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INCULCATE THE SPIRIT OF PATRIOTISM : CLARION CALL OF NETAJI'S BIRTHDAY

DEBABRATA BISWAS, General Secretary, AIFB

Time and again it is proved that only the spirit of Patriotism can involve the whole nation in the arduous task of rebuilding the country to reach the stage of prosperity as was dreamt of by millions of freedom fighters who sacrificed their all for the cause of the country. Even after six decades of independence, when 25 per cent are deprived of light of literacy and millions of young people are preys of unemployment, when secular and democratic values are fading at the aggression of communal and terrorist groups, a morbid sense of frustration are haunting the poor and the common people. A gross inequity has become the striking feature of our present-day society, where 77 per cent of the population are forced to live on meager earning of Rs. 20 a day, while a handful of our people are in the ranks of billionaires who are competing the first ten ranking of the world. In such a situation of inequity and injustice, the people, and the young generation in particular, are bewildered and frustrated and they can not think in terms of working hard for achieving excellence in life and for offering services to the nation. In such a situation of depression and frustration, a shining example of the life and struggle, and the ideology, of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose can inspire the people to fight against injustice and exploitation, as well as to work for the people and the country, and to make sacrifices for the benefit of the country.

It was Netaji alone who could ask the people to make sacrifice for the country, because he himself gloriously set the example how to make all sacrifices for the cause of the country. His patriotism and love for his countrymen were unparalleled in the history of freedom movement of our country. Allurement for any sort of high position in the country or any sort of worldly pleasure assured to a top leader could not prevent him from leaving the country alone at the risk of many sufferings, uncertainties, dangers and even of life, only for the emancipation of the country. He was, therefore, rightly hailed as the 'Patriot of Patriots' by no less a person than Gandhiji himself. Patriotism was the essence of his life and character. By observing his birthday as the 'Day of Patriotism', we can revive the spirit of patriotism which we are missing in the present day context. Once the patriotism is revived, our strength, courage and urge will be revived when we will be able to fight unitedly to rebuild our country as per the dreams of our freedom fighters.

It is a matter of hope and encouragement that the leaders of four leading left parties have now joined together to raise the demand for declaring Netaji's Birthday as the Day of Patriotism. I would appeal to all other progressive secular democratic parties also to come forward and jointly raise this demand for the Day of Patriotism to pay our highest tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 113th Birthday - the 23rd January 2010. We hope, the UPA government will immediately accept this demand of the peoples.

DISMAL PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURE SECTOR

It is once more clear that continuing price rise and alarming threat to our food security are caused mainly due to dismal performance of agriculture sector. And it is a matter of further concern that no serious efforts are made so far by the union government to reverse the trend and improve the situation. Even the Union Finance Minister is reported to have sounded a note of caution on the agriculture sector coming in the way of India's GDP (gross domestic product) growth aspirations. Against a target of minimum requirement of 4% growth, agriculture grew only by 2.5% in the first quarter and by less than 1% in the second quarter of the current fiscal year. It is apprehended that the growth is likely to be negative in the third quarter of this fiscal. This shortfall in agriculture production has no doubt caused an upward surge in food inflation which has touched near 20% level by the end of December 2009.

The prices of most of the food grains and other food articles have on average increased by 40 to 100%.

Of late, sugar price increase has reached an all time record. Still the government appears to be a mute spectator and the agriculture minister is only busy in releasing statistics for production shortfall which he anticipates to be of 10 million tonnes.

But this game of statistics does not help solving the problem. So long the government evades its responsibility to stop forward trading in food and other essential commodities and take all sorts of measures against hoarding and profiteering, the crises arising out of 'production shortfall' will continue to aggravate. On the plea of 'states' responsibility, if the Union government continues to refrain from taking positive steps to strengthen the PDS system which is having 260,000 outlets, but most of which are totally ineffective. If the Union government continues to be reluctant to help the states to increase subsidies in food items, the 'aam admi' will only continue to suffer miserably due to alarming price rise causing forced starvation.

Along with the Centre's failures in these areas, the government's failure in agri sector is obvious. The basic need continues to be related with higher agri growth. It is necessary to take all out steps to increase agriculture production and to increase public investment in agriculture. But the Union government has miserably failed in this respect. This failure in agri. sector not only threatens our food security, it also poses serious threats to livelihood of millions of poor farmers, who comprise about 70 per cent of our total population.

Hence, this unpardonable neglect and failure in agriculture sector not only cause shortfall in production of food items, but it also cause alarming price rise, near starvation of poor people and unfortunate suicide of thousands of hapless farmers. It is not only the failure of the Union Agriculture Ministry, but is also the failure of the UPA government as a whole.

CUBAN DELEGATION CALLS ON AIFB CENTRAL OFFICE

A Cuban delegation headed by Oscar Martinez Cordoves, Deputy Head, Department of International Relations, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, accompanied by Miguel Angel Ramlrex Ramos, Cuba's Ambassador to India, called on the AIFB Central Office in New Delhi on 23 November 2009. Dr. Barun Mukherji, M.P., Central Secretary, AIFB received them at the office and had a fruitful discussion on the present political situation of Cuba. Com. Oscar put forward his request to further intensify world wide pressure on the US for immediate release of the five Cuban heroes detained at US jail for more than 11 years. Com. Oscar further apprised the AIFB leadership about their all out national efforts to strengthen the agriculture and overall economy of Cuba. Dr. Barun Mukherji highlighted to them the burning issues that are to be discussed in its forthcoming 16th Party Congress to be held at Kolkata from 17-21 December 2009 and handed over to them several documents of the party. During discussions, both sides appreciated the need to develop 'Party to Party Relationship' in the near future.

COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT - "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING"

N. Velappan Nair, President All India Forward Bloc

Now it has become a reality that the entire Global Scenario is facing a very serious crisis created by rapid changing climatic conditions. The main source of this catastrophic Global Warming is the result of large scale emissions of carbon dioxide and other noxious gas emissions from the Industrial productive sky scrapper establishments of the highly developed Industrial - Capitalist countries. Eminent scientists and climate experts had pointed out the catastrophic impact of climatic changes. Among other dangers they have explained that a temperature rise of two degree Celsius will affect the production and quality of plantation crops such as tea, coffee, spices, rubber and other agricultural products. Climate change also presents mega threats to food and water security systems as well as to the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities and the people at large. So they strongly recommend that we urgently need to undertake some anticipatory research to mitigate the adverse impacts of global warming.

The much avowed expectation of the Copenhagen Climate Summit recently held was that a high quality, transparent and balanced agreement to combat the Global Warming would have been forged out. But as we all know, the summit ended in a fiasco. No tangible result had emerged from the summit. All the world leaders who assembled for the summit as usual agreed to disagree and the big players refused to accept a legally binding international acceptable emission norms and to everybody's surprise the

African nations took the lead in boycotting the meeting and thus the summit was concluded with the resolution that all participated.

It is evident that the Copenhagen Climate Summit had failed to arrive at an equitable and viable plan to Combat Global Warming. The accord reached at the summit does not commit any nation in CO2 emissions cut beyond a general acknowledgement that Global temperatures should be held along the lines agreed to by leading industrial nations. On the issue of review of mitigation actions India's stand "voluntary target of 20-25 percent cut over a 15 years period" had been definitely diluted. The world leaders who assembled there were who assembled there were adopting a very cunning design to force the developing countries to make their commitments while the developed nations were adopting a policy of non-commitment in the matter of mitigation action. Further, the world leaders assembled there had failed their people by not delivering an effective and equitable climate change agreement. This has proved the apprehension of all poor, undeveloped nations that ultimately a deal in this matter will be imposed by the US and that it is a pre-planned, shrewd design to impose to force the poor nations to succumb to US pressure.

As farmers are the direct victims of the climate changes, an agricultural country like India should not succumb to the pressure of Industrialised country's in this matter. The attempt of Industrially developed countries is to take maximum advantage at the expense of developing and underdeveloped countries in the matter of mitigation actions. Therefore, India should take a principled, independent and practical stand on this global crisis and gear up to face climate change impacts with due consultations with political parties, environmental - climate experts and eminent scientists.

In the light of the above stated facts, to the question what had transpired in Copenhagen summit, the answer in Shakespearean Language is "Much Ado about nothing".

SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND YOUTH TODAY

Chandra Kumar Bose

I want to begin with the words of Subhas Chandra Bose. In 1923, Bose wrote in what we called "Dreams of Youth":

"...We have born in this world to fulfill a purpose - to preach a message. As the sun rises to illumine the world, flowers blossom in the forest to spread fragrance, the river flows to the sea with the gift of ambrosial water, we too have come down to this earth with the ecstasy and full vigor of youth to establish a truth. The unknown and mysterious purpose which makes our otherwise worthless life meaningful must be discovered-and discovered through contemplation and experience gained in a life of action, which only can make our otherwise senseless existence, meaningful."

Bose had profound faith in what the youth can do to build a better world. He believed that Hope, Enthusiasm, Sacrifice and Courage - are the special attributes of youth. During his student years in Calcutta, he had clearly displayed his inborn qualities of leadership and charisma, and the ability and will to make personal sacrifices for the good of the larger community. Very Early on in life he involved himself in community work, and in taking care of the poor and the sick. He was a child of the Indian Renaissance and was inspired by the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, which he practiced throughout his life. His ideas of freedom and social justice were not borrowed from the west, but drawn from the rich traditions and culture of India.

It is perhaps not widely known that after he returned to India from England in 1921, having resigned from the Indian Civil Service, he focused on the role of the youth in India's struggle for independence from British rule, and also actively sought to inspire and engage them in the process of building a New India and a just and egalitarian society. Between frequent arrests and detentions, Bose toured the country and addressed innumerable student, youth and labour conferences. Much of what he said then remain relevant today.

In addressing the first youth conference in Nagpur in the then Central Provinces, Bose had declared - "Every Human Being - Man or Woman - is born equal, and he or she shall have equal opportunities of development - that should be our dictum." He further said that "there should be equal opportunities for education and development".

Bose firmly believed that in this process of Fundamental Transformation of Society, the youth and a key role to play. But for this the youth needed, together with their characteristic idealism and enthusiasm, thoughts and ideas, character development which comes through action. He said - "Thought without action cannot suffice to build character, and for this reason, participation in healthy activity - political, social, artistic etc. - is necessary for developing character". (Speech at the Punjab Students' Conference, Lahore, 19 October 1929).

The role of the youth thus has to be built on two pillars - a vision of a better world and character. In the absence of this vision and character, life would be rooted in materialism and freedom would become meaningless. At the same time, as Bose said without freedom, an individual and a nation cannot live in dignity. And that is why he wanted the young footsoldiers to develop their minds, strengthen their character, have

unwavering faith and determination in the national struggle for freedom and justice, and to be ready to sacrifice for the greater good of the nation.

We have now crossed sixty years as a free nation. But sadly, we have not succeeded in creating the just socio-economic order and a genuine democracy that Bose had envisioned. We are still mired in poverty, illiteracy and diseases. Some of our young people have made great strides in technology and the sciences. But an unacceptable number of our youth have little access to education and life's opportunities. According to the government of India sources, one quarter of Indians live below the national income poverty line. 296 million people are still illiterate. The situation we have today in India is a far cry from the vision of Subhas Chandra Bose. (Total Population 1.2 billion).

Youth power in India, as in other parts of the world, can contribute immensely to nation-building and to creating a just and fair society. We, in India, are developing and working on an agenda for change which I would like to share with you. Our policy and objectives are based on Bose's vision and programmes which remain very relevant today. There are three main components of this agenda for change in which the youth have a significant role to play:

1. Promotion of integrity in public life.

We are today plagued by corruption in politics, government and business. Greed and irresponsible behaviour has brought the world economic system to a crisis. The youth can an important role in several ways:-

(I) By their own example, that is by refusing to indulge in activities which have created the current crisis both in the financial sector and in society at large.

(II) By taking steps to expose those who engage in wrongful activities. They can do this most effectively by using the internet, and also by using legal procedures such as the right to information.

II. Protection of the Environment

In this field the youth, in fact, have a very big stake. They need to save the planet and ensure clean air and water for their own survival and for the benefit of future generations. We can play a very useful role here.

(I) Young people are already involved in cities in India to spread awareness about the dangers of high levels of pollution and depletion of the world's limited resources. We will be supporting and strengthening these movements by approaching schools and colleges.

(II) We shall be encouraging young people to undertake research in areas such a solar power to find alternative sources of energy.

(III) And we shall encourage the simple process of planting trees in our densely populated cities.

III. Access to education

In India today we have hundreds and thousands of high school students and young graduates who are willing to share their knowledge with those who are excluded from access to education. We are looking for ways in which young educated students can provide basic skills of language and subjects such as mathematics in order that no young person in India today is denied the basis right to education.

[Based on lecture delivered at the Nehru Centre, London on 30 July 2009, organised by the Netaji Subhas Foundation, U.K.]

JYOTI BASU PASSES AWAY : SALUTE TO THE LEFT LEGENDARY HERO

Jyoti Basu, the longest serving Chief Minister of a genuine national status, passed away at the age of 96 on 17 January 2010. He was a Patriarch, a legend, an Institution himself. He was a life long Fighter who created a glorious History around him. We pay our heartiest tributes to him.

Jyoti Basu was always at the helm of affairs in government or in party. But he could react freely with the people from all walks of life ____ people from politics or outside politics. people from high ranks or from lower levels of society, people from his front partners or from the opposition ____ and he always tried to help them with friendly intervention. He could thus earn the respect of all.

He began his parliamentary career representing a workmen's organisation. From then onwards, throughout his long parliamentary career he always fought for the cause of the working class and the downtrodden people. He was a genuine leftist, but was never confined to orthodox leftism. He implemented leftism in a pragmatic way. He achieved remarkable success in leading a Front and a Government comprising several left parties. Left unity was at the depth of his heart.

His towering personality, power to quickly grasp the problem and rare quality to take prompt decision in the midst of crises added colour and strength to his leadership qualities.

Jyoti Basu led a team of dedicated left leaders who formed the Left Front and ran the Left Front government in West Bengal that has created a history not only in the country, but in the whole world, by continuing to serve the people for 33 years at a stress. On the first day of assuming power as the Chief Minister in June 1977, Jyoti Basu made the historic announcement that the LF government will not run the administration from the Writers' Building alone, it will reach the people at the remotest corners of the state, the people at the

towns and the villages, the people at the factories and farmlands, and run the government along with the people and for the people as well. That is the essence of his message to us. Whatever we do in administration, in party, or at individual level, we must move along with the people and for the benefit of the people. That would be the right way to pay our tributes to him.

HISTORIC 16TH PARTY CONGRESS ADDS A GLORIOUS CHAPTER TO THE HISTORY OF ALL INDIA FORWARD BLOC

The 16th Party Congress was held in Kolkata after long 25 years which added a glorious new chapter in the history of All India Forward Bloc. This 5-day All India Conference was held from 17th - 21st December 2009, which was historic indeed in terms of participation of delegates totaling 1074, including 103 observers, from 22 states and the presence of foreign fraternal delegates from 18 countries.

On the occasion of this historic conference the whole city of Kolkata was beautifully decorated with thousands of colourful banners, posters, hoardings, flags, wall writings and full size photographs of Netaji and other former All India party leaders, along with various central party meetings and conferences. Beginning from the Airport to Railway Stations, from South to North, from East to West ___ the whole city was decorated in such a way that the city turned to be a Netaji City during the 5-days of the Party Congress.

In the morning session at 10 a.m. on 17th December, 2009 at Mahajati Sadan (Kamal Guha Nagar, Sankar Dutta Manch) the party flag was hoisted by Chairman Com. Velappan Nair and floral tributes were paid to Netaji statue and Martyrs Column by the senior leaders of the party. The Azad Hind Bahini and the Jhanshi Rani Bahini presented the guard of honour.

The Open Session of the Party Congress was held at Sahid Minar Maidan (Kolkata) on 17th December 2009 at 2 p.m. A record crowd of about 1 lakh people mostly comprising the Adivasis, Minorities and the women from rural Bengal attended the meeting which showed the strength of the party in Bengal and gave a strong message that the left movement is the one and only alternative to right reactionary forces. Com. Velappan Nair, Chairman of the Central Committee presided over the meeting. In his welcome address he called for the left unity throughout the country and asked the party men to fight against imperialism. Com. Debabrata Biswas, General Secretary of the All India Party in his hour long speech explained the national and international issues, highlighting the dangerous situation created by the aggressive role of the US Imperialist force throughout the world, including India. He urged upon the people to follow the path shown by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to combat this imperialist aggression. A country-wide left unity can only strengthen the struggle for establishing People's Alternative in our country.

The senior most leader of our party Com. Asok Ghosh in his speech at the meeting called for a genuine left unity, discarding the pseudo left unity that is presently prevailing in our country. Those who plead that money has no colour and strengthening the capitalism is the only way of development are definitely misleading the people. In such a situation, he said, we must be cautious about these pseudo leftists and must develop a real left unity to fight against imperialist and capitalist forces. The foreign delegates attend the Party Congress were present on the dias at the open session. In a separate dias, named Laxminarayan Chakraborty dias, was erected by the side where of the main dias at the open session eighty freedom fighters were present on invitation of the party. They were felicitated by party leaders on the dias.

After the public meeting, the first session of the delegate session was held in the evening on 17th December, 09 at Mahajati Sadan. Comrade Debabrata Biswas, General Secretary of the party placed the draft documents on national, international, organisational issues and the report of the General Secretary as well.

The International session of the Party Congress began at 10 a.m. on 18th December, 2009 at Mahajati Sadan where the galaxy of foreign delegates arrived in the midst of songs and hearty clapping of the delegates. Com. G. Devarajan conducted the reception programme. The Reception Committee of the Party Congress gave various presentation and gifts to the foreign guests. The fraternal delegates extended warm greetings to the Congress. The whole programme was literally a spectacular event and gave a proud beginning to the Congress. In the afternoon, the left party leaders, Com. Prakash Karat (General Secretary CPI(M)), Com. A.B.Bardhan (General Secretary CPI) and Com. Debabrata Bandhopadhyay (Secretary RSP) addressed the gathering. Com. (Dr.) Barun Mukherji welcomed the leaders and Com. Debabrata Biswas made the theme speech. The left leaders emphasised on the necessity of strengthening the left unity and to wage the united struggle against the imperialist forces.

The following foreign delegates attended the Party Congress :

Rim Hoe Song (Workers Party of Korea), Kim Hyon Il (Workers Party of Korea), G. Pin (Communist Party of China), Li Yong Peng (Communist Party of China), Apro Sem Daba (Korea), Hong Thang (Vietnam), Saha (Nepal), Udai Raj Pandey (Nepal), Syed Jaffar Sajjad (Bangladesh), Bimal Ratnayake (Sri Lanka), Khalid Haidavi (Palestine), Hassan Baber (Pakistan), Mahera Alam (Pakistan), Hossain Rasid (Maldives), Asim Md. (Maldives Jumhooree Party), Mussan Batu (Maldives), Lakshmi Chakravarty (Bangladesh), Rathir Chakravarty (Bangladesh), Md. Hussain (Bangladesh), Ali Ahmed (Bangladesh), Ting Math (Berma), King Low (Myanmar), Lattana Thavou Souk (Laos), Omar Touron (Venezuela), Nirmala Sukith (Sri Lanka.), Mr. Eduardo Iglesias Quintana (Cuba Communist Party of Cuba).

The delegates from different states participated in the discussion on all the documents Com. G. Devarajan replied on the international resolutions and Com. (Dr.) Barun Mukherji replied on national document. The discussion continued on 19th and 20th December 2009. On 21st December, Com. Debabrata Biswas replied on all debates and announced the new panel of Central Committee. The whole delegate session was conducted by four member presidium consisting of Com. N. Velappan Nair, Com. (Prof.) Amar Singh Kushwaha, Com. Subrata Bose and Com. Naren Dey.

During the three day long delegate session, more than 100 delegates participated in the discussion. After threadbare discussion, the two main documents on National and International issues were accepted with some amendments and suggestions.

The breakup of the delegates attending the sessions was as follows :

West Bengal-538, Andhra Pradesh-11, Madhya Pradesh-31, Kerala- 26, Uttarakhand - 10, Bihar-51, Tripura - 31, Manipur - 2, Haryana - 4, Jammu & Kashmir - 19, Puduchery - 19, Nagaland - 3, Tamilnadu - 79, Andaman & Nicobar - 3, Punjab- 5, Delhi -25, Assam - 43, Orissa - 21, Jharkhand - 46, Uttar Pradesh - 54, Maharashtra - 22, Karnataka - 31.

AIFB General Secretary Com. Debabrata Biswas said in his concluding speech that a new political situation was now created when imperialist and capitalist forces were launching their aggressions in different new techniques. The national bourgeoisie are also exploring new methods of exploiting the people. They are moving in collusion with world imperialism. But unfortunately the left forces are failing to find out new ways to combat the aforesaid aggressions. Hence leftism is in the midst of crisis. The major question of the day for the leftist is how to find out the new way. We need to find out this way individually and collectively. We are to find out this new way through our continuous struggle. This struggle will be in the field of ideology, in the field of culture, as well as in the field of socio-political areas. The 16th Party Congress calls for this new struggle in multi dimensional ways.

Com. Asok Ghosh in his concluding speech at the delegate session on 21st December, 2009 said, there is no denial of the fact that the leftist have fared badly in recent Loksabha and other elections in West Bengal as well as in Kerala. A new reactionary force like Trinamool Congress has now emerged. I think an international force is working behind them. We have therefore, organised our party congress particularly in Kolkata. We have hardly seen such a big participation of delegates from 22 states. I remember, we have had one such a big party conference at Arrah (Bihar) in 1947 where the number of delegates were about two thousand and four lakh people assembled at the open session. Forward Bloc is still now fighting to fulfill the dreams of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. But we can not achieve it only through words, instead we need a revolutionary army, a revolutionary party. The British Imperialism has faded, US Imperialism is now at the drivers seat. We need to fight it, for which we must develop a country-wide strong left unity.

An outstanding feature of the 16th Party Congress was that a few seminars on contemporary topics, several cultural functions and two important exhibitions along with a 'Light & Sound Programme on Netaji' were held at different centre of the city outside the venue of the conference at Mahajati Sadan. Three seminars were held :

- i) On 15th December 2009 at Subodh Mallick Square at Kolkata : Subject - 'National Government in exile : role and importance of Azad Hind Government in India's Freedom movement' : Speaker - Prof. Pranab Kumar Chattopadhyay. Secondly, 'INA: its origin and growth and its heroic struggle for freedom of India' : Speaker - Dr. Subhas Ch. Chatterjee.
- ii) On 19th December 2009 at Darbhanga Hall (Calcutta University): Subject - 'Partition of India : causes and consequences': Speakers - Dr. Amalendu Dey & Sri Mihir Ganguly.
- iii) On 20th December 2009 at Mahajati Sadan (Annexe) : Subject - 'Leftism : present phase and future prospects' : Speaker - Prof. Prabhat Patnaik.

Two outstanding exhibitions were held : i) at Subodh Mallick Square : on Netaji's life and struggle, ii) at Metro Channel (Dharmatala) : on Anti-Imperialist struggle throughout the world.

Attractive cultural functions were held at Rabindra Kanon & at Subodh Mallick Square, Kolkata.

On the eve of 16th Party Congress there were several attractive publications including One Souvenir containing various articles on Netaji and other important contemporary issues, One outstanding Pictorial

CALL FOR AN ONSLAUGHT ON THE RULE OF CAPITAL FOR A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE -- SOCIALISM

11TH INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF COMMUNIST AND WORKERS PARTIES HELD IN DELHI

The 11th International meeting of the Communist and Workers' Parties was held in New Delhi from 20th to 22nd November 2009 to discuss on "The international capitalist crisis, the workers' and peoples' struggle, the alternatives and the role of the communist and working class movement."

83 participants representing 57 communist and workers parties and 48 countries participated in this international meet. The public meeting at the end of the three day delegates' session was held at the Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi on 22 November 2009. Besides the foreign delegates, leaders of the four left parties of India, viz. CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc and RSP, addressed the public meeting. Prakash Karat, Sitaram Yechury, A.B. Bardhan, Dr. Barun Mukherji, T.J. Chandrachoodan and Pallab Sengupta were the main speakers from India.

Dr. Barun Mukherji, in his speech, said that the great revolutionary leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose taught us that a ceaseless uncompromising struggle against imperialism and capitalism can only lead us to establish socialism.

The Delhi Declaration adopted in the meeting.

- i. Reiterates that the current global recession is a systemic crisis of capitalism demonstrating its historic limits and the need for its revolutionary overthrow. It demonstrates the sharpening of the main contradiction of capitalism between its social nature of production and individual capitalist appropriation.
- ii. It further elaborates that - Profit maximisation, the raison d'etre of capitalism, has sharply widened economic inequalities both between countries and within countries in these decades of 'globalisation'. The natural consequence was a decline in the purchasing power of the vast majority of world population. The present crisis is thus a systemic crisis. This once again vindicates the Marxist analysis that the capitalist system is inherently crisis ridden. Capital, in its quest for profits, traverses boundaries and tramples upon anything and everything. In the process it intensifies exploitation of the working class and other strata of working people, imposing greater hardships.
- iii. The declaration notes that the only way out of this capitalist crisis for the working class and the common people is to intensify struggles against the rule of capital. It is the experience of the working class that when it mobilises its strength and resists these attempts it can be successful in protecting its rights.
- iv. It further says that our struggles thus far had been mainly, defensive struggles, struggles to protect the rights that we had won earlier. Today's conjuncture warrants the launch of an offensive, not just to protect our rights but win new rights. Not for winning few rights but for dismantling the entire capitalist edifice - for an onslaught on the rule of capital, for a political alternative --- socialism.
- v. The international meet in its Declaration call upon the people to join us in strengthening the struggles to declare that socialism is the only real alternative for the future of humankind and that the future is ours.

The meeting decided that concrete actions must be undertaken in all countries and coordinated globally on the following issues:

1. Against NATO and its global expansion; against renewed imperialist military aggressiveness, and against foreign military bases.
2. To observe 29 November as a day of solidarity with the Palestinians struggle.
3. To observe the year 2010 as the sixty-fifth anniversary of the defeat of fascism.
4. To strengthen popular mobilisation in defence of workers rights in coordination with the trade unions.
5. Intensify international solidarity for the release of the Cuban Five held by the US.
6. To strengthen popular movements, pressing governments in respective countries, demanding the right to work in coordination with the youth organisations.

AIFB : 16th State Conference of Bengal Committee gives a call to further strengthen Leftism

The 16th State Conference of AIFB, Bengal Committee was held in Kolkata at the Yuba Bharati

Krirangan, named as Pancha Sahid Nagar and Com. Sambhu Chakraborty Manch, from 12th to 14th December 2009. In the present backdrop of political situation in the State, the members took keen interest in the political deliberations and unitedly formulated a befitting course of action to combat the right reactionary forces and the ultra-left adventurists in the coming days.

A total number of 549 delegates from the 19 districts attended the Conference and 73 delegates participated in its 12-hour long discussions on two days.

On 12th morning Com. Rabin Ghosh, Chairman of the State Committee, hoisted the Party flag and Com. Dr. Barun Mukherji, Deputy Chairman garlanded Netaji's statue. Com. Asok Ghosh, General Secretary offered floral tributes to Martyrs' Column and Com. Debabrata Biswas, All India General Secretary, garlanded the statue of Sirajuddala, the last independent Nawab of Bengal who valiantly fought against the Britishers. Other leaders followed in offering their floral tributes.

The conference premises and the Manch was beautifully decorated with colourful banners and life-size photos of past Forward Bloc leaders, which attracted the attention of the delegates and the invited media people.

The delegates session was inaugurated by Com. Debabrata Biswas, General Secretary, AIFB Central Committee, who explained in his speech the present national and international situation and emphasised the role and importance of left politics in the current political situation.

At the delegates' session, Com. Dr. Barun Mukherji placed the draft political documents of the forthcoming 16th Party Congress and Com. Asok Ghosh, while placing the Secretariat Report highlighted the salient features of the Party's analysis of the State's current political trends and its organisational aspects.

The Conference adopted three important resolutions, among others, calling for thorough review of the possible adverse effects of the proposed Nuclear power plant at Haripur of East Midnapur district, West Bengal, secondly, extending Party's support to the Jute Mill Workers' strike and thirdly, calling for foiling the on-going conspiracy to further divide West Bengal and strongly opposing the anti-people activities of the divisive forces like Gorkha Janamukti Morcha, Greater-coochbehar & Kamtapur activists.

The three-day Conference elected the 76-member State Committee with Com. Asok Ghosh as the General Secretary. The conference further authorised Com. Asok Ghosh to declare the names of the Secretariat at a later date.

The conference also elected the 183-member State Council and the 3-man State Control Commission with Com. Bhaktipada Ghosh (Chairman), Com. Subrata Bose and Com. Arun Ganguly (of Alipurdooar).

At the end of the delegates' session, Com. Asok Ghosh in his Reply-speech emphasised that in the coming days, Forward Bloc must play its necessary important role in the Left movement of the State. He also called on the Party workers and leaders to launch strong mass movements for fulfilment of people's aspirations, which he felt, would further strengthen Leftism.

Secretariat of AIFB Bengal Committee constituted

As per decision of the 16th State Conference, Com. Asok Ghosh, General Secretary of the State Committee announced at the first State Committee meeting held at Kolkata on 7 January 2010 the names of the newly constituted State Secretariat, which is as follows :

| No. | Name | Designation |
|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Com. Rabin Ghosh | Chairman |
| 2. | Com. Dr. Barun Mukherji | Dy. Chairman |
| 3. | Com. Asok Ghosh | General Secretary |
| 4. | Com. Aparajita Goppi | Secretary |
| 5. | Com. Naren Dey | do |
| 6. | Com. Naren Chatterjee | do |
| 7. | Com. Dr. Rathin Chakraborty | do |
| 8. | Com. Nishikanta Meheta | do |
| 9. | Com. Rebati Charan Bhattacharya | do |
| 10. | Com. Udayan Guha | do |
| 11. | Com. Akshoy Thakur | do |
| 12. | Com. Gobinda Roy | do |
| 13. | Com. Hafiz Alam Sairani | do |

AIFB Bengal Committee calls for 4-month long action Programme

The newly constituted Secretariat of the AIFB Bengal Committee, in its first meeting held on 13 January 2010, formulated a 4-month long action programme with 11-point Demand and asked all party units to launch it from February 2010.

The party would devote the month of January 2010 for elaborately organising Netaji Birthday programmes, the main theme of which would be to strengthen and popularise the demand for declaration of 23 January ____ Netaji's Birthday as the 'Day of Patriotism'.

The Bengal Committee took the organisational decision to recruit and enlist at least 15 Applicant members from each Booth of all villages and towns of all the districts of the State during the period from 1st February to 15th March 2010. Each of the new recruits will be offered the relevant Membership card. Thus State Committee aims to enlist at least 10 lakh Applicant members throughout the state.

The mass fronts should be involved in this programme of recruitment of Applicant members who would further strengthen the mass fronts in their action programmes to be carried out from 16 March to 31 May 2010. During this period, phase-wise propaganda and deputations will be organised as follows :

Propaganda : during February 2010

Panchayat level deputation : March to April 2010

Block and Mahakuma level deputation : May 2010

Deputations will be given on the basis of following 11 points :

1. All the really poor people be included in BPL list and hundred days' work project be properly implemented.
2. The PDS must be strengthened and all the essential commodities including rice, wheat, pulses, edible oil and sugar must be provided to the poor at subsidised rate. The central govt. must increase its quantum of subsidy for the purpose.
3. The right to Water-Land-Jungle Act must be immediately implemented.
4. The Rangarajan Mishra Commission's report for minority reservation must be accepted and immediately implemented.
5. SEZ to be scraped and entry of big capital into agriculture and agricultural marketing to be stopped.
6. The administration must be very firm to check lawlessness and terrorism in West Bengal.
7. The development programmes for Dalits, Adivasis and SC-ST's must be implemented immediately.
8. Seeds, Fertilizer, Insecticides and agricultural equipments are to be supplied to the farmers at cheaper rates and for this marketing centre to be opened at each block.
9. Unemployment problem must be solved by creating more employment opportunities.
10. While continuing the Agricultural development programmes, Industrial development must also be implemented.
11. Electrification of all villages of the state must immediately be done.

TUCC AND ILO - JOINT COLLABORATED PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME - I

TUCC had organized a regional training class on 7th & 8th Jan 2010 at NITTR, Lecture Hall Shyamala Hills, Bhopal, M.P. for its activists for the state of M.P., U.P. and Maharashtra, which was sponsored by ILO - South Asia Office. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. S. Yadav, Jt. Director, M.P. SACS. Mrs. P Josilla, ILO- South Asia, Mr. Md. Afaque, CBWE, Mrs Sunila Sharma, MPSACS and few other technical persons deliberated in different sessions.

Com. S.P. Tiwari welcoming the guests, focused the area where training needs to be given, deliberating his speech, he categorically sounded that the persons attending the program, supposed to be the leaders in their respective sector, must be serious during classes and maintain the discipline. Lecturing in the technical session, he briefed the multi dimensional activities taken up by the people in informal sector without decent living conditions, he narrated his experience in rural areas of M.P., where working people do not enjoy minimum wages, work more than 12 hours, exploited by their masters, women live in unhygienic conditions and some time become slave and the situation force them to be trapped in flesh trade. He elaborately discussed about the Govt. schemes and the advantages there in. Painfully, he lambasted the Govt. officials, contractors and political leaders who made nexus to exploit these poor innocent people.

Md. Afaque, Education officer, CBWE put forward his proposals by which participants can interact easily and encourage their commitment for the cause of upliftment of socially downtrodden.

Mrs. P. Josilla, ILO, during technical session interacted with participants through card game to enrich them about the stigma and discrimination faced by HIV/AIDS affected people. She defined the need of care and prevention required for the most vulnerable section of the society, who easily gripped by this epidemic due to lack of education and awareness

Thanking the participants for their positive attention & co-operation, Com. Sanjay Yadav, General Sec. M.P. State Committee, TUCC, advocated the need of developing regular platform at national level, where trade Union education can be delivered to the next generation leadership and also to update the existing leadership.

PROGRAMME - II

An Awareness training camp for the activists of TUCC was organized on 12th & 13th Jan 2010 at Bablu Sevashram, Jharnapara Road, Heerapur, Dhanbad, Jharkhand.

Com. Janardan Pandey, member, Central Committee TUCC welcome the guests on behalf of the Jharkhand State Committee and requested the participants to ask for any sort of help if necessary, to complete this training programme successfully, which seems to be a new theme for trade union activists particularly for the state of Jharkhand.

The Guests Com. S.P. Tiwari, General Sec. TUCC, Shri. Promod Kumar Gupta, EO, CBWE, Shri P.N. Tiwari, Master Trainer, HIV/AIDS, BCCL were greeted with flower bouquet by Com Wakil Thakur, Com Gunjumalli Patnayak, Com Santhosh Kumar.

Com S.P. Tiwari, General Sec. TUCC, inaugurating the programme, focused the need of trade union education to rural people and the role to be played by TUCC activists for the informal sector workers. He also elaborated the problems faced these people and need for awareness about the schemes available to them at present. The participants from Bihar, Jharkhand and orrisa had responded well during this training session.

Com S P Tiwari had narrated them about the need of health care of informal sector workers and also stressed to expand the idea of HIV/AIDS prevention and cure which not only affect a person but torment his family and his school going children.

Com Chandrasekharan briefed the participants about the RTI Act, its utilization and the hidden efforts of a section of Govt. Executives to derail the process and purpose for which it was enacted. The Comrades from orrisa were very delighted and urge upon the leadership to hold such type of class in orrisa to enrich their state leadership.

Smt. Aparna Sengupta, Ex-MLA and Ex-Minister in Jharkhand Govt. and President TUCC State Committee extended thanks to all the guests and participants.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS - VIEWS & SUGGESTIONS OF THE CENTRAL TRADE UNIONS

The Central trade unions are grateful for having been invited as an important stake holder for the pre-budget consultations. We wish and hope that the considered views and suggestions placed by us collectively on behalf of the Indian workers will be considered with all seriousness and the exercise being carried out would become really fruitful.

During the recent 'melt down' it was brought out by the FIEO (Federation of Indian Exporters Organization) that over a crore of jobs were lost. The last Indian Labour Conference which was inaugurated by you during February 2009 considered the grave situation and recommended short term and long term strategies to meet the challenge, but most of them were not implemented. We emphasize positive action on the ILC's recommendations.

The Central trade unions have been unitedly raising the common issues and drew pointed attention and serious concern over five important issues, affecting the working people of the country. We also jointly met the Prime Minister of India on the 17th September 2009 and explained our grave concern seeking remedial actions on the same.

In order to overcome the private corporate sector's problem of liquidity and profitability the Govt. has extended several concessions and relaxations on restrictions on FII & FDI, tax concession, export subsidies and bail out packages. However, the millions of working people who are the victims are left in the lurch. In the last consultation held by you on 3rd June, 2009 we had suggested that to meet the challenge of heavy job losses due to financial crisis, the bail out packages given to the industries should be strictly linked to protection and creation of jobs. It was also suggested that the Government should review its economic policy as if our economy has to be export oriented only and one of handing over our huge domestic market to MNCs.

The workers in the unorganized sector, who constitute the overwhelming proportion of the working class of India continue to suffer without social security and social protection. The price rise of all essential commodities, particularly of the food items hit them the most. The Central trade unions call upon the Government of India to address these important issues in the ensuing Budget for 2009-10, so that:

- Price rise of essential commodities is contained through appropriate corrective measures and universal public distribution system besides containing speculation in commodity market.
- Concrete proactive measures are taken for employment protection in the recession stricken

sectors with the stimulus package being offered to the concerned enterprises.

Ø Steps are taken for removal of all restrictive provisions based on poverty line in respect of eligibility coverage of the schemes under the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act 2008 and creation of National Fund for Unorganised Sector to provide for Social Security to all unorganized sector workers including the contract/casual workers in line with the recommendations of National Commission on Enterprises in Unorganised Sector and Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour.

Ø Disinvestment of shares of Central Public Sector Enterprises is not resorted to and instead their growing reserve and surplus is used for expansion and modernization purposes and also for revival of sick Public Sector Undertakings.

We are of the considered view

I that all stimulus packages need to focus on employment retention and creation as well as to ensure that remuneration is adequate. There should be no lay offs, retrenchment, VRS, outsourcing, job losses, closures etc. and extending outreach to vulnerable and informal workers is crucial.

I In view of huge job losses due to the financial crisis, the ban on recruitment in Govt. Depts, PSUs and autonomous institutions should be withdrawn.

I The scope of NREGA is extended to urban areas as well and employment for minimum period of 180 days is provided, as recommended by ILO.

I The massive workforce engaged in ICDS, Mid-day meal scheme, Vidya volunteers, Guest Teachers, Siksha Mitra etc. be regularised and the workers engaged in the Accredited Social Health Activities (ASHA) are brought under the coverage of statutory minimum wage and social security. Universalisation of ICDS be done as per Supreme Court directions by making adequate budgetary allocations.

I Remunerative Prices for the agricultural produce and ensuring of massive investment in agriculture sector.

I The financial sector, including Banks & Insurance which stood the test of time even during the recent global melt down should be encouraged, enlarged and improved instead of imposing the so-called reforms which will adversely affect them and weaken their public sector character. The proposed move of Banking and Insurance and Pension Reforms to be stopped forthwith.

I Requisite budgetary support for addressing crisis in traditional sectors like Jute, Textiles, Plantation, Handloom and Coir etc.

I Budgetary support for revival of potentially viable Sick CPSUs

I Review the system of computation of Consumer Price Index as the present index is causing heavy financial losses to the workers.

In regard to resource mobilization, we would like to emphasize the following:

(a) India should not be one of the least direct taxed countries in the world. Conscious and progressive efforts must be made through our plans and budgets to increase the Tax GDP ratio.

(b) We are opposed to regressive taxation system and this must be replaced with progressive taxation system. Taxing the rich and the affluent sections who have the capacity to pay- the corporate service sector, traders, wholesale business, private hospitals and institutions etc. to be brought under broader & higher tax net. Increase taxes on luxury goods to facilitate reduction in indirect taxes on essential commodities as at present the overwhelming majority of the population are subjected to Indirect taxes that constitutes 86% of the revenue as at present.

In this connection, the proposed "Draft Tax Code" requires proper discussions with the trade unions. The code proposes that Gross salary will include the value of leave travel concession, amount received on encashment of unavailed leave on retirement, even the superannuation benefits i.e compensation under Voluntary retirement benefits, Provident Fund, amount of Gratuity on retirement or death, amount received on commutation of Pension. The code proposes to introduce the EET process, which means that contributions are exempted, accumulation is exempted but withdrawals are taxable. This is not acceptable, specially the proposals on taxing the withdrawal on PF and other savings. The tax on fringe benefits earlier imposed on the wage earners in the organized sector / salaried employees be not imposed again as this has inappropriately affected the tax paying employees.

(c) Tax on Long term capital gains to be introduced; so also higher taxes on the security transactions to be levied.

(d) The rate of wealth tax, corporate tax, gift tax etc. to be expanded and enhanced.

(e) ITEs, outsourcing sector, Educational Institutions and Health Services etc. run on commercial basis

should be brought under Service Tax net.

(f) Fast recovery of the NPA (Non-Performing Assets) and Tax arrears.

(g) Stringent measures against tax evasion and unearthing of black money including the unaccounted money in tax havens abroad. Review Double Taxation avoidance Agreement to curb speculative transaction.

We also urge upon you to hold post budget discussion with trade unions as is held with Industrial Associations/Federations.

PUBLIC PROTESTS AGAINST BT BRINJAL

Union minister holds first stormy consultative meeting in Kolkata

With the Union government's proposed steps for commercial production of a genetically modified crop viz. BT Brinjal, countrywide protests and opposition are growing up among different sections of the public, as was loudly demonstrated in a consultative meeting held at the Bose Institute, Kolkata on 13 January 2010. The Union Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh initiated this first of the seven public consultative meetings that he plans to hold across six other cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar, Nagpur, Ahmedabad and Chandigarh by mid-February 2010.

The stormy Kolkata meeting demonstrated its loud opposition to the proposed 'poisonous' vegetable that is likely to threaten bio-diversity, destabilise ecosystems and make our farmers dependent on multinationals. Eminent agriculture scientist Prof. R.N.Bose argues that once cultivation of BT brinjal starts in the country, there will be no seed security and agricultural sovereignty will be at stake. He firmly asserted ___ 'Agriculture will thus move into the hands of the corporate world'. The other expert said, the poor will not be benefited by it. The claim that insects can not harm this genetically modified crop was countered by the argument that we must be very cautious in its introduction as it is an edible crop.

The meeting was attended by about 400 people ___ mostly scientists, farm experts, farmers' bodies, consumer groups and NGOs. Haripada Biswas, Secretary of the All India Agragami Kisan Sabha, West Bengal Committee spoke at the meeting and submitted a memorandum saying that a mass movement would be launched to prevent commercial production of this anti-farmer genetically modified crop which is designed to serve the interests of the imperialist agents and the MNCs.

The green activist participants took exception to the fact that the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee, a wing of the environment ministry, had cleared commercial cultivation of BT brinjals without asserting the majority public opinion. They accused the Centre of playing to the hands of multinationals and demanded immediate withdrawal of the proposed scheme.