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Tahrir Square, Egypt on 11 February, 2011: The Mass Uprising



# Are Maoists Serving People's Interest?

**T**HE abduction of a district collector and a junior engineer by the Maoists in Orissa has become a major news now. The discussion by the mediators and the details of those going to be swapped for the release of the two etc are filling the pages of the newspapers and taking hours in the TV channels. Like some earlier similar episodes in AP and West Bengal, this episode will be over with the release of the two, of course with the government accepting some demands. Then what? Neither the CPI (Maoist) leadership nor those who are celebrating the episode are asking this question. If this is the way to achieve people's demands, why can't they kidnap a bigger fish and demand the New Democratic Revolution in return for the release? It will do a lot of good to the CPI(Maoist) if their leaders try to read what Mao told the rebel army officers of Chiang Kaishak who had taken him as a hostage.

What happened after the Maoist delegation led by a top leader of the PWG went to Hyderabad for talks with the then chief minister of AP facilitated by Varavara Rao and Kalyan Rao is well known. Utilising all the clues obtained while the Maoists came out and returned, the CPI(ML) People's War was almost wiped out from the state. In Orissa, once the episode is over the autocratic Navin Patnaik government is going to utilise it not only to intensify the extermination campaign against the Maoists and the adivasis in the name of helping the *annas*, but also to intensify the campaign to suppress the mass movements going on in the state like the POSCO, Kalinganagar, Bhubaneswar Basti Suraksha movement etc. in the name of suppressing Maoists.

What is done in Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, and in the few pockets in West Bengal, where the Maoist squads exist, by the state governments to suppress the people's movements in the name of their squad actions or the cancellation of the train running between Kharagpur and Tatanagar still during night time in the name of the derailing of the Gnanaswari express by them are well known. The anarchists run away after an 'action', but it is the people and their movements which suffer because of them. Their actions are not helping the people's movements in any manner. Their blasting of trains and abductions show that bereft of revolutionary ideas, without any concept about the need to develop the understanding about Marxist-Leninist theory and about revolutionary mass line and about proletarian democracy and development perspectives to overcome the mistakes happened in the 'socialism that was in actual practice', without efforts to mobilise the people who are disenchanted with the reversals in Soviet Union and China, without any effort to learn from past mistakes, in the name of sensational acts which provide media attention the Maoists have deviated to the line of LTTE, ULFA like outfits in practice.

The latest developments in Tunisia and Egypt followed by the uprisings in a number of countries in Maghreb and West Asia show that the people have once again started coming out on the streets and playing their role in creating history. The Maoists do not understand that the Communists are not contractors of revolution, but the vanguard forces who prepare the people for making revolution. Theirs are anarchist actions which are rejected by history and which negate the role of people in making history.

The role played by the Maoists in W.Bengal where they support Mamta Banerjee's Trinamul Congress and in Jharkhand where they support Shibu Soren's JMM which is in alliance with BJP are not serving revolution, but counter revolution.

The CPI (ML) severely condemns such anarchist actions by the CPI (Maoist) and appeals to the people to rally for advancing the mass movements and in support of people's uprisings taking place in the country and around the world. It warns the state government that if in the name of retaliation it tries to suppress the ongoing mass movements in the state the Party will retaliate uniting with all revolutionary left and democratic forces. ●

22 February, 2011

CC, CPI(ML)

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## Letter to Editor

**W**HILE the demand for unconditional release of government officers is well taken, it is questionable if the issue is linked to drawing attention to the plight of the adivasis. These kidnappings are clearly designed (i) to draw attention to the might of the 'Maoists', especially for the population held captive under their guns, and (ii) to secure breathing spaces and times for regrouping of maoist forces. These are common tactics of war; they have nothing to do with 'lives and livelihood of the people and the state's stubborn effort to push the interests of the corporate sector, riding roughshod over people's opposition', etc. There is no record of the Maoists ever engaging in such forms of resistance, quite the opposite in fact. All the wonderful resistance, including in Chhatisgarh, always takes place outside Maoist strongholds either by spontaneous outburst of people or organised by other radical groups.

These distinctions are important to keep in mind if PUDR is to maintain its credibility and not fall prey to maoist propaganda. These routine appeals for release of hostages, condemning selective killings etc., while basically endorsing the militarist path of the Maoists, are beginning to sound meaningless. ●

*Prof. Nirmalangshu Mukherji, Delhi University*

# Tunisia, Egypt And The Rebellion Spreads

**A****FTER** the mass uprisings uprooted the dictatorial regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, the popular revolts have spread across the Magreb and West Asian countries including Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Iran and other countries. These revolts have challenged all the reactionary regimes in the oil rich region propped up or supported by the imperialists, especially US imperialists. On 18th February once again the Egyptian masses demonstrated in Tahrir square rejoicing at the overthrow of the fascist regime of Mubarak, at the same time demanding that the army speed up the reform measures. The workers and even the police ranks launched agitations demanding restoration of their union rights and economic demands.

All these developments reveal the extent of people's hatred against these tyrannical regimes in the region and against the US imperialists who work hard through all heinous ways to keep them in power. The way Obama administration tried various tricks to save Mubarak till the last minute has increased people's anger further against the imperialist barbarity, especially against the US imperialists.

After Egypt and Tunisia, the response of the imperialist compradors and lackeys in power in the region to the people's uprisings have undergone a change, with the connivance of their masters. If they were caught unawares in Tunisia and Egypt, now being forewarned they have launched brutal suppressive measures from the very beginning, showing that they are ready to go to any extent to suppress the popular struggles. As a result by 19th February more than hundred people are killed in the army attacks against peaceful protesters. Hundreds are severely injured and black laws and prohibitory orders are imposed in all these countries. Similarly, as in Bahrain, the Sunni- Shia difference are utilised to divide the people. US imperialists and their lackeys are spreading numerous canards to divide the people who are revolting against the tyrannical regimes which have created sky-high price rise, corruption, unemployment and fascist tyranny. They propagate that it is the *Mullahs* who are going to be benefitted from these revolts, when even in Egypt where the *Muslim Brotherhood* has good influence, it could not play any major role in the uprising. Even an over view of the developments so far shows that it is not the *Islamists*, but the youth and middle classes uniting with the toiling masses are in the forefront of the movement.

A positive factor is that in the absence of any organised secular, democratic and left force to lead the movement, as in the past uprisings of the people, the agitating classes and sections are evolving their own people's committees at various levels to take over the political power. This initiative is creating conditions for all progressive, anti-imperialist forces to unite, creating possibilities for a progressive coalition of the fighting people to emerge. Knowing this very well the army headquarters are trying hard to weaken the movement, by calling for restoring the status quo minus Mubarak or Ben Ali. The game plan of the dictatorships and their imperialist advisers is clear: somehow or other establish status quo or 'order' so that they can manipulate using various comprador sections and lackeys to re-establish their control.

It is very clear that Washington and other imperialist capitals very much disturbed by these developments. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and setbacks to the international communist movement at global level,

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the US- led imperialists and their lackeys were shouting about 'end of history', 'socialism has become obsolete' etc and celebrating their final victory! But in the beginning of the 21st century, the people's offensive in the Latin American countries under the leadership of anti-imperialist, or more clearly, anti-US, popular forces leading to progressive governments coming to power in a number of countries including Venezuela, Bolivia etc had disturbed their world hegemony considerably. Now the ongoing uprisings in the North African and West Asian countries where US has its Naval and military bases as in Bahrain and Djibuti, have unnerved them immensely. So together with their compradors the US and other imperialist powers are plotting to undermine and suppress the uprisings. As history teaches they will go to any extent to maintain and strengthen their hegemony and plunder.

In this situation it is the task of the popular forces leading the uprisings in all these countries to get

prepared for barbarous onslaughts by the tyrannical regimes in the region backed by the imperialists and the Zionist Israel. They should mobilise more and more sections of the people and should be vigilant against all conspiracies of the enemy to divide their ranks using all heinous methods. We are preparing this note (20th Feb) when more and more reports are coming about the brutal suppression of the agitating people by the tyrannical regimes and when reports of manipulations by the reactionary forces to subvert the gains in Tunisia and Egypt. But we are sure that the large scale massacres of the revolting people and all forms of heinous methods employed to put down the uprisings are not going to destroy the spirit of anti-imperialist, anti – state rebellion spreading in the region. But in the present objective situation of intensifying crisis faced by the imperialist system which is shifted to the shoulder of world people, and ever intensifying contradiction between the US led imperialist forces and their compradors and lackeys with their neo liberal policies and fascist tyranny on the one hand and the working class and oppressed peoples on the other hand however hard the enemies try employing all inhuman methods they are not going to suppress these revolts which are spreading to more countries.

The revolutionary left and democratic forces in India salute the masses of people in the North African and West Asian countries in revolt against the tyrannical regimes in their countries. We extend revolutionary greetings and revolutionary fraternal support your struggles, which in all sense is the struggle of the people of the whole world to overthrow imperialism and its compradors and lackeys for ever, the struggle for democracy and socialism. These struggles of yours are giving immense enthusiasm to the struggles in our country against the ruling system. Let us close our ranks more firmly than ever with the spirit of internationalism. Advance your militant uprisings braving all tyrannical suppressive measures. The toiling masses, the oppressed masses of the whole world are with you. ●

## Intensify Struggle Against The Anti People Autocratic Ruling System

**IT WAS** a total wash out of the winter session of the parliament on the question of whether a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) should go in to the mega scams rocking the country or not. Proving that even without the parliament, which is reduced to nothing more than a 'talking shop' under the present bourgeois parliamentary system, the ruling system went on with its business imposing more and more anti people actions. Now after arriving at agreements to maintain the ruling system without any damage to it, the parliament is back in business to give formal approval for a large number of measures including the budgets.

It is already clear from the

statement of the prime minister and president's speech to the parliament that the coming budget is going to further speed up the neo liberal policies. In more areas the corporate houses and MNCs are going to enter in bigger scale. At the same time as these policies intensify, more people are going to be displaced from their habitats and the state terror is going to be intensified to put down all resistance to the ruling system. As all the major players among the parliamentary parties are united basically in imposing the neo liberal policies and are sharing power at centre or in the states, in spite of the uprisings in a large number of the countries around the world against price rise, unemployment and corruption eating in to the vitals of their lives, the ruling parties are arrogantly moving ahead with their anti-people policies.

In this situation the people are coming under the continuing onslaughts of sky high prices of all essential commodities, increasing under employment and unemployment and due to the cascading effects of the mega scams. The government has expressed its arrogant position repeatedly that it is not going to do anything to change the liberalization policies which have hiked the prices or to punish those who have stashed away trillions of Rupees in foreign banks or to take any action to confiscate it. Similarly it is not going to stop the aggressive entry of the corporate and MNCs to agriculture, retail trade, real estate or such

other fields making the people increasingly pauperized in all forms as the various studies given in this and earlier issues of our organ clearly expose.

So, the people have only limited options before them. Get organized and prepare to launch mass movements to compel the central and state governments to change their policies, or as they are not ready for it to overthrow the very ruling system itself. The coming together of revolutionary left and democratic forces at the initiative of CPI (ML) under the banner of the Democratic People's Front (DPF) and the All India Convention they are organizing to declare their resolve and the Parliament March on 28<sup>th</sup> February, when the budget is going to

be presented, to raise the banner of protest with the declaration that the mass struggles taking place around the country will be intensified in coming days are steps in this direction.

We appeal to all popular forces to rally with the DPF and carry on the mass movements against the neo liberal policies with more intensity. ●

## Beware Of The Politics of Cricket

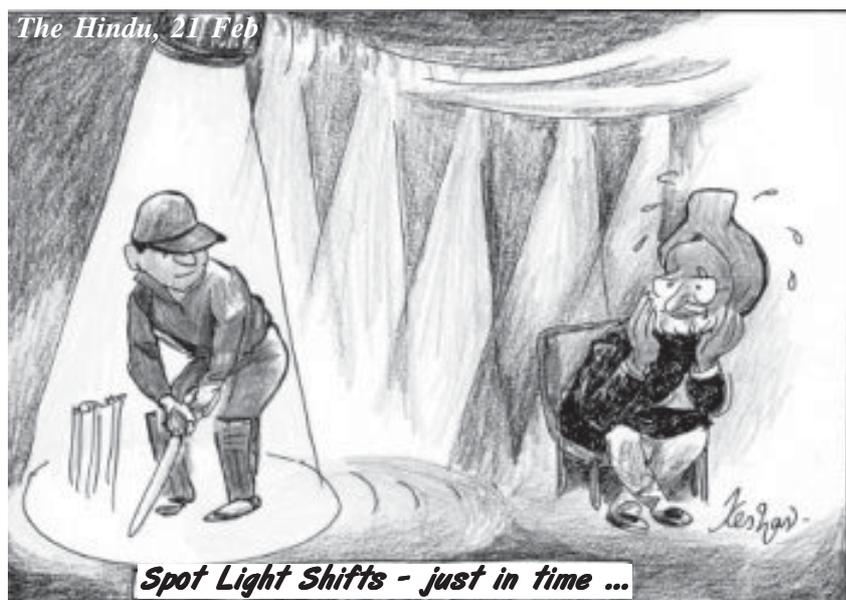
**C**RICKET is a game played mostly in Britain and in its former colonies. Considering its market value as many more millions have become its viewers, it is now played in various forms like the original five day matches, on day matches and now 20 over matches. Along with the increase in its popularity and the fabulous amounts collected by the governing bodies in different countries through advertisements, gate collections and other sources related to it, the neo colonial governments in the former British colonies as well as in Britain, Australia like countries, mostly in the former ones, more than a game it has become a tool to spread 'cricket chauvinism' as we are seeing now in connection with the *one day world cup* being played in the South Asia countries. As in every other field, as the amount involved in the games has increased manifold, games fixing and other corrupt practices also have increased leading to disciplinary actions against many players.

What has happened to cricket is the very same problems with all other items of sports and games. From the old days, like the period when the Olympics was started, the sports and games were intended to spread fraternal relations among the countries and in general to create 'sportspeople's spirit' of brotherhood and sisterhood among the participants and viewers. But now even Olympics have become a multi-billion business. Same is the fate of all the games and sports items.

What is happening now in the country in the name of the *one day world cup* shows how it is reduced to a mega event for earning fabulous amounts by all connected with it. Utilising the captains' statements and so called expert comments of a plethora of game masters more than fraternal spirit, chauvinist feelings are whipped up. Betting is promoted in all possible ways. A large business lobby and the media, especially the TV channels are utilizing the opportunity to amass huge profits.

As the greed of the Cricket Boards in different countries is increasing all dirty methods are utilized to attract more and more people to become participants by viewing and betting. This is more directed towards the middle class who are now becoming the chief catalyst forces in the people's uprisings throughout the Maghreb and West Asian countries. The intentions of the ruling system throughout the world are clear, It wants to make the sports and games also tools of their neo colonization process like culture, religion, Caste system and all other divisive and parochial elements.

Cricket as a game can be played and enjoyed by all those who like it. But what is being done in the name of cricket is an entirely different thing with definite reactionary intentions. So the cricket mania being created should be exposed and opposed by all progressive forces. ●



# People's Uprising Create History In Maghreb And West Asia

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KN Ramachandran

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**T**HE people's uprising started in Tunisia, the old French colony of North Africa, which was under the autocratic rule of Ben Ali for 23 years in January has succeeded not only throw out this hated regime but also have become a mighty spark which has inspired the people of the whole region extending from the Atlantic coast to Indian ocean.

Following a great uprising which continued for 18 days when millions of people got mobilized in Tahrir Square and other city centres across Egypt, the fascist dictator, Hosni Mubarak, the darling of US imperialists and Zionist Israel, who had ruled rough shod for three decades was overthrown. Now the revolts are spreading to the whole region.

The more than four decades long autocracy of Gaddafi in Libya had declared that it will not allow 'disorder' in the streets, that is, it was going to put down the uprising which got a terrific start in Benghazi, the second biggest city. It ordered a massacre of the tens of thousands who got mobilized in the streets of the city and was trying to make the city centre another *Tahrir Square*.

More than three hundred people were dead in the army assault in a week, but the people did not retreat. They dug in, with revolutionary determination. The rebellion spread to Tripoli, the capital and to other areas. The army assault continued. More people died and injured. But the uprising continued and when this note is being prepared the latest news heard is that either the dictator and his family have fled or are in hiding, prepared to

flee at any moment. The situation is serious in Algeria, Morocco and other Maghreb countries also.

In West Asia, in Bahrain where the US has its biggest military base of the region, the uprising is still continuing in spite of brutal attack by the military and the efforts of the ruling oligarchy and its US masters to resort to divide the sunnis, the minority section to which the ruling family belongs and the shias, who constitute the majority. In Yemen also, braving the suppression in which scores of people have already died and hundreds injured the rebellion is spreading to more areas. In Jordan and other West Asian countries also there are reports of the beginning of revolts or of people preparing for it. Within weeks the people's uprisings in such a large number of the countries have become so powerful that all the oligarchies are trembling and people are on the march to create history. The US imperialists and other imperialist powers and Israel are terrified by the mighty wave of people's upsurges.

## SIX DECADES OF NEO-COLONIAL HEGEMONY

It is quite natural that the imperialists are terrified. Because this region of Maghreb and West Asia was their strongest base from the post-Second World War (SWW) years and the area from where they had their maximum loot. This petroleum rich area was kept under firm control by them through the oligarchies and dictators who were propped up all these years against the people's will. After the SWW the whole region had witnessed mass upsurges and many progressive regimes had come to power like Mossadig of Iran. A wave of anti-imperialist struggles was spreading. Pan Arabic unity was influencing the region as a part of the intensification of the national liberation movements.

It was at that time the imperialists conspired to impose Zionist Israel over Palestine land as the advanced their outpost. Their main idea was to block the spread of national liberation movements and communist influence in the region by promoting parochialism and Islamic fundamentalist forces in the name of resisting the Zionists. Along with that internal feuds in the region were promoted so that the imperialists could amass fortunes by indulging in arms trade at ever increasing scale. It has reached such levels presently that the Saudi Arabian regime purchased \$ 60 billion worth arms from the US alone last year. In this way the hegemony of the MNCs controlled by the imperialists was imposed over the very rich oil reserves in the region.

When the Shah of Iran, the Mubarak of those days was ousted in a people's upsurge in 1979 and the clergy with anti-US positions took over, Washington manipulated and created a war between Iraq, ruled by Saddam Hussain, who was very much pro-US at that time, and Iran, leading to huge losses to both sides. When Saddam protested against the US petroleum MNCs working in Kuwait looting Iraqi oil by digging wells close to its borders and annexed Kuwait, it was utilized as an opportunity by US to launch a brutal aggression and finally annex it after exterminating millions and devastating the ancient country. During

the last six decades the US led imperialists have indulged in all forms of heinous, pernicious and sinister methods in the region to snub out all progressive forces and values, to perpetuate the rule of their agents and lackeys and to impose their hegemony in whichever way possible.

The wave of uprisings is sweeping across the whole region in such a situation when the hegemony of US imperialists and the autocratic, oligarchic rule of the imperialist agents and lackeys had become intolerable for the masses of people. But the imperialists are trying to conceal all these facts. When their trusted agent was ousted in Tunisia they were taken by surprise. Again, when the roar of the millions became louder than ever in Tahrir Square, they tried to mediate so that their lackey could continue till another suitable lackey was found. They were behind the plan to use a few thousands of Mubarak loyalists to create disturbance in the Square. When all their pernicious moves failed they had to witness the Mubarak regime going down. Now when Gaddafi is also on the verge of ouster, Bahrain, where their biggest military base in the region exists, is facing rebellion and Djibouti, where their naval fleet has base is also witnessing pro-democracy marchers, the situation is becoming really difficult for the Yankees and their allies and lackeys.

They are really worried what will happen to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries where they have a lot more interests as reports are pouring in about the resentment among people of all other countries in the region are also reaching breaking points. The people in the region are creating history after decades of sufferings and oppression. Afraid of the consequences of such a sweeping anti-imperialist, anti-autocracy movement, a movement against sky high price rise, against unemployment and unprecedented corruption, the US imperialists and their lackeys are trying to minimize the importance of the movement by propagating that the Islamist mullahs in Iran are behind these revolts or that these movements will ultimately lead to what happened in Iran in 1979. Along with this they are trying to check further spread of it by unleashing brutal suppression. Or they are planning to install their new lackeys in the place of overthrown lackeys. It is going to be a very critical moment for the revolutionary forces.

## **ROLE OF THE LEFT FORCES**

As far as the left forces are concerned, the people's upsurges sweeping across this strategically important region are very positive developments. As such they should whole heartedly welcome them and congratulate the people who are making them happen. The left forces should declare solidarity with these uprisings and do everything possible so that these valiant people succeed in proceeding towards their goal. At the same time they should view them in the context of the concrete situation when the international communist movement has suffered a severe setback, when there are no significant revolutionary organizations in these countries.

As already mentioned during the post-SWW years in this region the national liberation movements were advancing powerfully and the Communist Parties had significant presence. The ideals of people's democracy and socialism had good influence also. But the dissolution of the Communist International, the spirit of proletarian internationalism becoming weaker, the recognition of Israel by Soviet Union and the absence of any significant effort from the side of the then powerful socialist camp to challenge the post-SWW period policies of the US led imperialist camp including its neo colonial policies led to the growth of alien trends among the old and new Communist forces in the region as it happened elsewhere.

With the degeneration of Soviet Union to revisionist positions and its upholding of the policies of peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition with the imperialist camp and its advocacy of peaceful transition to socialism destroyed the ideological and political sharpness of the national liberation movements led by the Communist forces. They started degenerating to pacifist positions or pursued class collaborationist lines. In this situation either they were assimilated to the ruling system or brutally suppressed as in Egypt with the silent approval of the Soviet revisionists. The splintered sections of these revisionist parties existing in some of the countries in the region have no revolutionary vision. As a result they are incapable of playing any significant role in the uprisings taking place.

On the other hand, following the *Great Debate*, Marxist-Leninist groups had emerged in a number of countries in the region. But under the influence of left adventurist line, they soon suffered setbacks and were splintered. Though some of these groups are existing still, they have neither the vision nor the ability to play any role in these mighty upsurges.

But apart from these, there are Communist groups existing in the region who are playing whatever possible role in them. They are the positive sections who can play a role to unite all anti-imperialist and anti-autocratic democratic forces to replace the tyrannical regimes in the region.

A positive aspect of the movement is that contrary to the propaganda of the imperialists and their lackeys, so far the influence of the Islamist forces is not a determining factor so far. There are possibilities for the emergence of a Latin American like situation in some of these countries with anti-US, democratic forces coming to power.

Though it is not possible to predict the exact nature of the

governments going to take over in the countries where the tyrants are thrown out so far, what is happening in the region is going to exert a positive influence at international level.

After the disintegration of Soviet Union and the degeneration of China and other socialist countries the imperialists had shouted about “the end of history”, “socialism becoming obsolete” etc. But with the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the popular forces in the Latin American countries started giving a rebuff to these imperialist canards. Now, in the second decade of this century the series of uprisings in the Maghreb and West Asian countries have once again challenged the US led imperialist powers and the compradors and lackeys they have installed in power. These developments are creating positive conditions for the next wave of proletarian revolutions if the Marxist-Leninists take up this challenge seriously and move forward.

It is in this context of the importance of the formation of the *International Coordination of the Revolutionary Parties and Organisations* (ICOR) should be seen. The unfolding revolutionary objective condition has led to the founding of the ICOR and it shall definitely get strengthened in the context of the great uprisings of the people happening in Maghreb and West Asian countries.

The revolutionary task before the Marxist-Leninists is to work hard to assist in all possible ways the unfolding people’s struggles in these countries. To emphasise this point let us quote the following sentences from the **Founding Resolution of the ICOR**: “The Founding of the ICOR follows from the understanding: The time is ripe to counter highly organized, globally linked international finance capital and its imperialist world system with something new - the organized power of the international revolutionary and working-class

movement and of the broad masses in a new stage of the cross-border cooperation and coordination of the practical activity.

“Imperialism with its system of neo-colonialism can further exist only in a developing proneness to crisis which dramatically calls into question the existence of humankind. It is expressed in the world economic and financial crisis 2008, the structural crises of the capitalist system of production and reproduction, the debt crises, the global environmental crisis, the growing absence of family of the proletariat and the broad masses, the political crises, but also in the growing international threat of war, the increasing imperialist aggressions, and in the general tendency of imperialism to reaction and fascism.

“Capitalism has no future to offer to the working class and the broad masses of people in the world. Therefore, the ICOR calls upon all revolutionaries of the world to join together in the spirit of Lenin: “*Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything.*” (Lenin, *Working-Class Unity*)” ●

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## EGYPT: A Great Victory

**A**T LAST after 18 days of relentless protests and people’s uprising in the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and all over Egypt, the dictator who oppressed and plundered the people and the country for more than thirty years, Mubarak, the agent of US imperialists and their Zionist ally, the hated Israel was forced to resign. It is a great news. We salute the heroic people of Egypt in this hour of their great victory. It is always the people who create history. Once again in the streets of Cairo and other cities of Egypt it is being proved .

We congratulate the heroic youth who came out in the streets and compelled the dictator to resign and get lost. We congratulate all revolutionary classes and sections who joined hands to get this happen

The people of the whole world join hands with the Egyptian people in celebrating this great victory. At the same time we hope the revolutionary people shall carry forward the great struggle so that the military which has taken over will not be allowed to snatch this great victory from their hands.

CPI(ML) extends revolutionary greetings to the people of Egypt and assures them that we shall be with you in the great struggle for a people’s Egypt. ●

**KN Ramachandran**  
General Secretary, CPI(ML)

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# Mubarak At An End: Egypt's Masses Make Decision For The Democratic Revolution

**O**N FRIDAY Mubarak stepped down. Indescribable rejoicing of the masses of people in Egypt. They succeeded with their persistence. On the day before they had felt everything between excitement, joyful anticipation -and then bitter disappointment, anger and hate. Military speakers had indicated that Mubarak was about to step down. Hundreds of thousands of people poured onto „their” Tahrir Square. But once again, the detested head of state only declared himself to be the leading figure of the transition to „democratic relations”. He appointed his vice-president and former head of secret service, the high military official Suleiman to be his right hand. Promptly the anger of the masses rose to a boiling point. With thumbs turned down or shoes lifted up in their hands (the sign of utmost disdain) the masses made quite clear what they thought about his speech. On Friday afternoon, February 11th all squares and large streets in all cities are overflowing. Now millions are on the move. Mubarak and his clique have left Cairo and are on the way to Scharm ElSheik. The people do not want to be prevented from chasing out Mubarak “*in disgrace*”, as an Egyptian told a reporter. Cosmetics for the reactionary system or democratic revolution? Up to now the masses have rejected every proposed variety of bourgeois opposition. The mood of awakening represents democratic revolution. **The working class takes up the initiative:** a new wave of workers’ strikes developed. It spread throughout the country and is concentrating on the industrial zones Port-Said, Alexandria, Suez, etc. Strategically important companies, most of them in transportation, are affected. The food supply of demonstrators in Alexandria is organized by seamen. A week ago the city bus drivers in Cairo had already brought traffic to a stand-still for one day. Buses were allowed to drive only by order of the strike committees to bring the striking workers and employees to the central stadium. There the manifestation of a union independent of the government took place. A far-reaching stand still of the Egyptian economy would have an impact on all of world trade and world politics. The traffic on the Suez canal is not yet affected. It is one of the most important trade routes, where 14 per cent of the world’s goods traffic is passing. And the supply of the navy of most of the world’s great powers to the focal points in the Near and Middle East have to pass through this eye of the needle. Up to now the workers have not yet played the trump card of blocking the Suez Canal.

The Egyptian working class is getting a lot of strength from the cross-border revolutionary ferment : around the Mediterranean the waves of protest are rising high. In Jordan thousands are protesting without respect and self-confidently in front of the king’s palace, who had no other choice than to dismiss his government. The reactionary government in Yemen is teetering. A breakthrough in Saudi-Arabia, which is hostile to women and still dominated by feudal morals, was the public protest of a women’s group yesterday. They demanded the release of political prisoners. More and more women are bringing the increasing militant women’s movement into the revolutionary ferment. For Saturday oppositional groups in Algeria have planned a nationwide “day of anger”. They stick to it despite aggressive threats from government and police. Last but not least, the growing wave of solidarity all over the world is adding strength to the peoples’ upheavals around the Mediterranean. An impressive picture of this is just being given by courageous protesters in front of Egyptian embassies in the USA in the midst of heaviest snow storms and strong frost.

Cosmetic reforms within the reactionary system – or democratic revolution,

these are the two directions the masses in Egypt are facing! Cosmetics within the existing system also has the support of one wing of the ruling powers and of the military – the democratic revolution is a fierce mass struggle which the ruling powers are brutally opposing with their violence. Our unlimited solidarity belongs to the people of Egypt for its courageous revolutionary struggle for democracy and liberation! The dilemma of the ruling powers and the imperialists behind them For the Egyptian bourgeoisie and its allies in the governments in Washington, London, Berlin etc., the calculation is wrong. Their maneuvering space for an „orderly transition” to maintain their influence in Egypt is dwindling more and more. While Obama speaks in public with admiration for a great „historical change”, behind the curtains his administration is making plans to install an open military dictatorship. It is utter hypocrisy when Foreign Minister Westerwelle points out now that „*Germany always took the stand that the observance of human rights is indispensable*”. Why then did the federal government court the Mubarak regime for years? The revolutionary ferment in the Mediterranean is heading towards a new decision. The MLPD supports with much initiative the regional demonstrations taking place tomorrow, on February 12th in Germany. For these demonstrations action coalitions with youth leagues, women’s organizations, migrant organizations, Arabian clubs, union formations have called up, for example in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Munich, Nuremberg, Stuttgart and other cities.

**Long live international solidarity !  
Workers of all countries, unite!  
Workers of all countries and all  
oppressed, unite! ●**

*MLPD, Germany*

# Tunisian Masses Rising Up!

**T**HE former French colony of Tunisia is located on the Mediterranean coast. A just and widespread popular uprising over the last month has engulfed this North African country of 10 million people. Sparking the rebellion was massive unemployment, (deepened by the worldwide economic crisis) particularly among young people, rising food prices and shortages, the banning of all political dissent and extensive government corruption including the self enrichment of the ruling families.

Though brutally and repeatedly attacked by the police, leaving over 100 demonstrators killed, the uprisings continued and were victorious in toppling the tyrannical government of Ben Ali after 23 years of power. He fled, with the people at his heels, into the reactionary arms of the Saudi Arabian government. The hated Ben Ali government was supported by the United States for his maintaining “political stability” and as an “ally and partner” in the fight against “terrorism”. The Obama government’s words of “support” for the “new” Tunisian coalition government are an effort to co-opt and stop the movement in its tracks, limiting it to a change of government faces and players and minor reforms.

However, there are a number of positive developments that give hope that this initial peoples’ rebellion has the potential to lead to deeper and more fundamental changes in Tunisia and beyond:

- The General Union of Tunisian Workers was a key organizer of the anti-regime protests, so the *organized working class* played a leading role in the general peoples’ revolt. The day Ben Ali fled the country; the union had led a successful general strike!

- Yet, even after the leadership of the union (and other opposition parties) supported the “new” interim coalition (which still contained many leaders of Ben Ali’s party, the RCD),

protests continued in the streets demanding a thorough ousting of the RCD government. The people wanted no part of a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

- The union leadership had to reverse its decision and withdraw its support for the “new” coalition government when, at a meeting of union workers, the members voted to overturn their leaders’ political decision! The workers are more politically advanced and determined than their union officers!

- Based on the continued street protests and withdrawal of the Union’s support, the “new” coalition government is virtually in collapse as this statement is being written.

- In response to democratic demands of the popular uprising, outlawed Communist and Islamic parties have been promised legalization and some political prisoners have been released. This opens up political opportunities for genuine proletarian vanguard organization to lead the mass movement from its current stage of just democratic demands to a national democratic revolution and on to the seizure of working class political power and socialism.

- The Tunisian masses have set an example which is already inspiring the oppressed Arab masses of the region to fight back against the U.S. backed reactionary Arab governments of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, etc. These countries have been part of U.S. imperialism’s “two pillar policy” (one pillar being the settler state of Israel, the other the reactionary Arab repressive regimes) to suppress the Palestinian and Arab masses and control the vast natural resources of the Middle East, centered around oil. (For example Egypt is the second highest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, second only to Israeli.)

- Protests have already begun to spread to other Arab countries. According to the French newspaper *Le Monde*, in Egypt (which contains the largest and most developed working class in Arabia) demonstrators chanted, “We are next, we are next. Ben Ali tell Mubarak he is next.” Simultaneous protests in response to soaring food prices and rampant unemployment have been erupting in Algeria while escalating in Tunisia. According to the Associated Press of January 18, 2011, “Thousands have demonstrated in Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Oman, Libya and Yemen recently over the economic situation in their respective countries, some explicitly in solidarity with the Tunisians.” Tunisia may well prove to be the “single spark that starts a prairie fire.” (Mao Tse-Tung).

Tunisia is many miles from the U.S. and has a different history, culture and language. But in the USA, we too face unemployment, soaring food prices, corruption, attacks on civil liberties and deepening impoverishment. U.S. workers and oppressed peoples can gain much inspiration from the courage and determination of the Tunisian masses, especially in the heat of the continuing economic crisis, its “jobless recovery” and government dictated cutbacks and austerity programs. We can “fight City Hall”, we can “fight Wall Street”, we can fight for Power – and with unity and persistence, we can win! ●



***Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA, January 23, 2011***

# Tunisia: National Council To Safeguard The Revolution

[THE people's uprising in Tunisia heralded a new wave of upsurges which is still sweeping through Maghreb and West Asian countries. In Tunisia itself after the overthrow of the 23 year old autocratic regime of Ben Ali the forces who got together and gave leadership to the uprising are grappling with the idea of creating an alternative ruling arrangement which will provide democracy and welfare to the people. As none of these forces have countrywide influence or a program for reconstruction of the country and as they have many differences of opinion it may take some time before they resolve the problem of governance – *Red Star*]

**T**HIS Friday, 11 February 2011, a meeting took place at the office of the National Council of Lawyers at the Bab Bnet Law Courts in Tunis, which gathered the undersigned representatives of councils, parties, associations and organizations.

Those present studied proposals concerning the foundation of the National Council for the Safeguard of the Revolution, by fidelity to the blood of the martyrs, in support of the aspirations of our people, in dedication to the principles of its revolution, in reaction to the dangers of its reversal and its abortion, and to avoid a political vacuum in the country.

The participants agreed, in spite of their divergences of position as for the current government, on the importance of the foundation of this Council to which we gave the name of "the National Council for the Safeguard of the Revolution" in agreement with the following principles:

1. That the council has a decisional capacity and this while taking care of the preparation of legislation relating to the transitional period and their approval (cancellation of the contrary laws to freedoms, etc...)
2. Monitoring of the actions of the provisional government which undertakes the current businesses and the appointment of persons in charge of high positions, with the approval of the council.
3. The revision of the commissions which were formed with regard to their competences and their composition of kind so that they are the result of a consensus and in condition which they subject automatically all the projects that they propose with the approval of the Council.
4. To take initiatives which the transitory situation in all the fields requires, and initially, in Justice and Information.
5. The Council is composed of the representatives of the undersigned political parties, associations, organizations and councils, as of the representatives of all the areas provided that that is done by consensus.
6. The creation of the Council is approved by a decree emitted by the provisional President.

## Signatories

1. National Council of Lawyers

2. Tunisian General Union of Workers (UGTT)
3. Democratic forum for Work and Freedom
4. Workers' Communist Party of Tunisia
5. *Baa'siste* newspaper
6. Renaissance Party
7. The Movement of the People
8. The Movement of the Democratic Patriots
9. The Baa' S Movement
10. International Association for the Support of Political Prisoners
11. Left Labour League
12. The Congress for the Republic
13. The Progressive Unionistic Movement
14. Tunisian Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party
15. Association of Tunisian Magistrates
16. Unemployed Graduates' Union
17. Organization Freedom and Equity
18. Tunisian Green Party
19. Tunisian National Union of Journalists
20. Veterans' National Friendly Association
21. The Reforming Newspaper for Development
22. General Union of Tunisian Students
23. People's Party for Freedom and Progress
24. Independent Left
25. Tunisian Centre for the Independence of the Magistrates and Lawyers
26. Democratic Patriots
27. Free Writers' League
28. The Tunisian Association for Struggle against Torture ●

**From First to Ninth  
Party Congress:  
Nine Decades of the  
Communist  
Movement in India**

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New Delhi-59**

# *Pre-Budget Interactions And Corporate Manipulation of Economic Policy*

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PJ James

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**A**S USUAL, in the run up to the budget, to be presented to the parliament on February 28, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee is in the process of completing his interactions with various organizations representing Indian comprador bourgeoisie. The wishes and aspirations of the vast majority of toiling Indians composed of workers, both organized and unorganized, landless poor peasants, dalits, adivasis and so on are seldom represented in these discussions. From media reports, it has come to know that the reactionary and degenerated corporate big businesses who have no love lost for this country as is evident from the unfolding information on their massive Swiss Bank deposits, and who most shamelessly are indulging in all sorts of anti-national and anti people means and corrupt deals to loot the people and plunder the nation's wealth in the guise of 'development' are again pressuring the Manmohan government for huge tax concessions and subsidies of various hues.

Every budget is an occasion for the big bourgeoisie to increase the share of their appropriation of the country's income and wealth through 'legal' means euphemistically called tax exemptions. A glance at the previous budgets amply proves this contention. For instance, in the 2008-09 budget, such tax exemptions amounted to Rs.4.14 lakh crores while in the 2009-10 budget it rose to Rs. 5.02 lakh crores. A concerted effort is in full swing this time to raise it further

at the expense of more than 83 crores starving Indians whose daily earning is officially estimated at lower than Rs. 20 a day. In India, over the years, the budget is an exercise for diverting common societal and national wealth to the coffers of the well-entrenched corporate mafia who are in unholy alliance with the ruling political-bureaucratic nexus.

During the year 2008, in the context of global economic crisis, imitating imperialist states, the neo-colonial Indian state had extended a recurring stimulus package worth Rs. 2 lakh crores to the corporates composed of both Indian businesses and their senior partners, MNCs. In view of the declining resource mobilisation efforts on the part of the central and state governments, thanks to the reluctance to tax the rich, this transfer of wealth to the elite and well-to-do sections is reflected in a deliberate relative reduction in the allocation on social spending including that on public health, public education and public distribution of food on the one hand, and an absolute reduction in public investment in agriculture and traditional industries where vast majority of the country's toiling millions depend to subsist. Mr. Mukherjee claims an economic growth rate of 8.5-8.75 percent in 2010-11 and expects that it will cross 9 percent in 2011-12.

Surely, this has its impact in the massive transfer of national assets and the resulting concentration of wealth and income in the hands of a few anti-national sections and the ubiquitous pauperization of the masses. As assembly elections to four major states are due, this time, Mukherjee has to make a tight rope walk appeasing his corporate clients on the one hand, while hoodwinking the masses on the other. In the face of huge corruption scandals and sky-rocketing prices of essentials including food, the UPA government, it is widely held, will be forced to resort to some face-saving gimmicks and at the same time assuring the speculative investors, both foreign and domestic, that their greedy demands will be met immediately after the elections through extra-budgetary measures. The 2011-12 budget therefore will be flushed with heavy doses of populism and the huge amount mobilized through privatization of telecom, i.e., through the sale of 3G mobile bandwidth and the sum gathered through disinvestment of PSUs may be used for this without hurting the rich and the billionaires.

Despite this election-eve limitation, Mr. Mukherjee will definitely carry forward the strategic neoliberal steps he had initiated in his last budget. In the context of the continuing global economic crisis, the global speculative financiers are in dire need of markets for investment and goods. The comprador Indian state now headed by Manmohan have assured its imperialist masters that it will do whatever it can in this regard. This has already reflected in the inaugural address made by President Pratibha Patil in the Budget Session of the parliament. She said: "We have to strive to make the domestic environment more conducive to investment, encouraging public as well as private investment, and domestic as well as foreign investment, particularly foreign direct investment (FDI)." One

among these steps will be in the direction of strengthening corporatisation of agriculture in tune with the Indo-US strategic collaboration in agriculture thereby ensuring the hegemony of corporate agribusiness in this sector.

For instance, in their interactions with the finance minister, leaders of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had asked for urgent moves to boost investments in agriculture, infrastructure and industrial sectors. As regards agriculture, CII has recommended the extension of neoliberal economic reforms at a fast pace encouraging private sector participation through various tax measures, including 150% tax exemption on expense incurred on new technology and inputs; best crop raising practices; mobile vans exclusively devoted for conducting awareness programs; soil testing; residue analysis; diagnostics and so on. Obviously this demand is not in any way oriented to food agriculture or for strengthening food security but solely aimed at encouraging agri-business led by imperialist finance capital. The demand is to augment agricultural production and productivity through commercialization.

This will be in accordance with the assurances given to Obama during his Indian visit in November 2010. Apart from the pro-agribusiness steps such as private participation in storage, opening up of agriculture to FDI and liberal credit facilities for commercial agriculture which he promised in the last budget, a most likely step will be special provisions and incentives for agribusiness MNCs and their junior Indian partners for the widespread use of GM crops in agriculture in the name of raising agricultural productivity, with far reaching ecological and biological repercussions. The new announcements in the budget in this regard will be in continuation of the pro-agribusiness initiatives taken up in the 2010-11 budget.

Another anti-national measure expected from the budget by the various comprador organizations such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Assocham), CII, etc. is encouragement to FDI in the retail sector as the entry of foreign players will eliminate the millions of petty traders paving the way for the complete monopolization of retail trade by corporate speculators. True to their class character, even here also the Indian compradors are satisfied with their role as junior partners of MNCs like Walmart.

After agriculture, the retail sector, 95 percent of which is unorganized is the biggest employment provider in the country. According the Fourth Economic Survey of the Central government, about 40 million retail traders are there in the country which is very much an under-estimate. The total turn over in this sector rose from Rs. 320000 crores in 2006 to Rs. 1065000 crores in 2010 and in view of the expanding market here, MNCs are exerting maximum pressure on Manmohan government to open up the retail sector to them. At the time of his India visit, in the context of the still stagnant and crisis-ridden American market, Obama had stressed the urgent need for opening up Indian retail trade to American MNCs. In continuation of this imperialist directive to its lackey Manmohan, the Guidelines prepared by the Commerce Ministry at the behest of leading global retail giants such as Walmart, Tesco, Metro AG, Carefor, etc. are already before Mukherjee. The corporate mafia is expecting certain "forward steps" in this regard in the coming budget.

Interestingly, FDI in retail sector is suggested as a panacea for the inflationary rise in prices of all articles of consumption. As international experience has shown, in the beginning, the retail monopolies will eliminate the subsistence traders through price competition and trade wars from the market and after establishing their firm hold, it will be their monopoly price that is going to prevail. And under the control of global commodity speculators food prices are galloping.

Even reformist UN organizations such as FAO, ILO, etc. have several times warned about this dangerous trend of unleashing speculative forces in the market for food and other primary commodities. In this context, the commission and bribes involved in the conspiratorial move on the part of UPA government to allow foreign speculators to pry open Indian market are serious matters worth pursuing. No doubt, the traitorous ruling sections in the country will have a share in this booty.

Addressing the issue of funds for infrastructure sector, CII has demanded a number of tax exemptions and concessions in the 2011-12 budget. One such demand is the reintroduction of tax exemption on long term capital gains in the hands of infrastructure capital companies. The Long Term Capital Gains Tax was reintroduced in the Budget 2007-08 in the context of fabulous appropriation by corporate mafia consequent on the ballooning of the stock market and skyrocketing of SENSEX beyond 20000 and on the ground that tax rates and interest rates on borrowing had come down significantly. It was at a time when serious criticisms were raised against the Manmohan government's reluctance to tax the fabulous speculative profits amassed for stock markets by leading speculators like Ambani whose daily earning from stock exchange was to the tune of Rs. 20000 per day.

A similar situation is still prevailing today. Stock indices except for the interruptions created by foreign speculators' abrupt withdrawals of funds from the market are rising and the after-tax profits of companies are surging ahead. On the other hand, on account of galloping prices of food caused by speculation unleashed by the very same corporate sections including members of FICCI, Assocham and CII on the one hand, and stagnating employment opportunities on the other, vast majority of Indians are driven to

destitution and hunger. A specific demand put forward by all the comprador organizations to the finance minister is the drastic cut in social spending and subsidies on the poor. Those who are very vocal in raising the demands of the elite for tax exemption and incentives for further speculation have only contempt for the poor.

Not only the comprador sections but even the foreign speculators including those multi-brand retail giants who are in the queue are also demanding a favourable tax regime and flexible labour laws which are already guaranteed by the Manmohan government. The real estate mafia organized under the so called Construction Federation of India have also demanded tax exemptions and special privileges which are now extended to the so called manufacturing industry in the country. Corporate organizations have also raised the demand for raising the exemption limit and reducing the tax rate of both corporation and personal income taxes for further boosting elite consumption in the country.

The finance minister in the 2011-2012 budget will have nothing substantial to control prices except the aforesaid pro-MNC policy, since the root cause of the current rise in prices especially of food is speculation. Leading financiers like Reliance who through outright speculation in food and fuel are becoming world's billionaires are the real patrons of this government.

Most recent estimates envisage an increase in food grain output in the current year at 232 million tons from 218 million tons in 2009-10. Still food inflation is hovering around 15 percent. The reason for rise in food prices cannot therefore be sought in lack of production but the diversion of it from market through speculation, hoarding and black-marketing and these are the biggest source of windfall for the corporate mafia today. The traitorous Manmohan govt. is

encouraging this anti-people and anti-national act by legalizing speculation through futures trading at the behest of its corporate patrons. Since March 2010, the Reserve Bank of India has raised interest rates seven times for reducing inflation and price rise but of no avail. Unless effective measures for eliminating speculation are taken, price will not be controlled and that is possible only by reversing the neoliberal economic policies. It is too naïve to expect from the Manmohan government any fruitful step in the direction of curtailing speculation in food grains and strengthen public distribution.

As per the undertaking given to IMF and as already stated by Mukherjee, he is bound to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.8 percent of gross domestic product in 2011-12 and 4.1 percent in 2012-13. The corporate sections are compelling him to accomplish this task by reducing social sector expenditures including food subsidies rather than rolling back the 'stimulus packages' or increasing corporate taxes. In fact, if the government would have recovered the loss to the exchequer arising from 2G scam, that alone was sufficient to keep the fiscal deficit under control as required by neoliberal centres.

According to the 2010-11 budget estimates, the tax-GDP ratio of the central government was only 10.8 percent. If the government of As is obvious, the ultimate burden of meeting this fiscal deficit target as laid down in the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act will be put on the shoulders of common people either through a rise in the prices of fuel and food or through a rise in indirect taxes, the 'incidence' of which will be on the poor or through an outright reduction in expenditures on subsidies catering to the poor.

Meanwhile, the Planning Commission under the IMF-returned Ahluwalia has recommended an increase of up to 20 percent from last year's budgeted expenditure for sectors including roads, ports, airports and railways, as well as for health and education. All these will be thrown open to corporate penetration on the B-O-T basis under the euphemism of "public-private participation" In the same vein, at the behest of the crisis-ridden imperialist finance capitalists, the Manmohan government is reportedly preparing a road-map for throwing open the entire financial services including banking and insurance to FDI. The forthcoming budget will invariably have to take up all these neoliberal policies with appropriate dose of populism. The pre-budget deliberations and discussions are also intended as a confidence building process and a reassurance to corporate and vested sections that the government will be committed to their ultimate interests. ●

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# Scams And Price Rise Call For Overthrowing Neo-Liberal Policies

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Observer

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**T**HE UPA GOVERNMENT is going to complete two years of its second term. The central budget is presented at a time when its credibility has reached very low levels amidst unprecedented price rise, mega scams, under employment and general economic stagnation. If the UPA government took over in 2004 after six years of the BJP led NDA rule which had created severe socio-economic-political crisis, after almost seven years of Congress led UPA rule the condition is worse. A glance through the present socio-economic- political scene shall reveal this fact. The interview prime minister Manmohan Singh had with the representatives of the TV channels exposed the extent of the crisis faced by the central government in all fields and his inability to defend any of the policies pursued by his government. He was actually fumbling to find answers to the queries. Only because the representatives of these channels owned by the corporate houses treated him very politely using kid-gloves he could escape unhurt. But as the resentment among the masses is increasing day by day, his government is not going to receive a similar treatment from them.

## TWO YEARS OF SCAMS

**THE NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES** continued with ever intensifying speed have created conditions for the scams to flourish under the benevolent patronage of the political leaders wielding power and the bureaucrats, with the judiciary also getting tarnished at an unprecedented level. The level of corruption within the judicial system has reached such levels that even the just retired chief justice of the supreme court is reported to have provided opportunity for his relatives to amass wealth. He has exposed himself by refusing to declare his assets and arguing for it in the case of all judicial officers and staff. And the way the judiciary is delaying the cases involving mega scams further reveal how much many among the judges are involved in corrupt practices and in protecting the scamsters.

As far as the political leaders wielding power in the UPA government are concerned, there are cases of numerous scams including the Rs.1.76 lakh crores 2G Spectrum case in which one of the ministers of the UPA government is presently in jail along with many others. The much bigger S Band Spectrum case in which the highly strategic ISRO went for a two year contract with the private firm, Devas Multimedia, under a former ISRO chief, involving Rs. 2 lakh crores was cancelled only because the media came out with exposure stories and the political forces raised strong criticism in time. That this happened under the very nose of the prime minister's secretariat and involving the ministry of science under him shows the extent to which the tentacles of corruption have reached the higher ups.

One of the express reasons for the hasty introduction of the imperialist globalization policies through the 1991 budget by the then finance minister Manmohan Singh was that the so- called 'License Raj' was spreading corrupt

practices. Liberalisation was presented as a panacea for it. But after two decades of neo-liberal policies, corruption has reached sky high levels affecting all walks of life. It has reached even the Panchayat institutions at the lowest levels also. And the amounts involved in these scams also have reached superlative levels. Before the present scams, the much talked about Bofors Case of the late 1980s look like pea nuts. The prime minister has no answers when questions are raised against these.

Similarly, reports of fabulous sums stashed away in so- called tax havens are also coming out continuously. The government is showing reluctance to bring all the facts in its possession for public scrutiny. Even the courts are also kept in dark in spite of repeated queries. The CBI is increasingly utilized to delay the enquiries or some times to save the culprits through such delays and procrastinations. It is reported that the sums stashed away in foreign banks is more than the budgetary income of the central government for ten years! In spite of public out cry under various pretexts the names of the individuals and firms who have such amounts in the foreign banks are not revealed. It has led to the belief that even many ministers and leaders of the ruling class parties besides corporate houses, bureaucrats and various mafias are involved in this .

The manner in which the whole question of scams is handled has exposed the UPA government as a government of scamsters with many ministers even involved in them. It is exposed that after the imposition of

the neo liberal policies India has become one of the most corrupt countries in the world.

### **SKY HIGH PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES**

**THE PRICES** of all essential commodities have gone up to unprecedented levels. In spite of it the government is silent about it. It is not ready to reverse its policies which are responsible for the present state of affairs. These policies include the cutting down of the Public Distribution System (PDS), the government agencies almost withdrawing from the procurement of food grains and other agricultural products, permitting the corporate houses and MNCs to enter the retail trade sector, re introduction of future trade which has made hoarding and black marketing almost legal, huge bank funding for these corporate and MNCs, corporatization of the agrarian sector etc. It is absolutely clear that these neo-liberal policies are responsible for the prices of all essential commodities going up without any control. The prices are decided now by the market forces at their will.

In the case of prices also the claims of the protagonists of the neo liberal policies with Manmohan Singh in their forefront was that with the increase of GDP and growth rates, with the competition at the market place the prices will be coming down. It is proved that it is a totally false theory. On the contrary it is the market forces which have created the sky high prices for essential commodities. The prices are going up not because the production has gone down. It is because the control on the price mechanism is with the vested interests who want fabulous profits. As the retail and wholesale trade is going under the control of these sharks more and more, as proved elsewhere in the world the prices of the essential commodities will continue to rise, pauperizing the masses who spent most of their income for purchasing the food items.

Now the country has reached such a state that without reversing the neo liberal policies the inflation and sky prices cannot be brought down. As the government is not ready for that and on the other hand wants to intensify these very same policies further there is no scope for the prices coming down. And like the old queen of France who asked why the masses cannot eat cakes if there is no bread, the prime minister is justifying the sky high prices stating that it is because the income also has gone up. It is a most irresponsible statement contrary to facts. It is none else but a govt. appointed committee which pointed out that the average income of 80% of the people are below Rs. 20 per day. The whole govt. is lying to the people while the fabulously rich sections are making merry by fleecing the masses.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDER EMPLOYMENT**

**THE GOVERNMENT** is congratulating itself that the MGNREGA has done wonders and it has increased employment and income of rural people. But the real picture is quite different as proved by the findings of the already mentioned committee. The number of unemployed and under employed are increasing as the number of work days in the agrarian sector is decreasing fast due to mechanization of agricultural operations and other factors. The working hours of the employees and workers are hiked continuously, contributing to the increase in the number of unemployed. This has led to reduction in their actual income also.

The unemployment is becoming more serious among the educated sections. Even those educated in the professional colleges are finding difficulty to get employment.

As the govt. is intensifying the imposition of neo liberal policies, with all sectors controlled by the corporate forces and the MNCs increasingly, as the people are opposing the displacement and other anti people policies, in order to put down all opposition to the pro- rich policies pursued by the central and the state govts various black laws are imposed and the police and para-military forces and in Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern states even military is deployed to crush people's struggles. As the state is withdrawing from its responsibility to provide the welfare measures to the people under the neo liberal regime, its main responsibility is to protect the property of the haves and to maintain the law and order.

In its second term, the UPA government is proving its anti people nature more nakedly. In continuation to its first term, it has signed numerous agreements with the US imperialists in the name of strengthening the so-called strategic alliance. They include numerous purchases of arms and equipments and the agreements for the nuclear plants. Submitting to the pressure tactics of the Yankees agreements against the interests of the people are arrived at as a result of which relation with the Zionist Israel is strengthened and the relation with Iran is downgraded so that even the oil and natural gas import from that country is affected.

In the neighbourhood, the relation with all countries has worsened or has not improved. As desired by the imperialist forces the relation with Pakistan has further worsened. It has affected even trade in essential goods beneficial for both sides. As the US imperialists' contradiction with China is worsening, they are using India to strengthen the anti-China bloc. The comprador rulers are causing harm to the country by showing enthusiasm to please the imperialist camp.

The so-called development policies pursued by the UPA govt is increasingly

causing immense harm to the masses of the people by pauperizing them more and more through price rise and unemployment as we have seen. Besides it is causing environmental destruction also, devastating nature. Though these imperialist promoted policies are going to create conditions detrimental to the very existence of the human race itself in the long run, its immediate effects are devastating the living conditions of the vast majority of the masses, in various ways.

### **PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AS SAFETY VALVE**

**IT IS** in this situation the prime minister and other UPA leaders are nowadays frequently asked by the media people whether a Tunisia or Egypt like condition is going to be created here. These questions themselves show that the overall condition in the country is as bad as or worse than in those countries. Their answers always are that as India has a 'functioning democracy' such condition will not emerge. It shows that the existing democratic institutions are serving the ruling system as a protective cover or as a safety valve from any outburst of popular anger. The parliamentary system along with the judiciary provide a democratic façade to the comprador rule even after it has degenerated as an anti-people system in all respects. What happened during the winter session of the parliament when both houses could not meet due to opposition's agitation for the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to probe the scams expose how even the existing bourgeois democratic institutions have become not functional. Whatever democratic values they had are also getting eroded fast.

So these arguments of the spokespersons of the ruling system is not going to help them much as people are seeing from the day to day experience their real character. That the judiciary has degenerated as a corrupt institution in effect serving the propertied classes is proved through day to day developments. Similarly though the govt claims about decentralization of power through the panchayat system etc the number of the people who have lost belief in the existing democratic system and institutions are increasing. More and more corporate leaders, mafias, criminals and such tarnished sections are finding place in the elected bodies. On the one hand these institutions as a whole are becoming more corrupt. Elections have become a rich people's game using money, liquor and muscle power.

In India like countries what is helping the ruling system to survive even after their degeneration to extreme levels is that this rot has affected all the parties within the parliamentary spectrum also. For example, even after such a crisis faced by the UPA govt, the main opposition party is contended to wait till 2014 elections as its president himself says. None of the parties from BJP to the regional parties to the CPI(M) led Left Front has any basic differences with the ruling Congress led UPA on any of the basic policies pursued or with regard to the influence of corruption among its leaders or on any other matter of significance. All of them have qualified to fit in to the system. So it is these parties and the organizational strength they have which are going to be a major obstacle for a people's uprising to take place here as in Tunisia or Egypt. This grand coalition of the corrupt parties united in implementing the very same neo liberal policies and who have degenerated to embrace all vices of the rotten ruling system is going to be the stumbling block to be overcome to throw out the system.

Besides as a major line of defense the ruling system prompted by the imperialist camp has succeeded in putting to use not only the reactionary philosophical and political thoughts, and the feudal and imperialist culture, but also the religiosity and caste system in a grand manner. Or the ruling system has

built up a row of lines of defense to protect themselves from the outbreak of the hatred of the people.

But, all of them could not save Ben Ali and Mubarak and other dictators in the region are also forced to spend sleepless nights, or are fleeing as Gaddafi of Libya. So the so called functioning democracy may not help the UPA govt once the people dare to come out of the streets. The task before the revolutionary left forces is to make all out efforts to make the people mobilized in the villages, streets and in city centres to challenge the ruling system. On every occasion including the election campaigns the ruling system has to be exposed and the need for overthrowing it has to be emphasized. That will be the best form of election campaign the revolutionary left can organise. Similarly, as it is becoming increasingly clear that without reversing the neo liberal policies nether the price rise nor the scams nor the pauperization of the masses can be put to an end, movements have to be organized in such a way that they hurt the ruling system and compel them to change the policies.

There is no doubt India is in crisis in all fields, in economic, social and political fields. There is no answer for it within the ambit of the ruling system. The task is to throw out the system and create conditions for a new India, throwing aside all the compradors and lackeys of the imperialist system. It should be openly propagated and people should be mobilized for this. ●

**Communist Canvas**

**Bengali Theoretical Tri-monthly**

**Uttaran**

**Monthly Organ of W. Bengal  
State Committee of CPI(ML)**

**Shankar Das**

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**West Bengal - 700 118**

# Food Inflation and Agricultural Swaraj

Rahul Goswami

**T**HE PRICE of a basket of staple foods has become crippling in rural and urban India. The government's response is to favour agri-commodity markets, greater retail investment and more technology inputs. For food grower and consumer alike, the need for genuine farm swaraj has never been greater. The retail prices of staple foods rose steadily through 2010, far exceeding in real terms what the Government of India and the banking system calls "headline inflation" and exceeding the rate of the rise in food inflation as calculated for the country. These calculations ignore the effective inflation and its increase as experienced by the rural and urban household, and they also ignore the considerable regional variations in India of a typical monthly food basket.

Moreover, from a household perspective an increase in the prices of food staples is not seen as an annual phenomenon, to be compared with some point 12 months in the past. It is intimately linked to job security, net income, the pressure on the food budget given competing demands of medical treatment, education and expense on energy. When real net income remains unchanged for over a year or longer, the household suffers a contraction in the budget available for the food basket, and this contraction - often experienced by rural cultivator families and agricultural labour - is only very inadequately reflected by the national rate of increase in food inflation.

An indicator of the impact on households is provided by the price monitoring cell of the Department Of Consumer Affairs, Ministry Of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. This cell records the retail and wholesale prices of essential commodities in 37 cities and towns in India. Data over a 36-month period (2008 January to 2010 December) for the prices of cereals, pulses, sugar, tea, milk and onions reveals the impact of the steady rise in the Indian household's food basket.

In 33 cities and towns for which there are regular price entries, the price per kilo of the "fair average" quality of rice has risen by an average of 42% over the calendar period 2008 January to 2010 December. In 12 of these urban centres the increase has been over 50% (Vijayawada, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Patna, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Bhopal, Shimla, Karnal and Hisar). The average price rise over the same period for a kilo of tur dal, for 32 cities for which there is regular price data, is 46%. In 11 of these urban centres the increase in the price of tur dal has been over 50% (Puducherry, Bengaluru, Patna, Agartala, Nagpur, Mumbai, Indore, Ahmedabad, Shimla, Jammu and New Delhi). Where wheat is concerned, from among the 27 cities and towns for which there are regular price entries over three years, in 10 the per kilo price rise is 30% and more.

If in search of a comforting cup of tea over which to rue the effect of the steady price rise, this too will cost a great deal more than it did three years ago. For 25 urban centres with regular price data, the average increase over the same period of 100 grams of loose tea leaf is 38% and in 11 of these cities and towns the increase is between 40% and 100%.

The sugar with which to sweeten that cup of tea has become prohibitively expensive over the January 2008 to December 2010 period. For the 32 cities and towns for which there is regular price data, the average price increase for a kilo of sugar is 102%, the range of increase being between 76% and 125%. This increase for sugar - relatively homogenous for the price reporting centres - exhibits the countrywide nature of the price rise of the commodity. Nor is there a household economy case for substituting sugar for gur, or jaggery. For the 17 towns and cities reporting data for gur prices over the same 36-month period, the increase in price over the period has been an average 118% with 11 of these centres recording an increase of over 100%.

Adding a third element of higher cost to the humble cup of tea is the price of milk. For the 25 towns and cities which recorded increases in the per litre price of milk over the 36-month period (one city recorded a drop) the average rise is 37%. In seven cities a litre of milk costs at least 50% more in December 2010 than what it did in January 2008 - Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Indore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patna and Hyderabad. In conspicuous contrast are the rates of increase in price of cooking media - groundnut oil, mustard oil and vanaspati. Over the January 2008 to December 2010 period the 37 urban centres recorded average price increases of 10%, 9% and 10% respectively for groundnut oil, mustard oil and vanaspati.

Finally, the volatile allium cepa, or common red onion. In 29 cities and towns reporting regularly the per kilo prices of onion, the increase in price of the vegetable has been astonishingly steep. The average increase for 29 cities is 197.5% and in 14 the increase has been 200% and above - New Delhi, Shimla, Ahmedabad, Indore, Mumbai, Rajkot, Agartala, Aizawl, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Vijaywada. In pale comparison is the otherwise worrying average increase of 39.5% for a kilo of potatoes - this is the 36-month average increase recorded by 27 urban centres.

When examined at a point in the calendar, the rise in prices of staple foods has for the last four years tended to be worrying if not alarming. What has been the response from the central Ministry of Agriculture, and from the Ministry Of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution?

The Agriculture Ministry has busied itself with, as Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar told the Economic Editors' Conference in October 2010, "channelizing our efforts through effective policy instruments and programmes to ensure higher investments – both public and private". Pawar had at the time told the Conference: "We have concentrated on enhancing production and productivity both by bringing in high yielding varieties, hybrids and efficient farm equipments. Our efforts towards increasing soil nutrients have seen to the new fertiliser subsidy regime. We have also worked on easing the availability of credit to the farmer and offering better risk mitigation instruments."

The ministry has drawn up new programmes and strategies, among them the setting up of soil testing laboratories, what it calls "water harvesting and micro irrigation structures", the provisioning (or contracting of) storage and processing facilities, what it calls "sophisticated pest surveillance and monitoring systems" and finally "IT-enabled knowledge dissemination systems for the farmers". Pawar has rarely missed an opportunity to say that investment plays an important role in achieving higher growth rate - this falls in line with the central government's overall planning guideline of "faster and more inclusive growth", an intellectual trap which prohibits questioning of how 'growth' can be both 'faster' and 'more inclusive' when in fact 20 years of economic liberalisation have proven exactly the opposite.

The continuing recourse to finance and technology has meant that progress in agriculture for India is measured now in terms of increase in gross capital formation in agriculture as a proportion of agricultural GDP which, Pawar pointed out, "has gone up from 14.1% in 2004-05 to 21.3% in 2008-09". Who has been responsible for such capital formation, has it in fact taken place on the one and two hectare farm plots which up to 50% of farming households actually cultivate on, how much of this capital formation is corporate and includes logistics and food processing infrastructure - these are questions sidestepped by both concerned ministries and India's national agricultural research system, run by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

They ought not to be so ignored, especially when there has been for each of the last five years greater evidence of not only the rise in the prices of food staples but also of the stagnation of incomes for cultivator households. What impact does a steady rise in the prices of a typical food basket have on the rural consumer? The 61st round of the National Sample Survey (2004 July to 2005 June) provided state per capita averages for consumption of basic food items over a 30-day period. Using this data as a baseline, the impact on quantities consumed becomes clearer, and also helps explain some of the coping strategies resorted to by rural households with 10%-20% of the rural poverty line.

\* In 2004-05 in Andhra Pradesh, the rural per capita cereals consumption for a 30-day period was 12.03 kilos. At the time this cost the consumer Rs 113.60. The NSS reported in 2006-07 that per capita rural expenditure on cereals had risen to Rs 118 in the state. By mid-2010 the price for 12.03 kg of rice in Andhra Pradesh was Rs 240 - 212% up. Similarly, increases in the per capita 30-day price for cereals in some other states are: in Bihar (13.16 kg at Rs 112.98) up by 210%; in Maharashtra (10.49 kg at Rs 82.36) up by 255%; in Rajasthan (12.68 kg at Rs 85.58) up by 274%.

\* In 2004-05 in Rajasthan, the rural per capita pulses consumption for a 30-

day period was 0.5 kilo. This had then cost the rural Rs 11.54. By mid-2010 the retail price for this amount of pulses in Rajasthan was Rs 22.25 - 193% up. Similarly, increases in the per capita 30-day price for pulses in some other states are: in Andhra Pradesh (0.7 kg at Rs 19.36) up by 150%; in Bihar (0.7 kg at Rs 16.43) up by 202%; in Maharashtra (0.87 kg at Rs 22.44) up by 211%.

\* In 2004-05 in Bihar, the rural per capita consumption of milk for a 30-day period was 2.97 litres. This had then cost the rural Rs 36.31. The NSS reported in 2006-07 that per capita rural expenditure on milk had risen to Rs 39 in the state. By mid-2010 the retail price for this quantity of milk in Bihar was 71.28 - 196% up. Similarly, increases in the per capita 30-day price for milk in some other states are: in Maharashtra (2.72 litres at Rs 33.25) up by 221%; in Rajasthan (9.48 litres at Rs 102.89) up by 221%; in Andhra Pradesh (3.05 litres at Rs 32.83) up by 251%.

Establishing the links between unorganised employment, the availability of safe drinking water and sanitation, housing conditions and food absorption, the Report on the State of Food Insecurity in Urban India, by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation in 2010 said: "There is a substantial body of literature on average consumption levels in India that indicates not only low levels of per capita calorie consumption, but also a trend that reflects either stagnant or declining consumption levels over time across the various states of India."

Whether urban poor or rural non-farm labour or agricultural labour in peri-urban regions, how is the recommended dietary allowance of the Indian Council of Medical Research met, if at all? For the youth and young adults, the food deficit is sought to be met by the regular consumption of low-volume low-value packaged processed foods, usually priced at Rs 5 to Rs 10 per unit. While a generation

earlier processed food in rural areas was most commonly a packet of biscuits, today it may be a small packet of savouries or 'farsan', one of the many varieties of cheap confectionery, or small portions of dry baked products. These are usually in the 50 gram range, loaded with either sugar or salt, and the volume of their consumption contributes to the Indian processed food industry's conviction that its sector is assured of annual growth of 14%-15%, overlooking entirely the underlying reasons for some of this consumption.

The Consumer Expenditure Survey of the 63rd round of the NSS, carried out in 2006-07, estimated that in 2006-07, just over half (50.3%) of the Indian rural population belonged to households with monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) less than Rs 580 at 2006-07 prices. It is an indication as much of the precariousness of household food security as it is of the growing income inequalities in India - both rural and urban - that the average MPCE in 2006-07 was Rs 695 in rural India and Rs 1,312 in urban India at 2006-07 prices. The corresponding average MPCE in 2005-06 (NSS 62nd round) was Rs 625 in rural India and Rs 1,171 in urban India at 2005-06 prices.

"The wholesale/retail prices are largely determined by the market forces," Prof K V Thomas, Minister of State for Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said in answer to a question in Lok Sabha on price rise. "Different layers in the distribution channel leads to the entry of intermediaries and contributes to the high prices paid by the consumer. Lack of market integration is one of the factors that give rise to emergence of the intermediaries." This reply, on 16 November 2010, is part of a series of statements by the minister seeking to disconnect trading in food commodities from the rise in prices of food staples.

On 19 November 2010, in his reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha,

Prof Thomas said that the volume of trade in agri-commodities in the commodity futures markets from 1 April 2009 to January 2010 had increased by 102.59%. He said the "growth in volume and value of futures trade is not necessarily because of continuous rise in prices" and further emphasised, "it would not be correct to say that the growth in the trade volume in agricultural commodities during 2009-10 was due to excessive speculation or by causing inflation or indulging in profiteering".

Three weeks later on 12 December 2010, Prof Thomas replied to a question in Lok Sabha: "Futures trading does not impact the price or availability of any commodity in the short-term. But in the medium or long-term price discovery process facilitates strategic action by various stakeholders including policy planners in government to augment production and imports in shortage situation and export and MSP [minimum support price] operations during surplus situation, thereby helping the consumers and producers respectively as well as stabilise the prices." The four-year-old complaints of households all across India over rising food prices, and the lamentations of thousands of farming households over inadequate minimum support prices describes a quite different reality.

Launching commodities exchanges, encouraging market innovations, the building of infrastructure to help the movement of food (logistics) towards planned 'mega' food parks and sprawling modern terminal markets en route retail distribution channels, the reliance on biotechnology and mechanisation, and the diversion of India's public national agricultural research system to serve industrial agendas - these are the focus areas in the agriculture sector for the UPA 2 government. Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, said so bluntly on 4 October 2010 when he asked the vice-chancellors of state agricultural universities to carry out research-based projects with the help of industry. More investment in knowledge management and in diversification is needed, said Ahluwalia, falling back on the familiar and imaginary bogey of the unsatisfactory 'growth rate' of Indian agriculture as being the driver for such action.

Still missing entirely in the strategies of the two ministries directly concerned with food production and consumption, and missing also in the sprawling national agricultural research system of India is the recognition that decisions about the production of food lie with the producer and consumer. This is missing because control over production and distribution is sought - by government for political ends, by corporates for profit. Campaigns such as the just-concluded Kisan Swaraj Yatra have done much to reveal the true nature of the struggle over control of food production and distribution in India. Until there is a far stronger and thereby genuinely more inclusive agricultural swaraj, the burdens of rising food prices and shrinking food sovereignty must be borne by our homes and cultivators. ●

## ICOR Documents

**[Founding Conference Documents and List of Participants of the International Co-ordination of Revolutionary Parties and Organisations (ICOR) in English and Hindi.]**

**Contribution : Rs 10**

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# Reject French Reactors For Jaitapur

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A. Gopalakrishnan

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*[Jaitapur nuclear power project has become a matter of intense discussion all over the country because of the displacement of a large number of the people in the Konkan area to start with, and then based on many fundamental questions which challenge the whole nuclear projects of the government. This discussion also now involves the different nuclear agreements signed by the UPA government with US and now with the French government for installation of nuclear plants at Jaitapur and other locations. It is in this context an All India Convention is organized by the Konkan Bachao Committee formed to oppose the installation of Jaitapur nuclear plant by the last week of April. We are reproducing following two articles of Dr A Gopalakrishnan who was former chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board – REDSTAR]*

**O**N NOVEMBER 26, the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) accorded environmental clearance for the 6x1650 MWe nuclear power project in Jaitapur, Maharashtra. Extensive opposition to the project, notably from the Konkan Bachao Samiti (KBS), was overruled by the MoEF in granting this clearance. Environment minister, Jairam Ramesh, in a press statement however clarified that, “I can take on board only the ecological objections raised by the KBS. I have asked the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited and its partner Areva to address the other economic, commercial, safety and technological issues. Indeed, I do believe that NPCIL must significantly improve and expand its public outreach programme”.

Areva is a predominantly state-owned nuclear power company in France, which has developed the 1650 MWe European Pressurised Reactor (EPR), based on the French N4 and the German Konvoi reactor types. But, what is the maturity of the EPR technology today? Till date, no EPR has been constructed and commissioned for operation anywhere in the world. There are four EPRs in different stages of construction elsewhere, and two of them are already facing serious problems and delay. Areva sold the first EPR to Finland and this plant construction started in 2005. Several construction and design problems have delayed the start-up of this plant to the second half of 2013 — a delay of 3.5 years, with a cost escalation of 50 per cent. France itself decided to set up the second EPR, and the construction of this unit started in December 2007. Very similar construction and safety issues have led to a 50 per cent cost increase and a delay of commissioning to 2014. China bought two EPRs, but they are moving cautiously towards completion dates of 2013 and 2014.

Realising that the EPR is in trouble, the French government asked Francois Roussely, a former chairman of the Electricite de France (EDF), in October 2009 to evaluate the status of the EPR and the French nuclear industry in general. The Roussely Report (July 2010) has concluded that the credibility of the EPR has been seriously damaged by the problems of the two reactors under construction. Roussely states, “The complexity of the EPR comes from (questionable) design choices, notably of the power level, containment, core-

catcher, and redundancy of systems. It is certainly a handicap for its construction, and its cost — the EPR should therefore be further optimised based on feedback from the EPRs under construction”.

Part of the problems encountered during construction of the two EPRs relate to poor quality control and construction. Reported flaws include the poor fabrication of the pressuriser and the reactor vessel in Finland, cracks developing in base concrete at both sites, defective welds in the containment steel shells, etc. One of the serious design deficiencies pointed out to Areva in a joint letter from the French, Finnish and UK nuclear regulators is the lack of adequate redundancy in the instrumentation and control system design, a safety issue which is not yet resolved completely over the last two years.

There are other basic design issues of the EPR which could cause serious problems in the later stages of operation, those which neither the NPCIL or DAE is highlighting today. The EPR will use 5 per cent enriched uranium, as against the normal 3.5 per cent in current PWR designs, which will enable its fuel burn-up to reach in excess of 70 GWd/tonne as against 30-40 GWd/tonne in current LWRs. This improved fuel economy is touted as an advantage of the EPR. What no one has highlighted is that such high burn-up leads to much higher toxicity of the radioactive waste, with the production of a larger ‘immediate release fraction’ of radioisotopes. It is reported that according to an EDF study, EPR waste will have about four times as much radioactive bromine, iodine, caesium, etc, compared to ordinary PWRs using lower burn-up, with other reports putting these figures much higher.

Consequently, radiation doses to the workers and general public could also be correspondingly high, in case of radiological releases. These problems will persist during spent-fuel transfer, storage, reprocessing and

waste disposal. Furthermore, it is reported that the higher burn-up in EPR will result in thinning of the fuel cladding, making it prone for early failure and fission product release. Since no EPR has ever been operated, there is no in-situ data on long-term clad integrity under high burn-up, and therefore the current NPCIL assurances that radiation dose rates to workers and the public will be kept within the AERB-stipulated limits have no basis.

Current cost estimate of the Finnish EPR is 5.7 billion euros. The price of each Chinese EPR is stated to be 5 billion euros. Taking the average cost of a 1650 MWe EPR as 5.3 billion euros, at the 2010 exchange rates, the cost works out to be a whopping ‘19.5 crore per MWe! At this rate, the six EPRs at Jaitapur alone will cost the taxpayer about ‘1,93,000 crore, a little over the 2G Spectrum allocation loss. In comparison, a typical 700 MWe indigenous pressurised heavy-water reactor (PHWR) would cost about ‘8 crore/MWe, while a supercritical-steam based coal-fired station would cost just about ‘5 crore/MWe.

Asked about the cost of the project, the NPCIL says it is not yet finalised. That NPCIL is indeed hiding the enormous cost of the EPR from the public is clear from the answer given by Anne Lauvregon, CEO of Areva in an interview given to The Hindu on November 25. When asked about the EPR price, she said, “You know giving out the price depends on the customer (NPCIL, in this case). It is not for me to give the price”.

Over and above the cost of the reactor, the NPCIL will have to add on other costs which truly belong to the project. These will include the significant costs of the storage and disposal of radioactive waste from the high burn-up EPR spent-fuel, the eventual decommissioning cost, the extensive additional physical security costs including anti-aircraft batteries and extra coast guard deployment (none of which would be required if

Jaitapur were to have a coal-powered station), substantial increase in nuclear fuel cost over the years, etc. If complete transparency is not demanded from the NPCIL, all such extra costs will be swept under other heads and in effect become tax-payers’ hidden subsidy to promote the prime minister’s foray into these unjustified nuclear reactor imports.

In summary, on the false premise of ensuring energy security for the nation, the PM is leading India to purchase six unproven French EPRs at an enormous cost to the exchequer. No EPR has so far been built and operated anywhere in the world, and the partial construction of two such units have already shown significant deficiencies. In the long run these EPRs are likely to have serious operational, safety and radiological release problems far in excess of current generation reactors. It is best if India does not embark on an EPR-based power project until significant operational experience is gained elsewhere with such systems.

In her November 25 interview Lauvregon said, “Before buying something, people need to see the product. There are a lot of designs which are perfect on paper but which do not work”. Truly spoken, Lauvregon, the Indian people shall wait till your EPRs in Finland and France gain enough operational experience, before considering to place any orders for EPRs. ●

*New Indian Express / 03 Dec 2011*

## Jaitapur: Deficit of public trust

**T**HE GOVERNMENT has approved the construction of a 9900 MW (megawatt) nuclear park at Jaitapur in Ratnagiri district. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), a public sector undertaking of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), will own this mega power project. The project will have six European pressurised reactors (EPR), each of 1650 MW capacity; their fuel and critical equipment will be supplied by French state-owned company Areva.

DAE does not today have any concrete basis or data to evaluate the EPR performance on their own. And yet, the ministry of environment and forest (MoEF) has hurriedly approved the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the Jaitapur project, citing “weighty strategic and economic reasons in favour of the grant of environmental clearance now”.

In clearing the EIA, the minister for environment has left all the crucial nuclear safety-related issues to be answered by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), the NPCIL and Areva. AERB and NPCIL are secretive and evasive on such issues, and Areva works under NPCIL directions. Safety issues are at the core of the public disquiet, and the MoEF-cleared EIA does not even cursorily address these vital aspects.

Of late, a set of senior politicians and nuclear scientists have been carrying out a high-pressure blitzkrieg in favour of the Jaitapur project. The persons involved are the Maharashtra chief minister, the former and current chairmen of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the chairman and managing director of NPCIL, and agents of corporate houses and their federations, all of whom stand to benefit in one way or other.

Let us not forget that these are the very same people who colluded with the prime minister’s office (PMO) over the last six years to eventually trump up a false case to justify the import of foreign reactors. The public have hardly any trust in this unethical crowd, since their past actions indicate they are probably

influenced by the corporate nuclear lobby and the directions from the PMO.

It is time now that this group starts answering the hard questions that trouble most informed people, instead of evading them. For example, they must openly defend the premises on which it is argued that the import of 40,000 MW of foreign light-water reactors in the near-term is essential to ensure energy security in the year 2050. They must explain why they chose to import the EPRs, which have never been built anywhere, instead of selecting a French LWR design on which established operational experience & confidence exist.

Does this choice make any economic sense when all indications are that the EPRs will cost Rs20 crores/MW in terms of 2010-rupees, whereas an indigenous pressurized heavy-water reactor (PHWR) plant will cost no more than Rs8 crores/ MW?

Moreover, does selecting the EPR make any technological sense in view of the world experience with unidentified failure modes and design errors prevalent in brand new untested reactors, which might then lead to devastating nuclear accidents, especially in the initial learning phase? Or, are the PM and his DAE experts knowingly leasing out the Jaitapur area for Areva and the French government to experiment with this new reactor and fix its problems far away from their own nationals, while the people of Ratnagiri and the surrounding areas are made sitting ducks for this hazardous adventure.

How much understanding, based on relevant data, do Areva and NPCIL together have on the radiological and physical behavior of high-burnup spent-fuel from these EPRs and the consequent serious safety issues related to its long-term storage, cooling, transport and reprocessing?

There are many more such serious questions that still remain unanswered. The opposition to the Jaitapur project will not abate as long as the government avoids a full and transparent debate of each and every disturbing issue, which remains unanswered. ●

*(DNA) February 9, 2011*

*(The writer is a former chairman of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board)*

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## New Ministry In Nepal

**T**HE FORMATION of a ministry in Nepal after months of uncertainty and after almost eighteen times voting took place to decide a new prime minister is a positive development, however limited its scope might be. This time Jhalanath Khanal, chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist), has become prime minister with the support of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). In the earlier rounds of voting the CPN(UML) had joined hands with Nepali Congress and other rightist parties. Though the chairman of the UCPN(Maoist), Prachanda contested almost all the times, sometimes with the help of the regional parties he could not get the required majority. In such a situation, two parties which are having broadly left programs, at least in words, joining hands and forming a ministry putting an end to the long ordeal shall help to take Nepal a step forward from the crisis ridden situation which the US imperialists and the reactionary govt in India were trying to exploit.

The new prime minister has announced that the first priority of his ministry will be to complete the ongoing 'peace process' which was stalled for a long time. It includes the rehabilitation of the members of the armed wing of the UCPN(M) who are presently camping in barracks. The second task is to complete the Constitution writing process, without which a new election cannot be held. According to Khanal the third task is to bring minimum relief to the people implementing the reforms promised. The fourth task, according to him, is to 'take the country towards an economic revolution through development, reconstruction and socio economic transformation'.

There are many factors which shall act against the implementation of these wishes of the new prime minister. From outside the borders the imperialist forces have their own strategic plans about this Himalayan country landlocked between India and China, two new economic giants according to the analysis of the world market forces. Similarly both India and China have their own ideas about taking Nepal along with them. As far as India's plans are concerned it is well known to the revolutionary forces in South Asia. They are expansionist plans to put pressure on Nepal to force it to toe its line. Internally the Nepali Congress

representing the landlord and newly emerging bourgeois classes are not happy with the formation of the new ministry keeping them outside. Besides there are forces who wants a return of the king, forces openly loyal to the ruling classes in India who may even go to the extent of a division of the *terrain* region to form a new state. In this situation the tasks before the ministry as defined by the new prime minister is not easy to be materialized.

Apart from these factors, what is going to be the perspective of these two major left parties to lead Nepal towards democracy and socialism pursuing an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal path is also a major problem. Already there are reports that even the most radical among the left parties, the UCPN(Maoist) is facing the problem of alienation from the masses as they are compelled to abandon the path of mass struggles for a long time. There are also sharp divisions in that about the path of struggle to be followed, according to reports. As far as the CPN(UML) is concerned its record so far of handling power under the present ruling system is not very positive. The path of revolution or of reforms is the challenge before the left forces in Nepal. ●

# China-US Contradiction Sharpens

**R**ECENT reports indicate the sharpening of the Sino-US contradictions. Few days back the reports came that China has replaced Japan as the second biggest economic power, with the US just ahead of it. But as the US economy is ailing from the severe economic crisis affecting it from 2008 and has not recovered yet from it, the Chinese economy is the thriving one, capable of making headways across the world. This has led to an ever intensifying trade war between these two modern day super powers. Thus qualifying itself as an imperialist power throwing away all socialist character in practice, China has turned in to an imperialist super power with red flag in hand and socialism in words like the erstwhile Soviet Union from the 1960s after the capitalist roaders came to domination there also. Thus, China which is a member of the UN Security Council, of G8 and G 20 along with the US, is contending for world hegemony with the US while colluding against the world people. This collusion had become explicit when the US attacked Iraq and Afghanistan and on numerous other occasions already. But as China has become the major economic force and trade power in Latin America and Africa the contradiction between the two has started further intensifying through various means.

In this situation, reminding the old 'cold war' years and the period of the US-Soviet contradiction, US has started a major offensive against China by working out plans to 'contain' it by working out 'strategic alliances' with the countries around it. Few months back US administration announced plans for giving a new thrust to its Asia-Pacific Policy. The US imperialists are utilizing trade war, exchange rate war, public opinion war, joint military exercises with its allies and anti-China campaign along with a containment policy.

Reacting to this anti-China policy of the US, the Chinese foreign policy experts have come out with their own

analyses. In an article recently published in the CPC's official magazine, *Qiushi*, it has stated that "The US seems highly interested in forming a very strong anti-China alliance. It not only made a high profile announcement of its return to East Asia, but also claimed to lead in Asia". After analyzing the US efforts to consolidate its relations with its earlier partners, it continued its statement as follows: "India has stayed closely allied with the US in recent years and Obama promised to support India for a permanent membership in the UNSC".

The recent trend in the area shows that even Vietnam which had once waged a heroic war of national liberation with the US imperialists has approached the US for a military alliance as it is worried about the growing strength of China. But China is utilizing its economic power to win over as many of its neighbours to its side. This Sino-US conflict is reflected in the contention between the two in Pakistan where while the US militarily dominate, China dominates through economic bonds. According to the article "What is the most powerful weapon China has today? It is our economic power, especially our foreign exchange reserves. The key is to use it well". In order to overcome the US plans to organize its containment policy against China in the nearby countries, it is trying to utilize its rising economic influence to build alliances with countries with a focus on Europe and South America. According to the experts from China, because of its economic clout it shall be used as the effective means to avoid a war and to increase its influence.

Thus the Sino-US conflict is taking an international character utilizing trade as the modern weapon. As far as India is concerned it has a history of playing in the hands of US-British forces in the 1950s and 1960s resulting in the border war with the then socialist China. But conditions have changed. Though the imperialists shall utilize the contradiction between the two and to fan it, instead of a military conflict possibilities are for intensification of the trade war between the two in coming years. At the same time the powerful military lobby in the country will be utilized by the US to sell more arms and equipments in the name of this conflict. The recent reporting in Indian media shows that they are effectively utilized by US and its allies to maintain the tension in the area and to increase the arms trade. The signing of the so called strategic alliance agreements with the US from the time of the BJP led NDA govt which is assiduously followed by the UPA govt shows that, like in all other basic policy matters, as far as the question of US policy is concerned also there are no differences among the ruling classes and the ruling parties in the country. In this situation a love-hate relation shall be continued between India and China, with the hate aspect as primary, as it fits well with the 'strategic alliance' with US which in reality is nothing but 'strategic slavery'. When the inter-imperialist contradictions sharpen at international level, it is natural that being a 'junior partner' of US imperialism, the comprador govt in India also will have a role to play.

The present period is different and the major actors have undergone changes. The inter-imperialist contradiction between US and China is also taking new forms. ●

# Faiz on Culture

**[On the occasion of the birth centenary of Faiz Ahmed Faiz we are publishing an article by him on culture and his speech on the occasion of receiving Lenin Peace Price in 1962]**



**T**HE VAST LAND MASS known as Asia encompasses numerous countries and peoples and the cultural patterns specific to different lands do not easily yield to broad generalizations. Thus we have in Asia a number of Socialist States where cultural planning obviously takes on a completely different orientation from other countries operating under a different socio-political organization. Then there are countries which have escaped direct foreign colonial domination or occupation and where the continuity of cultural traditions was not radically subverted by foreign influences. Lastly, there is a group to which my country - Pakistan - belongs who have been only recently liberated after a prolonged era of subjugation. This paper is mainly relevant to the cultural problems of the last group, although some of these problems may be shared in some measure by the other groups as well because dominative western influences have been operative there as well at some stage of their political history.

Culture in the broad sense is commonly defined today as the whole way of life of a given human community. In a more restricted sense it comprises finished or stylized expression of this way of life in various forms of creative and artistic expression. For purposes of convenience these two inter-related aspects may be discussed separately.

In the broader sense, culture in human societies has two main aspects: an external formal aspect and an inner ideological one. The external forms of culture, social or artistic, are basically an organized expression of its inner ideological content. Both are integral components of a given social structure. They are changed or modified as this structure changes and because of this organic link they also promote and influence such changes in their present organism. Cultural problems, therefore, cannot be studied or understood or solved in isolation from social problems, i.e. problems of Asian countries also have to be understood and their solutions found in the light of this larger perspective--in the context of their underlying social problems. Very broadly speaking, these problems are primarily the problems of arrested growth: they originated primarily from long years of foreign domination and the remnants of a backward, outmoded social structure. This should not require much elaboration. Today's industrialized or economically powerful western countries caught up with various Asian lands between the 16th and 19th centuries. Some among these were fairly developed feudal societies with ancient traditions of advanced feudal culture. Others had yet to progress beyond primitive pastoral tribalism. The social and cultural development of them all was frozen at the point of their political subjugation and remained so until the advent of political independence. The culture of these ancient feudal societies, in spite of much technical and intellectual excellence, was restricted to a small privileged class which rarely intermingled with the parallel unsophisticated folk culture of the general masses. Primitive tribal culture, in spite of its child-like beauty, had little intellectual content. Both feudal and tribal societies living contiguously in the same homelands were constantly engaged in tribal, racial, religious or other feuds with their tribal and feudal rivals. Foreign colonialist domination accentuated this dual fragmentation, i.e.

the division among different tribal and national groups on the one hand and the division among different classes within the same tribal or national group on the other.

One basic cultural problem which faces many of these countries, therefore, is the problem of cultural integration. Vertical integration which means providing a common ideological and national basis for a multiplicity of national cultural patterns and horizontal integration which involves educating and elevating the entire body of the people to the same cultural and intellectual level. Thus, the qualitative political change from colonialism to independence was required to be followed by a similar qualitative change in the social structure left behind by the colonialist era.

Alien imperialist domination of Asian countries was not merely a passive process of pure political supremacy. It was also an active process of social and cultural subversion. It tried on the one hand to kill or destroy whatever was good, progressive, and forward looking in the old feudal or pre-feudal structures by way of arts, skills, customs, manners, humanist values or mental enlightenment. It tried to sustain and perpetuate, on the other, whatever was unwholesome, reactionary, or backward looking: ignorance, superstition, servility, and class-exploitation. What was handed back to the newly liberated countries, therefore, was not the original social

structure taken over at the point of their subjugation but the perverted and emasculated remnants of this structure. Superimposed on these remnants were cheap, spurious and second-hand imitations of western cultural patterns by way of language, customs, manners, art forms, and ideological values.

This poses a number of other basic cultural problems for these countries. First, the problem of salvaging from the debris of their shattered national cultures those elements which are basic to national identity, which can be adjusted and adapted to the needs of a more advanced social structure, and which can help to strengthen and promote progressive social values and attitudes. Second, to reject and discard those elements which are relevant to a backward and out-moded social structure, which are either irrelevant or repugnant to a more advanced system of social relationships and which hinder the progress of more rational, enlightened human values and attitudes. Third, to accept and assimilate from imported foreign and western cultures those elements which help to elevate national culture to higher technical, aesthetic and intellectual standards. Fourth, to repudiate those elements among these imports which are deliberately aimed at promoting degeneracy, decadence, and social reaction. Roughly speaking, these problems may be termed. problems of new cultural adaptation, assimilation, emancipation, and purification.

In addition to the above, political independence has also given rise to certain new attitudes, subjective as well as social, which also require rectification and reorientation, e.g. the craze for chauvinistic revivalism and the craze for indiscriminate modernism. Thus certain social groups insist that it is not only the good and valuable element of traditional, cultural and social practice which should be revived and revitalized but

also the bad and worthless elements. Conversely, not only the bad and worthless elements of modern western culture must be discarded and repudiated but the useful and progressive elements as well. The baby must be thrown out with the bath water! The motivation of these schools is primarily not cultural but political, i.e. to hamper the progress of rational social awareness and to confirm the exploiting classes in their interests and privileges. Secondly, political and commercial entrepreneurs from the more advanced western countries have sought to fill the cultural vacuum confronting newly liberated countries with a deluge of cultural, or more correctly, anti-cultural trash in the form of debased literature, magazines, music, dances, fashion, etc. which extol and glorify crimes, violence, cynicism, perversion, and profligacy. A good deal of this trash has been indiscriminately accepted by certain other sections of these communities under the mistaken notion of modernism.

From this point of view some of the major cultural problems of Asian countries, e.g. arrested growth, uneven distribution, internal contradictions, imitativeness, etc. are primarily social problems related to the organization, values, judgments, and social practices of a backward social structure. Their solution, therefore; lies outside the domain of a purely cultural endeavor and falls within the domain of political and socio-economic reforms.

## II

Notwithstanding what has been said above, it should also be borne in mind that while national culture cannot transcend the limitations of a given social structure it can certainly lag behind it. In other words, while cultural activity cannot go beyond the progressive potentialities of a particular society it can certainly fall short of what is both possible and desirable within the limitations of this society. It can accept or reject attitudes; it can adopt or ignore measures in the cultural field which are conducive to social progress and intellectual enlightenment within its own social framework. This is particularly true of those forms of human culture which are alienable to deliberate planning and conscious promotional effort, e.g. creative skills and the body of the arts. It is in this context that I would like to speak about the situation in my own country and the problems and solutions that have been, or are being faced and attempted.

In May 1968, the then Government of Pakistan set up a Committee under the chairmanship of the writer of this paper to investigate and report on these problems and what follows are some of the conclusions arrived at by this Committee. While discussing certain national attitudes inimical to the promotion and development of art and culture it was observed:

"There is a school of thinking which holds that all cultural activity in general and the performing arts in particular are immoral and anti-religious. The anti-culture, anti-art attitudes fostered by this school mainly derive from the following:

i) Prolonged colonial subjection subverted the native cultural patterns of our old society and the imperialist rulers sought to replace them by their own cultural imports. Everything native' by way of culture and the arts was held up to contempt and ridicule and their western counterparts held up as the only models fit for imitation. The resultant disruption of national life and impoverishment of all the national arts robbed large sections of our people, particularly the influential section called the Civil Lines', of all love, respect and understanding of their national arts. (ii) During the declining years of the Mughal Empire in the sub-continent, as elsewhere in similar historical conditions, the arts were seduced to become handmaids of dissolute courts and instruments of their decadent pleasures. This was particularly true of music and dancing which was encouraged to become the monopoly of a socially and morally unacceptable class. After the

***Alien imperialist domination of Asian countries was not merely a passive process of pure political supremacy. It was also an active process of social and cultural subversion***

downfall of the Mughals, the moral indignation evoked by these decadent practices and the social prejudices attaching to the class of 'singing girls' were detached from the social conditions which gave them birth and transferred, in the popular mind, to the arts themselves.

(iii) Since Independence these anti-art attitudes inherited from the past have been seized upon by certain factions in the country for topical political ends. They first sought to equate all music and dancing with the lewd vulgarizations of these arts by inept professionals. From these premises, it was easy to proceed to the conclusion, as has often been done, that all art is immoral, hence anti-religious, hence ideologically unacceptable. Any ideological objection that can be brought against any art, however, must relate to some particular form and content of a particular art and not the art as such. This obvious platitude is deliberately ignored because the basic motivation of this school is neither moral nor religious but socio-political. This motivation seeks to promote attitudes hostile to all agencies of sensitive feeling and enlightened thought, including scientific research and artistic creation.

(iv) The generally negative public and official attitudes towards national art and culture have opened the gates for a resolute cultural invasion by western commercial and political agencies. Thus, in the last few years many corrupt and perverted versions of western culture focused on sex, violence, and profligacy, have provided the stable cultural fare for the sophisticated Pakistani boy and girl and the main outlet for his or her natural craving for self-expression.

(v) A second fairly influential point in the controversy is that culture and the arts, even though they may not be morally undesirable or ideologically reprehensible, are still something of a luxury which only the rich countries can afford. Developing countries, like Pakistan, must put first things first and devote all their resources to material developments, i.e. agriculture and industry, and let the harp and the fiddle wait until better days come round--just as the poor would put his daily bread before the pleasures of art."

We are unable to agree with this point of view.

### III

In a developing society, where the paucity of funds hinders all development, education constitutes personal capital and hence counts as a basic factor in development. Similarly, culture which represents the awareness of a society of its values, aims, and aspirations provides an important incentive for a national development. Any development efforts which ignore the emotional and spiritual aid provided by a nation's awareness of its own goals and aspirations are bound to engender antagonistic contradictions between the people and the agencies responsible for such development. Cultural activity in a developing nation is in many ways a form of socio-political activity and it is only through this activity that a people's full participation in nation-building efforts can be ensured.

Secondly, the arts are as much a factor in the material process of production as is education. Just as an investment in national education has a direct bearing on national productivity through creating superior skills, an investment in the

arts has a direct role in improving the standards and qualities of many forms of industrial production by superior fashioning and designing.

Thirdly, in the world of today, advertising and public relations are no longer regarded as a luxury but an important change in industrial revenues. Nations do their advertising and public relations through cultural exchange, i.e. exchanges of art products and performances.

Before the inception of Pakistan there was, understandably, no such entity as a Pakistani nation. Politically, the people of present-day Pakistan (leaving aside some minority groups) were part of the Indian Muslim Community. Ethnically and geographically they were called after the areas they inhabited, i.e. Bengalis, Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, Pathans, etc. Understandably, therefore, the culture of the new Pakistani nation when it emerged was not a finished, ready-made unified entity. The differences in social development among different regions of the country, differences of climate and geographical habitat, ethnic and historical factors and administrative divisions enforced by foreign rulers, all combined to make the culture of the people of the present-day Pakistan a composite of diversified patterns. Nevertheless, these people in all parts of Pakistan shared a common historical experience as well as those common ethical and cultural mores which originated from the religion they professed. It was this common religion and the sum total of these values and their expression in social life which made the Muslims of the sub-continent emerge as a separate and distinct cultural entity over a long period of history.

There is considerable difference of opinion on how precisely this culture should be defined. There appears to be some agreement, however, that the culture of the people of Pakistan includes everything which has been integrated into the

bloodstream of the social and historical life of our people. This conglomeration is principally composed of (a) the religion of Islam which provides the ethical and ideological basis for the people's way of life; (b) the indigenous cultures of different linguistic regions inherited from their own specific cultural past; and (c) elements of western culture absorbed since the days of British occupation. Added to the above are the distinctive cultures of minority groups who form a part of the Pakistan nation.

This raises some debatable issues, e.g. the issues of regional cultures. The basic and characteristic vocabulary of our people's culture, i.e. language, dress, customs, architecture, music, folk arts, etc. has naturally been better preserved in our villages and the countryside of the various regions than in big towns where dominative foreign influences have introduced a cosmopolitanism composed of many elements and characteristics which are not exclusively national. The growth of these folk cultures was arrested at various levels of development with the disintegration of feudal societies, the withdrawal of feudal patronage, and the concentration of power, wealth and educational and cultural facilities in the big towns. A reversal of this process of stagnation, therefore, and a revival of these regional cultures--the most authentic storehouse of what is distinctively Pakistani--seems obviously called for.

This raises two issues: first, whether such a revival would promote centrifugal tendencies of narrow regionalism and militate against the goals of national integration; and secondly, whether such a revival and the development of regional cultures would yield to some sort of a synthesis on the national plane.

The consensus of the opinions can be summarized as follows:

(a) In as much as all regional

cultures are an organic part of the totality of our national culture, love for the part does not preclude, and, in fact, predicates love for the whole. The confusion of thought which continues to plague this subject stems from one basic fallacy which seeks to counterpose national and regional cultures as antagonistic rivals and thus postulates that one can or would develop only at the expense of the other. This fallacy can be dispelled by a clear understanding of the obvious fact that just as the country is a geographical union of its constituent regions and the nation is a political union of the people inhabiting these regions, similarly, national culture is an aggregate of these regional cultures plus the unifying bonds of faith and history.

(b) A genuine synthesis of diverse forms of regional cultures into national patterns cannot be brought about by any forcible impositions through administrative means. It can only evolve through a gradual accumulation of affinities and a gradual assimilation of "sympathetic elements into a new compound." This is possible only if "diversity" is not misinterpreted as disunity and the natural process of the growth of diverse elements is not perverted or stifled by an impatience for immediate results.

#### IV

The problem of national identity also relates to the classical tradition of the arts. And this presents a different set of problems.

(A) Since this tradition, particularly in arts like music and dancing, is much older than the Muslim era, it contains many ingredients unrelated to Muslim social traditions.

(B) Since the Indo-Muslim civilization was not confined to the areas which now form Pakistan, it contains many ingredients which transcend our boundaries and cannot be deemed exclusively Pakistani.

Should this tradition, then, be owned and accepted wholesale or should it be recast into a mold nearer to the heart of a Pakistani? There is considerable difference of opinion over this issue. One school holds that to establish a completely different national and ideological identity it is necessary to discard all these ingredients, and if this is not possible with regard to a particular artistic tradition, it is best to do away with this tradition altogether. The opposite view is that by maligning a tradition evolved by Muslim society in the days of their greatest glory, a tradition which represents their main contribution to the cultural history of this subcontinent, we really malign our own history; that we are not justified in taking exception to what our ancestors, in whom we take pride, not only took no exception to but actively sponsored and patronized.

As for territorial limits, it should be obvious that some of the most basic components of our cultural heritage originated and evolved in areas beyond the present geographical boundaries of Pakistan. These include the Urdu language and literature and the whole body of Arabic, Iranian, Central Asian, and various other influences which have been integrated into our cultural tradition.

Lastly, there is the problem of re-valuating our cultural and artistic tradition in the light of contemporary experience, the adjustment of "continuities from the past" with the demands of the present."

Western societies, after nearly two hundred years of scientific, industrial, and technological advancement, mainly at the expense of the peoples they dominated, have introduced to the world techniques, methodologies, tools, materials, and modes of production unknown before. These advances, in their turn, have induced new habits of thought and cultural expression, thus modifying or eliminating various traditional elements in social or cultural life. In developing

and newly liberated countries, like Pakistan, this process has just begun. And along with it have emerged the horns of a dilemma--of tradition versus modernism.

This dilemma has generated three tendencies--one of blind imitateness of our own past in the name of tradition, the other of blind imitateness of everything Western in the name of modernism, the third of a tasteless hodge-podge of the two in order to have the best of both worlds. We are of the opinion that all these attitudes are incorrect, that:

(a) The continuity of tradition does not mean its perpetuation in toto. For instance, the place of our traditional arms, the sword and the spear, is no longer in the battlefield but in the museum. Nevertheless, they should be preserved, loved, and respected as part of our heritage.

(b) The acquisition of scientific, technological, industrial, and intellectual knowledge from the West does not necessitate a negation of our own historic personality.

Therefore those elements of our traditional culture which were only relevant to another set of conditions in the past and have outlived their utility cannot and should not be artificially perpetuated merely on the grounds of sentiment. The sentiment of love and respect alone should be enough. The application of new techniques in the arts, experimentation with new forms of expression, utilization of new materials, popularization of new artistic concepts should not be discouraged merely because they have originated in the West, provided the artist retains his/her identity as a member of his/her on community.

(c) A living and dynamic culture is one which provides conditions for maximum contribution by national talent for the aesthetic and intellectual enrichment of the community at the highest level of contemporary attainment. Our endeavor should be to create the most favorable conditions for this maximum contribution at appropriate levels.

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## ***Faiz Speech While Receiving Lenin Peace Prize in 1962***

**C**REATING words and shaping them in an orderly form is the vocation of poets and men of letters. But there are occasions in life when one is left speechless. This is one such occasion for me; I don't have the words with which to adequately thank the Lenin Peace Prize Committee, as well as other Soviet institutions and friends, for the honour they have conferred upon me. The Peace Prize is invaluable because it carries Lenin's honored and sacred name with it. Lenin is the most revered standard-bearer of liberty and peace in our time, peace which is a prerequisite for human life and its beauty and excellence. I do not find anything in my life and work which should have made me worthy of this single honour. However, I can think of one reason: the fervent yearning for peace and independence which has motivated me and my colleagues. There is such glory in the desire itself that even the humblest votaries of peace and independence are considered worthy of respect and recognition.

All except those who are affected by dementia or are given to crime are agreed that peace and independence are beautiful ideals. All can visualise that peace is reflected in the wheat fields, in poplar trees, in the brides veil, in the

laughing hands of children, in the poet's pen, artists brush. All of us can visualise that independence guarantees all these and servitude kills all qualities which distinguish man from beast-- qualities of intellect and intelligence, truth and justice, dignity and valour, piety and forbearance. Therefore, there should logically be no difference of opinion among reasonable people regarding the achievement and consolidation of peace and independence. Unfortunately, however, that common understanding is lacking because, from the beginning of time, contending forces have been at work. These forces are the forces of creation and destruction, of light and darkness, of justice and injustice. The interplay of these contrary forces continues to this day. At the same time, the problems with which we are faced today are different in character than the one that used to tax us in the past. War today does not mean bloody tribal strife. Nor do we mean by peace today merely that bloodshed should come to an end. Today, war means the annihilation of the human race itself. Today, peace is the precondition for the survival of humanity as such. On these two words-- annihilation or survival-- depends the continuation or culmination of human history. On these two words depends the destruction or survival of the human habitat. Again, man did not have, until our own time, sufficient control over natural resources and the forces of production to take care of the needs of all groups and clans. Thus, there was some justification in the past for the grab-and-run loot which has been so much a part of human history. That is not the situation today.

Human inventiveness has taken science and technology to such high levels of efficiency that all mouths can be fed, all physical needs can be met, provided that the limitless bounties of nature, the infinite means of production at the disposal of mankind, are geared not to satisfy the avarice or monopolists or special interest

groups but to ensure the welfare of all, and provided also that the scientific and industrial abilities of the human race are put to constructive rather than destructive purposes.

All this is possible only under a social structure raised upon the foundations of justice, equality, independence and the collective good, and not on avarice, exploitation and monopoly interests. This is something to work for and not merely to talk about. This requires practical effort and in this effort, the struggle for peace and the struggle for independence converge and become indivisible. This is so because the forces which work for peace are also the forces which work for independence, and the forces working against independence are also the forces working for the destruction of peace. On the one hand there are the imperialist forces, whose interests and whose monopolies can survive only through force and thrive only through jealous competitions. Pitted against them are those who value human life more than banks and factories, those who love to work together rather than to order others about. In short, in politics and morality, in literature and art, in day-to-day life, this struggle between constructive and destructive forces is being waged on several fronts, in myriad shapes. For those who cherish independence and love peace, it is necessary to be vigilant on every front. For instance, even apart from this inevitable conflict between imperialist and non-imperialist forces, there are violent differences among countries which attained independence recently. Such differences exist between Pakistan and neighboring India, between one Arab state and another, and between one African state and another. It is obvious that only those Powers can benefit from these differences which are opposed to world peace and universal brotherhood. It is essential, therefore, that peace-loving peoples should think about these differences and help find just solutions.

A few days ago, when the whole world was excited by the latest Soviet achievements in space, the thought came to my mind that now that we could have a glimpse of our own planet from other stars, how foolish are these small mean nesses, this desire to cut up the world into small parcels of land, this desire to dominate small groups of people. Isn't there even a small group of aware, honest and just human beings among us who can convince the others that now that the passageways to the entire universe are being opened up in front of our very eyes, and the riches of all creation are there for humanity to use, we should dismantle all the military bases and throw these bombs and rockets and guns into the sea, so that we may go forth together to conquer this wide universe where there is room enough for all mankind, where no one need fight anyone else, where there is limitless space and worlds without number? I am convinced that despite numerous difficulties on the way, we can succeed in convincing humankind of these simple truths.

I am convinced that the humankind which has never surrendered to its enemies, will emerge victorious yet, and that, at long last, hatred, repression and war will give way to peace and universal brotherhood. I am convinced that we shall all live together in harmony as Hafiz, the Persian poet, had wanted us to live long ago:

Khalal pazir bawad har bina ki mi bini  
Bajuz bina-i-mohabbat ki khali as khalal ast.

(Every foundation that we have seen has been flawed,  
but for the foundation of love, for love alone is flawless) ●

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## Com Varghese Martyrdom Day

**THE** Martyrdom of Com Varghese was observed at Mananthavady in Wayanad district on February 18, 2011. Com Varghese who left CPI(M) and joined the CPI(ML) in the wake of Naxalbari struggle led several valiant struggles against the feudal forces who were ruthlessly exploiting the adivasis with the connivance of the rightist governments led by the Congress and then by the CPI in the late 60s and early 70s. Com Varghese was martyred on February 18, 1970. A criminal gang of police under instructions from the then Kerala government and with the help of some informers took Com Varghese into custody and brutally killed him and dubbed it as an 'encounter death.' Recently, one of the perpetrators of the crime, one Mr. Laxmana, then a DySP and later an IG, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a CBI court as the whole episode came out with the confession of a police constable who was forced to fire the bullets that killed the comrade. Consequently, the martyrdom of Com. Varghese has once again become a matter of intense discussion in Kerala.

It is in this context that the CPI(ML) state committee decided to observe the 41st anniversary of Com Varghese's martyrdom along with a prolonged political campaign highlighting the political significance of the struggle led by Com Varghese. As part of the campaign, a souvenir commemorating the life and revolutionary activities of comrade Varghese was published. Com KN Ramachandran, general secretary CPI(ML) released the souvenir in a Convention entitled 'the challenges confronting revolutionary movement' at Mananthavady. Com Sulochana, who was a contemporary of Com Varghese and who was subjected to brutal police atrocities during those days received the first copy of the souvenir. Comrades Thettamala Krishnankutty, P.S. Govindan, Adv Sabi Joseph and others spoke on the occasion. The convention was followed by a rally in which hundreds of comrades from various parts of the district participated culminating in public meeting in the evening at Mananthavady town. ●

# *The Maoists And The Malkangiri Charade*

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Sharmistha Choudhury

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**B**ETWEEN the Maoists and the media, the Indian masses are being treated to a dose of the liveliest drama. On the night of the 22nd of February, the national media reported that the Maoists had released the twin hostages of the Malkangiri collector and junior engineer, and that had the whole of Orissa cheering in jubilation. On the evening of the 23rd, the media did a volte face and announced that the Maoists had released only the engineer and were putting forward new demands as price for the release of the collector! The Maoists, it appeared from the latest available reports, were arm-twisting the Orissa government for the release of five of their comrades.

Whatever be the outcome of the abduction episode, it is now evident that our Maoist comrades appear to have lost all trace of sanity and look set to chart a new course for the Indian revolution. In Bengal, the Maoists have openly declared that they will support the right-wing Trinamool Congress, if Mamata Banerjee promises to release all political prisoners (read Maoists) after winning the forthcoming Assembly elections in the state. In Orissa, they are promising cooperation with the government if their demands are met and their important comrades released. And all the while, class struggle is kept in indefinite abeyance. Indeed, our Maoist comrades have reduced class struggle to isolated acts of terror and bargaining with the government!

Consider the course of events. Subsequent to Jairam Ramesh's granting of environmental clearance to Posco, the people of the affected villages intensified their resistance to the proposed project. Prior to the abduction fiasco, the spotlight was all set to be turned on what might have become a decisive battle between the people and the state. Even as late as on the 15th of February, the bourgeois media, ever reluctant to report people's struggles, were cautiously reporting the escalation of tension in the areas, following the people's renewed resolve to put up a fight till the end. Then on the 16th, the Maoists kidnapped a collector and junior engineer, and immediately all attention was diverted from the Posco resistance to the abduction theatre. Posco and the people's struggle against it receded to the background as the story of the kidnapping of a pair of 'popular' government officials captured the attention of the national media.

The Maoists presented a charter of 14 demands to the Orissa govt as the price for releasing the hostages. Govt representatives and mediators handpicked by the Maoists for the purpose went into a huddle, deliberating and debating over which of the demands could be met and how and when. The demands ranged from the release of jailed Maoists to the issuance of land pattas to the tribal people of Koraput and Malkangiri. In other words, democratic rights which are issues of people's struggles were sought to be seized by the simple expedient of abducting a couple of officials and holding them as hostage.

What a lesson in revolutionary politics for the masses! What need to organize, to fight for rights, to take to the streets in protest, to rise up in rebellion and revolt? So what if people are being evicted from their homestead in Dhinkia or Binayak Sen is incarcerated in Chhattisgarh? So what if scams are rocking the country and the prices of essential commodities are scaling dizzying heights? All you need are a handful of Maoist bravehearts to mastermind an abduction

and the government will bend itself backward to accede to your demands. Who knows, even the revolution might may be made to happen this way! If it isn't out of sheer lunacy that the Maoists are preaching this brand of 'politics' to the people, then they surely stand guilty of an utter and irredeemable political and ideological bankruptcy. Whatever be the reason, it is rooted in a habitual alienation from the masses.

And it is precisely this alienation from the masses that is driving the Maoists to desperation. Nowhere are they at the helm of, or even a part of, any people's movement. On another plane they seem to have even less to say about government policies than the parliamentary Opposition. Indeed the CPI-CPM can claim to have played more of a visible role against neo-liberal offensives like privatization and disinvestment than the Maoists. The terrorist line they practice make it impossible for them to organize the people against government policies or intervene politically in any matter of governance. So if the Maoists have to remain at all politically relevant in the simmering cauldron of Indian politics, they have no option but to resort to sensational acts be it the explosion of a mine or the abduction of a government official. Let every armchair revolutionary who cheers the Maoists on in their foolhardy acts of bravado be reminded that such acts are no cause for celebration but a grim reminder that as a political force the Maoists are getting more and more cornered and left with no other way of asserting their existence. Tragically for the Maoists, the state is only too well aware of their plight and is getting ready to take full advantage of their alienation from the masses.

The state, thanks to this latest kidnapping burlesque hosted by the Maoists, has emerged as a benevolent and rational institution. Not only did it get the engineer released with no bloodshed, it was also 'magnanimous' enough to meet so many of the Maoists' demands. It ordered the

release of Maoist activists and also agreed to drop the cases against some of them. The fact that it is the state's duty to give land rights to the tribals and work towards their welfare without its officials being held hostage for it, has been conveniently forgotten amidst this brouhaha. The fact that the state has only done its duty and not been unduly charitable in dropping some 9,013 cases involving petty offences against the tribals is all but lost. The message that has gone out is that the state has been 'generous' and 'condescending' enough to meet the Maoists' demands. Basic democratic demands, which the state must be forced by popular pressure to yield, have thus assumed the character of tall claims which can be met only if extreme measures like abduction of government officials are adopted.

The state has also made it abundantly clear that it is willing to accommodate abduction of its officials to an extent, but will not tolerate mass movements. For the state, it is easier to deal with sporadic acts of terror than face the wrath of mass movements. It may declare that it will stop combing operations against the Maoists, but nothing will bring it to refrain from attempting to crush the people's resistance against Posco. It may release some Maoist activists but it will not cede an inch to other left and revolutionary forces which are represented in mass movements. Again, if the Maoists insist on too many favours, it may drop the carrot and pick up the stick in all ferocity.

The Maoists have set a dangerous example. If their negotiations with the Orissa government break down and the state comes down heavily on them, the people cannot be expected to rally in their favour. Rather, the people will expect the Maoists to retaliate with further acts of terror maybe a few more abductions and sit back and watch the action. The Maoists may have to pay a heavy price for encouraging the people to remain passive spectators while their bravehearts fight it out with the government. ●

## Prime Minister Should Take Responsibility For This Antrix-Devas Deal?

**[Antrix-Devas Deal Scrapped: The** Antrix-Devas Deal had all the settings of a mega scam. How could the chiefs of the ISRO went ahead with such a deal even without the knowledge of concerned ministries, as is now repeated by the ministers, with a private firm owned by an ex ISRO chief and having links with US, Germany and other imperialist countries? And if the CAG had not asked certain questions and The Hindu group of papers had not pursued the matter exposing the deal, what would have happened? Even after the cat was out of the bag and the deal was finally going to be scrapped, that the US and Germany tried to influence the government to go ahead with it, shows that not something but many things are rotten in the whole deal and the major players involved in it. It is in this context we are reproducing the press statement we had issued on 12th February.]

**T**HE DEAL between Antrix (the commercial arm of ISRO) and the private firm, Devas Multimedia, if it got implemented would have given this company virtually 20 years of free access to scarce S-band spectrum worth an estimated Rs. 2 lakh crores, a step ahead of the 1.76 lakh crores 2-G spectrum deal for which the ex minister is in jail. The gravity of the ISRO deal with the knowledge of sensitive ministries and prime minister himself involving a 'highly strategic department', as the government spokespersons always mention, is much more than even the 2-G deal or a case of a scam. The act of the prime minister's office to deny any such deal like its failure to stop the 2-G spectrum deal even when it could intervene and stop it, make it a serious act against the interest of the country. The gravity of the matter increases further as there are reports that the US and German agencies are putting pressure on the government to go ahead with this anti-national deal.

The government in this country led by the prime minister, the state governments and the judiciary have no hesitation to close their eyes when somebody is shot down calling him anti national or send him to jail on trumped up sedition charges as in the case of Binayak Sen. But the ISRO and its commercial wing under the charge of prime minister is agreeing to a deal with a private company in a matter involving strategic importance! According to the repeated statements of the government of the time, a citizen is even denied right to write or talk about matters of strategic importance. But here a mega scam is taking place under the very nose of the prime minister involving the strategically important ISRO.! While the deal is a mega scam, more than the money involved, it is an act, according to so many government statements, which involves an act of sedition. Can the people of this country keep silence over it?

During the Narasinha Rao government a serious matter had come up involving the leakage of strategically important matters from ISRO through a woman from Maldives who had connections with one or more scientists of the same institution. In spite of people's protests the matter was buried. Should we allow once again this to happen?

The CPI(ML) appeals to all patriotic democratic forces to raise their voice so that this mega scam-deal is scrapped and the prime minister and all others responsible for it are made answerable for this scam and seditious act. ●

CC, CPI(ML)

## All India Meeting of Cultural Activists

**THE** Approach Paper on cultural front adopted by the Central Committee of the Party has given the call for taking initiative to launch such a front at all India level. It has stated: “The revolutionary struggle to resist imperialist culture and establish a people’s culture should reject all discriminations based on religion, caste, race, gender, nationality and language. Such a culture shall have a revolutionary democratic content and an international approach. The absolutism of “identity politics” that treats each social issue in an isolated and disaggregated manner that breeds parochial and sectarian interests should be exposed. Every area of social activity certainly needs intervention according to the specificities there. They can however ultimately be resolved only as part of overthrowing the entire system of exploitation and oppression.

“Today, workers, peasants, adivasis, dalits, women and all oppressed sections are rising up against imperialist globalization and various neo-colonial projects throughout the length and breadth of the country. Culture being a living process, these and other struggles by people also bear the imprint of a revolutionary culture though in a rudimentary form. A revolutionary cultural movement should be capable of nurturing this people’s culture based on the rich experiences of past, progressive cultural initiatives. Though there are efforts to move along revolutionary cultural activities, they end up as localized, issue-based and ad-hoc attempts. Since they are confined to immediate slogans, the ideological-political aspects associated with the development of an all India cultural forum are seldom addressed by them. On account of sectarian hang-over, many among the revolutionary ranks do not recognize the cardinal importance of a revolutionary cultural offensive at all India level. Even the ideological-political lessons of Cultural Revolution are not properly assimilated. Taking all these factors in to consideration, the tasks in front of the cultural front and its link with revolutionary political struggle are to be emphasized.

“This task can be fulfilled only by building up an all India cultural forum which is capable of ideologically and organizationally leading the cultural movement on the one hand and taking up tasks at state and regional levels as per concrete conditions through creative innovations on the other. With such a revolutionary initiative the neo-colonial cultural onslaught should be resisted with the firm resolve to strive for people’s democratic culture.”

Based on this call a meeting of the revolutionary cultural activists, progressive writers, creative artists and revolutionary intellectuals is organized on 26th and 27th of March at Kolkata. The meeting will work out plans to initiate the building of a all India revolutionary cultural front. ●

## Slum and Housing Right Activists Meeting

**THE** Basti Suraksha Movement in Bhubaneswar is passing through a critical period in its history of nine years of existence and struggles to protect and expand the rights of the people living in the slums of the city. In the last few days it had to wage a life and death struggle to save the houses of the slum dwellers and it is still continuing. It is in this situation the Basti Suraksha Manch is organizing a rally on 19th and a Convention on 20th of March at Bhubaneswar. In continuation of this rally and Convention it is decided to organize a meeting of activists working in the slum movements and engaged in housing right questions all over India at Bhubaneswar on 21st March. This meeting will discuss the following Charter of Demands of the slum dwellers and house less people and chalk out a program to launch an all India movement for this purpose.

### **Charter of Demands of the Slum Dwellers and Houseless People**

The living condition of the slum dwellers and the houseless people in the urban areas are worsening day by day and it has become a serious political question nowadays. In Bhubaneswar in Orissa and in other cities in the country, the struggles of the slum dwellers who are being evicted and displaced on account of the neo liberal policies imposed are intensifying day by day.

Historically, the slums have come up as an inalienable component of capitalist urbanization as a part of the industrialization under it. Capitalist penetration in to agricultural field has led to large scale migration of pauperized peasantry in to urban areas in search of livelihood. Massive throwing out of workers from the factories coupled with the swelling of the ranks of the unemployed and under employed under the anti people policies have contributed to worsening of the situation, with slums mushrooming in all urban areas. And these mushrooming slums are the inexhaustible source of cheap labour for the elite classes in the urban areas.

In India, like in other Afro- Asian – Latin American countries, slums are the products of the colonial period. This problem has further intensified in the neo colonial period. Under neo liberal regime, the intensification of the tendencies such as corporatization of agriculture, and onslaught of corporate forces and land mafias in to agricultural land, forests and areas where mines are developed are compelling millions of adivasis, dalits and pauperized and landless peasantry to flock to the cities in search of livelihood. Now in the context of innumerable neo colonial projects like SEZs and due to massive land grab and encroachment of urban lands by the speculative forces and the corporate houses with the connivance of

the state forces the slum dwellers are being forcibly evicted, making their life more miserable.

This situation calls for mobilization of these millions of slum dwellers and houseless people for housing rights based on the following Charter of Demands.

1. Immediately ban slum evictions.
2. Rehabilitate all slum dwellers with adequate and sufficient dwelling facilities. Ensure slum dwellers share in the urban property.
3. Provide water, sanitation, electricity healthcare and educational facilities to all slum dwellers.
4. Ensure statutory ration system for subsidised food for all slum dwellers. Include all slum dwellers in the BPL list.
5. Enact and enforce urban land and property ceiling.
6. Suppress all land and real estate mafias.
7. Stop police atrocities on slum people. Ensure their democratic rights.
8. Abolish the neo liberal policies. Implement a pro people, pro nature development policy.

The activists from outside Orissa should reach on 18th evening or 19th morning of March so that they can also participate in the rally and next day's Convention in order to get an understanding about the movement. ●

## TN: Struggle against Criminal Acts

**A JOINT** campaign was organised on 7th February opposing the criminal acts of the local DMK leaders. The campaign wall posters were destroyed by the police and with the knowledge of it a mafia gang surrounded the house of CPI(ML) leaders at night. The police did not allow a public meeting condemning the murderous the All Party Committee against the attack. A complaint has been launched against this action of the police. Feeling insecure about the coming election, DMK men have started this type of criminal attacks with the connivance of the police officers. As a result of the propaganda campaign of the Party and the joint committee and the publicity it received in the media top police officers have assured to take action. In spite of it the campaign is still continuing.

### Campaign against Scams

**AT CHENNAI** a public meeting was held on 24th January evening exposing so called republic of India which is stinking. The meeting was presided by com. Vedanayagam, Chennai dist secretary. The main speakers were Mathi Parayanar of Ambedkar Makkal Patai, Airport Murthy of Paraiyar Peravai, Sengol of Labour Republic front, Mandhaneyan of Makkal Valvurimai Poratta Iyakkam, Ad. Manohar, P.T. Shanmugasundaram, Party state secretary and Kalandurai, Party state executive member spoke

explaining the importance of the campaign organized by the Party and DPF when mega scams are reported continuously. The participation of various organizations especially working among the dalits and working class have given mass base to the state level DPF being built up to launch anti state struggles. The meeting exposed the ruling system and its attacks on the common people. At Madurai, Coimbatore, Kanyakumari also campaign held.

### DPF Initiative in state

Initiative to form Democratic People's Front at state level is being taken up discussions with following organizations based on a letter sent to them pointing out the ten point program: Ambedkar Makkal Patai, Paraiyar Peravai, Sirupanmai Makkal Kalagam, Puratchigara Ambedkar Vilipunarvu Pasarai, Labor Republic Front, Makkal Vlipunarvu Poratta, Ambedkar Siruthaigal Movement, Tamilar Republic Front, Tamilaga Vodukappattor Vididalai Movement, Caste Anihilation Liberation Front, CPI(ML) Makkal Vidudhalai, Mao Makkal Maruthuva Kalagam. ●

## DPF: All India Convention and Parliament March

**WHEN** the combination of ruling parties at centre and in the states ranging from Congress, BJP to regional parties and CPI(M) led Left Front with their dedication to neo liberal policies has made their Indian Republic stinking with mega scams and price rise. It is in this situation the Democratic People's Front formed based on a ten point program including the firm resolve to throw out the neo liberal policies which are intensifying neo colonial slavery, is organizing an all India convention on 27<sup>th</sup> February at Ambedkar Bhavan near Jhandevalan Metro station in which representatives from states from Kerala to Punjab and from Maharashtra to Manipur are expected to participate. The Convention shall work out plans to launch country wide movement against price rise and scams mobilizing the people for mass action. It will be followed by a Parliament March on 28 February demanding an end to price rise and the arrest of all scamsters and the confiscation of the trillions of Rupees stashed away by them in the foreign banks. ●



23 Jan, Bhopal, demonstration against Price Rise and Scams

## *AIRWO's Call on International Women's Day*

# Onward To The Establishment Of A New World Order

**THIS** March 8 will mark the completion of 100 years of the proclamation of International Women's Day. 100 years is a long time – in this case, certainly long enough to prove beyond much doubt that the capitalist-imperialist world order is incapable of granting equality and emancipation to women. In no corner of the world have women, of any class, colour or economic status whatsoever, gained complete liberation – and this despite the remarkable strides made in science and technology, despite the over-flow of social wealth, despite this age having created wonders undreamt of ever before. Capitalism has been patriarchal, unfair and unkind not just to working class women, but to women of its own class as well. It has emphatically established that it will brook no compromise with the sanctity of private property and the existence of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society even if it means denying its own women democracy and liberty. Thus, by consolidating and perpetuating the rule of private property in society, capitalism has pledged to keep the whole of womankind forever doomed to the status of second class citizens.

India under neo-colonial domination is far worse off than the developed countries of the world as far as the status of women is concerned. Here the masses of women, denied even the basic civic amenities, continue to lead miserable lives, battling incessantly against poverty, hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, joblessness, patriarchal atrocities and sexual violence. A slender section of the women population has access to education and jobs, but that by no means gives them freedom from gender discrimination and exploitation both at home and in the workplace. Working women or homemakers – patriarchy spares none, and the Indian state plays a crucial role in keeping women subject to patriarchal oppression. Despite the Indian constitution pompously declaring that no one shall be discriminated against by virtue of their gender, the state continues to see to it that women can never become the equal of men. Not only has it failed to establish real equality of the sexes in society, it has also not encouraged the advancement of formal equality. The basic principle of equal pay for equal work is flagrantly flouted, the government cannot bring itself to pass the Bill providing for reservation for women in elected bodies, the proposed Bill against sexual harassment at the workplace is so full of loopholes that even the ruling parties are crying foul, there is no mechanism in place to ensure the safety of women outside and within the home, rape and sexual assault have become intrinsic forms of state terror... the list of injustices suffered by women is veritably endless.

When the state is itself a perpetrator of women's oppression, it is naturally futile to limit the struggle for women's emancipation to a struggle for reforms within the system. It is necessary to orient the struggle for the emancipation of women towards the overthrow of the present order and the establishment of socialism, leading to a world order where the smallest vestige of domination of one sex by the other will have become a thing of the distant past. Today the world is experiencing an upswing in the struggle of the workers against capitalist exploitation, an upswing in the struggles of many countries and peoples for their liberation and independence. Countries are rebelling against dependence and neo-colonialism. The world women's movement too is alive and struggling for its demands. In most countries it has joined forces with the working class and people's and liberation movements.

This struggle, for the establishment of a new, gender-friendly world, has gained momentum over the last few years with militant women from across the world coming together to host the World Women's Conference of rand-and-file women in Caracas, Venezuela, from March 4-8 this year. The World Women's Conference will see rand-and-file women from all continents – women workers, peasant women, migrant women, unemployed women, homemakers, women of the indigenous people, scientists and artists – unite in a project of social and political emancipation. Thus the World Women's Conference calls for an amalgamation of forces in the awakening of the world women's movement. It gives the call to advance for the liberation of women in a society without exploitation and oppression.

AIRWO gives its wholehearted support to this global endeavour and wishes the Conference a great success. On its part, apart from sending its delegate to the World Women's Conference, AIRWO pledges to carry forward the struggle for the establishment of a new world order. It calls upon all democratic and revolutionary women of the country to unite against the ruling system, against the government as well as the parliamentary Opposition who openly collude to deprive women of rights and liberty, against the neo-liberal policies of the government which contribute to intensified pauperization of the masses and consequent further degradation in the status of women. On the occasion of the completion of the 100th year of International Women's Day, AIRWO calls upon women and men of the labouring classes, women and men with an egalitarian vision, to unite in the struggle against world imperialism and its Indian lackeys and press forward on the road of overthrowing private property and patriarchy. ●

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**Rally on Comrade Vergheese Martyr Day  
at Mananthapady, Wynad, Kerala on 18 February, 2011**