

The World Of Students

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THE 16th convention of the Bihar State Students Federation has made it clear that nothing is free from politics. The convention passed a number of resolutions on national and international, economic and political issues. Among the demands made were equality in education, representation of students on academic bodies, unemployment allowance, free education till matriculation and assurance against automation. The Sankaracharya of Puri was condemned for his views on untouchability, it was urged that Urdu should be given the status of the second State language of Bihar, checks on communalism were demanded and support given to the recent teachers and non-teaching staff's strike in universities. The old slogan of left students was voiced again against American influence in the universities.

But the students were not united on their stand on international events. Whereas Vietnam and Pakistan came in bold headlines, Czechoslovakia and the Sino-Soviet border dispute were ignored. The convention demanded that Lenin's *State and Revolution* and Mao's *On Contradiction* be included in the course. The plea was that

knowledge would remain incomplete without studying these books and that Calcutta University has prescribed them.

As students read and pass out, the queue of jobseekers becomes longer. There is no end to frustration and many unions are mushrooming now-a-days, directly or indirectly under the influence of some party or other. In fact, the Congress is the only party without much hold on the students, though wherever it is not in power, it is organizing student unions. For instance, Chhatra Parishad in West Bengal. The Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the Jana Sangh, is busy preparing workers for the party in schools and colleges. Its influence is growing and it is trying to show that it is not involved in politics. The SSP's Samajbadi Yuvjan Sabha has achieved a name in a short time but it is inclined towards cheap popularity like the SSP. Despite its wide membership, the SYS has done nothing creative. The PSP's Samajbadi Yuvak Sabha has got a signboard bigger than its strength deserves, at least in Bihar.

Communists

Communist students are divided. The oldest and stronger section is the All India Students Federation. It was founded in 1936 and till 1962 it was the common platform for all the left students. But thanks to weak and

opportunist leadership—and in Bihar, to casteism—it is falling. Just after the separation of the Marxist Communists from the CPI, the Students Federation of India was founded. But it has not come up as an all-India organisation.

Just after its foundation, the Bihar State Students Federation (Marxist) got a big shock when Mr T. C. Josh joined the Naxalites. Not only he, with him all the leaders and militant workers walked out. After that the Federation was broken for two years. This month it has tried to re-establish itself. To give it a new life came Mr Satyapriya Roy, the Education Minister of West Bengal.

But when the present leadership tried to blame Mr Josh for everything, and to claim that the leaders themselves were without any fault, the convention split into two parts openly. This shows the influence of Josh even when he is not present.

On various issues, specially Russia, one-third of the representatives under the leadership of Chandra Sekhar Chaturvedi of Ranchi were called extremists by the rest who were Marxists. 'Revisionists' and Naxalite members were heard. There were allegations and counter-allegations. Actually the position of the Marxists is very critical at the moment. They do not want to criticise either Russia or China. During the convention the chairman once said that it was a students' organisation and that "we are not the wing of any party." (Arrangements for meals were made in the office of the Communist Party). But the 'extremist' section was not silent and said that only those were going to the executive who either flatter the Communist Party or are kith and kin of party members.

So far as Naxalite students in Bihar are concerned, three or four organisations are active. It is said that their work is confined to postering in the last hour of the night and to writing extremist slogans on walls. They have even left behind the Chinese Red Guards in this matter and are always looking for walls whitewashed recently.

But even if the allegation by Marxists that Naxalite students only do

postering is true, that seems to be a reaction to their doing nothing. The position and programme of Naxalite students were outlined at their Bengal convention. They have declared that if any student wants to work in villages, he can go, but if they want to stay in schools and colleges, they can stay. These boys have to organise the general student mass on different economic and political issues and then they can pick up militant students during future struggles. Whether Marxist students are patriots or not is difficult to say, but they have one thing which no other student union has—militant and good workers.

When this journalist went to hostels in Patna he found photos of either Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Atal B. Vajpayee or Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Amongst political magazines, either *Organiser* or *People's Democracy* and *Liberation* were available.