

# Towards Socialism

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## MANY OTHER CHANNELS NEED TO OPEN FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

**DEBABRATA BISWAS, General Secretary, AIFB**

What happened on 8-9 March 2010 in Parliament, rather than in Rajya Sabha is indeed a historical event in the history of India Parliament. The day was the 8th March - the International Women's Day, when the Women's Reservation Bill was moved in the Rajya Sabha. There was enough of discussion on the issue since the last decade and more particularly since 2007 when the Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, but not discussed for adoption. It was interpreted in the political circle as a trick of the ruling Congress Party, keeping an eye on the then forthcoming general election of 2009. The opposition parties rightfully accused the congress party for its lack of courage and sincerity to go ahead with the Bill. The congress party was always bypassing the issue on the plea of reaching a consensus. But this time the numbers - game support of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha was favourable for the safe passage of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. The relentless fight and continuing demand of the Left Parties for Women's Reservation, of course, went a long way to pressurise the government to move the Bill. The Left parties have had the strategy from the beginning of the Budget (I) session to press for voting on the issue, rather to go on for another long-spell debate on the well-emphasised issue. But the situation took a new turn when some members tried to disrupt the proceeding of the House by violent demonstration and sit - in dharna to prevent the passage of the Bill. The chairman was forced to suspend them and got them physically removed by calling the marshal. The Bill was then passed by majority members, with only one in opposition.

The parties opposing the Bill might have some points. Reservation within Reservation for OBC women might be their demand, but that does not justify entire rejection of the Bill. Women covering half of the sky deserve one third reservation for their justified representation in the Parliament and State Assemblies. They are already enjoying this privilege in Panchayats and Municipalities and that does not pose any problem of deprivation of the OBC women.

But still it is doubtful how far the congress party will be prepared to get the Bill passed in the Lok Sabha. And even if it is passed, the problem will not end. The Basic need is empowerment of the women. Only reservation of seats will not ensure their adequate empowerment socially and economically. It needs further opening of channels for the women in the fields of education, employment and social states. In many other countries, like China, women are socially advanced, having equal opportunities like those for men in the fields of employment, economic self-sufficiency and educational opportunities. Hence, they are not particularly bothered concerned about reservation for women in legislative. Empowerment is the essence of reservation, and we must therefore need to open many other channels for empowerment of the women in true sense.

## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS DISAPPOINTS MILLIONS OF 'AAM ADMI'.

President Sm. Pratibha Patil addressed the joint session of both houses of Parliament on the eve of the Budget Session on February 22, 2010. Her address assumes a special importance, as it reflects the government's policy and future planning and programme for the welfare of the people at large. In view of this perspective, it can be said that her address has disappointed millions of 'aam admi'. It has failed to give any message of future employment prospects, as well as to ensure curbing of unprecedented price-rise.

We are happy to note that Hon'ble President has expressed her 'heartfelt condolences' for the victims of terrorist act in Pune. She has also expressed her concern for left wing extremists' violence in West Bengal, but unfortunately refrained from naming Maoists' recent attack at Silda in West Midnapore district of West Bengal, killing 24 EFR jawans. It was reported in the media immediately before President's address that omission of 'condemnation of

Maoists attack at Silda' was due to pressure on the government from its ally Trinamool Congress. If that be the fact, the matter is really very unfortunate. Moreover, it is noted that Hon'ble President herself has admitted that 'left wing extremism continues to be a significant cause of concern'. The UPA government has failed to contain ultra-left activities in the country. It has also failed to protect the poor tribal people.

Of late, the common people of our country are plagued with two most burning issue, viz. - 'price rise' and 'unemployment'. But these issues are not adequately dealt with in her address. And no new hope is also given to her countrymen. When she mentions about unhappy pressure on the prices of food grains and food products', it appears that the gravity of unprecedented price - rise situation is underestimated and the solutions suggested are also not convincing, nor very effective people are, therefore, disappointed when she expressed the government's view that 'higher prices were inevitable'. In such a case her assertion that the 'government' continues to accord the highest importance to ensuring relief to the aam aadmi on food prices' is far from reality. Prices are steadily rising, with food articles inflation almost touching 20.

The Hon'ble President is perfectly right when she says - 'our food security can be ensured only through sustained efforts at increasing agricultural productivity combined with a comprehensive reform of the public distribution system'. Unfortunately, both the propositions made by her could not be fulfilled by the government. Then the question causes, whether our 'food security' is at stake. The government should answer it categorically.

As regards price-rise, it should be noted further that prices of petrol and diesel are hiked through Budget announcement, which of course came after President's speech. We wonder whether Hon'ble President could have anticipated it and in that case, what could have been her reaction. But the fact remains, this hike in prices of petro-products would further aggravate the already critical price-rise situation.

So far, the second burning issue of unemployment is concerned, the President's address fails to convey to us any message regarding any new measures taken by the government for increasing employment opportunities. The government continues to harp only on its earlier NREGA measure, which have its own limitations. Particularly, when in the new Budget for 2010-11 only a little increase in monetary provision has been made for it. Moreover, the government continues to maintain its silence guarantee for millions of growing unemployed youths in the urban sector.

We may refer to a few other aspects of her speech. We do not find in Hon'ble President's address any positive assurance of early passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in the current session of Parliament. It is regrettable that the Bills is pending since May 2008.

The Hon'ble President in her address has tried to impress on us that there has been increase in credit blows to and recruitment of minorities. But there is no mention of UPA government's views about Ranganath Misra Commission's report which has clearly recommended 15% Reservation for the minorities, particularly 10% for the Muslims. This omission is a great disappointment for the minorities.

The UPA government is boasting of enactment of the Right of children to free and compulsory education, but no budgetary provision has been made for necessary infrastructure for proper implementation of the Act, particularly for ensuring quality education. The Hon'ble President's address has failed to highlight it.

### ***Left Parties Appeal to Members of Parliament***

## **DO NOT SUPPORT THE CIVIL NUCLEAR LIABILITY BILL**

Dear Member of Parliament,

The UPA Government is about to introduce the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Bill in Parliament. This Bill seeks to cap the liability of nuclear plant operators and the equipment suppliers in case there is an accident involving a nuclear plant.

This legislation is being pushed by the Government because of pressure from the US equipment suppliers and investors put through the US administration at the highest levels. The US has made a precondition that India must put a cap on liability of the nuclear operators and virtually remove all liabilities of the equipment suppliers before it delivers on its promises in the India US Nuclear Deal. That is why the Fuel Reprocessing Consent, claimed to be a done deal by the proponents of the Nuclear Deal has yet to be agreed to by the US. Neither have the dual use technology restrictions been removed as the Prime Minister had claimed before the Parliament.

### **SALIENT FEATURES**

The salient points in the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Bill are:

- It allows the foreign reactor suppliers to rake in unlimited profits while transferring their liabilities to the Indian exchequer.
- Financial liability for a nuclear accident will be capped at only 300 million SDRs (Rs. 2142.85 crore). Beyond this cap, the affected people will not get any compensation for either loss of life, health damages or damages to property and environment.
- The liability of the Indian operator of nuclear plants will be limited to only to Rs. 500 crore. The Central Government can decrease the amount of liability to a minimum of Rs. 100 crore.
- The difference between the two – Rs. 2142.85 and Rs. 500 crore, i.e. of about Rs. 1642 crore – is the

Government's share of the liability.

- There is no legal liability of the foreign reactor supplier even if it supplies faulty and substandard equipment.
- Any liability for foreign reactor suppliers can at best be included in private contracts between the suppliers and the Indian operator.

### **PROBLEMATIC PROVISIONS**

Given that a serious nuclear accident can cause damage in billions, the small cap of 300 million SDRs proposed shows the scant regard the Central Government holds for the Indian people. Any damage beyond this will not be compensated either by the Government or by the nuclear operator, which in the present case is a state operator. Given that accidents like Chernobyl and Three Mile Island, the two most well known nuclear accidents in history, have caused billions of worth of damages; this effectively means abandoning the victims in case of a nuclear accident.

The Bhopal Settlement of \$470 million (Rs. 2152 crore) reached between the Central Government and Union Carbide and accepted by the Supreme Court, has proved to be totally inadequate. Even today, lakhs of gas victims are suffering and have received only meagre compensation. It is completely unconscionable of the UPA Government to suggest that all nuclear accidents, which have the potential of being much larger than the Bhopal tragedy, be capped at a figure that has already been shown to be a gross underestimate. Apart from this, the minuscule liability of Rs. 500 crore for the Indian operator – currently the state owned Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited – is tantamount to encouraging the operator to play with plant safety.

The suppliers' liability has also been made virtually non-existent in the proposed Bill. Normally, if any accident takes place in a nuclear plant, the victims and the Indian operator should be able to sue the supplier for damages if the cause of the accident is found to be poor or faulty equipment. The Bill takes away this legal right of the Indian operator as well as the victims. Instead of ensuring the operators' and victims' right to claim damages from the supplier, the current Bill limits this to only a private contract between the supplier and the operator. The US suppliers can make billions of dollars from the Indian market, but will not have to pay any damages for a nuclear accident. Even if they are completely at fault.

### **FAVOURING US SUPPLIERS**

It is important to note that neither the Russian nor the French nuclear equipment suppliers have raised the issue of capping or limiting nuclear liability. It is an entirely US concern and being driven by the interests of US suppliers and investors. If this is accepted, this will be yet another case of the Central Government capitulating to the US and putting the interest of US capital before the interests of its people.

The Central Government has already proposed to buy 10,000 MW of nuclear reactors from private US suppliers like GE, Westinghouse and others without going through open tendering and competitive bidding mandated under the present Electricity Act. This is being done as Government to Government contracts, precluding public scrutiny of the terms of these contracts. The Government is also unwilling to tell the people either the cost of those reactors or the cost of electricity which is to be produced from such imported reactors. The latest figures available from the US regulator makes clear that the cost of US made reactors will be 3 to 4 times that of indigenous reactors and so also the electricity produced from such plants.

Moreover, even such high price for their reactors and billions of dollars of profits is not enough for the US nuclear suppliers. They also seek to completely cover their risks at the cost of the Indian exchequer. Omer F Brown, the key spokesperson for the US nuclear industry and the lead counsel to two major nuclear industry groups – the Contractors International Group on Nuclear Liability and the Energy Contractors Price-Anderson Group – articulated the US position on the need for nuclear liability law in India while speaking at a business summit in Mumbai in December 2006:

Currently, India does not have a nuclear liability law covering its facilities. Therefore, concerns over nuclear liability would be a major impediment to any nuclear trade with India...Most US nuclear suppliers would not be willing to work in India without nuclear liability protection.

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert Blake informed House Foreign Affairs Committee last year, "We are hoping to see action on nuclear liability legislation that would reduce liability for American companies and allow them to invest in India...". Recently, he said in an interview (10th March 2010):

We also are very much hoping that the Indian government will proceed with very important legislation on nuclear liability, that will be very important protection for American companies who are seeking to do more business in the civil nuclear area, in India. And, we were very gratified to learn that the President of India has announced India's intention to introduce this bill in the current session of the Indian Parliament.

This is the background to the proposed legislation.

### **AGAINST INDIAN JURISPRUDENCE**

The current liability regime in India is quite clear: for hazardous industries, the plant owners have strict liability for accidents and the law does not accept any limits to liability. The party concerned must not only pay full compensation to affected persons but also bear the cost of environmental damage that any accident may cause. The Oleum leak from Sriram Food and Fertilizers settled the liability regime in India. The Supreme

Court judgement in this case – MC Mehta vs. Union of India (1987) – stated clearly:

...in case of accidents occurring in plants run by enterprises which are engaged in a hazardous or inherently dangerous activity that poses a potential threat to the health and safety of persons such enterprises applying the Polluter Pays Principle owe an absolute and non-delegable duty to ensure that no harm results to anyone. (emphasis added)

Any legislation seeking to cap liability as is being proposed will therefore be completely retrogressive.

### **INTERNATIONAL LIABILITY REGIMES**

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill states that the Bill is meant to facilitate India's entry into an international nuclear liability regime. It explicitly states that India intends to join the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which was adopted in 1997. This it is argued would provide India access to an international fund to compensate victims of nuclear accidents, for which India too has to make its own contribution.

What is not mentioned, however, is that only thirteen countries have signed this Convention on Supplementary Compensation (CSC): Argentina, Australia, Czech Republic, Indonesia, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Ukraine and the US. **Out of these thirteen countries, only four including the US, Argentina, Morocco and Romania have ratified it so far. Hence the Convention has not yet entered into force since it requires the ratification of at least five States with a minimum of 400,000 MW of installed nuclear capacity.** In contrast to the existing Paris or Vienna Conventions, the CSC provides complete protection to the suppliers of nuclear equipment. This is the reason why important countries such as Russia have not signed the CSC; which has been a bone of contention between the US and Russia. Most other countries operating significant number of nuclear plants have also not joined the CSC. Therefore neither is there any reason why India should hurry to join this Convention, nor any basis to the claim that joining this Convention would immediately provide access to international funds, since the CSC is yet to enter into force.

The Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage under the auspices of the IAEA attempts to put together a common minimum liability regime for countries operating nuclear plants. India is so far not a party to this Convention. **It is noteworthy that the Vienna Convention does not cap nuclear liability but only puts a minimum floor.** It also allows countries to operate their independent liability regimes. For example, Germany, Japan and Finland all have unlimited liability, the same as current Indian law.

The US, which is not a part of the Vienna Convention or the Paris Convention (but a signatory to the CSC) has its own Price-Anderson Nuclear Industries Indemnity Act 1957 (last amended in 2005) governing its domestic nuclear damage liability. **The Price-Anderson Act ensures the availability of private-sector funds of over \$ 10 billion (over Rs. 45000 crore) to cover liability for nuclear damages. Thus the liability of the US nuclear operators for nuclear damages is 23 times more in the US than what is being proposed in the Indian legislation. Are Indian lives 23 times cheaper than American lives?**

### **NOT IN THE INTEREST OF INDIAN PEOPLE**

The nuclear liability regime being proposed through the Civil Nuclear Liability Bill is nothing but a huge hidden subsidy to the US equipment suppliers. It appears that in order to promote private nuclear power plants and favour US equipment suppliers, the UPA Government is willing to sacrifice the interests of the Indian people.

We appeal to you to consider all these aspects of the Bill carefully. We hope you will take a stand against this Bill which compromises the vital interests of the Indian people regarding their safety and security.

**[A joint appeal by the four left parties General Secretary i.e. Debabrata Biswas (AIFB), Prakash Karat (CPIM), A.B. Bardhan (CPI) and T.J. Chandrachoodan (RSP) to the Members of Parliament]**

## **THE BUDGET IS NOT FOR THE POOR BUT FOR THE CORPORATES : Forward Bloc**

The Union Budget 2010-11 placed by Pranab Mukherjee, the Finance Minister, today in the Parliament is not aimed for the vast section of the poor people of India. The Budget has given lot of tax exemptions for the corporate sector. It is an irony that while harping upon inclusive growth the government is excluding the poor.

It is a shocking announcement from the Finance Minister that to hike the Central Excise duty of petroleum products by Rs 1 per litre. It will have cascading effect. The prices of essential commodities will go further up and the more farmers will be forced to quit the agricultural activities in the light of the Budget and the recent hike of Urea prices and the announcement to reduce the fertilizer subsidy. This budget has nothing to stop the suicidal saga of farmers. The poor people and the farmers will be the direct victims of this budget. The 2% subsidy for farm loan will not make much difference. The government has totally ignored the suggestions made by Swaminathan Committee to bring back the agriculture into the path of growth. Allowing the private sector to procure the food grains will lead large scale hoarding and black-marketing.

The government is worry about the food subsidy of Rs. 52,490 Crores but keeping silence on the revenue

foregone of Rs 4,18,096 Cr. through tax exemptions to the corporates. The surcharge reduction of 2.5% announced in this budget to the Corporate sector will further enhance the revenue forgone in this account.

The decision to allow the Reserve Bank to sanction more private banks shows that the government is not ready to learn lesson from the current global financial crisis. It is the Banks and Insurance companies collapsed first in the so-called developed countries which led the global meltdown.

The reluctance of the government to enhance the Security Transaction Tax, Capital Gain Tax, Wealth Tax and Corporate Tax indicates that the government is under the penitentiary of Corporates and the Multi National Companies. The announcement for setting up more SEZs, disinvestment of PSUs and the relaxation in FDI norms are basically to satiate the interests of the Capitalists and the Multi National Corporations.

The expansion of the NREGS to the urban areas was the need of the hour. There is no concrete proposal for providing employment for the educated and skilled youngsters. It would be gibberish to consider that the NREGS will be panacea for our entire unemployment problem.

Enhancement of funds for the rural development, Bharat Nirman, setting up a social security fund for unorganised sector workers, which constitutes 93% of country's total work force, women farmer's fund and 13% rise in road development allocations are welcome steps.

## **THE MERITORIOUS AND POOR STUDENTS ARE BEING EXPLOITED BY THE CAPITALISTS : AISB**

An organizational workshop of All India Student's Bloc was held at Muzzaffarpur, Bihar from 23rd to 26th February 2010. Com. Ali Imran Ramz MLA, Chairman of AISB, Central Committee presided over the workshop and other related meetings. Com. Debabrata Biswas, the General Secretary of All India Forward Bloc was present in the workshop.

The workshop discussed elaborately about the organizational lacunae to carry forward the struggle of students against ongoing denial of academic rights, rampant privatization and commercialization of education. The delegates from five states namely, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh attended the workshop.

After threadbare discussion, the following decisions have been taken unanimously:

It was decided to launch a nation-wide campaign against privatization and commercialization of education. The UPA government is keeping a blind eye and promoting large scale commercialization in the education sector and thereby relinquishing its responsibility to universalize qualitative education for all. Mushrooming unbridled deemed universities and so-called professional universities and Institutions at private sector are the products of the privatization of education. The meritorious and poor students are being exploited by the capitalists who consider education as a profiteering business. The gradual withdrawal of organizational activities of student's unions from the campus and the participation of the students in the matters related to academic rights are providing ample opportunities to the entrepreneurs of education to exploit the student community. Therefore, the All India Students' Bloc, the student's organization under the ideological influence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose has decided to raise voice against these policies of the government. The AISB will conduct campaign at unit, local, district and state level from 2nd to 8th May 2010.

As a culmination of the first phase of this campaign a 'Maha Dharna' of students will be organized before the Parliament on 20th May 2010. The Central Committee will print and distribute the campaign materials such as leaflets, posters, badges etc.

It was decided to mobilize at least 1000 students for the above said 'Maha Dharna'. The following quota has been fixed for different states. In order to propagate the message of 'Maha Dharna' and to streamline the organizational activities, the extended state committee meetings of AISB will be held according to the following schedule:

|                |            |  |
|----------------|------------|--|
| Jharkhand      | 15-04-2010 | Com. Ali Imran Ramz, MLA                 |
| Bihar          | 12-04-2010 | Com. Ali Imran Ramz, MLA                 |
| Uttar Pradesh  | 18-04-2010 | Com. Ali Imran Ramz, MLA                 |
| Assam          | 28-03-2010 | Com. Debabrata Roy & Com. Sudip Banerjee |
| Tripura        | 31-03-2010 | Com. Debabrata Roy & Com. Sudip Banerjee |
| Orissa         | 15-04-2010 | Com. Debabrata Roy & Com. Sudip Banerjee |
| Madhya Pradesh | 25-03-2010 | Com. Amresh Kumar                        |
| Maharashtra    | 20-03-2010 | Com. Amresh Kumar                        |
| Delhi          | 18-03-2010 | Com. Amresh Kumar                        |
| West Bengal    | 20-03-2010 | Com. Amresh Kumar                        |

The next National Conference of AISB will be held from 26th to 28th December 2010. The venue will be finalized later on. The following schedule has been fixed for lower conference:

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Unit Conference           | June-July 2010   |
| Zonal/District Conference | August-Sept 2010 |
| State Conference          | November 2010    |

# THE HISTORIC WORKERS DAY SHOULD BE CELEBRATED WITH FULL ENTHUSIASM: TUCC

The Central Committee of TUCC met at New Delhi on 13th March 2010 at Central Office. Com. Saral Dev, Vice President of TUCC presided over the meeting.

The issues confronting working class of the country were discussed threadbare. Members elaborately and specifically deliberated on the agendas of conferences, organisational strength and future targets, multi agency offered and TUCC jointly collaborated training programme for activists, the events and activities planned for year 2010 etc. in positive manner and resolve it with time bound programme.

The meeting discussed on the report of NSSO and Ministry of Commerce. The report of NSSO and Ministry of Commerce depicted a picture where nearly 6.7 Lac Workers in 6332 export related and other industries had lost job since 1st April 2009, which excludes more than 74 lacs worstly affected workmen in Garment, Leather Jewellery, Diamond, real estate and other informal sector. According to ILO estimates the number of jobless worldwide reached nearly 212 million in 2009 following an unprecedented increase of 34 millions to 2007. IMF also forecasts, the continuous high unemployment rate in year 2010, around 3 million people in 2010 will loose employment in Developed Economies and European Union. According to ILO, the share of vulnerable employment worldwide estimated to reach 1.5 billion. It further added 633 million workers were living below USD 1.25 per day in 2008 which expanded upto 848 million in 2009.

The affect of 2nd Global melt down after the Great Depression had pushed millions of people towards poverty and their children off from their schools, life became very tough to them.

Apart from this global issue, skyrocketing price rise had confronted the people in world of work as well as the common people of the country in large scale and the Government who was supposed to promptly address the issue by providing food stuff to all through subsidised and regular mechanism, choose to keep mum, allowed the hoarders, black marketers to ruin the system by fixing the prices of commodities at their will.

The meeting also discussed that rampant labour law violations throughout the country, allowing private sector financial institutions to manage EPF and pension fund, proposal for 10%. Divestment of 18 Public Sector enterprises to extract out 58000 crores in initial stage, despite of our regular demands to create National Social Security fund - ridiculously Hon'ble Finance Minister had conceded only Rs. 1000 Crores for social protection of 44.2 crore in organised workers of the country - are the endless issues challenging our willingness to be proved by relentless struggle with non-compromising attitude till achieving our target.

The meeting unanimously resolved that : The year 2010, strategically very important to us, not only we have to conduct our conferences on time but also show our fighting gill through regular movements for the causes of the working class, so activities must be planned with its long term impact and expansion of organisation in future. All policies should be directed to nurse the need of the future required for upgradation of the organisation.

We have to fix up our target for year 2010, on which we should proceed with sincere efforts.

## **ACTION PROGRAMME**

- On 1st May 2010 - The Historic workers day should be celebrated with full enthusiasm, Torch Rallies (Massal Julius), Public meetings, gate meetings, etc. should be organised at each and every place where our units exists. Posters, stickers and batches will be printed and supplied by the Central Committee on 50:50 sharing basis.
- May month proposed to be campaign month for the rights of Unorganised sector workers throughout the country.
- Rallies/Demonstration should be organised in the month of June 2010 throughout the country for the formation of separate Boards at state and national level. for Unorganised and Agriculture Workers and also to implement Welfare Schemes of existing boards.
- **Central Committee of TUCC will meet at Bhopal on 25 June 2010 to review the decision taken.**

## THE ECONOMIC SURVEY PAINTS A BLEAK PICTURE

The Economic Survey 2009-10 clearly shows the bleak picture of Indian economy. It is now officially acknowledged that the wrong food management policies are the reason for spiralling price rise of essential commodities.

The Survey pointed out that there is a huge burden of food subsidy, which puts a lot of stress on the fiscal system. But the fact is that the total food subsidy currently provided by the Government is less than 1% of the country's GDP. In 2009-10, the food subsidy given by the government was Rs. 52,490 crore, which is less than a fifth of the tax exemptions given to the corporates, that is more than Rs. 4 lakh crore.

The Government should answer to the nation how the prices are soaring when a record procurement of

wheat and rice helped at build up buffer stock and strategic reserve as narrated in Economic Survey 2009-10.

## **AIFB LEADERS VISIT CHINA**

On an invitation from the Communist Party of China (CPC), a delegation of three leaders of All India Forward Bloc, viz. Com. Dr. Barun Mukherjee, M.P., Central Secretary and Head of Party School, Com. P.V. Kathiravan, General Secretary of Tamilnadu State Committee Forward Bloc and Central Secretary and Com. Janardan Pandey, General Secretary of Jharkhand State Committee of Forward Bloc and Central Secretary, visited Peoples Republic of China from 8th March to 19th March 2010 to attend a seminar on 'Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in China'. Com. Dr. Barun Mukherji was the leader of the delegation. In fact, it was an international seminar attended by leaders of political parties of 7 South Asian Countries, viz. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Apart from discussion sessions on the two main theme, along with a session on Environmental Change, addressed by senior experts and experienced leaders of the International Department of the CPC, held at Beijing, Cindere and Shanghai provinces delegates were taken to various rural and urban sites to have a grassroot -- level experience of developmental work being done throughout China. It is appreciated that such visits and interactive session immensely contribute to the advancement of friendship and cooperation between the political parties of the South Asian Countries.

## **A SECOND INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE IS VERY MUCH NEEDED: AIYL**

The State Level Meeting of AIYL, Karnataka State Unit, was held on 27th February 2010 at Tucc office, Bangalore.

Com. G.R. Shivashankar, Chairman, Tucc was also present and conducted the meeting. Com. Sanjay Bhattacharya, General AIYL and Com. K. Subburaj were addressed the meeting.

Participants from Bangalore City and other district of Karnataka attended the meeting. Many delegates critically expressed their views on organisational lacunae and demanded course corrections. The meeting unanimously opined that the Karnataka Committee has to chalk out detailed programme to encash the current situation for developing All India Youth League in the state. While addressing the meeting, Com. Sanjay Bhattacharya emphasised more on organisational activities. He opined that there is no short cut to build up AIYL except relentless mass movements on public issues. He said that the young people should learn lessons from the revolutionary lives of netaji, bhagat Singh and Udham Singh. The young people should come forward to save our country from the clutches of imperialist agents who subjugates the interests of the country before the neo-colonial forces. A second independence struggle is very much needed to provide education, employment, health and other amenities for all. Com. K. Subburaj explained about the relevance of AIYL and its importance in the current political situation.

After the threadbare discussion, the meeting resolved that :

1. On 23rd March 2010, AIYL will demonstrate in front of Freedom Park Cold Central Jail to demand Job For All, Education For All on the remembrance of a Supreme Martyr's day of Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru.
2. In the first week of April month a demonstration will organise in front of Indira Nagar Hospital (ESI Hospital) for improvement of the hospital services.
3. On 19th September, 2010, AIYL will organise a state conference at Bangalore.
4. In this meeting a twenty one members adhoc committee formed to carry forward the activities of AIYL in the state of Karnataka. Com. R.P. Narendra Babu (Chairman), Com. Yellappa, Com. G. Muniraju and Com. B. Manjunath (all are vice chairman), Com. N. Gopal Singh (General Secretary), Com. Moogoppa, Com. Satish Kumar and Com. Ravindra are secretaries, Com. Mahesh, Com. Venkatesh N, Com. Prashad, Com. Krishna, Com. Manjappa, Com. Shashidar Rai, Com. Com. Kumar Swami, Com. E. Shiv Kumar and Com. Aanth Murthy are Executive Committee Members, Com. Ravi (Finance Secretary), Com. Ranjith and Com. Umesh Chandra Shetty are organising Secretaries.

All the members are very enthusiastic, so, there will be a positive sign to develop AIYL's future leadership.

## **IMMEDIATELY TAKE CARE SRI LANKAN TAMIL PROBLEMS**

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## **LEFT PARTIE'S DELHI CHALO RALLY ON 12TH MARCH 2010**

# **THE GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED EVALUATE THE SITUATION OF PRICE RISE**

Thousands of enthusiastic activists of Left parties hit the Delhi streets on March 12, 2010 to protest against price rise with its leaders announcing observation of Satyagraha-jail bhara on April 8 demanding immediate action on the issue.

The massive rally marched from Ramlila Maidan to Jantar Mantar demanding action from the government to bring down the prices of essential commodities and roll back petroleum products price hike.

The Parliament Street stretch from the Sardar Patel roundabout towards Rajiv Chowk was awash with red flags, banners, placard and buntings displaying anti-government slogans. The rally culminated at Jantar Mantar winding through a corridor connecting the Ram Lila Grounds to somewhere close to Parliament. From the beginning to the end of the march, the participants raised sky-rocketing and spirited slogans against the anti-people policies of the government.

The 'March to Parliament' led by the four Left parties - Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India CPI(M), Forward Bloc and RSP was one of the biggest since the 1990s. However it was only a beginning as the leaders asserted, since the campaigns and struggles were going to be further intensified in the coming days.

The leaders of the Left parties, while addressing the rally, announced that there would be countrywide mass picketing and 'court arrest' programmes outside Central government offices in all district headquarters on April 8. In the militant jail bhara on April 8 across the country, they declared that they would defy the laws at various places to emphasise their demands.

Some 25 lakh people will take part in the programme demanding immediate steps to curb price rise and for strengthening of the Public Distribution System (PDS), which suffers from large scale food grain diversion as well as corruption because of unsolicited political interference as well as black marketing by fair price shop dealers. There will also be demands raised for implementation of land reforms and creation of employment opportunities.

The meeting was addressed by Forward Bloc general secretary Debabrata Biswas, CPI general secretary A. B. Bardhan, CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat, RSP general secretary T. J. Chandrachoodan, CPI Parliamentary Party leader Gurudas Dasgupta and CPI(M) Parliamentary Party leader Sitaram Yechury.

At the massive rally, charging Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with favouring the capitalists, Com. Debabrata Biswas said Central Government had been extending both support and benefits to the corporate sector. He alleged that The Central government has become mere spectator when the prices of all essential commodities are spiraling day by day. The prices of rice, edible oils, cereals, vegetables, fruits and other consumer goods are sky rocketing and the union government is simply accusing the state governments and issuing contradictory statements on daily basis. The prices of different types of dals and sugar become out of reach by the poor people. The price sugar has reached an unprecedented Rs. 50 per kilo in different parts of the country. The prices of dals also vary from Rs 80 to 110 per Kilogram. It is better not to say the prices of edible oils which are beyond the reach of even middle class. All the season vegetables are selling in the market at very high prices, which is really burning. Why this unprecedented and inexorable rise in the prices of all essential commodities?

The entry of MNCs and corporate business houses into the retail trade opened the doors for contract farming and provides opportunity to fix the prices of agricultural products before the harvest. Then gradually they release the materials at the prices fixed by them. If anybody wants to purchase from other source it will not be possible as all the goods are in the warehouses of the corporate houses. The government has failed evaluate the situation and did nothing to keep buffer stock to face such situation. It is a quirk of fate that the country successfully conducted the green revolution is now importing all essential commodities including rice and wheat! The government is busy with showing all figures of food inflation and state government's reluctance to lift the food items from the Central pool. But the fact is that whatever may be the figure of inflation the people have nothing to do with it. They are concerned with only getting food items at low prices. It is also a paradox that the farmers are not getting any benefit from this unprecedented price rise. Thus the corporate houses and the middlemen are exploiting not only the consumers but also the farmers who produce all these crops. The government is not taking any initiative to increase the productivity of agriculture and to extend low interest rate loans for the farmers as suggested by Dr. Swaminathan

Committee report. The failure of government agencies to procure the farm goods from the farmers is to be enquired. These failures of the government have become benefit to the importers. They government should stop all export of food articles henceforth. The time tested public distribution system must be revived and all essential commodities must be issued through PDS.

A. B. Bardhan said Dr. Singh had been extending both support and benefits to the corporate sector. He alleged that the prime minister had become a "broker of capitalists".

He stressed that the government must take steps to control price rise, ensure right to food and health and strengthen public distribution system among others. The UPA government that came to power promising to work for the 'aam aadmi' (common man) had jettisoned the approach to favour the rich and corporate sector, he said.

CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat said: "The government has failed in controlling prices...it is shirking responsibility putting the blame on state governments. The April 8 agitation will be the biggest mass movement...if the government does not listen we will work against it during the remainder of the budget session."

Abani Roy (RSP) warned of disorder if 'aam aadmi' fails to get foodgrain. "If the government fails to provide foodgrains to all, it means it is inefficient and there is a need to change this government," he said.

The Left agitation in the capital against price rise had its echo in Parliament on March 12 with members of four Left parties along with TDP and SP walking out of both the Houses protesting the government's "lack of response" to their demand for a white paper on the issue. The Left parties have intensified their crusade against the Congress-led UPA government. In Lok Sabha BJP, RJD, BSP and BJD have extended their support to the Left parties.

## CORPORATE ROBBERY OF MINING RESOURCES

S.P. Tiwari, General Secretary, TUCC

People indulged in Governance worldwide, making umpteenth attempt to restore their economy in order and minimize the hardship faced by their workers and common people due to global downturn and its severe impact resulting job losses, decreasing productivity, rationalizing employment generation, by way of supporting them through stimulus packages to bail them out from the most disastrous recession. Since 1920; whereas in our country- scenario is difference in governance- corporate loot of public exchequer by means of extraction through excise tax, import duty, company tax, income tax and the subsidized rate of interest provided on bank loans, if unpaid NPA are being write off on the directions of finance Ministry has become a common issue of discussion in debates.

Indian corporate, some times independently and some time in collaboration with their MNC counterparts, had put the government at their will and after snatching, sizeable parts of Agricultural lands from the poor peasants in the name of establishing EOZ and SEZ with government support, their next target was to capture resources under earth and absorb all possible wealthy materials in the country.

You are very much aware of the 4000/5000 crore scandal of Mr. Madhu Koda, ex chief Minister of Jharkhand, who from a very small RSS cadre reached to the post of the Chief Minister of Jharkhand within eight years, had capitalized this huge money only through commissions, received after signing the MOU'S on behalf of the government of Jharkhand with Corporate Giants like Tata, Jindals, Mittal and Pasco, now you may presume the actual amount involved in these MOU'S may be in lacs of crores of Rupees which was expected to be generated from mining resources.

The Reddy Brothers controlling mining in Andhra Pradesh had put up their own party Chief Minister Mr. Y.S. Yeddiruppa on mat and so called disciplined soldiers and leaders of BJP were soothing in disbelief, these mining mafias are also creating chaos in Congress Ruled State of Andhra Pradesh, where Mr. C. Rossaiah, a seasoned politician is on verge of submit his papers. Under their insistence and influence the UPA-II Government want to pass a bill in parliament to allow open coal blocks to these corporate robbers in CCL and other subsidiaries of Coal India.

Mr. Navin Patnaik led government in Orrisa had not been left far behind, to snatch land from tribals for "Vedanta Group", Tribals were mercilessly beaten and fired by the police, their only excuse was that they were protesting the proposed excavation right of Bauxite to be handed over to Vedanta Corporate. Needless to say Mr. P. Chidambaram our Honorable Home Minister was one of the Director of this Company.

The Ambani Brothers are fighting among each other to share the lucrative K.G.Basin Natural Gas to be evacuated from Andhra Pradesh State, as if it was inherited to them from their demised father Lt. Dhirubhai Ambani. In the name of operation "Green Hunt", Dr. Raman Singh Govt in Chattishgarh want to extract tribal people out from the prime mining areas for which MOU with Corporates had already being signed by him.

According to a book written by Mr. Felix Paddel-"Availability of Bauxite in Orrisa is of worth nearly 2270 Trillion Dollars, which comes twice of Indian GDP, and theses facts are recorded on the valuation in 2004,

approximately it worth's now 4000 Trillion Dollars.

UPA-II put poverty stricken people to dream that 85% of National population to be urbanized and these only can be executed by evacuating people from villages. Can we allow these people to stay back in villages and provide them all humanistic Amenities for livelihood?

## **TRADE UNIONS ON WAR PATH**

### **WORKERS COURT ARREST IN LAKHS**

On March 5, lakhs of workers participated in the Jail Bharo and Satyagraha collectively organised by several trade union organisations in all the state capitals, industrial towns and in many of the district headquarters. More than 10 lakhs workers, as the reports indicated, participated in the action.

This was in continuation of the protest actions these trade union organisations have been organising since September 2009. The organisations include the TUCC, CITU, AITUC, INTUC, BMS, HMS, AICCTU, AIUTC and UTUC. Their protest is mainly against unprecedented price rise, violation of labour laws, disinvestment of profit making public sector units, job losses and failure of the government to set up a national welfare fund for the agricultural and unorganised workers.

Thousands of workers, waving banners and placards, participated in the law violation programme. Com. S.P. Tiwari (TUCC), Com. Dr. M.K. Pandhe and Mohd. Amin (CITU), Com. Gurudas Dasgupta (AITUC), Com. Dr. Sanjeeva Reddy (INTUC), Com. Umraomal Purohit (HMS), Com. R.V. Subbarao (BMS), Com. R.K. Sharma (AIUTUC), Com. Abani Roy (UTUC) and Com. Swapan Mukherjee (AICCTU) were in the forefront on the day. Over 10,000 workers and central trade unions leaders courted arrest.

Addressing the protesters, the union leaders said this was the first time all the trade unions had jointly organised a 'Satyagraha' on workers' demands on such a massive scale throughout the country.

The agitators shouted slogans in support of their demands and carried placards and banners that demanded drastic steps to check the price rise', no to disinvestment in profit making PSUs' implementation of labour laws and creation of a national fund for social security in the unorganised sector.'

The Central Trade union organisations expressed deep anguish over the steep rise in indirect taxes, increase in the prices of petroleum products, and reduction in subsidy for urea and other fertilisers. These organisations later decided to meet shortly and chalk out the next phase of action to expand and intensify the agitation.

All the trade unions sent their warm greetings to the working class for making the March 5 Jail Bharo and Satyagraha a great success and urged them to be ready for the next phase of action.

## **COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE:**

### **THE EARTH LOST, MNCS WON**

Dr. Banwari Lal Sharma

People of the world were hoping that Copenhagen Conference would be successful in finding a solution to the climate crisis. However, it turned out to be otherwise. People saw that MNCs existence and their profit is more important than the Mother Earth's own existence, Copenhagen Conference successfully undid what was achieved in last 20-25 years to save the Earth. Developed countries, specially the US which is most polluting country and responsible for present climate crisis - had already given proofs of their insincerity and dishonesty in Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and it seems they are still unchanged. As some one remarked in Rio that overconsumption of the West was also responsible for earth's destruction, the then US president George Bush Senior's curt rebuff came - "Our life style is not for negotiation." It means, whatever be the price, they would continue their living style and no one can question it.

In fact, at the root of the crisis lies that misdeed of the West Which Davi Cope Nava, representative of Yonamagi Indians of Brazil, exposed during his visit to Europe just before the Copenhagen Conference. He said "We all know the Earth is changing which is dangerous for us all. If you continue to kill people, dug out oil and mineral, cut down trees for wood destroying the nature, then this planet will surely fall ill, killing, burning drowning all of us." Davi further said, "White man's strong roots lie in cities. He can not change; he has become mad for land. He always exploits it more and more so that his city can flourish. He always exploits it more and more so that his city can flourish. He always think of over and beneath the earth: oil, gold, minerals, roads, cars rails. He can not be happy. We, the Yanomagi people, are of different kind. We think of and speak about land, water, river, mountains, moon, stars, run through our heart and spirit."

## **An Appraisal of Climate Crisis:**

Behind big hopes from Copenhagen are those worries which Davi put in his own way. Other people of the Earth are expressing their worries in their own ways. Resident of a small island in Pacific Ocean Tuvalu are worried because their island is only 2 feet higher than the sea level. Temperature is causing polar ice to melt, rise raising the sea level. It spells doom for tiny islanders. Not only Tuvalu but Maldev, Lakshdweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Sunderbans in West Bengal, Kuttanad in Kerala will also submerge under the sea. Melting glaciers will cause rivers to dry up and forest to burn down.

Rising temperature due to increasing emission of green house gases, CO<sub>2</sub>' methane, nitrous oxide - is causing havoc with climate as well as human being and if it is not kept in check, horrifying outcomes will ensue. Agriculture will be worst hit, throw world food security in jeopardy. According to a report presented by expert committee of the FAO, only 1-2°C rise in temperature would spell doom for crop production in South Asia and sub-Sahara region in Africa. For example 1° Celsius rise will cause annual decline in wheat production by 6 million tons in India. The same effect will be for other crops, creating losses of Rs. 90 billion to poor farmers.

### **Contentious Issues:**

Copenhagen showed that the world is divided into two parts. The scenes, which have been common in WTO Conferences, were the same in Copenhagen. On one side there were developed countries who, rejecting earlier agreements, tried to put blame on the developing countries.

For the developing countries, on the other hand, the first contentious issue was the Kyoto Protocol. The first earth summit in Rio in 1992 decided that to save the earth from rising temperature, CO<sub>2</sub> emission had to be curtailed. Negotiations went on till 1997 in that year Kyoto protocol was signed which had provisions only for developed countries to cut their carbon emission under a time bound program, the US 7%, Europe 6.5% and Japan 6%. Several developed countries got this treaty ratified too by their respective parliaments. But the US did not ratify the treaty by its Congress and finally rejected Kyoto Protocol saying the treaty would have adverse impact on its industries.

Several rounds of preparatory talks preceded the Copenhagen Conference, in New Delhi in September in Bangkok in October and in Barcelona in November 2009. In Bangkok it became clear that the developed nations had jumped to the US side and they were no longer ready to accept Kyoto Protocol. Kyoto Protocol is a legally binding international treaty which now stands rejected by the developed nations. They now are presenting different draft proposals which call for voluntary emission cuts by nations and an international inspection mechanism to oversee these voluntary emission cuts by nations and an international inspection mechanism to oversee these voluntary cuts. Developing countries had, however, rejected these proposals in Barcelona meeting. Kyoto Protocol provided that the developing nations would require money that the developed nations would require money and technologies to deep their emission cut targets, which developed nations would supply as they had major responsibilities with regard to climate crisis.

The second contentious issue is related to emission cut targets. Developing nations want 40% reduction in the emission increase after 1990 and this should be achieved before 210. Non-US countries are adamant that this cut should be 16 to 23% while the US demands only 11 to 17%. Developed nations not only backed out from their earlier promises but they are now blaming the developing nations as major contributors to the crisis In Barcelona, developed nations wanted that the vast difference of responsibilities between developed and developing nations should to be narrowed. They also put great emphasis on the new mechanism of international inspection and reporting and pressurise leading developing nations (China and India) to accept the new cut targets. However, these proposals were not even negotiated upon in the Bali (Indonesia) negotiations and they do not have any place in the present UN Climate Change frame work.

And the developed nations now seem in no mood to provide finances and technologies required to bring down greenhouse gases emission of the developing nations, for which they had made commitments in Kyoto Protocol. They have to give 1 to 5% of their GDP for this purpose which they seem not ready for it.

### **What Decision was taken at Copenhagen?**

In Copenhagen the developing nations, specially the Africans and Latin Americans, were adamant on implementing the Kyoto Protocol and no change in Bali Action Plan would be acceptable to them. Developed nations were, however, not ready for this. They asked for forgetting the Kyoto Protocol and presented a new draft, Denmark Draft, which requires all the nations to announce voluntary cuts in their emission and open them to inspection for an international organisation. Responsibility to announce voluntary cuts lies on both developed and developing nations without any difference.

Leading developing nations - Brazil, South Africa, India and China formed a group to be called BASIC. BASIC initially supported the stand taken by the developing nations. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had announced that he would not accept any change in Kyoto Protocol and the Copenhagen Conference was going to end without having any agreement.

### **Obama's theatrics and BASIC's change of stand:**

The Conference was heading towards unsuccessful end and some leaders had left the venue, then US president Barack Obama played his last trump card. He first embraced China who is not less culprit than the US as far as the green house emission goes. Dr. Manmohan Singh had reached airport from where he was called back and BASIC countries, under US pressure, finally changed their stand, taking side with the US, leaving the African and Latin Americans to fend for themselves and agreed on Denmark Draft with some minor changes. This new agreement resolves not to let the earth temperature rise by more than 2° Celsius, developed nations will provide \$100 billion to developing nations for implementing their commitments and the agreement will be executed before 2015. Developed nations will announce their voluntary emission cut targets (not binding under any international agreement) within next one year. They will not be under any legal obligation.

At the time of this agreement only few countries were present, but they went through and announced it. Political aspect of climate crisis will be dealt with in Mexico Conference next year.

A few countries were present when this agreement was done and later announced. Developing countries rejected this agreement saying the BASIC Countries had deceived. Cuba, Venezuela condemned openly India, China, Brazil and South Africa.

### **India Demonstrates again : It is in the US camp**

After Copenhagen Conference India's environment minister Jay Ram Ramesh issued statement that Conference was successful and India played an important role in its successful completion. Ramesh, however, forgot what he said on December 14. He said "I have made it amply clear that we come here not for any new agreement, we are here not to negotiate on any long term protocol... India would not deter from Kyoto Protocol, or any long term commitment. "Shyam Saran, India's special envoy on climate change, said - "To talk about any political agreement instead of legally binding decisions and to suggest that we could achieve something before end of 2010 are mere conjectures worthy of immediate rejection."

After the Conference Indian government assured the parliament that the Conference would not impact on our sovereignty, Environmentalist R.K. Pachauri too explained that the US had no right to interfere in India's internal matters. It is, however, known that India was now lost position of leadership of the third world and become a US ally.

### **The Earth lost, MNCs Won : Copenhagen Conference turned into Climate trade fair**

Do the developed nations' governments not recognise the crisis the earth's very survival is subjected to? They know and recognise it, but they are in the clutches of big corporations and hence they cannot take independent decision. Not only environmentalists, but all those who are sitting in the front seats of the governments know that it is the multinational corporation who now control and run the present model of industrialisation which is the main cause of the climate crisis. The truth is : without taming these giant corporations climate changes cannot be checked. Now the global efforts, being made since last 20-25 years to save the planet earth, have been undone in Copenhagen. MNCs were active since first Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio to create an atmosphere that they could not be blamed for the crisis. In that summit they spent huge money on transport and stationary to make sure that they should not be named as the main culprit. They succeeded. In second Earth Summit in 2002 in Johannesburg they came out in open into the conference hall advertising through glittering pamphlets that they are the ones who know how to save the environment and NGO should take their help.

Next step they took in Copenhagen Conference where they and their portages organised a kind of trade fair there to tell the participating people what they have done to save environment and to check temperature rise. More than 100 such organisations of Commerce (ICC), US Chamber of Commerce (USCC), Business Europe, World Economic Forum (WEF), World Nuclear Association, International Air Transport Association, World Steel Association, Society of Engineers, United Construction Industry, FICCI and CII from India etc. These organisations and their member companies were camping there to see that no resolution against them came up in the Conference and the lucrative Carbon Development Mechanism (CDM) and Carbon Trading Business remain in their hand. They know that in future carbon trading is going to become a huge business and for this they are doing research, inventing new equipments and instrumentalities.

*courtesy : Nai Azadi*