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RED STAR

PLATFORM FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARIES

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AIRWO in the forefront in the
struggle against
BJD government's protection of
rapists in Odisha



FRANTIC COMMUNALIZATION TO SERVE VOTE BANK POLITICS

THE MANNER in which the Rajasthan police invented a plot to assassinate Salman Rushdie to scare away the author from the Jaipur Literary Festival to appease the Islamic fundamentalists under orders from the state government and the way in which the central government looked the other way in order to serve the vote bank politics in UP elections show the extent to which communalization has reached in this country. Now even those writers, who protested by reading sentences from Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* banned in 1989 in this country to appease religious fundamentalists, are threatened with legal actions and protest threats from the fundamentalists.

These are days when the religious fundamentalists are creating fertile ground for the military chiefs and other authoritarian forces in South Asia to wantonly indulge in state affairs, threatening military take over as in Pakistan or Bangladesh. What was once an usual thing in Latin American countries are threatening to challenge even the existing democratic façade in South Asia, however weak it may be. At this juncture by allowing the religious fundamentalists of all hues to dictate terms, and the state machinery dancing to their tunes for vote banks portend grave dangers.

It is a pity that by talking in the name of all Muslims or other minorities, the fundamentalists among them are creating conditions for the Hindutva forces to get further strengthened all over the country day by day threatening more communalization and more Gujarat like pogroms. History has proved repeatedly that all religious fundamentalists help each others' growth, and the minority fundamentalists provide favorable condition for the majority fundamentalists to communalize the society as they want, as revealed by numerous instances in this country. Still, even the erstwhile Left Front government in Bengal

did not protect the rights of an author like Taslima and weakened the left offensive that is required against all fundamentalist forces. In this situation, what is happening in the Salman Rushdie's case is most objectionable.

The CPI (ML) unequivocally condemns banning of Rushdie's participation in the JLF. It appeals to all left, secular and democratic forces to oppose the wanton communalization indulged in by all brands of religious fundamentalist forces and the way the ruling class parties are pursuing the vote bank politics appeasing and abetting the fundamentalists. The manner in which the ruling class parties are utilizing the services of the religious fundamentalist and casteist forces to divert people's attention from the vital issues confronting them by indulging in vote bank politics should be exposed and opposed. ●

22nd January, 2012

CPI(ML)

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No to Anarchism,
March to Revolution***

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adopted by the All India Special
Conference of November 2009
and Ninth Party Congress in
November 2011**

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Appeal to all comrades and friends of Red Star

Red Star has completed 25 years. Today it has to take up much more important tasks as the central organ of the CPI(ML). We Appeal to all to all to regularly clear their dues, to find new subscribers, to help in its publication in all respects and in taking it to all parts of the country and outside. The subscription rate for Red Star (English/Hindi) is

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TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF RED STAR

RED STAR as the central organ of the CPI(ML) is completing 25 years this year. From the time the *All India Coordination Committee of the Communist Revolutionaries* (AICCCR) was formed in 1968 *Liberation* was published as the central organ. After the formation of the CPI (ML) on 22nd April, 1969 it continued as its central organ. But following the severe setbacks suffered by the Party by 1972 leading to its disintegration due to the sectarian line it had pursued, as an instrument of the reorganization of the Party, *Mass Line* was published from October 1973. But when the Central Reorganization Committee, CPI(ML) which had initiated the Party reorganization like other sections of the Communist Revolutionaries was reorganized as the CPI(ML) Red Flag in March 1987, reflecting the call for building a Platform of the CRs as a step towards Party reorganization, the publication of *Red Star Platform of the Communist Revolutionaries* was started. In the strenuous tasks taken up during the last quarter century leading to the successful convening of the Ninth Party Congress in November, 2011, which has put forward the basic documents for advancing the People's Democratic Revolution, and which marks an important stage in the process of Party reorganization, Red Star as the central organ of the organization has played an important role.

During this period, in spite of many difficulties Red Star was continuously published regularly, developing its ideological political orientation reflecting the ideological political organizational progress of the Party reorganization. Today these tasks have become much more important when based on the comprehensive understanding of the class struggle to be developed in all fields the Party has taken up many international and countrywide tasks. *Red Star* has to be developed and strengthened in all respects. On this occasion we extend our gratitude to all comrades and friends who supported *Red Star* during its difficult journey. We appeal to all of them and to our new subscribers to continue to provide all help to strengthen *Red Star* further so that it can fulfill the role of the revolutionary party organ. ●

COMMUNIST APPROACH TO ELECTIONS

AS the election process to the state assemblies of UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur is started the ruling class parties are flaunting caste, communal vote banks

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and naked use of money and muzzle power to win them. The *aya rams*, *gaya rams* are having a good market once again. At the same time burning problems faced by the people like sky rocketing prices of essential commodities, rampant corruption, unemployment, displacement of millions from their habitats to facilitate MNC-Corporate projects, criminalization-communalization of the society as a whole etc are pushed below the carpet by all the so-called mainstream parties. From the media which was giving front page coverage to Anna Hazare's movement against corruption and Lokpal Bill, all these topics have disappeared.

In this situation the question of how to utilize the elections under the bourgeois parliamentary system of government which is becoming increasingly corrupt and anti-people, as a tactical line to develop class struggle and to prepare the masses for revolutionary seizure of political power, is a serious challenge before the left forces. In a country like India, where elections were introduced from 1935 by the colonial rulers and have become a part and parcel of the political system thereafter, the experience of the CPI(ML) movement in its beginning years when it came under sectarian line and as a part of it boycotted elections is a negative lesson. Still, refusing to learn from this the anarchist trends even today talk about 'boycott' of elections. For all other forces, how to utilize the elections for developing the revolutionary movement along with all other forms of struggle is a question of great importance. It is especially so in the context of degeneration of many of the former left forces to revisionist/ reformist positions.

As a result of deviating from the path of people's democratic revolution under the influence of Soviet revisionist line which dominated the international communist movement from the time of the 20th Congress of the CPSU, when first CPI, and then CPI (M) and the Left Front led by them abandoned the path of anti-state struggles for seizure of political power and degenerated to social democratic positions, corresponding to it their parliamentary practice also degenerated to opportunist lines. Wherever they came to power, as in Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, instead of using the opportunity to mobilize the masses for revolutionary change, they started implementing the ruling class policies like the present neo-liberal policies.

As a result, in these states the difference between them and the ruling class parties or coalitions in started disappearing. So, in Bengal even after 34 years of their continuous rule a TMC, in Kerala a Congress-led UDF or in Tripura Congress can replace them without much difficulty, similar to the musical chair competitions taking place in other states among various ruling class, regional, caste-communal based parties.

Among the Communist Revolutionary forces who mechanically tried to follow the 'Chinese path' and

embraced adventurist practice, it was the CPI(ML) Liberation which was in the forefront in successfully taking the mass line and adopting the line of utilizing all forms of struggle. As a result, within a short time it could expand its mass base and make its presence felt in Bihar and Assam elections where it won few million votes and a few seats in state assemblies and a member in the Lok Sabha twice. It could win the ruling position in the Karbi-Anglong autonomous council also.

But very soon, as a result of its failure to make a concrete analysis of the changes taking place in the country, it failed to develop class struggle according to the new situation. In continuation to this, in its 2007 Party Congress it took the line that a peaceful transition is possible in the existing social system. This deviation got reflected in its approach to elections also. Now it has become an ally of CPI, CPI (M) and other LF constituents in the elections to Uttarakhand assembly as it has done earlier in Bihar and Jharkhand elections. It has lost the ruling position in Karbi-Anglong and all the seats in Bihar and Assam. The votes polled by it also got reduced considerably.

It is in this context the approach paper *On Utilizing Parliamentary Forms of Struggle to Advance Class Struggle* put forward by the CPI(ML) [published in August 2010 issue of *Red Star*] should be seen. As elections are important political struggles, any opportunist alliance to win few seats or to get few more votes will cause serious deviations and degenerate the Party from the revolutionary path. After six decades of bitter experience if the revolutionary forces do not learn this lesson, they are bound to degenerate to ruling class politics as happened to CPI-CPI (M) like parties.

So, CPI(ML) is contesting the elections in few seats in UP and Punjab by putting forward an *Election Manifesto* explaining the need to build a revolutionary alternative to the ruling system and the main points based on which the people's struggle has to be developed to achieve it. It calls for uncompromising struggle against all parties and alliances which stand for neo-liberal policies. At the same time, it will support all those independents and constituents of the Democratic People's Forum who basically accept the main points in the Party's Election Manifesto. The Party is campaigning for including a column in the ballot paper for rejecting all candidates if none is acceptable to the voter.

At a time when the whole election process is made corrupt and all ruling class parties including the reformist forces are further de-valuing the existing bourgeois parliamentary system, the revolutionary forces should utilize the elections as an important political struggle like all other forms of struggle for putting forward the left evaluation of the present situation including the perspective for mobilizing the masses in the struggle for people's democracy. ●

COMMUNALIZATION OF SOCIETY IN VARIOUS WAYS

THE president's approval in December last of the Bill for Protection of the Cow Progeny passed by the MP assembly is yet another move for the silent communalization of the society. Under it any one doing anything harmful for the cow progeny including eating beef can be fined Rs. 5000 or imprisoned up to seven years. Already a number of states have enacted such draconian laws or put restrictions on slaughter of cows and on consumption of beef. Only Nagaland, Meghalaya, Bengal and Kerala are exceptions. Another such imposition is the MP government's order calling for compulsory Surya Namaskar in all schools by all students. These types of slow communalization is taking place in all fields, including the communalization of the elections, turning the country fast in to a theocratic one. Not only the Sangh Parivar and BJP, including Congress, all the ruling parties at center and in the states are indulging in or appeasing this communalization process. That is why when the communal riots were organized in Gujarat in massive scale by spreading false news about the Godhra incident, for days the central administration, the Congress leadership and a major section of the media did not bother to come out against it in a significant manner.

Two decades after the demolition of the Babri Masjid and a decade after the Gujarat pogrom, the communalization of Indian society has taken worse forms through numerous inroads made by the religious fundamentalist forces in to every sector of public life. The communal appeasement

policies pursued by the Congress governments at center and in the states from the time of the transfer of power in continuation to the 'divide and rule' policies of the British colonialists has reached dangerous levels of communalization of the socio-cultural spheres with communal hatred spreading with alarming speed .

It is in this situation the two incidents: one, Narendra Modi organizing the Sadbhavana mission at Godhra few days before the tenth anniversary of the incident there using which the communal pogrom was organized by the Sangh Parivar, and two, the Jaipur Literary Festival from which Salman Rushdie was banned in the name of protests from the Islamic Fundamentalists and action is contemplated against those writers who read portions of "Satanic Verses", a book by Rushdie, which was banned by the Indian government in 1989, all actions to appease the fundamentalists, should be seen. The ruling system is utilizing both majority and minority fundamentalisms to divide the people so that in the UP elections voting will be done on communal lines. The silent communalization has reached extremely dangerous levels endangering the secular values and social harmony among the people. Even when the criminal impact of majority fundamentalism is clearly manifested, those spreading fundamentalism among the minorities refuse to take any lessons. In this situation it is the task of the left and democratic forces to fight uncompromisingly against both majority and minority fundamentalist forces upholding secular values. ●

INDIA SHOULD BOYCOTT LONDON OLYMPICS

AGainst the sponsorship of Dow Chemicals to London Olympics already Noam Chomsky, a number of British MPs and former Olympians had protested to the London Olympics Organizing Committee. All of them have demanded that this company which is refusing due compensation for the victims and for disposal of the toxic waste of Union Carbide responsible for the Bhopal Massacre of 1984, which it has later purchased, should be thrown out from among the sponsors. The resignation of the environmentalist, Meredith Alexander, from the London Olympics Committee raising the same demand has strengthened the voice of those who protest against an Olympics with sponsorship of a MNC like Dow Chemicals.

The organizations of the affected people of Bhopal and Youth and student organizations like RYFI and AIRSO have already demonstrated against the sponsorship of Dow Chemicals to London Olympics and that if this murderous company is not removed from among the sponsors India

should boycott London Olympics. The CPI(ML) has demanded that India should boycott the London Olympics if Dow Chemicals continues as its sponsor .

But, in spite of all these, neither the government of India, the Indian Olympics Committee, nor the Indian MPs or other political parties and the various sports committees in India have not raised their voice in protest against this. Their silence on this issue is deafening. It is shameful that neither the Indian Olympics Committee nor the government of India nor other so-called public figures nor the media in a significant manner have come forward to demand the removal of Dow Chemicals from among the sponsors of London Olympics. So, we appeal to all progressive democratic forces in the country to raise their voice to kick out Dow Chemicals from among the sponsors of the London Olympics, or if it is not done to compel the Olympic authorities and government of India to boycott London Olympics. ●

20TH PARTY CONGRESS OF THE CPI(M)

KN RAMACHANDRAN

THE 20th Party Congress of the CPI(M) is held in the first week of April in Kerala at a time when the whole ideological-political line pursued by it under the banner of Marxism-Leninism stands exposed through its ideological line and practice at all levels. Compared to its last Congress, this time the Congress is held when it has suffered severe electoral defeats in Bengal after 34 years of continuous rule, and in Kerala. Compared to 2008, its strength in Lok Sabha is reduced to less than half. At a time when the imperialist system as a whole is confronting unprecedented crisis, creating favorable objective conditions for the advance of proletarian forces as manifested in the mighty uprisings of the people in many regions of the world, and in the mass upsurges in many parts of the country against the neo-liberal policies of the UPA government, it will be difficult for the CPI(M) leadership to justify its propping up of the Congress-led UPA government for five years till 2009 and the neo-liberal policies the state governments under its leadership had shamelessly followed in all the states it was in power. So the leadership has cleverly delayed the finalization of its so-called theoretical document and political resolution till the last moment, with the conferences up to the state level reduced to colorful exercises to elect the leaderships for the next three years, with a show of strength wherever possible. Though it may not be difficult for the leadership to justify the setbacks suffered before its ranks who are reduced to obediently swallowing their social democratic line, it may not be so easy to convince the left masses, especially the new generation who bothers at least to glance through Marxist-Leninist teachings.

34 YEARS OF POWER IN BENGAL

THE 34 years of Left Front rule in West Bengal was a total negation of the Leninist teachings on utilizing parliamentary struggles by a communist party for the revolutionary seizure of political power in the country. Though it started with the claims about implementing the land reforms, its 'Operation Barga' stopped at issuing registration to the share croppers by early 1980s itself. Land reforms based on 'land to the tiller' slogan was silently buried. It had nothing beyond 'green revolution' dictated by the imperialist agencies to offer to the peasantry. Soon the agrarian sector faced stagnation creating large scale unemployment in the rural areas along with the acute unemployment in the urban areas. The industrial initiatives taken in the name of facing this challenge, like SEZs and Corporate projects, soon led to large scale displacements and Singur-Nandigram-Lalgarh

like acute social tensions and alienation of a large section of the left masses. Even the minimum wages could not be implemented as the bureaucracy and the party apparatus down to the level of local leadership of the LF constituents, mainly of CPI(M), had become rampantly corrupt, compromising with the rural 'gentry' and the MNCs and Corporate houses. In this situation hundreds of thousands of youth were/are forced to migrate from the state. After getting 34 years of uninterrupted rule, the LF could neither utilize the opportunity to develop people oriented welfare projects nor at least to make a beginning for an alternative to the ruling class perspectives about 'development' based on neo-liberal policies. Those who were frustrated about the failure of erstwhile socialist countries including Soviet Union and China to develop an alternative to capitalist path of development leading to the severe setbacks suffered by the international communist movement, were further disappointed from what was done by the LF rule in Bengal and in Kerala. Instead of utilizing the power achieved within the comprador ruling system to expose its limitations and to mobilize the masses for revolution inspiring not only the people of these states, but also of other states, the degeneration of CPI(M) and its allies to social democratic positions, implementing the ruling class policies shamelessly, (*there is no alternative to imperialist globalization*), caused frustration among the masses and among the progressive sections among the middle classes and intelligentsia to a great extent, increasingly alienating them from the left politics.

Meanwhile, instead of learning from the degeneration of erstwhile socialist countries to bureaucratic state capitalist dictatorships, emulating them, CPI(M) soon transformed itself in to a bureaucratic organization at all levels. The democratic centralism within it was reduced to merely centralism. It talks about proletarian dictatorship without trying to understand that for Marx the hitherto supreme democratic model was what was practiced by the *communards* of Paris Commune, for Lenin democracy meant 'all power to the Soviets', that is all power to the people. For them, proletarian dictatorship meant transcending even the best models of bourgeois democracy and creating supreme examples of proletarian democracy. Instead, the CPI(M) is emulating not only the capitalist path of development based on neo-liberal policies pursued by China, which it still uphold as a socialist country even after its degeneration to '*socialism in words, but capitalism in action*', that is to a social imperialist power contending and colluding with US imperialism for world hegemony, but also

to its concept of state structure which is nothing but that of a *bureaucratic state dictatorship*. So, instead of trying to transcend the constraints of bourgeois democratic set up, it has become an intolerant bureaucratic institution wherever it has considerable hold. That is what was witnessed in Bengal, Kerala like states where it has considerable influence in general, and in areas like Singur, Nandigram and Lalgah in particular. Though the musical chair of handling power alternately by the LDF and UDF in Kerala did not provide it the facility obtained in Bengal, still the party structure there also is not different. The ultimate democracy enjoyed by the cadres there is the right to play the VS-Pinarayi 'Kabadi' game, as witnessed in the present conferences from below as part of the 20th Congress. In this manner, not only in its ideological-political positions, but also its organizational structure it has degenerated as a replica of the ruling class parties.

PROCESS OF DEGENERATION FROM THE TIME OF SEVENTH CONGRESS

AT A TIME when the usurpation of power by the capitalist roaders in Soviet Union and their transformation of this great socialist country to a social imperialist super power contending with the US imperialists for world hegemony was taking place, degenerating all the communist parties mechanically following whatever was coming from Soviet Union as the socialist gospel, in the context of the *Great Debate* launched by the Communist Party of China against this, the split in the CPI, formation of the CPI(M) and convening of its Seventh Congress in 1964 were momentous developments which enthused the proletarian revolutionary forces within the country and at international level. But the Program adopted in the Congress and Report presented to it showed that the cardinal issues posed in the Great Debate were not taken up and those who had taken a centrist line during the inner party struggle in the CPI had come to the leadership of the new party. It did not categorically reject the Soviet revisionist line. In essence, it took a centrist approach which meant following the Soviet line in practice. With regard to the class analysis in the country, it had rejected the CPI formulation that the bourgeoisie in the country is mainly national in character. It characterized the big bourgeoisie as having dual character, collaborating with and contending with imperialism. But it did not identify which of these is the principal aspect in the present situation. From this centrist position, within a short time it degenerated to the neo-revisionist line of compromising with the Indian state led by the big bourgeois-big landlord classes serving imperialism.

As a result, following the split in the Congress, the main political party of the ruling classes, when the Indira Gandhi government lost majority in the parliament in 1969, along with CPI, the CPI(M) propped up the reactionary

government. When the inner party struggle within it intensified against its neo-revisionist line and the Communist Revolutionaries within it led the Naxalbari Uprising with *land to the tiller* slogan in Bengal in 1967, when it was leading the coalition government there, it utilized the central forces along with state police to suppress it. As the 1970s witnessed intensification of the mass upsurge against the Congress government leading to the declaration of internal emergency by it, if CPI openly allied with the Congress, the CPI(M) took a no-struggle line against it, which angered and was condemned even by its general secretary Sundarayya, who resigned the post in protest. In the 1980s when the Rajiv Gandhi government was moving nearer to the US imperialist led forces and had started introducing the neo-liberal policies, it remained almost impotent. And, in the 1989 elections, the electoral understanding the CPI(M)-led Left Front arrived at with VP Singh led Janata Dal and BJP, in the name of utilizing the contradictions among the ruling class parties, in effect provided opportunity for the BJP to rise to the number two position among the ruling class parties. The role of the LF during the two years of VP Singh rule only further weakened the left forces in the country.

When the Sangh Parivar launched the Ayodhya temple offensive, intensifying the communalization, when the 1991 Narasimha Rao government imposed imperialist globalization policies and when the Babri Masjid was demolished by the Sangh Parivar with the silent support of the Congress government in 1992, the LF continuously failed to mobilize the masses for a countrywide agitation against these. The opportunist role of the LF constituents, outside and inside the United Front rule during 1996-98 supported by Congress paved the way for the BJP- led forces to come to power for next six years. As a reaction to the NDA's misrule, though the LF gained in the 2004 elections substantially, instead of playing the role of an independent left force, the LF propped up the Congress led UPA government for five years during which the neo-liberal raj was intensified in all respects and many unequal treaties were signed with the US imperialism, reducing the country to its junior partner. As a result, in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections the strength of the LF became less than half.

It can be seen that during the last four decades instead of pursuing the line of class struggle, the CPI(M) and the LF were following the line of class collaboration, reducing itself to 'socialism in words but ruling class policies in practice' which reduced it to a social democratic party.

IDEOLOGICAL DEGENERATION

IN THE Seventh Congress, condemning the CPI as a revisionist force, the CPI(M) had pledged to continue the Marxist-Leninist path in theory and practice. But the centrist positions it had taken on important theoretical positions

soon started getting manifested in all fields. Though it claimed to criticize the rightist formulations of the Soviet leadership, as manifested in the 1968 Burdwan Plenum documents, neither it rejected the Soviet line of 'three peacefuls' and other revisionist positions, nor it initiated any efforts to make an evaluation of the experience of the Soviet Union. It did not criticize the dissolution of Comintern in 1943 and the failure to re-organize it according to the needs of the post World War situation, nor it could initiate a critical evaluation of the Soviet practice which led to the emergence of bureaucratic sections to power including its inability to recognize the transformation in the imperialist policies taking place during the post-Second World War years under US leadership. Similarly, though it criticized the emergence of the left adventurist sections to domination in the CPC, it could not make a critique of their erroneous evaluation of the world situation and the 'new era' concept, which presented imperialism as facing total collapse and proletarian revolution advancing to worldwide victory. The CPI(M) leadership was contended with making certain fragmentary criticisms against both Soviet and Chinese lines and claiming that its theoretical positions are correct. Neither it was contributing anything to strengthen proletarian internationalism, nor developing the ideological political line and revolutionary practice to guide Indian revolution forward.

The bankruptcy of its line became evident when the capitalist roaders in China openly usurped power in 1976 through a military coup immediately after Mao's death and launched vigorous capitalist changes under the banner of 'Four Modernizations' soon after. The CPI(M) which had violently criticized the Cultural Revolution and the struggle against the capitalist roaders in China under Mao's leadership, openly embraced the Dengist leadership which was intensifying capitalist policies. Till today, when the imperialist policies pursued internationally and the capitalist exploitation pursued within China are abundantly clear, it is upholding China as a socialist country. When the class collaborationist character of the '*Theory of Three Worlds*' pursued by the Dengists got exposed through its counter revolutionary pursuit, the CPI(M) leadership tried to save the Dengists by putting the blame on Mao for it. It did not bother to ask why then this pernicious theory was not rejected, instead pursued by Dengista for many more years.

When Gorbachov introduced the *Glassnost-Perestroika* program soon after he took over as the supreme leader of Soviet Union in early 1980s, a concept which is now exposed as an imperialist product introduced by this collaborator of US imperialism to speed up the disintegration of SU, the CPI(M) leadership was in the forefront to eulogize it as a great contribution to the development of socialist practice. EMS like leaders wrote many articles to defend and propagate it. When the CPI(ML) forces attacked it as an imperialist product which will disintegrate Soviet Union,

and came forward with theoretical studies to expose it, they were ridiculed by CPI(M) leadership. When the CPI(ML) forces explained the transformation of erstwhile socialist countries including SU and China to capitalist path, the CPI(M) leaders attacked it by arguing that socialist countries going back to capitalist path is as impossible as '*human species reverting to monkeys*'. So, when Yeltsin took over in SU, started open capitalist transformation and later Soviet Union disintegrated, the CPI(M) leaders had no excuses to explain them. It took almost a decade for them to come out with an explanation which did not convince anyone. In spite of it, they still uphold China, North Korea, Vietnam like countries as socialist just because the ruling parties there call themselves communist or workers' parties.

In 1970s when the *stagflation* became serious, when the period of so-called crisis free capitalism was over, and when the neo-liberal policies were introduced as a panacea to overcome it, except for repeating that imperialist system was in unprecedented crisis, the CPI(M) like forces had no alternatives to offer when the same policies were imposed in India openly in 1991. Though there were talks about presenting an alternate budget against Manmohan's budgets initially, the LF did not move a no-confidence motion against the minority Congress government, and along with BJP, indirectly helped the Narasimha Rao government to complete its full term. And when the UF government took over in 1996 with the LF playing a leading role, under the banner '*there is no alternative*' (*TINA*) to imperialist globalization, it was obediently followed. In the states where LF was in power also the same policies were followed, competing with other state governments. In 2004 when the *World Social Forum*, the international carnival of the NGOs, took place at Mumbai and earlier when the *Asian Social Forum* took place at Hyderabad, CPI(M), forgetting what its leaders had written and spoken against NGOs in the past, was in the forefront with all other reactionary and reformist forces to celebrate them with the slogan '*there are many alternatives*' to imperialism. The Marxist-Leninist stand that socialism is the only alternative to imperialism was sought to be buried conveniently by them.

INTENSIFY IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CPI(M)

TWO DECADES after the disintegration of the Soviet Union when the imperialist camp as a whole and its lackeys everywhere were celebrating the demise of socialism, today it is imperialism which is facing the worst ever crisis in its more than four centuries of history and socialism is talked about by more sections than ever as the only possible alternative to imperialism. At this crucial juncture, the struggle for a socialist world can be carried forward only if forces like CPI(M) who were/are making pernicious moves to undermine the cardinal principles of the struggle for

socialism and are continuing as the apologists of neo-colonialism are ideologically exposed as such and only by winning over the proletariat and left masses from their heinous influence. If the existing ruling system in the country, the Indian state led by the comprador bureaucratic bourgeois-big landlord classes serving imperialism has to be overthrown to complete the tasks of the People's Democratic Revolution and advance towards socialist transformation of the society, the reorganization of the Indian communist movement with nine decades long history in to a powerful party with all India influence and capable of carrying forward these tasks is the primary task before the Marxist-Leninist forces. To achieve this goal, an uncompromising struggle has to be waged against the right opportunist line of the CPI(M) led forces and the anarchist line of the CPI(Maoist), to win over all genuine communist forces to the Party and to the revolutionary struggles.

When the CPI(M) is in the middle of organizing its 20th Congress as a once in three year ritual to satisfy its cadres without putting forward an ideological political line based on an evaluation of the experience of the ICM and which is capable of overcoming past mistakes and advancing the revolutionary struggles forward according to the demands of present times, when it is exposed as an out and out social democratic party, it is the task of the revolutionary forces to unleash an in-depth theoretical offensive against it to expose its opportunist line and practice. The CPI(ML) has taken up this task based on the ideological-political line it has put forward according to the concrete conditions of this neo-colonial phase of imperialism through the basic documents. It is the task of the Party committees at all levels to wage this struggle with all their might. It is also the revolutionary task of all Marxist-Leninist forces in general. ●

NDMLP – Sri Lanka Condemns LLRC Report

COMRADE SK Senthivel, General Secretary of the New-Democratic Marxist-Leninist Party of Sri Lanka in his statement issued on 23rd December 2011 on behalf of the Politburo of the Party on the Report of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee (LLRC), observed that the Report has been produced, sidelining, ignoring and hushing up important issues like finding a political solution to the national question and investigation of war crimes and human rights violations. This report has no meaningful proposals to offer for providing the necessary relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation for the Tamil people who have been experiencing destruction and misery and whose lives suffer the consequences of war. The LLRC, through its report, displays a tendency to justify and assert the chauvinist stand and wartime activities of the Mahinda Chinthanaya government.

The statement added that, despite boasts by the government that the LLRC would achieve great many things, the LLRC has meddled in matters that did not come within its terms and made comments in a way that does not question chauvinist hegemony. That is, while its mandate was to draw lessons from the peace process, its failure and consequences, and to enable reconciliation, the LLRC went beyond its mandate to make biased statements about war crimes and rule that no war crimes were committed. It has thereby issued the government and its armed forces a certificate of commendation. At the same time, it has made woolly statements about the thousands who have been abducted and gone missing. Besides, the LLRC has failed to properly examine evidence given before it regarding abductions and disappearances.

The Report, which in very general terms states that

the Tamil people have problems, has nothing that identifies the problems or their gravity. This Report offers neither the means for finding short or long term solutions for the problems of the Tamil people nor proposals to that effect. Instead, the Report has paid its fullest attention to putting forward suggestions that endorse the actions of the government and the armed forces.

The LLRC is, thus, just another in the series of commissions that are appointed when problems reach crisis proportions to deflect and cover up the underlying issues. Beyond that there is no significance of any kind for the report of the LLRC. Besides, there is little to learn from the report of the LLRC except for the waste of time and huge sums of public funds. The country and its people suffered destruction and setbacks as a result of denying the rights and demands of the Tamil, Muslim and Hill Country Tamil nationalities and sharpening the ethnic, religious and linguistic contradictions. No due lesson could be learnt nor could reconciliation be achieved without taking this into account. If genuine reconciliation is to be achieved in the country, steps should be taken that would affirm the rights of all nationalities based on equality, the right to self determination and autonomy.

To leave these aside and uphold the hushing up, rationalisation, eye wash and deflection of issues found in the report will only create further complications and crises relating to the national question, and meet with the resistance and struggle of the people. The global and regional powers will seek to transform such a situation into opportunities for them to intervene. The Party forewarns with a sense of caution that such a situation will bring great harm to the country and the people. ●

MANIPUR: ELECTIONS UNDER MILITARY BOOTS

SANKAR DAS

WHEN you are about to touch the runway of Imphal airport your dream to embrace this land of heritage and culture comes true, you may think. Last five minutes after entering Manipur aerospace you may have noticed the distant mountains or splendid Loktak lake just beneath the airway of your plane. Yes, Manipur is a place of rich past amidst speechless natural beauty, and more importantly a place of massive bio-diversity which the foreign companies do not forget even for a second. However, as soon as you come out from the airport your dream will start shattering on the completely broken streets. Broken roads, heap of garbage here and there, no electricity for hours, long queues in front of ATMs of the banks, petrol costs Rs.120 for a litre, there is always military people next to your shoulders, grim faces all around, complete shut up as soon as evening falls, the very identity of an ancient ethnic group is lost, the language and religion lost, the city lacks colour, life, hope yet huge money in the air, and obviously the smell of gunpowder, too. This is Imphal, the capital city of Manipur.

Now it is the season of elections — the festival of people! Each and every political party is busy to make final preparation of the battle in the ensuing election to 60 seated Manipur Assembly that is going to take place in 28th January. Each and every political party is giving the same promises which they never kept. Even Congress is promising to lift AFSPA if they win the election. Congress is the party that possesses stupendous ability to manipulate politics. Since the colonial days it is the main political party to become the custodian of the interest of the big bourgeoisie and landlord class. After transfer of power in 1947, one of its major objectives was to make the independent state in to a part of Indian territory by hook or crook. Manipur became an independent state in 1826 after the first Indo-Burmese war. From 1890 onwards British imperialism started actively intervening in the inner-politics of Manipuri royal family and finally annexed it. Trikendrajit, the general of royal army fought bravely but was defeated and hanged in public. After the British left, India came under the comprador bourgeois state pursuing neo-colonial policies. Congress emerged as the major political party to keep the very interests of imperialism and the big bourgeoisie-landlord classes in India. Manipur was included in India under coercion in 1949 under the initiative of Nehru and a new chapter of ethnic suppression started. Therefore it is quite obvious that, like Kashmir and other North-eastern states the people's movement for self-determination was crushed under military boots in Manipur. Congress has

played the key role. Yet Congress is still dominating the politics of Manipur and North-east.

The Armed Force (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) was passed in September 11, 1958, by the Congress dominated parliament of India. Immediately after that the Act was formally implemented in all seven states in North-east. The draconian law is being continued in spite of uncountable number of protests and 12 years long fast of Irom Sharmila. The Congress led central government has shown no sign to withdraw it. This Congress is now making the false promise to withdraw AFSPA after election. The UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the state in December. They promised huge funds for different welfare schemes. Soon chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh went on unprecedented inauguration sprees to catch the attention of the voters whom his government is deceiving for quite a long time.

Elections in this neo-colonial phase of imperialism is taking an interesting form which every serious fighter for democracy and socialism must study. As the capitalist forces are sinking deeper into crisis they are absolutely running out of any kind of ideological approach or sincerity to the people's cause. Now a days they are not fighting an election, globally their *mantra* is — buy the election. Sudden and sharp increase of public expenditure in election year is a global phenomenon today. Congress is the most skillful player in this game in India. Chief Minister Ibobi Sing is expressing his dissatisfaction over meager allocation of 13th Finance Commission of Rs. 12,000 crores for the next five-year plan as against the state's demand of Rs. 21,000 crores. For who's benefit it is anyway? Surely not for the people. When there is a lack of fund it goes against the people, and when there are more funds it also goes against the people in a different way. Along with that rewarding unbound money to the candidates is becoming one of the important features of Indian politics. Congress is giving Rs.10 crores to its candidates. BJP is not far behind. Even parties like CPI is also paying Rs.6 crores to its party candidates.

Everybody knows that the ruling parties will regain more money than what they actually spend throughout the years between elections by massive corruption. They practically loot the state exchequer in collusion with the obliging bureaucracy and contractors. When the people are lacking basic amenities, minimum services to them are denied, political leaders are making money like anything. And money is not only spent by the ruling parties today,

but by the oppositions also. Therefore the opposition also need enough scope to make money in different routes. This brings all political parties across the spectrum under a common but invisible umbrella and mechanism. When huge money is floating, huge government allocations come in uncountable heads in the name of 'disturbed area', terrorist activities of the underground organizations fighting against the ruling class and for self-determination itself have been converted into the tools of making money for the politicians, for the military, and for the banned organizations also.

All these are taking place centering the election. Banned CorCom is a glaring example. The coordination committee of seven underground organizations KCP, KYKL, PREPAK, PREPAK (Pro), RPF, UNLF and UPPK, popularly known as CorCom, has decided to ban the Congress party indefinitely. However, there are rumors in the air that they have claimed a sum of Rs 200 crores from Ibobi Singh, the chief minister, to lift the ban. These underground organizations call for boycott of the election. But that never forbid them to make money out of it. Meanwhile they have thrown grenades in an office of Congress and in the house of the Speaker of the Assembly to keep their pressure on. It can be easily understood that these activities no potency to challenge the ruling classes. On the contrary these are the weapons gladly used by them to fetch more money for their hated purpose and to continue the suppression of all democratic movements of the state.

The parties like CPI and CPI(M), who still call themselves communists to hoodwink the people, stand on another pole of degeneration. CPI which is sharing power with Congress, not only is corrupted but one of the main enemies of the people of Manipur and North-East, CPI(M), on the other hand, has formed a pre-poll coalition with four other parties, namely, Manipur People's Party, NCP (National Congress Party), RJD, and JD(U). Interestingly, MPP has also appealed to the people to support BJP. JD(U) is the coalition partner of BJP in Bihar. Therefore, there is a chance of post-poll alliance between BJP and this newly formed coalition called People's Democratic Alliance if the situation is favorable. Many keen observers of Manipur politics think so. CPI(M) has fitted itself in this pro- BJP alliance for a share of power.

Now, Trinamool Congress is the new entry in Manipur politics. They have filed nominations in 48 seats. After deceiving the people of Bengal by false promises now they are trying to catch fish in the muddled water in Manipur. In the election manifesto they have said that **if necessary** the party would fight to lift AFSPA. After so many struggles of Manipur people, after so much blood flooded the streets, the wise leadership of Trinamool is not yet sure whether it is necessary or not to lift the AFSPA.

Amidst this ocean of betrayal of the political forces the people of Manipur are left in unbelievable misery and

plight. Their identity is robbed, culture is robbed, language is robbed, right is robbed and moreover the chance of forming of a true leadership who can lead them out from plight is robbed too. The majority population of Manipur is Meitei. Although they constitute 60% of the total population, the Meiteies are living in only 10% of the geographical area of Manipur. 10% area in Manipur is plain land, rest 90% is hilly regions. The Meiteies are forbidden to settle in hills as the hill area is restricted for the Nagas and other tribes. In this way a permanent clash between Nagas and Meiteies are planted by the Indian ruling class in Manipur. On 15th October, 1949 Maharaja (king) Bodhi Chandra Sing was forced to sign the integration treaty with India by Vallabhai Patel. The right of self-determination of Manipuri people was lost at that very day. Long before that, in fifteenth century the *Vaishnavas* took away the original religion (Sanmahi) from Manipuris under patronization of the monarchy. Along with that Bengali script took away the original Manipuri script. In that situation, from 1950 onwards when the dominance of non-Manipuris began to increase, the anti foreigner (mayang) struggle gradually started. In 1967, at the time of 4th general election an organization was formed, called, Meitei State Committee who first raised the demand of *Independent Manipur*. Then another organization called Manipur Cultural Association that was engaged mainly to revive the original religion and culture of Manipur came up. Indian reactionary ruling class took full opportunity of the situation to plant a long standing conflict between the clans and nationalities in North-east following the imperialist divide and rule policy. Side by side supra-suppression using various black laws like AFSPA and deploying Indian Army, the ruling class compelled the peace loving people of Manipur to take arms in their hands in a situation of complete absence of democracy. Presently, the armed insurgent groups has mostly degenerated by the same ruling class through various means. Liquid money is one of the major weapons. UNLF, the major militant group is still fighting, but quite naturally they lack correct political direction and knowledge of using different forms of struggle.

One must understand the importance of the heroic struggle of Irom Sharmila in this backdrop. The role of women in Manipur was always very special. "The Manipuri women historically played an active role when the state was engulfed in military or economic catastrophe. In the post colonial period the democratic practices gave an opportunity to the women to play their active social role. In the present conflict between the security forces and unarmed youths and civilians, women played the role of the protectors of human rights. Women initially were involved in prohibition movement banning their men folk and their children from drinking. When the counter insurgency operations were started by the security forces, there occurred many cases of violation of human rights,

illegal arrests and torture. The women folk constituted themselves into groups of torch bearer (Meira Paibi).

In night time, both in the urban localities and rural areas torch bearing women folk guarded their localities from the military operations. Thousands of young men were rescued from the attacks of the security forces by the Meira Paibis. The Meira Paibis extend their activities acting as moral cops in their locality wherever clashes with police or armed forces occur. They formed into Joint Action Committee (JAC) to lead the agitation against the authorities till their demands are made. JAC has become an instrument of popular agitation in Manipur. However, though the presence of JACs is creating favorable circumstance to solve specific violent cases, it cannot reduce the feeling of insecurity among the people. However, women folk as a whole are for the maintenance of peace and against violence”, wrote *Imphal Free Press*. Irom Sharmila is the representative of courageous and struggling

Manipuri women now being considered as the only hope for the struggling people in Manipur.

In this situation the formation of state committee of CPI(ML) in Manipur for the first time in 2010 is extremely important. It is undoubtedly true that without a genuine communist party with working class leadership, which is capable of using every form of struggle including electoral battle to armed struggle, a revolutionary unity of the class brothers all over the country, no democratic movement can be developed and victory over the cunning and extremely reactionary ruling class can be achieved. Though it is the first election after the formation of the state committee, due to absence of sufficient strength it has decided not to field any candidate but carry on a propaganda drive against the ruling class parties. The Party has to take initiative to mobilize the most advanced sections of the struggling people of Manipur to uproot the ruling class and their ruling system in coming days. ●

NATIONAL WATER POLICY DRAFT : NEW ASSAULT ON THE MASSES

THE imperialist globalization-liberalization-privatization (GLP) imposed through the neo-liberal policies is snatching away all hard earned rights of the masses first by absolving the state from all responsibilities for the welfare of the people and second by privatizing-commercializing all essential services. In line with this, already the universal public distribution system of essential commodities, education, healthcare, communications and housing are already commercialized and employment is brought under contract and *hire and fire* system. Now the central government has launched its latest assault on the people’s right to drinking water through the 15-page draft National Water Policy in line with the 2005 World Bank paper which had called for “simulating competition in and for the market for irrigation, water supply and sanitation services”, everything in the name of saving the scarce water resources and for ‘sustainable economic growth’. The new draft brought out is another attack on the masses of people who are facing pauperization and devastation under spiraling price rise, unemployment-under employment and rampant corruption in all fields.

It was a minority government led by Narasimha Rao which blatantly imposed the GLP regime over the country throwing over board the welfare measures under the Keynesian policies in 1991 under orders from the IMF-World Bank twins. The devastation which these policies have brought to the life of the masses and to the nature during the last two decades is already well revealed. Not contended

with these, the present UPA government, the majority support of which is highly doubtful and which is only surviving because of the magnanimity of the opposition which refuse to move a no-confidence motion, as like the Congress and they are also afraid of an election, is frantically pursuing the neo-liberal policies in all fields as if in extreme hurry to complete the neo-colonial enslavement.

The draft water policy calls for privatization of water delivery services and for pricing of water to fully recover cost of operation and administration of water resource projects. It calls for the government’s withdrawal as a service provider in the water sector. Instead it calls for the private agencies and communities to play this role. This policy takes away people’s right over a precious resource and mean sharp rise in the cost of water in both rural and urban areas. Similar to the food security bill introduced, this is also an outright attack on the masses. It should be rejected out rightly. The CPI(ML) calls on all left and democratic forces to expose this latest assault on the masses and to mobilize countrywide opposition to it. ●

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BOT SYSTEM : NEO-LIBERAL WAY OF CORPORATE PLUNDER

PJ JAMES

DURING the quarter century of neocolonialism that followed World War II, on account of the confluence of several economic, political and ideological factors, imperialism allowed the direct intervention of the state in the development of entrepreneurial activity by both imperialist and comprador regimes leading to an increase in the role of public sector in the economy. The setting up of public sector undertakings that provided the essential infrastructures and social and economic overheads such as roads, railways, ports, airports, etc., and social services such as education, health, etc., and communications, energy, banking and so on for the smooth functioning of corporate capital were carried out under the Keynesian umbrella that ensured the accumulation of significant share of wealth in the state treasury through progressive taxation and deficit financing.

In several countries, along with the growth of the so called welfare state, bourgeois governments increased their share in the economy by nationalization of certain branches of industry. By pursuing a system of progressive taxation the state also mobilized a significant share of national income to substantially increase public expenditure. According to a World Bank estimate, as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, central government expenditures in the so called developing countries such as India rose from 15 percent in 1960 to almost 33 percent by mid-eighties which started declining steeply thereafter. In spite of this predominance of public sector under Keynesianism, the essence of production relations remained neocolonial as there were so many surreptitious ways of channeling surplus value created by workers in to the pockets of MNCs and comprador bourgeoisie.

But this arrangement could not continue for long. Progressive taxation by the state for running infrastructural projects and public spending on social security and workers welfare had been a heavy drain on the surplus value and therefore a diminution of corporate plunder or the so called rate of capital accumulation. As a result, when the capital accumulation process on account of its own inherent contradictions confronted one of the severest crises in the seventies as manifested through *stagflation*, taking advantage of the setbacks suffered by the Left, finance capital everywhere strived to bounce back with intensified vigour and reestablish its direct domination over erstwhile public enterprises through a process of denationalization,

disinvestment and privatization together with a roll back and downsizing of the state from infrastructure and social overheads.

Consequently, all strategic and key sectors including infrastructures which were hitherto reserved for public sector in the name of national security and people's welfare have been opened up for penetration by corporate capital. To speed up the process of downsizing of the state, taxation as a proportion of GDP has been substantially reduced in the guise of incentives and stimulus packages to speculative capital. For instance, in India, during the last five budgets alone, as revealed by budget documents, the Manmohan government had granted a tax exemption of almost Rs.22 lakh crores to corporates whose accumulation of wealth in the neoliberal period primarily takes place in the sphere of speculation rather than production. An important aspect of this neoliberal strategy was that the infrastructure projects pertaining to roads, ports, airports, etc. and public utilities are to be entrusted to corporate capital as BOT (build, operate, transfer) schemes with the imposition of appropriate user charges on the people.

Today the BOT projects have become one of the most lucrative sources of corporate plunder by speculative finance capital at a global level. Along with the complex set of financial devices that have been developed in the sphere of stock and money markets for surplus value extraction and thereby ballooning the financial sphere, finance capital being divorced itself from production has identified the BOT schemes as an ingenious form of corporate plunder. The blueprint for this that fully favours corporate monopolies is already laid down by World Bank in its guideline for infrastructural development.

As such, every infrastructural project, whether it is port, road, or bridge should henceforth be on a public-private-partnership (PPP) basis, the cost of which should be recovered by the operating party from the people through the imposition of user fees or toll collection. The government's partnership involves the required land acquisition and the provision of a certain percent of the estimated cost as grant (at present, in the case of road construction this grant component comes to 40 percent of the estimated cost) in addition to the provision of infrastructural facilities required for the construction of the project. The remaining part of the cost should be born by the corporate monopoly for which even public sector banks

and development financial institutions are already placed in the queue with immense funds on the basis of mere goodwill. After completion of the project, the private party is free to own and operate the project for so many years or decades collecting toll or user fees from the public. As neoliberalism demands, the role of the government here apart from the initial grant and provision of amenities will be that of a mere 'facilitator' of this arrangement by providing the required facilities for building and necessary police functions for the smooth operation of the project to the satisfaction of the private party.

But this is only apparent. As the BOT schemes everywhere have become an inexhaustible source of corporate wealth accumulation, the corporate billionaires have themselves transformed into a BOT lobby in respect of every infrastructural sphere. Corporate mafia, ruling class politicians and bureaucrats have become the three poles of this unholy lobby. Today right from the preparation of the project report of a scheme itself, the BOT lobby manipulates everything. As a result, the cost of the project itself will be inflated several times than its real cost and there will be an oligopolistic collusion to keep out the lowest bidders at the outset. And the public contribution or government grant for the project will also be on the basis of this inflated cost.

Often, this government grant, say 40 percent, may itself be sufficient to build the project. In that case, the remaining 60 percent of the money (that too from various public sources) mobilized in the name of the project can be diverted to other speculative spheres. Since the toll collection as per the original and periodically renewed basis continue indefinitely by the corporate-politician-bureaucrat nexus with the firm backing of all the judiciary, executive and legislature wings of the anti-people state, as already said, the BOT projects have become a fabulous source of corporate plunder during these days. The fact of the matter is that even with the existing resource mobilization efforts and without imposing user charges or toll collection the government itself can complete most of the infrastructure projects including roads, as was the case during the erstwhile Keynesian period. Therefore, the BOT projects are to be understood as part of the more vigorous and intensified plunder by speculative finance capital under neoliberalism.

There is another gruesome aspect also. The long term speculative interests of the BOT lobby also lies in relation to the land that can be acquired in excess of the requirements of the concerned project. The BOT lobby who themselves are also notorious "land developers" and real estate mafia are equally interested in grabbing the land in surrounding and adjacent places by forcibly displacing the marginalized sections like street vendors, petty traders and even retail merchants and all other oppressed sections from their habitat. For example, the usual trend that can be seen when express high ways are constructed by

demolishing the existing roads is the devastation of vast number of retail traders adjacent to old roads on the one hand, and the emergence of malls and supermarkets owned by corporate MNCs who are the BOT companies themselves.

Therefore, there is strong correlation between the insistence on the part of comprador states for FDI in retail trade along with the implementation of BOT roads. Along with this, public transport system also will be systematically demolished, compelling even people at the lower income levels to resort to private vehicles for transportation. This is definitely intended to gallop the amount that is looted by the BOT lobby through toll collection. To be precise, the BOT scheme which is at present eulogized by both the central and state governments in India is not an isolated project but is inseparably linked up with the whole process of neo-liberalization unleashed by corporate capital using its executive board, the comprador Indian state. Those who are with the people can never tolerate it even for a moment.

The anti-BOT struggle led by CPI (ML) in Kerala should be evaluated in this perspective. Irrespective of their public postures, even the CPI (M) leadership in Kerala, in spite of the opportunist positions its local leaders take, are proponents of BOT as the only alternative for road development. It is in this context that the UDF led by Congress leader Oommen Chandy, the running dog of corporate mafia and BOT lobby, is trying to impose the BOT scheme on Keralites in the most heinous way with the connivance of all apologists of corporate capital. Over the past several decades, both the UDF and LDF who have been successively ruling Kerala have done nothing in the direction of strengthening public transport system in the state which is most suitable for its habitat and topography. Most deplorable is the total neglect of an electrified double railway line in North-South direction with adequate number of trains at frequent intervals. Instead of it they were colluding with the strengthening of private bus lobby and corporate road construction mafia by systematically destroying the public transport system in Kerala.

Today the whole transportation problem including roads in Kerala can be settled only as part of a people oriented, democratic transportation policy which is possible only by resisting corporate capital and the whole neoliberal agenda. When the anti-BOT led by CPI (ML) struggle is gathering momentum and people on a large scale are coming forward and leading it, Oommen Chandy, the chief minister, true to his class character is pursuing a carrot and stick policy of unleashing police atrocities on CPI (ML) cadres on the one hand, and utilizing the services of time-tested NGO leaders to hijack the struggle and divert people to 'attractive rehabilitation packages'. But the chief minister has not yet succeeded in this tactic and in the face of strong people's resistance the toll collection is still pending. What requires is an urgent political initiative to arouse consciousness of

the broad sections of the people by exposing the true essence of the BOT scheme which shall enable them to more clearly identify the perpetrators of the neocolonial, neoliberal regime. This is indispensable for ensuring people's incessant fighting unity and to lead these struggles towards higher levels

This is not a question of Kerala alone. Rather it is a serious question in all the states. The gravity of the problem is intensifying day by day also. Already the people's resentment against this vast scale plunder is expressed through many spontaneous struggles by them at many places. They are not getting mobilized in to major struggles

as the political parties leading governments or sharing power at centre and in states are getting their own share of this plunder and discourage any struggles against them.

In this situation, if a study of the various BOT projects in different regions are made and people are mobilized major struggles can be launched at local, state levels and a nationwide movement against BOT projects and toll collection can be launched. The CPI(ML) calls on all progressive, democratic forces and the left masses to outrightly reject the neo-liberal loot through BOT projects. Mobilize the masses and launch struggles against this naked plunder all over the country. ●

KARNATAKA: INTENSIFYING MASS STRUGGLES

THE BJP government in Karnataka is implementing neo-liberal policies in all fields and opening the state for imperialist plunder. In this context the Seventh State Conference of CPI(ML) held prior to 9th Party Congress had adopted resolutions against de-industrialization, cheap labour market, land concentration, displacement of peasants, adivasis, dalits and slum dwellers, looting natural resources, destruction environment, caste and communal suppression etc. Now based on these resolution the Party and class/mass organisations are continuously mobilising the masses and organising campaigns and struggles.

LAND STRUGGLE

UNDER the leadership Karnataka Raitha Sangha affiliated to AIKKS and Karnataka Kolageri Nivasigala Sangha struggle for agricultural land and house site is going on in north Karnataka, especially in Raichur and Koppal districts. 6300 acres de-forested land had been recaptured in 52 villages of Raichur district by mobilising masses and first harvesting is successfully completed. This has encouraged landless peasants and agricultural workers for advancing and spreading the struggle to more areas. Raichur land Struggle Committee organised rallies on 9th December and 23rd December. It published the details of available government land and top ten land grabbers list, who are belonging to BJP and Congress and JD(S) like ruling class parties, their MPs, MLAs and land mafias. Struggle for distribution of more than 50 acres of government land for house site is developing in 11 slums of Raichur town. Unorganised workers, mainly minority women, are forefront of this struggle. In Shindhanur taluka town similar struggle is going on. For evicting slum dwellers municipal authority built High-Tec mass toilet inside slum and 80% construction also completed with high court order. Against this, by mobilising people these toilets were destroyed on 3rd January. An indefinite Dharna was started from 6th January in front of taluk office.

In Kodagu district anti-displacement agitation under leadership of Karnataka Raitha Sangha is going on. In the name of express highway, people of Kushal Nagar town and from agricultural land will be displaced. KRS decided to struggle against it. Mobilising the peasants and other peoples, it opposed state government's anti-people project. The evicted people captured 41 acre land and constructed huts on it.

ANTI LIQUOR MOVEMENT BY AIRWO

THE Karnataka state government had banned arrack selling by government shops fifteen years back for opening liquor market to Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL). Before ban there was government liquor shop in each village. After Banning, number of unauthorised liquor shops are started by mafias and anti-social elements in every village. Poor people are seriously affected by it. Families are facing economic burden. Against this *All India Revolutionary Women's Organisation* started vigorous campaign and took up struggles. As part of it Chikkamagalore district committee took militant action in Daraguni village. On 23rd December hundreds of women attacked one big liquor centre run by BJP grama panchayat president. Liquor centre was destroyed and bookee was beaten up. Women comrades are boldly faced police and goondas. They declared Daraguni as liquor free village and put board at the gate of village. After some days the board was broken by panchayat president. Immediately AIRWO mobilised the people of panchayat and culprits were caught and forced to put the board again.

STATE LEVEL YOUTH AGITATION SUCCESSFULLY HELD

CENTRAL COMMITTEE of Revolutionary Youth Federation of India (RYFI) had given a call to observe 26th January as a Anti-Corruption day. On that day in 6 districts protests were organised in which hundreds of youth actively participated and many got arrested. ●

WEST BENGAL: TRINAMOOL GOVERNMENT DRIVES FARMERS TO BRINK OF DISASTER

ALIK CHAKRABORTY

THE Centre's representative in the state, Governor M.K. Narayanan, has put the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government in a spot by expressing concern over the spate of farmer suicides that has rocked the state recently. In almost all of these cases, the Chief Minister has strenuously asserted that the deceased were not farmers at all. It is a conspiracy, she said, to tarnish the image of the government. The only reason that Mamata's comments have not given rise to mass outrage is that the sober and thinking section generally regards her as being slightly off her rocker and takes little note of her wildly outrageous remarks.

Be that as it may, it is indeed a fact that farmers in West Bengal are in a grim situation. For many, many years, farmer suicides had not been a prominent feature in the state. There were a few stray incidents of farmers being driven to taking their lives as a result of poverty and debt, but by and large, farmer suicides were something generally associated with states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. But now the harsh truth is that over 25 farmers have committed suicide in the state in the last seven months. Most of these have occurred in the district of Burdwan, generally regarded as the rice bowl of the state.

There are mainly two reasons why farmers in the state face such an unprecedented crisis today. First, the cost of production, especially the cost of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, has increased in leaps and bounds. Consequently, as things stand now, if the price of agricultural produce does not increase substantially, by a few times at least, it is well nigh impossible to make any profit out of agriculture. Secondly, while the prices of all essential commodities have skyrocketed, farmers are being compelled to sell their crops at a lesser price than ever before. As a result of these two factors, farmers are being forced to take huge loans in order to simply farm their lands. And when, after having taken enormous loans, they cannot sell their produce at an appropriate price, they are faced with doom. A few days ago, a farmer named Gopinath Bauri, from the district of Bankura, committed suicide. But he was a relatively well-to-do peasant. At the time of committing suicide, he had quite a few quintals of paddy in stock. However, he had been unable to sell it. Mamata Banerjee's government has initiated such an absurd system of crop procurement that it is impossible for farmers to sell their produce to the government at the price fixed by the

government. As a result, the middlemen are buying the crops from the farmers at abysmally low prices.

The minimum support price for paddy declared by the Central government – Rs 1080 per quintal – is only Rs 30 more than last year, whereas the price of fertilizers has almost trebled in the same period of time. In West Bengal, the state government has fulfilled its responsibility (!) by simply declaring that it will procure food grains from government procurement centres. Needless to say, the declaration was not followed up by much action on the part of the government, which then went on to make another declaration – namely, the various rice mills will buy paddy from the farmers at the government rate and pay the farmers in cheques. But the fact is that all districts in the state do not have rice mills. In some districts, there are rice mills at only some specific locations, and farmers have to travel 100-200 km from home to reach the said mills. As for the few farmers who live near rice mills, and for whom transportation of their stock is therefore not much of a problem, fewer still have bank accounts. Nor can they promptly open bank accounts because they often do not have the necessary documents related to their land for doing so. Hence, they cannot avail of the 'cheque facility' offered by the rice mills and are compelled to sell their produce to middlemen, who pay in cash, and pay far less than the minimum support price. Thus, while the minimum support price is itself inadequate, farmers are forced to sell their stock at an even lower price. The absurdity of the situation does not end here. There are still some farmers who have bank accounts, live near rice mills and can take their grains to the mills for sale. In such cases, more often than not, when they do arrive at the rice mill, they are informed by the mill authorities that the latter has no need of grains at the present. The farmer has to return home with his grains unsold, having spent ill-affordable money on the to-and-fro transportation.

As the situation stands, farmers in West Bengal have not been able to realize the cost of jute, now they are not being able to realize the cost of paddy. It is doubtful whether they will be able to make any money out of the Rabi crops either.

Although Mamata Banerjee has vociferously denied that any farmer in the state has committed suicide, she has been forced to acknowledge that farmers are not getting proper price for their crops. In order to overcome this problem, her government has made yet another ridiculous

declaration – that it will set up a rice mill in every block of every district. Even if we assume that the setting up of a rice mill in every block of the state will solve the problem of the farmers in the coming days, the question remains, how will the farmers survive this season? The government has no answer.

Actually, the crux of the matter is that both the Central and the state governments have assumed a lethal anti-farmer policy. Their objective is to implement monopoly control of MNCs in agriculture. The policy adopted by the government will force thousands of small and middle peasants to sell their land to monopoly capitalists, simply because they can no longer afford the cost of farming. It will facilitate direct monopoly investment in agriculture. Our entire agricultural sector will be made over to monopoly capitalists, who will naturally go on to extract the maximum possible profits out of it, thus unleashing devastating food insecurity and destruction of land and water resources.

The CPM-led Left Front, defeated and discredited in the 2011 Assembly elections, is busy trying to reap political benefit out of the catastrophe confronting the farmers and prove that their government had been ever so farmer-friendly. But when farmers are taking their lives across the state, the CPM and other Left Front constituents are content merely to stage a few shows of sham protest and hold forth on the superiority of their (routed) government. But how can the people forget that it was this very CPM-led Left Front government which had once superciliously declared that agriculture is no more profitable and so it is better to acquire agricultural land and hand it over to the Tatas and the Salems, even if it meant spilling the blood of the farmers? It was the CPM-led government that had advised farmers to forego growing crops and switch over to flowers; it was they who had introduced the dangerous gene technology in agriculture in the name of 'crop diversification'. To them goes the credit for evicting farmers from their farmland on the one hand, and, on the other, paving the way for big capital to take over the agricultural sector through GM seeds and gene technology. And in order to achieve this, the erstwhile Left Front government had left no stone unturned, not even stopped at genocide. The dominance of usurers and middlemen in the sale and purchase of agricultural commodities had even then been a dangerous feature. One or two cases of farmer suicide had occurred even during their rule and, as was their wont, CPM leaders had then alleged that the suicides were not a result of poverty and want but rather unrequited love or general depression! Today it is evident that the CPM and its allies are not a whit concerned about the welfare of farmers, they simply want to capitalise on the plight of the farmers to win votes in coming elections and, maybe, even come back to power.

Under the circumstances, when the government-sponsored aggression of monopoly capital has pushed the farmers to the brink of disaster, what is needed is an anti-

imperialist, fighting, political alternative, which can lead the peasants of the state in an uncompromising movement against the governments and the system that protect the interests of imperialism. The CPI(ML) is aware that the class which bears the historical responsibility of leading this struggle is not organized as a class today. Yet, if the struggling left forces which exist in the state today can unitedly stand up against imperialism, if the class force they partially represent can unitedly appear on the scene of this struggle, then that will not only enhance the struggle of the farmers but also stir the working class into action, into fulfilling its historical task.

The Struggling Left Coordination, comprising 6 struggling left organizations, in West Bengal is trying to build up a campaign centred on the demands of the farmers. However, it is unfortunate that quite a few struggling left forces have opted to remain outside the Coordination, though their participation would have helped to build up a stronger movement on the issue. But these forces, for reasons best known to themselves, have not even come forward to join the struggle on the issue of the farmers' crisis, leave alone join the Struggling Left Coordination. In such a situation, the Left Coordination has organized a number of conventions in quite a few districts, which have served to give a fillip to peasant movements there. Conventions have been held in Jalpaiguri, Bankura, Malda, West Midnapore and South Dinajpur. This initiative has built some amount of pressure on the government and the administration and inspired the farmers to raise a louder voice for their demands. Now it waits to be seen how far the struggling and revolutionary left forces can unite to take this question forward and organize a mass movement that will expose the anti-people, anti-peasant policies of the present government and the pro-capitalist character of the pseudo-Left. ●

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STARVATION DEATHS IN BIHAR

ARUN SHRIVASTAVA

ONE HUNDRED and fifty persons — men, women and children — have died of hunger in nineteen districts of Bihar in the past five years. The dead are mainly from the Dalit community. Some had the ‘red card’ with entitlement of 25 kg of rice and a few kilos of sugar at highly subsidized rates, yet they could not afford to buy even 50% of the entitlements. The ‘red card’ assures a below-povety line household to x kg of rice and y kg of sugar and kerosene oil as fuel for cooking.

A Dalit and resident of Bankat village of Gaya district, barely 120 kms from Patna, Chandu Manjhi died on 13th February, 2011, leaving behind his wife and two children aged 12 and 8. His total monthly income from manual labour was Rs 800. They did not have enough money to purchase even the minimum entitlement of food grains and sugar and kerosene. The household remained hungry for eight to ten days on the month. Bankat village also has four families whose total monthly income is 150 to 200 rupees per month. They each have a starvation death in the family.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF ‘SHINING BIHAR’ CAN’T ACCEPT STARVATION DEATHS

HOW CAN they occur when the Supreme Court has issued a directive that ‘should any starvation death occur, the state government shall be directly responsible?’ Therefore, it is virtually impossible to pin the blame on the state government. There are specifically two reasons why starvation deaths can’t be proven in a law court. (a) Usually the body is cremated the same day, often by the police. Post mortem facility is not available in rural and remote rural areas.

(b) Government doctors will never certify a death by starvation. Their career will be ruined. Therefore, even if the death occurred in a hospital, doctors would not specify the true cause of mortality; instead they normally enter death by heart failure or respiratory failure. All deaths eventually occur from heart failure or respiratory failure but the Bihar Government continues to fool the world. Economic deprivation is not a medical cause. Discussion with local doctors leads me to the conclusion that it is extremely difficult to conclude that a death has occurred from starvation. A person who has remained hungry for four months on the year can get any infectious disease like TB, severe cough and cold because the immune system is on the brink of collapse. Would a doctor enter in the death certificate that the death occurred because of economic deprivation and hunger? Not to my knowledge. Should

any doctor even dare say that it did, given the judgment of the Supreme Court, it’d become a medico-legal case, exactly as if a family member was deprived of food and allowed to die of starvation. And that also means complete collapse of clinical governance in India that has wider ramifications.

PIECING TOGETHER OF EVIDENCE

HOW DID the young researchers unearth and investigate starvation deaths? They collected circumstantial evidences. They met with the community leaders, village headman, talked to the neighbors and the surviving members of the household. They went to the homes of the dead to see what assets they had, how they lived, where they worked, how much they earned and cross checked how much of the subsidized ration they could buy. Most of these can be documented.

NITISH IS A MASTER MEDIA MANIPULATOR

HOW MANY journalists in the mainstream media have reported this as it should be? HT, AAJ, Sahara, Prabhat Khabar, Jagaran, all have reported but the context is missing. For them, it was just a few lines for the bereaved family the loss of children or mother or the sole bread winner. Far more important is to recall that during the British colonial period 79 million Indians died of hunger and starvation. As John Stuart Mill said, “India was a cash cow” that could feed the British colonial army and fund its colonial expansion worldwide without a penny from the British taxpayers, where the sun eventually never set. The British did teach Indian rulers one thing: how to rule ruthlessly. Nitish has adopted that dictum. He has given Bihar a relative safe society, safe for the *chatteratti* like the British did. In an old Raj Kapoor movie Anari, Motilal tells Raj Kapoor that to watch the dancing men and women and says they are the ones who never returned the wallet. Politicians also never return the wallet. But Nitish has adopted a path of decimating the poor. Chandu Manjhi is for starters. Wait for another 5-10 years and all the ‘useless eaters’ on whom tax-payers money goes down the sink would have been cremated, not even knowing why. Nitish in league with his advisor Mangla Rai, who like his mentor M.S.Swaminathan, should go down as India’s most corrupt scientist, worth being charged for treason, are together setting in motion conditions by introducing genetically engineered seeds and foods that would destroy Bihar’s 10 millennia old civilization. Laloo destroyed Bihar’s economy; Nitish and Mangla Rai will destroy a civilization that gave the world much to contemplate. ●

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF POST-WAR IMPERIALISM

[Review of the book "Imperialism in the Neocolonial Phase" written by PJ James and published by Massline Publications, Kottayam, Kerala, November 2011]

THOMAS MATHEWS

"IMPERIALISM IN THE NEOCOLONIAL PHASE", by P.J. James, is an in-depth empirical study of the modalities of imperialism with special reference to the post-war period. The analysis starts with the 'genesis' of neocolonialism, which is located in the interwar period, particularly attributed to the bankruptcy of European economies in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, which in fact coincided with the Bolshevik revolution and 'war communism'. The genesis of neocolonial theory could be seen in John Maynard Keynes' theme about "The Economic Consequences of the Peace" written in 1920. As Lenin observed in 1920, 'the US was the only full beneficiary from the war, which had become a general creditor from being a heavy debtor earlier'. American finance capital ushered in an era of boom based on export of finance capital and speculation that generated growing deficit and debt burdens of European countries. Repudiation of Tsarist debts by Soviet Union and rising American control of finance capital contributed to European bankruptcy and the Great Depression.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FINANCE CAPITAL

IT IS instructive to note that the Comintern characterized fascism as the "terrorist dictatorship of finance capital". Integration of private fascist armies propped up by finance capitalists has been an inherent trend of state fascism. Even as fascism propped up as a counter to socialism, Keynesianism evolved as an economic response to the socialist challenge and the 'Great Depression'. Keynes recognized the lack of effective demand in the imperialist economies as the reason for depression and advocated public investment in welfare, public works and armaments production to create effective demand by generating more employment. While the countries like Germany, Italy and Japan, who were deprived of colonies after the defeat in the First World War, advanced on the lines of fascism and militarism, America, Britain and France adopted the Keynesian policies particularly after the 'Great Depression'. The 'New Deal' programme introduced by Franklin Roosevelt in US between 1933 and 1939 were based on the Keynesian prescriptions. While the First New Deal (1933-35) created more than six million jobs in civil works and reforestation programmes of the government, the Second New Deal (1935-39) emphasized social security. But the programme as such lost its steam by 1937 itself when

joblessness rose from 14.3 percent in 1937 to 19 percent in 1938 and index of industrial production (1923-25 = 100) tumbled from 117 in August 1937 to 80 in January 1938.

As the 'New Deal' policies on Keynesian lines failed to stimulate the economy, it was the World War II that infused a new lease of life to the stagnant American economy." American continent not being a war-scene during the World War II, it was convenient for US to become the biggest supplier of not only arms, ammunition and war material but also food agricultural and industrial goods to the war-torn international economy. The mobilization of twelve million people into armed forces and near full-employment of the remaining civilian population by the war oriented economy generated the effective demand that wiped out the agricultural surpluses, a phenomenon of the Depression years". While World War II ravaged the economies of all imperialist powers, for US alone it provided an opportunity to make effective utilization of resources and recover from a decade of depression. As the World War II came to a close, US accounted for almost half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world and about three quarters of global gold reserves also moved to America.

TRANSITION TO THE 'NEO-LIBERALISM'

WHILE tracing the origins of neocolonialism to the Latin American and Philippines backdrop, its typical evolution is linked to the inter-war period of rise of the socialist challenge and fascist counter-terror. The transition to neocolonialism is historically situated towards the beginning of the Second World War; more precisely at the point of failure of internal Keynesianism and the evolving of International Keynesianism with a paradigm shift from welfare and development to militarization and arsenalisation. The precise point of transition is identified as the adoption of the Atlantic Charter by fifteen advanced nations including the Soviet Union, led by the United States of America in September 1941. After the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, Soviet Union also became party to the United Nations and participated in the Bretton Woods conference, though refused to join the IMF.

Monopoly finance capital is the key feature of neocolonialism. The salience of financial oligarchies becomes even more significant with global Keynesianism adopting new modalities in the spheres of international

mobility and control of labour, capital and commodities alike. The dominant rentier nature of monopoly capital assumes varied forms and dimensions and register phenomenal rise in the sphere of finance market speculation in particular. Rent-seeking activities enter and dominate the sphere of knowledge capital, intellectual property and even intellectual labour.

The Bretton Woods system comprising the IMF and World Bank established the hegemony of US led imperialist powers over global finance and development through a system of international currency exchange based on gold or dollar reserves and regulation of credit and aid in the interests of the developed capitalist countries. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was formed to regulate international trade to avoid protectionism and restrictive trade policies. The United States emerged as the world banker; and the huge expenditure required for financing the Marshall Plan for reconstruction of the war ravaged, aid programmes and American military expansionism were financed out of the printing of dollar.

Apart from the United Nations Organization and its specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods system and the Marshall Plan, the Truman doctrine and Pax-Americana chartered a programme of military and economic aid to developed and underdeveloped areas as part of the policy of containment of communism. The Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations, USAID, USIS, CIA, and above all NATO, became the main instrumentalities of US-led neocolonialism. Even as Germany and Japan remained the main beneficiaries of the Marshall Plan, intervention in Korea and Indo-China as also in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America was accompanied by aid and destabilization aimed at containment of communism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent. The number of countries with US military presence increased from 39 during the Second World War period to 64 by 1966. Pax Americana resulted in US takeover of political, economic and military control of the world. The objective of the policy framework was unrestricted and unregulated free movement of capital disregarding all values such as democratic rights, ecology and environmental protection, and equitable distribution of the burdens of crises.

MULTI - NATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNCs)

AS LENIN visualized, with the phenomenal increase of export of capital and expansion of the 'spheres of influence' of the big monopolistic combines, "things naturally gravitated to an international agreement among these combines and towards formation of international cartels". The number of international monopolies which Lenin had put at 100 in 1910 increased to 1000 by the beginning of the Second World War. With the global reach of multi-national monopolies in the exercising centralized ownership and control of corporate monopoly over production, including

agricultural production, of goods and services, R&D, technology, knowledge and armaments as also global trade and commerce, MNCs have merged as the main props of imperialism. So-called decolonization in fact meant only the withdrawal of the militaries and political/administrative control of the erstwhile colonial masters. Military and economic aid together with increased American military presence and armaments trade replaced the old system of colonialism.

As far back as April 1917 Lenin noted that "the concentration and internationalization of capital are making gigantic strides; monopoly capitalism is developing into state monopoly capitalism". The political, economic and military institutional framework created under American initiative during and after the Second World War put MNCs as the main pillar of global hegemony. As Lenin observed a personal union of industrial and finance capital, the MNCs represented a personal union of finance, industrial, trading and state capital, which combined two distinct segments of welfare/development and policing/military aspects. Perhaps what we see in the post-war phase is the globalization of Keynesianism and globalization of fascism in a new format. The US-led military industrial complex definitely included the entire NATO countries and OECD countries and even perhaps the entire spectrum of developed Northern hemisphere. Eyebrows may, however be raised, if we suggest inclusion of client states like Israel, India, Saudi Arabia or Pakistan as part of the imperialist military industrial complex.

NEOCONSERVATIVE PARADIGM

THE Bretton Woods system collapsed due to the contradictions within the imperialist political economy basically because Europe was not ready to bear increasing burden of American expansionism and global policing. As the US gold reserves dwindled and dollar liabilities increased steadily in the postwar decades, America unilaterally withdrew the convertibility of dollar into gold and accepted the actual depreciation of the dollar and devalued dollar twice, in December 1971 and February 1973. Prompted by the weakening of the US economy and intensifying Cold War, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) increased oil prices fourfold and aggravated the imperialist crisis, particularly the American crisis. However, the US succeeded in manipulating the OPEC in favor of American finance capital by persuading the OPEC regimes to hold their oil money in dollars in exchange for massive armaments deal between the US and these oil kingdoms. This deal signaled a paradigm shift in imperialist modalities and the comprador regimes got accommodated, one by one, in the imperialist military industrial complex. In fact, the OPEC move to drastically increase oil prices was aimed at dealing with their increasing debt burden. Other underdeveloped countries of Asia, Latin America and Africa were also caught

in the debt trap and considered cartelization of primary commodity producers. Interestingly, America wrecked the Bretton Woods system after waving an olive branch to China too.

India has been the premier site where the ideological tussle between the socialist path and the capitalist roaders unfolded in the very first decade after transfer of power. Even as the Comintern and the Communist party questioned the genuineness of Indian independence and pitched for working class power and socialist planning, the Indian ruling class opted for the Tata-Birla model. The socialist pretensions and welfare oriented ameliorative policies as also the Mahalanobis model of import substituting industrialization, with a public sector controlling the commanding heights of the economy was very much in the neocolonial frame. As the communist tide could not be stalled even with 'India-China bhai-bhai' and indo-Soviet friendship; and the dependence on foreign capital increased beyond control, the planning process itself was abandoned and the Rupee was devalued by 66% at one go, and the economy was surrendered to American interests.

By the end of the Seventies, the Import substituting industrialization paradigm had run its course in all countries and America had lost the Vietnam War all the underdeveloped countries except the oil kingdoms were in trapped in severe debt crisis. It was in the above context that the Washington Consensus was evolved; emphasizing the imperative of structural adjustment by all debt-ridden countries by shifting production from primary products that are non-tradeable in the international market to tradable industrial goods. This so-called neoliberal paradigm involves abandonment of the Keynesian model, particularly the welfare and development aspects of it.

In fact, Keynesianism was meant for developed capitalist economies, which had completed bourgeois democratic revolutions, full employment was the objective of the Keynesian prescription. In the Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI) period in underdeveloped countries such as India, neither the democratic revolution was complete nor were social security, social welfare and social infrastructure ever provided to the vast majority of the people. So the extension of the welfare and social sector public investment did not reach the general population, but selected sections only. However, the abandonment of Keynesianism in the wake of the neoliberal policies not only meant the withdrawal of limited social safety nets, welfare and social infrastructure provision which was available to even the limited sections earlier. On the other hand in the developed countries, welfare and social security has-been cut down and employment levels have declined. What we have in the underdeveloped countries under the neoliberal regime is denial of even the basic human right to life and basic needs and democratic rights. There is a qualitative difference in the application of Keynesianism in

a developed economy and an underdeveloped economy or bourgeois democracies and the nominal democracies such as India. In this respect also a distinction may have to be drawn between underdeveloped countries such as India and countries like China, where the democratic, if not the socialist, revolution has taken place. Again we have to see what changes or development the ISI stage has brought about in underdeveloped countries. This phase has developed the infrastructure, including social infrastructure sectors of health and education; and monopoly capital invested under the neoliberal regime benefits from the existing infrastructure and the new infrastructure facilities being provided with foreign monopoly capital at the cost of the cost country. This is in addition to the enormous transfer of surplus value on account of the exploitation of highly skilled labour force as also the monopoly profits on account of the ownership and control of technological knowhow and the domestic market. Speculative profits mopped up in the finance market, in stocks and shares and futures trading also are in addition to the profits for huge armaments and military hardware trade.

Neoconservative paradigm strengthens the operation of all the laws of motion of capital in its moribund monopoly phase. The rules are those of alienation, exploitation, exclusion and extermination. From economic sanctions to drone attacks and starvation deaths to forced suicides apart from wanton wars of aggression and occupation, imperialism is in war against the people of the world and the local satraps are in war against their own people. State in the underdeveloped world has become police and military state, an extension of the imperialist military industrial complex.

CONCLUSION

IN actual fact, it is a moot point whether Keynesianism can be extended to the global level. Keynesian economics is about macroeconomic theory, the "General Theory of Employment, Income and Prices" of a country or a nation state, specifically the economy of a developed capitalist or imperialist country. A global 'General Theory' is yet to emerge and that is not possible in the realm of bourgeois economics. James has done the groundwork for developing a critique of the neoconservative phase of imperialism. And such a critique would develop only in the frame work of socialism, envisioned by Marx, Lenin and Mao, as outlined in this book.

Professor James makes a very significant formulation while dealing with the genesis of neocolonialism. He asserts that imperialism always relied on military Keynesianism rather than on welfare Keynesianism. This assertion is fully validated by the results, the course and also the outcome of the most important historic application of the theory to deal with the 'Great Depression'. As both the 'New Deal' programmes failed to create the desired impact, it was the Second World War, which enabled imperialism to overcome

the biggest ever crisis. However, while advancing the argument that the so-called post-war boom and golden age could be attributed to application of Keynesianism on the global scale, he seems to underestimate the role of resistance from the working class forces and nationalist movements. Moreover, Comintern characterization of fascism as 'terrorist dictatorship of finance capital' has not been projected to the post-war phase adequately as a concomitant of global military Keynesianism, which imperialism has advanced globally. A related lacuna is the failure to pick up the thread from Lenin's classic formulation about taking into consideration the political aspects of imperialism, particularly the ideological division in the working class movement between the national chauvinist tendency and proletarian internationalism. How can we afford to miss the infirmities of India's conventional Left enmeshed in social fascism playing the national chauvinist card in implementing 'neo-liberalism' including the Indo-US Nuclear Deal?

Another apparent flaw is the inadequacy of conceptualization of imperialism as a unitary structure instead of persisting with the idea of different imperialist countries and blocks, even after taking note of the integration of global monopoly capital under the centralized edifices of the UN, NATO, World Bank, WTO and the G8 and the OECD. Emergence of militarized global monopoly capitalist state may have to be considered at least at the conceptual level.

Last, but not least, I would like to point out that the

conceptualization of neocolonialism does not adequately capture the meaning and essence of classical Marxist-Leninist formulation and characterization of the state and ruling class as semi-feudal/semi-colonial. The basic flaw is that while imperialism denotes the merger, collaboration and connivance of the monopoly capitalist forces and pre-capitalist forces of the colonized country/social formation, the neocolonial formulations apparently miss out that connotation; and all except the compradors and their hangers on are hapless victims of neocolonialism. However, this analysis recognize the connivance of the domestic parasitic classes in the neocolonial project and also flag the vanguard role of proletarian internationalist forces and the rural proletariat and semi-proletarians as well in India's democratic revolution and resistance to imperialism and fascism.

The author has made an excellent, rather detailed, study of imperialism in the post-war neocolonial phase. The book provides all the relevant data, theoretical tools, concepts, formulations and empirical and historical facts about the development of capitalist imperialism, with special reference to the post-war period. The section on India as a showcase of neocolonialism is particularly illuminating. This is a timely and welcome effort of the CPI (ML) to develop revolutionary theory, practice and consciousness in most challenging times. This is an essential reader for students, academics and activists; and above all for practitioners of revolution. I would recommend an abridged version, particularly in Indian languages for the benefit of mass following of the movement. ●

LAUNCH COUNTRYWIDE STRUGGLE AGAINST COMMERCIALIZATION AND TRADE IN EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT of India is going to pass many a bills connected with higher education system in the ensuing budget session of the Parliament. All the Bills are intended to further commercialize higher education and siphon public funds to the private operators in the name of highly publicized Public Private Partnership (PPP). They are intended to bypass the legislature, judiciary, regular executive processes and put all powers in few central bodies appointed, essentially, by central government. They are intended to establish a new trade friendly regime in place of the institutions like UGC, NCTE, AICTE, MCI etc. Yes, the present day regulatory bodies are not good, but all those bodies which the government want to establish anew, 'The National Council', 'The Tribunals', 'The Accreditation Authority' and 'The regime of World Trade Organization' are going to be worst possible systems.

All India Forum for Right To Education (AIFRTE) calls

up on its member and associate organizations to organize protest throughout the country against the above said utter anti-people trade oriented reforms in education. The forms of protest can be formulated by member organizations. However, they may concentrate their protest programmes in Universities, Colleges and in District Head Quarters.

The All India Forum for Right To Education appeals to all individuals and organizations who all oppose commercialization of education and work for a democratic education system in India to observance of the nationwide protest day on 16th of February, 2012.

AIRSO is an associate of AIFRTE and appeals to all its units to take initiative to make the 16th February All India Program a big success. Launch continuous struggles to force the central government to reverse the trade in education policies and to ensure equal and democratic education for all. ●

OBSERVE 11TH MARCH, FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF FUKUSHIMA MELTDOWN AS ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER DAY

Struggle to Stop Construction of All New Nuclear Power Plants!
Struggle to Close Down All Nuclear Power Plants!
Fight for Universal Nuclear Disarmament!

[The first anniversary of Fukushima meltdown which has caused dangerous levels of radiation following the earthquake and tsunami is on 11th March. What has happened to this nuclear power plant claimed as very safe by the authorities as well as the MNC which has built and operate it, has given a new turn to the debate on the safety of the nuclear power plants in general at the present level of development of the nuclear technology. In continuation of this debate the International Coordination of the Revolutionary Parties (ICOR) and CPI(ML) have called for an intensive campaign for: *stopping the construction and commissioning of new nuclear plants, for the de-commissioning of all existing nuclear power plants and for universal nuclear disarmament.* The first anniversary of Fukushima disaster is observed as an occasion to intensify the campaign for these demands by all progressive, democratic forces at international level. On this occasion, in order to help this campaign we are reproducing below three news items on different aspects of the great harm created by nuclear plants to the future of human beings.]

FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR CLEANUP COULD CREATE ITS OWN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER

FOLLOWING the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl 25 years ago, the Soviet government chose long-term evacuation over extensive decontamination; as a result, the plants and animals near Chernobyl inhabit an environment that is both largely devoid of humans and severely contaminated by radioactive fallout. The *meltdown last March of three nuclear reactors* at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan also contaminated large areas of farmland and forests, albeit not as severely or extensively as at Chernobyl. But lacking land for resettlement and facing public outrage over the accident, the Japanese government has chosen a very different path, embarking on a decontamination effort of unprecedented scale.

Beginning this month, at least 1,000 sq km of land — much of it forest and farms — will be cleaned up as workers power-spray buildings, scrape soil off fields, and remove fallen leaves and undergrowth from woods near houses. The goal is to make all of Fukushima livable again. But as scientists, engineers, and ordinary residents begin this massive task, they face the possibility that their efforts will create new environmental problems in direct proportion to their success in remediating the radioactive contamination.

“Decontamination can be really effective, [but] what you have is a tradeoff between dose reduction and environmental impact,” says Kathryn Higley, a radioecologist at Oregon State University who has studied several decontamination sites in the United States. That’s

because the radioactive particles the Japanese are trying to get rid of can be quite “sticky”. Removing them without removing large amounts of soil, leaves, and living plants is nearly impossible. The Ministry of Environment estimates that Fukushima *will have to dispose of 15 to 31m cubic metres of contaminated soil and debris* by the time the decontamination projects end. Costs are *predicted to exceed a trillion yuan.*

Given these drawbacks, an International Atomic Energy Agency fact-finding mission advised the Japanese authorities to “avoid over-conservatism” in their decontamination plans — in other words, not to clean up more than necessary to protect human health. Yet the health impacts of long-term exposure to low levels of radiation are not entirely clear. Many scientists believe exposure to even very low levels can slightly increase cancer risk, and many Fukushima residents feel they should not be forced to live with that risk — or the undercurrent of fear it brings.

But while the political debate over how much to clean up rages on, more practical preparations are already underway. On a frigid afternoon last month, about 160 workers wearing papery white jumpsuits and hot pink respirators filed up a winding road into a farming hamlet in Kawamata town, about an hour south-east of Fukushima and just inside the evacuation zone. Were it not for the bright blue plastic sheets, heavy-duty leaf vacuums, cranes, and trucks scattered everywhere, the village would have been picturesque. Now, the intricacy of the landscape —

its tiny rice paddies, bamboo groves, woodlots, streams, and earth-walled barns — was adding to the challenges of decontamination.

The workers fanned out over the otherwise abandoned rolling hills and brown fields. One group climbed a hill to rake fallen leaves into large black bags, while another spread magnesium over fields to solidify the soil for later removal. Nearby, another of the indistinguishable white figures chopped down overgrown weeds. The workers had been hired by Taisei Corporation, one of three large construction firms that won contracts from the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) to test the effectiveness and efficiency of various decontamination technologies at 19 model sites throughout Fukushima prefecture. The results of these experiments will guide the large-scale decontamination effort set to begin later this month.

Human exposure can be lowered without cleansing the entire landscape, of course. Japan's bans on hunting bears and wild pigs, selling wild mushrooms, and growing rice in certain areas fall into this category; so does the recommendation from Fukushima's agriculture department that farmers add potassium fertiliser to moderately contaminated fields in order to minimise cesium uptake by crops. As for forests, the focus for the time being is on decontaminating only patches close to homes because most people spend little time in remote woods.

But because the most heavily contaminated parts of Fukushima are, like the village in Kawamata, a hilly mosaic of houses, woods, and fields, the government can't leave nature entirely untouched. Houses backed by wooded hills are very common, as are fields in small valleys; in both cases, runoff from uphill can recontaminate lowlands. Intense public concern over contaminated food, meanwhile, means many farmers want to clean up their land as quickly and thoroughly as possible.

Japan's decontamination efforts are focused mostly on the radionuclides caesium-134 and caesium-137, which are currently present in approximately equal amounts and have half-lives of two and 30 years respectively. Although other radionuclides have been found in Japan, these two pose the greatest long-term threat to human health through ingestion and external exposure. Radiocaesium *has been found in all of Japan's prefectures*, but is most highly concentrated within an oblong swath that extends about 50km north-west of the plant, and *to a lesser extent throughout eastern and central Fukushima Prefecture*.

Radiological risk assessment expert John Till, president of the US-based Risk Assessment Corporation, says the fallout will probably be gone from the surface of plants within a few years, but attach strongly, through ion exchange, to soil — in particular to the clay soils common throughout Fukushima. From there the radiocaesium will move slowly into plants, at a rate — and level of risk — that is still unclear.

Remediation methods that work, Higley says, “seem kind of absurd but actually make sense”: cutting, scraping, raking and ploughing to varying degrees of depth and severity. Government agencies, private companies, and academics are all experimenting to find the most efficient and effective methods for Fukushima. The prefectural government *has recommended removing leaf litter from woods within 20 metres* of houses and deeply ploughing or turning over fields to dilute contamination. In the heavily contaminated fields that *cover at least 8,000 hectares around Fukushima*, several centimetres of topsoil will likely be removed. Some farmers are power-washing their orchards or shaving bark off trees. Officials involved with the cleanup are well aware of the drawbacks to these approaches: huge amounts of radioactive waste that no one wants to store long-term; immense investments of money, labor, and time; damage to wildlife habitat and soil fertility; increased erosion on scraped-bare hillsides; and intrusion by people and machinery into every area scheduled for remediation.

“You remove leaf litter from the forest floor and radiation levels fall,” said Shinichi Nakayama, a nuclear engineer at the JAEA who is overseeing the 19 decontamination pilot projects planned or underway. “You take away the deeper layers and they fall more. But you take it all away and the ecosystem is destroyed. Water retention goes down and flooding can occur.” Although no significant conservation areas lie within the most contaminated parts of Fukushima, some species on the prefecture's “red list” of endangered or threatened species — including the grassland butterfly and the Japanese peregrine falcon, both listed as “vulnerable” — are found there and could be impacted if projects like these are implemented on a large scale.

But Kiyomi Yokota, a naturalist and secretary of the Fukushima Nature Conservation Association, said that standing up for wildlife in the current situation would be difficult. “If people want to go home, I don't think I could tell them, ‘No, stop the decontamination, save the fish,’” he said. Human health, in other words, trumps habitat. But just how much fallout does the government need to remove in order to protect human health? On that key question the science is frustratingly inconclusive.

Past studies have shown that *cancer rates rise in populations exposed to a dose of 100 millisieverts* (mSv) of radiation. They reveal much less about the situation in Fukushima, where *lower doses will remain for many years*. (Measurements taken in Fukushima City in late December, for instance, ranged from .33 to 1.04 microsieverts per hour; sustained for a year, that adds up to doses of 2.9 to 9.1mSv.) The International Commission on Radiological Protection *recommends that the general public be exposed to a yearly dose of no more than 1 to 20 mSv* following a nuclear accident; those two numbers represent the difference between a decontamination effort confined to

about 500 sq km and one encompassing much of Fukushima prefecture and beyond.

So far, Japan's central government has taken direct responsibility for decontaminating areas within 20km of the plant and those where yearly exposure could exceed 20 mSv. (Together these areas make up the evacuation zone.) The environment ministry predicts natural radioactive decay and weathering alone *will reduce levels by 40% within two years*; Large-scale versions of the decontamination pilot projects will supposedly do the rest. The release of contaminated water from the crippled Fukushima nuclear complex last year stoked concerns about how that radioactivity might affect marine life in the Pacific. While the ocean's capacity to dilute radiation is huge, **Elizabeth Grossman** reported last year that nuclear isotopes were already moving up the local food chain. Some residents and activist groups like Greenpeace *have called for a faster*

and more aggressive decontamination effort, while others believe most of Fukushima is already safe enough to live in. Still, others doubt decontamination will succeed and are pushing the government to spend money on relocation instead. "Safe? What is safe?" Sumiko Toyoguchi, an elderly evacuee who used to live six kilometres from the nuclear plant and now lives in temporary housing in Fukushima city, asked last month. She said she doesn't want to return to her former home even after decontamination takes place, in part because she worries the work won't be done adequately. Ten months after the nuclear disaster, trust in the authorities is nearly non-existent. Without it, Japan's government risks the biggest cleanup fiasco of all: a decontamination effort that carries huge financial and environmental costs but still fails to convince Fukushima residents that their homes, farms, and forests are safe once again. ●

FUKUSHIMA MELTDOWN: NOT JUST A METAPHOR

THE consequences of the Japanese earthquake – especially the ongoing crisis at the Fukushima *nuclear power* plant – resonate grimly for observers of the American financial crash that precipitated the Great Recession. Both events provide stark lessons about risks, and about how badly markets and societies can manage them.

Of course, in one sense, there is no comparison between the tragedy of the earthquake – which has left more than 25,000 people dead or missing – and the *financial crisis*, to which no such acute physical suffering can be attributed. But when it comes to the nuclear meltdown at Fukushima, there is a common theme in the two events. Experts in both the nuclear and finance industries assured us that new technology had all but eliminated the risk of catastrophe. Events proved them wrong: not only did the risks exist, but their consequences were so enormous that they easily erased all the supposed benefits of the systems that industry leaders promoted.

Before the Great Recession, America's economic gurus – from the head of the Federal Reserve to the titans of finance – boasted that we had learned to master risk. "Innovative" financial instruments such as derivatives and credit default swaps enabled the distribution of risk throughout the economy. We now know that they deluded not only the rest of society, but even themselves.

These wizards of finance, it turned out, didn't understand the intricacies of risk, let alone the dangers posed by "*fat-tail distributions*" – a statistical term for rare events with huge consequences, sometimes called "*black swans*". Events that were supposed to happen once in a century – or even once in the lifetime of the universe – seemed to happen every 10 years. Worse, not

only was the frequency of these events vastly underestimated; so was the astronomical damage they would cause – something like the meltdowns that keep dogging the nuclear industry.

Research in economics and psychology helps us understand why we do such a bad job in managing these risks. We have little empirical basis for judging rare events, so it is difficult to arrive at good estimates. In such circumstances, more than wishful thinking can come into play: we might have few incentives to think hard at all. On the contrary, when others bear the costs of mistakes, the incentives favour self-delusion. A system that socialises losses and privatises gains is doomed to mismanage risk.

Indeed, the entire financial sector was rife with agency problems and externalities. Ratings agencies had incentives to give good ratings to the high-risk securities produced by the investment banks that were paying them. Mortgage originators bore no consequences for their irresponsibility, and even those who engaged in predatory lending or created and marketed securities that were designed to lose did so in ways that insulated them from civil and criminal prosecution.

This brings us to the next question: are there other "black swan" events waiting to happen? Unfortunately, some of the really big risks that we face today are most likely not even rare events. The good news is that such risks can be controlled at little or no cost. The bad news is that doing so faces strong political opposition – for there are people who profit from the status quo. We have seen two of the big risks in recent years, but have done little to bring them under control. By some accounts, how the last crisis was managed may have increased the risk of a future financial meltdown.

Too-big-to-fail banks, and the markets in which they participate, now know that they can expect to be bailed out if they get into trouble. As a result of this moral hazard, these banks can borrow on favourable terms, giving them a competitive advantage based not on superior performance, but on political strength. While some of the excesses in risk-taking have been curbed, predatory lending and unregulated trading in obscure, over-the-counter derivatives continue. Incentive structures that encourage excess risk-taking remain virtually unchanged.

So, too, while Germany has shut down its older nuclear reactors, in the US and elsewhere, even plants that have the same flawed design as Fukushima continue to operate. The nuclear industry's very existence is dependent on hidden public subsidies – costs borne by society in the event of nuclear disaster, as well as the costs of the still-unmanaged disposal of *nuclear waste*. So much for unfettered capitalism! For the planet, there is one more risk, which, like the other two, is almost a certainty: global

warming and *climate change*. If there were other planets to which we could move at low cost in the event of the almost certain outcome predicted by scientists, one could argue that this is a risk worth taking. But there aren't, so it isn't. The costs of reducing emissions pale in comparison to the possible risks the world faces. And that is true even if we rule out the nuclear option (the costs of which were always underestimated). To be sure, coal and oil companies would suffer, and big polluting countries – like the US – would obviously pay a higher price than those with a less profligate lifestyle. In the end, those gambling in Las Vegas lose more than they gain. As a society, we are gambling – with our big banks, with our nuclear power facilities, with our planet. As in Las Vegas, the lucky few – the bankers that put our economy at risk and the owners of energy companies that put our planet at risk – may walk off with a mint. But *on average* and *almost certainly*, we as a society, like all gamblers, will lose. That is a lesson of Japan's disaster that we continue to ignore at our peril. ●

[Joseph Stiglitz, 6 April 2011, *guardian.co.uk*]

DNA INVESTIGATIONS: DEATHS CONFIRM CANCER RISK NEAR NUCLEAR-REACTORS

AFTER being in denial for years, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has for the first time admitted that the deaths of its employees at the Kalpakkam nuclear site and their dependents were because of multiple myeloma, a rare form of bone marrow cancer linked to nuclear radiation. In response to a Right to Information query in October last year, the DAE said nine people, including three employees working at the Kalpakkam atomic reactor, about 70km from Chennai, died of multiple myeloma and bone cancer between 1995 and 2011. The department had earlier refused to divulge information despite an RTI query in 2010.

The risk to the lives of people working at the nuclear facilities at Kalpakkam came to the fore in 2003 when two of its employees — Mohandas and Ponniah — working at the reactor died of multiple myeloma after being exposed to nuclear radiation. DAE officials then denied that the deaths were because of overexposure to radiation. While two people were detected with multiple myeloma when they were working at the reactor, another was found to have the rare form of bone marrow cancer after retirement. The RTI query revealed that 14 people, including 11 family members of employees at Kalpakkam nuclear facilities, have been detected with multiple myeloma and bone cancer between 1995 and 2011.

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) officials, however, claim that there have been no deaths due to exposure to radiation at Kalpakkam. They even said the figure of people affected by radiation at the nuclear facilities

was lesser than the national average of 1-4 per 1 lakh people. “The figure of three employees at Kalpakkam having multiple myeloma during 16-17 years is not higher than the normal prevalence of such form of cancer among others, in India or abroad,” BARC said in its response. Experts, however, said it was a faulty comparison and that it was not possible to compare such sensitive data to the national average. As per international standards, cancer cases because of radiation are computed by comparing people living in proximate villages to those living in villages far away from the nuclear facilities, said Dr V Pugazhenthii, a physician who has been practising in Kalpakkam for 20 years.

Going by international standards, a DAE-funded study by Dr Manjula Datta shows that the number of people in proximity to Kalpakkam nuclear facilities suffering from cancer is a cause of concern. DNA is in possession of the report that was never made public. The report states that cancer cases in villages close to Kalpakkam are seven times higher (210 per 1 lakh people) compared to just (30 per 1 lakh people) in distant villages. Morbidity levels in areas near the nuclear reactor are 2-3 times higher than normal. The study covered 22 proximate villages (within 8km radius) and three distant villages (50km from the reactor site).

“Several cases of cancer due to nuclear radiation have come up in the vicinity of the Kalpakkam nuclear reactor, but they were never reported. Even when they were reported, the government refused to acknowledge them,” said VT Padmanabhan a researcher in health effects of

radiation and member of the European Commission on Radiation Risk. “Dr Datta’s report is one of the best independent surveys carried out to date. Going by its data, it is clear that radiation causes cancer.”

Data sought from the DAE under a separate RTI reveals as many as 244 Kalpakkam employees and their dependents were detected with various types of cancer between 1999 and 2009. Most people affected were in the 41-60 age group and included men as well as women. During 2000-2010, 19

cases of thyroid diseases were detected. Experts said thyroid diseases are common among people living in and around nuclear reactor sites. BARC officials, however, said the 244 cancer cases and mortality rates among Kalpakkam employees were not different from those seen among the general population. Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd officials did not respond to questions mailed by *DNA* to their official ids despite several reminders. ●

Gangadhar S Patil

THREE YEARS AFTER GAZA MASSACRES, PALESTINIAN PEOPLE REMAIN STEADFAST

MARKING the third anniversary of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, Comrade Jamil Mizher, member of the Central Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), said that the occupation, despite its vast crimes and massacres, failed to achieve its objectives and could not break the will or steadfastness of the Palestinian people.

Three years after the criminal war on the Strip, our people have regained our capacity and capabilities to confront the Israeli occupation, and despite the continuing threats, have not and will never surrender to their occupation. Comrade Mizher stressed that meaningful national reconciliation was long overdue in order to address the situation faced by our people. He urged that national unity processes must include practical steps on the ground – the release of political prisoners and ending restrictions on travel – and must include fully re-building the Palestine Liberation Organization on a democratic and inclusive basis, inside and outside Palestine, including new democratic elections for the Palestinian National Council with proportional representation among the Palestinian people everywhere they are. In this way, a rebuilt PLO can become a strong mechanism to confront the occupation.

Commenting on the impact of Arab revolutions on the Palestinian cause, Mizher said that strengthening Arab popular movements benefit the Palestinian cause. He called upon Arab governments – particularly those new governments following revolutions – to act to lift the siege on Gaza, permanently open all crossings, and provide aid and assistance to the Palestinian people in order to support their steadfastness in the face of occupation, aggression and war crimes. Three years after the war on Gaza the Palestinian people are eager for a national program from which to confront the occupation, fully rebuild Gaza, and build the Palestinian national liberation movement.

Comrade Emad Abu Rahma, a member of the Central

Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also noted that three years after the attack on Gaza, we must take Israeli threats to launch a new war on Gaza seriously. Abu Rahma said that the Palestinian people must be ready on the political and diplomatic fronts, and prepare the resistance forces, in order to counter these threats. Abu Rahma said that the occupation has continued its attacks on Gaza on a daily basis, invading with tanks, targeting civilians, and assassinating resistance activists; he noted that such attacks also happen on a constant basis in the West Bank, through land confiscation, home demolitions, and arrest raids and attacks. War crimes, he noted, are a permanent and continuous feature of the occupation.

In the face of these ongoing and escalating threats, “it is our people’s right to exercise all forms of struggle against this occupation, especially as international legitimacy and international law affirm the right of our people to exercise all forms of struggle. They noted that the Israeli government feared meaningful Palestinian national unity, saying that Israeli threats are escalating as they see that Palestinian political forces are serious about achieving unity.

Comrade Omar Shehadeh, member of the Political Bureau spoke at the PFLP’s event in Tulkarem to commemorate the 44th anniversary of the Front’s founding. “This is a day in which we renew our promises to the Palestinian people, to guard the cause and to guard our unity, and to give priority to the primary contradiction with the occupation, and defend our people’s democratic and social rights, confront all manifestations of corruption, abuse of our people’s freedom, and violations of our national values and struggle. This is a day to renew our commitment to the defense of life, human dignity, and the political and social rights of our people, workers, peasants, professionals, students and youth, women, and children and adults in the camps, cities, towns and villages within

our homeland and in the countries of exile and diaspora". There is an urgent national task to set a unified national strategy to resist the occupation and create a clear and specific Palestinian political line that guards against tampering and outside interference as a foundation to struggle to achieve Palestinian rights in word and deed. All Palestinian institutions, including popular committees and camp return committees must hold comprehensive elections based on proportional representation, and, centrally, there must be democratic and inclusive elections for a new Palestinian National Council inside and outside Palestine. Shehadeh noted that such elections must be democratic and a clear rejection of systems of quotas, saying that the rights of our people in exile and diaspora and within Palestine would not be forfeited. He said that such a new PNC is necessary to renew and rebuild legitimate Palestinian national institutions.

Such new elections on a democratic basis, said Shehadeh, would work to rebuild the PLO institutions on a democratic and inclusive basis in order to meet the needs of the Palestinian people to confront the occupation and its constant attacks and crimes, and safeguard the achievements of the Palestinian national struggle. Such

elections for a rebuilt PLO re-establish its status as the sole legitimate representative and the highest reference point for our people, the leadership of the struggle, which is organically linked with the struggle of the Arab people for liberation, democracy, social justice and unity. He reiterated the Front's absolute support for the freedom and dignity of our Arab people, condemning all forms of oppression and tyranny against them. He warned against the escalating threats of foreign intervention, particularly from NATO, which seek only to subvert and destroy the popular movements and their national and democratic aims.

Shehadeh concluded his speech by saluting all of the prisoners in the jails of the occupation, in particular those prisoners in isolation and the valiant hunger strikers whose action exposed the crimes of occupation before the world. He spoke of the PFLP's imprisoned general secretary, Ahmad Sa'adat, a Palestinian symbol of steadfastness, and how prisons, arrests, and assassinations would never break or eliminate the Front. He congratulated the Palestinian people on the anniversary of the Palestinian revolution, Christmas and New Year's Day, and pledged that the Front would remain on its path to liberate the land and people of Palestine, until return and liberation. ●

ODISHA: PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST NAVIN GOVERNMENT'S PROTECTION OF RAPISTS

DURING last 12 years the Navin Patnaik government has become completely anti-people. As a result, vast masses are driven towards more hunger. Displacement of people from land and livelihood is increasing every day. In the name of development the govt. is engaged in providing all facilities to MNCs and Corporate houses. Besides these anti-people policies, crime against people, like dacoity, loot, theft, robbery, murder and gang rapes, is on increase. During last 12 years, under BJD rule more than 12 thousand rape cases were recorded, but only 18 culprits were punished. In many places BJD workers and supporters were directly involved in it. BJD leaders and police are supporting the culprits. In many cases police is not registering cases against them. Even when people are going to higher officials, due to political pressure, state police has become callous for the common people. So no action is taken against the culprits. All over the state common people are afraid of going to police stations. This truth is admitted even by the present DG of Police.

In Arjunguda village of Pipili Block, just 18 kilometers from the state capital of Bhubaneswar, a gang rape of a minor girl, Babina Behera, took place and the rapists tried to kill her pressing her neck. She was found in a paddy field in a very serious condition with complete naked body.

Though she was taken to Pipili hospital the doctors did not start treatment saying she has gone to coma. Though she was taken to Pipili police station, the inspector did not register an FIR telling she is unable to say who raped her. Police refused to take any action. In the mean time her family was threatened. When she was taken to Capital Hospital at Bhubaneswar, when they came to know that it is a gang rape case, they did not start their treatment and just referred her to Cuttack SCB Medical College.

In Cuttack medical college she stayed for 8 days, but proper treatment was not done, as she belongs to a poor dalit family and is not able to spend for costly medicine. As even there they were threatened, she was taken to one of her relatives at Bhubaneswar and started treatment secretly at a private hospital. Her plight was informed to State Women Commission. It also did not take this case seriously and did not take any action. As the victim's relatives revolted at the State Women's Commission office, this news came out through some media. After this a PIL was filed by a High Court advocate, Prabir Das, at Cuttack. The high Court intervened in the matter and ordered for her treatment and ordered the police to register case.

In this situation, after coming to know about the matter, the CPI(ML) Odisha State Committee issued a press

statement. In a letter to chief minister it demanded an independent enquiry and proper treatment to the victim and arrest and punishment of the culprits. Same day many other organizations also intervened in the matter.

After this the real story came out. The culprits were Pipili's powerful BJD leader and state agriculture minister Pradeep Maharathi's people. On 6th January, 2008, in the same village a gang rape was committed by same culprits with present victims close friend Pravati Behera. Both were studying in 9th class at that time. Though a FIR was lodged at Pipili Station at that time, because they were Pradeep Maharathi's people, they tried to compromise the case calling 10 times meetings at Pipili BJD office. They pressurised the victims family. The case is still continuing at Puri court. But the first victim Pravati was murdered and it was made into a suicidal case. In this case the present victim Babina was main witness. So the Police, BJD leaders and the culprits threatened her and her family members to withdraw the cases and withdraw from giving witness statement. When they did not do so, they gang raped and tried to kill Babina. The agricultural minister gave shelter to the culprits in his farm house and police gave protection to them. Only after statewide movement started the police lodged a FIR and Crime Branch enquiry was declared. Three culprits were arrested. On 19th January agriculture minister resigned from his post. A judicial enquiry is declared. First the inspector of Pipili was transferred and after pressure from people he was suspended.

Not only Pipili gang rape, with in 7 days in Bhadrak a college girl was gang raped and killed. In Rajgangpur a girl was forcibly taken from a festival in a Bolero and gangraped, In Berhampur a blind girl was gang raped and killed. In Udala a 7 year old girl child was gang raped and killed. A case came out that in Kendrapada a girl was forcibly taken from Saliasahi slum to Vijayawada and gang raped for days. It shows the condition of the women in the state.

Taking this question seriously All India Revolutionary Womens Organisation(AIRWO) Odisha State Committee organized a demonstration on 12th January at Bhubaneswar demanding CBI enquiry and resignation of agriculture minister and chief minister. It demanded proper free treatment to the victim and severe punishment to culprits and those who supported them. In this rally AIRWO general secretary, com. Sharmistha Choudhury also participated. AIRWO declared a statewide protest from 15th to 21st January and appealed to all women's organizations to come out on the streets to struggle.

Sakhav

Organ of Kerala State Committee of CPI(ML)

**"Sakhav", Hashmi Lane,
Pachalam PO, Kochi - 12, Kerala**

On 15th January a rally of AIRWO at Damana Square burnt effigy of Navin Patnaik. On 16th January a massive protest meeting was held at Bishnupriya Appartment square led by AIRWO and Basti Surakshya mancha. On 17th a youth rally of RYFI from Inquilab Bhawan organised protest meeting at Indradhanu market square and burnt effigy of Navin Patnaik. On 18th AIRWO and Narayani Slum dwellers committee jointly organised a protest meeting and effigy of Chief Minister was burnt. On 20th AIRWO Khandagiri Branch Committee and Khandagiri Branch Committee of CPI(ML) started a rally from Bhaktamadhunagar and at Khandagiri square in front of Police Station organised a protest meeting. On 21st AIRWO, Basti Surakshya Mancha and CPI(ML) cadres jointly started a campaign in the morning at Bhubaneswar and marched to Berhampur campaigning in the trains. At Berhampur they joined the Gana dharna before RDC office and came back in the evening campaigning all the way. On 17th January Bhadrak District Committee of CPI(ML) organised a demonstration in front of district collectorate and submitted a memorandum. In Badamba, Cuttack and Puri districts CPI(ML) district committees organized demonstrations.

In a joint meeting of different political parties and mass movements was convened on 14th January a statewide continuous protest program was decided. On 16th a joint rally of this Gana Samaj started from Master Canteen square and marched towards Governors house. The protestors from political parties, organisations, womens organisations broke police barricades rushing towards governor's house. Women protesters fought against the police. They blocked the main road and started protest meeting there. A delegation met and submitted a charter of demands. CPI(ML) state secretary Com. Sivaram and AIRWO state president Comrade Pramila were part of this delegation.

The Gana Samaj called for state level protests demanding CBI enquiry and punishment of all culprits. It has demanded that Women and Child Welfare minister and the chief minister Navin Patnaik who is in charge of home department should resign. It has declared that till these demands are fulfilled the agitation will continue. ●

Sivaram



ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO THE STATE ASSEMBLIES

**Vote out all those who enslave the country to neo-liberal policies !
Vote for Revolutionary alternative, Vote for CPI(ML) !**

THE Elections to UP and four other state assemblies are taking place at a very critical time. Out of these five states, the ruling class parties are treating the seven phase elections to UP assembly as a dress rehearsal for the next Lok Sabha elections. They had started campaign for the same months before, spending fabulous sums, making the code conduct of Election Commission meaningless. During the last two decades, all these parties whether Congress, BJP, SP, BSP or others who were or are in power at center or in the states were/are competing with each other in speeding up the implementation of the neo-liberal policies which have pauperized the masses and devastated the nature unprecedentedly. These policies have led to unprecedented price rise, rampant corruption, unemployment which is compelling large scale migration and commercialization of education, healthcare and all other essential services. To transfer agricultural land at throw away prices to MNCs and corporate houses, peasants are displaced in ever larger numbers and their resistances are brutally suppressed. During the last five years after coming to power using the dalit card, the BSP government has not implemented land reforms, or any other policies which benefitted the downtrodden. On the contrary it has created new records of corruption and atrocities against the poor. Its pro-dalit action was limited to erecting statues of the so-called dalit leaders including Mayavathi herself. Meanwhile it voted for all anti-people policies of the UPA government at center. While Congress is in a hurry to enslave the country to neo-colonial policies by inviting even FDI in retail sector and signing a number of unequal treaties with US, the record of the BJP governments in Karnataka or Gujarat or elsewhere is not different. All these anti-people, anti-national parties are united in making the rich fabulously richer, while making the poor poorer, with 80% earning less than Rs.20 per day and more than 50% pushed below the 'poverty line'. While they contend to turn the parliament and state assemblies in to real *pig dens*, their collusion to serve the ruling system has become clear as the 42 year old exercise to enact a Lokpal Bill was once again scuttled.

These issues are not even discussed in the elections. All parties are engaged in mutual mudslinging and using caste-communal vote banks, along with money-liquor-muscle power to win. None of them are prepared to oppose the imperialist dictated policies. Elections are turned in to musical chair game. The CPI-CPI(M) like forces are not better, as their Left Front was also implementing the same ruling class policies in Bengal and Kerala. It is in this context CPI (ML) is contesting the elections in few seats, exposing

these parties and their fake election manifestos promising everything under the sun if voted to power and calling for a revolutionary alternative to the ruling system.

The more than six decades of rule by Congress and other parties after 1947 have only enslaved the country to neo-colonial plunder. A revolutionary alternative ensuring food, housing, healthcare, education and employment with need based wages to all can be achieved and the real independence, as the martyrs of the independence struggle had dreamed, can be achieved only by overthrowing the ruling system and advancing to people's democracy and socialism. The CPI (ML) has fielded the candidates and is supporting few others to take this politics of revolutionary change and people's democracy to the people. It calls for throwing out IMF-World Bank- WTO- MNCs and the neo-liberal policies implemented under their orders which are responsible for price rise, corruption, unemployment and increasing inequalities. It calls for an anti-caste movement aimed at annihilation of the caste, for fighting the caste-communal based vote banks, for land reforms based on "land to the tiller", end to displacement for MNCS and corporate houses, and for transferring all power to the people. It appeals to all progressive, democratic forces, the toiling masses to vote for the candidates of CPI (ML) and those supported by it to advance the struggle for a casteless, secular and democratic society which ensures social justice and equality.

In UP the Party has fielded six candidates: Comrades Ramraj in Mallavan, Hardoi district, Guruprasad in Safipur, Unnao district, Dr. Rambali in Misrik, Rajkumar in Sidhauli and Ramkumar in Mahauki of Sitapur district and Sunila in Kursi, Barabanki district. Party is supporting the following five independent candidates comrades Mukesh Misra in Unnao Sadar, Unnao district, Dinesh Yadav, Bakshi Ka Talab, Lucknow district, Satyadev Singh in Sadar, Sathish Tripathi in Sawata and Chandrabhal in Hargaon of Sitapur district, Anju Rajbhar in Sikandarpur of Balia district. The election manifesto and handbills explaining Party's stand in the elections have created enthusiasm among the rural masses of landless and poor peasants and all other downtrodden sections who are getting increasingly pauperized under the neo-liberal policies pursued by the central and state governments.

In Punjab Party has fielded com. Satpal in Bhadaur constituency of Barnala district. All the Party members and supporters in the state are mobilized to organize an effective campaign in this constituency. ●

THE OTHER SEPTEMBER 11 TRAGEDY

[There is a proliferation of political parties which thrive based on dalit vote banks like BSP led by Mayavati, who made a record by remaining in power as chief minister for continuous five years in the most populous state in the country, UP, which no other parties including the Congress could not achieve so far, and of preachers of *identity politics* and so many other votaries of dalit politics in the country. During the election times, as in UP and Punjab now, not only BSP, but all other political parties who aspire to come to power, also promises many things to dalits and other down trodden sections. In spite of all these, the condition of these sections of people who constitute a sizable section of the population has not improved. Besides the caste based atrocities have only increased as a number of studies made reveal. It is repeatedly proved that irrespective of all reformist measures, the situation will not change so long as the caste system with all its inhuman characteristics prevail. As pointed out during the renaissance movement and later by Dr. Ambedkar like reformers without *annihilation of the caste system* the condition of the dalits will not change basically. The recent study on the Paramakudi police killing of dalits given below, once again points out the necessity of taking up the question of annihilation of the caste system as an important program by the communist movement as an integral part of the struggle for social revolution – *Red Star*]

CRIMES against scheduled castes have actually increased, according to the government's own figures. But a fact-finding team in Tamil Nadu, where on September 11, 2011, serious police atrocities against dalits were committed, found that the district administration had little awareness about laws and measures for combating crimes against scheduled castes and tribes.

The union home ministry, in its annual report for the year 2010-11 (page 78), has stated that the number of crimes against scheduled castes in the country has increased from 26,127 in 2005 to 33,595 in 2009. State-wise figures are not available, but one has only to read S Viswanathan's classic study on crimes against dalits in Tamil Nadu (2007) to comprehend the seriousness of the situation there as regards violence against dalits by higher castes and classes.

The report details "measures to be taken in combating crimes against scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs)" such as implementation of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; improvement in convictions for crimes against SCs and STs; proactive role of the police in detection and investigation of such crimes; sensitisation of the law enforcement machinery; application of law without dilution; awareness-building; mechanisms for safety and security of SCs and STs; prompt registration of FIRs, proper supervision, review and follow-up; preventive measures and policing of atrocity-prone areas; representation of SCs and STs in the police, in sensitive areas; measures towards economic and social rehabilitation of victims of violence; sample surveys and studies; exemplary punishment for extreme violations of human dignity, etc.

Though the recommended measures are indeed impressive, none of them was found to have been implemented on the ground, as discovered during a fact-finding team visit to Paramakudi in Ramanathapuram district, Chintamani in Madurai district, and Ilayangudi in the

Tuticorin district of south Tamil Nadu where, on September 11, 2011, serious police atrocities against dalits, including murder, were committed. The district administration showed little awareness or was indifferent to any of the above-mentioned laws and measures. The district magistrate, superintendent of police, and inspector general in Ramanathapuram took a rigidly law-and-order approach to a legitimate dalit public protest and agitation, and ignored the proclaimed police code of conduct and charter of duties. The inspector general, a tough cop, went to the extent of branding John Pandian, a prominent dalit leader in the region, a mere criminal, and underlined the need for strict action against such 'criminals'. He was totally ignorant of special provisions in the law and procedure that govern police conduct in relation to crimes against dalits.

Six people were killed in police firing at Paramakudi, and hundreds were reportedly injured and/or suffered police torture at all locations in the three districts where violence occurred due to police mishandling. Journalist S Viswanathan, in his classic book *Dalits in Dravidian Land* (Navayana, 2007), has documented in painful detail 52 cases of atrocities against dalits in Tamil Nadu committed by more powerful and better-off sections of backward castes, especially the Thevars in the southern districts. The negative role of the police and the indifference of the rest of the state machinery, are among the important features documented in the book. In fact, state indifference and police complicity and indifference to provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 are major factors behind continuing atrocities against dalits in Tamil Nadu.

The struggle for social justice and civil rights on the part of the depressed Mallars (which is opposed by the backward Thevar caste) lies at the heart of relations between the two communities in southern Tamil Nadu. A high point in the struggle was reached in 1957 when rights activist

Immanuel Sekaran was murdered by suspected members of the Thevar community. Muthuramalinga Thevar, a leading member of the Thevar community, was arrested for his complicity in the case, but was let off.

The relentless struggle for social equality by the Mallars, resisted by the Thevars, was seen again recently in the Mallars' demand that their leader's death anniversary, falling on September 11, be celebrated as a state function just as the death anniversary of Muthuramalinga Thevar is celebrated annually. And that their leader should be christened *deivathirumagan* ('god's own creation') just as Muthuramalinga Thevar has been christened. Negotiations between the two communities took place with the mediation of the police who supported the Thevars against the Mallars, leading to a rejection of their demands. This caused an eruption of police violence against the Mallars on September 11, 2011, in Paramakudi, Ramanathapuram district.

The observance of Immanuel Sekaran's death anniversary on September 11 every year has been going on peacefully, as acknowledged even by the police and revenue authorities. Preparations this year went ahead, involving the allotment of time slots for leaders from political parties and others to pay homage to the slain hero. Even the murder of Palanikumar, a 16-year-old dalit student in Pacheri village, on the night of September 9, which caused great concern, did not affect the preparations. Notwithstanding the relatively peaceful atmosphere, the district administration prevented John Pandian, regional leader of the new dalit party, the Tamil Manila Munnetra Kazhagam (TMMK), from visiting Paramakudi to pay his respects to Immanuel Sekaran, after his visit to Pacheri to convey his condolences to the bereaved Palanikumar family. Undemocratic and insensitive though this was, the dalits kept their cool and John Pandian decided not to come to Paramakudi. There were no formal orders of externment against Pandian until the evening of September 10, 2011. Such an order was, however, communicated to the district authorities, from 'higher formations', at around 10.30 am on September 11, 2011.

Pandian had earlier been given a specific time slot (3 pm to 5 pm) on September 11, 2011, to pay his respects at the memorial of Immanuel Sekaran, establishing the fact that, till then, the police had no apprehensions of a possible breakdown in law and order in the event of his visit. In a provocative police move, Pandian was arrested in Valanadu, Tuticorin district, under Section 151 of the CrPC, at about 11 am on September 11, 2011. This was just a few hours before his intended departure for a state-approved visit to Paramakudi. The place of detention, a guesthouse at the police firing range, was inexplicable and led to concerns about his safety. The arrest was completely unwarranted.

As the news spread, people assembled at the five-roads junction in Paramakudi, a little distance away from

the memorial. A section of the crowd (some 50-odd men out of around 1,000 people) squatted on the road. Traffic on that day mainly consisted of people coming to pay homage to Immanuel Sekaran. From many accounts and practical wisdom, the sequence of events that followed soon after raised more questions than answers. Police officers at the spot failed to contain the small though slightly restive crowd by the usual peaceful means. Instead, they inexplicably resorted to a lathi-charge and began firing even as the crowd was dispersing into various alleys leading out of the main junction. Sivakumar, the Paramakudi revenue official on whose orders force was resorted to, failed to meet members of the fact-finding team. The revenue divisional officer confirmed that she was far from the scene of the incident, and that Sivakumar had ordered the police firing on his own assessment of the situation. This called for a statutory inquiry into the incident, in accordance with the law.

The fact-finding team was of the view that the situation could have been handled easily and without the use of force. The police version — that the crowd had resorted to arson — appeared wholly unfounded. None of the establishments in the area bore any evidence of having been set on fire. As for the police vehicle — an armoured carrier — that was set on fire, it defies belief that a crowd that was already on the run as a result of the lathi-charge, and far away from the five-roads junction, would have attempted to commit arson, especially in the presence of a posse of heavily armed policemen in riot gear. There is no evidence that the people manning the vehicle resisted attack. Further, a fire-tender stationed a few yards away could have extinguished the fire but the station officer, fire and rescue services, who was in control of the fire-tender, was unable to explain why it took him so long to move a few yards to where the police vehicle had been set on fire. A fire-tender belonging to another fire station, which was brought all the way, had stopped about 500 metres from the junction. Inexplicably, this fire-tender too was set on fire, allegedly by the crowd that was on the run trying to escape the lathi-charge and firing that had begun at around 12.45 pm. This led to the impression that the acts of arson were not the result of any action by the assembled crowd but were, in fact, carried out by the police in order to legitimise the unjustifiable violence. These aspects must be properly probed.

There are pointers to the presence of agent provocateurs in the few hundred-strong crowd at the five-roads junction. A lady in a red sari was conspicuous by her presence and a video recording from atop a building at the spot showed her actively orchestrating the protest against John Pandian's arrest and the squat-on-the-road agitation. She was also seen continuously talking on her cellphone. Apart from the video, a senior police officer confirmed that the lady was heard speaking over the phone and discussing the detention of John Pandian. The officer added that she

had not been seen in the district in the past, and that she could have been an outsider. It is strange that the policemen at the spot, including those from the intelligence, did not consider her presence as something that warranted a probe. Apart from identifying suspected agent provocateurs, officers who failed to follow the basic drill in such situations must be questioned.

In this context, there is urgent need to look into the norms and standards of international human rights law and Indian constitutional and legal provisions that govern the police handling of such situations. The yearly commemoration of Immanuel Sekaran clearly falls under the category of peaceful and lawful assembly. Article 20 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association." The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states in Article 21: "The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognised" and that "no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." India is party to the covenant and has a binding obligation to observe it fully.

The Paramakudi event has been recognised as 'cultural expression', allowing people to assemble peacefully. The aspect of recognition of the right to peaceful assembly has been observed. Even with certain other factors which may have influenced the gathering, the assembly was peaceful until the lathi-charge and police firing began. In fact, statements were made that negotiations were on between the police and the people assembled, in particular those sitting at five-roads junction. Besides the assembled people, there was a substantial police presence at the venue with all the necessary equipment and vehicles. The sudden rush of police, armed with lathis, brutally assaulting people who were sitting, and the subsequent use of firearms raises a host of disturbing questions about violation of human rights standards declared under international and national human rights law.

A code of conduct for law enforcement officials was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 17, 1979, and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, 1990 (referred to as basic principles) also exist. Corresponding provisions exist in the domestic law, especially concerning the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials including the police. According to Article 1 of the code, law enforcement officials/police shall at all times fulfil the duties imposed upon them by law, by serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal acts, consistent with the high degree of restraint required "by their profession".

The behaviour of the police in Paramakudi falls far short of this code, especially when "no illegal acts" by the public were noticeable. Article 3 of the code states specifically that "police officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty". The sudden lathi-charge by the police on people sitting on the ground, with no semblance of violent expression, and the subsequent use of firearms deserves rigorous scrutiny. Moreover, visual images have shown that the use of force was not in accordance with the principles of necessity and proportion. Closely related to the above, and as observed in the testimonies provided by victims with multiple injuries, issues arise relating to Article 5 of the code, which states that "no law enforcement official/police may inflict, instigate or tolerate any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". The visible injuries observed on victims show that they indeed suffered such violence, along with abusive language related to their caste identity. The right to physical integrity was severely violated, with some victims losing their ability to carry on their profession. For example, a vehicle driver's inability to use his arms and legs. Rights relating to life, limb and property were seriously violated. In some cases, people were cruelly beaten and killed. Another tragic case was that of a disabled person (polio paralysis to the left leg) being beaten on his legs, which were twisted. Here, one must take into consideration the Convention of the Rights of Disabled Persons (CRPD) which India has ratified. Article 15 of the convention prohibits any form of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment...

Article 6 states: "The law enforcement officials/police shall ensure the full protection of the health of persons in their custody and in particular shall take immediate action to ensure medical attention whenever required." This provision was repeatedly violated for most victims in the Paramakudi case. In some instances, the victims were left to find their own medical help; no effort was made to call an ambulance or ask for assistance. Besides, with the imposition of Section 144 of the CrPC, efforts to get an ambulance through the number 108 proved impossible even for the hospital authorities. On the use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials/police within the human rights framework, the basic principles refer to the code, especially Article 3 on the use of force, which, with its general provisions, among others, stipulates that government "should consider the development of non-lethal, incapacitating weapons for use in appropriate situations with a view to increasingly restraining the applicable means capable of causing death or injury to persons". In Paramakudi, there was a wilful negligence in observing the above provisions, with the police indulging in a brutal assault on unarmed people, with all kinds of force including a lathi-charge and stone-throwing. Some people too threw stones, injuring a few police personnel, but the police had

protective gear on. Other means of crowd dispersal were never attempted. The district magistrate of Ramanathapuram defended the stone-throwing by policemen as less harmful than police firing! Moreover, visual images showed that people were beaten up repeatedly, with the police stamping on their bodies. Warnings were not given through the appropriate audio means, but the police came well-equipped with riot-control vehicles (VAJRA), fire-tenders, ambulances, etc. Police vehicles appear to have been set on fire deliberately, to aggravate the situation.

A number of UN basic principles on the use of firearms were violated during the firing at Paramakudi on September 11, 2011. The basic principles include provisions for policing assemblies of different categories. Above all, as seen by the performance of the police in this incident, special measures need to be taken to sensitise the police and concerned state officials on anti-discriminatory approaches to policing and human rights protections as recommended by the Union home ministry itself. The basic principles also call for clear reporting and reviewing procedures; Article 23 states that persons affected by the use of force and firearms, or their legal representatives, shall have access to an independent process, including a judicial process. In the event of the death of such persons, this provision shall apply to their dependents. In all these circumstances, the issue of command responsibility should be examined.

After hearing witnesses, interacting with officers and taking into account the facts and circumstances of the case, the fact-finding team reached the following prima facie conclusions:

1) The arrest and detention of John Pandian, and preventing him from paying homage to Immanuel Sekaran, was unwarranted and led to the Paramakudi anti-dalit police violence.

2) It was clear that the dalits were proceeding to the memorial in a peaceful manner and were unarmed. There was no justification therefore for the use of force.

3) The use of force, including use of firearms, for an extended period of over four hours (from 12.45 hours to 16.45 hours) was unjustified.

4) The lack of a system to render medical assistance to the injured, and the brutal means by which the men in uniform dealt with the victims, was shocking and warrants action against those found guilty of such brutal acts.

5) There was no justification for using firearms; excessive firing caused death and injury to a large number of innocent people who were unarmed and were in a peaceful assembly/procession to the memorial. The firing/lathi-charge amounted to offences under the IPC and SC/ST (POA) Act, 1989.

6) It is learnt that there has been no executive magisterial inquiry into the use of firearms in this case, as required under the CrPC, apparently in light of the setting up of the Justice Sampath Commission of Inquiry. This is a patent dereliction of duty on the part of the district authorities.

7) There is a public perception that there will be no proper inquiry of any kind by the local administration, which is biased against dalits. An independent inquiry or investigation is therefore imperative. The investigation must be entrusted to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

8) A number of complaints from those who suffered serious injuries in the brutal police action state that no complaint or FIR has been registered. Each of the individual atrocities should be the subject matter of a separate inquiry. A special court should be set up at Paramakudi to receive complaints and process and investigate them.

9) Victims have not been properly rehabilitated both in terms of compensation and in terms of requisite medical treatment. Long-term measures of rehabilitation must be addressed, such as distribution of land to every SC family in the affected villages, development of their land, admission of their children to good residential schools, and provision of independent approach roads to their villages without them having to pass through areas of tension. Proactive, holistic measures must be adopted on the basis of equality, justice and dignity as mandated by the Constitution of India. Periodic fire-fighting is not the answer. A committee consisting of eminent citizens must be set up to continuously engage in measures to build the confidence of the people. ●

[K S Subramanian, a Senior Fellow at the Council for Social Development, New Delhi, was a member of the fact-finding mission led by Justice Hosbet Suresh and set up by People's Watch, to go into the police firing on dalits at Paramakudi, in Tamil Nadu. Infochange News & Features, January 2012]

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STATEMENT OF THE POPULAR FORCES AGAINST VIOUS ATTACH ON EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION

COORDINATING COMMITTEE of the popular forces for a strong socialist Egypt have joined hands against the vicious attack on the Egyptian revolution, to safeguard its goals of democracy against the attack launched by the Military Council and forces of counter-revolution. It condemned the media campaign to discredit the revolution and even the practice of physical attacks and to the extent of killings, arrests and violations of human rights and kidnapping in the streets and torture and abuse. It condemned the escalation of the scheme aimed at liquidation of revolutionary sections, mainly the left and progressive parties and democratic organizations which led the January 25 uprising of the last year.

It condemned the campaign against the revolutionary

socialists. It called on all national and democratic forces to counter this campaign to protect the revolution and its objectives towards the establishment of a modern democratic state for the benefit of the people, especially the lower classes, so as to achieve state of democratic freedoms, social justice and equality. It called on the Egyptian people to complete the revolution and achieve their goals of liberty and social justice. ●

Egyptian Communist Party, Socialist Party of Egypt, Party of People's Alliance, Socialist Labour Party, National Progressive Unionist Organization of Socialist Revolutionaries, Socialist Revolutionary Movement (January), Coordinating Committee for a strong democratic socialist Egypt.

POSTSCRIPT TO 9TH CONGRESS OF CPI(ML)

From the opening mass march and public meeting on November 7, the 94th anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution, attended by thousands of militant CPI (ML) Party members and supporters from eighteen different states of the reactionary Indian federal state; through five full days of intense discussion and debate on the Party Program and Constitution, as well as work reports and evaluations of Party work around the country; to a number of seminars addressing important questions including the ideological challenges confronting the international communist movement; to the closing ceremony where the red flag was lowered and Congress delegates, observers and fraternal international guests chanted militant slogans like "Inquilab Zindabad!" (Long Live Revolution!) and sang the "Internationale" together in many different languages; the CPI (ML) Ninth Party Congress proved to be even more positive than the leader of ROL, USA had foreseen. The dedication and hard work of the Indian comrades, the non-sectarian approach to the struggle, the proletarian internationalist spirit, the revolutionary outlook, and the commitment to socialism and communism displayed throughout the CPI (ML) Ninth Party Congress was exemplary. ●

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**Revolutionary Youth Federation of India (RYFI) Protest at Bhopal on 15th January
Against Dow Chemicals Sponsorship to London Olympics**