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**Organ of the  
Central Committee CPI(ML)**

# **NEW DEMOCRACY**

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# **Ongoing Struggle of Peasantry is Rooted in their Abysmal Conditions and Govt. not caring for Peasants or the People**

Aditya Prakash

**26<sup>th</sup>** September marked completion of ten months since farmers were prevented from entering the Capital and have been camping at the border sites since. Farmers had come to Delhi demanding repeal of three black Agricultural Acts and have been on continuous agitation demanding repeal of these black Acts and making MSP a legal right. Over these ten months the peasant agitation has spread to all corners of the country and drawn wide support from different sections of people. There have been two Bharat Bandhs and several road blocks besides continuous sit-ins at a large number of places. While demands of the peasantry have been all India in nature from the beginning, it has been gradually becoming a really all India movement in its spread.

RSS-BJP Govt. has hatched a number of conspiracies to suppress this movement and serve foreign and domestic corporate in whose service these black Acts have been enacted. Repression on the protesters on the one hand and on the other defaming the movement in the name of provocative acts engineered by the Govt., have been the most commonly used tactics of this Govt. However, peaceful mass protests of farmers have continued undeterred. This

peaceful assertion of the peasant masses has been in tune with very large participation of the people. This has unnerved the Govt. What can be better proof of this peaceful character than the fact that despite more than 700 peasants having died at the borders, two peasant activists having been killed by the police and four by ruling party hoodlums, not a single policeman has even been injured in protests. There were fake reports of a large number of policemen having been injured on 26<sup>th</sup> January but nothing has even been heard of these injuries or injured when the farmers' determination foiled the conspiracy of the RSS-BJP Govt. to derail and suppress the movement.

With north Indian states being the epicenter of this movement, RSS-BJP Govts. in Haryana and UP have gone all out in suppressing the movement but their attacks have been resisted by the farmers. RSS has mobilized its cadres, hooligans and has launched attacks along with state-controlled security forces. These attacks, however, have not dampened the morale of the peasant masses, rather each attack has led to invigoration of the movement. September 5 Rally at Muzaffarnagar in West UP was a pointer to the widespread support enjoyed by the movement among the peasant masses as well as general people. Moreover, this Rally marked an important milestone in healing the wounds inflicted by the anti-Muslim violence engineered by the RSS-BJP to deepen communal divide in the build-up to the 2014 elections. Participants in Muzaffarnagar meeting from Punjab fondly remember the warmth of the reception accorded to them by Muslim inhabitants of Muzaffarnagar. The peasant movement has bridged the communal divide to some extent, a divide so assiduously deepened by the ruling communal fascists.

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Peasant movement had called for an all India Bandh on

September 27. This Bandh evoked widespread participation. This heralded extension of the movement to areas where it had not been sharp despite its all India character from the beginning. Better response to Bandh call was seen in parts of UP other than West UP where besides Punjab, Haryana and Northern and Eastern Rajasthan, even earlier protest calls had evoked strong response; in Northern Madhya Pradesh where response had been good earlier but somewhat lukewarm in between; total Bandh in Kerala where both ruling LDF and opposition Congress supported Bandh. Even in other states, Bandh Call evoked better response like in Odisha and in Barak Valley in Assam. In Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Bihar, almost in all states, bigger rallies were taken out on Bandh day and transport was blocked for several hours at a number of spots. In brief, the Bandh call showed a growing movement.

But the reactionary rulers are hell bent on not accepting the demands of peasantry e.g. repeal of three black Agri Acts and giving MSP for all crops a legal status. This Govt. is so beholden to foreign and domestic corporate that it has taken a total inflexible stand in meeting farmers' demands. Reactionary rulers are grossly underestimating the resolve of the peasants to take this struggle to its victorious end. They are failing to realize that the peasantry is fighting an existential battle for the survival of Indian agriculture and their own survival. This resolve is rooted in the abysmal conditions in which the Indian peasantry and rural masses find themselves. The continuing agitation and the resolve displayed by the peasantry have also surprised some intellectual supporters of the movement. This is at least partly related to their lack of appreciation of the dire conditions of Agriculture. What the peasants are fighting for are not only their own interests but also for

the interests of the vast masses constituting overwhelming majority of the Indian people. Their concerns, sought to be made invisible by the priorities of corporate controlled media and made incomprehensible by the corporate funded and Govt. controlled academia, are forcefully thrust into the foreground by the ongoing peasants' movement.

Even as the Indian Govt. is following WTO ordained agenda of imperialist countries to move Indian agriculture away from food grain production in the name of cultivating high value crops for the imperialist markets and showing day dreams to gullible of increasing income, the worsening conditions of nutrition level of the Indian people has struck home the reality i.e. widespread hunger and malnutrition. According to Global Hunger Index prepared jointly by Irish *Concern Worldwide* and German *Welt Hunger Hilfe*, India has slipped to 101st position in 2021 of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94<sup>th</sup>. India is behind neighbours Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. The report terms level of hunger in India “alarming”. This stark reality makes itself felt to everyone except the ruling machinery in service of reactionary rich. Who can fail to see widespread malnutrition with 46% of children below the age of five being malnourished and over 70% of the people taking less than 2400 calories per day which is itself a poverty level intake. It is startling that despite such widespread malnutrition, allocation towards Children's nutrition has been a mere 0.57% of the Union Budget 2021-22. The Govt. has debunked the Global Hunger Index (calculated on the basis of total undernourishment of the population, child stunting, child wasting and child mortality parameters calculated for children below five years of age). Even the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) has found alarming levels of malnutrition among children. Its fourth round conducted in

2015-16 found prevalence of underweight, stunted and wasted children under five at 35.7%, 38.4% and 21.0%. Over a fifth of Indian children are wasted, even worse than in 1991 when every sixth child was wasted as per first NFHS in 1992-93. More than one third of world's malnourished children are in India while India has nearly one sixth of world population. Prevalence of underweight children in India is nearly double that of Sub Saharan Africa. Ruling classes and their Govt. do not take responsibility of this abysmal condition and their media spin masters do not dig this well of absolute misery, destitution, poverty and hunger.

While this dire condition is related to worsening conditions of overwhelming majority of the people, even on a macro scale the condition is quite alarming. Per capital cereal availability has declined from earlier being only 490 gms per day (176 kg per year in 2019) while it was 510 gms per day (186.2 Kg per year) in 1991, the year India is claimed to have embarked on its path of prosperity. Overflowing grain stores of the Govt. signify shrinkage of Public Distribution System while overstuffed markets signify relative decline in the purchasing power of the people and not in the least the grain being surplus to the needs of the people. Needs in the present system in India is measured by effective demand i.e. demand backed by money to purchase. This should have been an eye-opener to those who advocate moving away from today's crop pattern but has not been able to open the eyes shut by the service of foreign and domestic corporate. And yet the whole edifice of the black laws being thrust upon Indian peasantry to bring agriculture totally under corporate control is being erected disregarding not only the conditions of the Indian peasantry but also the needs of the Indian people. Interests of Indian people demand measures to improve agricultural production and making food grains available to

the overwhelming majority of the people. These need more support to peasant masses, better production conditions i.e. availability of inputs at lower costs, availability of new techniques without cost or with minimal cost and remunerative prices rewarding them for their labour and providing other means of employment to cover the period of less work in Agriculture and for the unemployed and underemployed rural population.

That Indian agriculture is in dire straits is not in doubt. But the Govt. is utilizing this to totally ruin Agriculture. It is the condition of peasants which is propelling the present struggle. Some argue that, given these conditions, why are peasants fighting against these laws? They fail to see that the Govt. is robbing them of their present while offering them a life of unemployment, helplessness and destitution for the future. They are not fighting because they are happy with the present situation; they are fighting because of the dreaded future that this Govt. is bent on forcing upon them. That is why the demand for MSP as a legal right has gained vast support among peasantry. At present only a small section of peasants are able to avail of it and that too for a small number of crops (23 at present.) That explains why the peasants are fighting on how the MSP is to be calculated, in particular basing on C2 as the base for determining the MSP for different crops.

For policy initiatives favouring Corporate, Govt. picks on the experts favouring Corporate and ignores the recommendations of those who do not favour such a course or not to the extent demanded by the Corporate. Such was the fate of the recommendations of the High Level Committee on Long-Term Grain Policy which had submitted its report in 2002 during the term of NDA I. According to Dr. Madhura Swaminathan, a member of that Committee, the Committee had suggested that the MSP be



based on the C2 cost of production (which refers to all costs including the imputed costs of family labour, owned capital and rental on owned land). The Committee had also suggested that MSP become more widespread and that it be given statutory status. Noting the nutritional needs of the people of the country the Committee had suggested “reintroduce a universal public distribution system” thereby dissenting from the so-called targeted PDS favoured by the Govt. which want to reduce expenditure on PDS to reduce Govt. bill even as the malnutrition is so widespread that as mentioned above nearly 70% of the people consume less than 2400 calories a day a poverty level estimate. The committee had recommended that PDS be delinked from poverty alleviation programmes which should be pursued separately. By making PDS a part of poverty alleviation, successive govts. have only increased levels of poverty by pushing more people below it.

However, recommendation of that Committee were thrown into dustbin by NDA I and kept there during two terms of UPA till Modi led RSS-BJP Govt. showed that the Govt. is meant to serve only the rich and powerful and even pretense of caring for the people was thrown aside. People are being asked to forget the present miseries and gloat in the assumed greatness of the past. New experts have been floated who argue that future rests with success of Corporate as the Govt. feels that future of the country is best served being in the camp of western imperialist powers.

The powerful peasant struggle going on for over last ten months is rooted in the objective conditions of Indian agriculture and peasant masses. Recently published report of the 77<sup>th</sup> round of National Sample Survey gives a glimpse of what peasantry of the country is suffering under. It shows the abyss in which the Govts. have thrown the vast populace of the country. The Survey covers

the data collected between June 2018 to June 2019. According to the Survey, of the 172.433 million rural households 54% are agricultural households and 46% are non-agricultural, the distinction is partly functional and partly related to defining a household. Of the agricultural households 88.1% of the households own less than 2 hectares (ha) of land with 0.6% owning upto .01 ha, 34.2% owning from 0.01 to 0.4 ha, 35.6% owning 0.4 to 1 ha and 17.7% owning between 1 to 2 ha of land. Taken all rural households, 50.2% own 0.01 to 0.4 ha, 20.6% 0.4 to 1 ha and 9.9% having land between 1 to 2 ha i.e. 80.7% owning between 0.01 to 2 ha of land.

According to Survey figures, Marginal & Small (up to 1 ha) and Semi-medium (between 1 and 2 ha) peasants were 80.4% in 2002-03 (59<sup>th</sup> round) of these marginal& small were 69.6% and semi-medium 10.8%. Their numbers rose to 85.4% in 2012-13 (70<sup>th</sup> round) with marginal & small peasants being 75.4% and semi-medium being 10% while in the current 77<sup>th</sup> round their number was 85.8% with 76.5% being marginal& small and 9.3% being semi-medium. Percentage of landless was 10% in 59<sup>th</sup> round, 7.4% in 70<sup>th</sup> round and 8.2% in 77<sup>th</sup> round. To whatever extent the Survey finding capture the facts on the ground, it is clear that small and marginal peasants are fighting an existential battle and need vast improvement in their conditions. This is corroborated by the other observable facts pertaining to their conditions. Their present struggle to save their land is a necessary beginning of their struggles but they need many measures including better prices for the fruits of their labour.

The crisis faced by the Indian peasantry is shown in the income drawn Agriculture. The Survey brings out startling figures. Of the marginal farmers i.e. less than 0.4 hectares, income from hiring out their labour is about Rs. 4,491 per month while from

crops it is only Rs. 977 per month and from livestock Rs. 1162 per month. The same figures for those owning land between 0.4 to 1 hectare (Small) is Rs. 3906 from labour done outside, Rs. 2693 per month from sale of crops and Rs. 1335 per month from livestock. Those owning between 1 ha to 2 ha (Semi-medium) earn Rs. 3647 per month from labour outside, Rs. 5269 per month from the crops and Rs. 1845 from livestock. These figures obviously take into account the income reported by the households i.e. it may not bring on record some income which is used for household consumption. From these figures it is clear that those less than 1 ha of land earn more from labour outside and less from the income from crops and even including income from livestock. The proportion of income from Agriculture rises in proportion of the ownership of land. Survey does not deal with labour time spent on agricultural operations as compared to labour done outside but from all accounts this is more in case of small and even marginal peasants especially if one takes into account the labour spent by all family members of a peasant family. This brings home the deep crisis in which agriculture has been mired in the country. Why peasants continue in this has been often explained by a number of studies and works. The abysmal level of income from Agriculture has been widely commented upon by the mainstream newspapers as well, who have sought to draw the attention of the govt. to the need for a better deal for the peasantry, but the present govt. beholden to foreign and domestic corporate, has just ignored the conditions of peasantry while continuing its push for handing over of Agriculture to foreign and domestic Corporate.

Indebtedness of the peasantry as well as quantum of debts as disclosed by the Survey too rises with land ownership. 27.8% of the marginal, 34.4% of the small and 70.2% of semi-medium

peasants are indebted. Rise in the proportion of indebtedness among peasants with quantum of land indicates that the indebtedness has close relations with loans contracted for agricultural purposes. Nearly two fifth of loans (38%) are from non-institutional sources and the proportion of those indebted to private money lenders rises inversely to the size of land holdings.

The lot of tenant peasants is even worse. In most of the country tenancy is under-reported, more often not even acknowledged. According to 77<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO leased in land holdings were 17.3%. These were 9.9% in 2003 and 13.7% in 2013. While data on tenancy is as mentioned always under-reported, there has been significant rise in tenancy over the past decade and a half- reportedly nearly doubled. That these tenant farmers are most oppressed among peasants is without doubt as they do not get any relief or benefit of Govt. scheme not even MSP for the crops for whom it is given to an extent. Tenants suffer from double burden from the exploitation and oppression of the land owners as well as from the exploitation by Corporate and fleecing by market sharks. Even more illustrative is the data about the states where it is most prevalent. Odisha tops the list with 32.2% leased in holdings with Andhra Pradesh a close second with 31.7%, West Bengal 22.2%, Bihar 15.5%, Telengana and UP 14.1% each, Haryana 13.8%, Punjab 10.3% with all India figure being 13.8%. High tenancy rate in states like AP show the deep crisis and unprofitability of Agriculture. On the other hand, tenancy in backward agricultural areas and states is mostly under reported.

Peasants are exploited crudely in the markets. Most of them are forced to sell their produce much below the MSP which itself is decided on non-remunerative basis. Even the State Assured Price (SAP) for sugar cane is much below the price calculated on the basis

of C2+50%. Sugarcane cultivators are further plagued by long delays in payment. For small and marginal peasants and even for semi-medium peasants it is mostly realising their labour embodied in the produce. According to 77<sup>th</sup> round, 52.6% of households sold 59.3% of paddy in kharif season while 50.8% households sold 58.1% of wheat in rabi season. We are here giving data only for the two main crops. Abysmal levels of the income for marginal, small and even semi-medium peasants are reflected in their lack of ability to access education especially higher education for their children, health care services for members of their families and generally their standard of life including nutritional level. One should not for a moment forget that peasants constitute not only the producers of food grains and raw materials for industry but are also biggest potential consumers of agricultural and industrial goods. India can neither have food security nor see any economic progress without improving the conditions of this largest section of populace of our country.

The determined struggle that the country is witnessing is thus rooted in the abysmal and deteriorating conditions of peasants. Attempt by the Union Govt. to give entire control of agricultural operations to Corporate has spurred the present struggle. (We have analyzed some aspects of the present struggle in January 2021 issue of ND.) The small and semi-medium peasants are not only providing the main human force in terms of participation for this movement but are also making their participation count through participation in the leadership of the movement. *It is this aspect which has provided the base in this farmers' movement to challenge the attacks on democratic rights, even attacks on federalism, in fact challenge the whole ambit of offensive of ruling fascist forces.*

It is not that contradictions in the rural areas have been eliminated, nay they are very much there and often make their appearance even through the attempts of RSS-BJP to discredit the movement. Report of 77<sup>th</sup> round of Survey also gives data of the spread of land holdings among social groups, of differences in their incomes derived from the agriculture and non-agricultural sources. Hence, division among peasants among social groups is very much present. But the main point is that the present pro-corporate offensive has united the peasant masses and even provided the objective basis for uniting all rural sections in the present struggle. Even tenant peasants can see how the present laws take away from them without giving anything. Moreover, the present struggle has also laid the basis for uniting all the toiling sections including industrial workers by opposing the amendment to Essential Commodities Act and thereby bringing universal PDS on the agenda. Besides the present struggle has blunted the offensive of fascist rulers and opened up the democratic space wherein even the sections of state machinery are beginning to find their voice and wherein the voices against the increasing loot and plunder of the country are being raised. With Central Govt. intent on handing over all assets to foreign and domestic corporate, opening wide all spheres of economic life not sparing even health and education from control of corporate, there are issues galore for struggle.

When the history of this period is written, this peasant struggle will likely be credited with having saved the people of the country from complete take over by Corporate including foreign corporate and having saved the country from abyss of communal fascism.



# **Oppose Sale of Govt. Assets in the name of Monetization**

**M**odi led RSS-BJP Govt. has announced a plan to monetize govt. infrastructure assets like roads, railway stations, gas pipe lines, warehousing facilities. This lease is of the assets owned by the Govt. and public sector units. It involves handing over of these assets to private sector to operate on long term (25 years in this case) lease. The lease so given by the Govt. is expected to cover assets worth over 6 lakh crore rupees over the next three years i.e. remainder of the term of this govt. Govt. reportedly plans to garner Rs. 1.6 lakh crores from road, 1.52 crores from railway assets, 45.2 thousand crores from power transmission lines, 39.83 lakh crores from natural gas assets and 35.1 thousand crores from telecom projects.

Govt. is claiming that it is not sale but giving only on rent. But this is a just a ploy to sell the assets at the value of 25 years' rent and this too calculated by a govt. run for the corporate. These assets are gone 'forever' from the Govt. whatever claims Finance Minister is making for the use by corporate controlled media to hoodwink the people. After 25 years these assets will be 'forced' to continue them in private hands may be with payment by the govt. to improve their condition, giving more blows to the people. With these ruling classes, people can be sure to be looted and cheated repeatedly and remorselessly.

The scheme is one of the big swindles of the Modi Govt. who has been shamelessly selling the govt. assets to fill the coffers of

corporate by robbing the people of the country. These assets were built from the sacrifices of the people and on the resources of the people for example land taken for developing infrastructure in the name of development.

This asset monetization plan shows the dire straits in which the economy has been brought under RSS-BJP rule. Demonetization, GST were some of the blows given to the economy which slowed down considerably. Govt. chose to borrow with increase in govt. debt reaching 90% of the GDP. With slowing growth and falling revenue collection, govt. fiscal deficit reached 9.4% of the GDP. It was not due to any expenditure on the people despite huge sufferings during pandemic or for the economy but to shower largesse to the corporate. One should banish the thought that PSUs will get this money to develop their operations or even improve their balance sheets which have gone into red primarily because of the Govt. robbing them. This money will be siphoned off by govt. through increased dividends or sale of shares etc. This Govt. has not shrunk from plundering even the Reserve Bank reserves !

More importantly the plan demonstrates how deeply this govt. is committed to serve the corporate come what may. Even with revenue collection falling, govt. went ahead with tax cuts for corporate, waived unconditionally retro tax and showered many facilities on the corporate under different heads. These corporate in turn are linked to foreign big capital which is using India to extract high profits. The two close corporate friends of RSS-BJP govt. – Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani – have attracted money from foreign firms for their closeness to this Govt. However, these are just some examples. Foreign money is pumped into a large number of Start-ups, another focus of attention of this Govt. The whole façade of self-reliance (Atmnirbharta) is to hide their servility to



imperialist capital.

This govt. has enormously increased indirect taxes which burden the common people. It has specially targeted petroleum products for this extraction (reaching two third of the prices of diesel and petrol). In fact govt. tax and non-tax revenues are expected to reach nearly one fourth of the GDP (22.7%). Bulk of tax collections being indirect taxes extracted from the people and bulk of non-tax revenues are swindling and sale of Public Sector and Govt. assets.

The speed and shamelessness with which this Govt. is handing over the country to foreign corporate and their friendly domestic corporate is yet another demonstration of the correctness of the firm resolve with which the peasants of India are fighting against the three Agri Acts designed to hand over complete control over agriculture to foreign corporate and their Indian compradors.

The open and wholesale selling of PSUs is being rightly resisted by the workers and the people as in case of Visakha Steel Plant. Govt. is betraying the people whose lands were acquired under the name of development and now being handed over to corporate under one pretext or another.

This “Monetization of Govt. & PSU assets” must be resisted with full force. Workers and people of all sections must come forward to fight against this Govt., out to sell the country while keeping people divided on communal lines.

CPI (ML)-New Democracy

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# **Defeat of US Imperialism in Afghanistan and its implications**

**D**efeat of US imperialism in Afghanistan marks a turning point in the international situation which has wide repercussions on the region and the world influencing all the major contradictions of the imperialist system. Inter-imperialist contradictions will obviously be sharpened further while the other contradictions like that between imperialism and oppressed nations and that between labour and capital in developed countries are also sharpening. This sharpening is occurring in a number of ways.

Defeat of US imperialism has occurred at a time of decline of US imperialism not only in strategic sense but also in immediate sense. It is locked in confrontation and conflict in almost all the regions of the world and is facing unsurmountable obstacles. It is a decline of a hegemonic superpower, being challenged by the rivals on the one hand and facing relatively increasing burden of its military expenditure as compared to its economic strength, the factors that had led to fall of another superpower, erstwhile Soviet Union.

US military occupation of Afghanistan was part of its hegemonic drive to control all regions of world, major areas of the resources and trade routes to contain rise of any rival. This was an effort of an economically declining superpower to secure and perpetuate its world hegemony. Its economic decline also related to the greed of monopoly capitalism to maximize its profits and shifting of relatively labour intensive operations to third world countries. Real reason for this was relatively high wages at home,

availability of cheaper labour power abroad and controlling the world markets by shifting production to other countries. This shift i.e. global reorganization of capital facilitated by WTO which concentrated different parts of production in different countries and regions, resulted in accruing of parts of generated surplus value to those countries participating in global value chain. Accumulation of surplus value in some of these countries led to investment in other areas of production reducing dependence on US and other developed imperialist countries for high technology goods and services thereby reducing their market share in those areas. While monopoly groups from US and other countries earned huge profits, a large part of profits of these companies came from production centres and markets abroad, the overall creation of well paid jobs in their own countries declined. As a result social expenditure increased. This along with growing military expenditure was sought to be sustained through bubble economy but bursting of bubble led to explosion of world financial economic crisis from 2008 onwards. Failure of wars of aggression and deepening economic crisis 2008 onwards have led to rise of multi-polar world which has been analyzed at length.

Afghanistan has a reputation of being a graveyard of empires. Defeat in Afghanistan has historically led to decline or at least readjustment of the aims of invading empires. It will not be otherwise for US imperialism. Effects of defeat in Afghanistan will not be limited to Afghanistan alone. Due to this defeat there will be even less support in America for military aggressions abroad. This may however result in even greater recourse to economic sanctions as tools of coercion. US hegemonic drive had consolidated Shanghai group (SCO), especially brought China and Russia closer, which is a formidable force. Withdrawal in military defeat from Afghanistan

has also placed question marks on the reliability of US for the reactionary rulers of different countries. Inter-imperialist contradictions are set to intensify on this new basis.

China will be the main gainer, being the only power in the region capable of exploiting resources of Afghanistan. With big deposits of rare metals and natural gas here, China may invest more here for their exploitation. These resources are estimated to be worth over one trillion US\$. Afghanistan is surrounded by countries aligned with Russia and China which are part of Belt and Road Initiative of China. Afghanistan will be an important part of this new Silk Road as it was of the old Silk Road. China and Taliban have discussed Chinese investments in Afghanistan. Western countries' threat of economic sanctions hence will be counterproductive.

Countries of South East Asia will also be cautious to act on the prompting of US against China. Even Japan which has been a strong supporter of and participant in Contain China policy of US imperialism, has issued statements somewhat diluting that stand. In Europe, US allies may readjust their hostility towards Russia, another big gainer of Afghanistandevlopments, though there will be different pulls and pushes in West European countries on that issue. While Afghan people's willingness to fight and sacrifice in struggle against foreign occupying power was the main factor in the victory of Taliban (they being almost the only force fighting against US imperialism), inter-imperialist contradiction also played its role, especially in rehabilitating Taliban as a legitimate political force in world forums. China's proximity with Pakistan and Pakistan's apprehension over growing proximity of US with India also helped SCO powers in influencing developments in Afghanistan.

The international role of US post-Afghanistan will have big influence on Middle-east. Turkey will try to expand its influence.

This will be resisted by Arab monarchs as they draw even closer to Israel. They would also tone down their conflict with Iran. Arab monarchs and military dictators have subtly shifted centre of their opposition from Iran to Turkey. US defeat will increase opportunities for Russia and China to increase their influence in Middle-east. While Russia has Army stationed in Syria, it also has close relations with Egypt's military rulers. China has entered into big economic agreement with Iran worth US\$ 400 billion; it is the biggest buyer of crude oil from Middle-east countries including Saudi Arabia. An important effect may be seen in the region that Israel's aggressive acts may not be as disproportionate as these have hitherto been. While both Israel and Arab monarchs remain hostile to Palestinians, the struggle of Palestinians will draw increasingly wider support from Arab masses and democratic public opinion in the US. Hence, US and Israel as well Arab monarchs will move to bolster Palestinian Authority (PA) led by Mahmoud Abbas mainly to counter growing influence of Hamas.

Africa has emerged as one of the main arenas of contention between imperialist powers and the scramble for resources and zones of investment is set to intensify in the continent. There are a score of hotspots in Africa where wars are actively going on. Imperialist powers are utilizing tribal and religious differences to foment and abet wars. The epicenter of so-called "War on Terror" is set to move to Africa as this war is another name for undeclared wars of aggression. The economic investments and military deployment of imperialist powers is increasing in African countries. USA, China, France, UK and Russia are main contenders for influence in this continent.

Defeat of US imperialism will further boost the forces in Latin American countries who are fighting against neo-liberalism

and domination of US imperialism, and pro-US elite in their own countries. These sections are not revolutionary communists. They stand for implementing redistributive reformist agenda. Specifically, they stand for increasing expenditure on social sectors from the income from natural resources. US imperialism continues to conspire for the overthrow of such govts. and imposes sanctions besides helping pro-US elite. US imperialism has succeeded in Honduras and Paraguay where recently pro-US forces have come to power. However, in Venezuela US conspiracy to topple Maduro govt. has collapsed while US orchestrated coup against FSLN (Ortega) Govt. in Nicaragua in 2018 was defeated. In Bolivia Evo Morales of Movement toward Socialism (MAS) was ousted from power but MAS came back to power in recent elections. In Brazil pro-US Bolsonaro is getting increasingly isolated. In Chile, the elections to constituent assembly resulted in victory of a large number of reform supporters. In Peru as well Castillo has been elected President with a programme of increasing social spending from mining resources, right to health and education, food and housing. Mexico too has a President who is not pro-US though he has avoided confrontation with US. Importantly there have been sharp struggles in Colombia, the strongest supporter of US imperialism in the continent. These protests are focused against increasing poverty and inequality. Defeat of US imperialism in Afghanistan will embolden forces fighting against US imperialism and its supporters among elite.

In Europe, the position of US imperialism will weaken further and isolation of UK will increase. The trend of European Union adopting a course independent of US imperialist interests will get stronger. Relations with Russia and China may not be seen through US prism alone. Despite Biden terming Russia as main

enemy during his campaign to become President, he is being forced to tone down his rhetoric and focus on challenging China. There may be less pressure on Russia in Europe, Middle-east and Central Asia.

One important impact of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan will be intensification of internal contradictions in USA. The contradiction between labour and capital especially against corporate and increasing demands for increase in social expenditure and for domestic investment will rise. There will be intensification of the struggle for racial justice and movement against white supremacists. Progressive section in the Democratic Party may get stronger and support to democratic struggles like struggle of Palestinians will increase while support for armed intervention will decline.

Indian Govt. has painted itself into a corner on this issue. It had supported US occupation of Afghanistan and opposed US withdrawal from there. While main ruling class parties had supported US led and Security Council approved occupation of Afghanistan, RSS-BJP Govt. had ignored the winds of change sweeping the region and firmly anchored itself to US imperialism. This brought Indian Govt. into conflict with SCO powers and specifically lost it the trust of Russia. Acting against Syria and Iran in the world forums at the behest of US imperialism, Indian Govt. has isolated itself in the region. Besides pro-US stand, Indian Govt. has opposed struggle of people of Afghanistan against US led occupation also from communal angle and viewing it from anti-Pakistan perspective. US withdrawal from Afghanistan has left Indian govt. cut-off from the whole region. With increasing reliance of US imperialism on Pakistan for its influence in Afghanistan and in the region, there may well be US pressure on India not to escalate its conflict with Pakistan. US withdrawal and hence its reduced

credibility as reliable military partner may also force Indian Govt. to recalibrate its stance on border stand-off with China.

In all Party meeting held by Modi Govt. on situation in Afghanistan opposition ruling class parties while supporting Union Govt. also questioned the isolation of India on Afghanistan especially estrangement from Russia.

On developments in Afghanistan, ND has published a comment and a statement. We hailed the victory of Afghan people against imperialist occupation forces. We also cautioned against social reactionary character of Taliban, its attacks on the rights of women, minorities including national minorities and religious minorities and on democratic rights of the people. We support the struggle of Afghan people against such attacks. But some organizations- reformist left, NGOs and also a section of intellectuals take the latter as the main aspect and ignore Afghan people's struggle against foreign occupation. It is surprising that they came to street even before US has fully departed while they had all along kept mum over atrocities during imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. Through this they whitewash crimes of imperialism, painting the occupation as liberation and discredit anti-imperialist struggle of people of Afghanistan.

They deliberately or otherwise undermine history of heroic struggles of women and oppressed minorities in Afghanistan and also ignore the aid and support to fundamentalist forces by imperialists. This narrative also omits the gains made by struggles of women and people in Afghanistan in the period before Soviet armed intervention and subsequent US led military occupation eight years after withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces. They omit the fact that people of Afghanistan through their struggle had



gained recognition for some democratic rights under 1964 Constitution under Zahir Shah and this struggle continued to advance under Daud Govt. It was Soviet military occupation which halted this process and shifted the focus from internal struggle to struggle against foreign occupation. Besides, Soviet military occupation helped reactionary elements within a socially conservative society. US military occupation furthered these i.e. suppression of democratic elements and strengthening of reactionary forces. Hence, it is the imperialism which is mainly responsible for suppressing the growth of democratic forces in Afghanistan. Prettifying imperialist occupation runs counter to the history and interests of democratic movement in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is a country of many ethnic groups with no group, not even the largest group, Pashtuns, being in majority. Attempts to impose centralized bureaucratic control over Afghanistan will breed resistance.

CPI (ML)-New Democracy strongly condemn RSS-BJP and their Govt.'s attempts to use victory of Taliban in Afghanistan to attack Muslims in India. RSS-BJP Govt. is also trying to portray victory of Taliban to justify its blatantly communal and anti-constitutional Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). They are not only trying to use this for their communal fascist designs but their pro-imperialist character is also on open display. Those who kept away from the anti-colonial movement, rather supported the colonial power in their own country, cannot be expected to support anti-imperialist struggles in other countries.

Central Committee

**CPI (ML)-New Democracy**

August 29, 2021

# **Country-wide Power Crisis: Who is responsible, who benefits?**

● **V. K. Patole**

**T**he month of October 2021 is seeing a power crisis unfolding in the country with power cuts being enforced in many states and many thermal power plants reporting coal stocks being severely depleted with only a couple of days reserve left. The main reasons being given by the Central Govt. for this situation are – increase in demand due to revival of economic activity, decreased coal production due to heavy monsoon rains, decrease in imports due to high prices. All are true to some extent but all were known or anticipated before-hand and steps could have been taken much earlier rather than the high-profile flurry of activity being shown by the Central Govt. now.

Post-pandemic revival of some economic activity and demand for more power was clearly expected, especially with the Covid threat waning as indicated by decreasing cases, increasing vaccination and about 67% sero-positivity rate heralding possible herd immunity. Decrease in imports of coal also is not sudden and the trend was clear since more than a year. Even otherwise imported coal comprises less than 10% of total coal used for power generation and more than 80% of this is used by private sector power plants. Decreased production and supply of coal in the monsoon period due to flooding of open cast mines occurs every year and power plants were expected to build up stocks every year

before the monsoon. Why was there negligence this year? Overall control and monitoring of power generation and coal production and supply are both under the Central Govt. The current power crisis is clearly mainly a result of negligence and mismanagement by the central govt. although state govts also did not raise the alarm earlier, nor asked for more coal for power plants run by them.

The Modi govt. is of course trying to milk this crisis to justify privatization of power sector and particularly of coal mining although up to now the demand for coal has always been fulfilled by public sector Coal India Limited (CIL) and SCCL. The dispatch of raw coal from CIL has steadily increased from 423 million tonnes (MT) in 2010-11 to 607MT per year (average 1.66 MT per day) in 2018-19. In 2019-20 with the economic slowdown and less uptake by power plants the dispatch decreased to 581 MT and further to 573 MT in 2020-21, the year of the Covid pandemic. Now in the face of increased demand in the situation of the power crisis it has ramped up coal dispatch by more than 25% to 2MT per day. All this despite not being allowed access to new coal blocks and being starved of funds for mine development with the Govt. taking away more than 1400 crores as dividend in FY 2020-21 apart from taxes and making the company invest its funds in fertilizer companies.

Similarly, the public sector power producers are called upon to provide more power to deal with the crisis although 48% of total installed power generation (all forms) capacity is in the private sector and 36% of coal based power generation capacity is in private sector. In the public sector, thermal power plants have significantly increased their PLF (Plant Load Factor-which denotes the power actually generated as a percentage of installed generation capacity) in August 2021 compared to August 2020. Central govt. owned plants from 61.9% to 69.45% and state govt. owned from 44.31% to

54.38%. On the other hand, the private sector plants' PLF has increased only marginally from 53.03% to 54.57%. Nor are their captive mines producing more coal.

However, all these facts are irrelevant for the Modi govt., as it is carrying forward the privatization policies of its predecessor with even more determination and speed to open up the coal mining and power sector for exploitation by corporate. Selling national assets to garner funds for day to day expenses of the govt. is now an established policy (monetization of assets) of this govt. Unfortunately for it, in the earlier auctions of coal blocks it had met with less than desired success. Now again around 88 mines are up for auction under provision for commercial mining i.e. free sale of coal in the market. 100% FDI is also permitted. The Govt. would be hoping that the current crisis and propaganda of "coal shortage" would induce more bidders to enter the auction. However, earlier auctions of coal blocks in the initial period had been for captive mining only and no sale. Now to give the owners of these captive mines also their pound of flesh they are to be allowed to sell 50% of their mined coal commercially on the market.

Privatization of Coal India and NTPC, the public sector behemoths of the power sector is already gradually underway for some time. Disinvestment of shares in Coal India is so far 11% while in NTPC it has reached 34%. More importantly most of the production is being done through private contractors and outsourcing of production work. Consequently 50 to 90% workers are not direct employees of the PSU and do not get the multiple benefits enjoyed by permanent workers who are steadily dwindling to be a smaller and smaller privileged section of the workforce. The minimum wages prescribed by govt. for these contract/outsourcing workers are at best about one-third of the wages of permanent

workers. They are deprived of other benefits like leaves, medical facilities, housing, annual increments, etc. Most importantly they have no job security. Even then, with a govt. agency being the principal employer, some labour laws do get implemented for them and as of now some limits are placed on their exploitation (as compared to contract workers in fully private mines and power plants). However if the new labour codes, which free the principal employer of many responsibilities and liabilities, are implemented, their lot will worsen.

The reformist and reactionary trade unions are the dominant forces in these industries and are recognized by the Govt. as representatives of workers. However, these unions show little interest in organizing these contract workers. In every 5 yearly wage negotiation in coal industry, demands are put forward on behalf of contract workers but not followed up seriously. The formula devised about 8 years ago by a high-power committee (HPC) of linking wages of contract workers at about 60-70 % of the minimum wage of permanent workers has not been implemented and no action is being taken by these unions who devised this formula.

With advancing privatization, the exploitation of these contract/outsourcing workers will increase further and their need for struggle too. They are scattered under many contractors but their overall numbers in these industries are huge. Revolutionary trade unions must take up and address the issues of this huge workforce and make all efforts to organize them and lead their struggles. The question of organizing these workers and leading their struggles should be addressed concretely especially in the environment where job security of these workers, which is any way not much, is becoming increasingly harder to defend. □ □ □

## **IFTU National Committee Demands Employment for Ford Workers !**

**N**ational Committee of Indian Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) expresses serious concern over more than four thousand workers being rendered unemployed due to closure of plants by Ford Motor Company in Sanand (Gujarat) and Tamil Nadu. This closure, along with closure or scaling down of production by a number of automobile companies over past five years shows the utter fallaciousness of the promise of generating employment through 'Make in India' touted by Modi led RSS-BJP Govt. The companies which closed or scaled down their operations include General Motors, MAN Trucks, Harley Davidson, Honda Cars and UM Motorcycles.

These closures, including many more, show the utter bankruptcy of the plan to generate employment through foreign manufacturers and of the FDI driven growth model. On the other hand, Ford has announced that it would continue to sell foreign manufactured cars in India.

IFTU extends full support to the workers' struggle of Ford plants in Gujarat and Tamilnadu. IFTU demands that the workers thus rendered unemployed should be employed in PSUs or given Govt. service and should not be rendered unemployed. It is a question of over four thousand working class families and RSS-BJP Govt. at the Centre should not be insensitive to the problems of the workers and allow these workers and their families to suffer.

National Committee, **IFTU**.

September 22, 2021

## **CC on Some Features of Present Situation**

# **Resistance to Attacks by Fascist Rulers**

**T**he period since RSS-BJP return to power is marked by the fight back of the people against rule of fascist forces. RSS-BJP had returned to power with increased strength in Lok Sabha. Support from several regional parties and capitulation of the different wings of the state machinery helped them advance their fascist agenda. First they implemented the political part of the agenda like dissolution of J&K state, abolition of Article 35A, virtual abrogation of Article 370. Then they moved to criminalization of triple talaq, award of the land where Babri Masjid stood to Ram Janambhoomi temple trust by the apex Court, and then to CAA-NRC-NPR. All this was in accordance with their Hindutva agenda. CC meeting held in September 2019 after their actions related to J&K, had characterized the situation as rule of fascist forces. The situation had developed from a situation of fascist offensive but short of outright fascism.

With Corona outbreak from January 2020 and imposition of lockdown from March 25, 2020 RSS-BJP used that situation to crush the anti-CAA-NRC-NPR movement. With this 'success' of scare mongering and baton wielding, RSS-BJP turned to economic part of their fascist agenda. They promulgated four labour codes abolishing existing labour laws. The main thrust of these changes is to deprive the workers of job security and right to organize and to strike, to whatever extent these rights existed. The whole point

behind these changes is to lower the labour cost to attract capital from western imperialist countries. Though this has been the attempt of successive govts. since new economic policies, rising confrontation between US and China, hence increased prospects of attracting western capital, has lent an urgency to this task and lockdown conditions was seen as an opportunity.

Despite such an all round attack on workers, response of Trade Unions has not been adequate. Factors behind this include strength of the reactionary TU centres, the compromising attitude of reformist TU centres and marginal strength of revolutionary and militant trade unions. It has also its roots in changing structure of working class in the country and contours of the working class movement. Workers in public sector and organized industries are now mostly contract workers whose emoluments and benefits are much lower than the regular workers. Importantly they have little job security. TUs led by regular workers mostly feel shy of taking up contract workers' issues thus weakening the movements of both regular and contract workers. The notable examples of their combined struggles prove the immense importance of such struggles. On the other hand, struggles of contract workers and workers in unorganized sectors are focused on securing minimum legal rights. Though they have not yet risen to the level of challenging the ruling classes and their state, they represent an important part of working class movement in the country.

TU Centres have not yet drawn any concrete plan to fight the Labour Codes. They have till now limited themselves to issuing statements and taking up propaganda programmes. On the other hand, they are engaging in discussion on framing of Rules for these Codes, in a way adopting a defeatist attitude towards struggle against the Codes. Revolutionary and militant TUs must take the



initiative, concretely analyzing the condition of working class movement and attempting to fight this capitulationist mood of major TU Centres. One important aspect will be to build the struggles of various sections sector wise and of the contract and outsourcing workers and developing the perspective of uniting different sections and types of workers. For this initiative should be taken to develop joint movement both from below and above taking the former as the main. TU centres are opposed to uniting with revolutionary centres possibly to keep their compromising platform secure.

Crisis faced by migrant workers due to lockdown has been a defining moment for the working class movement. Millions of workers walked thousands of kilometers in the biggest migration in such a short span of time. TU Centres have not discharged their responsibilities properly and have not challenged the inhuman and anti-worker lockdown. Our TUs tried to play their role especially in some states but the whole TU cadres could not be mobilized to rise to the occasion.

### **Attacks on Peasants and Agriculture**

Unleashing Corona scare and imposing lockdown, Central Govt. imposed three black laws designed to change the very nature and architecture of Indian agriculture and to sounding the death bell of Indian peasantry. These three Acts, from the subject matter they deal with, are being referred to as Mandi Bypass Act, Contract Farming Act and Essential Commodities Act. These three Acts, Electricity Bill designed to increase the electricity charges on people including peasants and shifting the burden of environmental protection onto peasants holding agricultural operations responsible for environmental degradation led the vast sections of

peasantry rise in protest. These Acts constituted pro-corporate attack on the peasantry handing over control of all aspects of agricultural operations to corporate. While corporate had much influence over the agriculture both controlling cost of inputs and prices of produce even earlier but these Acts have taken this to a new height of even bringing agricultural operations under their control. These attacks were in pursuance of WTO whose Agreement on Agriculture has been the guiding spirit for these Acts.

The peasantry is fighting the battle for its very existence. What is at stake is not just this or that change but the whole gamut of agrarian scene that is sought to be transformed and peasantry exited from their land and Agriculture and the whole control of agricultural production, transportation, storage and processing of agricultural produce and trade of the agricultural produce, being handed to foreign and domestic corporate. The Govt. tried to entangle the farmers' leaders into suggesting amendments. Aim of the Govt. behind this was to preserve the architecture for the complete control of the Agriculture by corporate through these Acts. Hence, farmers' organizations have rightly stuck to the demand of repeal of these Acts. This agitation has pitted the peasantry against the corporate and the Govt. backed by them and backing them.

These Acts have been analyzed in detail by peasant organizations and commented upon by the Party. In November 2000 and January 2021 issues of ND we have published much material on these Acts. We have also published an article on how the movement which had started from Punjab was built there. In fact the main steps including uniting all the peasant organizations were initiated in Punjab. These resulted in formation of SKM by three fronts including AIKSCC. To this some more organizations were

later added. We also published material on the main characteristics of this movement.

The peasant movement underwent a mobilization period culminating in All India Bandh on Sept. 25, 2020 which was widely successful. Then started the preparation for March to Delhi culminating in peasants' sit-in at border sites as they were stopped from entering Delhi. With movement extending to different parts of the country demand for MSP for all crops on the basis of Swaminathan formula also became one of the major demands of this movement. The Govt. responded by creating obstacles to the movement and also holding discussions with farmers' organizations. Govt. last offer of suspending implementation of these Acts for one and a half years was rejected by the peasant organizations. Then came the decision to hold tractor rally on the Republic Day. Developments of that day, conspiracy of the Govt. and role of other forces has been commented upon earlier in the February 2021 issue of ND. Not only Govt. conspiracy, even Khalistani forces and anarchist elements were party to derailing what would have been the biggest and most spectacular rally in the capital. Govt. attempt at derailing the Rally was followed by attacks at protest sites, forcibly removing nearly 250 big and small protest sites in UP and Haryana. However, their attempts were foiled at the three border sites of Delhi, of these attack at Gazipur was most serious. Since then attempts at forcible removal of protest sites have not been made by the Govt. till now but RSS attempts at creating troubles and trying to mobilize locals against peasants have continued.

After January developments, a period of holding mass meetings in the name of Mahapanchayats was taken up drawing huge number of peasants in various parts of the country. This somewhat shifted focus from border protest sites which had

reduced numbers. Holding of Mahapanchayats was then stopped by SKM first in Punjab, then in Haryana and later in West UP.

Call was given to start permanent sit-ins against three black acts. Attempts at these were not made in all states but where these were made, sit-ins could last only for a few days. This was due to difference in the agrarian relations, due to lack of substantial section of landowning peasantry producing significant marketable surplus, significant enough to influence their standard of life. Some role was played by lack of subjective forces as well which failed to educate and mobilize different sections of peasantry. These three Acts are against all sections of peasantry, Amended Essential Commodities Act is specifically targeted against poor peasants and agricultural labourers besides other sections of rural and urban poor. Govt. propaganda was not adequately countered.

One important aspect has been near total support of masses in Punjab where it is a movement of all Punjabis. The role of Sikh peasantry and langars run by them has been formidable in this protest. They are relating themselves to this movement even in cities, even in foreign countries where they are living. This has been a pillar of strength for this movement. As we have analyzed repeatedly, this movement is all India and its epicenter is in North India for the reasons given above. Despite the diversity of the country, these Acts will impact agriculture all over India.

This movement has two main aspects. It is anti-corporate and it is anti-fascist. Besides these, it is also against attacks on the federalism even to the extent it is enshrined in Indian Constitution. It is opposed to complete corporate takeover of agriculture which engages two third of Indian people, more than half of them directly. It was anti-fascist challenging the total ban on protests. Though it has as yet not succeeded in repeal of black Acts which are pro-

corporate, it has created anti-corporate atmosphere in the country. This aspect involves anti-imperialist aspects targeting foreign and comprador domestic corporate. Ambani and Adani establishments were attacked in Punjab and Haryana and pro-corporate character of RSS-BJP has been much exposed. On the other aspect i.e. anti-fascist, the movement has dealt blows at fascist rule and opened democratic space for the people's protests. Support of landlords plays an important role in strength of fascist forces and they serve as an important social base of imperialism. Thus the movement has dealt a political blow to landlord base of fascist forces while at present it is not against their economic interests. Opening of the democratic space for people's protests has been a shining achievement of the farmers' struggle. This challenge to the fascist forces and creating an atmosphere that these forces can be fought played an important role in state and local elections as well, where RSS-BJP suffered setbacks.

Opening of democratic space affords an opportunity for developing struggles of different sections of people especially of the peasantry. It has created conditions for overcoming corona scare and lockdown induced lull in the people's movements. However, creating conditions does not by itself mean building the movement. Concrete analysis of concrete conditions is necessary along with requisite subjective effort in accordance with that.

An important aspect of this movement has been to counter communally divisive politics of RSS-BJP. Peasant masses belonging to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims are participating in the movement thwarting RSS-BJP efforts at deepening communal divide. The movement has done what a number of propaganda campaigns for secularism could not do as the movement pertains to existential needs of the peasantry.

While rising peasantry has challenged the corporate supported fascist rulers, many reformist sections and ruling class linked elements raise a number of questions and objections. Before going into them, it should be reiterated that this is anti-corporate, anti-fascist movement and does not aim to overthrow the very socio economic order which is the goal of revolutionary movement. So by itself, it is not a revolutionary movement. But this movement has drawn peasant sections which are part of the main force for the revolutionary transformation of the country. Hence it is important that revolutionary forces play an important role to mobilize these sections for revolution. The targets of attack of this movement - foreign and domestic corporate and fascist forces- are also the targets of the revolutionary movement. Hence, this movement is pregnant with a lot of revolutionary potential. To expect that this movement should itself accomplish revolution betrays very naive approach to revolutionary movement; negates the leading role of working class and also negates the revolutionary potential of peasantry. Some of the forces touting such arguments try to justify their aloofness from this movement in the garb of such jargon.

One common refrain is that this movement is led by rich peasants. It is true that rich peasants are an important part of the leadership. But the leadership also has representatives of middle and small peasants in the leadership. In fact that provides the basis of sharp internal struggle in the movement between wings which stand for and against compromise on repeal of three black Acts. In January 2021 ND we had differentiated this movement from remunerative prices movement of 1980s and 1990s which was dominated by rich peasants and dealt exclusively with terms of trade of agricultural produce. The very threat to the existence of agriculture and peasantry including fear of losing land has brought

middle and small peasants into the leadership of the movement. It is quite apparent in Punjab where left organizations which mainly represent peasants with small holdings, are an important section of the leadership. It was not the case in remunerative prices' movement. Even in the SKM left organizations including revolutionary organizations and small peasants' representatives play an important role. For those arguing for exclusive rich peasant & landlords' leadership, example of Tikait in UP is given. But Mr. Tikait is not the sole leader of this movement. His stature has definitely grown after his role in combating RSS-State attack at Gazipur. Punjab is still the leading centre of the movement and this is recognized by Tikait as well. According to the concrete conditions of this movement, Tikait has not yet made any communal or casteist remarks in the course of this movement. Tikait being a representative of rich peasants make him prone to compromising position but the movement at present is strong enough to counter any vacillation. Those giving this argument quote examples from 1980s and 1990s but not from the present movement.

Another argument made is that movement for MSP is against poor. One thing should be clear that MSP will determine market price only when substantial part of the produce will be sold at that. At present only 6% of peasants avail of MSP according to Shanta Kumar committee report. Besides that, the argument is flawed and status quoist. It makes out a contradiction between peasants and workers and not between workers & peasants and ruling classes especially corporate. The demand should instead focus on reduction in cost of agricultural inputs which will lower the prices even on MSP. This argument is also flawed as it aims to lower or keep low the purchasing power of the biggest section of Indian people and hence, no rise in domestic demand for even industrial

produce. Such an argument is used by corporate friendly intellectuals who favour investment driven growth model and not demand driven one i.e. on the basis of improving conditions of people. Moreover, Swaminathan formula calculates the agricultural labour at the rate of minimum wages. Hence it will lead to rise of wages which can then be justifiably imposed as they are built into the prices of the produce. Those who propagate this unbridgeable conflict between two most important sections of toiling people of India- workers and peasants either do not want a revolution or do not know what they say. In fact, the Amended ECA is a biggest blow to workers.

Another imputation against the movement is that it is anti-Dalit. This is also far from fact. That less number of Dalits are there at protest sites is also due to the fact that this form of protest is not suitable for them as they have to work daily to earn livelihood. It is obviously not a movement against caste oppression. But it is also not a movement against Dalits. Icons of fight against caste oppression like Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule are observed at protests. Photo of Ambedkar adorns the stages and programmes along with icons of peasant movement. In fact BJP linked rich peasants have tried to ignite such conflicts but the struggling peasants have foiled such attempts. SKM has always intervened against such elements. Their attempt to fix wages unilaterally in Punjab was opposed by SKM. Their attempts to remove statue of Ambedkar in a village in Haryana was opposed by peasant leaders. To use attempts at deepening caste division by RSS-BJP and its allies like JJP as propaganda against the movement is motivated attempt or lack of basic information about the ground situation. However, it is a fact that the movement does not have as enthusiastic participation of Dalits who are mostly landless as of



landowning peasants. Attempts should be intensified to propagate anti-poor and anti-Dalit character of the black Acts. Besides ECA, corporatization of agriculture would put an end to share cropping and hence to the rights of share croppers including their right to land; it would put an end to demand to distribute surplus and govt. land to landless of which Dalits are main beneficiaries. Besides, by reducing the number of those employed in agriculture it will increase rural unemployment of which Dalits will be the main sufferers. It will put further pressure on the rural wages which are any way abysmally low.

### **Present State of the Movement**

The movement is more than a year old now. The protests at Delhi borders have also completed nine months. Since 26<sup>th</sup> January programme (analyzed in ND earlier issue) there is some hesitation towards marching into Delhi. Hence, steps to take the movement to higher level are somewhat difficult from the borders. The number at sites are relatively stable though they substantially increase when there is some programme. They became quite low especially at Gazipur during peak of second corona wave. Activists had come to Gazipur from different states to bolster numbers in that period. All organizations made such effort and situation was stabilized.

In fact the situation in Punjab, which continues to remain the driving force of this movement, is favourable for continuing the movement. They are also in favour of continuing the protest sites. There have been two important considerations of Punjab peasants. They are for repeal of the Act and they want a united movement. They oppose capitulation and disunity. It must be kept in mind that besides organizational support of the main organizations, broad support of the peasantry cutting across organizations is crucial to

sustaining and intensifying the movement. Punjab organization has played an important role in mobilizing the peasantry and at decisive turns in the movement. We have contributed to both defending the uncompromising stance of Punjab peasantry as well as in maintaining unity of the organizations in the movement.

In Haryana, another important state where movement is strong and where two protest sites of Singhu and Tikri are located, peasants remain strongly mobilized for the movement except in South Haryana which is water deficient and has lesser productivity. However support in the urban centres is not as strong in Haryana as in Punjab. BKU (Chaduni) is an organization in Haryana with base while several organizations are either local or individual based. There is scope for a revolutionary peasant organization in Haryana.

Situation in West UP peasantry is one of opposition to black Acts and support to the ongoing struggle. However, regular participation from peasants from here is lower than that of Punjab and Haryana. It is also due to absence of mass base of revolutionary peasant organization/s. However, where there is sustained effort there is good response. In Terai regions of Uttarakhand and UP there is strong support for the movement among Sikh farmers. Peasants of North Rajasthan also support the movement. Initially they were the main force in Shahjhpur sit-in but CPM led peasant organization, main force in that sit-in, is though interested in continuing the movement but not in taking it ahead.

Several ruling class opposition parties have extended support to the movement. However their support is aimed at electoral utilization of peasant disillusionment and anger. They are not mobilizing their substantial base among peasants. Their cadres are not even involved through peasant organizations. However,

their support gives peasantry an appearance of broad support. Revisionist parties are also not mobilizing for militant peasant movement. On the other hand, some revolutionary organizations see in this movement only a chance to increase their organization or to use it for other forms of struggle. They do not see much potential of this movement. Some of them do not even acknowledge fascist offensive as they hold that India has always had fascism. Several peasant organizations including ours are the main force propelling it ahead and taking uncompromising stand as desired by peasant masses. We have a line for building militant mass movement which we must extensively practice. To sustain our role in the period when rich peasant leaders or those linked to ruling class parties take a plunge for compromise, we have to expand our role. It is a mass movement and role of an organization has relation with forces mobilized by it. Mainly on that basis we may be able to carry our stand.

Present stage is characterized by steely resolve of peasantry to carry on the movement. We have to work with perseverance and with approach of unity, pursue others for taking this movement ahead, keep on pushing for action programmes and mobilize more and more forces for coming actions. All India Convention of SKM has called for Bharat Bandh on September 27 and all organizations should mobilize all forces to make it successful.

One perspective for continuing this movement as articulated by some leaders is of this movement acting only as a backdrop for electoral defeat of BJP and the victory of ruling class opposition parties and thus fulfilling its role in electoral defeat of fascist RSS-BJP. This parliamentary orientation is not helpful in developing and intensifying the movement.

## **Ongoing Peasant Movement & Coming Assembly Elections**

SKM gave a call of Punish BJP (Defeat BJP) in last assembly elections especially in West Bengal. We were part of this Call. In view of the continuation of the movement, this question may arise in more states. There are going to be election in five states, out of which in three namely Punjab, UP and also Uttarakhand the movement has varying impact. In view of the wide support for the movement among peasants some leaders are also toying with the idea of contesting elections in the name of SKM. This is quite problematic. Moreover except in Punjab, the movement lacks statewide impact (there are no elections in Haryana). In Uttarakhand it is limited to some pockets and in UP it is strong in one region, more than one fourth of the state. In UP and Uttarakhand, BJP is the ruling Party and will remain a contender for power. The main peasant organization of West UP, BKU (Arajnaitik) led by Tikait has not made its position on coming election clear. In Uttarakhand it may virtually be fight mainly between BJP and Congress, with SP/BSP limited to plain areas of Uttarakhand. Moreover, SKM is leading a movement against laws by Central Govt. which cannot be changed by the state govts. So impact of defeat of BJP will be only morale booster to the movement and not fulfillment of the demands.

Very importantly conducting of the election campaign by the ruling class parties will create divisions among the people. Some of these have already started their campaign. In Punjab BJP is not a major force in rural areas, but the ruling class parties claiming to support the agitation are undermining the unity of the peasantry through their election campaign. This unity is essential to continue the struggle. Hence, keeping and strengthening the unity of the

peasantry to continue and develop this movement is a paramount task.

Besides intensification of peasant movement, we have been articulating the need for building and developing militant movements of different sections especially of the peasantry based on the concrete conditions in different states and regions and on the relevant demands. This is now very much possible due to opening of some democratic space for people's movements largely by the ongoing farmers' movement. Such movements in different states where we have some strength should be built especially of tribals and of landless and poor peasants taking up issues which are burning questions before these sections. Attempts in this direction should be made in Telengana, Bihar, Odisha, AP and other states like West Bengal and other regions of UP on issues relevant to the state/region. Recently, an issue of Save Visakha Steel Plant has come. In this struggling mood of workers especially of people who were displaced when this plant was built is very important for development of struggle. We must concretely study different aspects of such burning issues on which people are willing to move and urgently draw up plan not for mere propaganda campaigns but for mass movement.

Ongoing farmers' struggle is historic. It is seldom realized when history is being made. Secondly, it is rare that movement of such breadth and intensity gives so much time to the forces which desire to play a role to organize their forces, plan their actions and play their role. It is really very positive.

August 29, 2021



# **Homage to Comrade Gonzalo !**

**C**PI(ML)-New Democracy pays homage to revolutionary memory of Com. Abimael Guzman (popularly known as Comrade Gonzalo), leader of revolutionary movement of Peru, who died on September 11, 2021 at the Callao naval base near capital Lima. He was 86 years old. He was arrested on September 12, 1992 and for last 29 years was kept in maximum security prison. He was tried by hooded judges in a military court. This trial was declared unconstitutional by Peru's Constitutional Court in 2003. His retrial began in 2004 and third trial in 2005 and he was sentenced to life in prison.



In 2018 he was given another life term in prison. Conduct of his trial and holding him in a specially made prison showed how much the reactionary state of Peru feared this fearless revolutionary. His trial and punishment were a mockery of trial. He had been seriously ill for last two months but was denied proper medical treatment.

Com. Gonzalo was attracted towards communist movement during his student days. He was appointed as Professor of Philosophy in a University in Central Peru. From his early days in the revolutionary movement, Com. Gonzalo identified the main force of the revolution in Peru as peasants and learnt the language of indigenous people. He firmly supported Communist Party of

China led by Mao in the Great Debate and emerged the leader of the section of the Communist Party of Peru called Shining Path supporting revolutionary positions of CPC. He became a firm adherent of armed revolution with peasantry as the main revolutionary force in Peru and upheld Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. Subsequently he left job and went underground and remained so till his arrest. In this period, a base for revolutionary politics was created among intellectuals. This was the period when the division among revisionist and revolutionary sections was occurring in different countries in which struggle of CPC led by Mao against Modern Revisionism spearheaded by CPSU under the leadership of Khrushchev and those who came after him played a pivotal role. This struggle helped revolutionary communists shake off modern revisionism and uphold revolutionary positions. In several countries especially third world countries the revolutionary sections demarcated themselves from revisionist leadership and went on to advance towards unleashing revolutionary struggles.

In 1980 Shining Path under the leadership of Comrade Gonzalo launched their war against Peruvian state. Under his leadership, Shining Path controlled vast rural areas in Peru and developed strong presence in the urban poor including in capital Lima. A significant feature was that this struggle was launched at a time when revisionists had captured party and state power in China and embarked on building capitalism in that country. At that time influenced by Deng revisionism dominating CPC, several sections of revolutionary communists in different countries had embraced revisionism. Com. Gonzalo repudiated revisionist turn of the CPC and became a fierce critic of Deng revisionism. Struggle in Peru added to the shining examples of movement continued under the

leadership of revolutionary communists. These movements reaffirmed that revolutionary communists guided by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought were the real inheritors of the communist movement and Mao Zedong Thought was all round development of Marxism Leninism in the era of Lenin.

Death of Com. Gonzalo in Govt. captivity, denied of proper medical treatment, is an occasion for communist revolutionaries world over to take inspiration from his dedication and sacrifices for the revolutionary movement. It is also an occasion to draw upon the experiences of the revolutionary war led by PCP (Shining Path) assimilating what has been positive and taking lessons from what has been negative. It is the time for communist revolutionaries to intensify their struggles against imperialism and reactionary ruling classes.

Central Committee of CPI (ML)-New Democracy paying its homage to Com. Gonzalo vows to intensify struggle for New Democratic Revolution in India.

**Red Salute to Com. Gonzalo !**

Central Committee,

CPI (ML)-New Democracy

September 12, 2021

□ □ □



## **Oppose Violent Attacks by RSS-BJP in Tripura**

**C**PI (ML)-New Democracy strongly condemns the attacks launched by RSS-BJP cadres on the offices of CPI (M) and several newspapers in different parts of Tripura. On September 8, Tripura witnessed violent mayhem by RSS-BJP cadres with police acting as spectators and thereby collaborating in these attacks. These attacks were in several subdivisions and even capital Agartala was not spared. This attack by fascist forces targeted several offices of CPI (M), offices of electronic and print media. Offices were vandalized and cars were burnt down. According to CPI (M) PB statement, CRPF jawans which were present in front of their office were withdrawn an hour before the attack showing its premeditated nature.

These violent attacks by fascist forces are a result of their increasing isolation in Tripura. Their utter failure to fulfill their election promises made in the last assembly elections held in 2018 and people's growing resentment against anti-people policies of state and central govts. have eroded the support of RSS-BJP. Elections to TTAADC covering tribal areas of Tripura held in April 2021 resulted in stunning defeat of RSS-BJP and its allies in Tripura. TIPRA and its ally won 18 out of 28 elected seats in ADC securing nearly 46% votes. Tribal areas cover 20 out of a total 60 seats in Tripura Assembly. Hence the desperation of RSS-BJP to attack and terrorize opposition throughout Tripura in view of next

elections due in 2023 and also to prevent expression of people's resentment. According to a joint statement of Tripura People's Party and PCC, CPI (ML) "BJP party forces involving the armed goons of the RSS, along with the police, carried out violent attacks beginning with the left and the democratic forces as the main target."

CPI (ML)-New Democracy strongly condemns these violent attacks by RSS-BJP fascists and supports the democratic resistance to these attacks. RSS-BJP fascists have been unnerved by the rising struggles of the people, particularly the ongoing farmers' movement, and are unleashing violence against their opponents.

**CPI (ML)-New Democracy**

September 13, 2021



**Read and Subscribe**

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| <b>Inquilabi Sada Rah</b>     | <b>Punjabi</b> |
| <b>Sangrami Ekta</b>          | <b>Odia</b>    |

# **AUKUS: Beginning of Military Alliance Against China**

**S**marting under withdrawal from Afghanistan in defeat and turning its focus to increasing confrontation with China in Indo-Pacific region, Biden Admn. has announced on 15<sup>th</sup> September a military alliance with UK and Australia. This new security alliance including providing Australia with nuclear powered submarines is in line with US Admn. treating China as its main adversary for its global role. Leaders of three countries have not hidden its military character. While not mentioning China by name, the target was made obvious by Biden “We all recognize the imperative of ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific over the long term,” and leaders of three countries asserting “We need to be able to address both the current strategic environment in the region and how it may evolve because the future of each of our nations – and indeed the world – depends on a free and open Indo-Pacific enduring and flourishing in the decades ahead.”

Since its withdrawal from Afghanistan in defeat, US vice-president Kamala Harris had toured countries of South East Asia to assure them of the reliability of alliance with US. Besides, asserting its focus on contention with China US also wanted to signal its willingness to engage in the region. The announcement of this military alliance so soon after withdrawal in defeat from Afghanistan has much to do to assert US commitment to security of Taiwan where pro-US rulers apprehend that lack of US commitment may embolden sections favouring closer ties with mainland China.

This announcement has many significant features. First it unequivocally asserts that current focus of US imperialist drive is Indo-Pacific and it visualizes challenge from China. During his campaign debate Biden had said that he considered Russia to be the main adversary to Trump's saying the same about China. However, the reality has asserted itself. As Obama tried to pursue Bush's hegemonic drive through other means, Biden is pursuing Trump's line on international relations albeit with other language.

This marks a definite shift away from Europe which is no longer the main focus of inter-imperialist contradictions. With Russia not being the principal adversary, West European powers' utility for US imperialism has declined. Here too, Trump's downgrading ties with Western Europe except UK is being followed by Biden, his loud proclamation in Europe "America is back" notwithstanding. That in the process a deal between France and Australia to supply a dozen diesel powered submarines worth Australian \$ 90 billion has been thrown aside, has not bothered France's NATO allies- US and UK. France has termed scrapping of this deal with French company Naval Group as "betrayal of trust" and "a stab in the back."

The announcement is also significant as the physical meeting of leaders of Quad countries- US, Australia, Japan and India- is going to take place in Washington in about a week's time. The purpose of quad is to counter China and is a part of US strategy to contain China. But there have been hesitation among Quad members to make it overt military alliance and this hesitation is going to be more in the context of US withdrawal from Afghanistan. Hence, US has taken this step with other two other countries of Anglosphere. Other two participants of what is an intelligence sharing mechanism of five anglospheric countries "Five Eyes" -

Canada and New Zealand- were probably not prepared for military alliance especially its nuclear component. It will now be open to others especially Quad members to join the military wing of anti-China alliance. It is not yet a full-fledged military alliance but declaration of the intent of US imperialism with a concrete measure.

US has also inserted UK into this alliance with all intention of making it Quad plus 1. UK under rule of Conservatives has been projecting a “Global Britain” strategy partly to hide its isolation since Brexit. UK had recently sent its aircraft carrier Queen Elizabeth to South China Sea.

It is also significant that this announcement has been made on the eve of start of SCO conference in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan where situation in Afghanistan post-Taliban coming to power is the main agenda. US imperialism wanted to make this announcement to distract attention from the importance of SCO meeting and posing a counter to China who along with Russia leads SCO.

China has reacted strongly. Its US Ambassador called it a reflection of “cold war mentality” while a Chinese official heard in this “echoes of gunboat diplomacy going back to the colonial era”. Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said, “The nuclear submarine cooperation between the US, the UK and Australia has seriously undermined regional peace and stability, intensified the arms race and undermined international non-proliferation efforts.” China has chosen to warn Australia with whom it has vast business relations. China is the biggest trade partner of Australia. Chinese official paper Global Times has called Australia running dog of US and commented “Australia has turned itself into an adversary of China.” It also warned that if Australia “acts with bravado to show

its allegiance to the US and takes the most prominent position in the US' anti-China strategy, especially by being militarily assertive, then Canberra will most likely become a target of Beijing's countermeasures to send a warning to others." Obviously China is concerned about the efforts of US to rally countries of the region against it.

The announcement also shows the scant regard to nuclear non-proliferation which US & UK boast much about. Helping Australia develop nuclear powered submarines will effectively legalize their acquisition and export of related technology. International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has said "a military nuclear reactor built in Adelaide was a "foot in the door" towards weapons development." This trampling of nuclear non-proliferation only substantiates that non-proliferation has been used by western powers only to target the govts. which are not to their liking. Former Australian PM Paul Keating has called, "This arrangement would witness a further dramatic loss of Australian sovereignty," Even Boris Johnson's predecessor Theresa May questioned whether the deal could lead to Britain being dragged into war with China. In fact this announcement is also targeted at domestic audience where these rulers are facing adverse public reactions – Biden for the type of chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan, Johnson for Covid mismanagement and downturn since Brexit and economic problems for Scott Morrison, Australian PM.

Several organizations of workers in Australia have strongly opposed this announcement. The Maritime Union of Australia representing waterside and port workers, seafarers and professional divers expressed its "total opposition" to this "reckless agreement" calling on Australian PM to focus on securing vaccine

supplies and helping Australians affected by lockdown instead of “pursuing secret military deals.” Warning that this agreement will escalate unnecessary conflict with China, the Union said that the announcement would result in “seafarers stranded on coal ships and some trades shut down.” Criticizing extraordinary sums of money being wasted on cancelling contract with France, the Union warned that the deal could push the Australian govt. toward trying to obtain nuclear arms, saying “The submarines will use highly enriched uranium ideal for nuclear weapons.” The Electric Trades Union of Australia (ETU) called this agreement a “betrayal” undermining “generations of highly-skilled, secure, well paying Australian shipbuilding jobs.” ETU also raised questions on storage of spent fuel rods from the nuclear submarines and also Australia relying on supplies from abroad which would jeopardize Australia’s “sovereign capability”. The Union said the Prime Minister shouldn’t make “such dangerous decisions on our behalf”.

This announcement may dampen spirits of some who smelt in Biden’s announcement of August 31 end of imperialist wars. It is not going to be so because imperialism means war. To end war, imperialism must be ended. Imperialism cannot but be itself. However, these manoeuvres of a declining power are both dismal and dangerous.

### **CPI (ML)-New Democracy**

September 16, 2021



## **AIKMS condemns Police firing killing of two persons in a massive eviction drive of poor in Darrang district of Assam**

**A**IKMS strongly condemns police firing on the people in Dholpur in Darrang District of Assam. In this firing two persons have been killed and several seriously injured.

Police resorted to firing as part of drive to evict people in the name of encroachment though they have been living there since long. As a proof of their residence they have electricity connection and other documentary evidence.

These poor families who built roofs over their heads for shelter after being internally displaced and affected by soil erosion of river bank of Brahmaputra river would face utter deprivation and destitution in this covid health crisis.

On Monday police had forcibly evicted 800 families. They resorted to firing to evict more families.

RSS-BJP govt. has taken this undemocratic and inhuman drive even without providing any alternative to the evicted people. This drive is to forcibly evict people who belong to minorities.

Almost all of these families are poor landless and make their living primarily as daily wage-earner. They need to be rehabilitated



properly by providing three Bighas of land and house constructed under Prime Minister Awas Yojana scheme as mandated by the Government announcement of providing land to the landless prior to undertaking any eviction drive for any governmental development scheme.

AIKMS Central Executive Committee demands that this eviction be stopped immediately, lands of those evicted be restored to them till they are provided alternative lands and houses and police officers who ordered firing to kill people be prosecuted.

AIKMS calls upon all peasant organizations and all democratic forces to protest against this illegal and in human eviction drive. A strong campaign for securing justice for this destitute uprooted people should be launched.

*(This statement was issued by Central Executive Committee of  
AIKMS on September 23, 2021)*

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# **Once More in Support of Collecting Caste Data in coming Census**

**W**hile the question of enumerating castes in the census data collection is being discussed widely including among ruling class parties, the question of releasing the data already collected is being brushed under the carpet. Caste data was collected as part of Socio Economic Caste Census in 2012-13 but the caste data was not released. It was UPA-II Govt. then. Some of the ruling class parties which were party to not releasing this data are however, now demanding conduction of caste census.

Central Govt. in its affidavit submitted before the Supreme Court on September 23, 2021 has said that it was not going to hold caste enumeration in the coming Census to be held in 2022. While giving many absurd and illogical reasons for holding that counting the castes (materially the backward castes) is not “feasible” Central Govt. has mainly maintained that not enumerating OBCs is a policy decision. Once again hiding behind the earlier Congress Govt.’s policies, present RSS-BJP Govt. has said in the affidavit that in 1951 “The Govt. had decided on the policy of official discouragement of caste.” RSS-BJP though in 2011, obviously it was in opposition then, had favoured conducting Caste census. At that time UPA-II Govt. had hidden behind the opinion of ORGI that “conducting caste enumeration along with population census 2011 may jeopardize the whole exercise of Census.” Hence a separate Socio Economic Caste Census was announced in 2011 and conducted in 2012. Release of

the caste data of that exercise has been demanded in the petition along with including collection of caste data in the coming Census.

While terming caste data in SECC 2011 as unreliable and holding caste enumeration as not feasible, Central Govt. has dished out reasons which are laughable were they not reflecting the deep seated upper caste chauvinism permeating the ruling state machinery including the main ruling class parties. Reasons given are so ridiculous for example “how could orphans tell their caste”? But how can the same orphans tell their religion or other parameters routinely collected in Census and whose collection all ruling class parties strongly favour. Mention has also been made in the Govt. affidavit of the sub-castes or their different spellings which have been existing since a very long time and have not been an obstacle to collecting caste data. Affidavit also alludes to a large number of castes but is forced to admit that castes with any significant population are as mentioned in the Central and state schedules. Further see this gem (!) of reasoning, “Fundamental calculation of the population count itself could be distorted.” How could this happen only RSS-BJP mandarins or the chauvinists manning the top echelons of the state machinery alone can say.

Affidavit also quotes Supreme Court’s Indira Sawhney judgement to mention difficulty in enumerating castes though the Court in that judgement had specifically mentioned, “Since caste represents an existing, identifiable, social groups spread over an overwhelming majority of country’s population, we may well begin with castes.” That judgement asks to begin with caste. Various Courts have lamented lack of data on this important and sensitive aspect since 1931 but the Govts. have turned deaf ears to this and ruling class parties supporting it when in opposition while opposing it when in power. The clue to the reason why RSS-BJP Govt. of the

day, and earlier Govt. led by other ruling class parties, have consistently opposed the inclusion of caste data (other than SCs as that is mandated by the Constitution and hence they have little choice.), “Since castes/SEBCs/BCs/OBCs have become part of integral part of politics, motivated returns through motivated or surreptitious means cannot be ruled out.” Hence, it is due to political reasons that main ruling class parties have been refusing to conduct the Caste enumeration i.e. upper castes whose interests they mainly represent may find it difficult to hold major share of power and privileges in society while being quite small part of the population of the country.

Some people try to give misleading arguments that the real issue is poverty which cuts across caste. Well, it cuts across religions too, then why collect that data! But more importantly, why not find out whether poverty and backwardness does have any caste colour? Why one should make assertion but refuse to test that assertion! If the data really proves that social and educational backwardness and poverty have no caste colour, why be afraid of collecting the data itself?

All the talk of conducting caste Census being not feasible or reliable or vitiating the very count of population is humbug. If that were so, all the Censuses conducted prior to 1951 are totally useless then why these are being kept on record books and repeatedly referred to by Govt. and in official data and books. Or whether the bureaucracy has suddenly become so incapable after the departure of colonial power? Is this not parroting superiority of colonial masters? Obviously this reason is totally groundless. The real reason is that the exercise may undermine the monopoly of upper castes and may put the agenda of taking correctives which may call upon the Govt. to make investments in advancement of people

belonging to backward castes. As castes have an institutional framework and these structures are being routinely utilized by ruling class parties, pressure to take such measures may become strong on the Govt. With RSS-BJP Govt. strongly committed to furthering the interests of corporate- foreign and domestic- and spending all in their service, the pressure to make allowance for advancing the people of backward castes may run counter to the pro-corporate agenda of the Govt. In this Govt. is backed by the top echelons of state machinery which are dominated by upper castes.

While the Govt. is blocking enumerating the backward castes due to political reasons as alluded to in the Govt. affidavit itself, it is also turning a blind eye towards the positive use of such data. This data may be useful in framing policies targeted against backwardness and poverty and also to counter those who oppose such measures citing lack of data.

Equally frivolous is the reason that collection of such data will encourage casteism. It presupposes and is often the argument of upper caste chauvinists that casteism is encouraged by affirmative action while affirmative action is only to address the already prevalent caste oppression and discrimination resulting in social backwardness, injustices and even atrocities. This argument is being repeated *ad nauseum* mostly by upper caste chauvinists who otherwise wear their castes on their sleeves and also in their names. Casteism does not need any encouragement, it is all pervading. Casteism needs discouragement and elimination and that is through elimination of privileges of upper castes and through affirmative action. Opposition to enumeration of castes is part of the efforts against elimination of caste privileges and for perpetuation of hegemony of upper castes.

Most of the ruling class parties wedded as they are to maintain the present socio economic system, are most opportunistic on the issue while being basically either opposed to or non-serious about it. Even the parties basing themselves on the support of backward castes have subordinated the issues of social justice to their participation in power, holding that their participation alone is enough evidence of social justice leaving masses of the people buried in the abyss of social segregation and injustice and subjected to atrocities. Besides refusal to conduct the caste census in 2022, non-release of caste data of SECC 2011 and non-release of data of Karnataka Census are also worthy of note.

### **Karnataka Caste Survey**

Another glaring example of hypocrisy and double-speak of ruling class parties on releasing caste data is non-release of the data collected in Karnataka. The state govt. with Siddaramaiah as Chief Minister ordered a Social and Educational Survey in 2014. This was conducted in April & May of 2015 for which reportedly 1.6 lakh personnel were used who surveyed 1.3 crore households. The state govt. spent nearly 170 crores on this exercise. The then state govt. avowedly undertook this exercise to enable the state govt. to decide on quotas under OBC category.

Though Siddaramaiah Govt. ordered the Survey, it did not release the report due to opposition from the representatives of dominant castes in his cabinet and overall domination of upper castes in the state's economic, social and political life. It dragged its feet for almost three years. It also showed that staying in power was more important for likes of Siddaramaiah above everything else. And now the same Siddaramaiah is raising the demand for releasing the report of that Survey! One can see such double speak on part of

some other parties too. NDA allies like JD (U) continue to stay in the Govt. despite Govt. ruling out conducting caste Census. RJD which is making much noise about the demand now was party to non-release of caste data of SECC 2011 by UPA-II of which they were an important constituent.

In Karnataka Census Survey report on castes was ready in the first half of 2016. But the then Govt. did not release it. BJP, which was in opposition then, had demanded that the report be released. The two Govt. which succeeded Siddaramaiah led Congress Govt. i.e. H.D. Kumaraswamy led JD(S)-Congress coalition Govt. and later RSS-BJP Govt. also did not release the report. Reason are not far to seek. The data of the Report found its way to press in August 2016. This data showed that dominant castes e.g. Lingayats and Vokkaligas are far fewer in number than generally propagated i.e. Lingayats being 17% and Vokkaligas being 14%. According to the leaked data :

| CASTE / COMMUNITY | SUB-CASTES | POPULATION | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Scheduled Castes  | 180        | 1.08 crore | 18         |
| Muslims           | 84         | 75 lakh    | 12.5       |
| Lingayats         | 90         | 59 lakh    | 9.8        |
| Vokkaligas        | 10         | 49 lakh    | 8.16       |
| Kurubas           |            | 43 lakh    | 7.1        |
| ST                | 105        | 42 lakh    | 7          |
| Brahmins          |            | 13 lakh    | 2.1        |

Though other reports (leaks) somewhat differ but the broad contours are same i.e. Scheduled Castes being the biggest group and Muslims the next. Lingayats are reported to be around 10%,

Vokkaligas 8% and Brahmins 2% i.e. together constituting just one fifth of the population of the state.

## **Tokenism**

While opposing the Caste enumeration which will build pressure on taking measures in the interest of backward castes, ruling class parties have been resorting to tokenism. While ruling out inclusion of caste enumeration in Census RSS-BJP spokesperson in Karnataka has said that greater space will be provided to OBC leaders in the Party and the state. Recently UP cabinet has been expanded to include several leaders of backward castes and scheduled castes.

Ruling class parties understand the electoral importance of backward castes and scheduled castes but they refuse to address the root causes of the caste oppression which lie in the domination of economic power in the hands of upper castes. This is especially so in case of land, the most important means of production for the vast masses in the rural areas where over two third of the people of the country live. What to talk of radical land reforms even those measures which are already there on the statute book are also resisted. A glaring example is the struggle of Dalits of Punjab for their share in Panchayat lands. This is only for annual lease and the same is provided for in an Act in Punjab and yet Dalits' struggle has been continually suppressed. This struggle has drawn wide participation of Dalit masses including women in districts of Sangrur and Patiala in Punjab. Congress in Punjab has made a Dalit chief minister but its Govt. has resorted to suppressing the struggles of Dalits especially for land.

The most important aspect which has been highlighted by the present debate on conducting caste census is continuing caste



oppression, discrimination and injustice in the country and failure of tokenist approach in addressing these. The elimination of social injustice is linked to revolutionary transformation of society, especially its vast rural areas. The equitable ownership of means of production will be important to eliminate caste system. Elimination of oppression, inequality and discrimination will be helpful in ending segregation among castes.

Caste census may just be the beginning. It is a democratic demand which must be supported. However, it has the potential of starting a process which may free the present dominant form of struggle for social justice from the clutches of the ruling classes. It may help in further mobilizing people into struggle for social justice which is integral part of the revolutionary movement of the Indian people.

September 24, 2021

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## **Agitation on demanding legal rights to podu lands in Telangana State**

# **5 Hour ‘Sadak Bandh’ in Telengana for Podu Lands & Repeal of 3 Agri Acts**

**M**ovement and agitation was carried out demanding legal rights to podu lands in accordance with the Forest Rights Act, 2006, for stopping attacks and raids of Forest officials and Police, and for withdrawal of cases foisted on podu cultivators. Movement

demanding immediate stopping of the destruction of crops in podu land in the name of regenerating forests i.e. Haritha Haram and stopping of digging of trenches besides the villages. Movement also demanded repeal of 3 anti farmer laws and enactment of law guaranteeing MSP. This movement was initially taken up by C.P.I. (ML) New Democracy, in which AIKMS participated actively for one month programme from 5th September to 5th October 2021.

AIKMS All India General Council had given a call to take up padayatras, demonstrations and public meetings on the occasion of “International Indigenous People’s Day – Adivasis Day”, demanding legal rights to all podu lands, which tribals and others are cultivating and stopping eviction of tribals from their podu lands.

After the formation of Telangana State in 2014, TRS Government led by KCR came to power. Since then, no podu cultivator has got any patta certificate. KCR had promised 3 acres of land to every Tribal and Dalit family, who have either no land or less land (to that extent govt. will provide the land) but no tribal has till date received any land from the govt. Moreover, the KCR Govt. is continuously harassing, attacking and destroying their crops, even evicting tribals from cultivating podu lands. All these repressive measures are being taken in the name of “Haritha Haram”. In some places, tribals have been evicted from their podu land, for which they have already got patta certificates. Even these were not spared. People have resisted the destruction of their crops and eviction from their lands. Hundreds of cases have been foisted. Even cases under section 307 IPC have also been foisted against hundreds and thousands every year. When the crops were destroyed and tribals evicted from their cultivated lands, some of them have resorted to suicides. Protecting and continuing to

cultivate podu lands has become a life and death struggle for the podu cultivators.

### **Successfully held Padayatras in Different Districts**

CPI (ML) New Democracy State Committee gave a call on the occasion of Adivasi Day, to take up Padayatras and hold public meetings at Dist. Headquarters. A Padayatra started on 5th Sept from Aswaraopet of Bhadradri Kothagudem Dist. This padayatra went through Dammamet, Mulkalapalli, Palvancha Mandals and reached Kothagudem. In the last phase of padayatra from Palvancha to Kothagudem about 3000 people have participated and a public meeting was held at Dist. Collectorate. A memorandum was submitted to the Dist Collector regarding podu land issues. Coms. P. Ranga Rao, K. Rangaiah, R. Chandra Sekhar, Gummadi Narsaiah, Mudda Biksham, Aruna and others addressed the public meeting.

Another Podu padayatra started from Sathupalli in Khammam Dist. on 5th Sept. On 7 & 8th cycle yatra held in Penuballi and Kallur Mandals. On 8th & 9th padayatra of podu continued through Konijerla, Yenkur and Tallada Mandals. On 10th it started from V. Venkatayapalem with 1500 people, reached Khammam. A public meeting was held at Dist. collectorate which was addressed by Coms. Com. P. Ranga Rao, G. Venkateswar Rao, RCS, A. Venkateswarlu and others.

On 9<sup>th</sup> September a Convention was held at Komararam village in Bhadradri Kothagudem district. Coms. V. Koteswar Rao, Madhu, Mukti Satyam and others addressed the participants in the convention. A padayatra started from there which went through Illendu, Tekulapalli and it reached Kothagudem on 11<sup>th</sup> September 21. A public meeting was held at Dist. collectorate in which more

than 2000 people participated. Com. Madhu, P. Nagaiah, M. Satyam and others have spoken and a memorandum was submitted to the District Collector.

Podu Padayatra was also held for two days in Sirikonda Mandal of Nizamabad district in which 200 people participated. At the end of padayatra a public meeting was held.

### **Programmes in other areas**

Adivasi Day was observed on 9.8.2021 and many programmes were held on that day. Particularly meetings were held in many villages of Mahabubabad, Mancherial, Asifabad, Nirmal etc. districts. Adivasi Day was observed in Nizamabad Dist. Hq. in which 200 people participated. On 6 August in Khanapur town of Nirmal Dist. convention was held with 400 people. On 16th August Adivasi Day was observed at Mancherial Dist Hq with 200 people.

### **Children's arrest along with their mothers at Yellannanagar**

Yellanna Nagar is a small hamlet consisting of about 150 families belongs to tribal and B.C. communities in Konijerla Mandal of Khammam district. They are cultivating the land since about 3 decades. This land is in dispute between revenue and forest departments. No family has got more than 5 acres of land, most of the people have got about one acre. Many of the cultivators faced cases during the last 3 decades besides destruction of their crops on a number of times by forest officials. Recently, particularly since KCR came to power as C.M, these people are facing eviction threats every year, in the name of Haritha Haram. This year, on the morning of 4th August 2021, forest officials went to the cultivated

lands and started destroying the cotton and other crops. Knowing this, peasants ran to the fields and requested officials to stop the destroying the crops. The forest officials abused with filthy language. When the people obstructed, skirmishes have taken place between them. Forest officials beat the people, particularly women, then the women also resisted. Finally, forest officials were forced to retreat. Next day they came along with the police when the people are demonstrating at Tehsildar office and arrested 21 people, among them 19 are women. Surprisingly they have arrested even the mothers. One of them had 3 months baby, another 8 months baby and yet another one year child. A case has been foisted under section 307 on 70 people, including these 21 members. This news had gone viral in the media and almost all the parties and mass organizations condemned this incident and demanded withdrawal of the case and release of the arrested persons. In the prison also, the Sub-Jailer harassed, attacked and locked up in the day time also. Even the children were also not given food in time. After week days, on 12th the arrested people were released. After the release, they held dharna at prison itself and the prison officials assured to inquire the incident and take action against the culprits.

CPI (ML) ND team lead by Com. P. Ranga Rao, AIKMS team led by Com. V. Venkataramaiah and POW team led by Com. Jhansi visited the village. CLC and leaders of political parties also went to the village. Due to pressure of the people and the movement, the KCR Government has been forced to withdraw Section 307 from the case. People have saved their crops.

### **Joint programmes**

After these programmes, the necessity of joint programmes to pressurize the KCR Govt. was felt and discussions were held with

the opposition parties except BJP, particularly with left parties and TJS. A joint action programme was chalked out of holding State convention, hold public meetings at different centres and rasta roko (Road Block) on 5th October in the areas of podu lands related the Districts of the State.

### **State convention on podu lands**

Convention on podu land issues was held at Hyderabad on 13.9.'21. About 400 people participated in the Convention. CPI (ML) New Democracy, CPI (ML) New Democracy led by Com. Chandram, CPM, CPI, TJS, Cong., TDP and Adivasi Organisations have attended the convention. The convention gave a call to support the Bharat Bandh on 27th Sept., and repeal of 3 anti farmers laws and enactment of a law guaranteeing MSP, giving memorandums on 30th Sept. to Dist. Collectors, holding public meetings and rasta roko on 5th October.

### **Successful Rasta Roko**

Before Rasta Roko, public meetings were held in various towns and villages of podu land areas. On 30th Sept. at Utnoor of Adilabad a Dist. convention was held with 800 people and in Mancherial it was held with 150 people.

On 5.10.2021, 5 hours long rasta roko of the national and state highways was held under the banner of the Podu Rythu Porata Committee at 65 centres covering from Adilabad to Aswaraopet covering 400 K.M., from Mahbubabad to Huzurnagar covering 150 K.M. and from Vanaparathi to Gadwal. CPI (ML) New Democracy participated in large numbers with 100 to 2500 people participating at each centre. Rasta roko was successfully held in Adilabad, Asifabad, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizamabad, Bhupallapalli,

Mulugu, Warangal (Rural), Mahbubabad, Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem, Khammam, Ganapathj and Gadwal districts. While coming to participate in rasta roko, P. Lingaiah, Age 55 years belongs to tribal communist Gundalapadu village of Kothagudem Dist. died on the spot as he fell under a tractor.

People's at rasta roko points raised slogans demanding patta certificates for podu lands, repeal of three farm laws and legal guarantee for MSP. They also strongly condemned brutal murders of peasants at Lakhimpur Kheri in UP by the son and associates of Union Minister of State for Home, Ajay Misra and demanded arrest of culprits.

Due to the pressure of the people's movement, KCR government has been forced to appoint a Ministerial Sub-Committee. KCR Govt. was also forced to declare that podu land issues will be solved within 3 months. The Govt. has sought to receive fresh applications from the podu land cultivators for seeking legal rights. The movement will continue till the podu land problems, particularly, legal rights to all podu cultivated lands.



**Lakhimpur Killings****Barbaric assault shows RSS-BJP determination to serve Corporate; use of criminal elements**

● **Ashish Mital**

**E**Four peasants and a press reporter were crushed to death by the goonda gang of RSS-BJP in an unprovoked, barbaric attack in Lakhimpur Kheri. This attack had the sanction of the central leadership is beyond doubt, considering the threat issued by the local MP and Union Minister of State for Home, Ajay Misra, the fact that his son led the attack, the continuation of Misra in his post despite being an accused and the silence of RSS and BJP central leadership on the matter.

Ajay Misra was recently made Union Minister of State for Home Affairs on 7<sup>th</sup> July. On September 25<sup>th</sup> this Minister, ‘Teni Maharaj’ as he is known to his followers, had warned, “If I had gone there, they would not have found a space to run away. Change yourself otherwise we will confront and change you in 2 minutes. I am not just simply a Minister, or an MP or MLA. Those who know about me before I became an MP, they will also know that I do not run away from any challenge. The day I accept that challenge and start working, that day you will have to leave Lakhimpur, remember this”. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day he had invited another



prominent BJP personality with known criminal antecedents, Deputy CM of UP, Keshav Maurya to the wrestling 'dangal' in his native village, Banvirpur, he was seen showing thumbs down to the protestors.

Mr. Teni has a long criminal record. He is an accused in a murder case of 24 year old Prabhat Gupta in 2005, in which he has been given reprieve by the lower courts and the matter is under challenge in the High Court. He is a propertied man, a local tough and has 'trade' interests across the border in Nepal. From this background his elevation to the position of Minister reflects the type of political leadership RSS-BJP is promoting. It is these type of faces on both sides who play a role in tussle for control of UP between Modi-Shah duo and Thakur Chief Minister. Mr. Misra was chosen above several other known Brahmin faces of BJP in UP.

When on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the Minister's son, Ashish led a convoy of 3 SUVs to race through at high speed and mow down from behind the peasants who were returning after their peaceful protest. He was only executing the final task of physically crushing the peasants, threats of which had been given. There was no way in this incident that the peasants could have known or saved themselves. The heinous act was pre-meditated, executed suddenly, was without provocation and was completed in a space of a few seconds. The incident highlights the level of frustration BJP has reached in being unable to control the sustained and expanding protest by the farmers of India.

### **Challenge to Fascist Rule: New strategy of Repression**

This farmers' movement against 3 laws and for MSP has posed a determined challenge to the fascist rule of RSS-BJP. It has mobilized masses, they have braved police administrative pressure

– cases, barricades and all, they refused to be taken in by the ploy to shift them to Burari, the attempt to engage them in legal wrangles in the SC was foiled, the attempt to project the movement as an anti-state, separatist Khalistani movement by foisting a religious flag at Red Fort was overcome and the movement had stood steadfast and it remained on course mobilizing masses in large numbers. The RSS had sent its goondas to attack the thinned out strength at the Ghazipur UP border on January 28<sup>th</sup>. But again, the farmers had stood up bravely refusing to lift the sit-in. The police back tracked for fear of further aggravating the anger of peasantry. This plan of the RSS, to use its own *bahubalis* to physically attack the protesting peasants and then, in the name of ensuring peace and ‘law and order taking its course’, allow the state forces to take over, has been executed in Lakhimpur. It is at a new centre and poses some new challenges.

While for a long time RSS-BJP fascist rulers have forced the ‘Lok’ to simply follow the diktats of the ‘tantra’, led by the farmers the ‘lok’ questioned the ‘tantra’. Nothing has worked for the ‘tantra’ because the peasants are determined to get the acts repealed and have crop price guarantee. Yet today, again the corporate driven media is on a drive to defame the movement for being violent, unprincipled, immoral, having nothing to do with farmers.

This event has shifted the scene of operations to Terai region. The Sikhs in Terai area of UP are in the districts of Saharanpur, Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur, Barielly, Pilibhit, Lakhimpur, and Bahraich. Though Sikh settlements in UP were encouraged even before the British rule by the Nawabs of Lucknow, the main influx came after partition when a sizable population moved in, leading to nearly 1.5 times increase in their population. Land was allotted only to those who had lost land in Pakistan and at

a standard 12 acres per beneficiary, while those displaced having no land were not allotted any land. Later migration was also fuelled by the agricultural potential of the land. Some lower caste Sikhs like a section of Raisikhs who joined as labour force, did not receive land of their own. Some of them also bought land. Much of this was also under forest cover and got converted into agricultural land. Though this area is sometimes called 'mini Punjab', population of Sikhs in the Terai belt districts is pretty low, being only 2.63% in Lakhimpur, which is the highest.

Overall, the Sikhs own a larger share in the land than their share in population, their average holding in Lakhimpur being 6.92 acres. The other more numerous communities, on the other hand control larger share of the total land, but the average individual holding is 2.02 acres.

The land worth of the area can be assessed from the fact that in 2019-20, Lakhimpur Kheri was the highest contributor, worth Rs 12,414.40 crore in agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector of the state.

It is this high productivity and dependence on agriculture for a living that attracted the terai region of UP and Uttarakhand in this movement. They have been amongst the most determined forces in establishing the permanent sit in at Ghazipur and amongst the biggest mobilizers there. It is important that while more than 60% of paddy and wheat in Punjab is procured by the govt., in UP and Uttarakhand it is less than 10 percent of the total produce. The other commercial crop of the area, sugarcane, remains chronically saddled with delayed payments and rate issues. Hence with participation of UP and Uttarakhand, the demand for legal guarantee of govt. procurement at MSP as per Swaminathan formula also came to the fore.

The BJP has tried to use this situation to its advantage by propagating incorrect facts to mobilize opinion against the Sikhs of the area, trying to rally other communities against Sikhs and creating a communal divide. First, they propagated that Sikhs are outsiders, not disclosing that even the latest settlers are at least 3 generations old. It did not cut ice. Second, they propagated that the Sikhs have displaced Tharus and Boksas. This also made no impact. Actually, displacement of Boksas and Tharus from forests took place mainly because the ruling classes and the govt. never helped them to settle down in farming. These tribals neither had the expertise nor the resources, and the govt. did nothing to provide them. Sikhs had both expertise and resources besides land given due to partition. The govt. converted forest land into agricultural land and allow non tribals to settle on it. Not just the Sikhs, all communities have benefitted from this, some even more than the Sikhs. The upper caste Brahmins and OBCs like Kurmis, Lodhs, Gadariayas, Maurya, Yadavs, many of who are numerically larger than Sikhs have benefitted in a big way from this. Many of them are big land owners, bigger than the Sikhs. It is these persons who are the dominant force in the district. What is important is that the Sikh peasants have been in the forefront of the struggle to save agricultural land of farmers and income from farming. That is why they are being targeted.

The RSS-BJP on its part has tried to invoke sympathy for the tribals uprooted here generations ago, though has done nothing at all for the tribals where they are fighting to save their land today. Nor has it proposed any policy to help develop the livelihood rights of Tharus and Boksas of the area. These tribals constitute 1.2 % of the total population of the district. Even today such a policy to secure the livelihood of tribals can and should be made. But BJP

effort obviously is only to whip up anti Sikh sentiment, not to help tribals.

## **Failed Communal Drive**

As elsewhere, the local BJP unit had been trying to rally the farmers on to its side, but has not been successful. Unlike in West UP, in other parts where organizations are weak, fear of police brutality and administrative penalization prevails and people have not yet come out in larger numbers in open protests. But the fact is that the RSS-BJP's own efforts to mobilize support among peasantry, despite its organizational network and its govt. in the state, has just not taken off.

When the SUVs drove into the protesting farmers, the four farmers killed were Lovepreet Singh and Nachatar Singh from Lakhimpur Kheri district and Gurvinder Singh and Daljeet Singh from Bahraich district. One press reporter was also crushed by the vehicles. He was Raman Kashyap. The other 3 who died when the vehicle overturned were the driver Hariom Mishra and two known BJP leaders Shubham Mishra and Shyam Sunder Nishad. The details are subject of enquiry. However, RSS-BJP propagated that Raman had been killed by the protesting farmers. His family however, stood firm and clearly stated that his body bore tyre marks of being crushed. His 13<sup>th</sup> day memorial meet was attended by leaders and people from the movement, not from RSS- BJP.

The BJP and RSS have not been able to communally polarize and mobilize the local people against the Sikhs. BJP did try to mobilize people against the arrest of Ashish Misra but could hold only a small Brahmin Sabha. It has found few takers amongst common people for its communal game plan. The SKM protest on October 12<sup>th</sup> drew large numbers predominantly Sikhs. Though

RSS-BJP game plan of communal polarization has not been successful, peasant organizations have to be vigilant against these conspiracies. In foiling this conspiracy mobilization of masses of peasantry in whole of UP into the movement will play an important role.

### **Challenges and Tasks before the Movement**

- This new situation demands a renewed and energetic effort to rally all sections of peasants. For this organizations need to work hard to explain the basic issues and mobilize the peasantry of Lakhimpur and neighbouring districts in open mass protests. Of equal importance is to mobilize the peasants and other sections on question of repression. This conspiracy by RSS and BJP must be enquired into and fully exposed. Peasant organizations in this area are relatively weak and the opposition parties have consciously chosen to make only press criticisms rather than rally people in open protests. This is one challenge before us.
- The other is the expectation from elections which are due next year. The dominant expectation is to show the BJP the door in the hustings. However the need is to mobilize masses into the movement. Elections are decided between parties and candidates where the choice is made between available options only. The results are often affected by division of opposition votes, campaigns for preventing victory of particular candidates, tactics of putting up candidates to cut into opposition votes, caste driven and communal considerations, state machinery manipulations during casting of votes and many others. The question before us is can we make the issue of repeal of these farm laws, this repression, as

the main issue of elections. None of the opposition parties have mobilized masses on these issues, because they wish to come to power on BJP's failures. They are only out to use the anger of the people especially peasants. This is the big challenge, to mobilize the peasants on this issue, build a movement and force all parties to take clear positions.

- This situation has brought urgency to the task of mobilizing peasants in East and Central UP also on these issues and other issues facing them. It will go a long way to push back the onslaught of the Corporate and the BJP and but brakes on BJP's hopes to rally these areas on caste and communal lines. Expansion of the movement will also help in instilling confidence in fearlessly pleading proper evidence in this attack in Lakhimpur.
- There are tasks related to the legal issue. The criminal proceedings have to be attended to and evidence has to be pleaded. The witnesses have to be given proper confidence. Effort is required to coordinate between the families of victims and other witnesses. A legal team needs to be set up for defence of peasants being accused of killing of BJP workers.







A view of the protest meeting against US led invasion of Afghanistan. Protest Demonstration was organized by Central Committee of CPI (ML)-New Democracy on November 29, 2001. This protest march started from Ramlila Maidan and culminated in a public meeting at Jantar Mantar. Over 20,000 people participated in this Rally.



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