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Organ of the  
Central Committee CPI(ML)

# NEW DEMOCRACY

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

# **NEW DEMOCRACY**

**June - 2024**

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# **Statement on 2024 Lok Sabha Results**

The most important aspect of the results of elections to Lok Sabha held in April-June 2024 is that the drive of Modi led RSS-BJP to impose fascist system in the country has lost steam. In fact that was the most important issue in these elections for which progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces including our Party had called for defeat of RSS-BJP in these elections.

While RSS-BJP had claimed it would secure two third majority for itself (370 seats) and over 400 seats for NDA, these claims have fallen flat. BJP has failed to secure even a simple majority, getting 240 seats, losing 63 seats from their tally in the last elections in 2019. They are now dependent on their allies to even form the Govt. NDA led by them has barely secured a simple majority. Not only have their seats declined, but even their vote share has declined from the past election. The aura of invincibility for Parliamentary elections built by corporate media around persona of Modi has been shattered.

Modi and other BJP leaders are boasting of emerging as the largest party, but it should be seen in the backdrop of massive use of power of Money and Media in influencing elections, blatant use of Central Govt. agencies like ED, IT and CBI including arrest of incumbent Chief Ministers just prior to elections, partisan attitude of Election Commission etc. Despite these, fascist forces have suffered a setback.

Not only RSS-BJP will be dependent on their NDA allies for forming and running the Govt. some of their major allies like TDP and JD (U), opportunists though they are, do not come from Hindutva cabal nor share the Hindutva agenda. The territory is in fact one which RSS-BJP are not used to since 2014.

A very important feature of these elections is that the issues of agrarian distress, unemployment and price-rise affecting vast sections of the people have made their way into political discourse. RSS-BJP have not been able to sidetrack the livelihood issues by their diversionary dangerous tactics. Increasing difficulties of the people and rising economic burden on them have made themselves felt. In bringing this into sharp focus, over one and a half year long agitation of farmers including a year-long sit-in at Delhi borders under the leadership of SKM had played an important role. Near complete washout of BJP from the areas where this agitation had been strong like Punjab, rural areas of Haryana, West UP and parts of Rajasthan bears testimony to this. Overall, RSS-BJP have fared relatively poorly in rural areas. This has highlighted the role played by people's struggles in stopping the fascist juggernaut of RSS-BJP. *While issues of the people have been common throughout the country, RSS-BJP has suffered where struggles or campaigns were built on these issues.*

While BJP leaders beginning with Modi tried to deepen communal polarization, they did not succeed as their communal drive was not cloaked in nationalist narrative. Modi himself stooped to very low levels during the campaign for these elections. Their hype on inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya was a non-starter as an election issue. They themselves abandoned it later in the campaign and were defeated in Faizabad. Modi's own vote share in Varanasi also declined. They lost a majority of seats in Ayodhya

region and suffered a near washout in Varanasi region.

Election results also highlight the importance of federalism for a diverse country like India. RSS-BJP had launched concentrated attacks on rights of states in pursuit of their fascist designs which have been rebuffed by people in a number of states. Attacks on federal structure have been part of the attacks on the democratic rights of the people in general.

Regional parties of the ruling classes which have been friendly with RSS-BJP at the Centre and have suppressed people's struggles in their state e.g. YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh and BJD in Odisha, have suffered heavily. BJP turned its back on them, striking alliance with TDP in AP and attacking BJD in Odisha.

While RSS-BJP have laid great stress on dominating eastern part of India, they have failed. In four tribal states of Northeast e.g. Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, their NDA allies have lost. In Manipur their cynical pursuit of unleashing violence between communities has been rejected. Their attempts to communally polarize people of West Bengal by notifying CAA Rules just before elections have been rejected by the people despite people's anger against the party ruling in the state for its repression on people's movements.

RSS-BJP and media allied to them have made much of the RSS-BJP performance in South India. They could win a seat in Kerala because alliance between Congress and CPM at all India level opened space for BJP posing as opposition. In Kerala CPM led LDF's neoliberal policies (including their Nava Keralam) have too been rejected. RSS-BJP's much hyped Tamilnadu campaign led only to some increase in their vote share while they conceded ground in Karnataka despite alliance with JD(S). In Telengana they

could improve their tally due to some adjustment with opposition forces in that state. In Maharashtra, despite their attempts to break the parties, their own strength also declined.

While RSS BJP retained their dominance over parts of North West India especially Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, their dominance over large northern belt of Hindi speaking states was dented heavily. The most devastating was their loss in the most populous province of Uttar Pradesh. While impact of farmers movement contributed, bulldozer raj of Yogi Adityanath evoked revulsion as people's problems e.g. rising unemployment, price rise etc. mounted. BJP-RSS drive to secure a two third majority of their own was seen as a part of their drive to change the Constitution including doing away with reservations. Loss in UP has been very important in denying BJP a majority in Lok Sabha. Bihar, which had some of these factors and more fertile ground for rejection of RSS-BJP and NDA, did not do so as opposition parties shunned all agitations and were content with their caste calculations. In Jharkhand, reaction to RSS-BJP was significant in tribal areas.

Punjab has denied entry to BJP despite several prominent leaders from Congress joining it. AAP, which had emerged due to people's disillusionment with two major parties, Congress and Akali Dal, has betrayed the aspirations of the people, suppressing even anti-BJP campaign by different organizations. This has allowed rise of Khalistani forces, with them winning two Lok Sabha seats. An important aspect of this is BJP's tacit support to these forces with a cynical aim of damaging rising people's struggles in that state.

Modi and RSS-BJP boast of success of their virtual abrogation of Article 370 and annulment of Article 35A in relation to J&K, but they did not dare to contest elections in the Valley.

Rejection of the move has been sharp and even leaders like Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti have lost. Sheikh Abdul (Engineer) Rashid who has been in jail since 2019 under UAPA has been elected by a big margin. In Laddakh an independent candidate won and BJP was third.

While all ruling class parties – in NDA and I.N.D.I.A. bloc – subscribe to same basic policies the difference is of the RSS-BJP drive to impose fascism. Setback to their drive will create better conditions for rise of people's struggles of all classes and sections of people- struggle of farmers for MSP, struggle of tribals for saving their land and of landless and poor to secure land, struggle of workers for wages, rights and against Labour codes, struggles of students and youth against commercialization of education and for employment, and myriad other issues of the people.

While struggle for democratic rights will continue to face obstruction from RSS-BJP led NDA Govt., conditions for waging struggle for democratic rights will be better. While attacks on minorities, especially Muslims, will continue under RSS-BJP led Govt. it can be exposed, opposed and resisted more widely and effectively. Importantly it will invigorate those sections of people who had suffered from defeatism seeing rise and rise of RSS-BJP. The lid has been lifted. Rise in struggles alone will prevent the fascist force from regaining lost ground.

Basic problems of the people can only be solved by bringing about basic changes, revolutionary transformation of India. Conditions for intensifying class struggle and people's movements have improved in the backdrop of deepening economic crisis in the country and rising disillusionment of the people with the system which could be seen in declining polling percentages. Elections have also brought to fore the continuing role of Money, Muscle and Media

in influencing elections as well as anti-democratic aspects of electoral exercise in the country. Despite these, fascist forces have suffered a setback.

**Central Committee**

June 4, 2024

**CPI (ML)-New Democracy**



## **Statement of CC of CPI(ML) New Democracy**

# **Successful Conclusion of All India Party Congress, 2024**

**C**PI (ML)-New Democracy announces successful conclusion of its All India Party Congress (2024) recently. Party Congress was held at Com. Chandra Pulla Reddy Nagar and proceedings of the Congress were conducted in Com. Rayala Subhash Chandra Bose (Ravanna) Hall. Successful conclusion of the Congress has been a victory of the Party ranks.

Delegates elected at the respective state conferences participated in the Congress. Congress proceedings were marked by informed and lively discussions and enlivened by the comradely atmosphere and great urgency to play our role in developing revolutionary movement and taking Indian revolution to victory.

The Congress commenced with unfurling of the Party flag at the venue and raising of slogans hailing the contribution of leaders who had been martyred or died in the course of movement. Proceedings commenced with paying homage to those leaders and



cadres of the Party who had laid down their lives since the last Party Congress and leaders who had died since then. The Hall was decorated with photos of great teachers and leaders of revolutionary movement including the photo of Com. Linganna who had been martyred by police on July 31, 2019. Party Congress paid homage to leaders of the communist revolutionary organizations who had died in this period, to leaders and cadres of communist revolutionary organizations who died at the hands of security forces in the course of revolutionary movement. Party Congress also paid homage to the leaders of revolutionary communist parties of other countries. Party Congress paid homage to 746 farmers who died during the historic protest of farmers against three Agri Acts and four farmers (and a journalist) who were killed by ruling party's hoodlums in Lakhimpur Kheri; to the activists who had died in the course of people's struggles including those killed by police while suppressing anti-CAA protests and people who died fighting exploitation and oppression. Party Congress paid homage to those killed in different countries in the course of movements against imperialism and reactionaries, especially to Palestinians who have died in Gaza after inhuman invasion by Zionist Israeli rulers of Gaza with nearly 34000 dead and Palestinians who are dying in West Bank due to attacks by Zionist Army, police and settlers.

Party Congress condoled the deaths of hundreds of thousands who died due to wrong and whimsical policies of fascist rulers e.g. in Demonetization, mismanagement of Covid etc.; hundreds of thousands of peasants who have been forced to commit suicide due to indebtedness owing to anti-peasant policies of ruling classes; thousands of industrial workers who have died in industrial accidents due to non-implementation of industrial safety measures and hundreds of thousands who have fallen victim of climate change

mainly due to imperialism and corporate.

Party Congress unanimously approved a Political Resolution “Present Situation & Our Tasks” analyzing the main trends of the international and national situation and determining the main tasks based on this analysis. According to this resolution, world is going through “big disorder” due to intensification of main contradictions of imperialist system in the backdrop of deepening economic crisis of imperialism, slowing down of all major economies, debt driven growth, increasing inequality with rise of wealth of corporate and deteriorating conditions of working people. Contradiction among imperialist powers as exemplified in Ukraine war and growing conflicts in South China Sea are hotspots of this. Multi-polarity has become dominant. Contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples is intensifying in economic, political and military spheres. Palestinians’ struggle for their national aspirations is at present at the forefront. New areas of armed conflict are springing up. Contradiction in imperialist countries between labour and capital and in social sphere is growing resulting in deepening of polarization. Conditions are conducive to growth of people’s movements against imperialism and domestic reactionaries who are increasing taking to anti-immigrant steps, obscurantism and racism.

In describing the country’s situation, the Resolution noted the intensifying drive of ruling RSS-BJP towards imposition of fascist dictatorship. This drive in the form of Hindutva fascism is supported by the major section of the corporate and rural elite. The Resolution noted intensifying attacks of the corporate – foreign and domestic – against the labouring people, their attempts to further penetrate agriculture while extending their tentacles into all spheres of industrial and economic life of the country. RSS-BJP

Govt. has launched attacks against workers in the form of 4 labour codes. The Resolution noted continuing exploitation and oppression in rural and urban areas with rising unemployment and under-employment. Political Resolution noted the growing inequality in the country with India topping the list of emerging billionaires while hunger, destitution, deprivation, malnutrition and eradicable diseases continue to grow. To pre-empt and disrupt the growing people's movements major section of big capitalists and big landlords are rallying behind RSS-BJP who lead a chauvinist communal movement and have armed wings. The resolution noted attacks on rights under the Constitution, against federalism and selective use of CBI, ED, IT against opposition parties. Political Resolution called for thorough campaign against RSS-BJP including during elections, to mobilize people against attacks against religious minorities, lynching and murders, attacks against their properties and places of worship and education and to build militant broad-based struggles of the people on their issues of livelihood and rights. Political Resolution emphasized the importance of joining hands with other forces to build people's movements against attacks launched by the fascist forces. Political Resolution also criticized the opposition parties of ruling classes which are implementing the anti-people policies where in power and suppressing the struggles of the people and emphasized the need to expose them.

Political Resolution emphasized the need to fight against increasing attacks against tribals, dalits, women and minorities. Need to build struggles against price-rise, growing tax burden on the people and rising unemployment was also emphasized.

Political Resolution emphasized the need of unity of communist revolutionary forces and resolved to work towards achieving unity of CR organizations where possible and developing a

broad forum to co-ordinate their response to rising challenges before the people.

On the agenda of this Congress was consideration of Party Programme in light of the changes especially in agrarian and industrial sectors over the last 27 years since when we had last discussed Party Programme. Draft by outgoing CC was presented, incorporating the changes as documented in data, collected through surveys and also in light of the experiences of the struggles of different sections especially of peasants and workers. Lively discussion followed after which Party Congress adopted the Programme incorporating some amendments moved. Programme highlighted the recent contours of the industrial and agrarian scene, noted the diversity across India especially in the agrarian field and increasing contractualization of workers. Programme held that India remains broadly a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country and stage of the revolution is New Democratic Revolution. Programme identified the enemies in the rural and urban India. Programme also held the working class as the leader of the revolution, peasantry as the main force and also identified allies of the New Democratic Revolution. Programme held that alliance of imperialism, comprador bureaucrat capitalism and semi-feudalism versus the people of the India is the principal contradiction in the country. Programme also highlighted importance of struggle against the exploitation and oppression of oppressed castes, tribals, women and minorities.

Party Congress also adopted Path for making New Democratic Revolution in India after a lively discussion. Path document rejected the parliamentary path pedaled by revisionist parties and upheld the path of protracted people's war. The document held that while drawing upon the experiences of the

revolutionary communist movement of different countries, this path is based primarily on the experiences of revolutionary struggle of the people of India. Path document outlined tasks in different regions of the country, taking rural areas as the main arena of struggle. The document also outlined tasks on different fronts and among different sections of people. Path document opined “The main task of the Party to begin with is to develop militant peasant movement in these areas.” to develop them further into armed struggle (local uprisings) and areas of sustained resistance.

After adopting the Political Resolution, Programme and Path documents, Party Congress delegates discussed the Political Organizational Review (POR) of Party’s work especially over the last five years, since All India Party Plenum held in 2018. According to the Review “Overall the period has registered some victories and some setbacks, all these furnishing wealth of experiences and lessons to help Party make better contribution to the victory of revolution in India.” In the POR CC candidly accepted weaknesses of the Party organization and functioning including its own mistakes. POR covered different facets of Party work including building of areas of sustained resistance, mass movements of different sections especially workers and peasants, women, dalits and tribals, students and youth. Party also reviewed various initiatives taken on different fronts.

POR drew lessons from both successes and setbacks and charted out a course to overcome setbacks and remove weaknesses, while developing Party’s initiative in unleashing people’s struggles. POR set forth immediate and some long-term tasks to be undertaken.

In the last session, Party Congress unanimously elected Centrals bodies of the Party. A new Central Control Commission

and a new Central Committee were elected. New Central Committee elected Com. Yatendra Kumar as the General Secretary of the Party.

After election of the Central bodies of the Party, Party Congress adopted a number of resolutions. Through these resolutions Party Congress condemned invasion of Gaza by Zionist Israeli rulers backed by US and other western imperialist powers and expressed full support to the Palestinians' struggle for their national rights; condemned framing of CAA (Rules) by RSS-BJP Govt.; demanded repeal of UAPA and other black laws and release of all those in jail under these black laws including in Bhima Koregaon case and North East Delhi violence case and release of all those who have completed their sentences. Repeal of recently enacted three Criminal Codes was also demanded. Party Congress condemned violence in Manipur, especially against Kuki Zo and military suppression of people of Jammu & Kashmir and demanded to bring Laddakh under VIth Schedule and self-administration for Kuki areas in Manipur. Party Congress condemned attacks on places of worship and education of Muslims, opposed imposition of Uniform Civil Code, criticized Peace Committees set up by Admn. after communal violence to be instruments of harassment of minorities and condemned discrimination on the basis of caste demanding extension of reservation to private sector. Party Congress opposed construction of religious places with Govt. funds and extension of reservation to appointments there if it is done. Party Congress demanded withdrawal of 4 Labour codes, condemned repression on workers' struggles, opposed privatization of PSUs and demanded stopping of attempts to privatize SAIL and Vizag Steel. Party Congress condemned attacks on tribals through new Forest Conservation Act and Forest Conservation Rules 2022.

Party Congress condemned attempts of the Govt. to bring repealed pro-corporate Agri Acts through back door, supported farmers' struggle for MSP and demanded arrest of Union Minister Ajay Mishra accused of Lakhimpur Khiri violence. Repeal of Land Titling Act was also demanded. Party Congress condemned attacks on federalism e.g. increase in the areas under BSF jurisdiction, opening of NIA offices in districts, taking over control of dams by Union Govt. Party Congress condemned attacks on the small businesses and imposition of GST. Party Congress demanded repeal of New Education Policy and extended support to struggles of students and teachers.

Last Session of the All India Party Congress was addressed by the General Secretary who called upon the Party ranks to rededicate themselves to the cause of New Democratic Revolution in India, to establish Party even more deeply in the struggles of the people and to reinvigorate the Party to intensify revolutionary struggles.

Then, the Presidium thanked the host committee, volunteers and all comrades who worked tirelessly for successful organization of the Party Congress.

All India Party Congress concluded to the strains of Internationale amidst great enthusiasm among delegates and amidst slogans in favour of NDR in India, calling for advancing on the path of protracted people's war, upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and hailing Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

**Central Committee**

April 27, 2024

**CPI (ML)-New Democracy**



# Of Sunshine, Flowers, Work and The May Day

● SK

*We want to feel the sunshine, and we want to smell the flowers,*

*We are sure that God has will'd it, and we mean to have eight hours.*

*We're summoning our forces from the shipyard, shop and mill,*

*Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will!*

*Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will!*

- Eight Hours, written in late 1860s

**S**ummer of 1930. Spain. The world was reeling under the impact of Great Depression of 1929. John Maynard Keynes, the economist, was talking about 'Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren' amidst the palpable gloom in Madrid. He started with the acceptance, *'we are suffering just now from a bad attack of economic pessimism.'* Optimistic, as he was, he noted, *'We are suffering, not from the rheumatics of old age, but from the growing-pains of over-rapid changes, from the painfulness of readjustment between one economic period and another. The*



*increase of technical efficiency has been taking place faster than we can deal with the problem of labour absorption; the improvement in the standard of life has been a little too quick.'* Setting out to explain further, he wrote, *'The prevailing world depression, the enormous anomaly of unemployment in a world full of wants, the disastrous mistakes we have made, blind us to what is going on under the surface to the true interpretation of the trend of things.'* He went on to say, *'My purpose in this essay, however, is not to examine the present or the near future, but to disembarass myself of short views and take wings into the future. What can we reasonably expect the level of our economic life to be a hundred years hence? What are the economic possibilities for our grandchildren?'* Within a hundred years, (by 2030), Keynes imagined, that for the first time since his creation, Man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem-how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well. He predicted that we would be working just fifteen hours a week, *'three hours a day is quite enough to satisfy the old Adam in most of us!'*

No, the intent here is not to debate whether Keynes was right or where he went wrong. It is interesting to note that there was a great economist who once imagined that the increase in technical efficiency and the resultant improvement in the standard of life would lead to three hours a day/ fifteen-hour work week! Contrast this to the current day calls exhorting people to work 70 hours a week.

The length of the working day has been a question many a historian and economist debated and the answers vary as our perceptions about work, work day, 'leisure', 'clock time' too have

evolved. And it is not just a matter of perceptions. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales considers the cock as nature's timepiece in its immemorial role during the fourteenth century. By the middle of eighteenth century, the clock had penetrated to more intimate levels. Rutger Bregman notes in his book *Utopia for Realists*, that, *'where an English farmer in the year 1300 had to work some 1500 hours a year to make a living, a factory worker in the (John Stuart) Mill's era had to put in twice the time simply to survive.'* The transition to industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of habits. Working people had to be compelled and disciplined. Edward P. Thompson, the historian, shows in his essay, *Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism* says that new labour habits were formed, and a new time-discipline was imposed *'by the division of the labour; supervision of labour; fines; bells and clocks; money incentives; preachings and schoolings; suppression of sports and fairs.'*

Neo-classical economists consider the length of the working day as a matter of individual choice wherein workers base their decision on the trade-off between their consumption acquired from work-based income and free time. Institutionalists stress on the social norms and institutional arrangements in determining the work day. The reduction in the length of working day is assumed to be result of growth of living standards and/or productivity with differences in the emphasis. Karl Marx, on the other hand says that the establishment of a normal working-day is the result of centuries of struggle between capitalist and labourer. Thus, the length of the work day is determined by class struggle, rather than by changing living standards, productivity, or institutional traditions.

Marx explains *“What is a working-day? What is the length of time during which capital may consume the labour-power*

*whose daily value it buys? How far may the working-day be extended beyond the working-time necessary for the reproduction of labour-power itself?" It has been seen that to these questions Capital replies: the working-day contains the full 24 hours, with the deduction of the few hours of repose without which labour-power absolutely refuses its services again. Hence it is self-evident that the labourer is nothing else, his whole life through, than labour-power, that therefore all his disposable time is by nature and law labour-time, to be devoted to the self-expansion of capital. Time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfilling of social functions and for social intercourse, for the free-play of his bodily and mental activity, even the rest time of Sunday (and that in a country of Sabbatarians!) — moonshine! But in its blind unrestrainable passion, its were-wolf hunger for surplus-labour, Capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working-day. It usurps the time for growth, development, and healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight. It higgles over a meal-time, incorporating it where possible with the process of production itself, so that food is given to the labourer as to a mere means of production, as coal is supplied to the boiler, grease and oil to the machinery. It reduces the sound sleep needed for the restoration, reparation, refreshment of the bodily powers to just so many hours of torpor as the revival of an organism, absolutely exhausted, renders essential. It is not the normal maintenance of the labour-power which is to determine the limits of the working-day; it is the greatest possible daily expenditure of labour-power, no matter how diseased, compulsory, and painful it may be, which is to determine the limits of the labourers' period of repose. Capital*

*cares nothing for the length of life of labour-power. All that concerns it is simply and solely the maximum of labour-power that can be rendered fluent in a working-day. It attains this end by shortening the extent of the labourer's life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility.*

*'The capitalistic mode of production (essentially the production of surplus-value, the absorption of surplus-labour), produces thus, with the extension of the working-day, not only the deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal, moral and physical, conditions of development and function. It produces also the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself. It extends the labourer's time of production during a given period by shortening his actual life-time' (Capital).*

History shows us the reduction of work time has been a result of the persistent struggle of the working classes. Cristoph Hermann, in his book, *Capitalism and the Political Economy of Work Time*, compiled these changes and notes the four phases. *'A first cycle spanned roughly the second half of the nineteenth century and resulted in the introduction of the ten- hour work day. A second phase started in the late nineteenth century and ended with the establishment of the eight-hour work day or the 48-hour work week after the end of the First World War. A third phase began in the 1930s and in some countries led to the adoption of the 40-hour week before the Second World War or shortly thereafter. Devastated by the war, most European countries lagged behind and introduced the 40-hour week in the 1960s and 1970s. A fourth phase of work time reductions evolved in the 1980s and 1990s and led to the introduction of the 35-hour week, but only a few*

*countries took part in this movement’.*

By the end of twentieth century, with the neoliberal turn, the decrease in the work hours is no longer seen as a sign of social progress. Instead, longer work hours are being touted as a means to safeguard jobs. In 2003 the Cologne Institute of Economic Research initiated a public debate in Germany by arguing that a one- hour extension of work time would create an additional 60,000 jobs; while in France the conservative government, which took office in 2002, used the slogan “working more, earning more, and creating more jobs” to justify its changes to the 35-hour week. The ascendance of neoliberalism has halted, reversed the trend of secular decline in work hours and has led to gradual increase in the work hours across the globe. The current clamour and exhortations for 70-hour work week in India has to be viewed from this context. The calls are synchronized with the imposition of labour codes extending the work hours from 8 to 12 in a day.

There is another important dimension to the increase in the work hours. Work time has not only increased, it has also become more intense. Research by David Maume and David Purcell in 2007 found that the pace of work increased significantly in the United States between 1977 and 1997, mainly because of increasingly complex tasks. The European Working Conditions Survey also shows a persistent intensification of work measured since the first survey was conducted in 1990. All this is leading to blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. A study conducted at the Harvard Business School has shown that, thanks to modern technology, managers and professionals in Europe, Asia and North America now spend eighty to ninety hours per week ‘either working’ or ‘monitoring’ and remaining accessible. And according to a Korean research, the smart phone has the average employee

working eleven more hours per week. Added to this, the wages have either remained stagnant or reduced.

Longer working hours, growing intensity of work are increasingly affecting the health of workers. Long work hours and growing work intensity are increasingly threatening the health of workers. As Robert LaJeunesse notes, a *'growing body of empirical research is suggesting that excessive work hours adversely impact the health, well- being and longevity of workers.'* Among the diseases frequently linked to long work hours and over- work are hypertension, cardiovascular disorders, mental health problems, and reproductive disorders. However, among the costs of work- related health conditions are not only individual pain but also family distress and ultimately burgeoning healthcare expenses. (Robert LaJeunesse, Work Time Regulation as a Sustainable Full Employment Strategy: The Social Effort Bargain).

During the 1770s, 'for "extirpating idleness debauchery and excess," promoting a spirit of industry, "lowering the price of labour in our manufactories, and easing the lands of the heavy burden of poor's rates' there were proposals to set up 'ideal workhouse' for paupers. It was proposed that such ideal workhouse must be made a "House of Terror," and not an asylum for the poor, *"where they are to be plentifully fed, warmly and decently clothed, and where they do but little work."* In this "House of Terror," this "ideal workhouse, the poor shall work 14 hours in a day, allowing proper time for meals, in such manner that there shall remain 12 hours of neat-labour..... The "House of Terror" for paupers of which the capitalistic soul of 1770 only dreamed, was realized a few years later in the shape of a gigantic "Workhouse" for the industrial worker himself. It is called the Factory. And the ideal this time fades before the reality. (Karl Marx, Capital). With the

suggested changes and increase in the working hours from eight to twelve hours a day and calls for seventy hour work week, there are now attempts to establish 'ideal workhouses'/ 'house of terror' albeit in a changed environment. The were-wolf hunger for profit is insatiable and the physical maximum bounds of work day are being stretched.

Karl Marx envisaged a life where everyone would have the time '*to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, raise cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner.. without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, headsman or critic.*' This can be juxtaposed with the ideal workhouse dreams of Capital. The human urge to feel the sunshine, to smell the flowers is not mere dream. '*Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will*' isn't just an ideal that is swept away by the reality. May Day is a reminder to struggle against the reality and change it.



## **Call By Student Organizations**

# **Rise To Protest Against Genocide In Gaza**

**Z**ionist Israeli rulers are attempting to seize Palestine to crush any national ambitions or opposition to their onslaught. Israel's justifications are only a grandiose smoke screen. Their right to self-defense actually means the ability to exterminate all the Palestinian people from Palestine.

With nearly 35,000 Palestinians killed in the restricted Gaza and an additional 100 killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, one of the largest genocides in modern history is currently occurring in the world. Doctors have been slain and hospitals have been devastated. Israeli forces have destroyed all of Gaza's educational infrastructure, including universities, schools, and libraries, leaving nothing but debris behind. Israel is receiving more military help from the US government while US institutions profit financially from companies that feed off the ongoing carnage in Gaza. In Gaza, mass graves, famines, and humanitarian catastrophes are becoming commonplace.

The Indian government is complicit in this genocide and is not acting to address the situation of the Palestinian people. They are sending Indian labourers to Israel; Indian firms are supplying weaponry to Israel to slaughter innocent people.

Students cannot stay silent in the face of such events. Students are turning out in great numbers to protest, despite facing repression, all across the world, especially in the USA. We condemn





*(Students Protesting against Genocide in Gaza in Punjabi University, Patiala on May 14, 2024)*



*(Students and teachers protesting against genocide by Israel and in support of Palestinians in JNU, Delhi on May 17, 2024)*

such repressive measures against students and other people raising their voice for justice.

We call upon all student organizations to jointly demonstrate and plan protest actions as and when possible, with broadly supported demands, and involve as many different students and organizations as possible.

**We demand:**

1. Stop genocide in GAZA immediately. International Court of Justice should issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders.
2. No relations with any Israeli educational institution/funding in any educational institute.
3. Stop arms supply to Israel by Indian firms.
4. Palestine should be made full member of UNO.

**All-India Coordination, PDSU-PSU**



# **Call For Repealing UAPA & Other Black Laws !**

## **Release All In Jail Under UAPA**

**T**he 44 day long process of general elections to elect the eighteenth Lok Sabha winds its way to the end. Even as the ruling Hindutva dispensation of BJP-RSS seeks to maintain its stranglehold on the seat of political power, a large section of the people and opposition polity see these elections as the last chance to save or restore democracy in the country. Whatever be the anxious expectations of the people across the social spectrum and that of the parties across the political spectrum, the singular context that sharply profiles these elections is the ten year rule of the fascist BJP-RSS at the Centre that has been characterized by brazen loot of the country's resources by select corporate houses facilitated by the Central government on the one hand and the free hand lent to the Hindutva hordes, the security forces and other agencies of the state to browbeat the struggling people and political opponents into submission on the other. Among all of this the attacks have been the sharpest on the largest religious minority, the Muslims, to the extent of not just perpetuating their wanton killing, but to utterly deny them an Indian identity and thereby the rights of an Indian citizen. The sections of the society which have sought to raise their voice in support of the oppressed people – the human rights activists, students, academics, lawyers, writers and cultural activists, all have been dealt with ruthlessly. The regime coined the disingenuous term of 'urban naxal' as a ruse to settle scores with its opponents.

In order to affect this design, the BJP-RSS government appropriated and sharpened the tools which were already put in place by the previous UPA government – the Enforcement Directorate, the NIA (National Investigation Agency) and laws like the PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) and the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act). Of all the draconian acts ever enacted by the Indian state, UAPA has gained particular notoriety first for the reason of provisions that enable the state to book a person under the Act for an alleged conspiracy (requiring substantiation of the flimsiest kind) against the state, and secondly, because attaining bail under the Act has been made extremely difficult, throwing by the side the universally acknowledged principles of criminal jurisprudence.

At a time when people across the country are eagerly looking to the ongoing electoral process as an opportunity to throw off the yoke of fascist rule of the RSS-BJP government, Janhastakshep resolved to caution the public opinion that restoration of status quo ante cannot be an assurance of restoration of democracy in the country. Ability of the citizens to safeguard their rights and use them as an instrument to improve their lives and command accountability from the rulers is important for democratizing Society. Annulment of these rights is the actual target of draconian laws like UAPA, enacted in the name of fighting terror. While the need of the hour is to abolish such draconian laws even the Opposition political groupings have steered clear of talking about suffering of people under UAPA. Hence, it becomes necessary to demand that the draconian laws, especially UAPA, which have formed the most formidable tools of imposing fascist rule on the country, be repealed by the government which they hope shall replace the incumbent Modi-RSS regime.

Discussions and public meetings on UAPA have been many and the demand for its repeal has also been raised from different forums repeatedly; hence, it was deemed fit by Janhastakshep to build the case against UAPA by specifically raising the issue of those incarcerated under this hated law in the wake of the violence staged in the Northeast Delhi to drown the protests against the CAA-NRC- which were largely by the Muslim community and supported by other progressive sections of the society- in a blood bath.

Twenty different persons were booked under UAPA in the infamous omnibus FIR 59/2020 that was lodged in the matter of the Northeast Delhi violence. All but two among them were Muslims, mostly students and known social and political activists. Of these all except six continue to remain in jail. In several cases, the trial courts have held the police responsible for “vague evidence and general allegations,” a “shoddy probe”, and an “absolutely evasive” and “lackadaisical” attitude. The enormous physical, mental, social and economic suffering of the victims and their families in such cases only gets compounded by the listlessness or even the complicity of the very institutions one looks up to for relief.

For example, in the High Court of Delhi, bail petitions of nine accused persons were listed for hearing between 34 and 60 times. In the case of six accused, hearings were concluded and judgment was reserved, but it never came as the two judges constituting the special bench that heard the bail applications got transferred from the court before delivering the judgment. A newbench was constituted to hear the matter afresh.

It seemed nothing short of a tragic comedy when the Delhi High Court took a deep dive, while hearing his bail plea, into elucidating the meaning of ‘Inquilab’ in the slogan ‘Inquilab Zindabad’ that had been raised by Umar Khalid. The continuance of

these circumstances cannot but have ominous consequences for our polity and society, ruining the lives and livelihoods of millions of people. It is important that the people understand these issues as they go to vote. Hence, Janhastakshep decided to hold a well-publicized public discussion on the topic.

What follows is a brief report of a very well-attended public meeting that was organized by Janhastakshep on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 2024 at New Delhi's Press Club of India on the topic "UAPA in Delhi: Punishment without Trial."

This meeting was meant to remind the people that even as India is undergoing perhaps the most important parliamentary election in its post 1947 history, protecting the cause of or establishing democracy would depend on their ability to enjoy the rights granted to them under the Constitution and demand accountability from the governments, which crucially depends on their being able to contest governments policies and wage struggles for their democratic demands. Governments have more often than not sought to put down peoples' democratic struggles per force and have enacted draconian laws time and again for this purpose. In this context Janhastakshep organized this meeting to once again highlight the plight of those incarcerated since long in Delhi under the provisions of UAPA and demand abrogation of UAPA which has become the biggest threat to democracy in India.

After a brief introduction presented by Janhastakshep convener, Dr. Vikas Bajpai, the meeting was addressed by a distinguished panel comprising of Colin Gonzalves, Sanjay Parikh, and Shahrukh Alam, all senior Human / Democratic Rights advocates of the Supreme Court of India and Nandini Sundar, noted democratic rights activist and professor at Delhi School of Economics. Dr. Anoop Saraya presided over and conducted the

meeting.

Colin Gonzalves cited examples of a number of judgments by the High Courts and the Supreme Court to sketch the contours of emerging tensions in the higher judiciary vis-à-vis its commitment to upholding the democratic rights of the people. He expressed concern that there is a growing proximity between the higher judiciary and the executive that is undermining the process especially of criminal jurisprudence. This is bound to have a chilling effect on the lower rungs of judiciary as well. He cited the example of Lekshmana Chandra Victoria Gowri, a BJP affiliated lawyer who had openly talked of the Green (Muslim) and the White (Christian) terror, and yet was recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium for elevation to Supreme Court. When its decision was challenged, the collegium responded that they can only examine the eligibility and not the suitability of the concerned person.

In his address Sanjay Parikh elaborated upon how the Courts have gradually turned criminal jurisprudence on its head in past few decades. While the earlier position of the courts was that whatever be the views or expressed intent (even if talking of violence) of a person, s/he could not be declared to be terrorist unless and until complicity of such a person could actually be shown in an evident act of terror. But now, an act of terror need not even have happened for a person to be implicated under terror laws. This has been affected through giving legal sanctity to 'Conspiracy' angle under UAPA whereby an allegation of merely 'conspiring' is enough to implicate a person under UAPA. Sanjay Parikh also emphasized the need for a peoples' movement for abrogation of draconian laws, rather than depending solely on the self-realization or wisdom of individual judges.

Giving example of the ongoing student protests in the US against their Government's support to war in Gaza, senior advocate Shahrukh Alam stated that in the US it is the police apparatus that appears much militarized in its behavior towards the citizen, but all the protestors arrested there are let off within a day or two. Contrary to that, the Indian police not only continues to behave like a colonial force vis-à-vis the people, but even the judicial system in the country stands militarized having little respect for the constitutional rights of the people. Drawing parallels from various other countries, she stated that while elsewhere the police and the law enforcing agencies persist in first collecting evidence against a person and then approach the courts to seek their custody, in India the police and the state agencies have unbridled right to keep persons under custody for months together even as they are still investigating the alleged crime. Additionally, an attitude has evolved where more than examining the crime alleged to have been committed by a person, the courts appear intent on interrogating the politics of a person, which colors their pronouncements.

Nandini Sundar leveraged her experience as a political activist to bring forth the living reality of the tribal people of Chhattisgarh. Attacking the policies of the present rulers of the country she stated that the use of laws like UAPA in most cases is not being done to control terror but to spread terror among the people. She said that the state has systematically pursued the policy of rendering large sections of the people – the tribal people, the minorities, especially the Muslims and Dalit communities, as not deserving of being the citizens of the country because it views any desire on part these sections to exercise their democratic rights as an obstacle in fulfillment of the government's designs. Hence, a tribal can be declared a terrorist and killed simply because s/he



lives in an area rich in natural resources which the government seeks to hand over to its political sponsors. Citing the case of Umar Khalid, she pointed to court's observations as to how his speeches had given impetus to the mobilization of Muslims which the court viewed as a threat. Hence, all those who seek to arm the people with the ideas and the words that help give expression to their struggles are deemed to be terrorists. Ms. Sundar submitted that the interrogation is not restricted merely to the questioning of the politics of the people, but their very existence and hence the need of UAPA for the rulers.

The talks by the speakers were followed by a question answer session whereafter a one-line resolution demanding that - "The draconian law of UAPA has no place in a democratic society and should be repealed forthwith, and all persons imprisoned under the Act should be released by the courts at the earliest" was adopted. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by senior journalist and Janhastakshep co-convener, Sh. Anil Dubey.



# Unravelling The Dynamics of Ongoing Civil War In Myanmar

● **Sujan**

**B**urma (now Myanmar) is home to a diverse population of various ethno-linguistic groups. British colonial rule, which lasted from 1824 to 1948, consolidated Burma into 8 constituent states: Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Karen, Mon and “Burma Proper or Ministerial Burma” in the centre. But apart from the “Burma Proper or Ministerial Burma” which had the Burman ethnic majority (Burmans), the other states were annexed and administered separately and tagged as “Frontier areas” or the “Excluded areas”. These areas were home to ethnic minorities such as the Chin, the Shan, the Kachin, the Karenni, and the others. Britain did unite them later with Burma proper to get the current geographic context of Myanmar, but the three British (Anglo)-Burmese wars and over hundred years of colonial exploitation failed to consolidate these states into a unified country. Overall, the busy trade route between China and India which made Burma rich and the rivers which made it self-sufficient in agriculture lay in ruins as the British colonial rule left behind a resource rich but underdeveloped, fragmented country. Later, the self-professed modern, socialist political regime and the military, both led by the majority ethnic Burmans (known as the Bamar) who out of estimated 50 million population today, account for about 60%

people, failed to assimilate this social diversity which had a historical context. The rest of 20 million non-Burman people who occupy 55% of land of the country are still treated as second-class citizens and continue to fight for autonomy or federalism which has taken the shape of one of the longest ongoing civil-wars in the world.

### **Historical Timeline (1947 – 2011)**

General Aung San, leader of the Burman independence struggle from “Burma proper”, and leaders of the Shan, Kachin and Chin peoples agreed to merge their homelands on the basis of equality to form the “Republic of the Union of Burma” in order to accelerate the process of seeking independence from Britain. This was done under 1947 Panglong Agreement which led the non-Burman people to believe that a federal system is being put in place, giving “full autonomy in internal administration for the Frontier Areas”. Shan and Karenni State were even given constitutional right to secede from the Union after 10 years in case of dissatisfaction. But the so-called socialist regime led by the majority Burmans tragically tried to do just the opposite by maintaining State centralization. Escalation of armed conflict between multiple non-Burman ethnic armed organizations and Burman controlled State military eventually led to coup d’état in 1962 and military controlled one-party rule came into existence under General Ne Win. This plunged the country into an ongoing civil war.

Civilian government did try to return to power after the “8888 Uprising”, starting August 1988 when a series of nationwide violent protests gripped the country. But bloody military crackdown after almost 2 months ended the protest, leaving behind thousands of dead. This is when Aung San Suu Kyi (the daughter of Aung San) emerged as a national icon. Facing sanctions from the

West, military did arrange an election in 1990 in which her party, the National League for Democracy, won 81% of the seats. But Aung San Suu Kyi was put under house arrest until 2011 as military refused to cede power. With Military rulers cornered by the US, China under Deng seized this opportunity and changed side to become the political and economic lifeline for military junta, as well as key arms supplier since late 1980s. Eventually Communist Party of Burma (CPB) collapsed in 1989 amid internal mutinies led by fighters of Kokang, Wa and other ethnic minority groups, who all formed their separate armies. Beijing, in turn forced them to an uneasy truce in late 1980s as the military government signed 17 ceasefire agreements with various armed organizations. Overall, China maintains close economic and political ties with these ethnic groups and continues to use their private armies as a buffer against the civilian or military regime at the Centre to protect its own economic interests. This translated into forced military patronage since 1990s under which China continued to expand its economic interests in upper Burma (especially in Shan and Kachin states). It involved everything as lakhs of Chinese immigrants continue to work in these rubber plantations, mining, etc. and some areas (e.g. Wa, Kokang) even use Chinese Yuan and operate on Chinese Standard Time.

### **Current Unrest ; The Prelude (2011 – 2021)**

Continuing civilian unrest caused by gas price hikes and led by monks (Saffron Revolution) in 2007, coupled with death of General Ne Win in 2008 led the way for some structural changes in the constitution under which military junta was officially dissolved and in 2010, a nominal civilian government was established. This democratic opening was largely driven by the military gaining support from US and permitting the military, some leverage vis-à-

vis China. This started with suspension of China's largest project in Myanmar, the Myitsone hydroelectric dam in September 2011. It coincided with US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton's visit to Myanmar. She also met Aung San Suu Kyi who was then just released from house arrest. Later Aung San participated in 2012 by-elections and general elections in 2015 when she was elected as the State Counsellor (head of State). However, the military ratified constitution of 2008 allowed the army to hold at least 25% of legislative seats, control over domestic security and most aspects of foreign relations, and many other matters related to domestic policy. This leeway, in the main, was meant to protect monopoly political and financial interests of military.

Overall, this one-sided democracy representing Burman ethnicity did not have any impact on the overall well-being of non-Burman ethnic people as military, buoyed by US support, took this opportunity to settle scores with China backed ethnic armies, which were guarding Beijing's economic and strategic interests, behind the backdrop of illegal drug business since the forced truce signed during 1980s. The military targeted primarily the upper Burma States (Shan and Kachin bordering China) and the Northern Rakhine State (bordering Bangladesh) with serious Chinese investment.

China in turn supported the ethnic armies, resulting in severe casualties on both sides. For example, Kachin State continues to be in the middle of ongoing war as the military broke a 17-year ceasefire agreement and resumed war with 'Kachin ethnic army (KIO)' since 2011. Kachin is the world's largest source of rare earth metals, which are critical in the supply chains of many big corporations, including Tesla and General Motors. China in turn, is

dependent on KIO to balance the military threat to continue mining illegally in this area. The later military 2021 coup d'état in fact helped this mining to grow unchecked since then.

But the clash between 'Arakan ethnic army' and the military escalated further into a planned ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims, who were till then majority in the Northern Rakhine State. Earlier, Rohingyas have suffered decades of violence and discrimination in the hands of Buddhist Burmans (of all ethnicity) and were regarded as "immigrants" by the military while denying them full citizenship of Burma. This Buddhist anti-Muslim Nationalism resulted in largest exodus since August 2017 after massive violence broke out, forcing more than 7 million people (half of them are children) to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. China was among the countries who failed to criticize this violence as they continue to hedge their bets on the Arakan ethnic army against the military, to protect their massive investment in Kyaukpadaung Special Economic Zone, while building gas and oil pipelines that cross from Rakhine to China's Yunnan province, an integral part to the Belt and Road Initiative since 2013. This competes with the Indian Kaladan project, building sea ports and roads, to connect Bay of Bengal to North-East India.

Meanwhile, Aung San Suu Kyi's complicity in such killing isolated her from the West. China grabbed this opportunity and became the key source of foreign direct investment since 2017. Xi Jinping, in fact, made a state visit in January 2020, the first by a Chinese leader in almost two decades. Multinational companies were happy, but gradually eroding into the military backed monopoly business interests. Backhand handling of this civil government was thus becoming difficult for the military and the much larger landslide victory over military backed Union Solidarity

and Development Party (USDP) in the next general election in 2020 made them realize that they had no chance of replacing Aung San Suu Kyi through fair elections in near future. USDP and the military thus rejected the results as fraud and on February 1, 2021 military staged a coup d'état (as in 1962). Aung San Suu Kyi along with thousands of activists was put under house arrest. But the coup was rejected by the majority 'Bamars' and sparked yet another civil unrest and armed resistance to military rule.

### **Post 2021 Coup**

Unlike in the past, the current civil unrest is more defiant and organized as the ethnic majority – the Bamars, who once provided the military the political and social legitimacy, have sided with Aung San Suu Kyi. These newer civil pro-democracy groups consisting of health workers, teachers, bankers, and other educated classes in the beginning formed a parallel government, known as National Unity Government, and started a peaceful disobedience movement i.e. refusing to go to work until the government is restored. Later, since late 2021, their armed division known as People's Defense Forces (PDFs) became active to counter violence by military who were by then resorting to merciless killings, even wiping out entire villages believed to support the unrest. Fighting was thus not limited to border towns (as before) as major towns like Mandalay, and Yangon witnessed unprecedented fighting, not seen since 1948. Bamars received a major push when the China backed ethnic minority armies also re-launched coordinated attacks against military in Northern Myanmar since October 2023. Beijing's Belt and Road projects which thrived under Aung San Suu Kyi, were at stake and failure of negotiations with military in their favour were now obvious. Since then, military junta have lost key control in the north along the border with China (Shan and Kachin

State), and in the West (Rakhine State), near the Indian border. This rapid success against military did rejuvenate the PDF's pro-democracy resistance in the South. But here the success has remained muted. Overall, the UN suggests that Myanmar is now a failed State as over two-third of the country remains under seize and over 1.8 million people internally displaced since 2021.

## **Epilogue**

Military junta says that there are 135 races or tribes in Burma. This implies that it is impossible to cater to everyone and therefore, it is necessary to have a strong military to hold the country together. But, 65 of the so called 135 races are all from the Chin State, which makes up about 3% of the population and they live in an area that makes up about 5% of the whole nation. That means the situation is partly amplified. Meanwhile, both US and China prefer a civilian government at the centre which is easier to manipulate, favouring their imperialist interests. For the first time since 1947, the whole civilian population i.e., both Bamar and non-Bamar ethnic population, have used this in their favour to act separately against the common enemy. But the concept of one-nation under the majority Bamar still remains far-fetched as question of minority ethnic assertion remains to be resolved.





# **‘Big Disorder’ in the World**

**T**here are multiple wars going on in the world. However, two of them are influencing the international situation the most. These wars are ongoing war in Ukraine and Israel’s war against Palestinians in Gaza. They epitomize “big disorder” in the world leading to realignment of different forces and countries. These are born out of the deepening contradictions of the imperialist system and are in turn further deepening these contradictions. These two wars primarily symbolize different contradictions of the imperialist system. However, these contradictions are exercising increasing influence on each other.

As the war in Ukraine grinds on, political situation in Eastern Europe is turning very volatile. America, Britain and other western powers have come to this rude realization that their efforts to secure “strategic defeat” of Russia through supplying arms and providing funds are not succeeding. Spectre of Ukraine’s defeat was bandied to secure 61 Billion US \$ in aid to Ukraine including military aid. Western imperialist countries are yet not ready to talk about “neutral” status of Ukraine, sticking to their stance since the beginning of this war. It is common knowledge and acknowledged by none other than chief negotiator for Ukraine that Russia and Ukraine had reached an initial agreement in Istanbul (Turkey) barely a month after beginning of the war in February 2022 and that it was the then British Prime Minister who came to Kiev and asked Ukrainian leadership to pursue the course of war. He had obviously carried the message not only on behalf of his country but also of US Admn. that war must go on till Russia is defeated on the battlefield and thrown out of all the territories under its control

since 2014 which includes Crimea. It has been over two years and war goes on at the expense of Ukrainians who are falling short of arms, ammunitions and most importantly of new recruits for the Army. New recruitment drive in Ukraine includes lowering age of conscription, removal of exemptions and drive to bring Ukrainians who had gone to West European countries back to Ukraine to fight the war. Scenes of civilians being dragged in streets demonstrates the paucity of Ukrainian soldiers.

Besides the battlefield situation, Ukraine war has badly divided the European countries leaving out UK which, like USA, wants this war to go on. There are countries in Europe like France and Germany, the main powers of continental Europe, who are supporting the war for their own reasons- France for securing its place under the sun and Germany for its inability to say no to USA. Faced with battlefield reverses being suffered by Ukraine in Donbas, recent advance of Russian Army in the border regions of Kharkiv and mounting casualties, Western powers are taking several measures to halt the Russian advance short of precipitating a direct war between Russia and NATO. They are supplying long range weapons to Ukraine, sending more Army personnel to Ukraine in the name of trainers (though trainers have been there for a long time, even operating the weapon systems supplied by western countries), permitting strikes inside Russia (not only newly incorporated territories and Crimea) and planning to divert profits from Russian money blocked in Western banks to supply more weapons to Ukraine. In fact, most of the aid money is going to arms manufacturers of Western countries, most importantly USA. However, these measures are unlikely to reverse the trajectory of war to a significant degree but Biden Admn. is keen to keep the war going on at least till elections in USA in November 2024.

An important question that has emerged before the western powers is of permitting Ukraine to hit targets deep inside Russia with weapons supplied by them. Biden Admn. has admitted to having permitted this, with Biden qualifying that this permission is restricted to hit military sites in Russia from where attacks are being launched especially in Kharkiv region. US, UK and France have also declared that they are supplying fighter jets to Ukraine to cut dominance of Russia in air space. Russia has reacted to these declarations by announcing that it would supply long range weapons to adversaries of western powers in other regions of the world to hit the interests of western powers. US imperialism wants to fight this war in Europe and may not want such escalation elsewhere. Western countries continue to raise the spectre of Russian attack on NATO countries to rally support in European countries and also in USA.

**Read and Subscribe**

## **CPI(ML) Organs**

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

Not only this war aid has fattened the coffers of military industrial complex in USA, a number of big western companies have their eyes set on controlling the resources of Ukraine. BlackRock, an asset management firm controlling over 10 trillion US\$ is reported to have taken over vast tracts of agricultural land and many US and European firms have contracted to secure control over fertile agricultural land and mineral resources of that country. US imperialism wants to take control over Ukraine and would not mind if some territories go to Russia. But the problem they face is that such a compromise will bring down the present regime in place in Kiev and along with that the influence of its western backers. That is the reason they would not like to force such a compromise but would like this to come from Kiev regime itself.

Prolongation of this war is deepening division among European countries. Some of the European countries like Hungary and Serbia have, since the beginning of war, opposed arming of Ukraine by NATO countries and favoured settlement through negotiations. This sentiment is growing in other European countries as well with large demonstrations taking place opposing the war and sending of weapons to Ukraine. There has been a change in the Govt. in Slovakia and the Fico Govt. which came to power stopped arms' supplies to Ukraine. Prime Minister Fico stated that he was attacked in retaliation to this stoppage. The attacker is part of the group agitating against stoppage of military aid to Ukraine. Though he has survived this assassination attempt, it is clear that western powers are actively promoting war propaganda in European countries and are creating an atmosphere of violence against those who oppose the Western narrative on this War. Recently in another country, Georgia, one of the Republics of erstwhile Soviet Union, western countries are fomenting trouble against a legislation to

regulate foreign funded NGOs. A law prescribing requirement to report foreign contribution if these are more than 20% of their total expenditure, is target of opposition. Obvious purpose of this law is to regulate the activities of NGOs funded by western countries. It is surprising that while most of the western countries have such laws regulating activities of foreign funded organizations/agencies, rather even more stringent ones, they are sponsoring opposition to this law in Georgia. The ruling dispensation in Georgia is openly admitting that the legislation is aimed at preventing a 'colour revolution' in Georgia, alluding to regime changes affected in a number of East European countries by western imperialist countries. In western media this law is being referred to as "Russian Law", referring to a similar law made by Russia in 2012.

Ukraine war has intensified contradictions in Western countries. Ultra-Right wing parties are using the increasing economic hardships of the people- due partly to imposition to sanctions on Russian energy and commodities and also due to aid to Ukraine and increasing military expenditure- to garner support. These are no peace-loving forces but they wish to come to power on the growing disaffection among the people to further intensify exploitation of workers and targeting of immigrant workers in their countries. Their rise symbolizes that the status quo in European countries is facing challenges from different type of forces.

Zionist rulers of Israel are continuing their war against Palestinians. They are totally destroying Gaza and have killed over 36 thousand people, mostly women and children, there besides continuously killing Palestinians in West Bank. Mass graves are found in areas which have been under Israeli occupation. Israeli military is facing attacks in Gaza and missiles from Gaza are still being fired into Israel, showing failure of Zionist rulers in wiping out

Palestinian resistance. However, this genocide being carried out despite International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling and UN General Assembly resolution show the utter impunity of Zionist rulers and their western backers especially US imperialists. US House of Representatives has passed a resolution sanctioning ICJ for taking up case against Israel.

However continuing genocide in Gaza is being increasingly opposed by the people in western countries including in USA. Campuses have become arena of protest against this genocide. Biden Admn. is facing the heat of these protests in view of proximity of coming elections. It is forced to show some concern over Israeli atrocities against Palestinians but these are sham. Biden Admn. draws red lines for them to be openly flouted by Israeli rulers and Biden Admn. comes to its defense. Despite overwhelming world public opinion, Biden Admn. openly says that there is no genocide in Gaza. They try to portray that Israeli rulers are not listening to them but this is sham. Israel cannot continue its genocidal war without US support and is carrying the present war with US supplied arms and ammunitions. Pretensions of Biden Admn. are largely due to domestic compulsions.

This continuing genocidal war is leading to growing opposition in Europe as well. There not only people are increasingly coming out in open against the war, but even some European countries are opposing continuance of war. Spain, Norway and Ireland have recognized Palestinian state and Spain has also come forward to join the case filed by South Africa against Israel in the International Court of Justice. A number of other European countries are facing increasing domestic demand for recognizing Palestine as a state. Recently French National Assembly saw scenes of support to Palestinian people.

On the other hand, besides continuing Palestinian resistance, efforts by resistance groups especially Houthis of Yemen and also Hezbollah of Lebanon to support Palestinian resistance have intensified. Air strikes by US and UK in Yemen have not deterred Houthis, rather they have increased range of their attacks and have attacked large US ships. Northern Israel continues to empty out with civilians leaving the area due to continuous bombings by Hezbollah in opposition to Israeli attacks in South Lebanon and in support of Palestinian resistance. While Israel's Netanyahu Govt. wants to involve western imperialist powers, especially US, to extend conflict but it would like to avoid a war on northern border if it has to fight all by itself even with US arms support.

Though US supported Israeli war goes on, there is increasing support for Palestine state among countries. To this effect, there is renewed efforts to forge unity among all Palestinian organizations. Two rounds of talks between Fatah leading Palestinian authority and Hamas leading Palestinian resistance have already taken place, first in Beijing and second in Moscow and another round is to be held in near future in Beijing. This forging of Palestinian unity is key to realizing Palestinian statehood. As support for recognition of Palestine state grows and US gets increasingly isolated, China and Russia gain influence among people of Arab countries. Arab people are getting increasingly disillusioned with their own leaders on the issue of Israel's genocide in Gaza. China and Russia step in to fill the void created by US isolation in the region in the situation of ongoing war in Palestine.

Driven by growing democratic opposition in USA, difficulties being faced by Israel's military campaign in Gaza and growing US isolation in Middle East with China and Russia stepping in, Biden Admn. has put forward a three-phase plan presenting it as Israeli

proposal. The plan involves six-week ceasefire, exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners and extension of ceasefire during the duration of period of discussion on outstanding issues. This plan has been accepted by Hamas for consideration and Israeli leaders have also accepted it though called it faulty. With US plan lacking credibility and to stop separate initiatives by China and Russia, US has turned to Security Council for approval of the plan. In the Security Council, China and Russia are demanding that the plan should include a permanent ceasefire and all pronouncements by Biden should be put into the Plan.

However, it signifies that Zionist Israeli rulers and their US imperialist patrons are forced to recognize the increasing difficulties in their plan to continue genocide in Gaza and carve out Greater Israel. US being forced to present such a plan despite blocking all resolutions calling for ceasefire is evidence that Israeli aggression backed by US faces obstacles in its way.

Israel's war against Palestinians is an expression of contradiction between imperialism and oppressed nations and peoples. This contradiction is getting greater resonance with intensifying contradiction among imperialist powers. Western imperialism led by US is facing increasing opposition in different parts of the world. Intensification of contradictions of imperialist system in the backdrop of intensifying economic crisis and slowing down of the major economics is leading to 'big disorder' in the world.





# **Working Class and Environment : The Story of Doloo Resistance**

● **Sanjoy Phukan**

**E**nvironmental crisis is one of the major crises that the World and global capitalism are facing today. For a very long time the ruling class was downplaying the crisis, despite repeated warnings from the scientists and environmentalists and was making futile drama of teaching the global population through school books about how to be a good consumer, how garbage should be separated, how plastic bags are to be properly used, how water and electricity are not to be wasted, and how one should occasionally celebrate ‘plantation ceremony’ in the neighbourhood, etc., while all along blatantly defying, in the name of ‘development’, all the written rules, laws and global treaties applicable to big producers and Corporate. However, the fact of the matter is that industrial pollution, production of massive amount of electronic waste, and unprecedented scale of deforestation in the name of development by far outweighs the pollution or environmental damage caused by individual consumers. A study by the University of Manchester has shown in 2022 (Corporations vs. Consumers: Who is really to blame for climate change?) that since 1988, only 100 companies had been responsible for 71% of the total Greenhouse gas emission. It has also been seen that the usages of plastic bag or plastic straw contribute only 1% to global plastic pollution.

Global forest watch, an independent web source, maintained and run by World Resources Institute (WRI) in collaboration with University of Manchester and even Google, recently published its report which shows that between 2001 and 2023, India has lost 2.33 Mha (Million hectare) or 23.3 lakh hectares of tree cover in the country. Interestingly, 60% of this loss is concentrated in North-East India spanning 5 states of Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Manipur, with Assam being the highest among all! On January 5, 2024, Deccan Herald published a story, titled “Forest land five times Delhi’s geographical area under encroachment, govt. data shows” which provided some stunning numbers. It stated – “A total 7,506 square kilometres of recorded forest area — five times the geographical area of Delhi — is currently under encroachment in the country, according to government data (Given in Lok Sabha on December 8, 2023). Assam alone accounts for 3,407.48 square kilometres (12.69 per cent of its recorded forest area) of forest land under encroachment. This is 45 per cent of the total encroached forest land in India.....

The northeastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura together account for 56 per cent of the total forest land under encroachment.” Very impressively, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) took cognizance of this and registered a suo-motu case against Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Survey of India with a title “News Item titled “Forest land five times Delhi’s geographical area under encroachment govt. data shows” appearing in Deccan Herald dated 05.01.2024” and ordered the Survey of India on April 19, 2024 to submit a report on the total forest cover in the country with a special focus on the North-East India. Notice has also been issued to all the State Governments of the country. In

the petition itself, the NGT mentioned that this massive loss of tree cover is clearly against the ‘Forest Conservation Act, 1980’, the ‘Air (Prevention and Pollution control) Act, 1981’, and the ‘Environment Protection Act, 1986’. Here, it is important to note that on February 8, 2024, it has been reported in Rajya Sabha that between 2019 and 2021, all the major loss of forest cover has taken place in the four North-Eastern states of Arunachala Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland, all of the order of 200 – 250 sq. km areas, while the Government has regularly stated – “The loss in the forest cover of north-east region of the country may be attributed mainly to natural calamities, anthropogenic pressure and developmental activities.” In another answer in Rajya Sabha on December 7, 2023, the Government has admitted that other than for the purpose of making roads, the conversion of forest land to non-forestry purposes mostly happens due to mining. Therefore, it appears something is brewing in the North-East with Assam leading the plan under the ‘prolific’ leadership of the Chief Minister Mr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. And the suo-motu case of the NGT could become important in this context.

Add to this the March 21, 2024 ‘reportable’ judgement of the Supreme Court, which declared – “Despite governmental policy and rules and regulations recognizing the adverse effects of climate change and seeking to combat it, there is no single or umbrella legislation in India which relates to climate change and the attendant concerns.”

“However, this does not mean that the people of India do not have a right against the adverse effects of climate change.”

Somehow, encroachment of forest land and tree cover, and the adverse effects of climate change on human lives have started to become important. And the leftists surely cannot miss the signal.

Saving the environment and ecology could be one of the most powerful weapons to fight global capitalism and its crony friends, the political messiahs of the country today. Because what none of these reports and judgements mentioned is that every eviction and encroachment process of the ruling class not only damages Nature but also comes down heavily on all the population residing there and on their livelihoods.

Let's go back to February 13, 2019. A three judges' bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Arun Mishra delivered a serious order on that day while listening to a case running since 2008, which had been brought forward by NGOs such as Wildlife First, Wildlife Trust of India, Nature Conservation Society, Tiger Research and Conservation Trust, challenging the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, and especially the 'encroachment' of forest areas illegally by people. The Court ordered eviction of all such families, which included more than 2 million tribal families and other traditional (nontribal) forest dwelling families, whose claims on the land within the FRA, 2006 had been rejected by the Governments and Ministries, from the 'encroachments' on forest lands. This meant eviction of nearly 1 crore indigenous population from their land. As there were a lot of hullabalos by several citizen's organizations and even international bodies went gaga over it, and it also became evident that the 'so-called' rejections are mostly illegal and are intentional doings of different depts. of the Governmental administrations, the Court finally retracted and stayed the decision on February 28, 2019. Interestingly, the Court noted – "It was submitted that at the present juncture there is likelihood of traditional Tribals being affected, whose claims have been rejected. At the same time the question which is also of significance and which cannot be ignored and overlooked is that in the guise of and Other

Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs), the land is not occupied by mighty people, industrialists and other persons who are not belonging to the aforesaid category.”

The case is still running and pending. However, there are few ‘developmentalists’, such as the Government of Assam, headed by the Chief Minister Himanta Viswa Sarma, who had been pushing the eviction plans relentlessly. Media reports show (Time of India, January 15, 2023) that the Government has evicted 500 families from the Pabha forest area. The CM tweeted later on – “Our commitment to preserve our natural resources is sacrosanct. Happy to share that after 5 days of eviction exercise 4,163 ha (32,000 bigha) of Pabha Reserve Forest freed from encroachers.” Deccan Herald reported on February 14, 2023 that “The Assam government on Tuesday began clearing nearly 1,900 hectares of forest and government land in Sonitpur district, affecting 12,000-odd people who were allegedly staying there illegally for decades, a senior official said.” Again, the Indian Express reported on November 7, 2023 that – “A total of 246 families were evicted from the Nalbari Reserve Forest in Assam’s Goalpara district as the anti-encroachment drive concluded on Tuesday, an official said.” And it just happened to be that all the evicted people are Bengali speaking Muslims. Again it has been reported on May 29, 2024 that “Around 400 Muslim families were evicted from their homes in the Sipajhar region of India’s Assam State on 20 May.....evictions were carried out on the orders of the current Chief Minister of Assam Himanta Biswa, a leader of India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who came to power in the state in 2021 and whose election promise was to free the land of ‘illegal encroachers’ which is a reference to Muslims of Bengali-origin in Assam.”

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Is there a pattern in this? The huge systematic reduction in

the forest area in the North East Indian region over the last couple of decades, the clear intention of the Government to deny the claims of the tribals on their land within FRA, 2006, and rather the massive eviction plan of tribals and nontribal forest dwellers from their land in the name of freeing the land from ‘encroachment’, and finally the introduction of the ‘New Forest Conservation Rules, 2022’ in July, 2022, all do seem to be a part of a grand design.

We all are aware of Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation. What might be pertinent here is David Harvey’s modification of Marx’s notion of “primitive accumulation”, which Marx saw as a key feature of how Capitalism works. This refers to a historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production through privatization of the commons. However, Harvey in his famous book ‘The New Imperialism’ (2003) stated:

“...primitive accumulation as Marx described it ... entailed taking land, say, enclosing it, and expelling a resident population to create a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatized mainstream of capital accumulation.”

Since accumulation is an ongoing process, Harvey proposed the term “accumulation by dispossession” (AbD) to describe the current processes. It is hard to miss the similarity between the AbD theory and what we tend to observe at many places in this country during last decades. In the present case, the massive capturing of land and resources through large scale eviction of people and destruction of ecology essentially represents the same phenomena.

One indication of such a design has always been the initial installation of high-class transportation system. There had always been fantastic highways in remote mining areas in the country even if essential medicines might not be available there. In this light,

consider the following fact. Till 2014, there had only been 9 airports in whole of North East India, while in last 10 years 7 more have been built increasing the aircraft movement by 113% in the region (Times of India, November 18, 2022). A name has been given to this massive expansion plan by the Modi Government which is called UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik). And the story in most of the cases had been similar. Consider the Pakyong Airport of Sikkim, spread over 990 acres of land. It has been built by grabbing land from local families under severe protests. While the compensation has stopped the protest, the airport always faced various technical problems of visibility, absence of adequate air strip, high altitude, etc. After a long closure, it has resumed flights on April, 2024. Similarly, Hollongi airport has been built in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh on a land of 791 acres by displacing quite a number of Chakma families. And the list goes on.

Therefore, in this context, the resistance against another airport in the Doloo tea estate land at Silchar, Assam becomes extremely important. Even though an airport was existing (still exists) in Kumbhirgram, near Silchar, also known as the Silchar airport, the Chief Minister of Assam Mr. Himanta Viswa Sarma, planned for another Greenfield airport under the UDAN scheme, only 30 kms away from it. The whole plan started in 2020 and developed in the midst of the pandemic. A team of officials from the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and the Government of Assam visited Silchar and did a prefeasibility survey on the lands of 3 tea estates. Somehow, the team suggested that Doloo tea estate would be the most useful one and the Government planned to acquire 827 acres of land of the Doloo tea estate. Doloo tea estate is an estate which has been running for more than 150 years and had been offering life and livelihood to quite a few thousand workers and their

families. The plan became public at the beginning of 2022 and the unrest and resistance of workers started immediately. The Government first forced the owner of the estate by offering some money and next surprisingly, the 3 major trade unions, affiliated with BMS, INTUC and CITU came out in support of the airport and signed an agreement with the owner. Although some clauses were included in the agreement stating that the evicted workers will be given work in other parts of the estate, all their dues will be cleared, and other facilities will be extended to them, all of these were hard to believe and the workers continued to agitate and oppose under the banner of Assam Majuri Shramik Union (AMSU, affiliated to NTUI). Other citizens' organizations, such as Forum for Social Harmony, also came forward in support. But, the developmentalist Government wasn't ready to listen and the District Magistrate of Cachar announced restrictions in the area under 144CrPC on May 11, 2022, and the very next day hundreds of bulldozers were brought in led by quite a few high level officers and hundreds of armed police force. And a massive eviction drive ran throughout May 12 and also for the next 2 days in the marked area and from a later declaration of one Minister in Assam assembly, Mr. Jogen Mohan Deb, we came to know that in total 41,95,909 tea bushes have been uprooted during the procedure. Expectedly, and also by the testimony of the workers, thousands of shade trees were also uprooted/cut. And throughout this whole drive, workers were held forcefully in their quarters by the police, almost like as Harvey stated – “taking land, say, enclosing it, and expelling a resident population to create a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatized mainstream of capital accumulation.” The workers continued protesting, there were police atrocities against them and against the Union leaders and the Government was



unstoppable. A case was filed in the Guwahati High Court in June, 2022, while the Deputy General Manager of the tea estate issued a lock out notice almost thereafter. The Government announced Rs. 1 lakh compensation for some workers in November, 2022 and at the same time the AAI submitted the airport proposal for the site-clearance approval to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). And nearly 7 months after that, AAI invited tender applications from agencies for carrying out the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) in June, 2023 for the first time!

The AMSU leaders planned for an appeal to the Eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal which had its office in Kolkata. Comrades from Kolkata came forward to help. 14 organizations assembled in front of the Assam Bhavan in September, 2023, protested and submitted a deputation. Workers and leaders from Doloo also came and participated. A thorough research was carried out with several scientific proofs about the environmental impact of tea bushes. Several documents were also gathered from question-answers in Parliament and also through RTIs, and then a case was filed in NGT by Advocate Samim Ahammed with the three organizations from Kolkata, Shanti, Ganatantra, Sanhati Mancha, Forum for Social Harmony (Kolkata chapter), and Samaj, Bigyan and Prakriti Porichoy magazine as petitioners. Not so surprisingly, the NGT immediately trashed the appeal - nothing can stop development!!! And then in 2024, MoCA granted the first stage clearance to the project.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, his junior Riya Jadav, and Advocate Shankar Narayanan took up the case and challenged the NGT verdict in the Supreme Court. CJI Chandrachud expressed surprise and ordered status quo on the airport work till further order. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, instead of defending the case

with facts and logic, came down heavily on the petitioners and almost stated that the 3 petitioners have some destructive motives and criminal cases must be started against them. However, the DLSA of Cachar visited the site by the order of the Supreme Court and submitted a report which factually supported every claim of the petitioners. Finally, the Government of Assam and the Government of India retracted, and the Supreme Court ordered an EIA based on the situation prior to the eviction and a clear stay till the EIA is cleared by the court. The reportable order also stated – “The decision on whether an airport is situated at a particular place is a matter of policy. However, when the law prescribes specific norms for carrying out activities requiring an Environmental Clearance, those provisions have to be strictly complied with.”

This landmark judgement is expected to have huge impact on any such plans and projects taken up by any Government or private bodies, which may not only protect the rights of the people, the workers, but also safeguard the environment. Left activists do find the impact of this incident, which is almost unprecedented in this country in last few decades, and can use it against every plans of corporate land grab and capture of resources.



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