

DECEMBER 2 001

Rs. 10

Liberation
CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)

US WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

INDIA'S CAPITULATION AT DOHA

REJECT POTO IN TOTO!

Long Live the Memory of Comrade Prithwiraj Singh

VETERAN COMMUNIST leader and freedom fighter Com. Prithwiraj Singh breathed his last on 31 October in his granddaughter's house at Karkathal, 60 km away from Ahmedabad in Gujarat. For several years he had been residing at the Party State Office in Patna and almost all activists and sympathizers from the IPF days knew him well. Born on 1 January, 1917 in Sonwan village of Ghoshi block in Jehanabad district of Bihar, he joined the freedom movement at the age of 15, leading a students' strike against celebrations of the birth centenary of George V in 1932. He became fully active in 1934-35 and in 1938 he, along with his comrades including Yamuna Karyi, organised workers of the Cotton Mill in Gaya, in a trade union and became its joint secretary. For some time he was involved in organising workers of Dalamianagar in Rohtas. He was one of the participants of the first meeting held in Munger in 1939 to

form the Communist Party in Bihar. He took part in the peasant movement led by Swami Sahajanand and Rahul Sankrityayan and spent 18 months in jails. He was secretary of the Gaya District Party Committee of CPI in 1951-52.

In the post independence period, he took part in the nationwide railway strike of 1960 and suffered prison hardships and torture. In 1962 he firmly stood by proletarian internationalism and in the 1964 split, he sided with the CPI(M). He spent 18 months in jail under DIR in 1965-66. He was soon disillusioned with the CPI(M) and started making attempts to revive the peasant movement with Tumaria Baba and raised the slogan "Peasants, awake and take lathis in your hands". He was vocal in expressing his sympathy with Naxalbari movement from the very beginning and joined the CPI(ML) in 1969. Later he played an active role in the movement against Indira autocracy. He played a significant role in



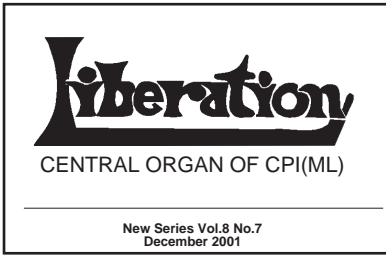
the formation of Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha and was one of the organisers of its Patna rally on 23 February, 1981. In 1982, at the age of 65, while addressing a public meeting at Kamta village in Jehanabad, he was almost beaten to death by the police. He made a significant contribution in building Bihar Rajya Deshbhakt Janwadi Morcha. Because of his significant role in building IPF he was elected president of the Bihar unit from 1982

to 1988. He also served as IPF's national vice president during 1988-94. Even after that, despite his advanced age and failing health, he continued to remain associated with Party activities and joined every state conference and Party congress. He had hoisted the flag at the recently held Bihar state Party conference on 28 August 2001.

Condoling his death, a meeting was organised at State Party Office on 1 November, attended by Com. KD Yadav, Saroj Chaube, Prabhat Kumar, RN Thakur and Ashok Kumar. His mortal remains reached Patna on 4 November via Jehanabad where Party State Committee Secretary Comrade Ramjatan Sharma joined his last journey. Party General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya reached Patna and laid down the red flag over his body paid floral tributes to the departed leader. Com Dipankar also participated in the funeral performed at Bansghat in Patna. Besides Comrades Ram Naresh Ram, Nand Kishor Prasad, Ramjatan Sharma and other senior leaders, leaders of CPI and CPI(M) as well as a number of renowned intellectuals and representatives of student-youth, women and workers' and peasant organisations joined the funeral procession and offered their tributes to the departed veteran communist.

On 13 November 2001, a condolence meeting was organized at Manpur in Gaya in his memory. It was attended by Party Polit Bureau Member Comrade Ram Naresh Ram, AICCTU National Secretary Comrade Ram Narain Thakur, State President of Bihar Khet Mazdoor Sabha Comrade Satyadev Ram and also CPI leader Comrade Satydev Prasad, CPI(M) leaders as well as local Party leaders.

Eternal glory to Comrade Prithwiraj Singh. □



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Reject POTO in Toto!

DEFYING COUNTRYWIDE protests, the Vajpayee government is desperate to push POTO through. While people like Advani have started accusing all who oppose or criticise POTO of being supporters of terrorism, another section of BJP leadership is trying a 'persuasive' approach with a view to manufacturing a 'national consensus' around this draconian legislation. They say, our legal framework remains rather outdated vis-a-vis the constantly modernising threat of terrorism, hence the country needs a new law. Moreover, both Bush and Blair have introduced new legislation to combat terror, should not India follow in the footsteps of these great democracies?

These are devil's arguments and are downright mischievous. Was TADA borrowed from the ancient code of Mann? What happened to this 'modern' legislation? This country has spent a decade under TADA, a decade which only saw the shadow of terror get longer and longer with tens of thousands of people languishing without trial under fabricated charges. If POTO is being questioned and rejected by the broad democratic opinion, it is not on any ethical ground of democratic rights and civil liberties but on the concrete basis of the Indian people's disastrous experience with TADA. And we are told that more than a thousand people have been detained in America since September 11 under the country's new anti-terror law, and even their friends and family members are not informed about their whereabouts. This, according to the Sangh Parivar, is the model of democracy we should emulate!

Prior to Ayodhya, it was the Jan Sangh's opposition to Indira Gandhi's Emergency that had given the RSS its first major political break at the national level. In an interesting reversal of roles, while the Congress today opposes POTO, the victims of Indira's Emergency today clamour for more draconian legislation than the infamous DIR and MISA of the Indira era. But it is futile merely to oppose POTO in the name of adequacy of existing (black) laws. This would mean conceding more than half the grounds to fascists who are already (mis)using all the existing black laws to the hilt and are clamouring for more draconian ones. The same premise would tomorrow legitimise POTO in the face some other more undemocratic measure.

While some NDA partners are voicing certain reservations, demanding some safeguards, several non-NDA state governments who are themselves presiding over similar sweeping legislation, have reduced their 'opposition' to POTO to merely a question of jurisdiction of central and state legislation and to a rather notional distinction between terrorism and organised crime. Oddly enough, the Left Front government of West Bengal, which has shelved its plans for a POTO-like ordinance called POCO only to await a proper legislative opportunity in the Assembly, belongs to this latter category of critics.

Democracy cannot be defended with such muted and muffled voices of dissent. The opposition to POTO has to be total and resolute. Vajpayee Government has rejected any dilution of its provisions. They have even hinted at convening a joint session of Parliament to muster adequate numbers necessary to pass the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The saffron fascists are out make a political point through this by once again trying for a political polarisation by vilifying minorities. Hence, "Reject POTO in Toto" can be the only acceptable slogan of resistance.



Largest-ever 'Anti-War, Anti-WTO Rally' Held in Delhi

IT WAS a bold and fitting reply to an acquiescing Vajpayee Govt. on behalf of the toiling people of India, and the initiative was taken by none other than CPI(ML) and its peasant wing, All India Kisan Sangharsh Samiti (AIKSS). As Party General Secretary Comrade Dipankar said, "The toiling people of India are ready to wage a decisive battle against American imperialism and their official agents in India from Doha to Kabul." To prove it tens of thousands of peasants and workers from Bihar, UP, MP, Chattisgarh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Delhi swarmed onto the streets in Delhi to participate in the 'Anti-War, Anti-WTO Rally' on 9 November and strongly protested the American war of aggression on Afghanistan and the US intervention in Asia. The red sea of the rallyists vociferously

opposed the anti-peasant policies of the Vajpayee Government and condemned it for surrendering to the diktats of WTO. They also severely indicted it for surrendering to the American war designs and adopting 'fascist measures to kill democracy' by promulgating black laws like POTO.

Thousands upon thousands of peasants and activists of other mass organizations had started pouring into Delhi since November 7, and they were accommodated in the camp set up at Feroz Shah Kotla grounds. It was from there that the massive procession started on 9 November at around 11 a.m. The rallyists with thousands of red flags and banners passed through Delhi Gate, Ranjit Singh Flyover, Tolstoy Marg and Jantar Mantar and held a large mass meeting in front of Parliament Street Police Station. In front of the procession a well decorated



Rally against War and WTO at Vijayawada

ABOUT 4,000 people attended the rally against war and WTO at Vijayawada held on November 9. The rally was organised by CPI(ML) Liberation, AIKSS and AICCTU. The participants had come from all the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Pondicherry and part of Orissa. The rally covered an 8-km route through the Vijayawada town. Despite heavy rains the turnout at the rally was satisfactory.

At the end of the rally a public meeting was organised. The meeting was addressed by Comrades Uma Maheswara Rao, CPI(M) State Committee member and former deputy mayor of the Vijayawada

Municipal Corporation, Kolli Nagewara Rao, CPI State Sectt. member, MCPI leader Omkar, YV Sambasiva Rao of New Democracy, Bharghava Shree of Unity Initiative and Ramesh Patnaik of SUCI. From our Party Comrades B.Sivaraman, PB member, and CCMs N.Murthy, Balasundaram, Shankar, Kumaraswamy and Bangar Rao addressed the rally. Comrade Poonacha from AICCTU, Bangalore also spoke.

The speakers condemned the US war of aggression in Afghanistan and the imperialist designs to force a new round of trade negotiations at Doha, and called for a united movement by the left and democratic forces against the war and WTO.

Com. B.Sivaraman condemned the US imperialism for launching an expedition of expansionism in the name of war against terrorism and destabilising Central Asia and South Asia and bringing war danger to our doorstep. He also denounced the Vajpayee government for indulging in war mongering against Pakistan and minority baiting in the country to cover up their own shameless surrender to imperialism. Condemning Shanta Kumar's announcement the previous day regarding the end to state procurement of foodgrains from the farmers, he demanded that Chandrababu Naidu should withdraw his support to the NDA government at the Centre. He urged the nine left parties in the state to launch a direct movement for the ouster of Chandrababu Naidu in case he didn't. □

truck, displaying festoons with slogans "American Imperialism, Hands off Afghanistan and Quit Asia!" and "Stop Surrendering Our Sovereignty to WTO! Come

Out of It!" written over it was marching from where slogans were also renting the sky. Throughout the rally participants shouted "Stop Starvation-Deaths,

Save Agriculture, Come Out of WTO!", "Stop American Bombing over Afghanistan!", "US Imperialism Will Be Buried in Asian Soil!", "Withdraw POTO!"

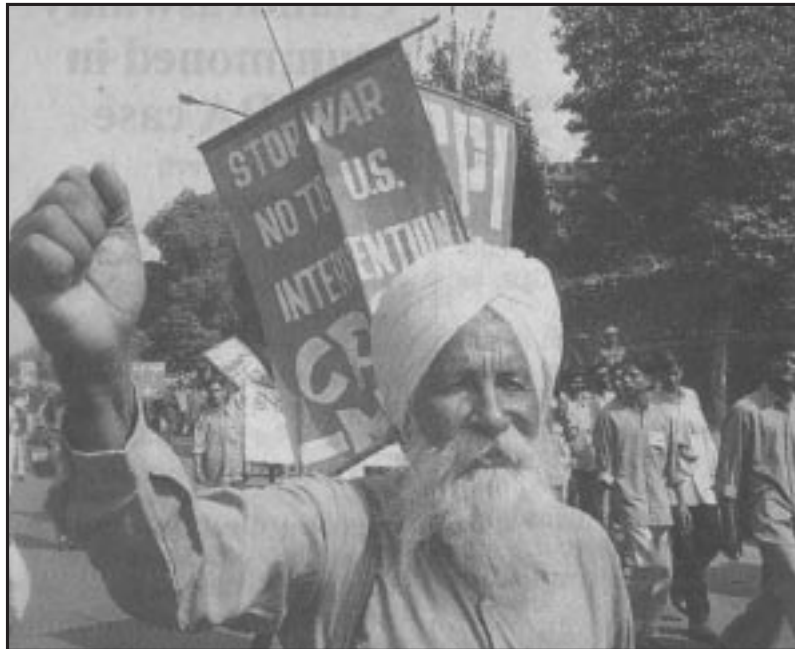
etc. The size of the rally can be assessed from the fact that the traffic at Connaught Place and ITO, the two busiest centers of the metropolis, remained blocked for several hours.

Addressing the mammoth rally on the long stretch of Parliament Street in New Delhi, Party General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya said, “America is waging an all-out war on the weak nations of the world. While in Afghanistan it is using bombs to kill and terrorise the people of this beleaguered country, at the Doha ministerial summit of WTO it is trying to use trade as a weapon of war and terror.”

He said while the world had expressed shock and condemnation over the terrorist strikes of September 11, Washington has misused and insulted the global sympathy against terror by killing and maiming hundreds of innocent Afghan people and systematically destroying their country. “And now it is desperately trying to use the current climate of war to impose a new charter of economic slavery in Doha”, Comrade Dipankar said.

He said it is a matter of great national shame that under Vajpayee’s leadership, the Government of India is supporting the American war in both Afghanistan and Doha. But if the Sangh parivar is prompted by its own tradition of imperialist worship, the peasants and workers of India have their own tradition of anti-imperialist resistance. He asserted that acute agrarian crisis has awakened the Indian peasantry to the danger of WTO and no POTO will be able to force them to accept the dictates of WTO and corporatised agriculture.

Comrade Dipankar said that the developed countries led by America are utilizing the war,



World Bank, IMF and WTO to come out of the recession and through these institutions want to ensure domination over developing countries. The developed countries have not fulfilled the WTO obligations till date, but they are pressurizing all developing countries including India to accept all its provisions.

Addressing the rally Comrade Ahkilendra Pratap Singh, Polit Bureau member, said that the whole Sangh Parivar including Prime Minister Vajpayee is suffering from mental sickness and they are so obsessed with US-mania that they cannot see imperialist conspiracy in anything. Our agriculture is ruining due to the WTO, workers don’t have employment and youth are disheartened. Still Vajpayee Govt. is ready to surrender once again at Doha. This government has no right to stay in power and must be overthrown by people’s movements.

A number of political resolutions, namely on war on Afghanistan, WTO, Doha ministerial meeting, POTO, communal frenzy

instigated by Sangh parivar, starvation deaths and Govt.’s new agrarian policy were also adopted in the rally. An effigy of George Bush was burnt at the end of the meeting.

Apart from Com. Dipankar, other CPI(ML) and AIKSS leaders who led this massive rally include Swadesh Bhattacharya, Akhilendra Pratap Singh, Pawan Sharma, PV Srinivas, BB Pandey, Swapan Mukherjee, Kumudini Pati, Raja Ram, Krishna Adhikari, Rajaram Singh, Rameshwar Prasad, Amarnath Yadav, Mahboob Alam, Ranjit Abhigyan, Rajendra Pratholi, Prem Singh, Phulchand Dhewa, Rajvinder Singh Rana and Ruldu Singh. Kaushalya Devi, mother of martyr Chandrashekhar, also came to participate in the rally.

This was the largest rally so far held in the country against the WTO and the American war on Afghanistan. With this assertion of the most downtrodden and struggling people, the rally has provided a new dimension to the ongoing anti-WTO movement in the country. □

Stepping up the tempo of the movement against the War and the WTO

The chance coincidence between the anti-war movement and the movement against WTO has however proved to be helpful in making the anti-imperialist movement comprehensive. It has also doubly exposed the saffron cabal in power within such a short time and brought them all in a straight line of fire. A large number of liberals (in their new avatar as neo-liberals, so to say) used to mock at the Left's strident anti-imperialist voice as a force of habit, a mechanical repetition of the rhetoric of yesteryear unmindful of the changed conditions of a globalising world. A good number of them used to detect a fair amount of residual nationalism in the Sangh Parivar. But India has never seen such shameless stooges occupying power. The latest in their string of surrenders and compromises is the somersault at Doha. Maran went there with a roar only to come back with a whimper. We carry detailed accounts of this surrender in this section.

Far more serious is the report that has appeared in *India Today* (November 19, 2001) regarding proposed military cooperation between India and the US. This is no routine affair. The list includes military and naval bases for the US on Indian soil, mercenary assistance to the US Navy by the Indian Navy, missile ranges and joint military training and what not. It seems the US is willing to subcontract part of its global cop role to India, in the entire Indian Ocean region. In plain words, it is as good as purchasing Indian armed forces. What began as a "strategic dialogue" between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbot has obviously transcended the contentious issues like nonproliferation and has assumed full-fledged strategic military cooperation. For the first time, under the pseudo-nationalists, the country is on the verge of being reduced to the status of a mercenary stooge of imperialism devoid of any independent conception of national interests. The surrender at Doha is surely a fallout of this. In fact, by openly demanding that Doha should not disrupt the new 'international unity' in the "war against terrorism", the developed countries have forced the developing world into submission. The newly unfolding challenges before the anti-imperialist movement are indeed onerous. The tempo of the present anti-WTO and anti-war movement needs to be sustained. As the situation in Afghanistan is bound to cast a shadow on the anti-war movement, included here are a quick look at the latest developments in Afghanistan and a report from London on the recent one-lakh strong anti-war rally.

The Doha outcome will be challenged by the people of India

ALTHOUGH THE ministerial declaration calls it a Work Programme and not a New Round of negotiations, *it amounts to launching of a new round of negotiations under WTO*. The negotiating mandates on different subjects have been elaborated. The traditional mechanism that goes with the commencement of a New Round viz. the establishment of a "Trade Negotiations Committee" to supervise and direct the process of negotiations has been announced. In the true style of New Round, the entire negotiations will be treated as a "single undertaking".

The bulk of "implementation" issues whose satisfactory solution, our country, among other developing countries, had insisted upon as a pre-condition for any new negotiations, have been incorporated as part of the new negotiations. By all accounts, there has been no worthwhile commitment on the part of developed countries on further liberalization of access for developing countries' exports of textile products. The issue of abuse of anti-dumping provisions as neo-protectionist measures has been now made part of new negotiations with little or no flexibility for reopening basic elements of the existing discipline and instruments currently in use by USA.

As far as *the New Issues* are concerned, there is an explicit commitment that negotiations will start after two years on for "trade facilitation" on some specific articles of GATT 1994.

On the issues of "Investment" and "Competition policy" and "Government Procurement", three most important new issues, (which, GoI was repeatedly asserting, would be opposed) have been squarely put in the work programme. The mandates in respect of these three issues start with a phrase: "recognizing the case for a multilateral framework". This amounts to a-priori decision on elaborating a multilateral discipline. While the formal decision on modalities of negotiations on these issues has been postponed to the next ministerial meeting i.e. giving a reprieve of two more years, *no doubt whatsoever has been left that under the apparently innocuous title of "further work" of the respective "Working Groups", virtual negotiations would proceed apace forthwith.* The working group on investment

will focus on “scope and definition; transparency; non-discrimination; modalities of pre-establishment commitments; development provisions; exceptions and balance of payments safeguards; consultations and settlement of disputes between members”. The working group on competition policy will focus on “core principles; transparency; non-discrimination and procedural fairness; provisions for hard-core cartels; progressive reinforcement of competitive institutions in developing countries.” If these elements are elaborated in the next two years, all that will remain to be done at the next ministerial meeting is to formally adopt the multilateral agreements on these two issues, incorporating these provisions!

The only fig-leaf that was obtained by those who tried unsuccessfully to resist this process of launching the New Round with New Issues, consists of “an understanding” from the Conference Chair that would enable each member to use the negotiations on modalities to prevent any negotiations until the member is prepared to join a consensus for negotiations on all the four new issues. What legal and practical value such an understanding has remains to be seen. If the members could not resist the virtual launch of negotiations *ab initio* on these issues at Doha, what hope is there that they would succeed later when the negotiations would have already gained momentum and the members would be busy protecting their individual interests in the light of the specific elements of the agreement that would have emerged by then?

On the other new issue of “*core labour standards*”, i.e. the celebrated “*social clause*”, the text does not contain the wording that ILO is the appropriate forum for a substantive dialogue on labour rights and thus implies that WTO could bring up

“Anti-WTO Rally” in Delhi

UNDER THE banner of “People’s Campaign against WTO”, a joint rally was held in New Delhi on 6 November near Pragati Maidan to protest against Indian government’s attitude of bowing under the developed countries’ pressure for starting a new round in the Doha WTO meet. Around two thousand CPI(ML) activists led by Comrades Akhilendra Pratap Singh, Brij Bihari Pandey, Kumudini Pati, Raja Ram, Rajendra Pratholi and Girija Pathak gathered at Appu Ghar and marched 2-km stretch to the rally ground in a procession shouting anti-WTO, anti-war slogans. Besides Ex-PMs VP Singh and Deve Gowda, SP leader Mulayam Singh, CPI(M) and CPI general secretaries HKS Surjeet and AB Bardhan, RSP leader Abani Roy, Kishan Patnaik of Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Medha Patkar of NBA and Vandana Shiva, our Party was represented by Comrades Akhilendra and BB Pandey on the podium. Addressing the rally Comrade Akhilendra said that America and WTO were both speaking the language of threat, and in a characteristic Sangh Parivar response Vajpyee Govt. has taken the path of meek surrender. In this situation there is no other way but to come out of WTO. SP Shukla, Convenor, People’s Campaign against Globalisation, conducted the meeting.

the issue later.

On *electronic commerce*, the zero duty commitment that USA had extracted earlier from the rest of the countries, has been extended until the next ministerial meeting.

On the question of “*reviewing*” the agreements like *TRIPs* and “*Understanding on Dispute Settlement*” so as to redress the imbalances and inequities that have been imposed by the former on developing countries and to do away with the coercive, undemocratic and unaccountable features that characterize the latter, hardly anything has been accomplished. The much-publicized declaration on *TRIPs* and Public Health serves a very limited purpose; in the words of one commentator “it could (and it is no more than could) enable developing countries to take measures to protect public health and “promote” (not assure) access to medicines for all.” The wider issue of *TRIPs* constricting the development and dissemination of technology in developing countries and strengthening the hold of private monopolies in knowledge and technology in general, at the cost of public welfare and development,

has remained untouched.

In the area of *on-going negotiations on “Agriculture”* and “*Services*”, the position is as follows. In “*Agriculture*”, all that is there is the willingness “to take into account” the “development needs, including food security and rural development”. The whole perspective of negotiations will continue to be informed mainly by trade concerns i.e. removing the so-called trade distortions. There is no recognition that for a country like ours that perspective is inappropriate and harmful. There is not even a hint that India will insist on retaining her right to impose quantitative restrictions on imports of agricultural products, without any qualifications and without prior consultations. In other words, GOI would continue to rely on the old and oft-repeated weak dispensation of “differential treatment to developing countries” in terms of tariffs and subsidies and even that would be subject to the broad negotiating objective of substantial improvements in market access for agriculture exporting countries.

In regard to “*Services*”, there is

a reaffirmation of the right of members “to regulate, and to introduce new regulations on the supply of services” and of the articles in GATS that are in favour of developing countries. But there is no departure from the very narrow approach regarding movement of labour. Moreover, no cognizance has been taken of the far-reaching issue raised by the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights about the fundamental importance of the delivery of basic services, particularly health and education, as a means of promoting human rights, and the likely adverse implications of a market-oriented and “liberalizing” approach in respect of such services on the

promotion of human rights.

All in all, brave posturing of GOI notwithstanding, what has finally happened at Doha capitulation to the pressures of developed countries and their multinationals. Whatever name they may give it, the product of Doha reinforces the process of encroachment on our economic sovereignty.

From all accounts, the Doha process constituted one more chapter in the murky annals of undemocratic, non-transparent and non-participative functioning of WTO. GoI has meekly surrendered to the arm-twisting and trickery of the developed countries and compromised national sovereignty.

We reiterate our demand in our memorandum to PM for a White Paper. We also repeat our demand that no agreement in WTO be signed without prior and explicit approval of Parliament and the State Legislatures, as necessary.

The outcome of Doha will be challenged by the people of India.

We reaffirm our resolve to continue and intensify our struggle against the process of globalization, marketization and recolonization spearheaded by WTO and furthered by the GOI.

(From a statement by the Indian People’s Campaign against WTO, issued on 15th Nov., 2001)

Capitulation at Doha

THOUGH THE first Draft Ministerial declaration issued on 27th September (covered by us in our last issue) was heavily loaded against developing countries, it still offered them some minimum room for manoeuvre. There was a provision allowing the countries to stay out of a few agreements, if they were uncomfortable with the issues under discussion. The draft itself contained some text within square brackets signifying that full consensus did not exist.

However, the second Draft Ministerial Declaration of 28th October moved away decisively from the relatively milder first draft. It appears that the powers that be were anxious to disabuse the developing nations of any fancy ideas they may have begun to entertain with regard to consensus-based approach. The ‘take it or leave it’ offer, meaning that all members have to agree to all the items on agenda, was back. There was no text in square brackets even on the contentious

issues and the new round, so resolutely opposed by developing countries, was forcibly thrust upon them. The entire process had the trademark of secret green-room meetings, non-transparent procedures and steam-rolling of interests by a handful of developed countries.

It is quite clear on whose authority and prompting the faceless bureaucracy of WTO issues these draft declarations and from where the pressure for such blackmail drafts come.

With a background such as this there was little doubt about what was going to transpire at Doha. On the first day itself, even as developing countries united against a new round, the developed countries were making a concerted bid to force the developing countries to accept a new round. All the processes around arriving at an agreement on the draft ministerial declaration text had been decided by the US and EU even before the entire membership had formally met.

Six Working Groups and their

Chairs were set up, with no authority from the membership, for discussing the draft text and narrow down differences over the second draft. These areas related to Implementation Issues, Environment, TRIPS, Agriculture, Rules, and Singapore Issues. Till the end these Working Groups could not sort out the differences on the issues between the developed and developing country members as there was wide gulf in perception. The meeting had to be extended by at least 18 hours, to bring about the consensus on the final declaration through the by now familiar ‘ramming’ process, and by that time some of the members had already left the conference.

Apart from the issue of total marginalization of the developing and LDC countries in the consultative process and the total distrust that characterized the entire ministerial meet (the declaration had to specifically mention that steps would be taken for making the decision-making process transparent and participation effective and for improved dialogue with the public), let us take a look at what was finally achieved in the draft.

The New Round Begins

Launching of a new round is a big victory for influential Quad group (consisting of the US, EU, Canada and Japan) who were insisting on it despite grave misgivings and opposition from the developing and least developed countries. The EU was able to push further the environmental issues on the agenda. Developed countries also won a commitment to future negotiations on rules about foreign investment and competition, government procurement, and trade facilitation. The labour issues, which were supposed to have been thrown off the agenda at Singapore, were back on the agenda. Thus all the issues listed in the draft declaration of the aborted Seattle Conference of 1999 have been included with minor changes in wording. Doha has undone Seattle. This is a major setback to the developing countries. Particularly in view of the fact that no major concessions were given to them by the developed countries.

Implementation Issues

A decision was supposed to be taken at the Doha Ministerial itself on the issues to “redress the difficulties and the imbalances” of the Uruguay Round agreements in the areas of textiles, agricultural exports etc. These are mostly issues on which the developed countries had reneged on the agreement. Among these, less important items — about 40 in number — involving mainly a “best endeavor clause” have been settled at Doha. Only one major decision — on not repeating anti-dumping actions on a country for the same product with in a year of the previous two being rejected/lifted — was made.

Textiles and Agriculture

On textiles, India’s demand of

The First Blood

IT IS possible. Unequal treaties can be reversed. People can be put before profits. National sovereignty can take precedence over corporate inviolability. Third World unity can cause chinks in the imperialist hegemony. Developing countries too can win victories in the battlegrounds of the fierce trade war launched by the developed world. The partial rollback of TRIPS is a small victory. But it shows the way forward.

Excerpts from the DECLARATION ON THE TRIPS AGREEMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

WE RECOGNISE the gravity of the public health problems afflicting many developing and least-developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

We stress the need for the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) to be part of the wider national and international action to address these problems.

We agree that the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health.

Each Member has the right to grant compulsory licenses and the freedom to determine the grounds upon which such licenses are granted.

Each Member has the right to determine what constitutes a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency, it being understood that public health crises, including those relating to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics, can represent a national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency.

We recognize that WTO Members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector could face difficulties in making effective use of compulsory licensing under the TRIPS Agreement. We instruct the Council for TRIPS to find an expeditious solution to this problem and to report to the General Council before the end of 2002.

We reaffirm the commitment of developed-country Members to provide incentives to their enterprises and institutions to promote and encourage technology transfer to least-developed country Members.

dismantling of textile quotas by 2005, or increase in quota, was not accepted. India was demanding implementation of the third stage of Agreement on Textiles and Clothing with effect from January 2000 and it was not accepted.

Though the food security and development concerns have been ‘taken note of’, there is no immediate concession handed over to India.

On agriculture, the tussle seemed to be mainly between the large agriculture exporters (Australia) and importers like EU and Japan. There was nothing tangible on reducing whopping subsidies in the developed countries that hurt the Third World

farmers.

TRIPS

There is a big noise in the media about the success of India in diluting the TRIPS provision, and it is being represented as a great victory for India. The fact is that while the Indian minister may have talked a lot at the meet, the real push had come from the resolute stand of Brazil and African countries. The fate of TRIPS in the present form was sealed the day the 39 pharmaceutical companies that brought collective action against the South African government to stop it from providing cheaper drugs against

AIDS epidemic, were forced to compromise (See September 2001 issue of *Liberation*). Recently in the US, the demand for ciprofloxacin suddenly shot up because of the Anthrax scare and the company (German multinational Bayer) with the patent could not supply adequate quantities of medicine. This episode highlighted the drawbacks of TRIPS.

The declaration itself is a political declaration and does not re-write the original agreement. However, on the whole, allowing flexibility in issuing of compulsory licensing to generic producers of inexpensive drugs and freedom to decide what constitutes “National emergency” are a victory against the pharmaceutical majors.

Work Program

ONE OF the biggest concerns again is that while the negotiations in each area will result in a separate agreement, the countries will have to take all of them in one package. That offers little flexibility of maneuvering to the developing countries. It was hoped that with the evolution and experience of negotiations, the trade talks would show maturity and move over to the more flexible system whereby members can keep out of the negotiations in a particular area till they have studied the problem in detail, or till it is not of pressing interest to them. But it appears that corporate interests of the developed world are more interested in capturing the markets of developing countries through wholesale blackmail.

Given the benefit of hindsight, the developing countries should have insisted on resolution of implementation issues before committing to any new areas. Nothing of the sort has happened. Not much concrete benefits have emerged. There have been more promises from the developed countries. □

General, Your Tank Is a Powerful Vehicle

General, your tank is a powerful vehicle.

It smashes down forest and crushes a hundred men.

But it has one defect:

It needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful.

It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.

But it has one defect:

It needs a mechanic.

General, man is very useful.

He can fly and he can kill.

But he has one defect:

He can think.

[A poem by Bertolt Brecht]

Why?

*Why do the babies starve
When there's enough food to feed the world
When there're so many of us
Are there people still alone*

*Why are the missiles called peace keepers
When they're aimed to kill
Why is a woman still not safe
When she's in her home*

*Love is hate
War is peace
No is yes
And we're all free*

*But somebody's gonna have to answer
The time is coming soon
Amidst all these questions and contradic-
tions
There're some who seek the truth*

*But somebody's gonna have to answer
The time is coming soon
When the blind remove their blinders
And the speechless speak the truth*

[A Tracy Chapman song from a 1986 album]

Anti-War Conventions in Bihar

AS PART of the ongoing campaign against war, anti-war citizens' conventions were held at Arrah, Patna, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Bihar Sharief, Gaya and Phulwari Sharief on 1 to 7 and 13 November, 2001 respectively. Party General Secretary Com. Dipankar Bhattacharya addressed these conventions. Similar conventions held at Arwal and Jahanabad were addressed by Party State Secy. Com. Ramjatan Sharma.

Addressing the conventions Com. Dipankar warned of the dire consequences that will follow the destructive acts by America in the name of finishing off terrorism. The real motive behind these acts was to establish hegemony over the globe, he said. A great danger is hovering

over democracy because of the open license given to the CIA to commit political murders. He pointed that it was a well-planned conspiracy to link terrorism with Islam and China. A well-conceived theory is now being constructed to search its philosophical, civilisational and cultural roots and portraying it as a threat to the Western civilisation. Com. Dipankar said that efforts to convert secular India into a 'Hindu Rashtra' are also being intensified and fascism is being imposed on the country by means of suppressing anti-war movements and imposing black laws like POTO.

He said that soon after the Central Govt. banned SIMI, the Laloo-Rabri govt. quickly started implementing it, but it never showed courage to impose ban on Bajrang

Dal and VHP like organisation. The West Bengal Govt. declined to impose POTO, but they already have a black law in its place, the POCO.

The convention held in Patna was presided over by a veteran of JP movement, Shri Arshad Azmal and Prof. Ishwari Prasad, formerly professor in JNU. Other prominent intellectuals participating in these conventions include noted Gandhian Razi Ahmed and Arshad Anzum in Phulwari Shrief, Ekbal Zafar of Indian National League, advocate Anjani Bhushan, Arshad Javed in Bihar Sharief, SV Bhaskar, Sayyed Ahmed Qadri, advocate Sartaj Ali Khan, Shauqat Hamaz and Satyanarain Bhattacharya in Gaya.

At several places including Bhojpur, Jahanabad, Nalanda and Patna, the effigy of US President George Bush was burnt on Dashahara day, 26 October 2001. Earlier on 22 October 2001, all the ML groups had jointly organised an anti-war march in Patna. □

Anti-war Conventions in Jharkhand

ON SEVENTH November, anti-war conventions were held in district centres all over Jharkhand. In these conventions, America was asked to stop war on Afghanistan and Indian government's decision to supply fuel to American warships was also condemned. Speakers said that taking undue advantage of the war situation, the govt. was conspiring to impinge on freedom of media and democracy by promulgating POTO. The convention also condemned the government decision to allow refuelling of American warships at Chennai. The conventions were addressed by Comrades Sub-

hendu Sen, Bhuneshwar Bedia, Devkinandan Bedia, Pacchu Rana and Guni Oraon in Hazaribagh, Comrades Mohan Dutta, Anant Prasad Gupta, Md. Israel, Jayshankar Chaudhary, Kumar Vinod, Sankeshwar Mahato and Jahangir Ali in Ranchi, Comrades Janardan Prasad and Ravinder Ram in Daltonganj, Comrades Jitendra Kumar and Kishor Kumar in Garhwa, Comrades JP Minz and Sarfaraz Alam in Latehar, and Comrades DS Diwakar, JN Singh and Meena in Bokaro. A 45-km long anti-war march was brought out from Mahuatnir to NayaMore, Bokaro, where a dharna was staged. □

Trade Unions Oppose WTO

To voice their opposition to the developed countries' pressure to initiate a new round at Doha ministerial meeting and Indian government's attitude of surrender, central trade unions jointly held demonstrations and dharnas at various centers of the country on November 9, the day Doha meet began. In Delhi, Comrade Ranjan Ganguli, one of the national secretaries of AICCTU, addressed a joint dharna at Jantar Mantar in which AICCTU was also a participant. In Patna, a joint procession was taken out from Gandhi Maidan and later a mass meeting was held at GPO crossing. Similar programmes were held in Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, Saharsa and Gaya.

Resisting war and imperialism, defending democratic rights in Blair's Britain

EVEN AS the British government and media were frantically trying to project the Taliban's abandonment of Kabul as a long-awaited 'liberation' and a vindication of the attacks on Afghanistan, one lakh people took part in a vocal and angry march through central London on 18 November, reflecting both the widening base and the deepening politicisation of the anti-war movement here. The demonstration, called by the broad-based Stop the War Coalition, called for an end to the continuing bombing of Afghanistan, warned Bush and Blair against extending their 'war on terrorism' to other third world countries and vowed to resist the draconian attacks on basic civil liberties in Britain which are currently being pushed through parliament under the pretext of fighting terrorism. The march – the biggest anti-war demonstration in Britain since the 1970s – was an impressive sight with a large contingent of students near the front of the march carrying 50 foot high puppets representing Death and American imperialism, followed by a procession several miles long with hundreds of banners representing a wide range of groups and organisations, which took over an hour to enter Trafalgar Square where a massive rally took place. Many Muslim demonstrators who had come from different parts of the country were observing Ramzan and as the early winter dusk fell, the call to prayer was broadcast from the loudspeakers in the Square and dates were distributed as people broke their fasts, in a symbolic gesture of solidarity. At the same time, many

people of South Asian origin chose to organise against the war along secular lines. Indeed, for them this was a way of demonstrating their opposition to what they see as the divide and rule policies of the British state. One of the most vocal sections of the demonstration consisted of Asian women's groups marching under the banner of Asian Women United Against the War. Women involved in sustained movements against domestic violence linked up with anti-imperialist women activists demanding that 'women's voices must be heard'.

During the rally, speaker after speaker condemned the war being waged against the people of Afghanistan, linked it to the interests of global capital, and attacked Tony Blair for fascistically overriding parliament and all the structures of democratic accountability in committing Britain to the war. The new 'emergency' anti-terrorism bill was a major focus: as veteran left-wing Labour MP Tony Benn reminded the protestors in a powerful speech, 'resisting this war means fighting American imperialism in Third World countries – it also means fighting to defend our own freedoms which we have won after a long hard struggle'. He pointed out that this will mean people can be incarcerated indefinitely without trial – similar legislation in the US will even allow people to be sentenced to death without a trial. And as in America, this will be applicable only to foreigners – British citizens will be exempt.

In order to bring in the new legislation, the British government is opting

out of one of the fundamental provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights – the prohibition on arbitrary detention. It is the only one of 40 or so governments signed up to the convention to do this. Under the new powers, the Home Secretary will have the power to imprison a person indefinitely on the basis of suspicion: not of crimes already committed, but of what they might do. A major target of the legislation will be asylum seekers: in a culmination of a whole series of draconian laws which have sought to portray refugees from repressive regimes as terrorists and criminals, information provided by the very governments they have fled will be used to detain them in Britain. They will automatically lose the right to pursue applications for asylum. It is feared that, as is already happening in the US, those arrested will face abusive conditions and their detention kept secret even from lawyers and relatives.

The use of mass internment as a tool of repression by the British state is not new: it was used against the nationalist communities in the North of Ireland in the 1970s and more recently in Britain during the Gulf War when many Palestinians and others from West Asian countries were detained. This time the powers are more sweeping than ever before and will potentially target all Muslims living in Britain who do not have British citizenship. Meanwhile, a whole range of other repressive measures have been smuggled almost unnoticed into the bill, intensifying mass surveillance and curtailing freedom of information. To give just one example, it will become illegal for environmental groups to inform the public of the routes along which nuclear waste is being transported. Clearly, the new laws are designed to be used against all forms of popular resistance and dissent. From now on, we are all potential terrorists.

– Kalpana Wilson

OBSERVING THE AFGHAN SCENE

The Game Not So Great

THE FALL of Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul, and now the chances of imminent fall of Kunduz, to the Northern Alliance forces has dramatically altered the war scenario in Afghanistan. The much needed morale booster for the US in its flagging military campaign before winter was provided not by any expansion of US ground deployment but by the fleeing of the Taliban. Despite such major Taliban reverses there is no sign of let up in the US bombing as a gesture during Ramadan. The spotlight at the time of this writing is on Kunduz where, despite Taliban declaration of 'surrender', thousands of Taliban and pro-Taliban forces under encirclement are facing a virtual slaughter. Hundreds have already been killed in reportedly the heaviest bombing of the campaign by the US on Kunduz. Thousands of Pakistani jihadists who crossed over into Afghanistan to fight the US have been sent to the frontline town to act as a 'human shield' and they are among those trapped and this has heightened the anxiety in Pakistan. Hence Musharraf's desperate plea for allowing these forces to surrender.

No matter whether it was a premeditated withdrawal or a disorderly debacle, the Taliban retreat has taken much wind out of their sails. Not only they have not been able to launch any attack against the advancing NA forces but are reportedly facing pressure in Kandahar itself from Pushtun tribal chiefs and mujahideen commanders.

Early fall of Mazar and Kabul was not something unexpected but the ease with which they were taken by the NA forces, which simply rolled into these towns without any resistance worth the name was in fact a surprise. But Kunduz is a different ball game. It was here the Taliban were concentrating their forces and preparing for a resistance

in all seriousness. The outcome in Kunduz will heavily influence further course of the war one way or the other. There have been conflicting reports with some saying that a section of 'foreign militants' are refusing to surrender and putting up resistance. Will Kunduz -- speed up the demoralisation and disarray in the Taliban camp? Or, it will inflame the passions, stem the tide and give a fillip to the resistance? Will the NA be able to maintain its winning streak? Or, will it have a boomerang effect on Pushtuns? Of late, there have also been reports of fierce local resistance from Taliban forces in towns like Maydan Shar near Kabul. Does it mark a turning point in the dramatic downslide? Well, in an extremely fluid situation one has to wait and see.

The euphoria in the West over the Taliban disarray has covered up the disarray in the US move to put together a 'broad-based and representative government' in Afghanistan. Despite military gains, the US political strategy is now under tremendous stress. The Northern Alliance doesn't appear to be fully amenable to the US. They ignored US warnings not to enter Kabul. The NA even asked the British special forces in Kabul to pack off and leave. Different feuding factions of NA are carving up the fallen cities into different spheres of influence. For instance, in Kabul where one-third of the population are Shiaite, Hazaras have set up their own security command and sphere of influence and it was reportedly this which prompted Tadjik forces to swiftly march into the city ignoring the US objections. But the only entity which is bereft of any influence is the UN. The Americans would soon realise that power in Afghanistan grows out of field guns and not Daisy-Cutter bombs. Meanwhile, Burhanuddin Rabbani has

declared himself president much to the US displeasure and ruled out any role for Zahir Shah, the chosen figurehead. What complicates matters further is the fact that Rabbani is already the 'head of state' formally recognised by the UN.

The situation in Mazar-e-Sharif is also reported to be tense between the Uzbek warlord Dostum and Tadjik commander Atta Mohammad and other Hazara commanders. The respective factions are backed by Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan who have their own tussle for influence. The western town of Herat and its surrounding provinces are controlled by one Ismail Khan, a commander of the Shiaite Hazaras backed by Iran, on whom other NA leaders have little control. In the sudden power vacuum following the disarray in Taliban ranks and the disruption of their command and communication structures, it is a free for all among different NA factions who are militarily expanding at a frantic pace to occupy as much territory as possible to be used as bargaining chips in the post-Taliban phase, unmindful of the fact whether they would be able to hold on to them. For instance, Khan's forces have been advancing towards Kandahar itself which has upset the US plans of enabling 'moderate Taliban' or other Pushtun forces to take over the city. Meanwhile, in Jalalabad the balance has tilted in favour of non-Taliban Pushtun forces including Haji Abdul Qadir, brother of the slain commander Abdul Haq. Down south the Pushtun tribal chiefs marginalised earlier by the Taliban have reportedly started reasserting now.

The advances by the Northern Alliance have put paid to Pakistan's ambitions of acquiring a "strategic depth" in Afghanistan. Big mouthed Musharraf, making loud demands on the US in the name of Pakistan's 'national interests,' is forced to eat the crow after every step. If anything, Pakistan now has much greater stake in the urgent ouster of Taliban from its southern strongholds.

Its part in the post-Taliban manoeuvres depends on its ability to deliver on the Pushtun front but many anti-Taliban Pushtun leaders are wary of Pakistan as well. India, keen to have a “roll” in the sticky Afghan mud, is patting itself on the back by sending a few diplomatic staff to open a mission in Kabul.

Meanwhile, Russia and Iran, which have reasons to be as much pleased as Americans if not more, about the advances of NA factions, have expressed concern about any prolonged presence of US forces in Afghanistan. But Americans, obviously bolstered by the Afghan developments, have reiterated their decision to go after several other countries. One of the known Hawks, Vice President Dick Cheney, has even released a list of

about 50 countries! On the other had, senior EU, and even British officials, have started grumbling about the hawks in the US. The first phase of progress in the American war in Afghanistan thus seems to have ushered in a decisive phase of the Great Game-II.

Any slip in the fragile emerging balance would mean a different civil war and different alliances. All the best laid plans of big powers would go awry. No matter whether it is going to serve any grandiose geopolitical design or not, American entrenchment in Afghanistan quagmire is going to be messy.

But it may be too early to write off Taliban. Though the worse is yet to come for it, at some point, whatever remains of it and the Al-Qaeda, is

bound to regroup and, as visualised by Mullah Omar himself, would go on a long-term guerrilla offensive after withdrawing into the mountains.

Conscious withdrawal or uncontrolled stampede, the Taliban retreat seems to have thrown cold water over the so-called jihad in Pakistan and elsewhere. “The Taliban retreat is demoralizing for their supporters throughout the Islamic world,” said Mauladad, a member of the right-wing Jamaat-i-Islami party. “I have started to wonder if the Taliban claims of resistance were as hollow as those of Saddam Hussein,” he added. But the secular global anti-war movement seems to be advancing unruffled as seen in London on November 18.

– BS

THE MYTH OF NATION BUILDING:

Afghanistan's fate after the Taliban and challenges for the Left

“All I want is a happy Afghanistan”
– King Zahir Shah, Rome, 2001.

Some facts about the “happy” Afghanistan of King Zahir Shah –

Infant mortality, 25 %. Life expectancy, 40. Literacy, 7 %. Number of highways, extremely limited. Railways, nil. Categorized as “peasant masses” (landless) 92 %. Banking system, usurious money lending. And, if statistics from two or three cities are excluded, the rights of women and children rested solely in the authoritarian whims of either tribal chiefs or local mullahs, often both.

That was the land of milk and honey King Zahir Shah left behind in 1973.

Prior to that, in 1972, the CIA's favorite Islamic fundamentalist, Golbuddin Kekmatyar, murdered a prominent secular student leader (Saydal

Sokhandan) on the Kabul University campus. And, by the time the King left Afghanistan, Islamic radicals had made it a habit to throw acid in the face of female high school and university students. Also, unknown the outside world, the Shah of Iran's dreaded secret police (SAVAK), already engaged in the brutal obliteration of Left wing activists in Teheran, was busy ensuring that similar trends in Afghanistan were eliminated efficiently and ruthlessly.

Now, nearly 30 years into the future, Afghanistan is being condemned to another version of Zahir Shah's happy Afghanistan.

The West appears enamoured by the *Loya Jirgha* which, far from being the local version of the modern day legislative assembly, was simply a collection of tribal and religious leaders who were quite willing to let the King

play the “big game” as long as their own financial interests in the provinces were not threatened in any manner whatsoever. Alternately, if a Zahir Shah-led *Loya Jirgha* is not convened in the near term future, Afghans will find their future in the rather dubious hands of a “representative” government dominated by key figures from within the Northern Alliance (United Front) on one hand and some of the CIA's favorite Pushtun warlords on the other.

Either way, the majority of Afghans will remain impoverished. The only solution is to bring into focus the economic agenda developed by progressive groups of Afghan students in the late 1970s, an agenda which essentially influenced the US, Iran and Pakistan to determine that direct intervention in Afghanistan, to stem the tide of change, was imperative; their convenient alliance with Islamic radicals within Afghanistan was cemented well before the Soviet invasion, a fact which has been deliberately hidden by a rather effective propaganda machine.

There is no established tradition of socialist or Marxist ideology and, for

all practical purposes, the progressive agenda of the Afghan Left was entirely home grown: land reforms, separation of religion and state, legalization of trade unions for workers and peasants, eradication of illiteracy and emancipation of women. Effectively, the agenda laid out the fundamental concepts designed to create a democratic “nation state”; thus far, despite the availability of certain liberties in selected Afghan cities, Zahir Shah’s system of governance was dedicated to maintaining neutrality in the power politics being played over centuries around Afghanistan’s loosely defined borders.

In fact, the basic ingredients for conflict within Afghan society, ingredients pitting progressive ideals against fundamentalist Islam were totally independent of any Soviet present; the debate between genuine reforms and feudalism was raging soon after 1966. Tribal chiefs and village clergymen were already on the alert and instances of “terrorism” against Afghan intellectuals and activists were rising with each passing day.

Afghanistan’s Left was largely unprepared to exploit a historic opportunity in the late 1960s.

Firstly, the revolutionary movement within the country was split shortly after its birth, a reflection of the divisions within international communism. Secondly, none of the progressive parties were able to establish any credible support bases in Afghanistan’s provinces and, in that context, the Left was hardly battle ready. Finally, given the CIA’s Cold War strategy of pitting Islamic fundamentalists against socialist movements in virtually all Muslim countries, the Left was unable to visualize the sheer strength and vigor of a broad opposition to any enduring changes in Afghanistan’s political order.

Furthermore, the alliance against Afghanistan’s Left was cemented when Afghanistan’s “Communist” government (1978) began to implement a long list of internal laws (beginning

with laws relating to land reforms) without laying the foundations for their rapid acceptance by the very people whom such reforms were intended to emancipate; consequently, while the message of the warlords and mullahs – “Islam is under threat” – was widely disseminated, the actions of the Taraki government were widely perceived as “godless” steps against religion and the term “jihad”, resonating loudly within the Muslim world, received a sympathetic ear in most Western capitals.

Today, with the Cold War era conclusively brought to an end during an extended Texas cookout (the Putin-Bush summit) and with Leftist movements in the Muslim world largely in disarray, the West finds itself confronting the same Islamic fundamentalists which it fervently backed just a decade ago. An overwhelming majority of the world’s Muslims now find that though the war against communism is over, their own financial conditions continue to deteriorate; therein lies the appeal of Al-Qaeda’s message. The problem for the West in general, and the US in particular, is that whereas socialist and Marxist ideologies are, by their very nature, anti-terrorist, Islamic fundamentalism is devoid of any humanist traditions which respect the distinction between combatants and non combatants in any conflict.

In Afghanistan, the Left is now being presented with another significant opportunity since the message of Afghanistan’s revolutionary movement is simple, direct and telling: without land reforms, without the expansion of the public sector, without legislating women’s rights into an Afghan constitution, without the creation of a judiciary (and related executive branches) which can enforce new laws and without the segregation – in certain key respects – of religion and state at the village level, “broad based” and “representative” governments are merely illusions serving only to pacify the conscience of liberals in the West.

It is vital that a process of unity of the Afghan Left is undertaken in order to avoid the polemics and personal rivalries of the last four decades. There is also the renewed requirement for the Left to encourage debate from within since one of history’s primary lessons is most certainly that a progressive movement which does not incorporate the right to dissent is unequivocally destined to become authoritarian and revisionist.

The revolutionary message must incorporate the weight and substance necessary to make a decisive impact on Afghanistan’s future. Otherwise, the myths of freedom (e.g. the BBC’s John Simpson declaring Kabul’s liberation and CNN’s Christian Amanpour confirming the liberation of Kabul’s women) are likely to replace the fact that recent events have, most certainly, served to highlight the immediacy with which the challenge of poverty and progress needs to be addressed. The removal of the Taliban is not accompanied by freedom from oppression – this is a dangerous premise being flouted by the networks.

Interestingly, armed with a powerful agenda for tenable reforms in Afghanistan, the Left may well find allies, albeit reluctant ones, right across the Western spectrum. However, it is important to bear in mind that habits die hard. Though the end of the Cold War has certainly redefined the protagonists for the new war – Western democracies against Islamic fundamentalists – American involvement in the defeat of Daniel Ortega in the November 4 Nicaragua elections must serve as a chilling reminder that the CIA’s corridors are often visited by the ghost of Che Guevara.

Afghanistan’s revolutionary forces need to begin work immediately to identify a plan of action in the midst of a surfeit of Afghanistan news and inconsequential related developments occupying widespread international attention.

-- Rakesh Saxena

POTO is an Attack on Democracy

Kamala Prasad

THE UNION GOVERNMENT notified on 24th October the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, 2001 (POTO). This has instantly become controversial. The policy as well as the motives of the Government have come under attack. This is in the backdrop of several “black laws” already existing in the country, the struggles waged to get them off the statute book, and the cloning mindset of the administration in making them an instrument of state terror.

A Weak Case

The Government’s case appears weak *ab initio* from the way this Ordinance is being justified. Home Minister LK Advani chooses the BJP National Executive to declare that those who do not support POTO, by implication, support terrorism! He forgets that the Government lacked courage to face the Parliament and had abused the emergency provisions for issuing an ordinance. And this is when the Parliament is convening within weeks. Ministers go to press emphasising that there is no political motive behind the measure and the means adopted. Any connection with the forthcoming UP elections is also discounted. But the UP Chief Minister immediately declares that he would replicate this law in the state, if it fails in Parliament. He has discovered its necessity only during the extended tenure of the BJP legislators who continue despite the five-year tenure having already expired. Belatedly, the Union Law Minister pleads that the USA and UK are already enacting anti-terrorist laws and they are mature democracies. So, why should India

not imitate, when the USA is the only political model for the BJP to imitate?

This is precisely the reason why the broad political opinion in the country should go for deeper introspection. There is nothing commendable about the herd mentality. Even the USA and the UK are seeking legislative approval and not rushing through a loophole in procedure. The UK law may even be delayed since it contravenes a European Union convention on protection of the liberty of the accused. The National Human Rights Commission in India also feels some of the provisions of the Ordinance may contravene provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which India is a party. Has the Government tried to bring out facts for sober reflection so far?

The Union Government has been overwhelmed by events and is obsessed with its measures to contain cross-border terrorism. Political and administrative failure is being papered up now to show that a draconian law alone can save the situation. Perhaps, the concerned union ministers had promised more than what they were capable of delivering. Once again reasonable misgivings of right-thinking people are being drowned in verbal missives from the BJP and its ministers.

Misgivings on Specific Provisions

Despite articulated deficiencies, there are three sentinels of our democratic freedoms. They contribute to guarantee citizens’ rights. Even unknowingly, they support people’s movements in their struggles for a

better future for marginalised groups. How do they fare in this Ordinance?

The media and the press have been the first to rise in widespread protest. Is it not ironic that there is so much talk about right to information while one major pillar of information is being put to risk? Section 3(8) of the Ordinance purports to discipline the media and create a fear psychosis among journalists. The multiple restraints on their professional activities are detrimental to their task, to their professional ethics, and to their bonafides in gathering information. An atmosphere of suspicion about their being agents of the investigating agency may reduce the quality of information they provide for public use. It may suppress some, even if marginal, inputs useful in understanding the motives of underground movements and their modus operandi. It will not be in the public interest to place the media in a position where its arms are twisted either through blackmail or through state terror.

The judicial processes do need reform. However, this Government has appointed a commission, essentially comprising jurists, to review the working of the Constitution, which will throw ideas for reforms. The provisions for special courts in Chapter IV and for disposal of bail applications, presumptions of adverse inference against the accused, composition of Review Committees, to name just a few in Chapter VI, purport to curtail the independence of courts. True, the judiciary will prevail once any case is brought up but the inherent risks due to political pressures and incompetence of the investigating agencies are very much a cause for public concern.

Finally, the status and the credibility of the National Human Rights Commission are under challenge. India has drawn considerable mileage globally from the commendable performance of the Commission. However, its views have been totally

ignored in the promulgation of the Ordinance. The Commission had, in 1995, pinpointed the provisions of TADA that militated against the normal legal processes. More importantly, it pointed out that TADA was intended to apply to specific areas but had been extended to the whole country and these provisions were freely applied to situations not contemplated by the Act. These provisions related to raising the presumption of guilt, admission as evidence of confession of guilt before a police officer, extraordinary protection to witnesses, amending the time limit for investigation and preparation of the chargesheet. In the view of the Commission in 1995, TADA was draconian in effect and character, yielding to abuse. This was violative of the social, economic and political justice of our Constitution. The Act operated unjustly and was based on a foundation of injustice. It also dismissed the plea that the integrity of our motherland would be in jeopardy, as a stand without merit.

A differently composed Commission examined the Draft Prevention of Terrorism Bill 2000 as drafted by

the Central Law Commission. This draft bill contained all the provisions now part of the Ordinance in 2001. The Commission rejected outright the need and the advisability for such legislation.

Politics and the Law

It is abundantly clear basing on facts that the Government was not after results; it was after a symbol and a slogan. The political decision to float the Ordinance has been clearly to pursue politics by other means. The experience of the last 20 years has been swept away making use of the opportunity provided by public outrage against events in the USA on September 11, 2001. But for the Home Minister and BJP stalwarts to state that the Ordinance is the outcome of universal public demand in the face of all these contrary facts is, to say the least, preposterous. In fact, "terrorism" has not even been properly defined though punishments for "terrorist activities" have been prescribed.

The Ordinance in its content and the manner in which this surprise has been sprung on political India is a challenge to political and parlia-

mentary supremacy, to the sanctity of constitutional ethics and judicial processes, to the dignity of the institutions established by law, and to the wisdom of civil society. This is a step towards weakening the fabric of democracy; a setback to the integrative processes at play for the emotional unity of the diverse sections of our population. This is the way the BJP has grown to the present position. It is feeling thwarted in its further progress as reflected in the number of state governments under its sway. If the 'mandir' agitation saw its meteoric rise, can the anti-terrorist slogan stop its slide?

Civil society has the final say. Progress to promote unity and integrity of the community and safety of the nation will come from mass mobilization. Political parties have to see the lurking dangers and follow the path of right and not the one provided by demagoguery. The danger to our democracy, procedural as well as substantive, is real. The Ordinance is fit to be defeated in the Parliament.

(The writer is a former secretary to the Government of Bihar)

Humour

Arming the Monkeymen with Anthrax

IN THE backdrop of September 11, after lot of original thinking on the issue, the President of India signed an ordinance which allows arming of "monkeymen" with a deadly strain of Anthrax called POTO. The preamble of the ordinance states that the Sept' 11 bombing of World Trade Towers has had considerable effect on the security scenario in India. The arsenal of our security should match that of terrorists, who are well equipped with biological warfare agents. Our counter-terrorism special forces, codenamed "monkeymen," – in honour of the Monkeyman who

terrorized the population in Delhi outskirts – will receive rigorous training in and around Ayodhya in the coming months. These forces will be at the disposal of the presidents of – United States, VHP and Bajrang Dal.

In the fine print, the legal eagles have found a particularly important provision which states that under certain emergency situations – like another plane crash in the US, or heavy floods in Nicaragua, or discovery of an oil field in Afghanistan – or external threats from forces inimical to the interests of India, the government of the day will be empowered to apply for becoming 52nd state of the United States. The

Government of India can send the application by high-speed fax in case Pakistan is also applying at the same time.

Elaborating on the issue, the Home Minister said in a press conference that the bill would be introduced in the winter session of the Parliament. Passing of the bill would also pave the way for crucial amendments to the Constitution. Presently our Constitution treats all citizens equal, which leads to lots of complications in governance. A neat and simple way of classifying the citizens would be available after passage of the Bill – opponents of the new Bill are traitors and the supporters of the Bill are patriots.

-- Girish Ghildiyal



Social Transformation rally in Giridih

THE NEW state of Jharkhand completed one year of its formation, and so did Babulal Marandi's BJP regime here. Within this short period the government's anti-people policies and misdeeds have become so conspicuous that mass discontent against it is not only growing day by day but getting reflected in agitations of unforeseen intensity. CPI(ML) has taken appropriate and timely initiatives from the day one of Marandi's rule, and has emerged as the leading movemental force on the streets and also as the most

vocal party of the opposition within the Legislative Assembly. (See box) This has raised the profile of the Party quite rapidly in the political scenario of Jharkhand. In comparison almost all of the bourgeois opposition parties are looking dwarfish and totally ineffective. At this turn of the political situation in the history of this new state, the rally held at Rajdhanwar of Giridih district on 8 November will go a long way in fulfilling the objective of building a large-scale mass movement to enforce a new

polarisation in the state.

With the central slogan "Ensure employment, security and dignity, or else leave the throne!", the social transformation rally was a thunderous success. With participation of around 40,000 people, it the largest rally in any district of Jharkhand so far. And the media duly admitted this fact. The intensity of mobilization becomes more pronounced in the light of the fact that only half of the district is covered by the network of the Party.

In the context of Giridih district, the significance of this rally can also be judged by the fact that on the same day, the Chief Minister Marandi and Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha were holding meetings in Giridih town and Koderma respectively, only 50-60 km away from Rajdhanwar, but these events hardly got any prominence in the media.



CPI(ML)'s Rajdhanwar rally was the front page lead news. This made Marandi lament in Laloo style: I am a poor adivasi, why would media pay heed to me?

In the newspapers, as far as the headlines go, it was a mass uprising in the citadel of BJP, in favour of *Maaley*. The Telegraph even termed it a "Red storm that swept away saffron dust". And speakers were quoted saying that the BJP rule was a "Jallad raj" (hangmen's regime). The rally was addressed by Comrades Subhendu Sen, State Secretary, Mahendra Singh, CC member and MLA, State Committee members Tarun Sarkar, Sukhdev Prasad, Puran Mahato, Loknath Paswan,

Parmeshwar Mahato, Pachhu Rana and Giridih District Committee members Vijay Singh, Mustaqim Ansari, Ashok Paswan, Sitaram Singh, Nageshwar Yadav and Bokaro DC member Bikash Singh.

Giridih is a peculiar district in Jharkhand where the competition between the anarchist stream represented by MCC and revolutionary democratic left stream represented by CPI(ML) is very acute. Only a few days ago, the anarchists had had their biggest ever strike on a picket of armed police at the border of Dhanbad district, nearly 80 km away from Rajdhanwar, killing 13 policemen and looting a large storage of ammunitions. And under

this pretext, the government had unleashed large-scale repression deploying BSF in this area. A number of rural poor were caught and made to surrender as MCC activists. Among them two belonged to our Party.

People are at the receiving end both from anarchists' terror and state terror. However, after the rally many people said that only by means of such democratic left movement could the Jharkhand be saved from degenerating into a 'disturbed area', only then can it avoid the destiny of becoming another bastion of anarchists.

It is an indisputable fact that such a large-scale mass mobilisation

could be made possible because it raised burning issues affecting the overwhelming majority of the people. The issues of democracy, secularism, genuine social justice and control of the rural poor over panchayati institution etc. raised by the rally can really intensify class struggle at grassroots level and give it a wider dimension. Broad masses of the peasantry have become totally disillusioned of Marandi govt. because of its utter neglect of development issues. On the other hand, the govt. has propped up a new strata of exploiters, the development mafia comprising feudal gentry, intermediaries, mafia agents and bureaucrats. Employment and social security has also been an important question because of the bleak future looming large over agriculture, which is the main prop of the overwhelming population of the district. CPI(ML) has been raising these issues from the very beginning and building from strength to strength in the course of agitation. And just as Marandi regime completes its first year of callous rule, people of Giridih under the leadership of CPI(ML) came in a mood to accept the challenge of putting up an independent alternative. And thus people from a very wide range of classes and strata came to attend the rally.

As regards the composition of the rally, half of the people came

from the rural poor origin, mainly dalits. Significantly, around 10,000 participants were there from the Muslim community. But participation of the people from backward caste middle peasantry, i.e. from Yadavs, Kurmis and Koiris, was no less significant. Then, at least one thousand participants belonging to middle peasantry were from the Bhumihaar caste. By all means the rally was different from Laloo style 'mandalite social justice' mobilisation. Rather it was a class-conscious mobilization, directed towards social transformation and attendant bid to power. Thousands of women too came to the rally, carrying children in their arms. Small traders and small contractors from market areas of Bagodar, Birni, Jamua etc. and even from outside the district could also be seen in sizeable numbers. Many of them came in Maruti cars along with their families. Even a section of BJP supporters came to the rally. In order to get a picture of the size of the rally, it would be relevant to mention the number of vehicles involved in carrying people to the place of rally. There were 109 large trucks, 10 full-size buses, 153 Tata-407 matadors, 185 small vehicles including tractors, trekkers, jeeps etc., 46 Maruti etc. cars, 487 motor cycles and 4260 bicycles. A vehicle stand had to be marked

for parking all these vehicles at 1 km distance away from the rally place.

Thousands of red and green flags and banners (representing CPI-ML and Jharkhad Mazdoor Kisan Samiti) overshadowed the entire ground covered by this well-organised, well-decorated and well-disciplined rally. Large numbers of drums and gongs including traditional musical instruments manders, tasas, dhols, nagaras and two bands kept on reverberating the battle cry for a new Jharkhand. Festoons were hung over a large area. Large number of motor-cyclists were wearing headbands. More than 50 microphones multiplied the thunderous effect of speeches. Looking like a great festival of people, this rally has vindicated the assessment of new class forces made and policies and tactics adopted at the 6th Party district conference in Giridih held recently on 21-22 September, 2001.

The conference had correctly noted that the class composition and the current political situation in this district promises that the future lies only in CPI(ML) hands in this district and this district will either become a citadel of anarchists or it will come up as a concrete experimental ground for revolutionary democracy.

— BB Pandey

Rajdhanwar is Developing as a Center of Social Transformation

— Mahendra Prasad Singh

IN THIS deteriorating situation of the state, it is hard to tell on which front the situation is worse than the others. At the fag end of its one-year

rule, Babulal Marandi is facing a tough challenge in his own home district, Giridih. The Chief Minister was supposed to inaugurate bridges over Irga, Remba and Karmai rivers, but the local masses openly declared

their intention to inaugurate the bridges themselves and in fact they did just that. Later the people boycotted the chief minister's programme, when he came along with his cavalcade for inaugurating the already inaugurated bridges. This assertion of the masses has assumed a political dimension. The forces oppressing backwards, dalits, adivasis and minorities enjoy patronage of the chief minister and the minister for mining, who

claims himself to be equal to the chief minister. These forces are jubilant nowadays. However, it is against these oppressive social forces that the people belonging to backwards, dalits, adivasis and minorities have girded up their loins. This has added a new dimension to the already simmering discontent against the Marandi government, which has by now spread all over the state, and imparted a new momentum to it. The movement emerging against the loot of funds assigned for development, as well as against oppression, is specific in some respects. There is a resolute and mature leadership behind these movements from district to village level, and the people too have a positive experience of struggle, so they have stayed on despite severe state repression. These areas cannot be compared to the extremist-affected areas, where social supervision over developmental work and general administration does not lie in the hands of masses, and people's initiatives are blunted. It is also different from the mass struggles erupting all of a sudden against loot and corruption, oppression, etc., and dying down so soon. A leadership having experience of conducting protracted struggle against oppression and corruption directs the ongoing movement in areas like Koderma, Rajdhanwar, Jamua, Bagodar and Gandeya. In the early days of Marandi rule, government-sponsored killings in Tapkara, Dorando, Bokaro, Semri Bejaro etc. had rocked the state. Movement on these issues had exposed the true colours of Marandi government. The event of inauguration of bridges by people themselves in Giridih district and ensuing rapid social polarization

further laid bare the unpopular character of Marandi government. However, more important is the fact that the agitating masses here put up a challenge before the government and the powers that be. Will this tendency spread far and wide and take the path of providing a political alternative? It is difficult to tell, but undoubtedly these incidents represent the most befitting reply to the government's misdeeds.

The chief minister has recently bragged that he would pay back bullet for a bullet. Though he has said this in connection to the extremists, people knew that all along Babulal Marandi has showered bullets only on the Jharkhandi poor, and minorities. With this statement, the chief minister's failure has also come into open. The police machinery itself is feeling insecure. Common people are already living under the threat of anarchists' terror. Now the police is also being given governmental authority to shower bullets on them. In a number of northeastern states, extremists have a friendly 'give and take' relationship with the governments. The Marandi government has already started treading along this policy of the Congress. Its police character cannot be camouflaged. It is a foregone conclusion that the decisive blow to the twin terror, of police and the extremists, would come only by open, path-breaking mass initiatives and democratic movements. In this context, the significance of the struggles going on in Bagodar-Rajdhanwar-Jamua area for the whole state cannot be overemphasized. These areas are not insulated from the problem of extremism, but they prove that trapped

within the spate of mass movements, squads isolated from masses cannot remain for long.

Earlier in the decades of '80s and '90s, Bagodar had emerged as an important center of anti-corruption movement in the erstwhile Bihar. The movement compelling the officials to return the bribes had earned popularity throughout the state. Then in the decade of '90s, the movement against police atrocity gained momentum. Those days Bagodar Police Station had faced a boycott under "Hukka-pani bandh" movement (non-cooperation, which in this event meant no supply of materials to the police station by nearby shopkeepers). During the agitation dozens of CPI(ML) activists were sent to jail. But thanks to the Party's persistence on mobilization and movements, the situation changed and from Bagodar the chain was extended to Birni, Jamua, Rajdhanwar and Koderma. The leader of the anti-crime movement in Rajdhanwar, Rajkumar Yadav, had to languish five years in jail. At the end of '90s, election of village pradhans conducted on the people's initiative caught the attention of the whole country. The people in Rajdhanwar, Jamua and Bagodar have launched a new beginning with the phenomenon of inauguration of bridges. In Rajdhanwar, Jamua, Birni and Koderma, the forces pitted against the government are getting mobilized at local levels to safeguard their social dignity. This is a battle for social transformation. But this phenomenon would no longer remain confined to Kodarma and Giridih. It has the capacity to assimilate multifarious issues and prepare the conditions for a larger democratic movement. □

A calendar of protests

A series of spirited struggles against a saffron regime

IMMEDIATELY AFTER the formation of Jharkhand state in mid-November, Party took a bold political initiative by actively boycotting the oath-taking ceremony as well as the governor's address. Party legislator Mahendra Singh's role in mobilizing the whole opposition virtually earned him the status of the "leader of opposition" in the Assembly. Outside the Assembly, a protest march was held by the Party and its mass organizations demanding sacking of the Governor, an RSS man, who was involved in demolition of Babri Masjid in capacity of the then UP Home Secretary. The Party put forth a 20-point programme for the newly founded state.

The Party then convened a "Navnirman Rally" on 30 November 2000. The objective of the rally was to expose the conspiracy of saffron rulers to relegate the dreams and aspirations of the people in this newly founded state to the margin, the dreams and aspiration with which the people of Jharkhand fought for seven decades to achieve a separate state. The main slogan of the rally, therefore, was: "Separate state is just the beginning, extermination of the mafia is the next task". And for this purpose, "the new dawn of Jharkhand demands hegemony of the red flag". Participated in by over 30,000 people, this was the largest rally called by the revolutionary left in Jharkhand. The rally gave a call to observe Jharkhand Bandh on 6 December to demand withdrawal of Prabhat

Kumar from the post of governor. In the meantime, amidst sporadic raids on churches and Christian missionaries by Sangh parivar, a nun was raped in Kurpania (Bokaro) and when tribal students protested in Ranchi they were brutally lathicharged by the police.

Significantly, JMM joined the bandh call and other left parties actively supported it. Minority community had also taken an active part in the bandh. In Ranchi, police conducted brutal lathicharge particularly on Muslims supporting the bandh. Police even resorted to firing on a contingent bandh supporters in Bagodar and ransacked Party office there. A good number of activists were arrested on that day.

On 28 December, the Id festival day, police killed four Muslim youth in Doranda of Ranchi town when thousands had gathered to protest the killing of a 5-year old Muslim girl who was run over by a BMP vehicle. Paramilitary forces were allowed to run riot, spreading terror among Muslims and arresting a large number of Muslim youth.

The state-level cadre convention held on 31 December 2000 came to the assessment that a situation of upsurge was prevailing in Jharkhand. It was decided to launch a vigorous protest movement against police atrocities, for employment and declaring the whole of Jharkhand as a drought-hit state. It decided to convene a parallel assembly on the question of withdrawal of the governor and a special campaign to force new

assembly elections in Jharkhand.

On 2 February 2001, the police fired on people agitating against Koel Karo dam in Topkara of Torpa block in Ranchi, killing 8 tribals and injuring several of them. The incident shocked the Jharkhandi people and a series of protests culminated in a bandh on February 5 sponsored by CPI(ML) and other opposition parties. And when police in Garhwa killed 7 dalits claiming that it was an encounter with a PWG squad, it was CPI(ML) that sent an investigation team to the village and exposed the fact that it was an incident of cold-blooded killing of innocent villagers, and organised protests against the massacre.

Then, after two days into the first budget session of Jharkhand, Party organized an Assembly gherao on 1 March 2001 on the issues of instituting judicial enquiry into the recent incidents of police firing, filing criminal cases against guilty police officials, immediately scrapping Koel Karo project, effective steps in the Ranchi land scam case and safeguarding tribals from land alienation etc. Party General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya, who was leading a 3,000-strong march was arrested along with 40 other activists, and several non-bailable sections were clamped on them. Opposition parties boycotted the proceedings and the entire opposition sat on a dharna in front of the Assembly, demanding action against police officials guilty of brutalities against CPI(ML) activists. The Marandi Govt. had to agree to an all-party enquiry into the incident. The next day, on March 2, a road blockade was organized throughout Jharkhand and even Rajdhani Express was blocked for four hours. An indefinite dharna was started from March 3 at Albert Ekka Chowk of Ranchi. Narmada Bachao Andolan leader Medha

Patkar, former *Janasatta* editor Prabhaskar Joshi, former Chief Justice of Bombay High Court SM Daud attended the dharna. Under growing pressure Marandi Govt. decided not to pursue the cases and Comrade Dipankar and others were finally released on March 7, and from jail they reached the dharna spot in a procession. Party organized a very successful Ranchi March on the slogan "Save Democracy, Save Jharkhand" on 14 March, in which 10,000 people participated defying all prohibitory orders imposed by Marandi Govt. in Ranchi.

CPI(ML) has continued to protest each and every incident of police repression or killing. For instance on July 26 an 'anti-massacre' protest march was held by CPI(ML) from Ralligarha (Hazaribagh) to Nawadih village of Keredari PS in Hazaribagh, the site of killing. The marchers protested the carnage of 8 rural poor in Nawadih. Although police washed off its hand saying that it was result of clash between two Naxalite groups, there were enough reasons to infer that the police itself perpetrated it.

In this situation, Marandi took a policy to harass CPI(ML) activists wherever possible. For instance in Garhwa, police arrested one comrade and then raided Party office on August 4 when Party's Garhwa district unit had started their district conference. Party activists resisted their arrest. The police then resorted to lathicharge on the procession and arrested some comrades from there. The issue was raised in August 9 'Rasta Roko' agitation in Jharkhand. Party also organized a protest demonstration in Ranchi.

It is clear that from the very beginning CPI(ML) has occupied the frontline in opposing Marandi's saffron rule on the streets and



Parivartan Rath Culminates in Ranchi Rally

Following the "Social Transformation Rally" at Rajdhanwar of Giridih on 8 November 2001, a *Parivartan Rath* (Transformation Chariot) took off from there and reached Bagodar on the same day. The Rath was launched to take the message of social transformation rally to several districts of Jharkhand including Dhanbad, Bokaro, Hazaribagh, Gumla, Lohardaga and Ranchi. A five-member Party team, including Comrade Mohan Datta as incharge and Comrades Om Prakash Singh, Devki Nandan Bedia, Vishwanath Prasad Gupta and Jay Prakash Minz manned the Rath. The Rath headed eastward on 9 November and passing through Hesla, Dumri, Rajganj, Dhanbad and Kumardhubi, reached Maithan. On the next morning it started from Maithan and via Jankunder and Badjna collieries and Gobindpur, reached Dhanbad. From there it headed towards Bokaro, and passing through Chas, Simandih, Jaina More, Phusro, Kurpania and BTPS, reached Kathara Bazar. Then on 11 November it marched towards Ranchi and passing through Petarbar, Gola, Angara, Bundu, Tamar and Raidih, reached Khunti. Then on 12 November, starting from Khunti it passed through Torpa, Basia, Kolebira, Gumla and Ghagra and reached Lohardaga. On 13 November, it reached Ramgarh and passing through Giddi, Bhurkunda, Barkakana and Hazaribagh town, it reached Barhi. From there, on 14 November the Rath came back to Hazaribagh town, and passing through Mandu, Charhi and Kuju, reached Ramgarh.

On Nov. 15, the first anniversary of formation of Jharkhand, the Parivartan Rath reached Ranchi. Two other processions coming from Mandar and Burmu joined it in Ranchi, where a rally was held. The Rally was a mark of struggling people's response to the official show Marandi government had organized in Ranchi.

also within the assembly. Because of this role, a process of polarization has started in Jharkhand in which adivasis, minorities, dalits, extremely backward castes, and democratic forces are increasingly coming over to CPI(ML)'s fold. Social base of RJD has come over to us in a big way, particularly in Giridih where we are already a formidable force. Even the social base of JMM is shifting towards

us because the party never fought resolutely either against RJD or against BJP. Moreover, our Party is attracting left forces because it has already established its credentials as the leading left party in Jharkhand and its parent state, Bihar. The situation is thus heading towards a heightened conflict between the saffron regime and the new social build up around CPI(ML). □

December 18 - Third VM Death Anniversary

The Politics of War

Vinod Mishra

War is nothing but the continuation of political process by other means
– Karl von Clausewitz.

After the cold war, when Fukuyama was declaring the 'End of history', he perhaps could not even dream that history would resume its course so soon.

Already it is about a month since the Gulf War started. George Bush feels that this is the last war after which a new international order will be established. In the eyes of Saddam Hussain this is the mother of all wars which will result in the resuscitation of the Arab countries and the liberation of Palestine. What will happen is yet to be seen, but it is certain that the motive behind this war is not merely the liberation of Kuwait. This war is the reflection of the present world contradictions and alliances and at the same time also the medium for realignment of relations.

The new international order advocated by George Bush simply means US domination over its resources. In the proposed US defence budget for 1991, the allocation on account of the controversial 'Star Wars' has been raised to 4.8 billion dollar from 2.9 billion dollar last year. The budget statement refers to the reduction of nuclear threat from Soviet Russia, but justifies this enhancement on the plea of probable missile attacks by third world countries.

From this American perspective of the new international order, it is quite natural that the USA would not tolerate aggression on Kuwait by Iraq. Countries like the USA and the UK consider the right to West Asian oil their birthright. The

fall of the US-agent, the Sheikh of Kuwait, coupled with the rise of Iraq again as a strong country and its dominance over 20% of oil resources were indeed direct blows to the new international order. America was only too eager for a war and certainly it was a fine commentary on the unipolar world that the Security Council of the United Nations behaved like a slave of the USA. Barring some small countries like Yemen and Cuba, none raised a voice of protest against America. In spite of all these however, Iraq had decided to fight.

The war has been going on with all its cruelty. Iraq now faces the most horrible bombing in history and this has laid bare the ugly face of Western civilisation. All the remnants of the centuries-old Mesopotemian civilisation between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, historic cities like Baghdad and Basra and holy places of the Islamic civilisation several centuries old are being razed to the ground. Hundreds of children, women and ordinary citizens are being killed. The West's fascination for high-tech has made this devastation a thrilling game on the television screen. The unseemly talk of US leaders and the language of the Western media clearly reflect their attitude of apartheid – an attitude of nothing but contempt for the aspirations, civilisation and culture of the impoverished countries of the Third World.

On the whole, this is the picture of the unipolar world America has been dreaming of.

However, a dream is after all only a dream. The American generals who had earlier claimed that the victory would be theirs within six days



Eternal Glory to Com. Vinod Mishra !

have not yet mustered the courage to launch the ground attack. There have been reports of a high tide in mass demonstrations in many countries of the world in support of Saddam and against the USA. One country after another is being compelled to change its position and the rift within the multinational alliance is widening.

Saddam Hussain may very well be defeated in the war, but he has to a large extent been successful in linking up the Palestinian issue with that of Kuwait. Now any peace proposal shall have to consider the Palestinian problem. Even if Saddam were to be defeated, the Arabic nationalism aroused by him will continue to haunt America even in the days to come. Basing on this, France and other European countries will go in for independent political initiatives, which are bound to come in conflict with the US interests. And the anti-American wave which is now sweeping the third world countries will definitely assume a new political complexion.

Whatever may be the outcome of the war it is definite that the US dream of a unipolar world will be buried in the Persian Gulf itself.

[Excerpts from an article written by Comrade Vinod Mishra in April 1991 issue of Liberation]

Workshop on women agricultural labourers

A STATE-LEVEL workshop of cadres of the Bihar unit of AIPWA was held in Samastipur on 21-22 September, 2001. There were about 75-80 delegates, who participated in discussions for 2 days. Papers were presented by Com. Saroj Chaubey, Shashi Yadav, and Meena Tiwari and Anita together on impact of globalisation on women Agricultural labourers, women's development in Bihar and women's education in Bihar, respectively. The workshop was also addressed by SCM, Com Dharendra Jha, AIPWA Secretary, Jita Kaur and GS, Kumudini Pati. Almost all the delegates participated in discussions, narrating their experiences and raising some questions regarding the policy and tactics to be adopted for furthering the struggles.

In the first presentation, a study of Bhabhua district was placed. Since the beginning of this year, around 300 harvesters have been put to use in the district; hence non-availability of work in the agrarian sector has become the major issue for women. Issues like minimum wages and equal wages for men and women have now been relegated to the background, issues which had been taken up by AIPWA at state level through strikes organised by women agricultural labourers. The phenomenon of employing harvesters is new to Bihar; it first began in UP and has now picked up in some Bihar districts bordering UP. In the concerned area of struggle some 200-300 labourers were brought in from North Bihar or Jharkhand for transplantation work. They are given

work on contract basis. In most of the villages of Bhabhua, Kudara and Mohania, this is a discernible feature. On the one hand, it is cheaper for the local farmers and, on the other hand, labourers coming from outside are unable to challenge the feudal authority of the employers. Some of the delegates recounted that when they go to collect hay, they are abused and chased away; the hay after harvest is later burnt in the fields. Tetra Devi and Phoola Devi, who are local leaders, say that 10 years back women agricultural labourers were being paid Rs. 5-10 or 2 Kgs uncooked grain, this being much less than what the males were being paid. It was through a long struggle for minimum and equal wages that by 1995, the wages for women went up to Rs.30 or 5 Kg. grain and breakfast or lunch. However, by this time the minimum wages stood at Rs.49.50. These leaders feel that this coupled with the agrarian crisis was one of the reasons for harvesters coming into the countryside. First there were just 5-6 harvesters in the district. Transplantation work would take only about 15 days and harvesting began to be done at a very fast pace with these machines. While the male workers began to flee to Punjab, Delhi or other districts of Bihar in search of work, women lost their livelihood, their situation worsened, and some of the womenfolk began to work as contract labour in brick kilns or as construction labour. Government agents began to visit the affected villages and talk about saving schemes and loans for starting

self-help groups and setting up cottage industries for making incense-sticks, bindis or soap etc. Some of the delegates felt that contradictions between the agricultural labourers and peasantry increased, though the kisan sabha felt that it could never reject outright the use of machines or scientific techniques in the agrarian sector. Another question that came up was that during militant struggles, the labourers coming from outside were becoming the victims, which could not be justified in any way. Despite a great deal of persuasion, they would adamantly continue to work because of non-availability of work in their own villages and extreme economic hardship.

A district-level convention was held in Bhabhua centering demands of women agrarian labourers. It was decided that protest demonstrations would be held in 2 subdivisions, viz. Mohania and Bhabhua. Middle class women also participated in these demonstrations, shouting slogans, delivering speeches and walking almost 3 kms. along with the women agricultural labourers. The slogans and speeches stressed worker-peasant unity. Memoranda were submitted to the subdivisional officers demanding: local labourers be given preference over labourers from outside; guarantee of work for women throughout the year be made; committees with representatives from peasants and labourers be formed to decide on the extent of use of harvesters; social security be guaranteed for women labourers; and Bihar be declared a famine-stricken state.

According to Phula Devi, the struggle generally takes the form of persuading the outside labourers to leave, chasing them away in case of resistance, gheraoing local officials, forcibly trying to cut the crops, threatening local landlords through gheraos, and trying to set fire to harvesters in extreme cases. The

local landlords often employ armed goons to beat up the labourers, open fire at protesters and even burn down villages. She stressed the need for providing licensed arms for self-defense and for continuing the struggle in the face of severe repression. According to another leader, Ramata Devi, it is easy to chase away the outsiders with lathis but very difficult to fight the guns of the landlords.

In West Champaran, women have a different story to tell. Here, the wage for women agricultural labourers remains as low as Rs.15 in some areas it goes up to a maximum of Rs. 25 or 4 kg. grain. While sugarcane is the main crop in this region, peeling sugarcane for a whole day would fetch a meagre sum of Rs.15 for a woman agricultural labourer. Labourers belonging to the Tharu community (4-5 blocks) get the least wage. Under the 'Hatai' system, which is prevalent among them, they get just 800 gms. of grain.

Some of the delegates said that forest land had been occupied by an American entity WWF, affecting the lives of the local populace. As trees were being felled, local villagers protested leading to their being beaten up and subsequent arrest. It was only through the militant struggle of the womenfolk that they were finally released. Others recounted instances of sexual harassment of women working in the stone quarries.

Women delegates from Nalanda said that it was possible only to get 150 days of work in the whole year. This has resulted in families having to live in extreme penury. Children's education and health, particularly that of girls is the first casualty. In some areas the wages are as low as 1 kg grain for the whole day. During the transplantation period the maximum wage in the district would be 5 kg grain but women labourers

got even less. The local landlords had already begun discussing how to pool their resources and purchase harvesters if the labourers protest low wages. Strikes have most often resulted in a ban on the labourers' cutting grass or grazing their cattle. In Nawada, the women workers get as low a wage as 3 Kg rice plus Rs.5 for arrack. Their male counterparts get 5 Kg rice and Rs.10 for arrack (which is referred to as 'pilai'). Some of the delegates also spoke of the plight of Bidi workers in the district. There is a great disparity in wages of men and women workers. There are more than 8000 bidi workers in this district, mostly belonging to Muslim families. Earlier a woman worker would be paid just Rs.12 per 1000 bidis. After a lot of struggle and lodging FIRs against the employers, the wage has gone up to Rs.16 for women workers, while their male counterparts get Rs.40 per thousand. According to the women workers, the wage can be raised further through struggle.

In Bhojpur, in the agrarian sector, earlier the wages were as low as Rs.10-15 for the women labourers. After struggle the wages went up to Rs.25-30 in several areas. Wages could not be increased further because landlords began to make their womenfolk work in the fields so as to break the strikes. In Sahar, one of the areas of struggle, women get a wage of Rs.30.

In Siwan, in several blocks, after struggle the wages have increased from 3Kg. grain to 5 Kg. But wages differ from area to area. In some areas women labourers are still getting a low wage of Rs.6 whereas in some areas they get Rs.15. Strikes have been conducted, and in Darauli, warning has been issued that the harvesters and other implements and fields would be set on fire if their pleas went unheeded. In Gopalgunj, wages for men and women for transplantation work are the same and

women's wage has gone up by Rs.25 in the last 5 years.

Women working as construction labourers have to face a lot of harassment at the hands of the employers. Now women are being enrolled as members of the Nirman Mazdoor Union. Meanwhile, the Bihar govt. has formed a Nirman Mazdoor Board in which AIPWA has demanded formal representation. AIPWA is also taking up the cause of safai karmachari women, who are being retrenched and being denied proper wages. In Patna, street hawkers, vegetable vendors and other women who live on daily wage are being first organised in slum areas as unorganised urban poor. Recently, an impressive rally of about 300 women was organised in Patna on their demands, their main demand being to put a stop to demolition drives in the name of beautification of the city.

On the question of impact on education of women in Bihar, Com Meena Tiwari said that the escalating cost of education has taken its toll on the girl students. She said that there is a high dropout rate for girls and even those who are sent to school are sent to govt. schools whereas the boys are sent to public schools. Several delegates felt there is a lack of infrastructural facilities and the schools are too far away for the girls to travel. Moreover, there is no security for them. In Bihar, there has been a block on scholarships and freeships for the last 10 years. In most of the Govt. run schools in the countryside, there is no drinking water or electricity. The buildings are dilapidated and the teachers do not attend to their classes. There are no degree colleges in the rural areas and the colleges in the cities are out of the reach of the girl students both economically and geographically. Some primary level education programmes are to be conducted through the anganwadis but hardly

any function. In the rural areas, many school buildings have been converted into camps for the police and paramilitary.

In Patna, post-graduate courses are being abandoned. Most delegates demanded one higher secondary school in each block and one degree college in each district for women. Science teaching is not being carried out in most girls' colleges, rather subjects like "home science" are being taught. Delegates from Samastipur said that they have decided to raise issues related to girl students separately within the students' movement. Delegates from Nalanda felt that security of girl students was the main problem. Anita, President of the Patna unit, said that in Patna, eve-teasing and molestation near the premises of girls' colleges and hostels had become an everyday affair and AIPWA has started protesting on this issue.

On women's development in Bihar a paper was placed by the Bihar state secretary of AIPWA. It was the unanimous opinion of all delegates that women's development in Bihar was only possible through a struggle against the feudal system. Issues like education, health care, drinking water, employment, widow and old-age pension, housing and separate toilets were some of the major issues. Though under the employment guarantee scheme women are entitled to 30% of the wage labour plus 100 days of work, the benefits go to the dominant section of the rural populace through the local elected representatives. The social security scheme is hardly implemented. In many areas feudals have obstructed literacy campaigns and did not even allow the womenfolk to come out of their houses. Leela Devi who has been elected in the Zilla Parishad on CPI(ML) banner, said that in Dulhin Bazaar RJD as well local goons and police were trying to thwart her efforts. She said that through

Samkalin Janmat: The pioneer of culture of resistance

On November 10, *Samkalin Janmat*, like the proverbial phoenix, once again rose from the ashes in its original birthplace, Patna, at the inaugural ceremony of Eighth National Conference of Jan Sanskriti Manch. This time its form is that of a socio-cultural quarterly. Readers would recall that intervening in the media in the decade of '80s as multi-dimensional news weekly, *Samkalin Janmat* had introduced a new angle to journalism. And in addition to serving as a mouthpiece of the raging struggles of the downtrodden in Bihar, it also carved out a niche in the field of cultural magazines in the Hindi heartland. In its Delhi reincarnation, as a fortnightly and then as a monthly, it focused on the national political scenario while continuing its intervention



as a powerful representative of revolutionary culture. Now, to serve the need of the present critical situation, it has reappeared as a socio-cultural magazine.

The reopening issue is devoted to the theme of culture of resistance against imperialist offensive of globalisation, against saffron cultural nationalism and resistance to all forms of exploitation and oppression of the humankind. It raises the "most necessary questions", which are so "simple", but so often forgotten or buried under countless pretexts.

-- BB Pandey

her intervention she has been able to fight corruption in the development programmes, resulting in lots of villagers demanding her direct intervention physically in their villages too. Malati Devi another ZP member says she is being prevented from carrying on developmental work in Darauli by RJD men. Even signature campaigns for implementation of widow and old age pension schemes being conducted by panchayat mukhia are being obstructed by them. They also obstructed sincere workers from running Anganwadis. In several areas loans are being blocked in CPI(ML) areas of influence under the pretext of non-payment of dues by one or two persons. In many areas, propaganda campaigns are being conducted to make the villagers aware of their

rights and make them organise to fight this terror. While in Aurangabad, block-level meetings are being conducted for this purpose, in Madhubani, women have organised for pressing the demand of implementation of the TRYSEM scheme. Several delegates said that a large number of NGOs have entered the countryside with the agenda of development but a thorough investigation has to be made and their work assessed to understand their functioning and level of commitment to the cause of women's development.

In the next phase more experiences of direct struggles on these issues and their fallout has to be brought out so as to expand AIPWA's vision and gear it up for action.

--Kumudini Pati



Fifth National Conference of AICCTU

THE FIFTH National Conference of AICCTU was successfully completed in Dhanbad in Jharkhand State from 8th to 10th October 2001. On 8th October, CPI(ML) and AICCTU, Jharkhand organized a massive rally, named 'Mazdoor Ekta Rally' (Workers' Solidarity Rally). On 7th night, as USA started bombing Afghanistan the rallyists reaching Dhanbad started raising anti-war slogans. The rallyists carrying red and green flags of AICCTU and JHAMKIS (Jharkhand Mazdoor Kisan Samiti) carrying drums and traditional tribal weapons became one of the biggest rallies here in the last two decades. The media, though preoccupied with the US bombing, gave wide coverage to the rally. After covering a distance of more than 3 Kms., the rally converged into a mass meeting at the Kohinoor ground. The meeting started with revolutionary song rendered by a Jharkhand cultural team. While the song was going on rain started. But despite heavy downpour, the people didn't move from the ground and the meeting went on in the rain. This became the talking point among the people and media also highlighted the fighting spirit and commitment of the people. The main speaker Com. Dipankar who also led the rally from Dhanbad Station to Kohinoor ground. Among

others, Com. Mahendra Singh, CPI (ML) MLA, Com. Swapan Mukherjee, General Secretary, AICCTU, Com. Upendra Singh, General Secretary of Coal Mines Workers' Union (CMWU) and Com. Rameshwar Prasad, leader of Agricultural Labour Union from Bihar.

The next day, i.e. 9th October, the 5th National Conference began at Com. Jagdeo Sharma Hall (Town Hall) with the hoisting of red flag by Com. Yogeshwar Gope, President of AICCTU. The Comrades also paid floral tributes at the martyrs' memorial.

The open session was inaugurated with the speech of Com. S. Kumarsamy, Working President that set the tone of the session. Next, the guest from GEFONT, Nepal, Com. Madhav Neopane, highlighted the need for militant unity among trade unions in South Asia in the face of growing imperialist onslaught in the region. A solidarity message from DSP, Australia was also read out. Fraternal guests from central trade unions, Com. Kanhai Banerjee, Secretary CITU, Com. S.M. Thakur, Secretary AITUC and a representative from TUCC, spoke highlighting the need for united action against the imperialist-dictated globalisation and the imperialist-led war. The other speakers in this session were Com.

C.M. Singh, Gen. Secy. AIREC, Com. Rabi Sen, Gen. Secy. of the Indian Railway Artisan Staff Union (IRASU), Com. Basudev Mahto, Gen. Secy. of the Railway Engineering Staff, and Com. Tripti Trivedi, Gen. Secy All India Central Govt. Health Scheme Employees' Association. Com. S. Mahadevaiah, Gen. Secy. of the union of all India postal Extra Departmental (ED) staff, Com. S.K. Vyas, General Secretary All India Central Govt. Employees Confederation and Com. Purnendu Ghosh, leader of Jute workers also sent solidarity messages.

The delegate session started in the afternoon. The house elected a 9-member Presidium consisted of Com. Yogeshwar Gope, Com. S. Kumarasamy, Com. Srilatha Swaminathan, Com. Meena Pal, Com. Sudarshan Bose, Com. N.M. Thomas, Com. Subhas Sen, Com. Upendra Singh, and Com. Sadashivan (from Andaman & Nicobar Islands). A 5-member technical Committee of Comrades Pradeep Jha, Atanu Chakraborty, V.K.S. Gautam, Dinkar Kapoor and Himmat Singh was formed to assist the presidium. On behalf of the outgoing National Council, Com. Swapan Mukherjee formally placed the General Secretary's report for discussion. About 100 delegates participated

in the discussion and also many delegates sent in their written suggestions.

On 10th October, the session started with a speech by Com. D.P. Buxi, Polit Bureau member of CPI (ML) and incharge of Jharkhand region. The delegate session continued after that. Com. N.M. Banerjee, AGS of the South Eastern Railwaymen Union (SERMU) also greeted the conference and gave valuable suggestions. The main points of debate that emerged in the delegate session were: (1) the question of united action with BMS and INTUC, and Shiv Sena's union in Maharashtra who started participating in some of the joint movements in recent times; (2) work in sick and closed industries in terms of evolving new forms of movements, mobilising the people and the level of flexibility on the question of VRS etc. Also our attitude towards govt. doing away with SICA and coming up with new tribunals; (3) review of solidarity actions in the light of the BALCO strike; (4) changing composition of Indian working class with concrete experiences in organizing contract workers within the mainstream organized sectors, and other unorganized sectors, particularly women workers; (5) trade union democracy, politicisation of working class and grassroots initiatives; and (6) strengthening the central structures including office and their more effective functioning. After long and lively discussions, Com. Swapan Mukherjee summed up the discussion stressing the need for taking timely initiative on immediate issues so that the workers under the influence of reformist and yellow trade unions could be won over. "Another challenge is to organize the workers under our influence", he said. Only by increasing our base and evolving new forms of movements can we play a more effective role in the ongoing movements, he said. Then with some

additions, the Gen. Secy.'s report was passed unanimously. After that the political resolutions were placed by Com. Srilatha Swaminathan, and approved by the house. The main resolutions were to observe 15th October as anti-war day throughout the country, immediate introduction of agriculture labour bill, implementation of construction labour act, against closure of fertilizer plant of Sindri, HSCL, IISCO, proposed privatisation of Coal India, against the proposed amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act and Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, opposing Rakesh Mohan, Geethakrishnan and Ahluwalia Committee reports, strict implementation of Supreme Court guidelines on sexual harassment at workplace and equal remuneration act as well as opposing the industrial policy of Jharkhand Govt. Then the process of election of national council started and the conference elected a 123-member national council. In the brief session of the newly elected National Council, a 39-member Central Working Committee and 19 office bearers were elected. The newly elected Working President Com. S. Kumarasamy honoured more than 100 volunteers whose silent hard work contributed to the success of the Conference. At the end, the Jharkhand Cultural Organisation rendered the 'Internationale' and amidst slogans the 5th National

Conference came to an end.

In the Conference, 468 delegates and 77 observers participated from 18 States. The major sectors like steel, coal, oil, textile, jute, tea, cement, transport, automobile, centre and state govt. employees and the unorganised sectors like bidi, construction, powerloom, small scale industrial sectors, loading-unloading workers, hawkers, agriculture labourers, workers from stone crushers and brick-kilns — industries covering major sections of Indian working class participating in the conference. Another major highlight was the participation of the Maharashtra-based trade unions associated with the Lal Nishan Party (Leninist) in this conference. This trade union has got large mass base in Maharashtra. Also, new forces working in the Eastern Coalfields (Bengal part) joined AICCTU in this conference. In the intensive campaign before the conference, the AICCTU could cross the membership target. Jharkhand, Bengal, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Assam played a leading role in achieving the membership target. It may be recalled that the process of formation of AICCTU was started in Dhanbad 12 years ago. The 5th Conference of AICCTU reiterated its commitment to march onward with new vigour and zeal to take on the forces bent on enslaving our motherland again

— Himmat Singh

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BIHAR**Ranvir Sena
'Commander' Met His
Doom**

BIJENDRS SINGH alias Langar Singh, the so-called "area commander" of Ranvir Sena, synonymous to 'terror' among the people, accused in as many as 40 murder cases and massacres, ultimately fell into rural people's hands in his own native village, Kab, in Rania Talab PS of Patna district on 11 November, 2001. In a drunken state he went to dalit tola and brandished a pistol there bragging that he will perpetrate a carnage then and there. He was overpowered by the people, who first shot him with his own pistol, and then thrashed him to death with lathi-blows. This man was the main accused person in Haibuspur massacre, in which ten Mushahars were killed in cold blood on the Holi day in 1997, and named in several other massacres in Patna, Jahanabad and Bhojpur districts. Though he had a prize of Rs. 50,000 over his head, he roamed around freely because the police never tried to nab him. In this situation, only people could mete out justice to him and they eventually did that. With the elimination of this notorious criminal, Ranvir Sena has suffered a setback. People are jubilant but also apprehending retaliation by this bloodthirsty gang and have therefore to be on guard against such attacks.

**Dharna by Panchayat
Representatives
Against Police
Atrocities**

PANCHAYAT REPRESENTATIVES of Patna district staged one-day dharna at Income Tax Square on 2 November to protest arrest of block pramukh Rajeshwar Mochi and mukhiyas Jaynandan Varma, Shivraj Singh Varma, Mumtaz Ansari and Mahendra Yadav in Dulhin Bazar block in Patna district and the inhu-

man beating and torture meted out to them in Danapur police station. Not only that, in a display of their cruelty the policemen plucked the mustache of mukhiya Mahendra Yadav. Addressing the dharna Bihar State Party Secretary Comrade Ramjatan Sharma said that the incident has exposed the contempt Rabri Govt. fosters towards the elected grassroots representatives and also revealed the conspiracy behind convening grand congregation of panchayat representatives on 2 October this year. Panchayat representatives assembled at the dharna submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister demanding dismissal and arrest of OC of Dulhin Bazar Police Station Rashid Parvez, DSP of Paliganj Md. Hasnain and other culprit police officials and unconditional release of all arrested people's representatives.

**Children Oppose
Police-Criminal
Nexus in Bihar**

IN CONTINUATION of the CPI(ML)-led mass resistance campaign launched in the wake of killing of an abducted child 'Golu' in Muzaffarpur, children participated in 'save the children' campaign launched on 14 November, the official Children's Day, against abduction, killing and the nexus of police and criminals, under which programmes were taken in various districts of Bihar.

In Arrah, AISA district unit organised a "save the children" convention at Jain School. Inaugurating the conference principal of Primary School Smt. Pushpa Mathur said that children's life is completely insecure these days, any child can be abducted any day and demand of ransom would be made to the family, and in case it is not paid they will discover the dead body of their child lying somewhere. All this is because police has entered into nexus with criminals. Muzaffarpur incident is a proof of this phenomenon. Address-

ing the convention as guest, poet Nilay Upadhyay said that be it Afghanistan or massacres and abductions in Bihar, everywhere children are the victims. Poet Jitendra Kumar also addressed the convention.

Observing the programme in Muzaffarpur, 200 children brought out a procession from Malighat to Kalyani Chowk where it turned into a dharna. Placards in their hands demanded "Punish the murderers of Golu".

In Begusarai, AISA brought out a procession of 50 children. In Samastipur, 60-70 children passed through the whole of the city and raised slogans against abduction, murder and nexus of criminals and police. AISA and Party leaders addressed the gathering.

In the meantime, several incidents of abduction of children have been reported. Seven-year old Chotu was abducted at Barari (Katihar) on 1 Nov. 11-year student Gaurav was abducted at Triveniganj (Supaul) and agitation against it is going on since 5 November. Then Mantu, 11-year old son of railworker Mahesh Kumar Sinha of Samastipur was found dead near the railway line after a week of abduction. CPI(ML) and AISA have staged a militant demonstration against this act.

WEST BENGAL**Sixth West Bengal
State Party
Conference**

THE SIXTH conference of West Bengal Party unit was held on 8-11 November in Krishnanagar, Nadia. An impressive and well-decorated rally with a huge effigy of Bush, held at Krishnanagar Govt. College Maidan on 8 Nov., marked the beginning of the Conference. Party General Secretary Com. Dipankar Bhattacharya was the main speaker. While thoroughly exposing the evil designs of US behind the Afghanistan war, Com. Dipankar



sternly criticised the role of Vajpayee Govt. in tagging the country to the imperialist war and the motives hidden behind the imposition of POTO. He also exposed the LF Govt's double standards in planning to bring a similar act in the forthcoming Assembly session. An effigy of George Bush was burnt amid sky-renting slogans against US imperialism. Com. Kartick Pal, State Secy. and other leaders also addressed the mass gathering. The propaganda campaign in this region that preceded the conference which focused on the US was in Afghanistan and Vajpayee's saffron designs against minorities attracted local left ranks and minorities. The LF Government's raids on SIMI offices were also protested as part of this campaign.

In all 258 delegates and 23 observers attended the conference. The agrarian situation and agrarian reforms pursued by the LF Govt., newly emerging class contradictions and the importance of organising agrarian labourers, building mass resistance against CPI(M)'s terror, particularly in the rural areas, were some of the main points of discussion. After Com. Kartick Pal's explanatory deliberation on these points, the draft, with some amendments, was adopted unanimously. The conference elected a

29-member State Committee which re-elected Com. Kartick Pal as its secretary.

In his concluding speech, Com. Dipankar explained the emergence of social-democratic rule in the state, the underlying socio-economic factors of the LF Govt., and fervently appealed the delegates to redouble their vigour and initiative for building a revolutionary left alternative that the state is craving for. PB members Comrades DP Buxi and Nandkishore Prasad and the Central Observer Com. Malleswar Rao also addressed the delegates.

The newly elected state committee decided to launch a week-long campaign against POTO and POCO starting from 17 Nov. which will culminate on 26 Nov. through a day-long Dharna at Kolkata and in the district headquarters of the State.

ASSAM

Convention against Globalisation in Assam

A convention against globalisation and its impact in backward regions, particularly in the North East India, was held at Cotton College, Guwahati on 7 Oct., 2001

where S. P. Shukla, Convenor, People's Campaign against Globalisation was the Chief Guest. It was inaugurated by Dr. Hiren Gohain, editor of the North-East Times and conducted by veteran intellectual Dr. Amalendu Guha and Anil Rai Choudhury. Prof. Devaprasad Baruah, Ex-VC of Guwahati University and Prof. Tarak Goswami spoke also addressed the convention attended by more than 170 persons including writers, artists, filmmakers, poets, journalists, political activists and trade unionists. The Convention adopted proposals opposing the policy of globalisation and condemned the total surrender by the Vajpayee led NDA Govt. It decided to carry forward the campaign in different places of the state. While condemning terrorist attack in America the Convention condemned the war threats by the Bush Administration as well as Vajpayee's surrender. A convening committee was formed to carry forward the anti-globalisation campaign. Earlier, on behalf of the preparatory committee, speakers were felicitated by Loknath Goswami and welcome address was delivered by Naren Borah. □



Anti-POTO Demonstrations

At Patna (top), Delhi (right) and Lucknow (below)



Eighth Conference of Jan Sanskriti Manch For a national democratic consciousness against globalisation

THE EIGHTH national conference of Jan Sanskriti Manch, held at Ramvilas Sharma Sabhagar (Engineers' Hall) in Nagarjun Nagar (Patna) on 10-11 November, 2001, was focussed on the theme "For a national democratic consciousness against globalisation".

Inaugurating the conference, noted Hindi critic Dr. Manager Pandey said that American capitalism wanted to control markets all over the world in the name of globalisation as it was eager to exploit the cheap natural as well as human resources of Asia the same way as it did in Africa and Latin America. Through 'global media', the information system is being used to establish the terror of American power and spread illusions regarding the American system by eulogizing it. It is for the spread of terror and confusion in the whole world that globalisation can better be called Americanisation. Well before the attack on Afghanistan, world people had read through America's false pretensions in its advocacy of human rights and democracy. Starting from destroying the Red Indian civilization to Hiroshima, America never cared for humankind and democracy.

Dr. Pandey said that America also wants to control thought processes. Conjuring an illusory capitalist prosperity it is exploiting the contradiction between commonman's aspirations and wants. On the other hand, the language of the market has intruded life and meanings have undergone a change. Post-modernism is the cultural manifestation of globalisation, which opposes the social consciousness of resisting capital. He said that the way cultural nationalists are lying prostrate before America, soon it will be in a position to do away with the Indian nation state. Hence it is an urgent task to strengthen the democratic nation state consciousness. The session was presided over by noted poet and editor

of *Sarvanam*, Vishnuchandra Sharma and conducted by Ajay Singh, General Secretary of JSM. Besides noted Urdu writer Shaukat Hayat, chairman of the reception committee, who warmly greeted the delegates, guests and observers and attacked American imperialist policies in his speech, critic Khagendra Thakur, poets Arun Kamal and Alok-dhanwa also addressed this session. The (re-)opening issue of popular revolutionary socio-cultural magazine *Samkalin Janmat* was also released in the inaugural session by Vishnuchandra Sharma. This issue has the culture of resistance as its main theme. Greeting the 'new incarnation' of *Janmat*, Khagendra Thakur, Arun Kamal, Ravi Bhushan, Madan Kashyap and Anil Sinha said that in the present critical period, when the people's struggles have been banished from the domain of literature and culture, publication of a magazine that gives expression to class consciousness and mass resistance does bring considerable hope. A brief discussion was also held on "cultural journalism" with senior journalist Anil Sinha in the chair.

The next day witnessed a lively debate over General Secretary, Ajay Singh's theme paper. It points out that on the one hand the war imposed and the terror spread by America is the most violent and terrible form of globalisation, and on the other, the protagonists of cultural nationalism in India have waged an unabashed campaign to portray a new mental and cultural slavery of multinationals as freedom. It emphasises the necessity for a genuine national democratic consciousness, armed with a ruthlessly critical approach, infused with boldness to effect a radical rupture with the whole legacy. Participants in the debate included Dr Manager Pandey, Khagendra Thakur, Ravi Bhushan, Madan Kashyap, Pranay Krishna, Jiten-

dra Kumar, Bhasha Singh, Anil Anshuman, Pankaj Chaturvedi, Hemant, Krishna Pratap Singh, VK Singh, Shyam Ankuram and others. The session was presided over by Ajay Kumar, Suresh Kankat and Arvind Kumar and conducted by Sudhir Suman and Krishna Mohan.

The conference decided to organize cultural programmes under the anti-war campaign in different cities in the November end. It also planned to organize a series of seminars to reassess our legacy and strengthen ties between Hindi and Urdu literature.

The conference unanimously elected Dr. Manager Pandey as its president. Erstwhile president Trilochan Shashtri could not attend the conference because of illness but he continues to remain an honorary member. Ajay Singh was re-elected General Secretary. Along with four vice presidents, Madhukar Singh, Madan Kashyap, Ajay Kumar and Dr. Ravi Bhushan, a 77-member National Council and 25-member National Executive Committee were also elected. Krishna Mohan, Pramod Yadav, Viren Dangwal, Bhasha Singh and Shambhu Badal were entrusted with the responsibilities of coordinating U.P, Bihar, Uttaranchal, Delhi and Jharkhand respectively.

On this occasion, veteran CPI(ML) leader Com. Ram Naresh Ram greeted the delegates and guests and said that in this broadbased struggle against globalisation, CPI(ML) is always with the dreams of cultural activists. The Party will always stand by the cultural activists in their endeavor to develop mass resistance.

A number of cultural programmes were presented by performance teams from Sakla Bazar, Bikarmganj, Begusarai and Patna (Hirawal). presentations by Jharkhand Sanskriti Manch and *Kala Kammune* Banaras were also significant, with the participation of Anil Anshuman, theatre artist Vijay Kumar, people's singer Amitabh, Nirmal Nayan, Durgesh Akari, and Krishna Kumar Nirmohi.

— Sudhir Suman and
Upendra Swami

