

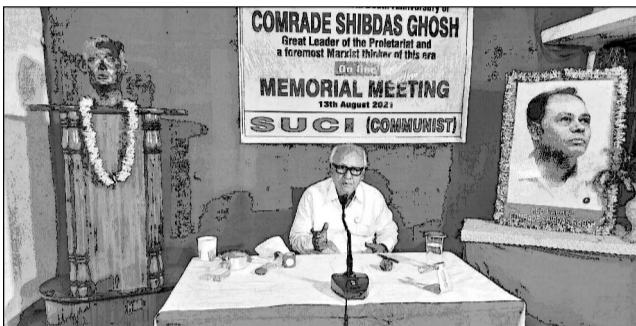
Proletarian Era

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Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (COMMUNIST)
Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH

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45th Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat on 5th August 2021 was observed with due solemnity in 27 states and one Union Territory



Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), addressing Comrade Shibdas Ghosh memorial meeting online in English on 13 August 2021



Comrade Manik Mukherjee, veteran Polit Bureau member, offering red salute. On his extreme left is Comrade Gopal Kundu, Polit Bureau member



Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, veteran Polit Bureau member, offering red salute

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150 years of Paris Commune

Historicity and Lessons

The Paris Commune stands in history as the first bold attempt to establish working class state and from that position, continues to remain as source of inspiration to the toiling millions longing for emancipation from the growing and gruelling capitalist exploitation. From 18 March to 28 May 1871, i.e. for 72 days, the working class of Paris held control of the city and proclaimed establishment of a new state which was qualitatively different from the hitherto known bourgeois states preceded by feudal states. The Commune no doubt suffered a defeat at the hands of the reactionary forces, but the struggle did not go in vain. Even in the 150th year of the Commune, the historic lessons derived from the Commune can enrich the anti-capitalist revolutionary movements in various countries. At the outset, it is necessary to dwell very succinctly on the socio-historic backdrop in which the Commune had occurred.

Historical context in which the Commune was formed

It was in 1789 that bourgeois democratic revolution took place in France with the workers and peasants instrumental in storming the Bastille prison fort and overthrowing age-old reactionary feudal monarchical rule. Though the leadership of this revolution was in the hands of the bourgeoisie it was

the working class which made it victorious. Even the exploited and oppressed women played an exemplary role in it. The bourgeoisie was compelled to arm the common masses in order to make the revolution successful. As a result the common people got a chance to raise their voice to realize their legitimate demands. They began to participate in matters of state also with arms. This did not bode well for the bourgeoisie. After capturing power the bourgeoisie did not want to continue along the path of revolution. But, the armed populace which comprised the toiling masses in greater number, desired to see the further progress of revolution. So a contradiction ensued. Moreover, though the bourgeoisie of France overthrew the feudal system, it failed to destroy all its remnants completely. The bourgeois class failed to consolidate itself and also in resolving the internal contradictions within the bourgeoisie. Amidst the turmoil, Napoleon Bonaparte assumed power in 1800 and brought about a feudo-capitalist (that is a rule in which feudal influence was prominent but emergent bourgeois content could not be given up) Constitutional rule. After the defeat of Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, a state of uncertainty prevailed for some time. At that time, in France where cottage industries were huge in

number, industrial development was very slow compared to other European states. In the 1830 revolution when Charles X was ousted, Louis Philippe was saddled in power as 'Citizen King', giving rise to a rule that was designated by Marx as 'bourgeois monarchy'. During the rule of Louis Philippe between 1830 and 1848, industrial development in France assumed pace with the application of newer technology. France became a strong player in the international competitive capitalist market. With establishment of big industries, the number of workers also increased. People from rural areas thronged to the cities to work in factories. Banking also flourished. But alongside also sharpened the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As shown by Engels, "...Thanks to the economic and political development of France since 1789, Paris has been placed for the last fifty years in such a position that no revolution could break out there without the proletariat, which had brought victory with its blood, coming forward with its own demands after the victory. These demands were more or less unclear and even confused, corresponding to the state of development reached by the workers of Paris at the particular period, but in the last

resort they all amounted to the abolition of the class antagonism between capitalists and workers. It is true that no one knew how this was to be brought about. But the demand itself, however indefinitely it still was couched, contained a threat to the existing order of society; the workers who put it forward were still armed; therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state." (Introduction to the 'Civil War in France')

In February 1848, there was an upheaval against the Louis Philippe rule. Again to quote Engels, "The liberal bourgeoisie of the parliamentary opposition held banquets for securing a reform of the franchise, which was to ensure supremacy for their party. Forced more and more, in their struggle with the government, to appeal to the people, they had gradually to yield precedence to the radical and republican strata of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. But behind these stood the revolutionary workers, and since 1830 they had acquired far more political independence than the bourgeoisie, and even the republicans, suspected. At the moment of the crisis between the government and the opposition,

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Paris Commune

Alongside capitalist development in France, contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat also sharpened

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the workers began street-fighting; Louis Philippe vanished, and with him the franchise reform; and in its place arose the republic, and indeed one which the victorious workers themselves designated as a "social" republic. No one, however, was clear as to what this social republic was to imply; not even the workers themselves. But they now had arms and were a power in the state. Therefore, as soon as the bourgeois republicans in control felt something like firm ground under their feet, their first aim was to disarm the workers. This took place by driving them into the insurrection of June 1848 by direct breach of faith, ... After five days' heroic struggle, the workers were defeated. And then followed a blood-bath among the defenceless prisoners, the like of which has not been seen since the days of the civil wars which ushered in the downfall of the Roman republic." (ibid)

25 February 1848 had granted the bourgeois Republic to France by overthrowing the previous monarchy-form of rule and installing Louis Bonaparte in governmental power. Commenting on this rule of Louis Bonaparte, great Marx said: "A section of the bourgeois class ruled by keeping the King in front. Now the bourgeois class has established bourgeois democracy by keeping the people in front." (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon). However, it did not take long for the toiling people to realise that the elected Republic which replaced the interim government was an anti-people bourgeois government. Every passing day exacerbated capitalist exploitation. Hunger and unemployment kept rising steadily. So, when the government responded to workers legitimate demands with provocative curtailment of even existing rights for work, this enraged the working people and increasing widespread resistance began to grow. So, the accumulated resentment among the workers began to burst forth in the form of resistance struggle, or insurrection as Paris began to see thousands pour into the streets in protest marches.

22 June 1848 had witnessed the workers' courage. As Marx had described: "The bourgeois monarchy of Louis Philippe can be followed only by a bourgeois republic, that is to say, whereas a limited section of the bourgeoisie ruled in the name of the king, the whole of the bourgeoisie will now rule in the name of the people. The demands of the Paris proletariat are utopian nonsense, to which an end must be put. The Paris proletariat replied to this declaration of the Constituent National Assembly with the June Insurrection, the most colossal event in the history of European civil wars. The bourgeois republic triumphed. On its side stood the financial aristocracy, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle class, the petty bourgeois, the army, the lumpenproletariat organized as the Mobile Guard, the intellectual lights, the clergy and the rural population. On the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself. ... On 22 June, there was a revolutionary upsurge of the people. Two main opposing classes- the bourgeoisie and the proletariat had come face

to face in battle.... More than 3,000 insurgents were butchered after the victory, and 15,000 were transported without trial. With this defeat the proletariat passes into the background of the revolutionary stage... The defeat of the June insurgents, to be sure, had now prepared and levelled the ground on which the bourgeois republic could be founded and built up, but it had shown at the same time that in Europe the questions at issue are other than that of "republic or monarchy". It had revealed that here bourgeois republic signifies the unlimited despotism of one class over other classes...." (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte) Glimpse of the next turn of events can be had from the words of Engels: "It was the first time that the bourgeoisie showed to what insane cruelties of revenge it will be goaded the moment the proletariat dares to take its stand against the bourgeoisie as a separate class, with its own interests and demands. ... If the proletariat were not yet able to rule France, the bourgeoisie could no longer do so. Its (the bourgeoisie) internal dissensions allowed Louis Bonaparte to take possession of all the commanding points -- army, police, administrative machinery -- and, on 2 December 1851, to explode the last stronghold of the bourgeoisie, the National Assembly. The Second Empire began -- the exploitation of France by a gang of political and financial adventurers, but at the same time also an industrial development such as had never been possible under the narrow-minded and timorous system of Louis Philippe, with the exclusive domination of only a small section of the big bourgeoisie. Louis Bonaparte took the political power from the capitalists under the pretext of protecting them, the bourgeois, from the workers, and on the other hand the workers from them; but in return his rule encouraged speculation and industrial activity -- in a word, the upsurge and enrichment of the whole bourgeoisie to an extent hitherto unknown." (Introduction to the 'Civil War in France')

For 17 years between 1851 to 1868, that is during the reign of Louis Bonaparte, renamed Napoleon III, the situation in France kept declining. The crisis of the capitalism was becoming evident. As a result the condition of the working classes and the middle classes of the various countries was worsening. Even the bourgeoisie which wanted profits were finding it difficult to make those profits. Commenting on the 80 years that France went through since bourgeois democratic revolution, Engels said: "France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were fought out to a decisive conclusion every time, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model of a unified monarchy based on social estates since the Renaissance, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And

the struggle of the aspiring proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere. This was the reason why Marx not only studied the past history of France with particular predilection, but also followed her current history in every detail, stored up the material for future use and, consequently, events never took him by surprise." (Introduction to Marx's 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon')

Alongside intensifying exploitation of the working class, the French bourgeoisie also wanted to extend their domination in other parts of the continent. This aspiration of the ruling bourgeoisie was manifest in the steps taken and policies adopted by Napoleon III, who, was the first President of France (as Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte) from 1848 to 1851 end, and through a coup installed himself as the Second French emperor from 1851 to 1870. But the main obstacle before the expansionist aspiration of the French bourgeoisie was equally powerful neighbouring Prussia under Bismarck. Bismarck was then engaged in unification of Germany. So, if France was to extend its sphere of influence, it had no other alternative but to declare war against Prussia. So Napoleon III began to foment national jingoism and on 16 July 1870 got the proposal of launching war on Prussia in the French parliament.

But the French working class opposed this war plan. In a pamphlet titled "To the working class of all nations", they called upon all their fellow brethren to raise voice against this pitching for war. The Berlin unit of the First International wholeheartedly responded to the call and promised that no bugle for war, no thundering of the canon, no win, no loss would be able to deviate them from the cause of proletarian internationalism. But ignoring all protest of the working people, Napoleon III declared war against Prussia on 2 July 1870. When the French force intruded into Prussian territory, it faced severe retaliatory action from the Prussian army. Within no time, the army of Napoleon III faced crushing defeat at the hands of Prussian force on 2 September. Prussian force took Napoleon III in captivity and thus the rule of Napoleon III in France had ended.

Post-Napoleon III France

With the fall of Napoleon III, the empire collapsed like a house of cards, and the Republic was again proclaimed by the French people in September 1870. But the Republic was headed by one notorious person called Thiers, whom great Marx described as a "monstrous gnome, (who) has charmed the French bourgeoisie for almost half a century, because he is the most consummate intellectual expression of their own class corruption. Before he became a statesman he had already proved his lying powers as an historian.... A master in small state roguery, a virtuoso in perjury and treason, a craftsman in all the petty stratagems, cunning devices, and base perfidies of parliamentary party-warfare; never scrupling, when out of office, to fan a

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Paris Commune

It did not take long for toiling people to realise that the Republic established in 1948 was an anti-people bourgeois government

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revolution, and to stifle it in blood when at the helm of the State; with class prejudices standing him in the place of ideas, and vanity in the place of a heart; his private life as infamous as his public life is odious." (The Civil War in France) Thiers was consistent only in his greed for wealth and his hatred of the men that produce it. Having entered his first ministry under Louis Philippe poor as Job, he left it a millionaire. It is, therefore, clear that the reactionary bourgeoisie picked up the right man to foil the endeavour to retain Paris Commune that was yet to be established.

The bourgeois Republic of France under Thiers needed first to stop the advancing Prussian army from entering Paris. But it did not possess a military power to thwart the mighty Prussian force. So, they had no alternative but to hand over arms to the people including the working class. As put by Engels, "In this emergency the people allowed the Paris deputies to the former legislative body to constitute themselves into a "Government of National Defence." This was the more readily conceded, since, for the purposes of defence, all Parisians capable of bearing arms had enrolled in the National Guard and were armed, so that now the workers constituted a great majority." (Introduction to 'The Civil War of France, 1891') But a conflict of interest ensued between the bourgeois government and the working class as the manifestation of the principal contradiction between labour and capital in the bourgeois society.

The ruling bourgeoisie, haunted by the fear-complex of anti-capitalist proletarian revolution which great Marx had proved to be an inevitability as per governing laws of social development and inexorable course of history, wanted to disarm the workers by force. To succeed in its attempt, the French bourgeois government considered it imperative to enter into an understanding with the Prussian authorities at any cost. On the other hand, Bismarck, the head of Prussian rule, too had sensed from his bourgeois class instinct that unless the possibility of any revolutionary upsurge in France was frustrated, it might trigger similar situation in his country as well. In fact, the German working class had also stood by the French workers and openly announced

support to the struggle for emancipation of the French workers. So, Bismarck agreed to free the French soldiers taken in captivity in Metz and Sedan cities and handed them over to Thiers. Also, the Prussian army encircled Paris from all sides, obviously with the tacit support of the Thiers government which wanted the armed working class of Paris to surrender before the foreign army.

But seeing the mood of the Paris working class and common masses, cunning Bismarck did not agree to that. As stated by Engels, "On October 31, 1870, workers and the revolutionary section of the National Guard in Paris launched an insurrection after receiving news that ...Thiers, by order of the Government of National Defence, had begun negotiations with the Prussians. The insurgents occupied the Hôtel de Ville and established a revolutionary organ of political power, ...taking advantage of the incomplete organization of the revolutionary forces of Paris and the differences between the leading sections of the insurrection -- the Blanquists (followers of Blanqui) and the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Jacobinists (followers of Jacobine) -- the government went back on its words, and, with the help of the few battalions of the National Guard which remained on its side, reoccupied the Hôtel de Ville and regained power." (ibid) But the seething of the aggrieved working class did not cease nor any despondency could overwhelm them. "On January 22, 1871, on the initiative of the Blanquists, the proletariat of Paris and the National Guards held a revolutionary demonstration, demanding the dissolution of the government and the establishment of the Commune. The Government of National Defence instructed its Breton mobile guards, which guarded the Hôtel de Ville, to fire at the masses. It arrested many demonstrators, ordered the closure of all the clubs in Paris and banned mass rallies and many newspapers. After suppressing the revolutionary movement with terror, the government began to prepare for the surrender of Paris." (ibid) Despite the treachery of the French bourgeoisie and having been surrounded by the Prussian army for five long months from 19 September 1870, the undaunted workers of

Paris had held their fort courageously.

On the eve of the Commune

Noteworthy, after a 135 day long surrounding of Paris, finally an Armistice was signed with Bismarck, the Prussian ruler. It stipulated, *inter alia*, that the Prussian Army would remain in Paris. This enraged the people and caused a feeling of national humiliation. Moreover the day the Armistice was signed was the Martyrs' Day of the 1848 revolution. So the French people would never accept the terms of this Armistice. As Engels had put it "At last, on January 28, 1871, starved Paris capitulated. But with honours unprecedented in the history of war. The forts were surrendered, the city wall stripped of guns, the weapons of the regiments of the line and of the Mobile Guard were handed over, and they themselves considered prisoners of war. But the National Guard kept its weapons and guns, and only entered into an armistice with the victors. And these did not dare enter Paris in triumph. They only dared to occupy a tiny corner of Paris, which, into the bargain, consisted partly of public parks, and even this they only occupied for a few days! And during this time they, who had maintained their encirclement of Paris for 131 days, were themselves encircled by the armed workers of Paris, who kept a sharp watch that no "Prussian" should overstep the narrow bounds of the corner ceded to the foreign conqueror. Such was the respect which the Paris workers inspired in the army before which all the armies of the empire had laid down their arms; and the Prussian Junkers, who had come to take revenge at the home of the revolution, were compelled to stand by respectfully, and salute precisely this armed revolution!" (ibid)

Bending before the awakened workers, Thiers shifted French capital from Paris to Versailles. Yet, he could not discard the apprehension that the rule of the big landowners and capitalists was in constant danger so long as the workers of Paris had arms in their hands. So, he wanted to disarm them. Accordingly, he sent troops on 18 March to seize the arms and

artilleries from the National guard which included the workers. But he failed as Paris people resisted the attempt boldly. So Thiers ordered a war between the Versailles-based French government and Paris. On 18 March 1871, Thiers' 40,000 strong army reached Paris in the early morning. Initially the Army began to make gains. But except for 300 of the 30,000 National Guard, everyone fought in favour of the toiling masses under the leadership of the Central Committee. The common people, along with the National Guard erected barricades on every street and offered resistance. In the face of this stiff resistance, Thiers' mercenary army was defeated and had to retreat. Soon the Central Committee of the revolutionaries was successful in establishing complete control over Paris. And then arrived a defining moment not only in France but in the history of struggle for emancipation of the working class and other sections of the toiling masses.

Proclamation of Paris Commune

As described by Engels, "On 26 March, the Paris Commune was elected and on 28 March it was proclaimed. The Central Committee of the National Guard, which up to then had carried on the government, handed in its resignation to the Commune after it had first decreed the abolition of the scandalous Paris "Morality Police." On 30 March, the Commune abolished conscription and the standing army, and declared the sole armed force to be the National Guard, in which all citizens capable of bearing arms were to be enrolled. It remitted all payments of rent for dwelling houses from October 1870 until April, the amounts already paid to be booked as future rent payments, and stopped all sales of articles pledged in the municipal loan office. On the same day, the foreigners elected to the Commune were confirmed in office, because 'the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic.' On 2 April, ...the Commune decreed the separation of the church from the state, and the abolition of all state payments for religious purposes as well as the transformation of all church property into national property; as a result of which, on

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Paris Commune

First time the bourgeoisie bared its tooth and claw with insane cruelties when the proletariat dared to revolt against its oppressive rule

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8 April, the exclusion from the schools of all religious symbols, pictures, dogmas, prayers - in a word, "of all that belongs to the sphere of the individual's conscience" - was ordered and gradually put into effect. On the 6th, the guillotine was brought out by the 137th Battalion of the National Guard, and publicly burnt, amid great popular rejoicing...." (ibid) On 16 April 1871, the Commune promulgated a decree postponing payments of all debt obligations for three years and cancelling interest, the decree alleviated the financial condition of the petty bourgeoisie and was unfavourable to the creditors among the big bourgeoisie. Thus, the Commune promulgated a slew of decrees "which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society." (ibid) Under the influence of the proletarian revolution in Paris, which gave birth to the Paris Commune, revolutionary movements of the masses started in Lyons, Marseilles and many other French cities. Engels further observed that "from March 18 onwards the class character of the Paris movement, which had previously been pushed into the background by the fight against the foreign invaders, emerged sharply and clearly. As almost only workers, or recognized representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either these decisions decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class -- such as the realization of the principle that in relation to the state, religion is a purely private matter -- or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society." (ibid)

This made Thiers and his mentors, the French bourgeoisie, (or to put it otherwise the Versailles-based government) more apprehensive of a revolutionary uprising. So they became more desperate, despotic and ruthless in occupying Paris and overthrowing the Commune. In view of the stiff resistance by the Communards, Thiers sought permission from Bismarck to have a 1.5 lakh strong army. In addition Bismarck provided a lakh Prisoners of War to assist the Army. History is also witness to the fact that in the final phase of this battle, the Prussian army openly joined hands with Thiers. First Thiers ordered an attack on 2nd April. Many lost their lives but did not surrender. Women displayed exemplary courage in the battle. Even children showed a lot of valour in this battle. Thiers' army went on firing canon indiscriminately on the communards. Spies of Thiers were planted in Paris.

A batch of renegades was created to break the struggle from within. As usual, Thiers brigade intensified armed attack on the customary pretext of preserving law and order. Taking advantage of some undesired carelessness on the part of the National Guards and treachery of some traitors, Thiers' army forced open in Paris on 21 May. The communards came out on the streets and tried

to resist with all their might. Barricades were put up everywhere. As against 60 canons of the invading army, the communards had only 12. Moreover, some unsteady Paris citizens were swayed by rumours and frustration. So the need to forge an all-out unity against the invading bourgeois forces could not be fulfilled. Stream of human blood flooded the city. The Thiers army was hunting out the communards like wolves and killing them brutally.

Fall of the Commune

Finally, after boldly holding the fort for 72 days from 18 March to 28 May, the communards were overrun by the enemy force. Barbarity of the Thiers administration knew no bounds. Within days nearly 30,000 people had been killed in battle. Even after the battle had ceased, brutal killings of communards and common people continued. A telegram of Thiers held brief of the beastly savagery that raved wild: "The streets are filled with their corpses. This ghastly sight will serve them a lesson." That marked the fall of historic Paris Commune. In spite of many of its limitations, it can be said without any doubt that the Commune had all the potential for a future full-fledged working class State. And with the collapse of the Commune, the first attempt of the working class to capture power was foiled.

The Commune ceased to exist but the spirit did not. As stated by Marx: "Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them.... The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people." (The Civil War in France) Engels stated: "...the Paris Commune ... was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." (Introduction to 'The Civil War of France', 1891)

Lessons from the failure of the Commune

Marx observed in a meeting of the First International that "The working class did not expect a miracle from the Commune." (The Civil War in France) "Whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained." (Letter to Kugelmann on 17 April 1871) "...this was the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class capable of social initiative... It was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour." (The Civil War in France)

Despite hailing and whole-heartedly supporting the Commune, both he and his revolutionary compatriot Engels could notice some shortcomings as well. In another letter to Kugelmann on 12 April 1871, Marx wrote, "If they (Communards) are defeated only their

'good nature' will be to blame. They should have marched at once on Versailles, after first Vanoy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. The right moment was missed because of conscientious scruples. They did not want to start the civil war; as if that mischievous abortion Thiers had not already started the civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris. Second mistake: The Central Committee surrendered its power too soon, to make way for the Commune."

Engels pointed out that "From the very outset the Commune was compelled to recognize that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against itself" (Introduction to 'The Civil War in France') Even in the preface to the new German edition of the Communist Manifesto, on 24 June 1872, Marx and Engels, mentioned that "One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.'" Secondly, Engels had pointed out that the Commune should have confiscated all properties of the Bank of France as "The bank in the hands of the Commune -- this would have been worth more than ten thousand hostages. It would have meant the pressure of the whole of the French bourgeoisie on the Versailles government in favour of peace with the Commune... This was also a serious political mistake..." (Introduction to 'The Civil War in France') Marx in his letter dated 2 April 1871 to Kugelmann also stated emphatically that "...the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another but to smash it."

Moreover, Engels also identified the ideological weakness of the Commune because of compromising character of the Blanquists and Proudhonists who were within the Commune, as another reason of its collapse. Elaborating further, great Lenin had shown that "Only the workers remained loyal to the Commune to the end. The bourgeois republicans and the petty-bourgeoisie soon broke away from it, the former afraid of the revolutionary Socialist proletarian character of the movement, and the others dropping out when they saw that it was doomed to inevitable defeat. Only the French proletariat supported their Government fearlessly and untiringly, they alone fought and died for it, for the cause of the emancipation of the working class, for a better future for all toilers." (On the Paris Commune) Drawing attention to the question of involving the peasants around Paris in the revolutionary struggle, Lenin said: "In Europe, in 1871, there was not a single country on the Continent in which the proletariat constituted the majority of the people. A "people's" revolution, one that actually swept the majority into its stream, could

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Threat to human rights is highest in police stations, says Chief Justice of India

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on 8 August said police stations pose the "highest threat" to human rights and dignity, which are 'sacrosanct'.

"The threat to human rights and bodily integrity is the highest in police stations... Going by recent reports, even the privileged are not spared third-degree treatment," the Chief Justice said. Custodial torture and police atrocities still prevail despite constitutional guarantees, he said.

Lack of effective legal representation at police stations is a huge detriment to arrested or detained persons. The first hours of arrest or detention often decide the fate of the case for the accused, the CJI said.

The top judge was speaking at the release of National Legal Services Authority's legal services app and vision statement at Vigyan Bhawan. The CJI had a word of advice for his fellow judges.

Chief justice Ramana noted that if the judiciary wants to gain the trust of the poor and vulnerable, it has to assure the marginalised that it exists for them. "If judiciary wants to garner the faith of the citizens, we have to make everyone feel assured that we exist for them. For the longest time, the vulnerable population has lived outside the system of justice," the CJI said.

Lengthy, expensive formal processes followed by the courts dissuade the poor and the vulnerable. The judiciary's toughest challenge today is to break these barriers, he said.

"If we want to remain as a society governed by the rule of law, it is imperative for us to bridge the gap of accessibility to justice between the highly privileged and the most vulnerable. For all times to come, we must remember that the realities of socio-economic diversity which prevail in our nation cannot ever be a reason for denial of rights. Let our past not determine our future."

Chief Justice Ramana said the digital divide has not helped the cause of easy access to justice. Rural and remote areas suffer from lack of connectivity. "Accessing justice in India is not merely an aspirational goal. We need to work hand in hand with various wings of the government to make it a practical reality."

The Chief Justice said he has already written to the government about the urgent need to bridge the digital chasm "on a priority basis".

"Let us dream of a future based on legal mobility, a future where equality is a reality. That is why the project 'Access to Justice' is an unending mission," CJI Ramana said. (The Hindu 08-08-21)

AIDSO led movement across

Andhra Pradesh forces authorities to bow down

Different Universities of Andhra Pradesh (AP) had declared examination schedules for both UG and PG courses all of a sudden without completion of syllabus by the teachers and giving time to the students for preparation.

Immediately, a statewide movement was organised by the AIDSO, AP State Committee, demanding postponement of examinations till the vaccination is over for both the students and the teachers. A massive



Rayalseema University Kurnool

5 day online survey was conducted in which 93.3 % of more than 25,000 students who participated, expressed that they were not ready to write the examinations without necessary time to prepare for the same. Students demonstrations were organised in number of universes in Kurnool, Anantapur, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati,

Rajahmundry and Nellore. Initially, the authorities of these universities acted most undemocratically without paying heed to the genuine demands of the students. But then, bowing before the pressure of movement, the Andhra University (AU)

administration had to accede to the students' demand and postponed the semester examinations giving 20 days' time for preparation and vaccination. This victory of legitimate students' movement has created a very positive impact and the acceptance of AIDSO has increased significantly among the students.

Decision has been taken at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Party from 25 July to 29 July 2021 to co-opt

A. the following Central Committee members in the Polit Bureau:

1. Comrade V. Venugopal,
2. Comrade Kantimoy Deb,
3. Comrade Rabin Samajpati,
4. Comrade Swapan Ghosh,
5. Comrade Amitava Chatterjee,
6. Comrade Chandidas Bhattacharjee,

B. the following comrades as members of the Central Committee:

1. Comrade A Rengasamy,
2. Comrade Jaison Joseph,
3. Comrade B S Amarnath,
4. Comrade Arun Bhaumik,
5. Comrade Debasish Roy,

Adani moves a step back in face of sustained peasant movement

The historic peasant movement on demand of repeal of the three black Farm Laws and withdrawal of the proposed Electricity Act (Amendment) Bill which has already run for months together through the biting winter and blistering summer of a large part of northern India has added a new chapter of sustained united democratic movement in the life of toiling people of the entire country. At the same time it is causing grave anxiety in the rulers, the Union government or their chief mentor-patron the corporate houses for whose benefits these Farm Laws and Electricity Bill were conceived and thrown out for implementation. The Union government, unmoved and adamant in open, must be feeling shifting ground below its feet. The corporate houses for whom the three laws and the Bill were placed on a platter as a gift, are also feeling the heat of a united sustained movement of fighting people.

A recent report by indiaseatradenews.com on 31 July 2021, throws open such an undercurrent. It states that the Adanis, one of the chief beneficiaries of the said laws etc., are shuttering operations of their Adani Logistics Limited at its rail-linked inland container depot (ICD) at Kilaraipur in Ludhiana. For long continued seven-month blockade by

the fighting peasants has rendered the facility idle, incurring huge losses to the group.

The multi modal logistics park at Kilaraipur, spread over 80 acres, was opened in 2017 to cater to the industries in and around Ludhiana, offering services for import and export of cargo by rail and road. Since January 2021, the protesting farmers have blocked the main gate of the ICD by placing tractor trolley to obstruct movement of goods and personnel, thereby halting entire operations at the facility.

The Adani Group left no stone unturned to remove the blockade. It approached the administration and police, even moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court in March. But to no avail. Interestingly the huge establishment employs just 400 person and their families, while the group apprehend the overall economic impact to be worth more than staggering Rs 7,000 crore.

The determined farmers are continuing their fight. Toiling people of the country will wait for still more news like this one of the Adani Logistics Limited to come to light in near future. Long live the sustained united movement of peasants, the unflinching toilers who feed the country, including the corporate profit sharks. (Source: Business line reproduced by India Seatrade News 31-07-21)

SUCI(C) gave call to observe a week-long programme from 9 to 15 August as

“Week of taking pledge to bring emancipation of the people.”

UP School Board Saffronizes Syllabus Removes Writings of Tagore, Shelley

The students of classes 10 and 12 of the UP Board will no longer study the works of great poet and litterateur Rabindranath Tagore, Milton or Shelley from the new academic session (2021-22). The Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) is implementing the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) syllabus for English in these classes starting from this year.

In the process, Tagore's story 'The Home Coming' (Chhuti) and Dr. Radhakrishnan's essay 'The Women's Education' have been removed from the Class 12 syllabus after its revision. AL Basham's 'The Heritage of India' has also been removed from the curriculum of class 12. Mulk Raj Anand's story 'The Lost Child' and 'An Astrologer's Day' by RK Narayanan have also been taken out of the syllabus. The students of class 12 will no longer be taught the poems of renowned renaissance poets like John Milton, P. B. Shelley and William Wordsworth. From the class 10 syllabus, Sarojini Naidu's poem 'The Village Song' has now been removed. The works of Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, W. M. Raeburn, and R. Srinivasan have also been removed from the new syllabus. This is not an isolated incident. Previously, Sangh Parivar openly opposed Rabindranath's humanitarian view as it didn't fit with their Nationalism (i.e. Hindutvawadi outlook).

Last year on the plea of reducing the load of syllabus due to the shortage of study time in Covid situation chapters on federalism, citizenship, nationalism, secularism, human rights, legal aid and local self-government were expunged from CBSE courses. Now the UP syllabus. Since the 2014 election, when the BJP returned to power, it started attack on democratic, secular, scientific remains in

education field. The affiliates of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the parent body of the BJP, have become active in the field of education again. They have been interacting with officials in the ministry of human resources (now education) to change the curriculum to match their Hindutvawadi agenda. The Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas and other such organisations have been demanding the removal of English and Urdu words from texts. They want the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore on nationalism removed.

While the above-mentioned pieces are being removed from the syllabus, in the same UP state the Chaudhary Charan Singh University in Meerut is introducing books by Ramdev and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as part of its undergraduate philosophy syllabus. The UP government has recommended Ramdev's book *Yog Sadhna va Yog Chikitsa Rahasya* and Adityanath's book *Hathyog Swarup aur Sadhana*.

While the convenor of the Board of Studies, CCSU certified the book by Adityanath as of very high academic value, and that by Ramdev as a good addition for Philosophy students, the educationists are protesting against this move of the BJP-led UP Government. A teacher at the CCSU university told the Press on condition of anonymity: "We understand they are appalling recommendations - powerful people are forcing us to teach from their books, which are sub-standard... Asking people to practise yoga isn't the same thing as forcing them to read the books of people with half-baked knowledge." However the BJP has become deaf to their criticisms. Let's recall Bhagat Singh's lesson: It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear. [Sources: India Today 6 July 2021; Deccan Herald 3 June 2021]

**Book stall by
AIKKMS
at
Singhu
border,
Delhi,
on
7 August**



Paris Commune

Commune no doubt suffered a defeat at the hands of reactionary forces, but the struggle did not go in vain

Contd. from page 4

be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasantry. These two classes then constituted the "people." These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To smash this machine, to break it up -- this is truly in the interest of the "people," of the majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, this is "the preliminary condition" for a free alliance between the poorest peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible. (The State and Revolution) Lenin further pointed out that, "It is well known that in the

working class state operationalizing dictatorship of the proletariat. He thereby proved the correctness of Marxian science provided it is concretely applied in the concrete situation. Though there is a sad collapse of Soviet and Chinese socialism as well as dismantling of the powerful socialist bloc because of counter-revolution orchestrated by the defeated bourgeoisie aided and abetted by the revisionist conspiracy and machination of the imperialist powers, it is only a temporary setback. Marxism and revolutionary working class movement have ultimately been enriched and developed in the light of newer experiences and lessons drawn from such incidents. The setback of socialism has also brought in its wake many new experiences and lessons which will act as the beacon to the



Comrade Saumen Basu, Polit Bureau member, SUCI(C), conducting a discussion in Party central office in Kolkata on 8 July on the occasion of 150 years of Paris Commune. Seated beside him are Central Committee and State Secretariat leaders.

autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was forced upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not assume the rigidly pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement... Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards who, as he expressed it, 'stormed Heaven'. Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programs and arguments. To analyse this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it, to re-examine his theory in the light of it -- that was the task that Marx set himself." (ibid) It is worth mentioning that drawing appropriate lessons from both the brave initiative as well as failure of the Paris Commune, great Lenin accomplished first anti-capitalist socialist revolution in Russia and established the first genuine

working class struggle for emancipation in the days to come. The proletariat armed with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, the highest ideology of the time, and its most enriched and developed understanding contained in Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, will again bounce back, free the people from the clutches of obsolete bourgeois thoughts, isolate all the compromising revisionist and social-democratic forces and overthrow decadent, moribund, reactionary, utterly corrupt and ruthlessly exploitative capitalism to make global revolution a reality.

Let us end with Lenin's word: "The thunder of the cannon in Paris awakened the most backward strata of the proletariat from deep slumber, and everywhere gave impetus to the growth of revolutionary Socialist propaganda. This is why the cause of the Commune did not die. It lives to the present day in every one of us. The cause of the Commune is the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal." [Lenin on the Paris Commune (April 1911) From The Militant, Vol. V No. 12 (Whole No. 108), 19 March 1932, p. 1. Originally published in Rabochaya Gazeta, No. 4-5, April 28 (15), 1911]

AIDSO -led movement achieves significant victory in West Bengal

Taking advantage of people's helplessness due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown, both the central and the state governments have been on a spree to destroy education in every respect-whether it is curriculum, duration of the course, system of teaching or method of examination. Now, because of the pandemic, educational Institutions are closed for more than one year and a half. Moreover, a large number of students from the poor families are unable to avail of online teaching because they cannot afford to buy a smartphone.

The pandemic situation is persisting with periodical ups and downs in intensity because of a fractured healthcare system and flawed vaccine policy of the central government. But the common students are paying the price of anti-education anti-people policies of a pro-corporate inhuman

bourgeois governments. Hence, education has virtually come to a standstill. Though the governments are opening hotels, restaurants, bars, gyms, beauty parlours and cinema halls, they are averse to open the schools by ensuring all necessary precautions. Even the guardians are forced to pay fees including various charges other than tuition fees. Alongside, they demanded students' concession in all kinds of mass transport. So, students, teachers and guardians have been demanding for opening up the educational institutions. West Bengal under a TMC government is no exception. West Bengal State AIDSO had long proposed to the government to work out a plan involving students, teachers and guardians' representatives to open the schools and colleges with due expediency.

But the government did not respond. So, apart from raising the demand to waive off all kinds of fees, refund of fees already paid and asking the government to bear the financial responsibility of the institutions, AIDSO also pressed for opening of the educational institutions. In different districts AIDSO organized gherao, demonstration, deputation and other forms of militant movements to

realize the just demands. AIDSO state leadership called a statewide symbolic road block programme on 26 July 2021. In this peaceful and symbolic road block programme, the police of the TMC- led state government launched brutal assault on the agitating students including girl students in Kolkata, Bankura, Contai (East Medinipur) and other places, and arrested more than hundred students including girl students and examinees. Police filed non-bailable cases against 11 AIDSO activists including Bankura district president and secretary. Four of the arrested were denied medicine and clothes in the jail



AIDSO activists being taken to Bankura Jail

custody. This inhuman behaviour of the police vehemently condemned by one to all. The students of the entire state under the leadership of AIDSO came on the streets, organised massive campaigns and demonstrations on 30 and 31 July. Again on 31 July, the police ruthlessly lathi-charged on the peaceful demonstrative programme near Calcutta university and 38 activists of AIDSO including state president Comrade Samsul Alam were arrested. Finally, under pressure of growing people's opinion against such brutality, and the staunch pleading by a large number of advocates of the Bankura district court, the state administration was compelled to accept granting of bail of the 11 AIDSO activists.

Forced by the movement, the state government issued circulars to all district administrations to issue circular asking the schools not to charge any excess fees and refund such fees already received. This has been a significant victory of the students' movement spearheaded by the AIDSO and proved once again that a united legitimate movement for a just cause and under a correct revolutionary organization makes even the unwilling bourgeois government to bend.

Movement planned in Kerala against proposed Silverline K-Rail project

In Kerala, a state-level people's resistance movement is in the offing aimed to resist the proposed Silverline K-Rail project - a joint venture of Central Government and State Government, that is perceived to be disastrous from social, economic and environmental standpoints.

The Silverline project seeks to construct a high-speed train running between Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram at an average speed of 136 km per hour and a maximum of 200 km per hour. One way fare would be Rs. 1457 with a 7.5% charge hike per year to follow. While the K- Rail estimates the cost of Silverline to be Rs.6394 crores, the Niti Ayog estimate is RS.1,26000 which would raise the fare still higher.

The Standard Gauge railway track with stations and other infrastructure constructed with technology, loan and other requisites from Japan would need 5000 acres of land. within which would be 132km. of paddy fields. Around 20,000 civil construction sites, including houses, schools, places of worship, and public utilities would have to be demolished. The natural course of several rivers and canals would be obstructed. Thousands of trees, hills of the Western Ghats would be destroyed.

With closure of existing roads in towns and villages- commuting would be difficult. All this would seriously directly affect lives and livelihood of not less than a lakh of people indirectly, the entire state. There are trains already running at a speed of 160km per hour in some parts of the country; they are to run in Kerala too by 2025. Would not the 'high speed' Silverline project taking 15 years to complete, become obsolete then?

The claim that 70,000 commuters would travel on

Silverline seems a bit too tall as the experience of the Kochi Metro incurring loss is for all to see. Thousands of people were vacated from their abodes for the construction of the National Highway, yet the work remains pending even at a lapse of forty years.

Experts on Railways etc. call the proposed project disastrous for Kerala. Discussions have not been held in the assembly, or with people's representatives. It was only under public pressure and court directives that the Kerala Government is attempting to go for environment impact assessment. The Kerala Government has shown precedence of an approach that can only be called callous and criminal for having undertaken projects like Vizhinjam port construction and some others that were in utter disregard to the climate, environment and topology of the state.

Similarly dismal is the picture of rehabilitation- nothing short of a grave social problem. In 12 years, rehabilitation of 316 families dislocated from Moolampally due to construction of container terminal, has not been completed. People displaced due to sea-surge in 2017, are still dumped down at FCI godown!

All such observations have led people living in areas through which the proposed line would pass, to get united, irrespective of party allegiance, or political or religious affiliation under the banner of a State - level People's Committee and form people's resistance committees. Leftist organisations are coming up in open protest too.

The Government has either to escape public wrath by withdrawing this disastrous project or face defeat in the face of massive protest in the days to come.

AIUTUC wholeheartedly supported the power-men's strike

The All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC) in a statement issued on 10 August 2021 extended whole hearted support to the nationwide strike of the Electricity Workers on the same day at the call of National Co-ordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers against anti-people, anti-farmer and anti-worker Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

AIUTUC strongly demanded that the BJP-led Central Government should refrain from enacting the Black Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and also urged upon all section of the working people and common consumers across the country to support the strike in order to save this core sector from the aggression of the Corporate.

Victory of heroic movement led by 'Nurses' Unity' in West Bengal

Since independence nursing employees of all levels at government hospitals are being deprived of just salary structure. The situation in West Bengal is precarious. Neither the salary commission nor the state government has ascertained a logical and legitimate salary structure bringing an end to the extreme salary deprivation. As for example till now the GNM diploma holder nursing employees' salary structure as per diploma has not yet been determined at par with the state government employees in the same grade their level.

The elected state governments, one after another, did not recognize the nurses as diploma holders. Starting from those in community health service to the other nursing school authority and its teachers, clinical instructors, lecturers, professors, ward sisters, deputy nursing superintendents, and even nursing superintendents— all are victims of deprivation. The policy of



Gathering of agitating nurses at SSKM hospital in Kolkata

ascertaining salary structure on the basis of education qualification, training period, experience, responsibility of work has not been executed in case of nursing employees. Against this degrading and humiliating outlook concerning nursing employees, the 'Nurses' Unity' has led demand deputations one after another not only to the former CPI (M) government, but also to the present TMC government. Despite recognizing the genuineness of the demands, these have not been implemented till now.

Besides submitting memoranda to every salary commission we upheld the logic of our demand to get approval of participation in the hearing of the salary commission. Perhaps because women workers form the majority in nursing profession, it has been taken for granted that such humiliating, dishonourable and inhuman conduct may be meted out to them.

Last 9 December 2016 keeping patient service unbroken the nursing workers held a sit-in-demonstration at

SSKM hospital in Kolkata. The demonstration continued for three days. Then a discussion was held with the state health minister in the presence of the Directorate of Health Services and the then Principal Secretary of the Department of Health and it was promised to consider the demands favourably. But nothing positive emanated though many days rolled by. When the authorities were contacted, it was stated that the file was untraceable. Finally, under pressure, the file no OGA (ng)/IN03/2020) was retrieved. But because of covid pandemic, the nurses had to wait till the situation improved.

On 7 July, 2021 the 'Nurses' Unity' submitted a memorandum to the chief minister demanding an end to salary deprivation, permanent government job for all trained nurses, and termination of administrative torture. It was also conveyed that if measures were not taken within seven days nursing employees would be compelled to take resort to greater movement.

Further on 14 July last, through a press conference the 'Nurses' Unity' once again informed the respected Chief Minister, Health Minister and other

officers and also the people at large of renewal of the movement. Not getting any response from the Chief Minister, the nursing employees were compelled to hold sit-in-demonstration at SSKM hospital on 26 July last.

Without neglecting service to the patients, thousands of nursing employees from different districts participated in the sit-in-demonstration which continued for seven days. Then a rally of over 10,000 nurses was organized. Feeling the pulse of the movement and unable to deny its legitimacy, a discussion was organized. But nothing had happened. On 6 August, another huge procession was organized. Finding the nurses unbending, the health minister met the movement leaders and said that the file was sent to the Pay Commission on 31 March, 2021 and results would come within 3 to 4 months.

In view of this definite assurance, the movement was withdrawn. But it has created an indelible mark in the history of nurses' movement and strengthened their unity and resolve.



◀ Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C) offering revolutionary tribute to great Frederick Engels on his 126th death anniversary which was on 5th August.

45th Memorial Day of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat was observed on 5th August 2021



Comrade Saumen Basu, Polit Bureau member offering red salute alongwith Comrades Amitava Chatterjee and Chandidas Bhattacharjee, both Polit Bureau members and Comrade Manab Bera, Central Committee member (2nd, 3rd and 4th from his left) at central office Kolkata



Comrade Satyawan, Polit Bureau member



Study Centre of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought, Ghatsila

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