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By speeding up the supplanting of workers by machinery and by creating wealth at one extreme and poverty at the other, the accumulation of capital also gives rise to what is called the “reserve army of labour”, to the “relative surplus” of workers, or “capitalist overpopulation”, which assumes the most diverse forms and enables capital to expand production extremely rapidly. In conjunction with credit facilities and the accumulation of capital in the form of means of production, this incidentally is the key to an understanding of the crises of overproduction which occur periodically in capitalist countries — at first at an average of every 10 years, and later at more lengthy and less definite intervals.

— V. I. Lenin
Works, Vol. 21, p-64

Israel must be forced to stop naked aggression against Palestinian people of Gaza

The recent fresh offensive of the Zionist Israel against the Palestinians in the Gaza strip, launched with all-out moral-material support and encouragement from particularly the US imperialists as also other big imperialist powers, has surpassed all its records of ruthless retribution. It marks itself as a mindless state-terrorism designed to annihilate the enemy and terrorise an entire population of innocent civilians. It is an arrogant blitzkrieg, pronouncing “all-out war against Hamas and its kind” to be carried out till “all the goals of the operation are achieved”. It figures as the bloodiest in the near past for the Palestinians. It takes place in a strip of coastal land called Gaza, often referred as ‘the biggest concentration camp in the world’, where nearly a million and a half Palestinian people have been living under siege by the Israelis for a year and a half, with their life brought close to a collapse as the Israeli blockade deprives the population of food and basic amenities. Further, the brigandage emerges as a culmination of continuous attempts by the Zionist Israeli regime to assassinate leaders and activists of the Hamas, ever since it came to power on people’s mandate in Palestine.

And how ferocious and brute the present attack has been?

A simple remark from a Gazan civilian expresses the condition in its essence: “We used

to plan our lives day by day. Now, it’s hour by hour.” Since launched on December 27, the assault included relentless air strikes along with bombardment from naval warships in the sea, intensified and followed by a massive ground operation with infantry, tank and artillery strikes under cover of helicopters from the air. In less than a fortnight, it has taken a toll of more than thousand Palestinian lives, dozens of which have been women and children, along with more than a few thousand wounded, most of them grievously. Hospitals were overwhelmed and morgues overflowing. Children of Gaza already suffering on account of the relentless Israeli siege, were subjected to widespread deafness and trauma from the daily sonic booms created on purpose by Israeli air force jets to terrorise the population. Billowing smoke and fire of devastation hung over the localities. Such a carnage was perpetrated by a demonic military assault. The Israeli aircraft used “bunker-buster” bombs, GBU-39, recently acquired from the U.S. to penetrate underground locations. Aided and abetted by the Global Positioning System (GPS), they were meant to destroy the network of tunnels at the Raffah border with Egypt, that serves as lifeline for supplies for Gaza under Israeli siege. Besides, Israeli aircraft including scores of F-16 fighter jets and Apache

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SATYAM SCAM PROVED AGAIN

Indian capitalism submerged in morass of corruption

Reacting to the horrendous financial scam of Satyam Computers, one of the largest Indian IT companies, that has come to light, Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on January 8, 2009 said that this divulgence has proved how corruption has not only devoured but is driving the crisis-ridden moribund decadent capitalist economy of our country to wreak havoc in people’s life. With omnipresence of a plethora of regulating agencies in the form of Registrar of Companies, Securities and Exchange Board of India, Reserve Bank of India, Institute of

Chartered Accountants of India, Company Law Board and above all the government of India with its various intelligence as well as vigilance wings, there is not even an iota of scope to think that this biggest corporate fraud involving, as revealed so far, over 7,000 crores of rupees has occurred without the knowledge, if not indulgence of all of them, remarked Comrade Mukherjee. No explanation, so-called investigation, plea or excuse can convince anyone that systematic accounting irregularities, fictitious declaration of assets including cash in hand, gross understatement of liabilities and

swindling of funds that have left lakhs of investors, over 50,000 staffers and a host of business associates and stakeholders out in the cold, have evaded notice of one and all, asserted Comrade Mukherjee. But for the self-confession of the company chief, the skeletons would have continued to be in the cupboard. It is no secret that under the camouflage of high-sounding terminologies of stringent corporate governance, social responsibility of business, prudent disclosure norms and transparency, many large corporates in connivance with the utterly corrupt

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The aggressor and the attacked cannot be equated on any count

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helicopters, as well as tanks have pounded, pulverized and flattened hundreds of sites on the ground including buildings, police compounds, fire stations, homes of militants, Hamas-run mosques, schools and university buildings, with most shelling occurring in residential areas. Aware of their crime, the Israelis justified themselves saying that 'Hamas uses civilians as human shields,' or that the Hamas militants fire rockets from residential areas, but did not allow foreign journalists to enter Gaza to see the truth. The stark reality was that, with some 1.5 million Gazans crammed into a sliver of land 40 kilometers long and just 5 to 12 kilometers wide, military targets and civilians would naturally tend to exist side by side. Knowing it well, the Israelis bandits made the civilians their targets to pay them with a sort of 'collective punishment'. They were subject to the brute air-raids or artillery pounding of the Israeli brigand even during busy hours of the day. Even UN or other humanitarian or relief missions were not spared. The outcome was devastating and pathetic. Not only has the Hamas' infrastructure to rule been 'badly impaired' and their weapons development facilities 'wiped out', supply line of tunnels badly damaged, many senior leaders and activists as also scores of securitymen killed. From this heinous inhuman onslaught, the civilians at large including innocent women and children have met the same fate. This has prompted Chris Gunness, a spokesman for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, to demand "Grave question marks hang over this killing ...There must be an investigation and the facts must get out. There must be accountability." The well-known American human rights activist and academic Richard Falk working on the situation in the occupied territories, including Gaza, demanded of the U.N.'s International Criminal Court to investigate Israel's policies in regard to the Palestinians. Both Falk and the UN special rapporteur on human rights in the occupied territories, himself a Jewish American, could not but pronounce that Israel's policies in Gaza, including imposition of collective punishment

on the people of Gaza was a crime against humanity. Both of them, have since been expelled from Israel. On the contrary, attitude of the US and other imperialists was amply evident when they rejected the draft resolution circulated by Libya on behalf of the 22-member Arab League in the United Nations and was supported by South Africa and Indonesia. In the Security Council the US Ambassador ignored it and both him and the US president, George Bush instead squarely blamed firing of rockets by Hamas as instigation. Neither of them mentioned that an Israeli army incursion into Gaza on November 4 after the expiry of a six-month ceasefire in Gaza, led to a resumption of Palestinian rocket fire into Israel.

In fact, this US attitude set the tune of an orchestrated campaign in the imperialist-controlled media, which accompanied the present banditry of the Zionist Israeli rulers since its inception. It tried to make world people believe that this dastardly act of the Zionist Israeli brigand was a mere retaliation to unprovoked rocket firing by the Hamas activists into the southern parts of Israel. However, in face of mounting people's opinion against Israeli attack and particularly civilian killing, the campaign had to shift its position and hold both the Israeli rulers and the Hamas responsible for the present crisis, thereby equating the aggressor and the attacked.

To get further at the crux of the issue, we must cast a hurried look into the history.

As it is well known, the state of Israel was born in 1948 only. But before that Palestine was already there with beautiful habitations of Arabs living for centuries. For long it was a part of the Turk Ottoman empire. Jewish people who had once lived there spread out in different parts of the globe. About half a century before the Israel state was established, there had developed the Zionist political movement from amongst the European Jews that floated the idea for a Jewish state in Palestine for the Jewish community. As the campaign indoctrinated with religious and ethnic feelings gathered momentum, Jewish settlers migrated into Palestine. They were largely affluent and plantation

owners requiring vast land and labour. Arab villagers provided the labour force for them, cheap and hard-working. With time Zionism emerged with more and more colonialist trend, hostile in attitude towards the local Arab inhabitants. The settlers targeted the lands made habitable by the Arabs through their hard work. By the Ottoman rules, buying of lands from the Arabs was difficult. And so the settlers started using force as the means. For their purpose they raised and maintained underground private armies, that were really secret terrorist outfits to be used against the Arabs. The Arabs gradually lost their land and thus foothold. Jew villages were founded there. At every such settlement, there had been the Arab villages with villagers living normally. Yet when the settlers occupied the lands, they destroyed everything, every bit of building stones, even the graveyards that belonged to the Arabs, so much so that those villages were completely lost from history. The settlers could boastfully present to any visitor that they had built up their villages on a barren, vast land, nothing but a desert.

Naturally this produced indignation and resistance among the Arabs. But they were divided and disunited among themselves on tribal, ethnic and other grounds. Imperialist powers did not lose the scope of using such a favourable playground to give effect to their machinations. They took 'Palestine as a country without a nation', and encouraged colonialist infiltration of the Jewish settlers, carefully concealing to the world that there were resident Arabs who were being uprooted to make the land empty for the Jews.

After the first world war, Palestine came under the British rule. The British government declared its intentions in the Balfour Declaration, of sponsoring a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine. The Zionist design was thus endorsed. Even the League of Nations provided a mandate in favour of Britain to develop Palestine as a Jewish national home. But the relation between the British imperialists and the Zionists soon became strained, as the US imperialists started penetrating into the region. Zionist terrorist outfits, such as Irgun and others attacked

and assassinated British soldiers and administrators and perpetrated terror attacks against Arabs. Ultimately defying British opposition, the Zionist leadership openly met the US imperialist leaders.

After the second world war, through the machinations of the US imperialists, on November 29, 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in General Assembly Resolution 181. Finally, the state of Israel was established on May 15, 1948. The Arabs were opposed to either partition or a binational state, either way leading to the loss of their homeland. Thus war broke out between the Arabs and the Jews, and continued after the setting up of Israel state. In reality, it turned into massacres and massive forced eviction and expulsion of the Arabs. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs had to flee their homeland and take refuge in adjacent countries. Those still remaining were pushed back by the Zionist Israelis continuously into a smaller and smaller territory leading a life in refugee camps, which were nothing but ghettos.

On the other hand, the Zionist Israel state, itself a product of imperialist machinations, was liberally supported and aided, militarily-materially and politically, particularly by the US, as also other imperialists. With those helps and supports, Israel armed itself with sophisticated and most lethal arms-ammunitions, only to grow into world's one of the most deadly war-monger forces with immense espionage, subversive and striking power, a veritable threat to the existence of not just the Palestinians, but all the Arab countries of the Middle East. As a typical militarist, expansionist brigand, the Zionists acquired newer and newer areas adding them to their occupied territories. Each such occupation meant expulsion and eviction of more and more Arabs. To crush any and every Arab opposition and resistance against occupation and expulsion, the Zionists, along with their mentor US imperialists, designated Arab resistance as acts of 'terrorism' and unleashed the worst kind of state terror on the Arabs in the occupied territories as a sort of 'collective

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Dangerous Portend of Raj Thackeray's Parochial Stir in Maharashtra

Immediately before a ghastly terror-strike shook and shocked the city of Mumbai in end-November last leaving a trail of death, destruction, panic and trauma, Maharashtra had been gripped by resurgence of regional-parochial-chauvinist frenzy spearheaded by Maharashtra Navanirman Sena (MNS), new outfit floated by Raj Thackeray in 2006, the former Shiv Sena leader, after he fell out with his parent organization. But his disagreement was not on any ideological question but over leadership, to be more precise as to who would step into the shoes of Balasaheb Thackeray, the Shiv Sena supremo, in the days to come. With Uddhav Thackeray, Balasaheb's son emerging as a strong contender, Raj, Balasaheb's nephew, an aspirant for the post, engineered a split in the party and was out to prove that he and his faction only are the true champions of, what they call, 'interest of Marathi *manus*' (Maharashtrian people) the plank on which once emerged Shiv Sena in the 1960s.

MNS sponsored violence

Following the footsteps of Shiv Sena, Raj also introduced the politics of his new outfit by perpetrating a spate of violence. In last February, there were sporadic incidents of attacking North Indian people in Mumbai, in which 40 taxis were damaged, taxi-drivers assaulted, and the office of the taxi-men's union and a garment shop vandalized. Such incidents were intermittent thereafter as well. It was also attempted to spread the violence to other parts of the state. In October, the MNS attacked 13 Railway Recruitment Board examination centres in suburban Mumbai and Thane district and disrupted the examinations protesting against "inadequate" representation of Maharashtrians among the candidates. Raj bluntly justified the attacks claiming that advertisements for recruitment had not been placed in Marathi newspapers. Not only that. To exacerbate the tension and make Bihari people the target of attack, he compared the famous festival of 'Chhath' of North India to a drama and made fun of it. He also lashed out at Jaya Bachchan, noted film actress, for saying in a function that as she was an MP from Uttar Pradesh, she would prefer to speak in Hindi. Such was the fury that even film personality Amitava Bachchan had to tender apology for the episode. On October 28, a person from Uttar Pradesh, was lynched after a minor scuffle in a local train in Mumbai. All this evidently was done in a planned coordinated manner to rake up a chauvinist hysteria particularly when elections to the state assembly were drawing near.

As a reaction to the MNS-sponsored violence, passions ran high in North India. Stray incidents

of attack on Maharashtrian families domiciled in North Indian states were also reported. And to fish in the troubled water, regional political parties of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh like RJD, Samajwadi Party, Janta Dal (United) and others began to foment counter-sectarian feeling to secure their respective vote banks. Evidently, so-called steps to protect the interest of Marathi-speaking people had in fact precipitated disaffection and disharmony among the various sections of toiling masses spread over the country and provoked various parochial-separatist-chauvinist forces to raise their ugly head. Strangely enough, despite the incendiary potential of such development being well-known to all and inflamed passion already raging, there has been no effective voice raised against the mendacious flaunting of Raj and others either inside or outside parliament even by the pseudo-Marxists like CPI (M), CPI pretending to be staunchly anti-communal.

Shiv Sena's emergence as a regional-parochial force

In this backdrop, before we undertake an in-depth analysis of Raj's agenda and other related issues that have serious ramifications in the socio-political milieu obtaining in the country today, it is imperative to recall the history of his parentage i.e. Shiv Sena. As everyone knows, Shiv Sena was launched by Balasaheb and his followers in 1966 capitalizing on the brewing discontent and a feeling of disempowerment by the Maharashtrian middle class and unemployed. Like their fellow countrymen irrespective of region, religion or language, Maharashtrian people were also reeling under the exploitative capitalist rule set up in the country after independence. Balasaheb could make out that as

there was no genuine people's movement along right track to press for the just demands and correctly articulate the true aspiration of the suffering Maharashtrian people, there was a scope for playing Marathi-sentiment from a sectarian outlook and carve out a space in regional vote-politics. Accordingly, the political approach of the Shiv Sena was centred around the concept of *bhumipur* (sons of the soil), the idea that Maharashtra inherently belonged to the Marathi community but the native Marathi people in their own state are marginalized by migrants from other states or 'outsiders'. So instead of pursuing the desired political line that could make the toiling Marathi people aware of the real cause of their plight and misery, Shiv Sena, from its narrow sectarian-chauvinistic mooring, pointed finger at the migrant South Indian and Gujarati populace. Shiv Sena also released a vigorous propaganda that Maharashtrians were "subalterns" economically in their own state. It tried to fan up regional sentiment by saying that Mumbai, the "jewel in the crown", was not "Marathi enough" as its economic levers were controlled by Gujarati and Marwari businessmen. It also sought to impress upon the common Marathi-speaking people that but for the influx from other states into the city of Mumbai, India's commercial capital, the economic prosperity of Mumbai could have percolated to the 'sons of the soil'. Alongside, it went full-throttle in fanning up anti-Muslim hatred. A large number of disgruntled and unemployed Marathi youths, in absence of suitable alternative and desired political consciousness, were drawn into the fold of Shiv Sena being charged by Thackeray's anti-migrant oratory, inflammatory slogans and derogatory description of South Indian languages. Responding to his call, they got involved in various attacks against the South Indians, Gujaratis and later North Indians including physical assaults and vandalizing properties. Lethal attacks were carried out on underprivileged working-class South Indians active in Mumbai's once vibrant trade union movement. Shiv Sena cadres were involved in a series of violent conflicts with the leftist trade union activists and were even

charged with murder of prominent trade union leaders. The insidious potential of Shiv Sena line was glaring when similar parochial-chauvinist groups in the name of 'Sena' appeared in different parts of the country. For example a group called Lachit Sena broke the surface in Assam and began running amuck people it branded as enemies.

Shiv Sena's embrace of communal Hindutva

While Maharashtrian chauvinism was meant to be an exclusive label initially, the Shiv Sena supremo later found that mingling hard core Hindutva with *Marathi manus* slogan would prove to be further advantageous in fomenting blind sectarian passion. So he made Shiv Sena embrace Hindutva after a long spell in the wilderness in the 1970s. And to assert its *Hindu Marathi* credential, he let loose its activists to inflict countless atrocities and iniquities upon Mumbai and its citizens by attacking Muslims and non-Marathi people residing in the city for decades. Once Shiv Sena leadership found that this strategy of regional-religious fanaticism was working well in netting electoral gains and securing backing of the forces of reaction, Shiv Sena supremo enrolled the outfit as a constituent of *Sangh Parivar*, mascot of Hindu fundamentalism in the country. Consequent upon that, Shiv Sena apart from intensifying anti-Muslim hate campaign also got associated with planned violence against Muslims including killing. Simultaneously, it made it a point to adopt an anti-Pakistan posture purely from communal angle and clamoured for India's existence as a Hindu nation. In 1987, 125 Shiv Sena activists participated in what was termed "morale boosting" activities aimed at strengthening the Hindu community in Punjab during the 1980s insurgency there. It has engineered many anti-Muslim riots in the state, including the Mumbai riots of the late 1960s and the Bhiwandi riots in 1984. Frenzied Shiv Sena storm-troopers were in the forefront of the Hindutva zealots who razed historic Babri Masjid to the ground in December 1992. Following that, Shiv Sena activists basking under their shelter of *Sangh Parivar* were found to openly orchestrate brutal anti-Muslim carnage in Mumbai in connivance with the then Shiv Sena-led state government that led to 1,500 killings. Continues since then with

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Raj Thackeray inciting chauvinist hysteria and large scale vandalism to assert himself

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escalated pitch explosive parochial-communal howling and xenophobic violence against religious minorities and migrants.

Shiv Sena leaders prospered but not people

Thus, though many of the social gains Maharashtra made through arduous struggle of renowned social reformers spurred by *Enlightenment* — values, including reason, liberty, equality and tolerance, were rolled back. Balasaheb and his party stormed into the centrestage of regional vote politics. In alliance with BJP, Shiv Sena won the 1995 Maharashtra state elections and was saddled in power. Shiv Sena also shared power at the Centre as partner of BJP-led NDA from 1999 to 2004. It continues to have an uninterrupted spell in Mumbai Municipal Corporation for last 15 years. But people of Maharashtra could hardly distinguish between the rules of Shiv Sena-BJP coalition and erstwhile Congress regimes in so far as deprivations, deceptions and delusions are concerned.

With much fanfare, Shiv Sena government in the nineties announced *zunka bhakar* scheme stating that it would bring cheap, nutritious, traditional food to the masses and also help small entrepreneurs, particularly the sons of the soil, to have a good source of earning. No one knows what has been the fate of the scheme and how many of these stalls have benefited the sons of the soil. In 1996, Raj Thackeray, then most trusted right-hand man of Balasaheb for executing the incendiary agenda of Shiv Sena, organized a performance of rock star Michael Jackson in Mumbai to raise funds for the Shiv Udyog Sena (SUS), an organization started by him for the express purpose of generating employment for Marathi youth. Jackson performed to a packed stadium, but the SUS claimed the concert generated no funds. The SUS folded up quietly with no public accountability. So the people began to get disillusioned and slowly drifted away from Shiv Sena fold. Sensing electoral reverse, Shiv Sena adopted a new game plan, the *Mee Mumbaikar* (I am a resident of Mumbai) campaign feigning that it was throwing out regional differences and embracing all those who lived and worked in Mumbai.

But Mumbai residents were not convinced of the bona fide of its intention. That facade was exposed in 2003 when Shiv Sena cadres led by Raj Thackeray attacked North Indians arriving in Mumbai to sit in the Railway Recruitment Board's examinations. Thus, the atmosphere was kept surcharged with communal-parochial slogan and a persistent terror, tension and feeling of insecurity overawed the populace. The common people found that while there was no succour brought to them, the Sena leaders and leading activists were showered with all material gains, pelf and power. The lifestyle and property making of front ranking Sena leaders including Raj has been raising many eyebrows. Disillusioned, the people of Maharashtra voted against Sena-BJP coalition in 2004 assembly polls. At Centre also, the combine faced defeat and had to relinquish the hot seat of government.

Birth of Raj Thackeray's MNS

Being ousted from power, Shiv Sena soon landed in a topsy-turvy situation. Factional feuds reached a dizzy height with prominent functionaries quitting the party. Moreover, with Balasaheb Thackeray ageing and ailing, the conflict between Raj and Uddhav as to who would be the heir-apparent of Balasaheb became thoroughly exposed. Unable to outwit Uddhav backed by Balasaheb in the game, Raj left Shiv Sena and announced launch of MNS. It was sought to emphasize that Raj Thackeray's break with the Shiv Sena meant a break with the Sena's ways too. In fact, Raj projected himself more as a committed social worker than as a politician by speaking about MNS workers giving protection to women commuters on local trains, of the cadres acting as a back-up for the overworked police force, of the rights of senior citizens to safety, of farmers to electricity, and of the youth to employment. In short, he pretended to undertake an agenda of *navnirman* (rebuilding). But it took barely few months for the real intent to come to light. Raj and its MNS had no qualms in openly flaunting the old parochial-chauvinist agenda of Shiv Sena and making everyone know that quintessence of their politics, too, was mindless violence and wanton hatred.

Riding on raked up ultra-

chauvinist-regional slogan, Raj also tasted minor electoral success last year in few Municipal elections. But that was not what Raj would be satisfied with. With the Assembly elections scheduled in early next year, an issue was needed to rally confused Marathi-speaking populace behind the party on a larger scale. So a cynical tactic by embracing the ultra-chauvinist platform became necessary. Hence, as a curtain-raiser, fresh dose of anti-North Indian particularly anti-Bihari violence was precipitated by MNS hoodlums in Mumbai alleging that jobs which Maharashtra should get by right as 'sons of the soil' is being taken away by others. Notably, neither the central nor the state governments, both led by Congress, most trusted representative of the ruling bourgeoisie, took any effective step to curb such vandalism and rancorous bellicosity of Raj lest it should alienate the Marathi-speaking people in an election year.

Raj's arguments

Raj contends that he has been doing whatever should be done for the betterment of Maharashtra. He would not let 'outsiders' take away from them what has been essentially of the Maharashtra and flourish at their expense. Elsewhere he alleged that with migrants from other states flocking to Mumbai, the culture of Maharashtra is under threat. Moreover, because of such large-scale 'influx,' Maharashtra is being reduced to minority in Mumbai and hence denied what would have been otherwise due to them. He also on occasions lambasted the Bombay Film Industry or 'Bollywood' for promoting vile 'Hindi' culture. On a closer examination, it will be found that Raj's views are mere reiteration of the arguments put forth by Balasaheb and his Shiv Sena in support of their narrow sectarian parochial-chauvinistic agenda. So except name, Raj's MNS is no different from its pedigree. To any discerning mind, it becomes clear that Raj is trying to outmaneuver Shiv Sena in becoming the main face of regional-parochial politics in the state by inciting same old chauvinist hysteria, fanning blind passion and unleashing anti-migrant tirade coupled with large scale vandalism as well as violence as means to assert itself.

What has been fallout of communal-parochial frenzy?

Before we proceed to analyze Raj's contentions and espousals on the anvil of logic and reason and linked to the socio-political situation obtaining today, let us focus on the fallout of such venomous parochial-communal preachings. Like other parts of the country, the toiling Maharashtra people have also been increasingly suffering from abject poverty, rapidly dwindling income, spurt in unemployment and job loss, skyrocketing of prices of essential commodities, absence of necessary education, healthcare, sanitation, water supply, electricity and other civic amenities. Denied of remunerative price for the crops and hence unable to repay loan they take to meet the escalating cost of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, the peasants are committing suicide. Dispossessed of land and starved of adequate scope of employment even as agricultural labour, rural poor are also migrating to the cities to somehow eke out a living there. But that too is eluding them with most of the labour-intensive industrial units are either getting closed or modernized with latest technology to drastically cut the number of workers. With the 'thumping success' of Shiv Sena or rise of MNS, is there any abatement to this stifling situation? Has there been any change in the lot of the suffering Marathi-speaking people in Mumbai and its agglomerates? Objective reality is no, not at all.

Rather, fallout of such overdose of malicious campaign is ruinous. If we turn to other parts of the country like the North-Indian states, it will be obvious what a heavy toll such communal-parochial frenzy is taking on the life and livelihood of the common innocent people. Raising the same bogey of the local people getting outnumbered because of incessant influx of migrants from other corners of the country, extreme separatist-chauvinistic-parochial forces are practically holding people to ransom. Organized attacks, planned killing, loot, plunder are rampant. A persistent fear and tension is haunting people. Citing the limitless deprivation of the local people particularly the backward strata, even secessionist forces have not only been raising their ugly head

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Crass communal-parochial forces are pitting people against people

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but making decisive inroad into the minds of the people. Thus entire North-East has become a hot bed of divisive politics and activities.

At peril in all this is the idea of the citizen's identification with, and proprietary for, democracy itself. While nothing tangible is coming out of this chauvinist-regional slogan and frenzy in so far as mitigating the burning problems of life is concerned, it is only generating fratricidal feuds, animus and mistrust among the oppressed Indians scattered in various parts of their own motherland. What the people want is not internecine clashes, not a perpetual tension and sense of fear haunting them all through over and above the misery and penury they are engulfed in. Except pitting one section of the people against the other, such insane flaunting of parochialism-communalism has begot nothing else. So what matters is to clearly understand where all these aberrations and deprivations are stemming from and how to remedy the same. Keeping this backdrop in mind, we now take up Raj's arguments for examination.

Question of marginalization because of migration

Let us take the issue of locals being numerically reduced to minority because of 'influx' and hence marginalized. In this regard, some very pertinent questions need to be seriously pondered over. India is an independent sovereign state that was set up following united struggle of all people of this land irrespective of caste, creed, religion, region or language to free their motherland from the yoke of foreign imperial rule. This urge was not of any particular community or religious or regional group but of all sections of the people pursuing a common cause. India today belongs to Indians no matter where they are domiciled, what languages they speak or what religious beliefs they profess. Obviously, any Indian has the full right to venture into any part of the country for education, employment or other purpose. Any move to debar any citizen from exercising this right under whatsoever pretext is akin to subversion of the democratic principle and denial of the very integrity of the country. If Indian citizens move or relocate themselves from one corner to the other of their own country today, how can that be

called an 'influx'? In that event, the very concept of united independent country gets negated and instead what gets approbation is the right of anyone disgruntled or aggrieved for whatsoever reason to secede. Surely, this is not in the interest of the common people who aspired and rightly so, to be united as citizens of one integrated country. Our venerated freedom fighters stood up against all kinds of sectarian attitudes and narrow mindedness and wanted that all kind of separatist walls between communities are demolished and solidarity of the Indian people having common Indian identity gets cemented. In fact free movement of people from one part to the other only helps the desired solidarity to be firmed up through intermingling, understanding each other's way of life, culture, values and so forth. On the contrary, arbitrary fiat to restrict people's free passage would only increase separatist mentality and widen chasm between inhabitants of different parts of this vast country. But the centralized operation of the exploitative capitalist rule will continue unabated.

Moreover, there is definite socio-economic reason for people to move to Maharashtra, particularly Mumbai. The state has been one of the most industrially developed ones in the country. Phenomenon of uneven development is a common feature of capitalism as the capitalist rulers prefer setting up industries only at places they find most suitable in every respect for earning maximum profit. Capitalist India has been no exception to that. So except some specified industrial belts and the big cities developing around them, the scope for employment has been insignificant if not nil in the other parts of the country. Hence, labour, both skilled and unskilled, from all parts of the country move to these industrial pockets and the sprawling metropolis like Mumbai, Calcutta or Delhi for job. With capitalism having long ago penetrated agriculture, more and more rural people are getting evicted from land. Starved of availability of job even as agricultural labour, a vast section of these landless jobless rural poor have also been rushing to the big cities and their outskirts in the hope of finding some means to make a living. It is compelling need of survival that makes them leave places of domicile and throng at relatively prosperous big cities. The issue has got another vital aspect. If

viewed in correct perspective, it can be easily found that wherever one gets engaged in any kind of productive activities, he does produce some goods or services through his labour power and thereby creates wealth and contributes to the economic development of that place. Very definitely, he exploits none but lives upon his own toil. For example, in Mumbai, the largely rural, unskilled and poor people of North Indian origin work in highly labour-intensive and low-paid occupations such as delivering newspapers and milk, vending vegetables and fish, or carrying heavy loads in which old settlers normally are not interested in. Without its northern migrants, Mumbai would grind to a halt. There can not be any clash over these questions among the toiling people eking out a living by selling labour power in this capitalist system and unitedly struggling against all injustices, deprivations and oppressions. Likewise, the very contention of one section of the people 'being outnumbered' because of free movement of others within the country actually mean that in India, Indians are being outnumbered by Indians. Incredible paradox! Apologists of such absurdity, in fact negates the very existence of India, aim and objective of glorious Indian freedom movement and a golden chapter of history. Hence, it is clear that the argument of economic conflict among the toiling people because of migration is a kind of parochial-communal teasing having no bearing to reality. By posing the question in such a misleading manner, the parochial-communal forces are shielding capitalist oppression and setting upon one section of the people against the other. In this connection, it is to be added that even campaign about migrants overtaking locals in Mumbai is mischievous. The proportion of migrants in Mumbai's population sharply declined from 66 per cent in 1961 to 43 per cent in 2001. The migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar constitute just 12 per cent of Mumbai population. (Praful Bidwai's article in Frontline, Volume 25 - Issue 05 March 01-14, 2008)

What may wonder many particularly the thinking mind is that how could the protagonists of communalism-parochialism get an access with such distortions and deceptions? Is it without any reason or there are definite factors working

to their advantage? In getting a correct answer to this question, we need to recall the invaluable analysis of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, founder General Secretary of SUCI and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era. He showed that because of definite socio-historical reason, the process of democratization of the society remained unfulfilled during the freedom movement. So though Indian people speaking different languages and professing different religions became a nation politically, they remained disunited by religion, caste, region, race, ethnicity and so forth. That has provided in independent India a fertile ground for all divisive forces to sprout, thrive and incite people on divisive lines.

Question of losing political power

So in every respect, the situation is grave and becoming yet more explosive with every passing day making people shiver and hold breath in apprehension of lethal attack on them anywhere, any moment, on any pretext. It is a spectre of horror haunting them round the clock. If the parochial-chauvinist thoughts, if allowed to spread unabated, will assume further alarming proportions gradually leading to separatist and then secessionist slogans as already heard in some parts of North East. It may take still further extremist postures. For example, though not that relevant in the context of Maharashtra right now, yet worth enough to be alerted of is the bogey been raised charging the migrants to be 'outsiders', sometimes branding them with malafide intention as 'foreigners' and above all, accusing them of snatching political power of local people. They are instigating local habitants by saying that as inevitable consequence of unrestricted influx of 'outsiders', they are going to be outnumbered and hence lose political power. Centering on this hysteria, they are plotting and executing internecine clashes and killings. Such questions admittedly are generating lot of confusions not only among politically backward famished people fidgeting for survival but even a section of intelligentsia. So it is pertinent to have due clarity on the issue by correctly searching out the truth on the anvil of Marxian science and make people aware of the same so as not be misled by malicious

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People's culture gets enriched through intermingling, not suppressed

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propaganda of divisive elements.

Before we enter into that discussion, we would like to point out that aim of the epoch-making Indian freedom struggle which stirred crores of people with patriotic fervour was not to give birth to political power of any particular province people, whether Bengal, Assam Punjab or Tamilnadu, but to create political power of Indian people—India that emerged out of this struggle as a united independent country comprising all provinces and through voluntary merger of all sections of the people living in different parts of the land and belonging to different castes, religions, ethnicities or languages. If being totally oblivious of this history, slogans are raised for political power of Bengal, Assam or Tamilnadu people, does it not strike at the very noble concept of the political power of Indian people that arose out of blood and toil of crores of freedom-seeking Indians? Such slogans are not only separatist but do smack of secessionism. With grave concern, we are finding that all parochial agitations are ultimately degenerating into that.

In dealing with such a crucial question, it is pertinent to recall what Lenin said long ago in regard to democracy. "If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of 'pure democracy' as long as different classes exist; we can only speak of class democracy. ... pure democracy is not only an ignorant phrase, revealing a lack of understanding both of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a thrice-empty phrase, ... mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers.... Bourgeois democracy ... under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for the exploited, for the poor." (*Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*) With this class outlook, we are to approach the question of political power. As students of Marxism-Leninism, we know that in a class-divided society, the question of political power is linked to state power. In a capitalist set up like ours, it is the ruling bourgeoisie which is in control of the state and hence the political power that it exercises through its various wings including its political representatives to coerce and suppress the exploited. So political power in the main is

concentrated in the hands of the ruling class while the exploited masses irrespective of caste, religion, region or ethnicity are denied and deprived of the same. Whatever little political power was available with the people in the form of democratic rights are also being gradually taken away by the ruling class to render the oppressed people powerless in every respect. So, people must first be clear about their class position, which class they belong to in this class-divided society, before approaching the question of political power. Since they are dispossessed of the political power that vests with the ruling bourgeoisie and bourgeois state albeit under the smokescreen of 'democracy', the oppressed toiling people must wrest political power from the unyielding hands of the ruling bourgeoisie. And to materialize that, it is imperative to smash the bourgeois state machine by revolution through intensification of class and mass struggles and in course of that give birth to people's own political power, one and indivisible for all irrespective of province, religion or language as was seen in great Soviet revolution and ultimately establish people's state. Though not exactly the same, yet, it may be added, that during the course of our freedom movement, the people of India fighting for a common cause rose above all distinctions to give birth to a kind of political power of their own and brought down colonial state. In this light, people must view the question of political power and not get swayed by foul and flawed campaign of the separatists-secessionists.

Issue of culture

Next we turn to the hue and cry raised by Raj that Maharashtra culture is under threat because inflow of other culture people from outside the province. This very perception of conflict between two people's culture is totally opposed to the objective law and process of growth and development of culture and hence trash and baseless. From the very infancy of human development, human beings, pitted against the vagaries of nature, united socially to be able to survive, and gather food, build shelter and produce. Centring around this common struggle against hostile nature and contradictions existing within society, language, thought, ideas, emotions, sense of ethics and morality, public conduct, etc.

gradually evolved and developed. Culture is nothing but the finest and most comprehensive manifestation of the spiritual (mental) functions of man. As society progresses, so also is developed the realm of culture moulded and remoulded in conformity with the laws of progress. In keeping with that, the various art-forms as aesthetically satisfying vehicles of communication of cultural thoughts also developed to make life more beautiful. The various forms, behavioural patterns and customs through which culture gets expressed in a particular phase of development disappear in course of progress to make way for newer modes of expression. There is nothing like eternal or immutable culture. Hence equating culture with some traditional rituals that might have lost relevance in the changing panorama or behavioural pattern alienated from the rising trend of social progress is unscientific, unhistorical.

As students of Marxism-Leninism, we also know that in a class-divided society like ours, there can not be any supra-class cultural thought. Either it is the desired culture of the exploited class who is historically poised to lead the struggle of progress of mankind and hence conducive to unhindered cultivation of mental faculties, freeing the mind from all sorts of bondages, shackles, backwardness and obduracy. Or it is the decadence of the ruling class, in the name of culture — the rotten thoughts about life peddled by this reactionary exploiter class hindering social advancement to perpetuate its oppressive rule. There can not be anything neutral in the sphere of culture. What we are talking about is the people's culture in varied forms and expressions. In multi-lingual, multi-religious India, various communities of people through their struggle in diverse socio-economic milieus have developed a set of their respective cultures which in terms of nature and character are people's cultures and manifest in their artistic creations, social practices and behaviours. More they come in close contact with each other in course of their common struggle for emancipation from the exploitative capitalist rule, more flourished will be their respective cultures by way of mutual give and take. In the process, what is complementary to social progress will exist and develop to attain new heights and

what is found to be inhibitive to the cause of social advancement will wither away. Even various art forms as aesthetic representation of respective people's cultures get mutual appreciation and provide mental refreshment and nourishment to each other. Maharashtra *Launi* dance is equally enjoyed by one and all in the country and even outside as Assamese *Bihu* or Punjabi *Bhangra*. Folk songs of Bengal or Maharashtra touch everyone. Similarly, we are regaled by Beethoven's compositions or Paul Robson's singing. Thus we see that the very proposition of Maharashtra culture being faced with any danger because of burgeoning population from other states does not have any scientific basis and only goes to convolute the whole issue. Again, Maharashtra has a rich cultural heritage which over the years has been further enriched through influence and assimilation of modern democratic thoughts. It just can not be washed out or wished away so easily. Judged in this context, the so-called sympathy that Raj Thackeray, his MNS or his parent Shiv Sena show for the Maharashtra culture proves to be a hoax. Let us put it straight. Had Raj been so concerned and touchy about Maharashtra culture, what prompted him to arrange a Michael Jackson show in Mumbai?

In this connection, it may be added that of late Raj and his MNS often lambaste Bollywood for promoting 'Hindi' culture and thus harming preservation of Maharashtra culture. This is another twist to reality. It is true that barring a few exceptions, most of the films produced in Bollywood are in Hindi so that it could get an all-India market. Alongside, a plethora of Marathi films also comes out of the studios of Bollywood which, save and except language, is no different to the mainly rotten stuff dished out in numbers to 'excite' the audience with overdose of sex and violence. What Bollywood generally promotes on that line of US-based Hollywood are to a large extent vile cultural distortions which moribund capitalism-imperialism fosters to kill sensibilities, finer feelings and sense of values among the masses, to make them fall victim to vulgar and base instincts, to emasculate them from within and dehumanize them so that they are dispossessed of the necessary mental sustenance to stand up and revolt against the exploitative capitalist rule. So the fight has to be

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Treachery, arrogance characterize Zionist Israel-US imperialist nexus

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punishment' to the entire population with a view to isolating the uncompromising fighters. They even perpetrated repeated barbarous incursions, invasions, occupations and sieges against other Arab countries on the plea that they had been lending support to the Palestinian liberation fighters and giving refuge to them. For example, in the 6-day war of 1967 Israel invaded and occupied parts of the neighbouring countries like Egypt, Syria or Lebanon.

Uprooted from home and livelihood, the Palestinian Arabs were thrown into a pathetic life of terrible destitution and uncertainty. In their frantic efforts to survive with freedom and dignity, they ultimately built up organized struggle under the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) with Yaser Arafat as their leader. What started as their war of resistance was transformed soon into a struggle with demands for their independent homeland, that is the Palestinian state, and right for the Arabs to their return to their homeland. They fought heroically true to their spirit. But unfortunately, the Arab world was marked by its disunity in its stand for the Palestinians. Besides, revisionist leadership that had assumed power in the then Soviet Union could not and did not put up any resolute stand in favour of the rightful national liberation struggle of the Palestinian Arabs for their independent homeland state against the brute aggressive expansionist US-Israel nexus. The Palestinian liberation movement thus could not make any substantial headway and lingered through the years with twists and turns.

Rather, with the debacle of the socialist camp, the imperialists-capitalists, as well as the Zionist Israel found fresh vigour to launch and continue their offensives to a greater extent. Mounting people's opinion against the Israeli brigandage, occasionally forced Israel and their mentor US imperialists to come to compromises. Thus, Israel had to give back some of the areas, for example from Egypt, it occupied in the 1967 war. Again, in the mid-nineties, in the so-called 'Middle East Peace Process' under the Oslo agreement, Israel agreed to a binational status of Palestine and thus to setting up of an Arab Palestinian state as early as

possible. The Palestinian Arab leadership that emerged after the death of Arafat, also agreed on it. But in all cases of compromises and agreements, reached under the tremendous and mounting pressure of world opinion against the belligerent brigandage of the Zionist Israel and the war-monger US imperialists, both these fascist dangers of humanity was marked by their treachery and arrogance. The next moment after reaching an agreement, they used to make it convenient to flout the agreement, even violate UN resolutions, draw up fresh designs towards pushing their expansionist imperialist goals further through. Thus, not only have the Zionist stalled emergence of the Arab Palestine state during all these years of the 'Peace Process', in the very recent past, after the Hamas came to power in Palestine in a democratic election and vowed to continue uncompromising resistance to realize the just and legitimate demand of the Palestinians for a free independent state of theirs, the Zionist rulers of Israel plainly refused to accept the Hamas rule. Instead, taking advantage of the bitter opposition of the compromising Fatah leadership to that of the Hamas and in connivance with the US imperialists, The Zionists tended to support and encourage the Fatah leadership to run a parallel government of the so-called Palestine Authority in the West Bank. To keep the Hamas chained and even to oust them from power, Israel clamped an all-out inhuman blockade on Gaza, that has continued for the last 18 months. Over and above, they made repeated attempts to kill Hamas leaders and destroy their military strength through frequent air strikes and expedient violations of the ceasefire. Hence, this present crisis in Gaza can only be described as 'unjust, unfair and aggression' by the Zionist Israel, in face of which the heroic Gazan people, under the leadership of the Hamas still remains unbending.

As mentioned earlier, the imperialist-controlled media is trying to pose Israel and the Hamas equally responsible for the Gaza incident, they being of the opinion that launching of rockets by the Hamas instigated Israel to initiate its action in defence. Albeit in brief, we have shown what lies at the root of the problem, how it has come to the present position through

imperialist machinations and Zionist brigandage. We have also indicated that uprooted from homeland and livelihood, the Palestinian Arabs, forced to live a subhuman life in camps and occupied territories did not take to this struggle for nothing. Freedom-loving people of Palestine could not opt to remain in subjugation to or be annihilated by the expansionist brute war machine of the Zionists. So it was their just struggle for national liberation, not just a movement for a piece of land. However loud the imperialists may cry and may paint the fighting Arabs as 'terrorists', freedom-loving, democratic-minded anti-imperialist people of the world will always greet this struggle of the Palestinian Arabs as their heroic endeavour towards liberating their homeland from the grip of the colonialist inhuman Zionists. They have fought it with great sacrifice and bloodshed. They are yet to reach their goal. Till that, it will always remain a just struggle against an aggressor which must be heightened further and stronger. There cannot be any two opinions on the fact that this just battle of the Palestinian people, presently embodied in the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people of Gaza, can be ended only with the realization of their just and legitimate demands. Prime among these demands that can ensure lasting solution to the crisis include establishment of a full-fledged sovereign Palestine state, handing over of Jerusalem to the Palestinians, recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland now under the illegal occupation of Israel and forthwith vacating all territories of Palestine and Syria, that Israel grabbed in 1967. However, no move towards fulfilling these demands can be made without restoring peace in the region. So there must be immediate stoppage of Israeli aggression and unconditional lifting of the blockade against Gaza and the Hamas. As it appears from the moves of the so-called peace brokers, like Tony Blair, really the emissaries of the US and other imperialists and the Zionist Israel, they want to buy peace not by freeing the Gazans from the blockade, but by strengthening the blockade further on the plea of preventing the Hamas from procuring the arms and ammunitions for fighting any more.

This is revolting and ridiculous. No freedom-loving people can do away with their right to protect themselves against any attack, particularly when they have a branded expansionist war-monger as the Zionist Israel at their door. Besides, the tunnel network, a major target of Israel, provides the Gazans with the minimum supply of basic needs of living amidst the horrible condition they are put in with the continued blockade by the Israel. Hence, demand for withdrawal of blockade is again a necessary and just demand of the Gazans that must be met with immediately.

But merely raising voice and reiterating the legitimate demands of Palestine people cannot end this war, nor can thwart the devastating war-mongers like the US imperialists and the Zionist Israel from their expansionist hegemonic design. It deserves and urgently demands from one and all anti-imperialist, freedom-loving and democratic-minded people and forces of the world, more so of the Arab countries to forge an unwavering unity and stand by the fighting Palestinian people with active support. It must be realized that the battle of the Gazan people is an inalienable and essential part of the world anti-imperialist movement. Defeat of the evil axis of the Zionist Israel and their mentor the US imperialists, is also necessary to add fillip to the mass struggles and revolutionary movement against capitalism-imperialism all over the world. And so, there should develop united and sustained militant movements in every nook and corner of the world with a view to creating as powerful pressure as possible, upon the ruthless Zionist Israel and the war-monger US imperialists to immediately stop the unjust aggression, withdraw its forces from Gaza and for that matter, every occupied regions and fulfill the legitimate demands of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. The process has already started. As reports pour in from different continents, they show that people of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, Turkey and the West Bank and different cities of Israel in the Middle East, India, Indonesia and Japan among other Asian countries; Sudan and South Africa in Africa; Argentina, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Mexico, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Bolivia of Latin

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Only people's movement can thwart the menace

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directed against vile imperialist culture and not against any particular language or linguistic community. What is of concern is the attempt to forcibly impose one culture on the other or deliberate suppression of one's own culture and language that the oppressive ruling class fosters in its attempts to buttress its sinister agenda of disrupting people's unity. In the instant case, it is only Raj and his ilk who are bent upon imposing their version of Maharashtrian culture on others thus articulating the nefarious bourgeois class design.

People must assert to stop the menace

So it is clear that all these divisive groups and elements under cover of their so-called empathy for their respective people are in fact perilously disrupting people's unity, creating divisions among the toiling masses and above all impeding the process of developing people's united legitimate movement thereby protecting the vile bourgeois class interest. It can be observed that this sinister machination is operative on an escalated scale when capitalism is

wreaking havoc in people's life. Unemployment, price rise, recession, penury, predicament are spiralling beyond limit. Even in Maharashtra, thousands of peasants are committing suicide, retrenched factory workers in and around Mumbai are dying of prolonged hunger, employment opportunities are squeezing in crisis-ridden capitalism. What is of prime importance today is consolidation of people's fighting unity and extirpation of all noxious malicious divisive thoughts that Raj and his ilk is trying to foment much to the glee of the ruling class. So the task imperative has been to build up fierce left-democratic movement based on higher ethics and culture demanding redress of the burning problems of life and in the process, by intensifying class and mass struggles, prepare the necessary ground for overthrow of exploitative capitalism by revolution. Once this tide of people's genuine movement sweeps across, the anti-people forces who are laying death trap for people by fanning up divisive hysteria with the backing of the ruling class will automatically get isolated.

Satyam scam exposes the skeleton of Indian capitalism

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administration have been carrying out their operations flouting all rules, evading tax, misappropriating dues to the workers, defaulting statutory payments like PF, decamping without repayment of institutional loans, entering into shady financial deals and undertaking dubious transactions, he mentioned. This scandal that has broken in the wake of similar frauds that occurred in the past centering on stock market operations, counterfeit stamp printing etc. shows how hollow is the claim of the Prime Minister and his colleagues that the country's economy is stable and insulated from global meltdown, added Comrade Mukherjee. He pointed out that throughout the world, fraud and corruption have become the seal of dying capitalism. He also drew attention of all to the fact that in absence of desired pressure of

conscious democratic movement of the people and in the context of no effective protest surging forth both inside and outside the Parliament against the series of financial scams and malpractices, misappropriation of funds, skullduggery and large scale institutional frauds that have been surfacing at regular periodicity, the criminals, crooks and cons are daring to thump around with alacrity and pursue their baleful agenda with impunity.

Comrade Mukherjee demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of all involved in this sting operation, guarantee of job security to all Satyam staff members, full protection of interest of all stakeholders as well as immediate appropriate measures on the part of the government to prevent any recurrence of such large scale crime by the unholy nexus of corporate bigwigs-corrupt bureaucrats-greedy politicians.

Statement of Socialist Party of Bangladesh (BASAD) on the ninth general elections of Bangladesh

In course of a statement issued on 30 December, 2008, Comrade Khalequzzaman, Convenor, Socialist Party of Bangladesh said that barring few incidents of disturbance and commotion, the ninth general elections have been held peacefully. Spending of black money has also been as before. People wanted respite from corruption, misrule, unprecedented price rise, blustering of war criminals and fundamentalists, dependence on imperialism, violence and the overwhelming unbearable condition. Since there was no visible alternative other than the 'better of the evils', one side of the scale of mandate has touched the ground by raising the other to the sky. This huge mandate is totally based on the condition of fulfilling people's expectations. It is impossible to do that within the present capitalist set up by, and serving the interest of, the capitalist class. In spite of that, the countrymen hope that the newly elected parties and their combination will be sincere and respectful towards fulfilment of people's aspirations and preservation of basic democratic rights of the masses. As it is the responsibility of the government to discharge its democratic responsibilities, so also is our appeal to the people to remain ever-vigilant and united, conscious of their rights at the same time. In this election, it has once again been strongly reaffirmed that the intense urge of the people for change will gradually lead the countrymen towards a radical change of the whole society.

Stand by the Palestinians against Israeli attack

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America; Belgium, England, Scotland, Wales, Portugal, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Greece and Denmark in Europe; Canada and the United States in North America are organizing massive militant movement in complete solidarity with the Palestinians of Gaza, holding the

Israeli state as the direct criminal, acting as an appendage of world imperialism — particularly U.S. imperialism but also that of the European Union. It only remains to lead these movements further into necessary and effective sustained struggle. Only that will ensure the victory of the Gaza people and with that, the victory of freedom, truth and humanity.

Against the recent Israeli attack on Gaza, SUCI protested and staged demonstrations across India in cities like New Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Rohtak, Gwalior, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Bangalore among others.

SUCI has called 12-hour general strike on 22 January in West Bengal

SUCI has called a 12 hour general strike on Thursday, 22 January, 2009 on an 18-point charter of demands which, *inter alia*, include immediate reduction in the prices of essential commodities including petrol-diesel, cooking gas, kerosene, fertilizer, electricity, food articles, reduction in the fares of bus and ferry services, bringing down prices of essential commodities, stalling fee hike in education and banning sex-education from the curriculum and full-fledged implementation of the 100-days job scheme. This call has been given after both central and state governments have not responded to the month-long agitation in various forms organized by the party pressing for these burning demands. The utter disdain of the governments towards legitimate demands of the people have forced the party to call for this strike in people's interest.

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