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CPI(M) and its government engineer genocide in Nandigram :

People hit back with a mighty roar of condemnation



The rural hinterland of West Bengal sits on the threshold of a rising surge of peasants' movement. It has been triggered by the highhanded policy of the CPI(M) government of West Bengal towards grabbing, by hook or by crook, of lakhs of acres of fertile agricultural lands from peasants of different parts of the state to hand them over to monopolists and corporates of the country and abroad on the plea of industrialization but really encouraging building of luxurious housings, shopping malls and such others for the rich. If Singur of Hooghly district wrote the first chapter of this new episode of peasants' struggles, Nandigram of East Midnapore (East Medinipur) district added in letters of blood an

epoch-making chapter of resistance and resolve. If the incidents of the two places during the last few months, particularly those at Nandigram which took place on March 14 and immediately after it, bared shockingly and shamefully the venomous fangs and the ugly face of a fascist force, bearing the name CPI(M), they have also brought out, in unequivocal terms and in outrageous bursts, the anger, anguish and condemnation from democratic-minded people of the entire state, from peasants-workers-students-teachers to the writers-artists-cultural activists-intellectuals-scientists-medical, law and other professionals and others, from common men to the Governor, the constitutional head of the state.

The background

After the government had grabbed the land of peasants of Singur without notice, by force and through all sorts of dubious and fake records and measures and had tried to brutally suppress and stifle their protest with the help of the police force. People of Nandigram, by and large living on agriculture, became apprehensive when a notice of land acquisition was issued in the name of the Haldia Port Authority headed by Lakhsman Seth, the CPI(M) supremo of the region, apparently for a chemical hub by the Salem Group of monopolists of Indonesia for the SEZ project. The peasants en masse went to the local administration to know what it actually meant. The police and administration, visibly instigated by the local CPI(M) leaders pounced upon and lathicharged the peaceful peasants' rally. That attack ignited the fire. Carrying the heritage of many militant left movements, Nandigram people retaliated and stood up resolutely against any attempt at grabbing of their extremely fertile land, which was the main, if not the

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Results of recent Assembly Elections

Omniuous rise of BJP — urgent need to contain it

Results of the three assembly elections are out. In both Punjab and Uttarakhand, the Congress has been ousted from power and the BJP staged a comeback. Out of total 116 seats in Punjab, the BJP-Akali alliance has bagged 67 while the Congress could manage 44. Similarly in Uttarakhand, the BJP's tally has been 34 against 21 of the Congress. So it has been a

comfortable margin for the BJP in either of the case. Only in troubled Manipur where the polls were conducted under military supervision, the Congress alongwith its ally CPI had a clean sweep by securing 34 out of 60 seats. Numerically, the Congress has lost 18 and 15 seats in Punjab and Uttarakhand respectively. On the other hand, the BJP's respective

gain has been of 23 (along with Akali) and 15 seats. The CPI (M), CPI failed to secure a single seat in any of these two states. Obviously, it shows that communal BJP has not only drubbed the Congress in the hustings but has re-emerged with renewed strength.

Brief overview of the elections

It may be recalled that in the

previous assembly elections, the Congress caused big upset by turning the apple-cart of the Akali-BJP combination in Punjab and dislodging BJP from power in Uttarakhand. Besides scoffing in customary fashion at the BJP camp for bad governance, the Congress leaders also then accused it of spitting communal venom. They

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BJP rises with communal fangs of Hindutva

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exhorted that if the Congress was voted to power, not only would the people get a clean corruption-free government which would bring about growth and prosperity of all but the biting capacity of the communal-parochial forces would also be blunted, if not made crippled forever. Without formally aligning with the Congress, the CPI (M) also appealed to all to vote the Congress nominees where CPI(M) candidates were not in the fray branding them as 'secular' candidates in a winning position. So the Akali-BJP alliance, a bourgeois combination, failed to secure people's mandate for another term and was replaced by the Congress and its partners, another bourgeois amalgam, in the treasury bench.

But it took very little time for the people to be disillusioned with the new incumbents as on assuming power, the Congress-led governments also began to pursue the same set of anti-people bourgeois policies which the erstwhile Akali-BJP government in Punjab and BJP-run government in Uttarakhand were following. In absence of emergence of any genuine left-democratic alternative to delusive bourgeois politics through the process of development of intense people's movement under correct leftist leadership, on the burning problems of life, the aggrieved people finding no other option once again tilted towards the BJP and its ally, the Akali Dal and rehabilitated them in power in both Punjab and Uttarakhand.

The Congress however tried to play down its defeat in these two states by highlighting its success in retaining power in trouble-torn Manipur as if everything was hunky-dory there. But according to most of the observers, the latest round of Assembly elections in Manipur illustrated how the democratic process was subverted by intertwined workings of the corrupt bourgeois politicians including the ruling Congress, the Congress-led central government and the various secessionist-communal-parochial groups that had ensured that fear, deep-rooted and almost uncontrollable, continued to be the most palpable feeling in the State. While the entire elections have been conducted under military

surveillance, free flow of money was the hallmark of the campaigning process of all contending parties. Even the bourgeois press could not hide this limitless use of money-power by one to all in the fray. However, the authorities, immediately after the elections, claimed that it was a free and fare poll with almost 80% of the electorates having exercised their franchise. But there is an allegation from some quarters that the report of huge turn out of the voters is a hoax and the ruling combination has manipulated the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) to come back to power. This is how the Congress by striking underhand deals with the various communal-parochial forces and drawing upon its strength from the seat of power at the state and centre managed to snatch another term in Manipur.

Congress, CPI (M), CPI unfazed at BJP's win

But, neither the Congress nor made 'secular' by its self-styled Left friends nor the friends themselves, the CPI (M), CPI expressed any concern at the way the BJP is charting out its way back to power or the incendiary potential of a vicious mix of communally explosive activities it is indulging. In a customary fashion, the Congress has attributed its electoral reverses in Punjab and Uttarakhand to sudden spurt in price line of essential commodities and anti-incumbency factor. In the name of correct interpretation of the election results of Punjab and Uttarakhand, the CPI (M) said, inter alia, that "In both states price-rise of essential commodities was a major issue. These electoral setbacks have relevance for the UPA government at the Centre. The Congress leadership and the UPA government should draw the proper lessons from this defeat. The policies pursued have failed to curb price-rise, tackle the agrarian crisis or provide relief to the people." (CPI (M) politburo's statement dated 27-02-07) Clearly, by refraining from spending a single word on the BJP's minatory return and instead focussing on the policy-frame of the UPA government whose content and character the CPI(M) leaders, as per their own admission (vide editorial of People's Democracy dated 11 to 17 October, 2004), are themselves

providing, the CPI (M) has only exhibited their usual double standard and clearly indicated that their worry is not BJP's resurgence but how to purify the thinking of the Congress.

BJP's resurgent swaggering of Hindutva

But while the Congress and the CPI (M) true to their respective class-positions are engaged in framing their own version of the election results, the common people of the country can not but feel gravely alarmed at this resurgence of the BJP boding evil for the future. This latest election victory of the BJP is no isolated an incident. The BJP as the discerning minds have been taking note of is gaining consistently in the assembly polls that have taken place after the last parliamentary elections. It secured majority in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, formed government in Bihar and had clear edge over its rivals in Jharkhand. Even in the recently held municipal elections in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra, the BJP in alliance with Shiv Sena scored over the Congress and its allies including the CPI (M).

One would recollect that on the eve of the last parliamentary elections, the BJP, in order to woo the broader masses and repair its extremely tarnished image, pretended to be moderating its rabid communal stand. But after conceding defeat, it at the behest of the RSS, its mentor, decided to vigorously pursue its line of Hindutva, which as is not unknown to any one is a vile communal doctrine that under the pretension of preaching Hindu religion undertakes an atrocious hate campaign against the religious minorities particularly the Muslims and then exploiting the warped mindset and simulated divide based on religious blindness persecutes them, unleashes on them murderous attacks solely to derive electoral mileage out of this artificially created communal polarization. "If anybody tries to take cover of secularism to indulge in anti-Hindu politics and statecraft, the BJP will stand in their path like a rock"—declared the party top brass to make it clear that it has decided to return to power by adopting this most reprehensive policy. And it did not just make a

statement but to meticulously implement the same, began to make renewed efforts to incite communal passion round the country, exacerbate minority-bashing and thus surcharge the atmosphere by engineering fratricidal bloodbath and carnage. The recent riots of Gorakhpur in UP and of different places of Madhya Pradesh bear eloquent testimony to that.

Planned communal clashes at Gorakhpur and other places

Right in the fiefdom of Mulayam Singh, the self-proclaimed secularist, an ally of the Congress till the other day at the centre and most endearing to the CPI (M) top brass, the BJP-RSS engineered in January last a large-scale violence directed against the religious minorities. Yogi Adityanath, a rabid Hindu communalist and BJP MP who had perfected his technique of letting loose all hell on the Muslims centering on insignificant incidents mostly manufactured like a Hindu's clothes getting stained accidentally by the paan (betel leaf) spat by a Muslim or reported rape of a dalit by a Muslim engineered a scuffle between two communities during a Muharram procession in which one youth was badly injured. Then in the name of seeking revenge for the killing of a Hindu by Muslims, he reached the spot with his armed hooligan brigade, destroyed a mazhar (holy grave), set shops owned by Muslims to fire and orchestrated a murderous attack on the Minority people. The fact is that prior to such a planned attack by the notorious BJP MP and his hoodlums, the area with substantial Muslim population did not experience any untoward incident. It is surprising that Mulayam Singh instead of taking appropriate action against Adityanath removed the District Magistrate and Police Superintendent, the officers who tried to diffuse the mounting tension through some administrative measures. As soon as they were shunted out, a Muslim youth was killed. It became a matter of discussion at Gorakhpur that a Hindu Yuva Vahini man who perpetrated the crime inflicted a self-injury to use it as a cover. Yet neither Mulayam nor the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre took any effective step to preempt

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Genocide in Nandigram

CPI(M) government draws the heinous agenda at the highest level of administration

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only means of their life and livelihood. In face of their determined resistance, the chief minister of the government apparently backtracked; he admitted the notice was a mistake and no land will be acquired without people's consent. However, representative of the Salem group declared after his talk with the government that their project at Nandigram was standing all right. Added to such examples of falsehood and duplicity on the part of the government, previous experience from different instances all over the state also prompted people of Nandigram to be apprehensive of attacks of CPI(M) goons and cadres, with or without support of police and administration. So they prepared themselves to offer stubborn resistance. They disrupted the link roads or bridges to prevent police and, under their cover, CPI(M) goons, from getting into their villages. That their apprehension was not baseless, was proved soon. CPI(M) goons tried to break through the resistance of peasants under the cover of darkness of winter night. But Nandigram peasants, who were once supporters, even activists of CPI(M), foiled their attempt through determined resistance though at the cost of six precious lives of villagers. Thousands of villagers then chased the miscreants across the river, that separates Nandigram from Khejuri. In Khejuri, they torched a local CPI(M) leader's house from where the attack was conducted. The leader's son was killed by the infuriated masses of peasants. From then on the Nandigram people showed example of unbending morale, true to their heritage and providing inspiration to peasants struggling in different parts of the state. Loss of lives of their kins and comrades did not make them lose their heart. They demanded that the government announce formally and properly that there will be no land grabbing and that police will not enter into the area before any settlement on the issue. Unable to achieve their end, the goons on the other hand, reportedly including notorious anti-socials of far and near hired at high costs, carried on incessant firing into the area from

across the adjacent river or canal. The government and CPI(M) blew hot and cold; once if the chief minister aired assurance to peasants that no steps will be taken without their consent; at other moment, the same chief minister challenged any opposition to their plans, local leaders assembled goons, notorious for the dastardly killings of Keshpur-Garbata a few years back or a senior leader of CPI(M) like Benoy Konar threatened to "make the life hell" for people of Nandigram. The latter, however, maintained their stand unwaveringly for over two months. And then came the black morning of March 14.

The black morning of March 14

Without being able to break through the organized resistance of Nandigram people and without trying for any peaceful solution through dialogue, the CPI(M) government took to the most heinous and cunning despotism. It unleashed a cleverly designed barbaric fascistic onslaught on the struggling peasants of Nandigram. A few thousands of police and paramilitary forces like the EFR, and shielded behind them, the CPI(M) goons, armed lethally and often in police uniform and using arms and arsenals used by the police force but wearing chappals to give away their identity, were let loose in a dastardly operation in the morning on March 14. It has now come out to the public that the operation was planned and ordered directly from the highest level of the police, administration and the government deciding upon indiscriminate and desperate firing in case of any resistance. In the plea of reestablishing the rule of law in Nandigram, as if it was not there in spite of all government offices and administrative work going on in perfect tune all these days, they decided to "occupy" the area by force. It has also come out that the ministers from other parties of the Front, even the core committee members of the Front coming from these parties were kept in dark about this invasion, though there was a meeting of the ministers going on exactly when the operation itself was in full swing. There were indications, if not open announcements, that there might be

such a move very soon. As the report goes, even the district administration issued warning that anti-socials with all sorts of huge amount of arms were assembling in the area. Such warnings too went unheeded. Rather CPI(M), a party, that amply testified its fascistic creed on several previous occasions, chose this date the right moment. They knew that the Higher Secondary Examination, the largest school-leaving examination of the state that involved lakhs of students would start all over the state on 15th. So, they must have thought, any protest against their attack would not draw people's sympathy and support. They however forgot that those who really stand on people's support, can drive their views home into people even in such emergent situations.

The onslaught they perpetrated deserves no other definition but being called the most heinous massacre, a genocide, with hardly any parallel, that a government of an avowed democratic set-up has given effect to in independent India. It was such a grave event that even the Governor, the head of state could not but criticize it. With indications of attack in the air and brisk preparatory activities of the police and the CPI(M) goons going on around the region, people of Nandigram were also mentally and organizationally set to stand up against the attack. Thus, when the police-goons combine made moves, thousands of peasants, particularly the womenfolk and even children of peasant families came out in procession and tried to persuade police to retreat. Instead there happened the historic event of the state, that made everyone having a modicum of democratic sense shudder with awe and disgust. The police of a government that still bears a Marxist tag to befool people, charged upon the peaceful, unarmed protestors, that too mostly women and children. The ghastly scenes of the incident that came out on television proved that it was no less barbarous, in fact even more, than the infamous Jalianwalabagh massacre by the police of the British imperialist government. Nevertheless, the police had a perfect lay-out. They tear-gassed the demonstration profusely and from behind the smoke-screen of

the shells, they fired. All the victims of firing were found to have the injury above waist and even on the chest or the back. This clearly indicated that the motive was to kill, to murder the unarmed. Men and women killed from back, proved convincingly that the firing was done even on the fleeing crowd. Children were literally butchered. CPI(M) leaders including Sitaram Yechuri, or Brinda Karat tried to make people believe that the trouble was initiated by and the victims were outsiders; they dished out blatant lies that there was no question of land-grabbing in Nandigram and it was a simple case of political clash for extending control over the area. Recovery of large haul of arms and ammunitions including those used by police and those otherwise, alongwith CPI(M) flag and leaflets, police helmets, etc. from the ongoing probe, and arrest of 10 persons who have confessed to have been hired by the CPI(M) leadership for lakhs of rupees from different parts of the district to carry out operation of getting into and "occupy" Nandigram, all this prove glaringly how truthful the front-ranking leaders of CPI(M) are in their versions to the Press and people. Further, existence and movement of the *Bhumi Uched Pratirodh Committee* (BUPC standing for Committee for resisting eviction from lands), their massive support in the area cutting across the different sections of the society, are ample proof to check the veracity of the words of the fore-ranking national leader of CPI(M). The state party chief Biman Bose initiated the campaign later taken up by different CPI(M) leaders and the police officials that the police fired in self-defence in face of incessant firing from the members of BUPC. Surprisingly belying their claim, there has not been a single instance of police being injured by bullet, that the police could produce in public.

Police-CPI(M) goons transgressed all norms of civility and humanity

How many rounds of firing were there from the guns of thousands of police and goons deployed in the operation? Nobody will ever be able to make sure. There were dead

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Communalism cannot be defeated by parliamentary politics

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such a sinister move. On the contrary, the bourgeois media also in a highly communalized manner did not report these facts but conjured up a riot story, spread rumours of burning temples and thus played second fiddle to the malicious propaganda unleashed by the BJP-RSS camp. (Source: Tehelka.com, Feb 17, 2007)

Before the smoke subsided at Gorakhpur, counterparts of Adityanath opened newer fronts in Madhya Pradesh. From the Western district and commercial capital Indore to Jabalpur in the East the communal violence was witnessed in just a week. First, communal violence raised its head in Jabalpur followed by communal clashes in Indore and subsequent communal tension in Biaoara (Rajgarh) and Guna. The pattern of riots made everyone suspicious of a calculated handiwork of vested interests belonging to the communal Hindutva brigade. In Jabalpur, the posters of Jain community's Gajrath Festival were allegedly torn up, that caused tension. In Indore, a row over alleged molestation of a minor snowballed into a communal clash and a Muharram procession was stoned at prompting authorities to clamp a curfew on the city. And similar rumour about poster tearing was circulated. In the ultra-sensitive Rajgarh district, the Biaoara town witnessed riot when people returning from Tazia procession of Muharram were charged of damaging posters of Hindu Sammelan (Conference). In Guna, stones were pelted at the Muharram procession. The BJP-led state government was already facing flak for pushing its Hindu communal agenda and saffronising the institutions. First, it forced everybody to sing Vande Mataram and even expected Muslim madarsa students to do the same. Then a similar controversy was raised over compulsion of doing Surya Namaskar (offering prayer to the sun). Hoshangabad, a district named after Hoshang Shah is sought to be renamed as Narmadapuram obviously to incite Hindu passion and secure some electoral mileage. Thus it will be clear that in each of the above incidents, there was a planned attempt on the part of RSS-BJP and its associates,

infamously known as Sangha Parivar (Saffron Brigade) to doctor a situation that would ignite passion, foster frayed tempers and ultimately snowball into a communal conflagration.

Heinous game of Hindu communalists

This spate of orchestrated communal violence and clashes once again shows that defeat in the last parliamentary elections has not blunted the communal claw of the BJP-RSS. Rather, the combine is merrily pursuing its rabid Hindu communal agenda and pandering to flurry of dastardly acts reminiscent of post-Babri demolition and post-Godhra genocides throughout the country, pitting one section of the people against the other, fomenting communal passion and exacerbating communal polarization with impunity.

Thus the murky game of the Hindu communalists is unfurling not only in the states undergoing polls but in other states as well with added dimension and in newer forms. The Sangha Parivar is just not passing resolutions in its meets to revive the hated doctrine of Hindutva but is implementing the same as its chief political practice through creation of hysteria around the same. Under RSS tutelage, the BJP is not only winning elections by capitalizing on the growing renunciation of the Congress by the people but is communalizing the whole country posing serious threat to people's unity. Already, it has been working overtime to create an inflammable situation in Gujarat through rabid anti-Muslim communal propaganda so as to clinch victory in the next elections by cornering the votes of the majority community in a communally divided state. If the BJP succeeds in working out its vile stratagem and sustains the pace of electoral victories in state elections, it is almost certain to regain power at the next parliamentary elections of 2009 with all out backing of the ruling capitalist class.

What made BJP reinstalled

But the obvious question stirring minds of the saner section of the people who believes in secular principles and is visibly

perturbed at this resurrection of communal BJP is: how could this happen? What made the BJP which became so hated in the public eye for its divisive communal line, pursuance of anti-people economic policies of capitalist globalization and downright misrule and hence ousted from power reappear on the scene with redeemed strength within a span of just two years and a half? To seek the answer, we would request all to revisit what we have been saying for so many years.

We begin by recalling the premises on which the BJP made it to the centrestage of national politics. After prolonged misrule for about 45 years at a stretch (barring short-lived discontinuities in between), the Congress was so much discredited in the public eye that its further continuation in the power was seriously jeopardizing the political stability which the ruling capitalist wanted to ensure by any means in order to continue its exploitative class-rule uninterrupted. Sensing that, the class in its search for a suitable alternative to the Congress turned towards the BJP which by that time had appeared on the national scene by creating a communal base particularly in the large northern states by flaunting its depraved Hindutva credential. Had there been a surge of a massive united democratic movement involving all sections of the toiling masses throughout the country on the burning problems of life and under the leadership of genuine leftist forces, that would have fostered cementing of the unity of the downtrodden populace rising above kinds of narrow sectarian outlook and canalize the accumulated wrath of the people in right direction. But in absence of any such movement surging forth with desired celerity, it became easy for the BJP to misdirect the grievances of the people along communal line, encash on the artificially stimulated Hindutva sentiment and emerge as the national alternative to the Congress with full backing of the ruling class.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the much-desired people's movement could not be developed at all India level because of the opportunistic politics of the CPI (M) and its associates masquerading as leftists-communists who by that

time decided that they would shun the path of movement and become integral part of bourgeois power politics. Repeatedly we asserted that it was only by releasing a wave of the aforesaid left-democratic mass movement on the edifice of higher ethics and culture that the ominous rise of such a baneful communal force like the BJP could be prevented. The deep-rooted fraternity and solidarity that will grow among the various sections of the toiling masses in the process of participating in such movements centering on the common burning problems of their life will work as the bulwark against infiltration of venomous communal thoughts purported to disrupt the fighting unity of the people. Also we said that alongside development of this movement, unless the BJP could be cornered through painstaking sustained ideological campaign stretching from the villages to the furthest corner of a town or city, it would not be that easy to defeat it even in the election. And even if it were somehow defeated, the communal politics of the RSS-BJP would not be wiped out only by it. Rather, it would stage a comeback using this arch communalism as the main prop. So long the ideological fight coupled with the united democratic movement of the people was not taken up in right earnest, the oppression of minority communities would not cease nor would be removed the danger of the BJP's return to power.

Treachery of pseudo-communists

But the CPI (M) and its associates paid no heed to that thereby making it rather easy for the class to keep the people's fury and discontent within the precincts of vote-politics and shift the popular choice towards the BJP. This is how the BJP making full use of the communally polarized environment and exploiting to the hilt the severe anti-Congress sentiment captured governmental power at the centre in 1999.

On the eve of 2004 parliamentary elections, we once again emphasized the same approach reiterating the imperativeness of developing a countrywide strong democratic

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Genocide in Nandigram

CPI(M) tramples underfoot all norms of civility and humanity in regard to dead and injured

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bodies brought in series in all the adjacent hospitals of the East and West Medinipur districts; the figures kept on increasing. The Union Home Minister informed the Rajya Sabha a figure of six, as he received it from the state officials, while the unofficial reports flash at least 18 deaths. Even the partners of the Left Front government of the state, were giving much higher figures. But all these stand meaningless, as it comes out from the reports of local people that the police-goon combine have buried heaps of dead bodies in the pits and trenches on the roads, have dragged away many dead bodies to hide them and have even beheaded them and thrown them into the rivers and canals that were everywhere in this locality of southwest part of the state. At least 8 trekkers were seen to be moving away from Khejuri on the other side of river; all those were carrying dead bodies to be thrown outside the region; a fact that is corroborated from reports of 27 dead bodies found stuck up in the sand-island of the River Haldi, or even near the Bay of Bengal, at the mouth of a river. In addition and over and above these dastardly killings, was the fact that numberless women were mercilessly gang-raped both by the police and the goons and then killed; many were dragged away and were still missing; obviously they must have met with the same fate as was confirmed from the horrid tales of torture coming out from the few fortunate survivors, who spent two days unbound and thrown in jungles. In a word, it was the most atrocious and heinous massacre that the CPI(M) government have brought down on a democratic movement.

It must also be pointed out here that even in case of devastating wars, there prevails an accepted code that injured must be provided with adequate treatment. The code is mandatory, for any kind of clashes. But here in Nandigram, children have been killed by tearing them apart; dead have been beheaded; injured have been dragged; it has also been found on the TV, that when women rushed to see and rescue a victim of firing, they were severely lathicharged by the police.

But all these took place on the operation field. Over and above,

thousands of peasants, a large section of which were women and children with grievous bullet or shell injuries on them were brought by local people themselves to the hospitals, rather their name-sakes, that exist without any proper medical facilities, namely adequate doctors, attending staff, medicines, blood, nor ambulance to shift them to other places and the like. Even these injured were left unattended, struggling not for life, but to die the most painful death. When doctors from outside, such as those belonging to the medical teams sent by our party or others offered their help did not get cordial reception from the authority. Immediately after the event and for about two complete days, CPI(M)-goons aided and abetted by the police cut off all outlets from the area; they even snapped telephonic connections. Hundreds of police and even paramilitary forces were deployed around the hospitals, who prevented the journalists, even the relatives and kins of victims to meet the latter; there was no list of dead or injured even with the hospitals concerned. Hundreds of people are still missing. So it is feared that many more dead remained unbound, or many more injured might have succumbed to their fatal injuries not only unbound, but also after they had been brought to the hospitals. It was also learnt from the locals that the police-CPI(M) goons did adopt a novel way of covering up their misdeeds; they opened up the stomachs of the corpses before throwing them into the river, so that they did not float up afterwards. What kind of culture, what kind of ethics the government and its administration has reflected in this whole scenario, in which they simply took this heartless, rather deliberately negligent attitude towards the dead or injured, found or unbound and including women and children, transgressing upon all norms of civility and humanity, that even the avowed imperialist warmongers will think twice before taking to.

Design becomes evident

But the design does not end in a simple attack on the protestors. Traditionally a left citadel, Nandigram became an icon of unbending resistance to the CPI(M) and their government's

effort to grab their fertile farm lands. This has led CPI(M) to totally lose ground in and around Nandigram in the last few months. Fearing a bleak prospect in future panchayat or other elections, CPI(M) took resort to the treacherous duplicity, an incomparable admixture of cunningly dished out cold assurance and carefully hatched and cleverly concealed clandestine plan for taking hold of the area and the farmlands there, by force and intimidation, even annihilation of anybody opposing them. Totally isolated from people, they chose their mainstay in the brute force of administration-police-goon combine. Thus, after attacking the peaceful demonstration of peasants and breaking through their resistance, the unholy alliance made their intention clear. The police set up camps in the areas, where they could not enter a few days back, only to help the CPI(M) goons to carry on the ransacking of the villagers' houses, raping their women and murdering the organizers of the resistance. The footage of electronic media clearly held out all these misdeeds of theirs. CPI(M) leaders and goons were also aware of this. This was reflected when reporter and cameraman of one channel covering the incident on the 14th were beaten up cruelly, even found missing for a length of time, their telephone was snatched, camera smashed; even telecasting of some channel was gagged — all this came out glaringly on the small screen.

West Bengal roars with protest and condemnation

Despots and fascists always and ultimately fail in their counting. CPI(M)'s design also fell through. Across the entire length and breadth of the state and across all the sections of people of its society, there were strong condemnations of police atrocities. Students, teachers, intellectuals, scientists, professionals, including law-professionals of the High Court and district courts, came out in spontaneous outburst against this heinous fascistic onslaught of the CPI(M) and their police. It appeared that the conscience of the people of this state was duped during this three-decade long rule of

CPI(M). At one stroke of this inhuman fascistic act of CPI(M), that dormant conscience regained its fervour and courage. The bandh called by all opposition parties on March 16, in which SUCI took a main initiative, was not only spontaneous and all-out throughout the state. It was a remarkable turnaround from the character of many bandhs of the near past, in which confused by the incessant propaganda of the monopoly-backed media and as also the industrial houses, a sizeable section of population was tending to become passive or even hostile to this form of movement. But this time, atrocities perpetrated by the police and CPI(M) goons whipped up people to stand erect in protest. Many of our comrades were arrested and sustained grievous injuries in districts in course of conducting propaganda on the Bandh day. But in spite of such attacks people, in large numbers and in all parts of the state, voluntarily joined the propaganda squads and processions of our party. While the police and the CPI (M) goons pounced upon our gatherings, for example at Shyambazar in north Calcutta, common people bravely intervened, resisted the attackers and practically chased away the CPI (M) hooligans from the area. Aged middle class persons came forward to vehemently argue with the police on the streets of Calcutta, when the latter was indiscriminately lathicharging and arresting the picketers and even bystanders. That such public involvement in favour of a political party was unprecedented was unambiguously admitted by the TV channels. People jeered at the comment of the CPI(M) leaders on the bandh, attesting to the fact they have lost all credibility in the state. Our party also observed a state-wide Martyrs' day on March 17 by wearing black badges, erecting martyr's columns and observing two minutes' silence at 12 Noon. On 19th March, there were massive demonstrations throughout the state and gherao of SDO and DM offices. Not only in West Bengal, Nandigram incident has drawn unequivocal protest from different parts of India. As a part of All India protest day at the call of SUCI, protest demonstrations were held in

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Lies Concerning the History of the Soviet Union

Mario Sousa

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[As a mark of our respect for and recognition of Comrade Joseph Stalin, the great Marxist-Leninist leader, we decided to publish this article (on 15 June 1998), which gives striking and deadly exposure to the Lies Concerning the History of the Soviet Union during Stalin's rule. For want of space, we were constrained to print this article in instalments, fully aware that the process hampers smooth reading. In this issue, we publish the second instalment, which presents vital factual details that help establish the truth. — Ed., Proletarian Era]

Nazis, the police and the fascists

So these are the most worthy purveyors of the bourgeois myths concerning the millions who are supposed to have died or been imprisoned in the Soviet Union: the Nazi William Hearst, the secret agent Robert Conquest and the fascist Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Conquest played the leading role, since it was his information that was used by the capitalist mass media the world over, and was even the basis for setting up whole schools in certain universities. Conquest's work is without a doubt a first-class piece of police disinformation. In the 1970s, Conquest received a great deal of help from Solzhenitsyn and a series of secondary characters like Andrei Sakharov and Roy Medvedev.

Fraudulent methods give rise to millions of dead

Conquest, Solzhenitsyn, Medvedev and others used statistics published by the Soviet Union, for instance, national population censuses, to which they added a supposed population increase without taking account of the situation in the country. In this way they reached their conclusions as to how many people there ought to have been in the country at the end of given years. The people who were missing were claimed to have died or been incarcerated because of socialism. The method is simple, but also completely fraudulent. This type of 'revelation' of such important political events would never have been accepted if the 'revelation' in question concerned the western world. In such a case it is certain that professors and historians would have protested against such fabrications. But since it was the Soviet Union, they were acceptable for the bourgeois intelligentsia.

In numbers, what were the final conclusions of the 'critics'? According to Robert Conquest (in an estimate he made in 1961) 6 million people died of starvation in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s.

This number he increased to 14 million in 1986. As regarding what he says about the Gulag labour camps, in 1937 five million prisoners were detained there before the great purges began. After the start of the purges then, according to him, during 1937-38, there would have been an additional 7 million prisoners, making the total to 12 million in the labour camps in 1939! And to keep in mind, all these 12 million of Conquest's figures would only have been the political prisoners! In the labour camps there were also common criminals, who, according to Conquest, would have far outnumbered the political prisoners. This means, according to him, that there would have been 25-30 million prisoners in the labour camps of the Soviet Union. Can anything be more absurd?

Again according to Conquest, a million political prisoners were executed between 1937 and 1939, and another 2 million died of hunger. The final tally, resulting from the purges of 1937-39, then, according to Conquest, was 9 million, of whom 3 million would have died in prison. These figures were immediately subjected to 'statistical adjustment' by Conquest to enable him reach the conclusion that the Bolsheviks had killed no fewer than 12 million political prisoners between 1930 and 1953. Adding these figures to the numbers said to have died in the famine of the 1930s, Conquest arrived at the conclusion that the Bolsheviks killed 26 million people. Is this not absurdity to the extreme?

Alexander Solzhenitsyn used more or less the same statistical methods as Conquest. But by using these pseudo-scientific methods on the basis of different premises, he arrived at even more extreme conclusions. Solzhenitsyn accepted Conquest's estimate of 6 million deaths from the famine of 1932-33. Nevertheless, as far as the purges of 1936-39 were concerned, he believed that at least 1 million people died each year. He sums up by telling us that from the collectivisation of agriculture to the

death of Stalin in 1953, the communists killed 66 million people in the Soviet Union. On top of that he holds the Soviet government responsible for the death of the 44 million Russians he claims were killed in the Second World War. Solzhenitsyn's conclusion is that '110 million Russians fell victims of socialism'.

Gorbachev opens the archives

The collection of fantasy figures set out above, the product of extremely well paid fabrication, appeared in the bourgeois press in the 1960s, always presented as true facts ascertained through the application of scientific method. And Khrushchev made use of them in his allegations against Stalin! Behind these fabrications lurked the western secret services like the CIA and MI5. And however false they may be, the impact of the mass media on public opinion is so great that the figures are even today believed to be true by large sections of the population of Western countries. After Gorbachev made public, the documents of the Archive of the central Committee of CPSU unprecedented speculative inflation began to take place in the numbers of those who were alleged to have died or been imprisoned under socialism, now all mixed up into a single group of tens of millions of 'victims' of the communists. Slanderers of Stalin and socialism expected that their allegation would now be corroborated by the archive documents.

But when the archives were opened up and research reports based on the actual documents began to be published a very strange thing happened. Suddenly both Gorbachev's free press and the speculators in dead and incarcerated completely lost interest in the archives.

The results of the research carried out on the archives of the Central Committee by Russian historians Zemskov, Dougin and Xlevnjuk, which began to appear in scientific journals as from 1990, went entirely unremarked. Rather

they went completely against the inflationary current regarding the numbers who were being claimed by the 'free press' to have died or been incarcerated. Their reports were published only in low-circulation scientific journals practically unknown to the public at large, which could hardly compete with the press hysteria. So the lies of Conquest and Solzhenitsyn continued to gain support. In the West also, the reports of the Russian researchers on the penal system under Stalin were totally ignored on the front pages of newspapers, and by TV news broadcasts. But the question remains, why?

What the Russian research shows

The research on the Soviet penal system is presented in a report nearly 9,000 pages long, and published between 1990 and 1993.. Among many authors of this report, the best-known are the Russian historians V.N. Zemskov, A.N. Dougin and O.V. Xlevnjuk. The West could come to know about the reports from some collaborative work of researchers of different Western countries. Two such works with which the present author is familiar are the one which appeared in the French journal *l'Histoire* in September 1993, written by Nicholas Werth, the chief researcher of the French scientific research centre, CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), and the work published in the US journal *American Historical Review* by J. Arch Getty, a professor of history at the University of California, Riverside, in collaboration with G.T. Retterspohn, a CNRS researcher, and the Russian researcher, V.A.N. Zemskov, from the Institute of Russian History (part of the Russian Academy of Science). Today books have appeared on the matter written by the above-named researchers or by others from the same research team. Before going any further, it should be made clear, that none of the author-scientists involved in this research has a socialist world outlook. On the contrary their outlook is typically bourgeois and anti-socialist, indeed quite reactionary in cases. Yet, what has happened is that they have thoroughly exposed the lies of

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Fraudulent methods, concocted data and anti-Soviet bias lie at the root

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Conquest, Solzhenitsyn, Medvedev and others, only because they have placed their professional integrity in the fore and have not allowed themselves to be bought for propaganda purposes.

The results of the Russian research answer a very large number of questions about the Soviet penal system. For us it is the Stalin era that is of the greatest interest. Let us pose a number of very specific questions and seek out replies from the articles in the journals *l'Histoire* and the *American Historical Review*. The questions are the following :

1. What did the Soviet penal system consist of?
2. How many prisoners were there — both political and non-political?
3. How many people died in the labour camps?
4. How many people were condemned to death in the years before 1953, especially in the purges of 1937-38?
5. How long, on average, were the prison sentences?

After answering these five questions, we will discuss the punishments imposed on the two groups which are most frequently mentioned in connection with prisoners and deaths in the Soviet Union, namely the kulaks convicted in 1930 and the counter-revolutionaries convicted in 1936-38.

Labour camps in the Soviet penal system

After 1930 the Soviet penal system included prisons, labour camps, the labour colonies of the Gulag, special open zones and obligation to pay fines. Anybody remanded into custody was generally sent to a normal prison while investigations were carried on to find out if he were innocent, and could thus be set free, or whether he should go on trial. An accused person on trial could either be found innocent (and set free) or guilty. If found guilty he could be sentenced to pay a fine, to a term of imprisonment or, more unusually, to face execution. A fine could be a given percentage of his wages for a given period of time. Those sentenced to prison terms could be put in different kinds of prison depending on the type of offence involved.

To the Gulag labour camps were

sent those who had committed serious offences (homicide, robbery, rape, economic crimes, etc.) as well as a large proportion of those convicted of counter-revolutionary activities. Other criminals sentenced to terms longer than 3 years could also be sent to labour camps. After spending some time in a labour camp, a prisoner might be moved to a labour colony or to a special open zone.

The labour camps were very large areas where the prisoners lived and worked under close supervision. For them to work and not to be a burden on society was obviously necessary. No healthy person got by without working. The number of labour camps in existence in 1940 was 53.

There were 425 Gulag labour colonies. These were much smaller units than the labour camps, with a freer regime and less supervision. To these were sent prisoners with shorter prison terms - people who had committed less serious criminal or political offences. They worked in freedom in factories or on the land and formed part of civil society. In most cases the whole of the wages he earned from his labour belonged to the prisoner, who in this respect was treated in the same manner as any other worker.

The special open zones were

generally agricultural areas for those who had been exiled, such as the kulaks who had been expropriated during collectivisation. Other people found guilty of minor criminal or political offences might also serve their terms in these areas.

454,000 is not 9 million

The second question concerned how many political prisoners there were, and how many common criminals. It relates to those imprisoned in labour camps, Gulag colonies and the prisons (though it should be remembered that in the labour colonies there was, in the majority of cases, only partial loss of liberty). The data which appeared in the *American Historical Review* includes a table which shows the total number of prisoners encompassing a period of 20 years beginning in 1934, when the penal system was unified under a central administration, until 1953, the year Stalin died.

A series of conclusions can be drawn from the above table. To start with we can compare its data to those given by Robert Conquest. The latter claims that in 1939 there were 9 million political prisoners in the labour camps and that 3 million others had died in the period 1937-1939. Let the reader not forget that Conquest is here talking only about

political prisoners! Apart from these, says he, there were also common criminals who, according to him, were much greater in number than the political prisoners! In 1950 there were, according to Conquest, 12 million political prisoners! Armed with the true facts, we can readily see what a fraudster Conquest really is. Not one of his figures corresponds even remotely to the truth. In 1939 there was a total in all the camps, colonies and prisons of close to 2 million prisoners. Of these 454,000 had committed political crimes, not 9 million as Conquest asserts (rather its meagre 5%). Those who died in labour camps between 1937 and 1939 numbered about 160,000, about half of 3 million that Conquest asserts. In 1950 there were 578,000 political prisoners in labour camps, not 12 million (again less than half of Conquest's figure). Yet, despite all these to this day Robert Conquest remains one of the major sources for right-wing propaganda against communism. As for the figures cited by Alexander Solzhenitsyn - 60 million alleged to have died in labour camps - there is no need for comment. Only a sick mind could promote such absurd delusions.

Let us now leave these
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Custodial population January 1	Gulag working camps 1	Counter-revolutionaries		Died		Freed 4	Escaped 5	Gulag Labour Colonies 6	Prisons 7	Total 8 (1+6+7)
		Total 2	%	Total 3	%					
1934	510,307	135,190	26.5	26295	5.2	147,272	83490			510,307
1935	725,438	118,256	16.3	28,328	3.9	211,035	67,493	240,259		965,697
1936	839,406	105,849	12.6	20,595	2.5	369,544	58,313	457,088		1,296,494
1937	820,881	104,826	12.8	25,376	3.1	364,437	58,264	375,488		1,196,369
1938	996,367	185,324	18.6	90,546	9.1	279,966	32,033	885,203		1,881,570
1939	1,317,195	454,432	34.5	50,502	3.8	223,622	12,333	355,243	350,538	2,022,976
1940	1,344,408	444,999	33.1	46,665	3.5	316,825	11,813	315,584	190,266	1,850,258
1941	1,500,524	420,293	28.7	100,997	6.7	624,276	10,592	429,205	487,739	2,417,468
1942	1,415,596	407,988	29.6	248,877	18.0	509,538	11,822	360,447	277,992	2,054,035
1943	983,974	345,397	35.6	166,967	17.0	336,135	6,242	500,208	235,313	1,719,495
1944	663,594	268,861	40.7	60,948	9.2	152,113	3,586	516,225	155,213	1,335,032
1945	715,506	283,351	41.2	43,848	6.1	336,750	2,196	745,171	279,969	1,740,646
1946	600,897	333,833	59.2	18,154	3.0	115,700	2,642	956,224	261,500	1,818,621
1947	808,839	427,653	54.3	35,668	4.4	194,886	3,779	912,794	306,163	2,027,796
1948	1,108,057	416,156	38.0	27,605	2.5	261,148	4,261	1,091,478	275,850	2,475,385
1949	1,216,361	420,696	34.9	15,739	1.3	178,449	2,583	1,140,324		2,356,685
1950	1,416,300	578,912	22.7	14,703	1.0	216,210	2,577	1,145,051		2,561,351
1951	1,533,767	475,976	31.0	15,587	1.0	254,269	2,318	994,379		2,528,146
1952	1,711,202	480,766	28.1	10,604	0.6	329,446	1,253	793,312		2,504,514
1953	1,727,970	465,256	26.9	5,825	0.3	937,352	785	740,554		2,468,524

Stalin will ever remain a great leader of proletariat!

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fraudsters in order that we may ourselves concretely analyse the statistics relating to the gulag. The first question to be asked is what view we should take about the sheer quantity of people caught up in the penal system? What does the figure of 2.5 million really mean?...

The internal and external threat

The number of people caught up in the penal system requires to be properly explained. The Soviet Union was a country which had only recently overthrown feudalism, and its social heritage in matters of human rights was often a burden on society. In an antiquated system like the tsardom, workers were condemned to live in deep poverty, and human life had little value. Robbery and violent crime were punished by unrestrained violence. Revolts against the monarchy usually ended in massacres, death sentences and extremely long prison sentences. These social relations, and the habits of mind associated with them, take a long time to change, a fact which influenced the development of society in the Soviet

Union as well as attitudes towards criminals.

Another important factor is that the Soviet Union, a country which in the 1930s had close to 160-170 million inhabitants, was seriously threatened by foreign powers. There was a major threat of war in the 1930s from the ... Nazi Germany, a threat to the survival of the Slav people. The western bloc also harboured interventionist ambitions. This situation was summed up by Stalin in 1931 in the following words: "We are 50-100 years behind the advanced countries. We have to close that gap in 10 years. Either we do it or we will be wiped out." Ten years later, on 22 June 1941, the Soviet Union was invaded by Nazi Germany and its allies. Soviet society was forced to make great efforts in the decade from 1930-1940, when the major part of its resources was dedicated to its defence preparations for the forthcoming imminent war against the Nazis. Because of this, people worked hard while producing little by way of personal benefits. The introduction of the 7-hour day was withdrawn in 1937, and in 1939 practically every Sunday was a

work day. In a difficult period such as this, with a great war hanging over the development of society for two decades (the 1930s and 1940s), a war which was to cost the Soviet Union 25 million deaths with half the country burnt to a cinder, crime did tend to increase as people tried to help themselves to what life could not otherwise offer them.

During this very difficult time, the Soviet Union held a maximum number of 2.5 million people in its prison system, i.e., 2.4% of the adult population. How can we evaluate this figure? Is it a lot or a little? Let us compare.

More prisoners in the US

In the United States of America, for example, a country of 252 million inhabitants (in 1996), the richest country in the world, which consumes 60% of the world's resources, how many people are in prison? We are to keep in mind that US is not a country threatened by any war and there are no deep social changes going on, affecting economic stability.

In a rather small news item appearing in the newspapers of August 1997, the FLT-AP news

agency reported that in the US there had never previously been so many people in the prison system as the 5.5 million held in 1996. This represents an increase of 200,000 people since 1995 and means that the number of criminals in the US equals 2.8% of the adult population. The number of convicts in the US today is 3 million higher than the maximum number ever held in the Soviet Union! In the Soviet Union there was a maximum of 2.4% of the adult population in prison for their crimes - in the US the figure is 2.8%, and rising! According to a press release put out by the US Department of Justice on 18 January 1998, the number of convicts in the US in 1997 rose by 96,100.

As far as the Soviet labour camps were concerned, it is true that the regime was harsh and difficult for the prisoners, but what is the situation today in the prisons of the US, which are rife with violence, drugs, prostitution, sexual slavery (290,000 rapes a year in US prisons). Nobody feels safe in US prisons! And this happens today, that too in a society richer than ever before!

[To be continued]

Protest and police atrocities mark March 16 bandh against Nandigram genocide



Near Writers' Building (State Secretariat) and at Shyambazar, Hazra and Bhownaipur areas in Calcutta

Genocide in Nandigram

West Bengal rises with strongest condemnation of CPI(M) engineered genocide

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Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Barak Valley of Assam and elsewhere.

Remarkable role of writers, artists, cultural activists, professionals

Remarkable also was the part played by renowned artistes, writers, poets, film and theatre personalities, educationists, scientists, teachers, law and medical practitioners and such others. One and all they decided to take up whatever means of protest they had at hand. They held a historic convention in Calcutta on 28 February, formed from there the 'Forum of Artists, Cultural Activists and Intellectuals' platform for sustained struggle, established its branches in the districts, raised funds for the kins of genocide victims and thousands of hapless people still surviving, walked on the streets of Calcutta and district towns, silent at the ghastliness of beastly torture perpetrated by the custodian of the law themselves or the hired mercenaries whom CPI(M) claims as their cadres, or vocal in solidarity with the struggling peasants. They protested by surrendering coveted literary awards bestowed on them by the CPI(M) government, severed connections with the government-run bodies or institutes. Thus famous historians Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar and Pradip Datta, the veteran poet and writer Tarun Sanyal surrendered the Rabindra Award and donated the prize money to the funds being raised for the genocide victim peasants of Nandigram. They even asked the government to strike off their names from the list of awardees. Eminent dramatists, actors and other personalities who were the members of the West Bengal Natya Academy resigned en masse: they included from veterans like Bivas Chakaraborty, Manoj Mitra, Meghnad Bhattacharyya, Asok Mukherjee, Chandan Sen to the youngs like Kaushik Sen, Bratya Bose, Suman Mukherjee and others. Writers were refusing awards from the government or declining from joining any programme by the government; for instance well-known poet Sankha Ghosh, tendered his resignation from the

post of Vice-President of the Bangla Academy, Ashrulkumar Sikdar, the writer, resigned also from the Bangla Academy, Anita Agnihotri, another eminent writer surrendered the Somen Chanda Award and the award money, Shashi Anand resigned from membership post of the West Bengal Film Development Corporation; Nabinananda Sen from the advisory board of Nandan Advisory Committee. Even from beyond the boundary of the state, eminent personalities like Justice VR Krishna Iyer, Medha Patekar, Irfan Habib, Anuradha Talwar, Arundhati Roy and others as also students, researchers and scientists working abroad have also expressed their solidarity with the peasants, condemned the government and police action, and even demanded punishment of the chief minister as it is demanded by Justice Iyer. Many of them, like Medha Patekar have taken all pains to actively come out in support of the peasants.

Here a few points must be added on the ongoing CBI probe into the Nandigram incident, being carried out at the emergent order issued by the Calcutta High Court. The probe has already brought out revealing evidences from the words of the victims and from their direct investigative efforts in and around the area. Reportedly at one single spot, they have jumped upon a huge haul of arms and arsenals, accompanied by CPI(M) party flags, leaflets etc., and more strikingly helmets and other accessories that are only used by the police. They have arrested at least 10 people from the spot, who have confessed to be CPI(M) cadres brought there from different places other than the locality. All this came from a brickyard, which was used as a centre for carrying out the attack. The evidences unequivocally corroborate the allegations that CPI(M) activists, in disguise of police and using materials of the force were largely involved in the operation to "occupy" Nandigram to quote the expression from the Home Secretary, an active accomplice of the event. The CBI team has already revealed, though in a fraction only, the gravity and ghastliness of the situation. Yet it is feared in all quarters that the way

the administration is cleverly non-cooperating with the team, the way the party CPI(M) is pushing its cadres to submit concocted versions of the incident, the terror they are maintaining in the area to prevent the real victims from coming out with their accounts, the way the Congress ministers and leaders of the UPA government at the centre are parroting the reports and accounts provided to them by the CPI(M) government, precisely the force that has perpetrated the crime, the way those UPA leaders and ministers are appeasing the CPI(M) on which it depends for its survival: in face of all these CBI would never be keen to find out the total truth.

Defying hoodwinking of government, movement goes on

Singur-Nandigram episodes are far from being settled. The government and CPI(M) are still trying to hoodwink people. They are washing their hands off by only expressing that the incident was 'sad'; they announce withdrawal of police in phases, in the same way as Bush announces withdrawal of soldiers from Iraq in phases. While the whole state demands resignation of the CPI(M) government and its Chief minister, they, including their leaders like the General Secretary of CPI(M) Prakash Karat ignore it with cool, calculated indifference. Instead, they try to confuse people by their arguments, that there was no rule of law during the last two months in Nandigram and that their supporters were driven away from there. The police operation was meant to establish the rule of law and reinstate their displaced cadres and supporters. It has already been mentioned that the routine administrative work was all the time on during this period. It has also been indicated what made the villagers try to prevent police from entering into their area; they feared that the force will have the hoodlums in their trail, in disguise of police or else. That their fear was not baseless has been proved beyond doubt. It was those hoodlums or their accomplices inside Nandigram area, who fled from the area, afraid of people's wrath. And it is for these reasons, to make road for those goons to reenter

and "occupy" the area, as the Home Secretary describes the purpose, under the cover of equally criminal police force that CPI(M) and its government undertook such a reprehensible heinous inhuman act, and now even in the face of country-wide condemnation are dishing out pointless arguments to confuse people. On the other hand, people of Nandigram under the leadership of the BUPC could rise up against the CPI(M) goons once again. It remains for them to realize the plain facts. Sweat of their brow has made the land of Nandigram fertile. The land has provided the milk of life for them. Now when that land is being snatched away from them on the plea of fake industrialization, they cannot but rise up in determined resistance. The brute force of the fascist CPI(M) has brought unthinkable sufferings on them. We assure them, on behalf of people of the entire state, that they are not alone in their fight. All their tears and blood have soaked deep into the soil of not just their locality or the district; beneath the cover of the fertile land of the entire state which harbours, nurtures and promotes protest and resistance their tears and blood have spread from the Himalaya to the Bay of Bengal, from the rough rocky lands of the west to the soft, muddy fields of the east. It has rejuvenated the fighting spirit of people that is not going to be cowed down or befooled by the tricks and sticks of CPI(M). It has resurrected the conscience of the democratic-minded people. The entire West Bengal including the hapless people of Nandigram and Singur, simmering with indignation, must now prepare for a long sustained organized struggle not just at Singur or Nandigram, but anywhere and everywhere throughout the state if the government dares to grab lands of peasants. We raise the demand on their behalf that the government must immediately scrap SEZ projects, must declare that no fertile agricultural land will be acquired in the name of fake industrialization, really intending to develop luxurious real estates, shopping malls, swimming pools, hotels and such infrastructural facilities for

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Results of recent Assembly Elections

Left-democratic movement coupled with fierce ideological struggle — sole deterrent to communal politics

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movement and gave a call to fight the elections in the continuation of and conducive to the same against both the Congress and BJP. But the CPI(M) and its associates instead argued that if they could strike an entente with the Congress (whom they suddenly found to be 'secular' and hence an ally in the fight against communalism) and somehow manage to inflict an electoral defeat to the BJP, the latter would be wiped out from the scene. In fact they under the pretext of resisting the RSS-BJP did finalize an alliance with the utterly anti-people Congress, whose hands were also tainted with communal blood and indicated the same to be the essence of their present political line. The CPI(M) leaders preferred to completely ignore the dirty trick that the ruling bourgeoisie was playing in making its subservient political forces irrespective of hue stay afloat in parliamentary vote-politics and carve road to power by indulging in unabashed communalism-parochialism.

After the elections, the CPI (M) leaders apparently took upon themselves the responsibility of forming a Congress-led government in the name of containing BJP's communalism and then pledged to give full support to that government for full five year term. It was thus very clear that they were too eager to be partners of the bourgeois vote-based politics, albeit with their "left" signboard, for pelf and power and hence refrained from indulging in any activity that might irk the ruling capitalist class. On the other hand, we went on harping that if this menacing rise of arch communal BJP is to be resisted, there is no other way but to create the desired tide of left-democratic movement and simultaneously conduct a fierce ideological struggle right from the grass root level.

Left-Democratic movement—only course

History has proved how correct we had been and how wrong were they. Such an opportunistic role of the pseudo-Marxists have only helped the arch communalist RSS—BJP and other communal forces to

regroup and strike more grisly threatening to tear apart the very fabric of people's unity and solidarity. Today, as is evident to everybody, the CPI (M) leadership has completely sold itself to the ruling capitalists and is faithfully carrying out the dictations of domestic and foreign monopolists. Preferring to survive on the crumbs the CPI (M) leadership throws at them, its associates are also performing the role of bootlickers of the ruling class. So there is nothing to expect from these leaderships. On the other hand the communal-parochial slogans of the RSS-BJP and its allies have been slowly carrying out the people who are disgusted with the Congress after being completely ruined during its rule of last two years and a half. Encouraged at that, the BJP and its allies recouped themselves from the shock of defeat and began reasserting themselves on the communal-parochial overtone. The ruling bourgeois class which in its class interest wants the people to alternate between two of its chosen parties or combinations and thus remain ever arrested in the cobweb of two-party democracy backed them with necessary media and financial support. It is where the situation arising out of the menacing rise of communal BJP is so grave and fraught with a dangerous portent. So the essential task of combating BJP's communalism by building up the united conscious people's movement on true leftist principles befalls all who are seized with this problem and seeking a proper redressal. The cultural environment and mindset arising out of such a movement will give rise to a sense of belonging to each other and thereby forge a granite-strong unity among the participants irrespective of caste, creed or religion. This is how a bulwark against the polluting thoughts of communalism-fundamentalism can emerge out of this people's movement. We call upon the honest rank of the CPI(M) and its associates to seriously ponder over this crucial aspect in the perspective of fresh threat of resurgence of communal BJP and the saffron brigade.

Another hurdle before growth of left-democratic movement

In this regard, one more development has to be taken into cognizance and combated effectively both organizationally and ideologically. While the opportunistic and capitulating politics of the pseudo-lefts is a big impediment before building up this all important democratic movement based on correct leftist principles, there is another hurdle obstructing the process. As we have shown, in absence of such a left-democratic movement, the Hindutva zealots have been significantly advantaged in spreading poisonous communal message and keeping the religious minorities particularly the Muslims under continuous threat and intimidation. Faced with such a suffocating frightful situation, the minority people have been feeling extremely insecure apprehending attack on their life and property at any time under any pretext. They are neither given any security by the administration nor are they fortified in the vortex of an intense left-democratic movement which, if had assumed desired strength and momentum would have motivated the majority community people to come forward and protected their compatriots belonging to the minority community in the interest of the movement. It is in this vacuum that the vested interest among the minority people pretending as friends of these hapless and persecuted minority people and shedding crocodile tears for the utter distress and misery they have been languishing in, is stepping in and getting the opportunity to preach a sort of counter-communalism which in turn is again helping the RSS-BJP to buttress its odious agenda with yet more ferocity. These self-proclaimed minority-saviours who also have blessings of the ruling capitalist class have been trying to congregate the minority masses by either fomenting religious sentiment or giving direct call to assert their power on communal line. Thus, what is becoming causality in the process is the desired unity of the toiling masses irrespective of caste, creed and religion in their legitimate struggle against the common enemy

i.e. moribund decadent stinking capitalism spelling disaster in their lives irrespective of whether they belong to this or that religious group. This is how these forces like the protagonists of Hindutva, are also in effect helping the sinister bourgeois class design to throw spanner in the unity of the toiling people and have-nots, hiding the exploitative capitalist system from their eyes and thus weakening their struggle for emancipation. In many of the states, whether it is Assam, West Bengal or Kerala, these forces aided and abetted by the bourgeois class are trying to be at the centre stage of body-politic as representatives of the minorities and thereby create space in the corridors of power. If these forces which are no constituent of the left-democratic movement and hence seriously jeopardizing involvement of the minority people in the united democratic movement manage to win elections by inciting minority sentiment overtly or covertly, they can not be any different to rabid communalists like the RSS-BJP in so far as making electoral gains by inciting communal passion is concerned. Already there are instances where such forces after bagging a few seats playing the minority card underwent a volte-face to join hands with arch communal and parochial elements as well as outfits including traditional minority-bashers for pelf and power. So the minority people ought to be careful and alert about these kinds of pseudo-friends and must understand that they like their brethren belonging to the majority community are being pressed under the grinding wheel of exploitative capitalism which is the root of all evils stalking their lives and thus becoming victims of the same oppressive bourgeois class politics. So it is only expeditious growth of an intense united left-democratic movement embracing all segments of the toiling people rising above caste, creed or religion and seeking remedies to the burning problems of life that is what is to be longed and strived for since it can only provide all the legitimate weapons to fight all oppression, suppression and injustice including the demonic communal discrimination and persecution.

Thousands march in 9th March Mahamichhil in Calcutta

Mammoth indeed was the rally Calcutta witnessed on 9th March, 2007, since it left everyone wandering whether it was a one lakh or one and half a lakh-strong gathering and historical too, since it was a unique reflection of the hatred and rejection – people of the state felt against the Bengal government's policy of grabbing fertile farmland and brutal killing of peasants in the process.

The 'Mahamichhil' (mammoth rally) called upon by West Bengal

members held aloft a long banner (bearing the demands of the rally) behind which walked the central and state leaders. Then walked the rest people converging into the city from all parts of the state, representing all walks of life. Party workers of the districts one and all, supporters leaders and volunteers of the land protection movement were joined by workers from closed down factories and tea gardens braving hazards and hardship of the journey yet resolved to express

appreciative of the voluminous, well-decorated and disciplined rally as they were convinced of the seriousness and righteousness of the cause. Indignant at the betrayal of the parties they once sent to power, they have been, in even increasing number entrusting their confidence and trust in the SUCI which found an expressions on the 9th thus "Once CPI(M) was the biggest party (in the state), I predict thereby in near future, SUCI will turn biggest of

On the platform erected at Chowringhee, were seated Comrades Provash Ghosh and Asit Bhattacharya, Central Committee members, Comrades Ranjit Dhar, Manik Mukerjee, and Prativa Mukherjee, State secretariat members. Comrade Prativa Mukherjee in her inspiring address emphasized that when people are roused under the right leadership, equipped with correct ideology and ethics, there is no force which can defeat or suppress them as is



State Committee of our party, SUCI, carried along with, the memorandum, bearing signatures of more than one crore people, collected diligently and extensively over the months as a testimony to the all-out rejection and protest against forcible acquisition of agricultural lands, including those at Singur and Nandigram. The memorandum also demanded reopening of closed factories, (which is not less than 56000), and setting up of industries in districts where there is none, as well as job for retrenched workers.

The rally was preceded by a series of programmes of mass campaign like demonstrations, street meetings and public meetings over the months, where our leaders went on to expose the anti-people and anti-workers-peasant policies of parties in power which as shameless servitors of the capitalist class have resorted to tactless deception on the one hand and autocratic oppression on the other, with police and goons set on to destroy resistance movement of the people and gag the voice of opposition as a whole. The mammoth rally of 9th March was the vivid expression of the people's justified grievance and wrath against the government and its police.

At the front, Komsomol

solidarity and support. So were students youths and women alike. There were the struggling peasants from Singur and Nandigram. Their valiant battle adding a new chapter in the history of mass movement, their very presence served as an inspiration to all. Among them was Meera Bhul, mother of the martyr of Singur movement — Rajkumar Bhul.

All along, people gathered on the side of the road was as

all" – an elderly person was heard remarking.

On the way, near the party's central office, the rally was greeted by Central and State Committee leaders Comrades Anil Sen, Sukomal Dasgupta, Yakub Pailan along with other elderly leaders and workers.

As the rally reached its destination, Esplanade – the site for many a battle in Calcutta, was turned into a virtual sea of people.

apparent today. She pointed out, while even on protest, the so-called opposition parties have governmental power in mind, SUCI alone aims at developing movements of the people one after the other conducive to the movement for revolutionary transformation of the society.

The meeting ended with the music squad rendering a song dedicated to the fighting peasants of Singur and Nandigram.

Nandigram-Singur shine as beacon of tomorrow's struggle

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tourist entertainment, must return to the Singur peasants the lands already grabbed from them; the government must arrest and stringently punish those responsible for the attack and the genocide at Nandigram, must provide the victims adequate compensation and must immediately take all steps to trace out those of Nandigram area still missing. At the same time, the peasants, be it of Singur or Nandigram or elsewhere in the state as also the people at large must realize that to fight for life and livelihood against a fascist force of the kind of CPI(M), aided and abetted by, that is backed by and working for the capitalist class of

the land and abroad and their henchmen, it is necessary to develop people's own power, by forming people's committees at the grassroot level, develop and strengthen the volunteer force and carry on the movements united and organized. At the same time, it is very important that the question of who leads the struggle must be attended to. It is painful that even in this movement costing so many lives, such forces as are basically rightist, have already sneaked into and have made room. So, the struggling peasants must recall the warnings raised by the great proletarian leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh that to reach its cherished ends, any mass movement

must have the revolutionary leadership established before it. Only thereby it can be freed of anti-people rightist or such social democratic forces that can lead the movement astray with a view to fulfilling their own petty parliamentary interests and thus to serving the same capitalist class, for which CPI(M) is now working. It is only a movement under a revolutionary leadership, that can develop on such lofty morale and culture that will steel people to make settled facts unsettled, to make the fiercest enemy beat retreat.

It is the people who speak the last word. Victory awaits for them to wrest it!

Mammoth Rally by Artistes, Cultural Activists and Intellectuals against Nandigram Genocide

Nandigram genocide, perpetrated jointly by the CPI(M) government and the party's killing brigade, the artistes, film and stage activists and intellectuals of West Bengal staged protest and condemnation on March 15 and 17. A mammoth silent demonstration on 17 March led by poet Tarun Sanyal, energy scientist Dr. Sujay Bose, litterateur Mahasweta Devi, eminent cultural activist Manik Mukherjee, film director Aparna Sen, singer and lyricist Pratul Mukherjee, painter Ganesh Haloi, stage director Bibhas Chakraborty, director-actor Kaushik Sen, writer Saibal Mitra, advocates Jaimalya Bagchi, Kalyan Banerjee Partha Sengupta, film maker Shatarupa Sanyal and others and joined by thousands of well-meaning people from schools and colleges, universities, institutes of sciences, centres of art, art colleges, cultural and drama group, physicians and lawyers etc., all wearing black badges marched along Bidhan Sarani and S. N. Banerjee Road amidst spell bound and grief-stricken, hundreds and hundreds of onlookers on the two sides of the road. Before the rally started a short meeting at College Square was held under the presidency of Tarun Sanyal, President of the Forum of Artists-

Cultural Activists-Intellectuals which was addressed by the aforesaid eminent personalities and a few others. Shri Bibhas Chakraborty observed this heinous crime of Buddhadev Bhattacharjee government is reflecting an abysmal low cultural standard of it. Shri Ganesh Haloi said, this barbarous genocide has stunned him deeply. Jaimalya Bagchi said, as because this government does enjoy any mass support it also does not feel any compunction for this killing. The government is trying to set in 'rule of law' turning water of Haldi river red. Mahasweta Devi pointed out that it was women who all along remained in the forefront. Aparna Sen, pointing to the killing by the CPI(M) cadres hand in glove with the police demanded stoppage of deployment of party cadres in suppressing any movement. Pratul Mukhopadhyay lamented, we have reached again after five years but in Bengal. One Sandhya Das, a peasant housewife from Nandigram, narrated her horrifying experience of seeing killing spree by the police and CPI(M) goons combine. She told how they buried bodies of children covered with salt and how they demonically tore apart babies in front of the mothers ! Manik Mukherjee firmly opined, it is futile

SUCI strongly condemns Nandigram genocide and demands immediate resignation of the culprit CPI(M)-led West Bengal government

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on March 15, 2007 strongly condemned the wanton shooting down of innocent unarmed women, children and poor peasants by the Police at Nandigram on March 14, 2007, at the behest of the CPI(M)-led government of West Bengal. This fascistic course of action that the pseudo-communist government of West Bengal has resorted to for forcibly snatching cultivable land and homestead of the peasants to satiate the lust of the land-hungry greedy domestic as well as foreign monopolists pointedly and clearly brings out that having betrayed the cause of the people, it has virtually declared a war against the poor and middle peasants, observed Comrade Mukherjee. By indulging in such a heinous crime of engaging thousands of Police and armed party storm-troopers to mount such a savage attack on the hapless downtrodden rural poor seeking to protect their life and livelihood, the CPI(M), added Comrade Mukherjee, has once again brought to the fore that underneath its 'Marxist and communist' cloak lies a faithful servitor of the ruling capitalist class who is prepared to go to any extent to prove its loyalty to its masters.

Demanding immediate end to this barbaric fascistic armed operation Comrade Mukherjee called upon the people of the state carrying a glorious tradition of firmly raising voice of protest against all sorts of injustice and felonious acts to rise in revolt against this anti-people pro-capitalist government and demand in unequivocal term its immediate resignation.

to accuse Buddhadev Bhattacharjee personally for, all he did, he did in concurrence with his party's Polit Bureau and at the dictate of the ruling class. So we must demand resignation of this killer government. He informed that two housewives of Nandigram broke down in tears before Comrade Debaprasad Sarkar, MLA when they were depicting how the CPI(M) dressed in police uniforms but with chappal broke into their houses and

raped them during the police-CPI(M) carnage on the fateful day. The CPI(M) party and its government have stooped to such a low.

In the meeting poet Tarun Sanyal announced that he had surrendered his *Rabindra Puraskar* in protest against the Nandigram genocide by the CPI(M) government. It also announced and informed that litterateur Nabarun Bhattacharya had surrendered his *Bankim Purushkar* and would donate the prize money for the victims of Nandigram; poet Sankha Ghosh resigned from the post of Vice-President of Bangla Academy, Ashrukumar Shikdar and some others also resigned from the membership of the same, Shashi Anand resigned from the membership post of the West Bengal Film Development Corporation.

On behalf of the Forum gave a call for donating to the fund to be built to help the victims of Nandigram and people on the roadside donated generously during the passage of the demonstration all-through up to Rani Rashmoni at Esplanade. The demonstration ended there.

Demonstration on 17 March organized by Forum of Artists-Cultural Activists-Intellectuals against Nandigram Genocide

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