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Organ of the
Central Committee CPI(ML)

NEW DEMOCRACY

In This Issue....

**CPI (ML)-New Democracy Call for Lok Sabha
Elections 2024**

**Parliamentary Elections and Challenges Before The
People**

Punjab: Rail Roko by PMU and ZPSC

IFTU Call on May Day, 2024

**All India Tribal Forum Statements of Ladakh and
Manipur**

Farmers' Big Assembly at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi

One Hundred Years of Vaikom Struggle

Statement on Doloo Tea Estate, Silchar, Assam

Palestine: Continuing Resistance, Growing Support

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CONTENTS

CPI (ML)-ND Call for Lok Sabha Elections 2024	02
Parliamentary Elections 2024 and Challenges Before The People	10
Punjab: Rail Roko by PMU and ZPSC	16
IFTU Call on May Day, 2024	24
AITF Statements of Ladakh and Manipur	27
Farmers' Big Assembly at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi	30
One Hundred Years of Vaikom Struggle	37
Statement on Doloo Tea Estate, Silchar, Assam	42
Palestine: Continuing Resistance, Growing Support	44

CPI (ML)-New Democracy Call for 2024 Lok Sabha Elections

Defeat Fascist RSS-BJP in Lok Sabha Elections

Unite & Resist Attacks by Hindutva Forces

Build Struggles for Livelihood & Rights

The coming Parliamentary elections (April-June 2024) will be one of the most important elections to determine the course of ruling class politics in India. At stake is not just which Party will form the Govt. but also the type of governance the country will have. The ruling RSS-BJP, during their power over last ten years, have come a long way in preparing for imposing fascist dictatorship over the country. They have prepared the ground for all round attack against the people- their organizations and struggles- sharpening tools of repression – both its apparatus as well as legal framework. Simultaneously, they are also attacking Opposition parties of ruling classes, preparing the way for their own monopoly

over state power to impose fascist dictatorship over the country. The most important issue before the people during these elections is therefore to expose, oppose, punish and defeat RSS-BJP.

RSS-BJP drive to impose fascist system draws support from major sections of corporate- foreign and Indian- as well as rural elite. In fact, over last ten years largesse has been showered over the corporate, some of them like Ambani and Adani benefiting the most. It is due to their drive to increase their wealth and power amidst deepening socio-economic crisis that dominant section of the ruling classes want to change the existing mode of governance to fascism. They wish to suppress people's struggles and have chosen RSS-BJP for its capacity to divide the people on religious lines, divert their anger and disrupt their unity necessary to challenge this anti-people and anti-democratic drive.

RSS-BJP and ruling class sections supporting them, wish to change if not abolish the present Constitution, to do away with whatever rights people, due to their struggles, have under it. Constitution, framed after domestic ruling classes came to power at end of British colonial rule over the country, has incorporated aspects of struggles of the people during movement against colonial rule. These aspects are related to anti-colonialism, democracy, secularism, social justice and federalism. RSS, which had chosen deliberately to stay away from the freedom movement, has been the chosen representative of the sections of ruling classes to do away with these aspects. Not only they wish to do away with rights of states, they want to alter electoral process to perpetuate their absolute control over the state machinery. They wish to do away with having to take measures before elections. Dominant sections of the ruling classes want to do away with that. This is the danger facing the people of the country today.

With the help of dominant sections of mainstream media controlled by corporate, RSS-BJP has weaved a fake narrative of improving conditions of the people and emerging India. Intensifying contradictions among imperialist powers have helped them to an extent both in terms of getting favourable treatment and in flaunting their so-called independence but this cannot hide the underlying crude reality of worsening conditions of the people and unfulfilled promises. Non-publication and even non-collection of data has been hallmark of RSS-BJP rule. They make unfounded, unsubstantiated claims of their achievements but their own pronouncements prove their statements to be lies. They claim to have reduced poverty but also claim to provide 5 kg free ration to nearly 80 crore people. Non-poor availing 5 kg of free grains! India is home to largest number of destitute, even more than our proportion of population. India is sliding on the scale of Global Development Index, Global Hunger Index and World Happiness Index. Govt. boasts of India becoming fifth largest economy but this most populous country of the world is among the countries having lowest per capita GDP, and that too is very unevenly distributed. So gross is inequality that richest 1% of the population own 40% of the wealth of the country, highest since the records are available.

Last ten years of RSS-BJP rule have been unprecedented disaster for the people. RSS-BJP leader who became Prime Minister in 2014, Mr. Modi, promised to double income of farmers by 2022, which is since long past. Forgetting their promise, Modi Govt. launched attacks on Peasantry and Agriculture through three Agri Acts, an attack that was beaten back by peasantry through their epic struggle (2020-2021). Debts on farmers are increasing and they continue to commit suicides while prices of inputs are rising. Modi had promised to implement Swaminathan Committee

recommendation for determining MSP but unashamedly went back on this. Over ten years of Modi Govt., MSP has increased on an average of 5% per year which is below the rate of inflation. Though they are increasing MSP in view of elections, but they are refusing to make a law guaranteeing procurement of all crops on MSP.

RSS-BJP and Modi had promised creation of 2 crore jobs for youth every year. This *jumla* has been a cruel joke. Having abolished annual Employment-Unemployment Survey and Labour Bureau's quarterly enterprise surveys, they make false claims of reduction in unemployment. All claims of increasing employment are based on increase in self-employment which includes even unpaid work in household enterprises. Share of self-employed has increased to 57.3% (from 49.5% in 2013-14) while share of salaried workers declined from 23.1% to 20.9% of the total work force over the same period. Stagnation and even decline has been on in manufacturing sector despite talk of "Make in India" and "Atmnirbharta" while construction sector employment has risen to over 13% of the work force where overwhelming majority (83%) do casual work and 11% are self-employed denoting low quality jobs and irregular employment. Worse still, inflation adjusted wages of India's workers have remained stagnant (risen less than 1%) during RSS-BJP rule while attacks on working class have risen. Small industries and small shopkeepers have been further squeezed out with demonetization, GST and lack of market protection.

There has been systematic attack on public education and public health with increasing privatization and commercialization. A lot of people are pushed into poverty due to out of pocket expenditure on illnesses. A sinister campaign to poison young minds is on through saffronization where teaching of science, history, virtually all disciplines is distorted, enquiry curbed, inquisitiveness

punished and conformity rewarded. Lumpenism is being promoted in youth, they being used as hoodlums for RSS designs.

Though the policies underlying these attacks have been followed by all the parties of ruling classes, but RSS-BJP have resorted to their unchecked implementation and through imposition of fascism wish to clear the ground for all round attack against the people. They wish to impose terrorist methods to serve the ruling classes and imperialists. Today threat of fascism comes from RSS-BJP.

RSS-BJP rule over the decade has been an unmitigated disaster in terms of social cohesion. Religious minorities, particularly Muslims, have been prime target of attack, their rights annulled, their workplaces, houses and places of worship and education destroyed and collective punishment meted out to the community. Muslims are being targeted to communally polarize society in favour of RSS-BJP. Citizenship Amendment Act Rules have been notified to deepen communal division in Eastern India especially West Bengal. Attacks on Christians too have increased over this period. Attacks on economic interests of Dalits and their social oppression have increased. Manuwadi code is being imposed on women. Laws are being changed and security forces are increased to dispossess tribals from their land in the interest of corporate. Modi led RSS-BJP Govt. has been most offensive against poor and unprivileged people.

RSS-BJP's Hindutva is the weapon of most reactionary sections of ruling classes against minorities as well as all socially oppressed, tribals and women, endorsing as it does patriarchy and unquestioned obedience. It is to instill fear among vast section of people. Hindutva promotes upper caste chauvinism. It runs counter

to the interests of vast majority of the people whose united struggle is the most potent weapon to check advance of fascist forces.

RSS-BJP Govt. represents the most reactionary sections of the ruling classes who have launched cruelest attacks against people. Over last ten years of rule they have captured most of the institutions of the state. They have used on large scale UAPA and other criminal laws against the activists of people's movement. Democratic space is being squeezed and even shut down. RSS-BJP have unleashed CBI, ED, IT agencies against leaders of Opposition parties to suppress these parties and force their leaders to join the ruling bandwagon. The caged parrots are turned into hawks against Opposition. This has distorted playing field between ruling class parties. Through electoral bonds they had sought to monopolize big contributions and squeeze contributions to ruling class Opposition parties. Their move to impose fascism must be checked.

- To check their design to impose fascist dictatorship, revolutionary forces must unite the people in all round struggle against RSS fascism, its Hindutva base and its corporate sponsors. This broad based unity is the sole guarantee to stop their efforts to impose fascism. It is the bulwark of struggle against fascism. All efforts should be made to defeat RSS-BJP and their NDA allies in coming elections.
- Progressive, democratic and patriotic forces must launch a vigorous campaign against Hindutva attacks against minorities, their religious places and socially oppressed sections. People should be mobilized on vast scale, if necessary, beginning from those areas where progressive and democratic forces are relatively strong and mobilizing all

forces on this plank. Large scale mobilization of people will send message to people in other areas.

- Majoritarian fascism has been and can be challenged by struggles of the people, struggles of different sections of people provided these are waged with clarity of purpose and determination to succeed. Class struggle and struggle of different sections of people furnish and strengthen the forces for struggle against fascists. As RSS-BJP intensify attacks against different sections of people, they create conditions for revolutionary and struggling forces to unite the people into struggle. These struggles not only achieve the immediate result of pushing back a particular offensive, they also open up democratic space and forge people's unity in struggle against fascist rulers.
- CPI (ML)- New Democracy appeals to the people of the country to defeat RSS-BJP fascists and their allies in the coming elections. We recognize that even the Opposition parties of ruling classes do not represent alternate economic and social policies. When in power, ruling class Opposition parties implement anti-people policies and suppress people's struggles. But it is RSS-BJP which are moving to even close the space for struggle against these policies, to brutally suppress all people's struggles. We recognize the limited nature of democratic rights under the existing dispensation and we remain committed to mobilize the people to defend and enlarge democratic freedoms. However, today fascist forces threaten to abolish even the democratic rights to the extent they exist. This attack must be resisted and defeated to strengthen struggle for going further in people's struggles.

It is clear that Opposition parties of ruling classes do not recognize the danger of fascism from RSS. Hence, they are not putting up common candidates against RSS-BJP in coming elections. They are only concerned with increasing their own parliamentary strength even as they talk of defeating BJP.

CPI (ML)-New Democracy appeals to the people to unite and rise against the danger posed by these fascist forces. Spare no effort to expose, isolate and defeat the fascist forces- RSS-BJP.

CPI (ML)- New Democracy appeals to all progressive, democratic, patriotic forces and individuals to rise to the occasion for this historic duty to foil the attempts of fascist forces. Unite to check and defeat the designs of these forces. It is in the utmost interest of the struggle of the people for their rights and freedom and for the struggle for a better society.

Central Committee,
CPI (ML)-New Democracy

March 27, 2024

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Editorial :

Parliamentary Elections and Challenges Before The People

For coming Lok Sabha elections, Central Committee of CPI (ML)-New Democracy has called for defeat of RSS-BJP and their NDA allies. As CC's Call puts it, "At stake (*in these elections*) is not just which Party will form the Govt. but also the type of governance the country will have. The ruling RSS-BJP, during their power over last ten years, have prepared the ground for all round attack against the people- their organizations and struggles- sharpening tools of repression – both its apparatus as well as legal framework. Simultaneously, they are also attacking Opposition parties of ruling classes, preparing the way for their own monopoly over state power to impose fascist dictatorship over the country."

For these elections RSS-BJP leaders have set a target of securing 370 seats for BJP and more than 400 seats for the alliance led by them- NDA. Some of the leaders of ruling party are openly saying that they need a two third majority of their own to change the Constitution. Though such tall claims may be to bolster the morale of their cadre, but their plan of changing the Constitution- specially to remove the rights enshrined in the Constitution- has been much talked about. RSS-BJP have been maintaining a stance of denial while encouraging its leaders to make such statements.

Given the RSS's longstanding opposition to rights of oppressed sections- oppressed castes, tribals and women, rights of minorities and rights of the states, these statements appear to be laying the ground for such an overhaul, the exact course of which will be dependent on the outcome of the elections.

It is worth attention that RSS is going to complete one century of its existence next year, a rarity of such a long existence of a fascist organization. Over this period it has pursued its fascist aims and designs navigating different political situations and over this long period it has come a long way from being a fringe organization to the dominant organization of the ruling classes. The purpose is not to go into its history, but to understand how this growth of fascist forces for over a century is rooted in the deep seated inequality in society and undemocratic character of the state even after transfer of power by British colonialists. Indian society is caste ridden with upper caste dominating not only resources but also state power. In this inherently unequal society, Democracy based on universal franchise appears to be an outgrowth, a contradiction pointed out by Chairman of Drafting Committee of the Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. While big capitalists and big landlords control the Indian state, it is managed or at least its management is dominated by the social strata belonging to Hindu upper castes. The latter also are predominant among the land owning sections in the country. Parliamentary democracy in India therefore is democratic in form but undemocratic in essence. It is not comparable to bourgeois parliamentary democracy in developed capitalist countries of the West. This aspect is relevant here in the rise of fascist forces that an undemocratic section has continued to dominate both Indian society and Indian state all through its existence as parliamentary democracy.

In this respect, the Indian political system reflects the Indian society where capitalist factors of production have grown over a largely feudal base though other forms were also present. This sort of hybrid formation which is called semi-feudalism has preponderance of pre-capitalist relations in the countryside, where the majority of Indian people live and which in electoral exercise exerts a big influence in determining the contours of elected bodies. This state of rural India, full of contradictions and struggles based on them, furnishes material for the growth of fascist forces in the country. But by themselves, these forces are not powerful enough to change the mode of governance. Indian big capital which has grown and continues as comprador has been in alliance with landlords in the rural areas under the aegis of imperialism. Hence, turn to fascist dictatorship is rooted in the crisis faced by Capital, foreign and domestic, which marshals these undemocratic forces for change in the mode of governance i.e. from existing formal parliamentary democracy to an openly terroristic mode of governance i.e. fascist dictatorship. It is thus rooted in the drive to intensify surplus extraction for which it allies with rural elite in the vast countryside.

In this respect, undemocratic aspects of existing parliamentary democracy stand out. Despite India being a country with diversity, a multinational, multi-religious society ridden with caste system; archaic norms of patriarchy; marginalized big tribal population, a system of first past the post was adopted. Proportional representation is not only more democratic but also corresponds to the diversity of India but this was not done. Due to this, with only 30.8% vote secured in 2014 general elections, even if we ignore deficiencies of the electoral system, RSS-BJP embarked on packing all state institutions, institutions dealing with Education and

History, with their own people to dismantle hitherto existing system to prepare the ground for their march towards fascism. Despite overwhelming majority of the people living in abysmal poverty, money power and muscle power dominate the electoral exercise. Once elected, the representatives do not care to fulfill promises and people have no recourse of redress- no right to recall. Moreover, with mainstream media under the control of big capital, betrayal of these promises is never made an issue. Though today people face the danger of fascist dictatorship, it is relevant to recall the undemocratic base from which fascist forces in India have drawn their sustenance and have grown.

While we should highlight these deficiencies rooted in the present system, we should not lose sight of the fact that today even the rights enshrined in the Constitution are facing threat from fascist forces. They have and continue to paint Muslims as the enemy who are responsible for all the problems of other sections. In this communal drive fascist forces are backed by corporate media which laps up all the false allegations leveled by fascist forces. They do not bother to check that Indian Muslims are one of the poorest sections of Indian society. RSS-BJP talk of appeasement and several such things without bothering and being made to bother about facts on the ground. Sachchar Committee (2005) report had exposed myth of appeasement, detailing the conditions of Muslims in India. Their real attack, in the name of Muslims, is against the working people whom they wish to divide to pre-empt their struggles against attacks by corporate and landlords. Stridency of their attack mirrors hollowness of their claims. In the name of Muslims they camouflage their advocacy of the rich and their property, dividing the poor on the religious lines.

People of the country are reeling under the increasing burdens on the people. Rosy picture of people's improving conditions painted on the basis of manufactured data, with official data collection being paralyzed, fall flat before the real conditions of the people. Growth of unemployment, increasing tax burden, increasing contractualization of work force and attacks on the Agriculture mark the present and drive the people in struggles for their livelihood. Before these struggles, communal propaganda of RSS-BJP falls flat as exemplified by a number of struggles, historic farmers' movement being most prominent among them. Impact of this struggle on the sections of peasantry in the areas where it was strong, is still quite evident. It is these struggles which have dealt and will deal big blows against fascist forces. Unity of people in struggle against attacks by ruling classes is biggest challenge to them. Unity of toiling people in struggle is the biggest bulwark against fascist forces.

However, problems of the people pose challenge to the rulers only when these are marshaled into mass movements, into rising of the people. Otherwise these ruling class parasites thrive on the people's problems, take advantage of them, advocate and implement solutions which further worsen their conditions, and divert their attention from their real enemies to imaginary enemies, make them fight each other and increase their oppression and exploitation. Further they paint this increase in exploitation and oppression as in people's own interests while it is the interests of corporate and rural elite that are served.

We are calling for defeat of fascist RSS-BJP and their allies- in the elections; we should be clear that it is the people's struggles which will really check them and defeat them. And for building these struggles we need to shun both sectarianism and tailism, take

initiative to mobilize people and undertake joint actions to bring people into struggle. It is the unity of the people against fascist forces and ruling classes whose interest they serve that is our main objective, all other measures are to facilitate achieving that objective. Revolutionary communists are the most consistent anti-fascists and as vanguard should mobilize all those who can be mobilized in struggle against fascist forces.

Struggle against fascist forces is a struggle against most reactionary section of ruling classes; hence it is part of our struggle against ruling classes. It takes this form at present when even the existing rights are under threat. It is not identity of interests of different forces but underlying shared objective of combating and defeating fascism.



**On the Call of Pendu Mazdoor Union
(PMU) and Zameen Prapti Sangharsh
Committee (ZPSC)**

**Despite the Siege of
Villages across Punjab,
Railway tracks are
Jammed !**

Tn March 11, 2024 thousands of Dalits rallied on the Call of PMU and ZPSC to block railway tracks despite indiscriminate violence against the workers and despite hundreds being arrested and locked up in police stations after lathi charge!

The Rail Roko call was given for implementation of the Land Reforms Act 1972, distribution of additional land to landless workers-farmers, for registration of houses falling under the Lal Dora (residential areas), workers' daily wages to be increased to Rs. 1000 per day and provision of work throughout the year, being given Sunday off, for complete loan waiver including loans from micro finance companies, for removal of illegal encroachment from Nazul and Provincial Government lands, to give ownership rights to Dalits and to issue five marla plots and construction grants to needy families. Rail Roko call was given to demand that a third of panchayat lands be permanently given to Dalits at a lower rate and

that Dalits and landless be made members of co-operative societies and provided all facilities.

Instead of accepting these legitimate demands made on behalf of rural labourers, the Dalits/labourers were badly beaten up by the police of Punjab government.

A day before the Rail jam, the houses of the leaders were raided and they were arrested, the workers were surrounded in the villages and the villages were sealed by deploying a heavy police force and the Dalits who were going towards the railway track were severely beaten. Dozens of men and women were badly injured and arrested. While no restrictions are imposed on the farmers when they go to the railway track, but on the other hand, the Punjab government's decision to stop the Dalits from going to railway tracks by suppressing them has hurt the Dalits. However despite this coercion, thousands of labourers reached the railway tracks by breaking the police checkpoints. They sat on railway tracks. These included railway tracks from Amritsar to Delhi including at Kartarpur, tracks from Sriganganagar to Ambala, from Nakodar to Ludhiana and from Ferozepur to Ludhiana. These railway lines have been jammed.

Leaders of the protesting organizations said that Dalits/labourers will not remain silent after this oppression, but will give a fitting and bitter reply to the Punjab government. The two organizations also demanded immediate release of more than 800 workers including leaders across Punjab, along with solving the above basic issues of the rural poor. They said that dozens of men and women have been seriously injured after the lathi charge on Dalits on the Moga railway track and have been admitted to the hospital for treatment. The track jamming group at Dhuri was also beaten up and arrested.

To prepare for the Rail Roko, PMU (Rural Labour Union Punjab) and ZPSC (Committee for Struggle to Get Land) organized rallies, meetings of labourers in hundreds of villages in Patiala, Sangrur, Malerkotla, Ludhiana, Jagraon, Moga, Muktsar, Faridkot, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts. The labourers were mobilized for the train jam by marches. Police raids were conducted at the homes of many provincial leaders of the organizations, but realizing the attitude of the Centre and the state government towards the landless Dalit workers, many leaders had already gone into the 'forest of the people' in disguise. Arrests of hundreds of activists, including about a dozen leaders in the raids created more anger in the minds of the labourers. As a result, the labourers expressed their anger by jamming the railway track at twice the number of designated places.

The railway chaka jam was led by PMU Punjab State President Tarsem Peter, State Press Secretary Kashmir Singh Ghugshore, Nirmal Singh Sherpur Sadha, Raj Kumar Pandori, Hans Raj Pabwan, Mangan Singh Vairoke, Lakhwant Kirti and ZPSC President Mukesh Malod, Bikar Singh Hathoa, Gurwinder Bauran and Dharamvir Harigarh.



Rail Roko at Kartarpur (Amritsar Delhi line)

A joint meeting of PMU and ZPSC expressed satisfaction over the action of the Chakka Jam of the trains on March 11. The meeting also expressed that the actions taken by the police at the behest of the Bhagwant Singh Mann government of Punjab to foil the Rail Roko movement was a failure. The meeting decided to burn effigies of the central and state government across Punjab for five days from March 17 to March 21 against the repression. The rural labour leaders said that the hideous coercive face of the central and



Rail Roko at Moga (Ludhiana Ferozepur Line)

state government on the Rail Roko movement of our two organizations has been clearly revealed. This barbaric coercion calls into question their positions on democratic rights and right to land. They also said that besides arrests of activists from their villages, arrests were made in raids at the state office of the Kirti Kisan

Union at Jalandhar and Ghadar Bhawan in Sangrur. This was a conspiracy to scare away the landless laborers from organized struggle for the solution of basic issues like ownership of their land, of houses in Lal Dora (red line) by instilling terror through repression. They said that the landless Dalits, labourers have expressed their solidarity by jamming the wheels of the trains while shattering the barbaric coercion and terror. Despite police repression, the landless labourers, Dalits, peacefully exercised their democratic right by jamming the wheels of the trains. They said that RSS-BJP Govt. at the Centre wants to keep Dalits and labourers as slaves by crushing democratic rights of Dalits. They also said the face of the Chief Minister of the Punjab government against Dalits and labourers has also been exposed. An example of this is also that labour leaders have been given time for meetings and they have not met them till date.

Leaders of the two organizations said that even though the Land Reform Act 1972 was made after struggles for the sake of getting the votes of landless Dalits and labourers, it is not implemented. According to this law the surplus lands was to be distributed among the landless labourers-peasants, but even after the passage of 51 years, it was not implemented. By implementing the Sway Mittwa Scheme by December 2023, the people living in the red line were to be given the right to own houses, but not a single family has been given the right to own houses across Punjab. He said that neither the central government implemented it nor the state government considered it necessary to implement it. Because the chauvinist governments want to keep the Dalits, the workers deprived of resources.

A protest was held against the police administration acts of raiding Gadar Memorial Bhawan Sangrur by crossing the walls at

night and illegally detaining Kirti Kisan Union state leader Bhupinder Singh Longowal and student leader Sukhdeep Hathan and seizing the records, flags, etc. and insulting women by entering houses in Shadihari village without lady police. A large gathering of farmers and labourers was held at Sangrur Dana Mandi on March 22, 2024 after holding a rally at Bhagat Singh Chowk, Tsunami Gate, passing through the main square and jamming the square while protesting in the main market. On reaching there, Duty Magistrate received a demand letter from the leaders and assured to take appropriate action. Addressing the gathering on this occasion, Raminder Singh Patiala, the leader of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and the state press secretary of Kirti Kisan Union, Swaranjit Singh, the district President of Jamhuri Adhikar Sabha, Swaranjit Singh, the state leader of Jamuri Kisan Sabha Punjab, Vtreva Singh Santokhpura, Mukesh Malaud President of ZPSC, Kull Hind Kisan Sabha district leader Nirmal Singh Batariana, CTU state president Comrade Devraj Verma, ATK state president Sukhdev Sharma, BKU Dakonda (Dhaner) district leader Randhir Singh Bhattiwal, BKU Dakonda (Burjgill) leader Najam Singh Punnanwal said that the action taken by the police administration on the night of 10th March by storming the walls of Ghadar Bhavan like raiders without uniform to create terror among the struggling people is highly condemnable and intolerable. The leaders demanded that action be taken against the police officers who carried out illegal raids and arrests, the records seized from the office should be returned and it should be ensured that such action does not take place in future.

Finally, after giving the demand letter, the leader of the ZPSC, Dharamvir Singh Harigarh, announced that if no action is taken in this matter, there will be protests against the Aam Aadmi

Party leaders coming to the villages to seek votes in near future. On this occasion, District President of Kirti Kisan Union Jarnail Singh Jahangir, State Leader Bhupinder Singh Longowal, General Secretary Darshan Singh Kunnaran, Leader of Agriculture Kisan Vikas Front Mahinder Pal Singh Bhathal, Leader of Rational Society Punjab Master Paramved, Leader of BKU (Rajewal) Gurjit Singh Bhari, leader of BKU Dakonda (Dhaner) Jagtar Singh Duggan, Makhhan Singh Duggan Karamjit Singh Gandewal, District President of Democratic Teacher Front Sukhwinder Gir, State Leader Raghveer Bhawanigarh, leader of ZPSC Paramjit Kaur Longowal, Employees' Leader Muhammad Khalil also addressed a large gathering.

Protest in Jalandhar Against Police Raid on KKU office

State office of Kirti Kisan Union (KKU) was raided by Punjab police on March 11, 2024, the day rail roko was called by ZPSC and PMU. Office was searched, locked and police misbehaved with those working in the office.

Against this unprecedented action at the state office of KKU, a strong protest was held at Jalandhar on March 21. Farmers gathered in large number at the premises of Deshbhagat Yadgar Hall, held a meeting and then marched to the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar. Caravans of farmers from different districts participated in the protest. Protesters handed over a letter addressed to Chief Minister of Punjab.

Addressing the protest gathering State President of Kirti Kisan Union Nirbhai Singh Dhudike and General Secretary Rajinder Singh Deep Singh Wala asked the Punjab government whether Kirti Kisan Union is a banned organization? They said that locking the union office, entering and searching inside is a provocative, illegal

and fascist move by the police. They alleged that such drastic action was taken against KKV for the Union raising farmers' demands, demand to open India-Pakistan trade through the road corridors of Punjab and to silence the voice being raised for the protection of Punjab's waters. They reminded the Punjab government that the history of Kirti Kisan Union for more than half a century has been a history of struggles and sacrifices. Due to such actions of the police, the voice of struggle raised by the Union cannot be silenced. Farmer leaders warned the police to refrain from such actions in future and demanded strict action against the police officials responsible for this action.

Addressing the gathering, state vice-president Jatinder Singh Chhina and state leader Satbir Singh Sultani said that the organization's office was targeted at a time when every member of the Union was busy preparing for the Mahapanchayat being held in Delhi by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha. The police searched every floor of the office. The police officers along with the office staff detained Jasvir Kaur, the leader of Istri Jagruti Manch, and hurled abuses at her. They said that the union had lodged its protest against this action of the police to the higher police officials at the same time, but they turned a deaf ear. Farmers' leaders said that this has happened for the first time inside the office of KKV.

Addressing the rally, Union State Press Secretary Raminder Singh Patiala and Finance Secretary Jaswinder Singh Jhabelwali criticized RSS for describing the peasant struggle as a struggle of separatist, terrorist and anarchic people. RSS, which had served British colonial rulers and divides people on communal lines, can never understand that the farmers of Punjab and the country have a long and glorious history of anti-imperialist, anti-corporate struggles. They said the RSS resolution was passed with the intent

of communal polarization and demanded that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat apologize to the farmers of the country for this anti-farmer resolution.

Leader of Istri Jagruti Manch Jasvir Kaur Jassi, Press Secretary of Pendu Mazdoor Union Punjab Kashmir Singh Ghugsor, District President of Bhartiya Kisan Union Kadian Amrik Singh, Kashmir Singh of Bhartiya Kisan Union Rajewal and Sukhjinder Singh of Bhartiya Kisan Union Lakhawal, Truck Union leader Ranjit Singh also addressed the meeting.



Call of the IFTU National Committee to the working class

**Celebrate 138th May Day Intensifying
Fightback Against BJP-Modi
Government's anti-worker policies !
Defeat Attempts of BJP Govt. to
Communally Divide the Working
Class !**

Comrades, friends!

With the industrial revolution came the capitalist class as well as the modern industrial working class. Exploitation of the workers' labour increased. There were no working hours, wages were low. The working class revolted against this extreme form of

exploitation of labour from sunrise to sunset and fought to shorten the working hours. In 1886, the working class in the city of Chicago in the United States sounded the siren for a strike against employers, demanding an 8-hour day. Despite arrests, shootings, cases and hangings, we achieved 8-hour working day due to their sacrifices. IFTU salutes the Chicago workers who were martyred fighting for the rights of the working class. Since 1886, the working class of the world has celebrated May 1st as the Day of Working Class Struggle.

In the name of patriotism and nationalism, the BJP Modi government has put the lives of 45 crore organized and unorganized workers in the country into crisis. During these ten years of coming to power, BJP has privatized public sector institutions and wealth. (Defense, Transport, Power, Naval, Coal, SAIL, GAIL, Aviation, Nuclear, Aerospace, Railway, Insurance, BSNL, Gas, Oil) It has handed over 24% to 100% of various sectors of public sector enterprises in the country to Corporate. The Government, which is supposed to raise the living standards of the workers, is doing away with permanent jobs. PF, ESI, pension, minimum wages, education, medical facilities, reservations have been done away with and essential services have been handed over to Corporate sectors. Economic inequality has risen. 29 labour laws that the working class had fought for have been dumped in favor of the Corporate and changed into four Codes. The death warrant of the rights of 45 crore working class has been written by this Central Govt.

BJP- RSS Modi Govt is continuing its attacks on the rights of the people and the working class who are fighting against the bigoted fascist attacks. Workers' welfare rights are not protected. In the name of CAA, UCC, and other steps it is inciting religious hatred in the country. It is damaging the unity between different

religions and castes that have been living together for thousands of years and attacking the unity of the toiling masses. The working class must fight back such divisive policies and fight unitedly against BJP's anti-worker policies. The need of the hour is that the working class widen its unity and organize strong struggles against the anti-worker policies being followed by the BJP Central Govt.

Comrades ! The working class should fight in the spirit of the sacrifices of the Chicago martyrs. Modi government has not solved the problems of the workers even though they have been fighting against the anti-labour policies of the BJP for the past ten years. It is working more and more strongly for the interests of the corporate sector. All sectors of the working class across the country should unite and prepare for long-term strike struggles and other forms of united, broad based struggles. The IFTU National Committee calls upon the working class to prepare for sacrifices even greater than those of the Chicago martyrs.

Long live May Day.

With revolutionary greetings.

National Committee

Indian Federation of Trade Unions



Press Statement of All India Tribal Forum (AITF)

(We are publishing here the statements issued by Kedar Sabara, Mukti Satyam and Ramsai Soren, Convenors of National Executive Committee of All India Tribal Forum)

Support the struggle of Ladakhi People for including Ladakh in the 6th Schedule !

The over 80% tribal Ladakhi people are in struggle demanding that Ladakh be given the status of a full state and be included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Sonam Wangchuk, a resident of Ladakh and one of the country's well-known environmentalists, along with thousands of Ladakh residents has started an indefinite hunger strike from March 6 in which he is joined by thousands more Ladakhis. In the name of development, the RSS-BJP Govt at the Centre is going to do industrialization and mining there, as a result of which there is a serious threat to the environment, natural resources, biodiversity and above all, the existence of tribals. Therefore, in order to protect the natural resources and environment of Ladakh, it is demanded to stop the campaign of destruction carried out by the Government in the name of development and to give Ladakh the status of a separate state. Apart from this, the agitators have also demanded

that the area be included under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution under Article 244 of the Constitution to get the right to enact laws on their land, forest and mineral resources to protect the existence and rights of the people of Ladakh. This is so in Tripura and Manipur. All India Tribal Forum supports the above justified demands of the people of Ladakh and their movement. Apart from this, more than two weeks have passed since the hunger strike started in the open ground of the Nabang Doreje Memorial Park in temperatures below zero degrees Celsius, but the RSS-BJP-led Modi government at the Centre is far from meeting their demands. Tribal Forum condemns this anti tribal attitude of the Modi Govt.

During the last general elections in 2019 and even in the Ladakh Hill Council elections held last year, the BJP, in its election manifesto had promised to give separate state status to Ladakh and include their area in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. But later the BJP Govt has betrayed the people of Ladakh by not implementing those promises even after five long years in power. The BJP and RSS Govt is threatening the environment and biodiversity of the region to serve the interest of big corporations who are trying to loot the valuable natural resources and minerals of Ladakh.

In this context, the All India Tribal Forum demands that the Modi Govt should immediately fulfill the just demands of the Ladakhi people.

All India Tribal Forum (AITF)

Date: 24th March 2024

□ □ □

AITF demands Election Commission Ensure Right to Vote of Large Numbers of Manipur Tribal People !

Thousands of Kuki-Zomi tribal people of Manipur have been forced to leave their homes in the state due to the terrible state Govt. backed violence against them last year. Neither the State Govt. nor Central Govt. of BJP- 'double engine' they call themselves- are able to contain violence and bring peace in Manipur. Rather the Govts are not bothered to restore conditions conducive for the tribal people to return home. So thousands of tribal people of the state have become internally displaced- 60,000 within Manipur itself and another 12,000 living in Mizoram and thousands others in Delhi and other cities of the country. Most have lost their documents including voter ID, ADHAR etc in fires and during violent conflict. But their names can be located by the Election Commission in its rolls. However, the Commission has stated that such displaced can only vote if they return to Manipur! Why? Is Manipur not in India? Citizens who fled for their lives leaving homes, jobs and finances- from where will they find the resources to go back to Manipur? Go where- their homes have been burnt down and the state Govt. has neither compensated them nor given alternative housing and not at all offered assurance of rights and safety if they return.

This move to rob the tribal community of vote is sinister. It happens in all tribal areas where there is forcible displacement to

access their land and jungles for Corporate loot. The tribals chased away are robbed of even their identity as citizens in this manner.

AITF demands that Election Commission should ensure that all internally displaced Manipuris are given right to cast their vote by making special arrangements wherever they have relocated in numbers.

Date: 24th March 2024



Massive Demonstration on March 14, 2024 by Farmers in Delhi's Ramlila Maidan Against Betrayal by RSS-BJP

SKM's Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat rejuvenates struggle for MSP and Loan waiver; Sets Agenda for Parties in Elections.

Trade Unions, Other Mass Organizations Join in Support as Farmers' Call Drowns Media Hype of Pran Pratishtan.

SKM's well attended Mahapanchayat at the Ramlila grounds on March 14 was a big success. More than 20,000 farmers participated, mainly from Punjab and from neighbouring states of Haryana, UP, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, MP and from Karnataka.

They heard their leaders address their demands – MSP for all crops at Swaminathan formula of C2+50% with guarantee of Govt procurement; Debt waiver for all farmers and agricultural workers; Punishment to all guilty of Lakhimpur genocide and arrest of Central Minister of State for Home, Ajay Misra Teni; No to Privatization of Electricity, No to pre paid meters, No to hike in electricity tariffs, Free electricity for tube wells and 300 units for domestic and other uses; Rs 10,000 pm pension; Increase in MNREGA wages to Rs 600 per day and 200 days work per year; Proper implementation of LARR 2013, amongst others.

This rally turned out to become a political battle for SKM to reassert its strength and rejuvenate its struggle on demands on which the Modi led RSS-BJP govt had backtracked on its promises made on December 9, 2021, when SKM had suspended its agitation. It was a battle against the govt's attempts to launch massive and bitter repression under the excuse of preventing a repeat of the 13 month long road blockade which had surrounded the Capital of India and had announced to the world that farmers of India are being ruined by the pro Corporate farm policies of the Govt. It was a battle within the farmers to overcome differences and reunite the struggling forces. It was a battle to assure the farmers, other working sections and patriotic citizens that united mass movements are the only recipe against fascist repression camouflaged by communal agenda of RSS. It was a struggle to once again push back the corporate media shamelessly propagating religious agenda and to bring dire needs of the people of India on agenda.

The process began last year with joint calls with Trade Unions on issues of all working people. SKM held 3 days day- night padavs, dharnas at state capitals to remind the govts of their promises through state Governors. This was followed by a well

attended SKM national Convention in Jalandhar on January 16 which called for a nationwide Grameen Bharat Bandh and a Sectoral/Industrial strike on February 16. It was preceded by a successful Tractor - Vehicle parade on Republic Day in all districts.

As preparations began, several farmer organizations which had left SKM began returning to its fold. But some farmer organizations, convinced as they were, charted a different plan of action. While they had earlier planned a Delhi march on Feb 26th, they shifted it to February 13th on two routes from Punjab. The Govt. and the media projected this to be a major challenge. Govt. imposed blockade by erecting iron spikes, barbed wire, concrete walls and internet ban at Shambhu and Khanauri borders and along the highways/roads in Punjab and Haryana. Later as the protestors assembled and tried to force their way, the Haryana police resorted to a extremely disproportionate repressive attack on these protestors, even though the number of protestors was not that large. Massive tear gas shelling was done by drones, they were lathicharged and rubber and ordinary bullets were fired. On Feb 20th at Khanauri several were injured and 23 year old Shubkaran was martyred.

While SKM understood that this parallel action plan will project disunity and will disrupt any planned movement, it went into instant action against the repression. BJP leaders and offices were gheraoed in Punjab with protests elsewhere. Rail routes and roads were blocked for 4 hours. Along with firmly implementing the bandh of Feb 16, SKM also held continuous protests all over the country with maximum force in Punjab against repression and to hail this martyrdom. It held 3 day- night protests at DC offices in Punjab and protests at houses of MPs/ MLAs on Feb 21. It also held a tractor march on highways on Feb 26 and demanded that India

should Quit WTO. This was also to counter BJP Haryana CM's threat to ensure that henceforth tractors will not be allowed to ply only on roads as they are meant for tilling. SKM also set up a unity committee to rally all agitating forces on one platform and to prevent the Govt. from taking advantage of the division in farmers' ranks. Along with these actions the protest on March 14 was planned with the call that the Govt. has no right to prevent farmers from coming into and protesting in Delhi as it is our Capital.

During this period the media had played a big role to hype up the Govt. response and project govt. success against the farmers. The govt. effort was akin to attacking enemies, not one of dealing with its own citizens. Its ministers encouraged division by repeatedly reaching Chandigarh for talks and making empty promises. It also launched a media campaign through its supporters against the validity and practicality of the demand on MSP. All these were countered. Fear, which had spread due to repression, arrests and prevention of mass gatherings were countered effectively by local organizations through implementing all the protest calls of SKM. With such efforts, the SKM mobilization was able to succeed.

The leaders who spoke at the Mahapanchayat condemned the massive road blockade at Punjab borders of Khanuri and Shambhu and repression and firing on farmers including murder of Shubkaran. They condemned BJP government for creating atmosphere of terror against peasant struggle and for treating Punjab like an enemy country. They demanded named FIRs against Union Home Minister, then Haryana CM and HM and suspension of Ambala District Police Commissioner. They criticized the govt. for waiving more than Rs 14.58 lakh crores of Corporate loans, but failing to redress the demand of farmers. They explained

how Modi Govt is hoodwinking people, by giving Bharat Ratna to Prof. MS Swaminathan and Charan Singh to gain their sympathy, but ignoring the farmers and denying them their justified demands, as Swaminathan Commission recommended. They said all claims of being just and ensuring rule of law under BJP rule are fake and in reality criminals and murderers adorn the Govt., law is being bent to save the murderers of farmers in Lakhimpur. They demanded a SC led judicial enquiry into Shubkaran's murder, withdrawal of false cases against farmers of Lakhimpur and on those who protested during 13 month long struggle.

The speakers elaborated how all claims by RSS and BJP leaders of being honest, truthful and religious is a sham as they have gone back on written promise of setting up a committee to look into the MSP demand, they have resolved to continue repression on farmers in order to prevent protests, they have cheated the farmers by withdrawing subsidies and raising input costs and by imposing maximum GST on farm equipment and spare parts, that they are forcefully snatching their farm land against their wishes and on measly terms.

The speakers discussed the pro-corporate economic policies of the BJP government at the Centre, the impact of these policies on farmers, labourers, food processing, storage and rural markets. They explained how the World Trade Organization terms of Agreement on Agriculture is forcing the Govt. to permit penetration of MNCs into agriculture sector in order to wind up PDS food support and allow complete control of Corporations over food markets. They criticized Corporate and commercial takeover of farm land, forest and water resources. They bitterly attacked the BJP's policy of saffronization, communal cleavage and attacks on minorities.

The speakers explained the SKM call to Expose, Oppose and Punish BJP, BJP ki Pole kholo, Virodh karo, Saja do to be implemented as possible in all states during elections. They called for Ending Corporate loot, Saving Agriculture, Saving India It was declared that in Punjab farmers will stop BJP leaders from campaigning by asking them to answer for their party's betrayal. Call was given for such opposition by farmers everywhere.

The main speakers included Rakesh Tikait, Balbir Singh Rajewal, Rajinder Singh Deepsinghwala, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, Tejinder Virk, Darshanpal, Gurnam Chaduni, Sunilam, Medha Patkar, Rajaram Singh, Vijoo Krishnan, Ravula Venkaiah, Satyavan, Harinder Lakhwal, Harmeet Kadian, Avik Saha, Joginder Nain and others. Several senior leaders constituted the Presidium while the proceedings were conducted by a steering committee of 11



(Com. Rajinder Singh Deepsinghwala, General Secretary Kirti Kisan Union (KKU) AIKMS addressing the Mahapanchayat at Ramlila Maidan)

members. Several All India and state Trade unions as well as the Central Trade Unions had supported the protest which had been named a Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat. Mobilizations included that of Delhi industrial workers by IFTU and some others. Several other leaders of other organizations were present.

BJP had tried its utmost to ensure that the Maha panchayat failed. It began with delaying the permission. It is only after the Delhi police were given an ultimatum on March 10 that farmers are going to leave in large numbers on 13th, they relented on 12th night. But that was with several conditions including a limit of 5000 participants. BJP's govts and Delhi Police adopted several measures to stop and harass the farmers. At several places trains coming into New Delhi were stopped in UP and other states for hours and they started only after protests. Hundreds of buses were stopped in Haryana from entering at night and were let in only in early hours creating traffic jam and confusion around the Ramlila Maidan. 400 farmers from Karnataka were prevented from leaving Nizamuddin station till late evening. All Gurudwaras were instructed not to serve food. A large part of the ground, almost one third, was under water which had been deliberately leaking till the end, limiting the gathering inside. The leadership remained determined and kept up all preparations to make the Maha-Panchayat a success.

The Maha-Panchayat concluded at 2.30 pm and the farmers left with a resonating echo of their slogans having left a strong impact of their demands in the National Capital. They returned, encouraged and enthused. The SKM protest had not only shattered the atmosphere of fear created by the Modi government but also forced Delhi Govt. to give democratic space.



One Hundred Years of Vaikom Struggle

● SK

(They argue that roads will become impure if the untouchables pass through the roads leading to the temple. I want to ask him whether Vaikom's deity or Brahmins are defiled by the mere presence of untouchables. If they believe that the god of Vaikom will become impure, then he cannot be a god. It is just a stone, which can only be used to wash dirty clothes.'
– Periyar)

It happened one hundred year ago, on 30th March 1924. Three volunteers, each belonging to three different castes, a Nair, an Ezhava and a Pulayu, wearing Khadi dresses and garlanded, attempted to enter the road leading to the temple in Vaikom, in the then Kingdom of Travancore. They were followed by thousands of people. The police promptly arrested the volunteers from proceeding further. Similar attempts were made each following day till 10th of April 1924. This struggle continued in different forms. This was a historic struggle in the national movement that continued for over 600 days till 23rd November 1925. It is now time to commemorate the struggle.

During the 1920s, some thought that ‘untouchability’ was as a ‘blot on Hinduism’ and that they could purify it with the eradication of untouchability, paving way everyone joining it as equals. A community meeting of five thousand Ezhavas in Kerala demanded the right to enter the Hindu temples. TK Madhavan, a Congress leader and a close associate of Sri Narayana Guru, took the issue of temple entry to the national stage. He introduced a resolution in the 1923 Kakinada session of the Indian National Congress. The resolution declared that ‘the temple entry was the birthright of all Hindus’ and it exhorted to work for the ‘eradication of untouchability’. The resolution was adopted by the Congress. Another Congress leader from Kerala, K. Kelappan, convened an ‘Anti-untouchability Committee’ within the then Kerala Committee in January 1924. They decided to fight for the right of Ezhavas and other lower castes to use the roads around the Vaikom temple.

EV Ramasamy Naicker, AKA ‘Periyar’ who was the then president of Madras Presidency Congress Committee, was immediately invited to join the Vaikom struggle as it unfolded. All the local leaders were arrested and Periyar received another invitation to lead the Vaikom struggle. He received a letter from George Joseph, a close associate of Gandhi and the editor of Young India. Periyar’s entry into the struggle gave a fillip to the Vaikom movement. He played a crucial role in the movement. He participated in the movement for 141 days. He was arrested and confined for 74 days and he toured Kerala for 67 days to mobilize the people’s support. In his speeches he stated that he didn’t want to see the deity in the temple, but he wanted to use the streets where pigs and dogs walked freely. These words stirred the people into action and they came in large numbers to support the struggle.

The struggle lasted for more than 600 days and ended with a

compromise. The lower castes were allowed entry into the three newly constructed roads around the temple. These roads were constructed in such a way to keep them away from the environs of the temple. The fourth side and the temple were still kept out of bounds for the lower castes.

The Vaikom movement paved the way for many other struggles in Kerala. Gandhi's attitude and role led to disenchantment. To start with, Gandhi viewed this as an issue pertaining to Hindus alone. Goerge Joseph, his close associate, was involved in the Vaikom movement in the beginning. Gandhi asked him to stay away as he happened to be a Syrian Christian. Similarly, Gandhi decided to send back a set of Akalis from Punjab who had arrived in Vaikom to set up a langar and ensure free food to the agitators. Periyar differed with Gandhi's decisions and later dissociated himself from the Congress. BR Ambedkar cited the inspiration of Vaikom struggle when he launched the Mahad Satyagraha in 1927 asserting the right of 'untouchables' to use the water from a public tank in Maharashtra. Subsequently, Periyar and Ambedkar considered this as an issue beyond seeking a right to enter the Hindu temples. On the other hand, Gandhi considered the question of temple entry as a means to eradicate untouchability. BR Ambedkar argued succinctly that, *'If the Hindu Religion is to be a religion of social equality then an amendment of its code to provide temple entry is not enough. What is required is to purge it of the doctrine of chaturvarna. That is the root cause of all inequality and also the parent of the Caste system and Untouchability, which are merely forms of inequality. Unless it is done not only will the Depressed Classes reject the temple entry, they will also reject the Hindu faith.'*

There were different trends and divergences during the

course of national movement in India. The differences pertained to the approach towards colonialism, forms of struggles to be adopted. People like Ambedkar raised question of social equality and the rights of the Dalits.

The Vaikom struggle reflected the various trends and attitudes that were prevalent in the national movement. The leadership of the national movement attempted to sidestep the question of social equality and social justice. It clearly revealed the nature and limitations of the class that led the national movement. This has led to the rupture within the national movement where by the aspirations of social justice and articulation of their demands often had to clash with the leadership of the Congress and they took a different trajectory.

One hundred years have now passed. There are changes and yet there are things that haven't changed much. We still read the news about struggles of lower castes questioning the discrimination in the temple processions and their right to enter the temples in various parts of the country. We had parliamentarians like M K Acharya in 1928 who were very vocal in their support to child marriages. They openly stated that, '*scrapping child marriage would toss chastity out of the window*', '*women would be doomed if they are not married as a children*'. We now hear similar arguments shamelessly peddling obscurantism. Mahadev Desai, an associate of Gandhi, recorded the interaction between the orthodox Devan Neelakandan Namboodiri, the then chief trustee of the Vaikom temple who stubbornly opposed the access to the lower castes. He in fact refused to meet Gandhi inside his home and slighted him. When asked about the harsh treatment meted out to lower castes, Namboodiri, responded that the Ezhavas and Pulayas were merely '*reaping the reward of their karma* and that '*it was*

for their (bad) behaviour in their past life that they had been relegated to the bottom of the pile in this one'. He plainly asserted that the practice he and his caste men followed had been started by Adi Sankara, and that *'surely untouchability is there in every part of India. We carry untouchability a little further. That's all'*. These days we hear similar voices, arguments and chauvinist assertions in a more forceful manner further bolstered by the Hindutva forces in power. We can debate the (partial) success or the failures of the Vaikom struggle. We can further debate on the issues that it didn't raise or articulate at that time and its limitations in the historic context. Yet, the Vaikom struggle assumes significance as it brought up the question of social equality in to the realm of political struggle. And it is that significance which cannot be brushed aside.



Read and Subscribe

CPI(ML) Organs

New Democracy	English
Pratirodh Ka Swar	Hindi
New Democracy Bulletin	Telugu
Biplabi Ganaline	Bengali
Inquilabi Sada Rah	Punjabi
Sangrami Ekta	Odia

The Curse of ‘Double Engine’ – The Experience of Doloo Tea Estate, Silchar, Assam

(We are reproducing here a statement by NTUI, IFTU, SWCC, LJMU, SSC(WI), AWBSRU, HWUC, SGSM, AICCTU, TUCI, FSH (Assam and Kolkata branch), SASSC, 16 Bigha Basti Banchao Committee, TUCI, Samaj Bigyan o Prakriti Porichoy, and Rajarhat Mollaparrah after Supreme Court order in a case relating to Doloo Tea Estate, Silchar Assam. –Editor)

Like Achhe Din, PM Modi announced another dream for his fellow citizens on June 15, 2016 and named it UDAN which is an acronym of Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik. This scheme is supposed to make well-connected air travel affordable for Aam Nagrik. Since then, the Aam Nagrik, not having enough to eat, started to wait with bated breath to travel to the furthest corner of the country from home as a migrant labour, maybe, by aircraft! So, 30 airports are being built all over the country for this noble cause and for that hectares and hectares of land are being expropriated, rivers, mountains, forests, are being destroyed and obviously, the ‘double engine’ idea is being proven handy here.

Take the recent example of Silchar, Assam. Himant Biswa Sarma, the democracy lover CM of Assam, decided to offer UDAN to the people of Silchar and opted for a Greenfield airport (a project

that has to be built from scratch i.e. in a place where there is no prior human activity). Airport Authority of India (AAI) for a mysterious reason earmarked the century old Doloo Tea Estate (Mynagarh, Lalgargh division) adjacent to the famous Doloo lake, the serene haven of peace, as the best suited place for having an airport. Now, the smaller engine of the 'double engine' plan (curse?) came forward with hundreds of bulldozers, huge numbers of security forces and officers, blocked the workers and on May 12, 2022, uprooted 41,95,909 tea bushes and tens of thousands of big shady trees! Thousands of workers lost their livelihood along with the trees on the very same day ! But unlike the trees, the workers came out, protested, fought! The wave reached Kolkata too. On September 26, 2023, hundreds of comrades from NTUI, IFTU, SWCC, LJMU, SSC(WI), AWBSRU, HWUC, SGSM, AICCTU, TUCI, FSH (Assam and Kolkata branch), SASSC, 16 Bigha Basti Banchao Committee, TUCI, Samaj Bigyan o Prakriti Porichoy, and Rajarhat Mollaparrah assembled near Assam Bhavan (Kolkata, West Bengal) and submitted demands through a deputation.

Next, FSH (Kolkata), SGSM, and Samaj Bigyan o Prakriti Porichoy came forward, carried out thorough research on the subject and submitted a petition to the Eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). Somehow the NGT was not ready to listen despite the proven fact that a tender for making the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been called after more than 1 year of the actual destruction ! The petitioners then moved to the Hon'ble Supreme Court where Mr. Prashant Bhushan came forward and argued for the workers and especially for the Environment. The Hon'ble bench of the Supreme Court, comprising of the CJI Justice Chandrachud, Justice J. B. Pardiwala, and Justice Manoj Mishra, was astonished and immediately stayed the

judgement of the National Green Tribunal and declared status-quo on the activities on the land in question.

This order certainly boosted our demand and we declare the same support to the cause of the workers of the Doloo Tea garden and promise to fight for the livelihood of the workers and the restoration of the Environment. We also promise to carry forward the fight in our state, especially in Deucha Panchami of Birbhum and other places where similar expropriation is taking place.



Continuing Palestinian Resistance and Growing Opposition to Invasion of Gaza

● **Zameer**

For over six and a half months Israeli rulers have been embroiled in war in Gaza. They have left literally no stone unturned, no building standing, no atrocity undone and no impunity unbreached. Yet even after killing over 34,000 Palestinians they are nowhere near reaching their avowed goal i.e., of eliminating Hamas. In fact, the goal is unreachable except by eliminating Palestinians from Gaza which actually is the aim of the Zionist rulers. The courage displayed by Palestinians and the spirit of defiance and resistance that has come over them is the stuff of

which miracles are made and validate the oft-quoted saying of Anthony Bourdain, “Today, nearly everything is made in China. Except for courage. Courage is made in Palestine.”

Drive to survive as a nation has overtaken instinct of preservation of self. Decades of schooling in the cauldron of Zionist crimes and total tolerance of these crimes by the imperialist West which otherwise loses no opportunity to lecture on human rights, has steeled the Palestinians. Their will, as displayed on the beaches of Gaza too, has unnerved the oppressors as much, if not more, as their heroics in the asymmetric war going on in Gaza and West Bank. They have passed the test to survive as a nation with the colours of their Resistance, of body and spirit, splashed over the sky. It is one of the moments in History when powerful oppressor appears weak before a weakly armed but strong willed opponent.

War in Gaza has exemplified how just condemnation of Nazi crimes has been marshalled to cover, rather support, the wholly unjust crimes of Zionists against Palestinians. The irony is that this justification is not questioned; rather it is propagated as a gospel- To avenge Nazi crimes is to support Zionist crimes or, obversely, to question Zionist crimes is somehow to support anti-semitism, also portrayed as equivalent to Holocaust denial. The whole western imperialist media is plunged in this subterfuge of global proportions.

October 7, 2023 marks a turning point in the history of Palestinians’ struggle for their national existence and survival. While its role in junking the so-called Abraham Accords signed on the grave of Palestinian national aspirations is well talked about, after October 7 Palestinians have taken the destiny of their nation in their own hands. A process which was on since beginning of Intifada and spurred on by namesake Oslo Accords has reached an

important milestone in the ongoing war between Zionist rulers of Israel and Palestinians. They have taken away their destiny from the Arab monarchs and dictators who are more interested in saving their loot and plunder of the resources of their countries and owe their power to the imperialists' arms and armies. This is an important aspect of this ongoing war.

Over the last six and a half months, the Israeli Army has been bogged down in crushing Palestinians and is becoming target of attacks by Palestinian resistance. Reports of attacks on occupation forces in Gaza and West Bank appear regularly though largely uncovered in the Western media or even in the Indian media which sources its coverage mainly from the former. Israeli Army is now targeting Western Gaza (Rafah border), having bombed North and South Gaza earlier. Yet, Israeli Army has to rush to North and South Gaza again and again as resistance strikes.

In an earlier comment, this writer had commented that while Palestinians remain the main force of this war, there are several factors influencing the course of this war. One of them is the support by Arab people and this is broadly referred to as the Arab street. Two is the support extended by Resistance groups i.e., groups fighting against US imperialism and its lackeys. These are supported by Iran, a regional power which is continuously targeted by US imperialism which does not want any power in the region to emerge which is outside its influence. Houthis ruling over major part of Yemen and Hezbollah, a major force in Lebanon and important partner in power in that country, are among the prominent forces among them. But there are Resistance groups in Iraq and Syria also. The common feature of these groups is that they are fighting against lackeys of US imperialism and other western imperialist powers in their own countries, are supported by

Iran and are mostly Shia. Three, democratic people in imperialist countries who oppose Zionist war in Gaza and support Palestinians. Four, the major powers like Russia and China that are opposing US efforts to impose its will on the region. Five, most third world countries and even small imperialist countries in Europe are coming out in support of the cause of Palestinians. This has led to deep and still increasing isolation of Israel and its principal backer, US imperialism, in the world. Condemnation of Israel's war on Gaza and demanding of ceasefire by overwhelming majority of member countries in the General Assembly and recently US being the only country to vote against the Resolution for recognizing the Palestine state in the Security Council bear testimony of this isolation. All these factors are influencing the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine.

Israel's Attempt to Expand the War and Drag Western Powers into the War

Israel is finding the going difficult in the ongoing invasion of Gaza. They are killing a large number of civilians without eliminating the capacity of Palestinian resistance. This has frustrated both Zionist rulers of Israel as well as their western imperialist backers, especially US imperialism where civilian casualties in the ongoing war are spurring wide protests. Israel wants to drag Iran into war but US imperialism does not want to widen the war as it will strain its supporters in West Asia and expose them before their own people. This will also give more opportunities to other imperialist powers, especially China and Russia to intervene in the Middle East.

Israeli rulers had launched an attack on Iran Consulate in Damascus, Syria on April 1 in which a number of military officers

including two top commanders were killed. This attack was in total violation of international law and against Vienna convention on safety of Diplomatic missions. Iran retaliated on the night of April 13, firing missiles and sending drones, in all more than 300, into Israel. Nearly 99% of them were reportedly shot down by air borne anti-missile batteries of US and UK. It caused small damage but message of Iran's ability to retaliate was conveyed and that seemed to be the purpose. Bravado of Israel that no Middle East country has the capacity to retaliate was dented.

Israel and its backers were smarting under this attack. Reports were doing the round that US was approaching Iran to allow a small attack to save its image. These reports were given credence when Israel carried out exactly such an attack on April 19, a response which was called "tepid" even by a Cabinet Minister of Netanyahu Govt. However, such manoeuvring may spill into larger war. There are reports of a trilateral meeting between military leaders of Russia, China and Iran. It is pertinent to note that there are several important military powers in the region besides Israel which include Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey. The region has seen sharpest rise in the military expenditure with Israel accounting for biggest rise.

One important aspect of this attack was participation of Jordan's Air Force in shooting down Iranian missiles and drones. There were initial reports of Saudi participation but this was denied by their spokesperson. Participation of Jordan in defense of Israel has led to large protests in the country. Jordan has developed deep economic ties with Israel and is totally dependent on USA for its defense. An agreement reached in 2021 has allowed US military to operate independently from its bases in Jordan. While anger among Arab people has spilled into the streets forcing their rulers to not

support Israel and US, it is yet to reach a level which can force them to side with Palestinian resistance.

Resistance Organizations Extend Support

On the other hand, Resistance organizations supported by Iran have come out against Israel's invasion of Gaza. Continuous exchanges of fire and missiles across Israel-Lebanon border has led to a large number of Israelis going away from northern parts bordering Lebanon. This has also engaged Israeli military continuously since the start of Gaza invasion. Besides, number of pro-Iran resistance militias operating in Iraq and Northern Syria have targeted US military bases and posts in the region. In these attacks US soldiers have been killed and injured and bases damaged. US has retaliated but this has only meant deeper military engagement in the region.

Houthis who rule over most of Yemen have been most effective in their support to Palestinian resistance. They have been fighting over last nine years against Saudi Arabia and UAE led forces supported by US imperialism. They closed Red Sea to ships going to and from Israel or owned by Israelis. US and UK targeted their missile sites, after which Houthis have targeted US and UK ships as well and have hit several of them. While costs of this closure are well known, Houthi forces are also targeting the alternate lanes some of which lie close to Yemen. US has approached Houthis to cease their attacks on ships in Red Sea including those from Israel and has offered to get their demands met from Saudi Arabia led coalition. According to these reports Houthis have rejected these overtures to stop their opposition to invasion of Gaza. US-UK are embroiled in this conflict and are engaged in fire fighting missions, not wanting spread of this war and also doing everything militarily to support Israel.

Waves of Protests in US and other Western Countries

Democratic people in the Western countries have been protesting against Israel's war on Gaza from almost the beginning of this invasion. There have been large gatherings in support of Palestinians in most of these countries. Ireland has been the most vocal critic of Israel's invasion and Spain has also opposed civilian deaths in this invasion. Students had protested in their colleges and universities and workers had blocked loading of war material to be sent to Israel. Of late there has been further upswing in these protests.

Most significant of these have been protests of students sweeping across USA. Students are coming out in large numbers in protests across universities and colleges. Teargas has been used against protesting students. More than 80 students have been arrested in these protests but these arrests have not deterred students from joining these protests. This repression has brought even a good number of teachers to join protests and oppose entry of police in campuses. Realization that their country i.e., USA is the main supporter of this genocide of Palestinians has made these protests broader and more determined. They are demanding that US stop funding Israeli Army. Though American mainstream media is not covering these protests, at least as much as their extent deserves, protests are however gathering steam. These protests are being compared to anti-war protests during Vietnam War. At that time the protests had forced themselves to be heard. It is still to be seen what impact these protests will have on the policy makers in the USA. This time protests are on an issue what US imperialism considers as its core strategic interest. However, these protests have rattled Israeli Govt. Prime Minister Netanyahu has compared US student protesters to Nazis of Germany of 1930s,

alleging attacks against Jewish students and teachers- allegations which have no basis in facts. Israeli rulers know well that impunity of their conduct owes a lot to total commitment of US Admn. to their aggression against Palestinians. However, this welcome breeze of student protests has energized the Resistance and is unnerving oppressors in the Middle East. According to some surveys, a majority of young Americans oppose Israel's war against Palestinians, especially genocide in Gaza and also oppose US Govt.'s stand of supporting Israel's warmongerers rulers and their genocidal policies towards Gaza.

Russia, China and Global South

Strengthening of multi-polar world has also influenced developments in the Middle East. Unlike during the period of uni-polar world, USA is no longer the sole arbiter of war and peace in the world including in this region. Isolation of US in UN Security Council, where it exercised fourth veto in favour of Israel and against Palestinians since beginning of Israeli invasion of Gaza, was clear. While exercising veto against upgrading status of Palestine as a full member, US said that it is not opposed to Palestinian statehood as such but this should come only through negotiation between the parties. This means that Palestinians shall have their state only after Israel agrees to their statehood, which the latter would never do as it is in principle opposed to Palestine state. Israel in fact denies the very existence of Palestine nation. The US stand means that it too would be opposed to Palestine state till Israel agrees to it which means that US has, though not explicitly but in practice, abandoned its stand in favour of two state solution which it had been advocating till now. Rather it has shown its stand to be what it has really been- creation of a Palestinian state subordinate to Zionist Israel and not two independently existing states.

Third world countries have largely rallied behind Palestinians. South Africa, Algeria and some other African states have taken the lead in opposing Israel's genocide in Gaza. They represent an overwhelming majority of the world people which are being increasingly referred to as Global South. Their stand is being admired by the world people and gaining support across the globe. Govt. of India on the other hand is not taking a clear stand on the issue. In the name of pursuing independent policy, they are in fact bargaining with different imperialist powers and are failing to stand with Palestinians which had been a longstanding stand of Indian Govt.

The present conflict has brought the issue of Palestine on the agenda of the Global institutions and before world public opinion. Western imperialist countries are either sidelining it or not stressing it while Israel openly opposes it. They pay lip service to two state solution but refuse to discuss its modalities in concrete terms. For Zionist rulers of Israel Jewish state- Israel should encompass the whole of Palestine and even beyond. But the attention of world is focused on Palestine issue. Israeli rulers are caught in a situation of their own making. If they stop the war, it will not be acceptable to their chauvinist base and if they continue the war, their condition is going to only worsen. This encapsulates the dilemma of Israel, whose rulers cannot imagine existing as a normal state within internationally accepted boundaries. They must exist as a hegemonic regional power and that is how their imperialist patrons also envisage.

Palestinians' resistance against Israeli rulers who are backed by western imperialist powers especially USA has become an arena at the forefront of struggle of oppressed nations and peoples against Imperialism. Palestinians' self-sacrificing and death-defying

struggle is not only for themselves but part of the struggle of all oppressed nations and peoples against Imperialism.



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