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Red Salute Mao Zedong



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“Class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment are the three great revolutionary movements for building a mighty socialist country. These movements are a sure guarantee that communists will be free from bureaucracy and immune against revisionism and dogmatism, and will forever remain invincible. They are a reliable guarantee that the proletariat will be able to unite with the broad working masses and realize a democratic dictatorship. If in the absence of these movements, the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and monsters of all kinds were allowed to crawl out, while our cadres were to shut their eyes to all this and in many cases fail even to differentiate between the enemy and ourselves but were to collaborate with the enemy and were corrupted, divided and demoralized by him, if our cadres were thus pulled out or the enemy were able to sneak in, and if many of our workers, peasants and intellectuals were left defenseless against both the soft and the hard tactics of the enemy, then it would not take long, perhaps only several years or a decade, or several decades at most, before a counter-revolutionary restoration on a national scale inevitably occurred, the Marxist-Leninist party would undoubtedly become a revisionist party or fascist party, and the whole of China would change its colour.”

— Mao Zedong
(We Must Prevent China From Changing Colour—July 14, 1964)

Move to regulate political parties

Latest offensive of the ruling bourgeoisie under garb of political reform

Of late, a section of intellectuals and columnists are raising questions as to whether time has come to regulate the political parties and make it compulsory for them to conform to certain norms, practices and disclosures as mandated by the state and law. Underscoring the faulty electoral process that is in operation in India, they argue that unless steps are taken in this regard with due expediency, parliamentary democracy can not be freed from the aberrations assuming alarming proportion with every passing day. In fact, there is an orchestrated propaganda in the bourgeois media over this. The honest democratic-minded people who are visibly concerned at the rapid degeneration of the electioneering mechanism leading to the electoral arena to be an exclusive preserve of money and muscle power often tend to get carried by this propaganda and think that perhaps the suggested measure would bring the desired remedy. So there is a need to examine if the proposed course would abate the situation or there is some other motive hidden behind this apparent penchant for eradicating the accumulated filth in the system.

The proposal

The apologists in favour of regulating the political parties say that the aberration is stemming from the very functioning of the political parties enjoying lax and absence of any restraint whatsoever. The parties are fielding criminals, dubious characters, top notch industrialists, filmstars, big names of the glamour world and bunch of self-seekers as candidates in the elections merrily using money and muscle power just

for the sake of winning. As a result, elections are becoming farce and the standard of the legislators is going down. Moreover, as the parties are under no compulsion of disclosing their income and expenditure or making their primary members' list public, no one knows how much funds they have at their disposal or if their ranks teem in tainted characters, moneybags, turncoats or self-seekers. Though some of the political parties hold intra-party elections, those are only formal and symbolic meant for public consumption as absolute power rests with their high commands. This is how the political parties are being run most undemocratically and because of that the polity is becoming aberrant. If there are specific rules governing schools, colleges, hospitals, NGOs or even temples and shrines, why should not there be laws to regulate political parties? If most advanced democracies like US and UK, can have such laws to make the political parties function democratically, why should India not follow the suit? Until there is a law for the political parties, the parliamentary democracy in India will not be steered clear of the rots and putrefactions. There is no denying the fact that there is truth in the conduct of the vote-based political parties as detailed above and that has caused confusions and raised questions among the suffering people. So an in-depth discussion on the subject has become imperative.

Before we enter into that, it is pertinent to mention that a plethora of new laws have been enacted over the years. But have they brought any relief to the people's life? Or

the situation continues to turn from bad to worse? Despite enactment of a host of new laws, there is not even an iota of relief in the people's life. Rather, the condition is worsening further. The Election Commission which notwithstanding its deemed autonomous character is viewed for all intent and purpose as a government organization, has already come out with a set of reforms with the declared objective of cleansing the electoral process. Based on that, it is interfering into the internal affairs of the various political parties right from their intra-party elections to various functions and activities. EC has even arrogated to itself the power of ratifying their constitutions. Thus there has been on a limited scale imposition of certain regulations on the political parties. Yet, experience of the people has been that rot in the hustings continues unabated. The big bourgeois parties like the Congress, BJP etc. have been unrestrained in indulging in lavish spending without caring to submit any account, open flouting of electoral codes, rampant use of mafia power, booth capturing, false voting, seeking votes in the name of caste or religion, open flaunting of communal credential and so forth obviously with overt or covert support of the administration. These parties who alongwith their allies are principal contestants for governmental power have thus been controlling things the way they want. To seek an answer as to why such can not be done and how could the maladies and malaises be removed, we must go into the very root of these menaces. For that, at

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Unfettered political parties evolved as inalienable part of democracy

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the outset, it is essential to have a proper understanding of history as well as the socio-political situation obtaining today.

Tracing history a bit

Since our discussion is on the political parties, we first focus on the history of emergence of the political parties which dates back to a particular stage of development of the human society or the social order i.e. advent of capitalism by overthrowing obsolete feudal system. Bourgeois democracy emerged as the political superstructure of capitalism. To operationalize bourgeois democracy under supervision of capitalist state comprising three principal organs, the military, judiciary and executive, the modern republics came into being with parliament as the highest law making body. Government to be formed by the majority of elected representatives of the people was viewed as a caretaker of the state. Parliament was sought to be constituted with the elected people's representatives and so came the concept of suffrage with which were born the modern political parties in the 18th century mainly in Europe and the USA as democratic organizations distinguished from the interest groups that played in the feudal system to advise the monarchs. The modern political parties grew and developed as groups or associations of a set of people broadly agreed to a common ideology, set of programmes and pursuance of a given action plan to promote the interest of various segments of people within the broader ambit of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and take part in the elections. Exponents of bourgeois democracy then envisioned that besides government, there would develop many voluntary organizations having accountability to none else but the people. As the government would perform a specific role in operationalizing democracy, so would these voluntary organizations discharge crucial role in enhancing the political consciousness of the people as well as securing and protecting various rights and entitlements of the citizens of the republic. In that sense, these organizations would function as

watchdogs of democracy having power to criticize even change the government through democratic process. Hence, they were to be kept out of any control of the government. Political parties fell in the category of these voluntary organizations and were envisaged to be free from any interference by the government. State intervention in the conduction and activities of the political parties through even intermediation of the government was considered as curtailment of the freedom of expression, a fundamental right of the people.

Secondly, we as students of Marxism know that in a class-divided society, the state is a class-state articulating, implementing and protecting the class interest and class aspiration of the ruling class. The interest of the ruling class is totally opposed to the interest of the ruled class or classes. And so the state is bound to coerce, repress and suppress the interest and aspiration of the ruled and oppressed class or classes. The government as caretaker of the state can not but work in the interest of the ruling class. So, in a class-divided society, whatever a state or its subservient government does, is bound to go ultimately against the interest of the oppressed class or classes. Since the society is class-divided, the political parties also can not but have class characters. So, as the ruling bourgeoisie had to develop its political parties, the ruled and oppressed proletariat also needs to have its own class party to uphold its cause. Dawn of bourgeois democracy was the age of free competition when the individual capitalists sought to develop by competing freely in the market without any intervention of the bourgeois state. As a reflection of this in politics, the various bourgeois political parties grew as representatives of various capitalist groups and functioned independently without any fetters. This autonomy of the bourgeois political parties was granted in the bourgeois parliamentary democracy then in its prime. So establishment of multiple political parties were welcomed and multi-party democracy given all encouragement. There was, relatively speaking, a much free and fair democratic atmosphere

allowing people many a right and freedom, economic and political, including the right to vote freely and fairly.

Guillotine of democracy

But the situation changed with emergence of monopoly in course of development of capitalism. It was at this stage when capitalism began to be stricken with market crisis endemic of the very system. At this stage, economic power started getting concentrated in the hands of a few monopolists. So the era of *laissez faire* was over. Concomitantly, the political power also started getting concentrated in the hands of those representing the monopoly. To ensure that the legislatures were dominated by one or two principal parties having unquestionable allegiance to the monopoly houses, there was a gradual shift from multi-party democracy to two-party democracy in advanced capitalist countries and number of political parties were sought to be reduced on the pretext of avoiding 'crowding' in the political domain and reforming the electoral mechanism to 'smoothen democratic functioning'. More capitalism plunged into crisis caused by progressively declining purchasing power of the people squeezed to fill the coffer of the ruling monopolists, more loath it was to allow any relative autonomy and freedom to the oppressed people lest their accumulated grievances and discontent in a liberal democratic environment should crystallize against its exploitative class rule and genuine revolutionary party of the proletariat grew and gathered strength. Once crisis-ridden capitalism began exporting finance capital and assumed imperialist character, it started trampling underfoot all established democratic principles and moral values and exposing its autocratic face. One after another, the democratic rights were being snatched away. Many of the democratic institutions and bodies were being stripped of their democratic content. The bourgeois state started intervening in the socio-political affairs and the state apparatus was merrily used in gradual subversion of democracy. For example, the judiciary which, as we stated above, is an organ of the state, was sought to be projected as a

supra-state body vested with enormous power and having no accountability whatsoever. In the name of judicial activism, the bourgeois state committed to protect the aggregate interest of capitalism began to use judiciary to arrogate to itself exclusive power to establish an autocratic rule. Of late, the judiciary in many bourgeois countries including those claiming themselves to be the 'largest of democracies' has been virtually turned into appendage of the state. Judicial pronouncements too, if one carefully observes, are brazenly in favour of the power that be overriding, more and often, even the basic tenets of jurisprudence. Fascism that seeks to concentrate absolute power in the hands of the autocratic capitalist state and completely rid people of the barest democratic rights has become a general feature of almost all capitalist countries, developed or developing.

On the other hand, the mounting discontent, wrath and anger of the people against the brute capitalist oppression are bursting forth in the form of movements. The ruling bourgeoisie knows that if the democratic movements surging forth as ventilation of accumulated wrath and indignation against exploitative capitalist rule are allowed to grow in an organized manner in democratic milieu, they might well in course be transformed into anti-capitalist revolutionary struggle under correct revolutionary leadership. From this fear complex of anti-capitalist revolution, the despotic capitalist rulers bent upon thwarting any sprouting of legitimate people's struggle on correct base political line, are so desperate to shut all democratic avenues to voice legitimate protest and forbid any dissenting voice against capitalist rule both inside and outside the legislatures as well. In other words, the ruling bourgeoisie could sense that even if a semblance of classical democratic functioning is abetted, it might well endanger its very rule. In this specific situation, the ruling bourgeoisie is working its stratagem to deny the unfettered rights once granted to the political parties. Secondly, it is determined to suppress growth and development of the genuine revolutionary party

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Yashpal Committee - HRD Minister on education reform

Cunning design to destroy people's education for unfettered trade in education

[The first portion of the article was published in the last issue of *Proletarian Era* (v. 43, No., 2; September 1, 2009). Here we include the remaining portion- Ed. Board, *Proletarian Era*]

National Tribunal for adjudication

With the experience that earlier committees-commissions and their recommendations invariably invited strong criticisms from education-minded people and conscious that the present ones too are likely to invite such criticisms, both the Yashpal Committee and the HRD minister act fool-proof. They propose a single National Education Tribunal 'with powers to adjudicate on disputes' in educational institutions. Skirting the real problem, they place the onus of "the origins and the extent of the crisis that the higher education system" faces today on the academic community and the 'autonomy' the educational institutions enjoyed. The Committee writes : In India, "social hierarchy and divisions are sharp, institutions of learning serve as sites where powerful social forces vie for dominance". Is the academic community only and basically responsible for such sharp divisions in society or the political turmoil generating from that? In any case, the Committee feels that "Peace in this context" is the "pre-condition for rationally organized dialogue between contending forces, ideologies and viewpoints". Nobody would object in peaceful dialogue. But then "However, over the last few decades...Not only organized youth but the official machinery of the university has been deliberately used to obstruct or subvert the possibility of peaceful debate". (p.16) So the Committee and the HRD minister decide to "Establish a National Education Tribunal with powers to adjudicate on disputes among stake-holders within institutions and between institutions"... "Set up a Task Force

to follow up on the implementation of this Agenda for Action". (p. 67)

The question is: Is the proposed National Education Tribunal or the Task Force anything other than bureaucratic bodies in power and with power? How will then the Committee and the minister ensure that they would not be 'curtailing the autonomy'? In fact, like the NCHER, these bodies will be all powerful to see that peace is maintained, that is, no objection or dissension is expressed or registered against implementation of the "Agenda for Action", no democratic movement of teachers-students and employees develop in educational institutions. Fascism, in political parlance, presupposes consolidated power and curbing of any movement against it by using that power. The proposals of the Committee and the minister smack of clear fascist tendencies. Why? To implement their agenda of unbridled privatization-commercialization of education, which not only follows the dictates of the GATS; at the same time it gives effect to the basic class design : restrict education from the poor, make the best education available for the rich only.

Autonomy

The concept of autonomy of educational institutions is an inseparable part of the concept of democracy, that evolved right at the time when democracy itself was being born in the human society. Even in India, the freedom fighters struggling against the British imperialists, as well as the educationists, social reformers and other luminaries of the Indian Renaissance, always upheld this concept. They fought for education

for their countrymen, one and all. They knew it well that the goal could not be reached without the government taking up the task. So they demanded of even the imperialist government 'free and equal education for all'. At the same time, they held and made it clear that education is best imparted when it is left with the academicians, the teachers-professors and the educationists to decide on its content, span and all the rest. Also, education is imparted in its full flair only when there is no interference from the government or any non-academic quarters. Government's financial responsibility towards providing education to its people, can never be the plea to curb the academic freedom for educationists and educational institutions. Historically evolved, this concept of autonomy was also the time-tested one. Any breach of it told, and always tells, miserably upon the standard and functioning of the institutions and education as a whole. The Yashpal Committee is fully aware of the strong sentiment for autonomy of educationists and educational institutions that prevails among the education-loving people of the country. So, once more it starts beating about the bush to create confusion and carry through his design from behind its cover.

After proposing an all-powerful NCHER and a National Education Tribunal, the Committee lays down that the NCHER "would perform its regulatory function without interfering with academic freedom and institutional autonomy. ... it would move to a verification and authentication system." (p.57) It envisages "universities and institutions to put out self-declarations mandatorily in the public domain for scrutiny. Universities are to be seen as self-regulatory bodies and the Commission is to be seen as ... more interested in creating more and more space for ... protecting their autonomy." (p.57) A very open-hearted proposal, as it sounds. But there are many 'ifs' and 'buts' underlying it. It regulates virtually all the affairs of education and educational institutions, yet it does not interfere into freedom and autonomy! It desires universities to

be self-regulatory, only with the binding of a mandatory responsibility to submit self-declarations! And, what concepts of autonomy or freedom, the power-consolidating proposals of the Committee and the minister cater. "The principle of moral and intellectual autonomy from political authority and economic power is ingrained in the very idea of the university". (p.62) Thus universities should be "freed from control of both government and 'for-profit' private agencies in matters of not just academics but also finance and administration". (p.58) However, "Even as we endorse the principle of full autonomy for a university, we recognize the need to evolve certain performance criteria on the basis of which universities can assess themselves and can be assessed by others in a transparent manner." (p.26) So they will not be just self-assessing freely, they will be guided, that is monitored, by stipulations from others, like NCHER etc. In fact, the government has already mooted another move, The National Authority for Regulation in Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2009 to set up a 5-member National Authority for Regulation in Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions (NARAHEI). This latter , a private body will accredit institutions on parameters like teaching, learning and research, human resource and research infrastructure, placement, governance structures and course curriculum. It will be compulsory for every institution to get accredited by the NARAHEI, which will also have the power to revoke the certificate in case of any failure to discharge its functions. What iota of 'moral and intellectual autonomy' will be left to the educational institutions with the NARAHEI, the NCHER and the National Educational Tribunal operating in their full vigour? Rather, does it not show, how the Committee and the minister cry for autonomy and curb it to fit their plan?

Autonomy for fee hike

But certainly 'autonomy' or 'freedom' will be there. The
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Addendum

[N.B., That the proposed all-powerful NCHER may turn out to be a coercive body, has been indicated and discussed in the first instalment of the article. In the meanwhile, even the Prime Minister's Office, sensing people's opposition to the idea, has opposed any Constitutional amendment for giving sanction and status to the NCHER, as proposed by the Yashpal Committee and the HRD Minister, on the ground that the body may then turn out to be "coercive". (vide Times of India September 9) - Ed. Board, P. Era]

Yashpal Committee - HRD Minister on education reform

Loan to students a boon to the agencies fuelled by government

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committee has the elaborations. "It may be recognized that the cost of providing quality education is increasing. State funding for the same has been dwindling over the years and is irregular. Universities are expected to raise their own resources. While the State cannot walk away from its responsibility of financing higher education, imaginative ways will have to be devised to find complementary sources of funds." (p.41) "The universities should also be able to employ professional fund-raisers who have the skills to identify the unique selling points of the university and persuade potential donors and investors to invest in the university." (p.62). So the universities are not to remain mere seats of learning; they must have the autonomy to sniff about from where to acquire their means of subsistence. This is what the Committee endorses with all talks of quality teaching etc. Of course, it cannot be blamed for dawning upon this novel idea. It stemmed from the NPE'86. The committee places it a newer, more guarded pack. Like the Committee (*Universities are expected to raise their own resources*), the NKC too, suggests use of available 'large reservoir of untapped resources in the form of land' owned by the universities as 'a source of finance'. At the same breath, both the Committee and the NKC claim that they do not stand for 'for-profit' education, a claim that can at best be termed hollow and hypocritical.

Loan to students

So the universities will be 'autonomous' and 'free' to develop as self-sustained institutions employing *professional fund-raisers* to get hold of 'investors' for them and by using their available resources. 'Autonomy' and 'freedom' will also be there in determining 'finance' that includes 'fee structure'. Already the NKC, which serves as one of the pillars for the Yashpal Committee report and the minister's package, recommended for even a 100% rise in the name of 'rationalization of fees' even in all government funded universities, as well as for linking fees with 'price index' to be

adjusted every two years. The NKC also considered *fees as a major source of revenue*, even a major foreign exchange revenue earner by allowing foreign institutions. The Yashpal Committee is on the same line. It has already recognized that there will be increase in the cost of providing quality education and suggested means to meet it. It also welcomes the *best of foreign universities, say amongst the top 200 in the world*, (p.40) if they want to come here and work, certainly with 'a level playing field for private investment in education and with the same rules applicable to both domestic and foreign institutions with appropriate policies for the entry of foreign institutions into India and promotion of Indian institutions abroad' along with relaxation of 'income tax laws to encourage large endowments' as suggested by the NKC. Magnanimous, the Committee has its proposal for *making education affordable* which should be the "primary focus". With benevolence, "No student should be turned away from an institution for want of funds for education." (p.42), the Committee suggests "An assured loan to every student (and a scholarship based on merit for the needy) in accredited institutions should be the aim (and our recommendation)." There should be "Guaranteed student loans at low interest rates for those who can take loans and free education for those who cannot afford it at all, will be necessary to educate India." (p.39-40) But there remain a lot of hitches here. First, even the Committee admits that there will be such a fee-hike that even students with monthly income of their parents around Rs. 38,000, would need a loan for their studies. Second, people of the country is well aware of the bureaucratic red-tapism and absolutely corrupt nexus of administration, corporate houses and the loan-giving agencies, that simply put the real needy students only at bay. Third, this proposal for offering loans to students to be repaid after the studies presupposes that the recipient of the loan will be absorbed in some job, a condition that remains totally uncertain in these days of spiraling unemployment. Fourth, and most

significant, the suggestion was advocated long back by the Birla-Ambani committee. The said committee also realized that in the existing condition, there would be defaulters among students, which would deter the loan-giving agencies from coming ahead. So the government must come forward to make good for the losses of the investors. The scheme, nicknamed 'education guarantee scheme' would thus turn out to be 'profit guarantee scheme' for the investors, to be run and fuelled by the government. It must be noted at the same time that the same government is otherwise curtailing grants to schools and colleges for want of funds! 'Loan to students' will then never help the real needy, the poorer section of students, rather will drain out people's exchequer further to the benefit of the loan-giving investors!

Global trade

While promoting the cause of foreign universities to take entry in the country, the Committee and the minister have added that if renowned and front-ranking universities of different countries open their branches here, our students will have the chance to avail of their benefit without going abroad. It will stop 'brain drain', and instead will help 'brain gain' as good teachers of those universities will add their contributions to the country's education. However, one important point is deliberately ignored or evaded by the knowledgeable, learned members of the Committee. It must be recognized that leading educational institutes and universities of the past of one and all countries, including ours like Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton, Calcutta, etc. earned their fame and stature as seats of learning never on the strength of any commercial investment. It is true that there were benevolent donors who contributed to the growth of the universities, including their funds. But it was the prolonged selfless struggle against thousand and one hardships and obstacles undertaken by great scientists, social thinkers, and historians and others over decades for learning-teaching-research basically for the cause of disseminating knowledge in the

society, that could make these institutions reach the height, they are famous for. Such devotion and commitment can never be expected from even the fore-ranking members of staff in branch counterparts or campuses of traditionally renowned institutions in other countries, built on liberal flow of FDI and with a commercial outlook. Those campuses can at best utilize their fame as 'brand value' to pull resources and earn 'profit'. The teachers would not have any mission to fulfill; they will be highly paid 'trainers', to produce bands of so-called foreign degree-holders who, in their turn, will earn their degree paying the fat price commensurate with the respective 'brand name' of the institution. The cause of cultivation and dissemination of knowledge, will be no concern for either party involved in the process, teachers, students or research workers, not to speak of the university authority or the *professional fund raisers*. Such branches of the traditional seats of learning will really be the agents to fulfill the mission of the GATS: unfettered privatized global trade in service sector like education to fetch the maximum profit. It is further corroborated when the Committee makes the comment "*India is in a unique position to serve as a destination for affordable higher education for a vast number of students from countries in the southern hemisphere.*" (p.43)

The issue has another vital aspect to judge. Today, is there any country, any educational institution of repute or not, where it is not being increasingly noticed that the more education is being commercialized and so-called globalized, the more there is rising the problem of dearth of quality teachers? Or, where people are not feeling increasingly concerned with the fast-falling standard of teaching and learning, one major cause of which is the dearth of quality teachers? But people must ponder: do the standard of education as well as standard of teaching as also learning, depend merely on the financial resources meant for the system, or the curricula, course structure, or evaluation-examination systems or the like? Rather, is it not

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Yashpal Committee — HRD Minister on education reform

Development stands for differentiation-discrimination of disaffiliated colleges

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the ideological ambience prevailing in the society that stands crucial? Standard of teaching-learning processes hinges upon the outlook and approach of teachers and students, their cultural-ethical-moral standard itself. Now, the utterly decadent capitalist system that prevails in our country, as also other capitalist ones, is continuously breeding corruption in every sphere of social life, strong and shameless egoism and self-centric careerism in people cornered and pulverized by a totally exploitative social system that only generates disparity, insecurity in life, aimless desperateness, all sorts of obnoxious putrid culture and such other maladies in their worst forms. How can there be a social ambience which could inspire teachers and students with nobility and invincibility of a real 'man-making, character-building' education? It is only when there are struggles in the society for developing the cult of a scientific, updated ideology and culture befitting the present stage of development of human society so as to create within the society an ever-consolidating cultural-ethical-moral ambience that would help attain higher character and mental make-up. Only then, will the tide turn and there will again be a surge within the society to produce teachers who will take up their profession as a mission to promote genuine education that makes a man and build character. Such ambience will lead students to relook at learning not for their career only, but for building them up as human-being worth its name. Till then the moribund capitalism may try to give effect to a thousand and one designs, ostensibly to improve education, but in reality destroying it.

People must also give a thought to the fact till such struggles are released with might and effectivity, this problem of meeting the dearth of really good teachers cannot be solved by opening certain branch campuses of some foreign institutions howsoever reputed they may be or by founding any number of universities and colleges with a liberal flow of money? Of late, the UGC has come ahead to address 'the problem of faculty shortage and

upgrade the skills of college/university teachers'. It proposes a kind of hiring academicians of Indian and foreign origin and belonging to academic, research and business organizations on different terms and high salaries. Strangely enough, the UGC has remained silent about the startling fact revealed in the recent report of the Chadda Committee set up by the UGC itself that nearly 35-40% of faculty posts lie vacant in the colleges and universities of the country. Will such structural or technical measures as of hiring academicians at high costs, with so many existing posts lying vacant help in any way in producing good teachers? In fact, the effects of opening educational institutions at random, is already being felt in the country. Even the Committee itself has admitted the calamity to education brought about by such institutions. The substandard education they have been catering has forced to withdraw their recognition in many cases. It cannot be otherwise in decadent capitalist society, where even a branch to promote globally reputed 'brand value' can never serve the purpose, as and when education is viewed as a commodity to sell and buy, as a domain of investing and reaping maximum profit. Yet the Committee and the minister advocate the same method in a slightly different cover. Does it not speak of hypocrisy of the policymakers once again?

Privatization-commercialization-vocationalization

Spate of privatization of education is inevitably accompanied by commercialization. NPE'86 initiated the approach; being an inalienable part of the same design, the Committee report, and based on it the minister's package, pick up the same thread. The Committee prepares the ground in its report with several sugar-coated observations and utterances. The universities are isolated from the real world outside and should "develop capacities to respond to the challenges faced by rural and urban economies and culture; (p.66) the proposed NCHER is to "Connect with industry and other economic sectors to promote innovations." Higher education in India is "no longer viewed as a

good in itself, but also as the stepping-stone into a higher orbit of the job market, where the student expects a concrete monetary return, ... graduates should be sufficiently exposed to interdisciplinary experiences, which can sustain them when the demands of a particular job market changes." (p.9-10) Yes, education has a positive role in finding out and performing jobs. Professional education must also be adequately developed to impart required, constantly improving skills and methods. But as it has come down presently, that goal of education is being placed in conflict with its basic role of man-making and character-building.

As a result, as the Committee itself admits, education is being viewed for earning money. Its cost is rising exorbitantly, so much so that, as the Committee again is compelled to admit, "it is largely the poor, who either cannot afford academic education or who pass out of poorly-equipped and uninspiring schools with low mark" are being pushed to remain content with vocational education which "has remained underdeveloped" (p.24). What it boils down to is that the poorer section of students, who make the overwhelming majority, remain half-educated with vocational education, and are excluded from the official count of educated unemployed. But what they get in the name of education is not just 'underdeveloped'. It undermines studies of the mainstream branches which are essential for cultivation of knowledge and development of the faculty of reasoning and scientific bent of mind to make a man of character and integrity. It thus dehumanizes students with a brand of education which is robbed of its essence, that is the 'man-making, character-building wholesome content' and makes them 'mistris', some petty workers to barely eke out a living. To whatever extent of the real education is imparted, that remains an exclusive privilege of the affluent students. With all crocodile tears for the poorer students, the Committee does not feel any compunction to point at this truth. Rather it suggests tinkering methods that can strengthen vocational education itself, when it says "This kind of stigmatization of

vocational education, ... needs to be overcome a skill-development council at the Central level is a positive step in this direction." (p.24) Another cunning move to conceal the design of snatching away education from poor and making it the asset of the rich!

Commercialization of teachers' assessment

Naturally the entire commercial approach to education, which the Committee describes as 'stepping stone into the job market' has already vitiated the academic community: teachers, students and employees associated. Over and above this, the Committee, exactly in the same line as that of the NKC, recommends introduction of 'differential competitive remuneration' for teachers on the basis of evaluation of students. Again, to create confusion with a view to concealing the motive, the Committee starts beating about the bush first. It writes in the report: "Quality of teaching is the best indicator and a key determinant of the overall quality of institutional life. Any reform... must give the highest priority to attracting good teachers... Assessment of teachers is another area in discussion.... Students are in a unique position to provide an experiential assessment of the quality of teaching. Parameters of student feedback can be drawn up so as to avoid distorting factors, such as the tendency to earn cheap popularity by using conventional means like dictating examination-oriented notes. Student feedback at the end of each semester should become a routine, and teachers whose feedback record remains poor in successive years should be required to face formal procedures which might allow a university or college to shed them." (p. 44) Once more, the Committee makes a cunning move. It admits crass commercialization as a major malady of the present higher education system. Yet it suggests a method that smacks of similarity with the method of rating performance in private limited companies, which give birth to awkward professional competition, mistrust and jealousy and finally ego-clashes and disunity, this time

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Yashpal Committee - HRD Minister on education reform

A single board is unreal, unconstitutional and unacceptable

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among teachers in educational institutions only to be exploited by the authority. The Committee identifies that in the commercialized ambience, students expect a concrete monetary return. Yet it suggests a system which hinges upon a give and take relation between teachers and students. The Committee is also aware of the *distorting factors*, which are not limited to *dictating examination-oriented notes* only, but expects student evaluation will be effective. It says that institutions of learning are vitiated in various ways and *"serve as sites where powerful social forces vie for dominance"*. In such a case, will not the suggested method remain prone to making teachers compete with each other for more favour of and, hence, better evaluation by students, so that their remuneration is not affected and they are not shed off by the university or college? Will not such unwanted competition be a perfect ground for the authorities to play upon? What kind of quality teaching would one expect from the teachers chained in such an arrangement? Rather, the entire ambience will stink of putrid commercial outlook in place of even the already dwindling cordial-humane and noble relation between teachers and students.

Disaffiliation and upgraded-clustered- cast out colleges

The Committee keen on overall development of higher education in the country, stipulates as one of the *"first tasks of the NCHER"* the task of identifying *"the best 1,500 colleges"* out of about 20,000 of them in India to upgrade them as universities, and create *clusters* of other potentially good colleges to evolve as universities. (p.66) Besides, there may be universities created to act as only *examining bodies* and colleges may be encouraged to *merge with each other* to make optimal use of the resources. The Committee also suggests that the NCHER should act on a *time frame for elimination of the present form of affiliating system*. (p.31)

These suggestions also stem from a cleverly woven argument. The Committee observes that the *"current structure of the Indian*

university system has a large number of affiliated colleges associated with either a Central or State university; This structure has burdened many universities with the management of academic content, examination, and quality of these colleges." (p.30) The Committee also holds that *"underperformance of the State universities has a direct relation to their size."* Large number of colleges affiliated to them makes it difficult for them to maintain quality. And so, borrowing and following the idea from the NKC, the Yashpal Committee suggests a differentiation of the colleges and universities, that is sure to lead to discrimination. There will be a set, comprising about 7.5% of total number, of best colleges upgraded to universities, some less privileged clustered to evolve as universities and the remaining vast number of colleges, equivalent to the 'community colleges' in the NKC plan, to remain support less, non-affiliated and left to themselves to arrange for their resources for self-sustenance. The Committee spends a lot of words on this discourse, but evades any discussion of the fact that this system of affiliating colleges to a university evolved historically with the introduction of modern education in the country. Colleges affiliated to a university, follow the academic pattern set by the leading academicians associated with that university and, even if remotely placed, can thus take the advantage of their experience and wisdom. Thus students of even an unassuming, rather backward college do have the chance of studying under the same system as those of renowned colleges and can earn the degree whose worth was determined on the reputation and standing of the parent university. Thus they enjoy a possibility of developing themselves, placing themselves at an equal rank with the students of the better colleges. But the suggestions of the NKC and now the Yashpal Committee leave them doomed for future. This is the picture of development for which the Committee has exercised a lot and based upon which the government is bent upon bringing reform in education. So there is again another measure which upgrades institutions for the

affluent into privileged seats of education, but relegates 'community colleges' for common poorer students into self-sustaining doomed institutions. The privileged is pampered further, at the cost of the poor cast-asides who are further fleeced of their scopes!

Evaluation-examination and the boards

In summary then, much-trumpeted reform has led to privatization shooting up cost of education and smooth sailing of corporate and other investors of the country and abroad. Accompanying commercialization vitiates the ambience, robs education of its essence as 'man-making, character-building process, pushes students and teachers towards self-seeking career-oriented 'stakeholders'. In addition, the entire community of colleges and universities are differentiated and discriminated into privileged and non-privileged ones. But the reformers show no intention to stop here. They seem to be extremely perturbed at the burden students have to bear from the 'traumatic' examination system. So they have the panacea; scrap examination; introduce continuous internal assessment; do away with evaluation on percentages of marks; introduce grades fixed on percentiles; do away with central public, that is, board examinations, even the different state boards. They completely ignore the questions: What is examination for? Can these measures which are anything but technical brush-ups, bring about desired benefits without struggle with devotion and commitment to the cause of education as the motive? In face of students' trauma of examination, is scrapping examination the way? Or is it not necessary to see that the teaching-learning process properly works, teachers and student can take help of properly and adequately equipped infrastructure, books, libraries, laboratories etc.? Are the reformers aware that in a country these conditions are far from being fulfilled? Here students of even economically challenged families have to take help of private tuition for their studies, schools are held under trees without any roof above, or are used for non-academic, administrative purposes thus hampering and dislocating studies

and normal activities of schools. Do not such conditions naturally cause students to develop fear of examination? Does the solution lie in scrapping examinations? The minister has a complex proposal for which he is frantically campaigning to get it through. He proposed to make the board examination after class X optional; those willing to go for professional courses and those seeking admission to the XI- XII course in colleges or schools, other than their respective own schools, would sit in the end-X examination. Those continuing in the same school would not need to sit for any public end-X examination. This will create two categories; a privileged one passing through that examination will be better screened and evaluated to find a chance in further studies; the other opting for no end-X board examination, will lose edge for continuing higher education on account of their being only internally assessed in his or her school. In a country infested with rampant corruption, dishonesty, clashes of petty interests even in educational institutions, and with many-a-school running with a miserably low teacher-student ratio without adequate number of teachers and adequate infrastructure, 'grade system' and continuous internal assessment will always remain susceptible to lead to flawed evaluation, corruption, favouritism and will be hardly accepted as reliable measure in the broader field. Even it will ultimately lead to no detention policy. Evaluation will stand for granting promotion only and not for properly assessing knowledge for rectification and improvement of students. Moreover, a well-organized public examination makes students more focused, more self-confident, when successful, than they are from examinations taken by their own schools. Even repeated, continuous assessment or surprise test will never have the same desired effects in schools run in different conditions, for students coming from different social backgrounds, with different social and personal problems. During his campaign, the minister reportedly told that board examinations will be scrapped also in class V and VIII in schools across the country. So, in effect, he visualizes a virtually no

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Yashpal Committee - HRD Minister on education reform

Raise organized resistance to the perilous design to rob people of education

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examination during the whole secondary span, which will boil down to no detention policy in schools, in the same line as in the National Curriculum Framework'05 propounded by the NCERT. A section of students may be unfortunately misled to take this measure as relieving for them. But what will be the fate of their learning process without any check at any stage? The teaching-learning process for which the reformers shed much crocodile tears, will be the victim. Incidentally, in several instances, as in West Bengal ruled by the pseudo- Marxist forces like CPI(M), this 'no detention' policy has proven disastrous, as it severely affected the teaching-learning process.

But it must be pointed out that the reformers do not mean what they suggest. They suggest scrapping of examinations, but they are hypocritical at that, as they argue, as does the minister rushing across the country, that examination will be necessary to *judge* a student when he seeks admission to a new school in class XI, from his own that ends in class X. So examination is necessary for a judgement! Also the Committee and the minister seem to be working on the idea of organizing national tests like GRE for students from all over India aspiring to enter universities. So here again an examination is held necessary! It all means that examinations will be there, particularly for admission to higher education. In that case, those who are coming from the ordinary class XII schools without appearing in and without being tested through the end-X examination will have to compete with those tested, screened through end-X examination. Obviously the latter will stand a better chance to prove themselves fit. Normally the former will be the poorer students of ordinary schools and the latter from the more equipped schools of affluent sections. So, even these examinations are going to help the privileged, richer lot of students. The poorer students will simply be screened out. And, this is what the Committee and the minister working for implementation of the class design of restricting education

from the poor, really desire for. So, the move for scrapping examination to remove trauma of students is a hoax. It is a deliberate ploy to help the rich students find further undue advantage and deprive the poor from whatever minimum chance they may have, even by virtue of their merit. Besides, the proposed GRE-type examination will be of a pattern, borrowed from abroad and different from the normal curricula. So, it would be out of reach for ordinary, particularly rural students, the poorer section. Students will need additional training with additional expenses to prepare for this examination, adding more to their problems. Also, students would be permitted to send their best test score in this university entrance test to the university of their choice. If admitted and if that university is away from his or her home, it will only add to the cost to bear. So the learned and student-friendly Committee and the minister propose examination measures which will ultimately restrict admission to universities within students from affluent families. The rest? There is no answer with the reformers. The Committee is piously optimistic that we should "*seriously think of reviving our faith in each school and its teachers to credibly evaluate its own students.*" (p.43) It was the same Committee which spend so many words on the prevailing corruption in the country's education system and ambience, but did not indicate any cause or remedy!

The Yashpal Committee further suggests a *rethinking on the need to continue with State Boards of Secondary Education and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)*, their purpose being *equally accomplished by the national tests* (p.43) like the proposed GRE-like one. The HRD minister takes up the cue, advances further, proposes a single school board and scrapping of existing state boards. He mixes up different issues, for instance proposals for single core curriculum for subjects like mathematics and science, this paving the way for a single entrance examination for professional courses and scrapping of different state boards to give way to a single

board. First, what could be the reason for having a single board? The only tangible reason is that it will bring the school education into total unitary control of the class. In the same way, the Committee proposes to bring the higher education under the absolute control of a single body NCHER. As they feel it such total authoritarian control is necessary to implement their design without facing any hindrance or opposition: the design of making education available to the rich, and snatching it away from the poor. Second, it is strange how a single curriculum for mathematics and science, a proposal worth consideration, may be related to the question of a single board, which proposal is blatantly unconstitutional and as mentioned a deliberate cunning design. With extremely varied conditions in different parts of the country and with different levels of development of education attained, education is rightly included in the 'Concurrent list' with the Centre and the state both sharing the responsibility. Different boards, both all-India and local or state-wise, really cater to the prevailing varied needs. These evolved in keeping with the particular conditions prevailing in the country. Why then are there talks of dissolving these without any basic changes in those conditions? As mentioned above, the Committee and the minister once argue that the large size of universities tells upon their quality. So they disaffiliate colleges. Yet they suggest a single large board or a body like the NCHER for the country. Is it at all feasible? Hence the proposal of a single board is unreal, unnecessary and not feasible too.

The Committee and the minister appear very concerned about corruption prevailing in different boards. In this capitalist society of ours, plunged in deep crisis and stinking with decadence, can they name any major institution, not excluding the government, the ministers, the Parliament, even reportedly the Judiciary, which is not affected with rampant corruption and misuse of power? So, corruption is not the root. The root is in decadent capitalism reigning in the country. Neither the Committee, nor the minister seem to

be concerned with that. Nor they are ignorant, after all knowledgeable they are. It is simply because they are themselves working brazenly for this decadent system, the capitalism. They thus want to reserve education for the rich, the capitalists and their henchmen and deprive common poorer people from the slightest of education. At the same time they cry against corruption, a fake cry indeed! They want to work without facing any resistance. So they try to assume unlimited unitary power, subsuming the other agencies, the class once established themselves for a smooth working or other purposes. Against this increasing trend of centralization of power, the existing institutions, such as these boards need be preserved and strengthened and the move for a single board be immediately and totally withdrawn.

The design must be thwarted

There are still other interesting aspects and proposals in the Yashpal Committee report and the HRD minister's package. For brevity's sake, they are left out for the present. However, the discourse briefly, yet amply, brings out the motive with which the reform proposals are being made. The design is simple.

Since they assumed power with independence from the British imperialists and started consolidating capitalism in the country, the ruling capitalist class of India also took up the policy of curtailment of education for the poorer common exploited people of the country who constitute the overwhelming majority of population. Mortally afraid of revolution and revolutionary consciousness of the masses, they also knew it well that education was the weapon with the people which help them acquire this consciousness. So, along with curtailment of education, they went on distorting the content of education with obscurantist, unscientific thoughts and ideas instead of a proper scientific, secular education. This robbed education of its man-making character-building essence and

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Regulating political parties-a double-edged bourgeois design

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of the proletariat. The hidden motive behind bringing the political parties under state control creating a smokescreen of political reform is to be understood in this perspective.

Indian context

In India, political independence was achieved at a time internationally capitalism was in its decadent moribund stage. Secondly, a capitalist state was established following political independence from British imperial rule. Right from its very inception, it was, therefore, bent upon curtailing the democratic rights and truncating parliamentary democracy. More the days rolled by, alongwith escalated economic oppression, more and more political rights of the people were robbed in the form of various bans and restrictions imposed on the forms of registering legitimate protests, or by ruthless crushing of democratic mass movements. In course of time, as result of this bourgeois machination, decay of the political system and electoral process became more pronounced.

Voting was reduced to a farcical exercise with the results being rigged in favour of the powerful bourgeois parties and their allies by way of, as stated earlier, total domination of money-muscle-media power, abolition of relative neutrality of the police-administration as well as appellate bodies, overt indulgence of the authorities to blatant subversion of established norms and practices by the parties enjoying backing of the ruling class. All powers were gradually concentrated in the hands of autocratic bourgeois state. The reason of progressive degeneration of the electoral process lies precisely here.

Bourgeois design behind regulating political parties

It is thus clear from the above discussion that the rot which is seen in the election politics is originating from and abetted by this crisis-ridden moribund utterly corrupt capitalist rule. If this degeneration of the electoral process is to be arrested, then the direction of the blow should be against the very

capitalist system. Here comes the role of a genuine revolutionary party of the proletariat. The ruling capitalist class, it goes without saying, can not restore the democracy it itself is bent upon curbing. Its expressed 'concern' about rotting of the electoral process is a camouflage. Cunningly, it is trying to use the disenchantment of the people to pose as if it is very concerned about rotting of the electoral system and hence intending to overhaul it. But its real motive is to kill two birds with one stone. On one hand, it will ensure that people's indignation does not go against its class rule. At the same time, in the name of regulating the political parties, it would try to make the revolutionary party destabilized and defunct. In our article published in *Proletarian Era* (vol. 42 no. 5, 15 October, 2008), we had shown that the electoral reforms of the EC were highly discriminatory and aimed at putting up as many hurdles as possible before the genuine revolutionary party while contesting polls and gradually eliminate it altogether

from the arena of parliamentary politics. The present move is a step further in that direction.

So it is clear that there is no scope for turning the bourgeois parties into pro-people outfits by way of bringing reforms in the rules. Their anti-people stance and activities can be defeated only by the pressure of democratic movement. Hence, need is to build up sustained movements against rising corruption, bourgeois misrule and tampering with the electoral process. In no way, the ruling class should be allowed to curtail democratic rights. Demand must be raised for the right to recall the elected representative if he or she is found to be working against the interest of the people or using his position as legislator for ulterior motives including self-aggrandizement. In this course, the vile attempt to impose state control over the political parties has to be thwarted. We, therefore, call upon all well-meaning thinking people to rise to the occasion and build up powerful movement against this sinister bourgeois conspiracy.

Yashpal Committee — HRD Minister on education reform

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paved the way for dehumanizing students into robotic, self-seeking careerists without rational scientific bent of mind. But in spite of all their efforts towards catering such a distorted education to students, a section of students, albeit a minority, could make their way to find out the correct revolutionary ideology and develop revolutionary consciousness on whatever minimum education of worth they obtained from the system. So, the ruling capitalist class carefully planned the design of curtailing from and depriving the poorer section of students from even this sort of education. Education was more and more restricted to a privileged, affluent section of students who would acquire it at

higher and higher cost. This became the central focal theme of the education policy of the Indian capitalist state and the ruling capitalist class. Aware of the fact that people of India would not meekly surrender to their design, they took help of deceitful ways. Step by step they planned it. They set up committees and commissions one after another. Those presented lengthy discourses on proposed reforms invariably criticising the earlier ones for their failures and shortcomings and making tall pledges for a brighter scenario. Well-orchestrated campaigns were raised with this or that theme. Behind the smokescreen of the verbosity of critical assessment of situation and future recommendations of committees

and commissions and the campaigns otherwise revamped, the plain motive that worked, was to confuse people and to generate a public opinion among such confused masses in favour of the proposed reforms. It is as a part of this campaign that they raise the question of fast-falling standard of education. They knew that people of every section of society who dreamt of a really wholesome education for themselves and their children, were deeply annoyed with this devastatingly deteriorating standard of education. Hence the reformers, the ruling class and their henchmen, in their bid to befool people posed and announced that their attempts were only to check this downfall and bring education to its glory. To the effect they proposed

the structural and infrastructural measures, discussed above, which were never to meet the challenge successfully. Behind all their rhetoric, what the reformers, including the present Yashpal Committee and the flamboyant HRD minister, really do is to give effect to nothing but the class design of the ruling capitalist class. People in their turn must be aware of the multiple dangerous implications of these reform attempts and must build up massive, powerful movement embracing all sections of people to thwart these reform measures, the devastating design, lock stock and barrel. That remains the only course to ensure the minimum education that common people may find even today.

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