the Chief Election Commissioner, too, was compelled to go on leave. The other members of the Election Commission and election personnel of different categories were, however, not removed; on the contrary, new members were inducted. The electoral roll stood as a great impediment to free and fair election, since it was fraught with omission and expunging of names of more than one crore genuine voters and inclusion of one crore and forty lakh false names and fake voters. Naturally, scrapping of this list and publication of a flawless roll came up as an important demand of the movement. The caretaker government did not go beyond some cosmetic changes in the list, thus leaving room for rigging if election was to take place on its basis. It was obvious that the caretaker government was acting at the behest of the BNP-Jamaat coalition. In fact, as Hasan had withdrawn himself, Yajuddin Ahmed, who had been elected President by none other than the BNP-Jamaat coalition and to whom the Khaleda government had handed over the power, appointed himself as the head of the caretaker government. He further appointed a number of advisors, but retained all the important portfolios like the Chief of the Election Commission, home, defence, foreign affairs, general administration etc. for himself to look after. Subsequently, in protest of the high handed attitude of President Ahmed, at least four of the advisors resigned from their posts. Adamant high-handed attitude of Yajuddin Ahmed, his grabbing of total power and running the caretaker government in the interest of the BNP-Jamaat combination invited further and stronger condemnation from the widest sections of population. The valiant people fighting the BNP-Jamaat hooligans and police on the streets of cities and towns, at every

nook and corner of the countryside, were joined by the Supreme Court Bar Association, professional organisations and intellectuals. Resignation of Yajuddin Ahmed from the post of the chief of the caretaker government and postponement of the election till an ambience for free and fair election was ensured assumed the prime importance in the movement. There were also demands like 'depoliticisation' of police and suspension of activities of paramilitary 'Rapid Action Battalion' (RAB) and the army from the election process. Soon it became clear that the election, if it took place under the caretaker government of Yajuddin, was never going to be fair and free. All the opposition parties ultimately decided to boycott the election and demanded Ahmed's resignation from the post of the chief of the caretaker government. The stubborn President, wielding power and threat, banned any kind of protest and demonstrations and brought down tremendous repression, but finally had to yield to the massive strength of the movement. He relinquished the charge of the chief of the caretaker government and after declaring the state of emergency in the country and ultimately handing over the power to the Army, was reduced to a titular head. The chief advisor to the President and the DG of the Intelligence were removed and the election scheduled to be held on January 22 was postponed. New chief of the caretaker government was sworn in.

Several month-long movement of Bangladeshi people thus wrested virtually all the important demands. It was again a victory, a new feather in the crown of the Bangladeshi people who have already earned an enviable position in the history of people's struggle of mankind, by virtue of their gallant fight on different occasions in the erstwhile East Pakistan or even after 1971, in the sovereign independent state of Bangladesh. Thus they waged the historic language movement of 1952 made memorable with the Language Martyr Day of February 21, a movement waged in defence of Bengali language and culture against the move of forcibly

imposing the alien language and culture of the Urdu-speaking Pakistani rulers, the struggle which ultimately gave birth to the sense of Bangladeshi nationalism; then there was the fight to overthrow despotic President Ayub of Pakistan in 1958, during which the Bangladeshi people had to go through a bitter street fight against the ruthless military of Pakistan, which was being used by the West Pakistani rulers to subjugate the Bangladeshi people (at that time East Pakistani people) to a virtual colonial rule of the then West Pakistan. Then, there was the gruelling fight against cruel repressions of President Yahiya Khan and his brute mercenary killers, the Rajakars, a fight that finally turned into the national independence movement from the virtually colonial status in Pakistan in 1971 and finally there was militant mass movement in the independent Bangladesh against the hated President Ershad with a view to establishing parliamentary democratic system instead of autocratic military-presidential rule. These militant mass movements that people of this country launched and carried through on each of these occasions spoke loudly of their laudable courage and determination in the fight against oppression and injustice. But even those formidable mighty struggles could not help earn the end of exploitation, oppression and injustice, for which people of that land made such immense sacrifice and passed through such pathetic bloodbath. Rather through these struggles people did put an end to the rule of one tyrant, only to find themselves ultimately subjugated to another oppressive regime. That gave rise to questions as to why this was happening, why in spite of so much of struggle and sacrifice, people are not finding the way out of misery and deprivation. The correct answer eluded them, as, and so long as, they failed to develop the adequate consciousness to reach that.

Glorious history of militant mass struggles earns Bangladeshi people great pride and prestige, but leaves serious questions behind

To understand why people's

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From Singur to Nandigram

CPI (M) leader openly declared to make life hell for Nandigram people

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general strikes on 2nd and 5th December called by our party as well as in the subsequent programmes of road blocks, mass demonstrations and rallies in front of police and administrative headquarters in every district and mass signature campaign, the CPI(M) leadership like despots of all ages, extended its paw to Nandigram in East Midnapore district. Grab of 1,000 acres in Singur was to cater to the requisition by the Tatas while intended capture of 10,000 acres in Nandigram is for a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) desired by the Salims, the infamous Indonesian monopoly house.

Nandigram, incidentally, has a CPI MLA. The local panchayat belongs to the CPI(M). But, the moment it came to be known that the CPI(M) government now on a mission to acquire and destroy green farmland in the name of fake 'industrialization' under the aegis of domestic and foreign monopolists, is targeting Nandigram, it created a furore among all the villagers and common people irrespective of party affiliation. They were determined to resist such a hostile takeover that would besides displacing thousands of families and destroying long stretches of cultivable land, demolish 112 temples, 42 mosques, 25,000 residential houses, 127 primary schools, 4 high schools, 3 higher secondary schools, 3 madrasas, and 13 markets. Like Singur and other places figuring in the proposed acquisition list of the government, our party from the very beginning has been organizing the people of Nandigram in people's committees and volunteer corps with a view to transforming the people's outrage into a well-knit disciplined protracted fierce resistance movement. A 'Committee for Resistance of Eviction from Land' (Bhumi Uchhed Protirodh Committee) has also been formed in Nandigram as a joint platform for conducting the movement.

Realizing that under phrasemongering of so-called industrialization, the government's is a disastrous venture to dispossess them of their belongings and doom them to utter ruination, thousands of the CPI(M) and CPI supporters also joined the resistance movement and took up cudgels to foil the conspiracy. This shattered the base

organization of the CPI(M) in the area dealing a heavy blow to its leadership who perching atop the tower of power was harbouring an illusion of enjoying perennial support in the area. So incensed became the CPI(M) leaders at this loss of ground that Benoy Konar, a CPI(M) central committee member and prominent state-level leader of the party, openly and arrogantly declared in a TV interview their plan "to encircle the Nandigram people from all sides and make life hell for them". And exactly that was what they did modelling on the war of attrition and aggression often by the imperialist brigands on their detractors.

Countdown of the gory parade

It all started on 3rd of January when Haldia Development Authority (HDA), a state government body headed by Lakshman Seth, the local CPI(M) MP, and having its jurisdiction extended to Nandigram issued a notice specifying which have been the moujas (delineated village plots) where land is scheduled to be taken over. Naturally hundreds of anxious peasants went to the local panchayat office to ascertain whose land has come under the acquisition notice. In the meanwhile, several contingents of police force were brought from outside and mobilized at Nandigram police station and Nandigram high school. So the people feared that land grabbing might start any time and hence began to agitate. Seeing the mammoth assembly of people, the panchayat authorities alerted the local police station. When the police arrived, there was certain altercation following which the police resorted to lathicharge and finally fired several rounds inflicting grievous injuries to many. This news of police atrocity spread in no time and the entire Nandigram burst in fury. Apprehending further attack from the police and CPI(M) storm-troopers who were reportedly congregating in certain camps in the surrounding area of Nandigram, the villagers put up barricades by digging all the approach roads and damaging small bridges at the entry points.

When there was so much commotion and tension all around, the police instead of taking effective step to check provocative gestures on the part of the CPI(M) leadership

or contain the massive force of anti-socials it mobilized to, what Benoy Konar said, "Make the life hell for Nandigram people", added fuel to the fire by arresting on the morning of 5th January twelve persons from a local bus stand when were returning to their workplace in Calcutta after spending Id holidays in their native villages in Nandigram. It was indicative of, if not prelude to, what was in the offing. A section of the media, which deserves appreciation for trying to give authentic news of the movement, has, of late, come out with the details including live footage as to how the CPI(M) leaders masterminded and conducted the armed operation against the struggling peasants. The names of the culprits, the places they collected before launching the offensive, the main brains behind the operation have all been made public through this investigative journalism to lay bare, layer by layer, the entire game plan of the CPI(M) leadership. It was thus clear that the administration through its deliberate action paved the way for the CPI(M) brigade to perpetrate a cowardly cloak-and-dagger attack on 6th night snuffing out seven precious lives. This caused a massive public flare-up and much to the discomfiture of the CPI(M) and its government who sought to force Nandigram yield to their dictatorial fiat by unleashing a reign of state terrorism, the resistance movement became further consolidated and intensified forcing them to retreat. There was a forceful display of revulsion throughout the state at this bestiality of the CPI(M) and its government. People also deprecated the CPI(M) top brass for the series of palpable lies they spread to cover up the wrongdoings.

Spate of lies

In our detailed article on the police barbarity in Singur (vide P Era dated 1st January 2007), we had shown how the CPI(M) were indulging in palpable falsehoods and distorting facts to obfuscate the truth. In the case of Nandigram, there has been added dimension to that. Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the CPI(M) chief minister initially said that no notice of acquisition was issued and our party together with other opposition forces was instigating the people based on rumour. We challenged the

statement since such a notice was indeed received by the BDO office and the BDO himself acknowledged the fact in camera. While the chief minister was flatly denying existence of any such notice, the CPI(M)'s minister for civic affairs argued that bodies under his ministry like the HDA were competent to serve such notices. Even after all this, the CPI(M) in a press statement released on 9th January reiterated: "As far as the specific violent incidents related to Nandigram is concerned there has been no notice issued for land acquisition. Yet a deliberate campaign of misinformation is being run by opposition parties."

However, after so much of drama, bravado and braggadocio, the chief minister suddenly made a somersault to admit that the HDA did issue such a notice and it was "a mistake on their part". Though the chief minister wanted to make the people believe so, it has now been exposed that issue of hitherto denied notice by the HDA was no such innocent a 'mistake' but a deliberate move on the part of the government to manipulate acquisition of the earmarked land. "The state government", it is reported, "wanted to acquire land through a devious route bypassing the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 (which allows land owners to register their objection before declaring award and disallows acquisition before such declaration) so that it does not have to face Singur like resistance. The original plan was to make use of the provisions of the West Bengal Industrial Infrastructure Development Act, which are, in a way, less transparent than the 1894 Act...Haldia Development Authority was given the go-ahead so that it could issue a notice as a prelude to land acquisition as per less transparent Act which empowers the CEO of HDA to do so." (The Statesman, 12-01-07)

The chief minister after breakout of the public outcry alleged that a communal organization like Jamiet-E-Ulema was inciting the masses. But again he ridiculed his own position while trying to vilify the movement by embellishing it with a communal colour. It is well known that Jamiet though a Muslim outfit had opposed

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From Singur to Nandigram

CPI(M) vending fake industrialization to justify land grab

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partition of the country and played a mentionable role in national liberation struggle. Moreover it is now revealed that CPI(M) leaders like Jyoti Basu and Biman Bose had eulogized the outfit on a number of occasions and even shared its dais.

The CPI(M) in its press release dated 9th January said: "On 6th January midnight armed... gangs of Bhumi Raksha Committee unleashed mayhem within the village. They killed CPI(M) supporters....Five bodies of CPI(M) activists and sympathizers who have been killed lynched and hacked to death were found. They were: Bhudev Mandal, Sankar Samanta, Rabin Bhuia, Sudeb Mandal, and Biswajit Maiti." Once again the lie proved to be so palpable. The family members and neighbours of Biswajit, a teenager, and Bharat Mandal informed media persons that they were movement activists. "We shall tear apart the CPI(M) leaders", screamed wife and mother of Bharat. Bhudev like many others who earlier belonged to the CPI(M) switched over to the resistance movement. Only Sankar Samanta was a CPI(M) leader who died in the retaliatory burning of his house that was used as the launch pad of the sanguinary attack by the CPI(M) anti-socials.

Biman Bose in a press meet accused Medha Patkar, the leader of the Narmada Bachao Andolan and a renowned social activist, who has been actively supporting the land movement in Singur, Nandigram and other places of India, of visiting Nandigram before the incident and orchestrate the violence. Smt. Patkar has challenged the authenticity of the allegation and slapped a defamation notice on Bose. Caught in his own web, Bose fumbled before the media and tried to escape by saying that he did not make any categorical accusation but talked of probability. He also sought to pacify her by expressing regret for the fictitious charge he made, But Smt. Patkar visibly enraged at this motivated attempt to malign her in public, refused to withdraw the notice. Even after being so ridiculed in public, Bose unblushingly carries out most derogatory and distasteful campaign against her for lending support to the struggling peasants.

CPI(M)'s chicanery in distorting the issue

Being completely isolated from

the people and aware of the deep and penetrating impact of the movement on the people, the CPI(M) leaders are now, in the name of sorting out the misgivings of the people and scotching the 'rumours floated by the opposition' has decided to go full throttle with its delusive propaganda that while out of concern for generating employment for and bringing prosperity to the state populace, it is embarking upon a massive 'industrialization' programme by wooing the industrialists, the opposition is playing spoilshot by posing it as a conflict between industry and agriculture. "It is not agriculture versus industry but industry on the foundation of agriculture" say the CPI(M) and hence those opposing acquisition of farmland are, according to them, 'anti-industrialization'. We have shown in our articles in the pages of Proletarian Era (vide issues dated 15-09-06, 01-12-06 and 01-01-07) that the very slogan of industrialization along the capitalist way today is a complete hoax. In the present era of third intense general market-crisis of moribund decadent capitalism, the capitalist class can not foster the kind of industrialization meaning regular setting up of employment generating labour-intensive industries it could during the days of advent of capitalism breaking shackles of obsolete feudal economy. Setting up one or two capital-intensive sophisticated technology-driven employment-stingy industries here and there including unstable IT and IT-enabled services outfits (solely

dependent on fluctuating outsourcing orders) that guarantee maximum profit from a limited upper segment market, is no 'industrialization'. Stricken by the insurmountable crisis of ever squeezing market, the monopolists to satisfy their lust for earning maximum profit are now finding alternative avenues for capital investment like speculation in capital market and sprawling real estate business of building habitats, shopping malls, luxury hotels, entertainment centers, health hubs, flyovers and so forth for the handful of rich. This lucrative realty trade is being camouflaged as urbanization that the CPI(M) leaders are crying so hoarse about. This is precisely the gameplan for which the Tatas, Salims, Ambanis or Ruiahs are eyeing at vast agricultural tracts at convenient locations. CPI(M) leaders are fully aware of all this as they are aware that talking of such projects breeding permanent gainful employment is a bunkum. But their loyalty is now to the exploiting capitalist class for pelf and power. Hence they are out on a mission to enact the sinister class design of the ruling monopolists by duping the people with the slogan of fake industrialization and development.

If the CPI(M) leaders were so serious about doing something positive to tackle the mounting unemployment problem, they would have made serious endeavour to open the 56,000 odd closed factories in the state and reinstate 15, 00,000 workers thrown out of employment. They could also strive for setting up some industries in the state sector to create as much permanent job as

possible. There is vast stretch of non-agricultural land available for the purpose. But instead, they are themselves handing over the public sector units to private capitalists; allowing private capital to enter and take over essential public utility services like healthcare, education, civic amenities, transport under mouthful slogan of public-private partnership and are on a spree to destroy fertile multi-crop land to buttress the profit motive of the monopolist sharks.

To defend the move of large scale farmland acquisition, the CPI(M) leaders are floating the argument that progress lies in augmenting agricultural production through modernization-mechanization and gradual transition from agriculture to industry and that only can improve the lot of the peasants. This is another deception. It is as clear as daylight that crisis-ridden capitalism is posing stumbling block before desired modernization of agriculture and smooth transition to desired industrialization. The rapid augmentation in the number of landless peasants that the CPI(M) chief minister often refers to in a bid to justify his scheme of things is a feature of capitalist agricultural economy, ruthless capitalist exploitation in the rural sector. Our party has been telling since long that crisis-ravaged moribund capitalism can not undertake modernization of agriculture the way it was done in Europe and America in the days of advent of capitalism since that at one stroke would throw millions in the village out of employment and if that

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Eminent intellectuals, film and stage personalities, artists, lawyers, doctors, educationists and others in a protest demonstration in Calcutta on 12.1.07 against repression on peasants at Singur and Nandigram by CPI(M) goons and police.

UTUC-LS attends Finance Minister's pre-budget meet

Presidents and general secretaries of central trade unions of the country were invited on December 29, 2006 in a pre-budget meeting with the Union Finance Minister at New Delhi. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, All India President and Comrade Shankar Saha, General Secretary, represented UTUC-LS. In the meeting addressing the Finance Minister, Comrade Chakraborty : KC,'s speech

"We have placed a joint memorandum to you in which we have placed some important immediate demands of the working people, which, I think need no elaboration. I hope you will consider them and accommodate in the budget. What I would like to place before you is the policy that the government is following and which has already created and is still creating several problems in people's life. You will definitely appreciate how difficult it is to make a full discussion on such a complicated policy within 10 minutes. It requires, full day or more. Yet, I shall try to place the salient features of this policy. It is the policy of globalization. You know well that the aim of globalization is to make all the governments, not only of our country but of all countries, as the facilitators of private capital, both domestic and foreign. Not only the central government, all the state governments are also doing the same thing. You know how lands of the poor and middle farmers of Singur in West Bengal and the lands of poor adivasis of Kalinga Nagar in Orissa are forcibly taken over by West Bengal and Orissa governments to hand them over to the Tatas. Similarly, the land of the farmers of Dadri of UP had been acquired by the UP government to hand over to the Ambanis. Similar attempt was made in Jhajjar of Haryana also, which we resisted by people's movement. The Union Government had already invited 75% of FDI in Telecom and 49% in LIC and civil aviation and now it is going to invite FDI even in the retail trades. It is a well-known fact that the capitalist economy is ruled by wild law, where mighty animals swallow the weaker ones, big fishes swallow smaller ones. Naturally, it is definite that by this other than the grocer's shops only which are exempted, all other shops of the

middle and poor traders will be taken over by the powerful MNCs. As a result lakhs and lakhs of people who own those small shops and trade in the stationery goods or in sports and electrical goods will not be able to compete with the giant capital of the corporate houses, either foreign or domestic. Thus lakhs and lakhs of people will lose their livelihood. You know this, too, that in the process of liberalization and privatization several lakhs of small and medium industries are already closed down making several lakhs of workers jobless. Even the central and state governments have put moratorium on recruitment. Only in the national banks out of 13 lakh of employees, 9 lakh are going to be sent off either on VRS or even on CRS. Same thing is going on in the Railways, LICs and everywhere. No less dangerous is that after the full implementation of liberalization the present concept of job itself will be changed. There will be no permanent job, scale of pay or retirement benefits as are there today. All jobs in the private sectors of course, even in the government departments and educational institutions will become contractual jobs – three years', four years' or five years' job with a fixed amount and with 10, 12 or even 14 hours duty. In the IT sectors, there is fatty salaries for some, but for others and particularly in the call centers or BPOs, people are working with meager salaries for more than 12 or 13 hours and that too in the night. All these are telling adversely on their nerves and already many have fallen mentally sick. This has actually pushed the working men behind 1886 when working people of America fought in the Hay Market in Chicago for 8 hours work. You also know that another aim of the policy of globalisation is to relieve all the governments of their obligations towards the people. They will have no responsibility to give education to the people; if one wants it, one will have to purchase it. The process of commercialization of education has already started in our country. And after the implementation of GATS education will become simply a

commodity. And the government will have no responsibility to provide job, healthcare or shelter to the people. People will have to buy them.

But as a result of the implementation of the policies of globalization, liberalization and privatization what is the condition of the common people? Only the other day the newspaper published the report of the National Sample Survey Organization, which tells that one-third of the rural India lives on Rs.12/- a day. One-third means at least 200 million people. Again 30% of the urban population spends a little more just Rs.19/- a day while 10% of the urban people spend only Rs.13 a day. Actually, this is not the real picture of the country of today, it is a report of 2004-05 and that too a sample survey. The situation has worsened all the more by this time. But if we take this also to be the picture, then what is the situation of the country? And all know that how, because of implementation of liberalization and privatization the unemployment problem is mounting. But the government is claiming that our growth rate is very high, from 8% to 9%. But this development for whom? For a few corporate houses at the cost of crores of working people. Yes, some IT sectors and some automobile industries are coming up. But no basic and key industry has come up in the country after the implementation of globalization. All this, no doubt, clearly indicates that the policy of globalization will ruin the country economically, politically, educationally and culturally. Most of the parties say

that we cannot come out of globalization, it is unavoidable. But why we cannot, if small countries like Cuba or some other Latin American countries and North Korea can? Indian economy is much stronger than theirs. And if India comes out, many other weaker nations, which are suffering much more than us because of this policy, will definitely come out. Only you will have to take a bold step, if you really want to help the working masses. However, I will request you to review the whole situation and the policy."

After Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Comrade Shankar Saha, General Secretary, UTUC-LS, said, interalia : Entire population of the country since independence have been aspiring for inclusion of 'right to work' in the Constitution as a fundamental right which the Second Commission of Labour similarly recommended. Secondly, he demanded, budget should be oriented in such a manner that it can generate sufficient employment in the country and the government must have to pay unemployment allowance to the unemployed and underemployed. Thirdly, he urged the government to ensure determination of minimum wages on the basis of the criteria laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference, 1957 upheld by the Apex court also. He also pointed out in this connection that the Apex court had observed that workers getting less than the statutory minimum wage should be treated as forced labour and in that sense 92 per cent of the labour force in India is forced labour.



Protest demonstration at New Delhi organized by AIMSS demanding stringent punishment of the culprits of brutal Noida killing

Left and democratic alternative the only hope for people

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sincere and militant struggle and sacrifice were going in vain, the answer is to be sought correctly at the root. Like many other capitalist countries, Bangladesh is a newly independent capitalist state which has earned sovereignty and independence at a time when the world capitalist-imperialist system has been passing through intense and all-out crisis. Having turned into a totally moribund force, this world capitalist-imperialist order, now only breeds unforeseen economic recession and market crisis, acute political bankruptcy and total cultural and moral degeneration. Bugged in these, the ruling class, the capitalist class of one and every capitalist country, big or small, is incessantly trying to shift the burden of crisis on the people.

Exploitation, unemployment, poverty, deprivation of the common toiling masses are thus constantly on the rise. Valuelessness, moral and cultural degradation are being made a part and parcel of life. Political systems, be it a parliamentary system or a dictatorial rule, display total decadence fraught with corruption, greed for power and self and such other vices. Side by side, to prevent the masses from breaking out in resentment and wrath against the system under revolutionary leadership, the capitalist class of all capitalist countries, developed or not, are taking to more and more centralization of economic and political power with growing trends of fascism, crushing the oppressed people with more ruthless repression. Under such circumstances, a simple change of government, even overthrowing a most ruthless autocratic dictator, does not necessarily lend any hand to the system that rules over the country. To free themselves from exploitation and oppression, toiling, exploited classes and masses thus need to identify this main enemy of theirs, the capitalist system and overthrow it from power by the stroke of revolution.

However, revolution does not come in one day, capitalism cannot be overthrown in just one fine morning without any revolutionary struggle under the correct revolutionary leadership. What is thus required is to develop intense class and mass struggles on the burning problems of people's life,

extra-parliamentary and parliamentary whatever form they may be of, and to coordinate and strengthen them making them conducive to the struggle for revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. This is a task that can be accomplished only when the struggles are conducted under the revolutionary leadership. Only such a leadership can make people conscious of who their enemy is, what their tasks are, how to organize themselves to fight protracted, sustained battles against a powerful enemy and finally how to conduct such battles unwaveringly on the strength of ideological clarity and high cultural and moral values. Failing this, even mighty militant mass movements snatching significant victory at one stage may find them bogged in the blind alley of ultimate failure.

Movements of Bangladesh, even the present one which has again proved the mettle and grit of people of that country, standing out as a source of inspiration for the struggling masses all over the world, should be judged on this premise, on the necessity of realizing the revolutionary task of the exploited people of capitalist countries. History is replete with examples, even from recent past, of what could be the outcome of any laxity in realizing this, any failure in realizing that the militant mass movements, even if they may meet immediate victory, must be developed further to make them conducive to the anti-capitalist revolutionary battle under revolutionary leadership.

Thus in the Philippines, common toiling people fought on the streets tooth and nail against strong-arm dictator President Marcos and his army, backed liberally by the US imperialism finally to overthrow him from the power that he had held for about three decades and during which he had given his country nothing but inhuman autocratic repression and fierce state terror, rampant corruption, strong disparity of wealth, with only a dark life for the masses. But even such a glorious and significant victory could not bring any change to people's life there. Through parliamentary elections, ultimately there arose to power another dictator, Estrada. The hapless people of the Philippines, instead of finding any relief from

their miseries, were thrown under the fresh dictatorial and highly corrupt regime of Estrada, against which they had to launch afresh their fight for life and living. Elsewhere in Indonesia, which had once been among the front ranking countries of the Non-aligned Movement, people had to fight hard to end the more-than two-decade long barbaric oppression of Suharto, the dictator, which had only brought about abject poverty of masses, ethnic strife and immeasurable disparity between the haves and have-nots. But simple overthrow of Suharto did not bring any solution to their burning problems of life, did not lead the end of their misery. They were trapped again in the cobweb of the same kind of exploitation and misery.

Intense class and mass-struggles conducive to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement remain the only way for oppressed masses

The recent movements that rocked Bangladesh and emerged as a glaring example of people's power to inspire the oppressed toiling masses in their own respective fight or for that matter, militant mass movements of any country, need be judged on the anvil of these experiences of history, on the edifice of this understanding of the tasks and requirements to be fulfilled by the fighting people to reach their cherished goals. Presently, and since the days when in independent Bangladesh people could ultimately establish parliamentary democracy after a long, arduous battle against the military-presidential rule, there are two major combinations of bourgeois parties that are operating and holding sway over the masses. They are respectively the combination led by the BNP, which has finally taken the shape of the combination of the BNP and the Jamaat, that were in the governmental power a few months back and the combination led by the Awami League (AL) and including other parties like the Bangladesh Communist Party, Workers' Party etc. The BNP and the Awami League, the respective leading parties of the combinations, notwithstanding their apparent differences and enmity, bear the same outlook and approach on the

basic question of serving the ruling capitalist class and capitalist system of the country. Both of them are governed by this same class design. Hence for the oppressed people to achieve their goal of freeing themselves from the maladies of life inflicted upon them by the capitalist rule, the necessity of developing a combination of left and democratic parties and forces appeared supreme, a combination which would organize and develop militant class and mass struggles conducive to the anti-capitalist revolutionary movement and, in course of these struggles, would help people wrest some relief from the unbearable oppressive condition under the present capitalist rule and this way, would emerge as an instrument of people's struggle as against the reigning bourgeois combinations that are constantly hoodwinking people with their opportunistic politics. One should take note of the fact that being a part of Pakistan that had emerged on the religious basis, Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) was in the grip of fundamentalism for the considerable stretch of more than two decades. Even then the heritage of militant mass movements of the country, was giving birth to leftism and Marxism-Leninism, as an alternative thought and force in politics; left-wing politics was gradually taking its root and leftism was finding its expression and gaining strength and prestige in the society. From there, it has now grown to a sizeable power in the Bangladesh political scene. At the same time, it does not reflect correct outlook and approach in all respects and among all the left forces. Rather, it is marked by its absence. This, in turn, is causing difficulty in advancing and strengthening mass movements as conducive to the main struggle of anti-capitalist revolution. BASAD (Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal meaning Bangladesh Socialist Party), which has grown in the post-independence days in Bangladesh, has been making a consistent attempt towards these ends and trying to forge a strong unity of left and democratic forces and developing class and mass struggles under its leadership as conducive to the anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. This found expression in the combination of eleven leftist parties, under whose leadership people of

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Surge of powerful mass-movements in Bangladesh

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Bangladesh formed different broad-based committees and launched massive movements, such as, the one staged by the *Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee* which was meant to weed out the traitors and killers who acted in collaboration with the Pakistani Rajakars during the independence movement and which could give effect to capital punishment for the infamous Azam Khan, the hated killer. There was also a movement by the Tel- Gas Raksha Committee that worked for protecting the natural gas and oil reserve from being exploited by the imperialists.

Combining with Awami League no guarantee against fundamentalist menace

But thereafter, when BNP under Begum Khaleda Jia came to power combining with the arch-communal Jamaat, and fomented fundamentalism and communalism, unleashed a reign of terror on opposition, encouraged terrorist acts of rabid communal forces, people of Bangladesh were subjected to fresh pulses of tremendous oppression and terror. Naturally, they wanted relief from that unbearable suffocating condition. That was a ripe situation to consolidate and advance left and democratic movements, to launch and develop massive class and mass struggles. But the major political parties of the eleven-party combination, fell back from their tasks and joined hands with the Awami League in the name of thwarting the danger of fundamentalism-communalism. They forgot that the force they were combining with to fight fundamentalism-communalism, namely the Awami League, was itself an offshoot of the erstwhile Muslim League, which latter was a downright fundamentalist party. Hence the Awami League, had all the seeds of softness towards fundamentalism right from the beginning of its career. Besides, as a bourgeois party born and grown in the decadent stage of capitalism, it was already submerged in all concomitant vices and deviations, viz., corruption, power craze, opportunism and total valuelessness. Notwithstanding their open pledges for secularism, they did not ever engage themselves in sincere, uncompromising struggle against fundamentalism at the grass

root levels, the villages, towns and cities. BASAD, as it appears, did again raise the warning about the danger of joining with the Awami League. But the major parties of the eleven-party combination did not care to pay heed to that. They did not realize the plain fact that fundamentalism-communalism cannot be defeated through parliamentary means and ways. Like all other reactionary bourgeois thoughts and ideas, fundamentalism-communalism can be uprooted only through militant democratic mass movements, built upon the rock-solid unity of people irrespective of religion, caste, creed, language, races or such others, they being united on the strength of progressive ideology and higher cultural-moral values of the anti-capitalist revolution. So, at a critical historic juncture of the post-independence Bangladesh, when the secular, democratic values, to the extent they were acquired during and through the freedom struggle against Pakistan, were being corroded, when religious fundamentalist thoughts and ideas were posing an increasingly menacing threat, when reign of terror was spreading its tentacles throughout the country endangering peace and security of common people, when it was primarily necessary to develop and strengthen fast the left and democratic combination to lead people's movements, when the BASAD had come out in all earnestness to point out this historic task of the left and democratic forces of Bangladesh, the major leftist political parties forsook this task and took up the line of joining hands with the Awami League, in the name of fighting fundamentalism.

Incidentally, this move finds analogy with that of the big so-called leftist parties of India, namely the CPI(M)- CPI, who in the name of fighting against BJP, the right-wing communal party, have time and again made the most unprincipled alliance with the Congress, the most trusted party of the Indian bourgeoisie, with an eye to electoral prospects, in spite of the fact that the latter, during its long history has repeatedly come to serious compromises with fundamentalism and communalism. Naturally such parliamentary opportunistic alliance could not touch fundamentalism, did not deter the RSS or other fundamentalist

organizations to spread their roots into the masses.

Thus, in Bangladesh, the major leftist parties that decided to leave out of the 11 party combination and join with the Awami League, became instrumental to the design of the latter, at the cost of the left and democratic movement that was developing slowly, yet steadily. The Awami League wanted to cash upon people's unbearable sufferings from and tremendous resentment against the economic- political exploitation that was incessantly mounting during the reign of the BNP-Jamaat combination; it wanted to make use of people's wrath at the BNP-Jamaat government for their unbridled fomentation of terrorism and fundamentalism. The Awami League planned to divert this resentment, this wrath into electoral ends, as if defeating the BNP-Jamaat in election would put an end to every malady. Those lefts deciding to join the 14 party combination of the AL became instrumental to this design and that brought the two major combinations of bourgeois parties, pitted in the forthcoming election battle.

But the scheduled parliamentary election also brought to people an additional means to launch and step up their movement for asserting democratic norms and rights, a vital aspect in their struggle for seeking relief from the burning problems of life. This made people come out on the street since October last year, in thousands in cities, towns and villages in demand of a free and fair election. But then came the bolt from the blue. The Awami League first took in the Jatiya Party of HM Ershad, the hated autocratic former military ruler of the country whom the AL itself fought to oust from power and who had been with the BNP even a few days back bearing charges of corruption leveled against him. The Awami League also embraced the recently formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Badruddoza Chowdhury, a former president and a breakaway ally of BNP or the Islami Aikyajot, a new splinter group from the BNP; Zaker Party and a few other smaller parties. With all these varied, and even discredited forces, the AL wanted its combination look like a 'grand alliance', *Mahajot* for election battle. Finally going against the 23-point minimum national programme of the alliance and

instead of attempting to develop a movement for the people free of fundamentalist traits and menaces on the basis of that programme, the Awami League welcomed into its combination Bangladesh Khelafat Majlish (BKM), a rabid communal force, which pledges to allow edicts by Islamic clerics and enact a blasphemy law (those who criticize Muhammad or his close companions were 'murtads' and should be dealt with death sentence), if voted to power. Reportedly, the left parties, for example, the Workers' Party, which had come out of the left and democratic alliance to join hands with the AL with a view to fighting the menace of fundamentalism and terror perpetrated by the BNP-Jamaat combination, could only fumble and mutter a few words in protest, soon to gulp them back. It was clear that whatever may be the outward differences, both the contending combinations, led respectively by the AL and the BNP, represented the same basic flock. Whichever combination of the two, comes to power through the election, people won't find anything to expect from it. They will be left again to the dark days of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, deprivation and above all, fundamentalist menace. The ground for fundamentalism to grow and penetrate deeper and deeper into the society is left fertile. The reality thus once more vindicates the views of the BASAD which raised warning against joining with the Awami League forsaking the left and democratic combination.

In conclusion, the heroic battle, the Bangladeshi people fought all over their country, their gallantry and determination have once again created a bright example of people's struggle which is sure to inspire fighting toiling masses of one and all country. The Bangladeshi people, in their turn, will expectedly value their experiences and lessons they have learnt from their own struggle and from the history, will realize the historic necessity of developing a strong and consolidated left and democratic combination as an instrument of people's class and mass struggles on their burning problems of life, that has devolved upon them and will conduct their struggle in future to meet it fast and firm.

From Singur to Nandigram

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gets added to the swelling number of unemployed already in existence because of the capitalist economic order standing as the main hurdle to unhindered job-breeding industries, it will be a collapsing situation for the capitalist rulers. How can an aberration created by capitalism be eradicated by capitalism? Similarly, the so-called espousal of the chief minister for big land farming for increasing farm productivity is in fact a cover-up for allowing big monopolists and MNCs to take over agricultural production to accentuate the pitch of exploitation through 'contract farming', 'cultivation of so-called cash crop etc. as envisaged in the blue-print of capitalist globalization. This is the real import of the 'foundation of agriculture' the CPI(M) bigwigs are so insistent about.

Nandigram struggle to continue

So the conspiracy is deep-rooted and needs to be foiled by heightening the people's movements surging forth in the state of West Bengal drawing inspiration from the heroic resistance struggle of Singur and Nandigram. Even after so much of adverse public reaction and the

sinister import of the rolled out brouhaha over so-called industrialization exposed, the CPI(M) chief minister completely sold out to the blood-sucking monopolists has not refrained from reveling in human misery and lampooning the struggle of the suffering masses. In a meeting with the business tycoons after the Nandigram brutality, he has brushed aside the courageous resistance movement as 'sound and fury' typical of idiots. He has even shown the audacity of saying that left to him; he would set right everything with flexed muscle. All this brag and bluster, flaunt of arrogance might have helped him to renew before the capitalist masters his commitment of servitude, but would not cover the fighting peasants. A new awakening is dawning upon the toiling masses signalling resurgence of the tide of democratic movement that once swept across the state arousing the conscience of the whole country to stand against all evils and injustice. Singur made the beginning. Nandigram has given the foundation. What is needed is correct leadership and proper direction to lead the struggle to victory and conduce to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement.

SUCI condemns pre-meditated carnage at Assam

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on the 7th January, 2007 expressed deep shock and indignation over the serial killing of innocent unarmed Hindi speaking people hailing mainly from Bihar from 5th January onwards in different districts of Assam reportedly carried out by the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), reasons for taking recourse to such senseless pre-meditated carnage being best known to them. Comrade Mukherjee also severely indicted the Congress-led Central and Assam state governments for their abject failure to check such incidents of gruesome violence and provide adequate security to the life and property of innocent unarmed people particularly when such ghastly killing with communal overtones and in a planned manner has been taking place in Assam since last few months. Comrade Mukherjee demanded of the governments, both Central and State, that apart from paying adequate compensation to and taking prompt measures for rehabilitation of the families of those killed and injured, they must take immediate step to prevent recurrence of such killing of innocent unarmed people, ensure full proof security cover to them and guarantee them peaceful pursuance of their chosen profession to eke out a living.

Comrade Mukherjee in the statement also urged upon all those who are perpetrating such senseless killings to realize the fundamental truth reaffirmed by history that exterminating fellow citizens through unilateral precipitation of frenzy and violence can never bring any good to any section of the people. No noble objective, asserted Comrade Mukherjee, can be realized through such sanguinary acts and in the final analysis it is bound to be proved as a self-defeating suicidal exercise. He, therefore, appealed to them to abjure such suicidal course of action, strive for forging strongest possible unity among all sections of the toiling people irrespective of cast, creed, language and religion, and seek solution of the burning problems of their life without in any way jeopardizing people's unity so vital for realizing any just cause or demand.

Countrywide condemnation of Saddam's execution

Immediately after the news of heinous execution of President Saddam Hussein was broadcast, the Central Committee of the party gave a call for observing the very day of December 30, 2006 as 'Condemnation Day'. Accordingly protest demonstrations, burning of effigy of killer Bush and Blair were organized in different states of the country and the brutal assassination of President Saddam Hussein was condemned. Here are a few reports of those programmes.

Jaunpur

Protest demonstration at Jaunpur led by Comrade VN Singh, State Secretary was brutally lathicharged by police at Kotwali, injuring Comrade Singh and several others; thirty demonstrators were arrested.

Mumbai

Protest demonstration at Kandivate (East) in Mumbai was addressed by Comrade Avadesh Tyagi, the Secretary, Mumbai State Organizing Committee and Comrade Jairam Viswakarma.

Jabalpur

Protest demonstration at Jabalpur was addressed by Comrade Sita and Others.

Patna

Protest demonstration from Bhagat Singh Chowk to Patna Station in Patna was led by Bihar State Secretary of the party Comrade Shibshankar and other state leaders.

Bhubaneswar

Protest demonstration in front of Orissa State Secretariat in Bhubaneswar was addressed by Comrades Bina Das, Member State Committee, Dhurjati Das and Raghunath Das.

Calcutta

Massive demonstrators proceeding in front of the US Consulate in Calcutta was addressed by Comrade Pravash Ghosh,

Secretary, West Bengal State Committee and Member, Central Committee.

Ghatsila

A protest demonstration at the Station Chowk at Ghatsila was addressed by Comrades Ashis Dhar, Sarala Mahato, Monilal Majhi and was presided over by Comrade Abhoy Das.

Agartala

A protest demonstration at Agartala from Colonel Chowmahani to Battala was addressed by Comrades Subrata Chakraborty and Sibani Das, members, Tripura State Organizing Committee, SUCI.

Bangalore

The Bangalore district committee of SUCI organized the protest meeting near Mysore Bank Circle. Comrade K.V. Bhat, member, Bangalore District Committee, and Comrade M. K. Prakash and Comrade Nagammal

addressed the meeting.

Guwahati

In Assam, protest demonstrations were held at Panbagan in Guwahati, Dhubri, Goalpara, Silchar and other places of the state.

Delhi

A joint demonstration of left organizations, including SUCI was held at Delhi protesting execution of President Saddam Hussein and demanding immediate cessation of all Indo-US military and diplomatic relations. Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, Member, Central Committee, SUCI addressed the demonstration.

Chennai

Protest demonstrations were held at Chennai, Erode, Theni, and Villuputram in Tamil Nadu, Comrade S Narayansamy, Member, State Organizing Committee addressed the demonstration at Chennai.

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