

SEZ BONDAGE

Slave owners are back. They are back in business with Union Jack and iron boot without bothering about dignity of Tri-colour.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) are in reality Slave Economic Zones. Indians do not need them and yet Indian wage slaves like their counterparts in third world countries are being forced to toil under severe oppressive conditions without any labour rights. National laws are not applicable to SEZs because they are literally foreign enclaves where global players in league with their local agents run their writ ignoring the constitution of the land and the, host governments, state and central, can do nothing in the event of human rights violations. These colonial outposts have virtually instituted a savage free-market capitalism that in most cases reverse decades of social welfare reforms. Unfair labour practice is the hallmark of these foreign industrial estates which symbolise all the horror that can follow when democracy is supplanted by dictatorship. And yet all political parties, left and right alike, are determined to establish a chain of such foreign islands on Indian soil, within a shortest possible time—they are in a hurry.

In the past Communists and, Gandhians to some extent used to look to Moscow for economic model but now they see only Washington and London. They sell SEZ fantasies to deceive and repress their own people, they surrender economic sovereignty and alongwith it political decision-making power as well, all in the name of 'development'. There are too many Mirzafars in India today—they cannot be plucked from the earth completely.

SEZ stands for open championing and promotion of the dreams and aspirations of the privileged, both domestic and foreign, at the cost of underprivileged. SEZ means destruction of environment and ecology and ruthless exploitation of natural and human resources. Ironically though, even the tag people is being cruelly denied to the wageslaves of SEZ and conferred upon the significantly better off sections. The whole dynamic of SEZ dictates that peasants will lose more agricultural lands while wage labourers will return to the days of industrial revolution. The tragedy is that there is no Charlie Chaplin to make another "Modern Times".

The government ousts people settled or working on the land desired by the SEZ-investor backed by imperial finance capital. In their own domain the imperial finance capital has found already that their rate of profit has fallen miserably and therefore are lying in wait for overseas third world investment opportunities for higher returns. The minister investor parleys at the dinner hall and the subsequent negotiations between the investor and the managers of international finance capital, that is to say, the linkage from international finance capital through the investor down to the government of the state having thus been strengthened, international venture capital flows, gathers steam and even swells and inundates the dry-of-investment-states like West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa into investment-hubs in the same proportion as the state-machinery is geared against workers to enslave them within the confines of the SEZ as well as against peasants and shepherds to disengage and displace them from their own soil.

This the government is bound to do because the government of the concerned state is held captive under chains of the international capital.

Singur or Nandigram or Kalinga-nagar should be seen in that light. Thirty years ago there were only 80 SEZs in 30 countries which generated just 6 billion US dollars in exports. Today 3000 SEZs operate in 120 countries and account for over 600 billion US dollars in exports. Under these circumstances global capital flowing through a host of middle men—whether it is the Tata group or the Salim group or any other—is agreeable to flow in the parched state if and only if the government of the state is willing and able to enforce the conditionalities of SEZ. Indian investors, push the government to forcibly acquire land because they feel that the state has the legal right to acquire land by hook or by crook for SEZ-investors.

For the SEZ-affected people there is no time to lose time. The impending danger is grave and if they fail to acknowledge and counter it on time, they are going to suffer and lose more. ~~////~~