

LETTERS

AN APPEAL

Over the last few months the Government of West Bengal and the CPI(M), the largest ruling party of the state have been engaged in acquiring agricultural land at Singur on the spacious plea of industrialization by resorting to state terror, fraudulent means and lies, without caring a fig for opinion and opposition of the masses. In the name of setting up 'Special Economic Zones' and developing industrial centres, they are hatching a conspiracy to hand over to the domestic and foreign capitalists large parcels of land in such areas as Nandigram, Baruipur, Bhangar, Barasat, Salboni, Dankuni and a number of other places. We, the undersigned vehemently protest against these schemes of the ruling party and the West Bengal Government.

At the same time we also note with concern that an effort is being made on behalf of the government and the ruling party to put labels of sorts on those who have been protesting against these detestable moves. Lately the government and the ruling Marxist party are out to play a very dangerous game. Recently chief minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya has levelled an allegation that Jamiat-e-ulema-e-Hind is a communal organization and they are out to incite communal sentiments over the question of land acquisition. The former chief minister Mr Jyoti Basu has levelled the same allegation with a bit of circumlocution: 'I don't know whether they allow the Hindus to enter their organization; if not, I must say, they are communalists.' In an unambiguous term we denounce all these cock and bull stories.

The role of the Jamiat in the anti-British struggles in India before Independence is known to any sensible student of history. Persons like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Mohammad Abdul Bari were leaders of this organization. During his chief ministerial tenure, Mr Jyoti Basu sent a message to the Jamiat conference held on September 2, 1997; it contained the recognition of that positive role of theirs in the Freedom Struggle. Secondly, now this organization is a social organization and as such it is rendering such social services as spread of Madrassa education and setting up of treatment clinics for the Muslim community, and of late, in the movement to oppose acquisition of agricultural lands it is playing a positive role. Thirdly, the members of the Jamiat are followers of the Islamic faith. Faith in a religion and communalism—the two are not synonymous. If it were so, the Bharat Sevashram Sangha should be regarded as communal organization. In the same breath Ramkrishna Mission has to be viewed as a communal organization, or the members of Durga Puja Committees (thronged in by the members of the party of Buddha Babu and Biman Babu) are to be marked as communal elements. Fourthly, as per what Jyotibabu says, whether an organization is non-communal or otherwise depends on the presence of the members of the other communities. To go by that definition, the BJP cannot be called a Hindu communalist organization, as Muslims are very much there in its leadership. Fifthly, in a number of countries various religious groups took part in movements on diverse issues—for example, the Buddhists in Vietnam or the Catholics in Latin America. The adverse comments on the character of the Jamiat are simply infantile.

All these are not beyond the ken of Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya or Mr Jyoti Basu. They have been making such utterances consciously. Today throughout West Bengal public opinion has been formed on a vast scale against the acquisition of land; the urban people have stood in support of the struggles of the rural masses. Various organizations—political, democratic, human rights, women, cultural and science groups—and people of different strata of the society—students, youth, teachers, educational workers, writers, artistes, litterateurs, scientists, professors, workers and

others—are rallying in support of the peasants. After a long interlude there has emerged a bond of friendship between the town and the countryside on the issue of Singur. At the same time, on the basis of this common struggle there has grown a camaraderie that binds the people of the two communities together—Hindus and Muslims. The combined sound-waves of conchshells and *aajaan* have the potential of turning into an invincible force . Tapasi Malik, a student of Singur, Bharat Mandal, a day labourer, Bishwajit Maiti, a student and Sheikh Selim, a tailor of Nandigram had to shed their lives as they all joined the struggle to save agricultural lands; they were killed by the butchers of the state and the goons hired by the ruling marxists. A broad-based unity in struggle has developed. In the face of this mass uprising the West Bengal government and the CPI(M) have become panicky. So they are now hatching a dirty conspiracy to derail the course of the movement away from the anti-eviction orientation.

We appeal to all strata of people, Hindus and Muslims: Be alert against this vile attempt at engineering a communal riot and foil it. The democratic minded people of Bengal have never lent quarter to communalism. Today also they will not show any indulgence to it.

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**'NO' TO
'MADE IN CHINA'**

'One-hour technology' products from China started entering Indian households some years ago. Even though the majority of these products did not succeed in the Indian market due to their 'inferior' quality, the Chinese 'invasion' of Indian market is still continuing. The dumping of Chinese-made fans, locks watches bicycles, radios, batteries etc is slowly replacing Indian domestic products and has become a threat to Indian industry. China herself is one of the victims of the counterfeit products they produce; in the year 2001, fake and low-quality medicines produced in China killed about 1,92,000 people.

The Indian toy industry has been more or less wiped out due to the dumping of cheap Chinese toys produced mainly by the Chinese Military Industrial Complex of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). In the last few years, many manufacturing units in India have been closed down due to this competition. Some companies have adopted the next best line of action by joining the enemy. Many Indian companies have already shifted their production bases from small Indian towns and villages to China. This has resulted in unemployment for lakhs of workers, pushing them to the brink of starvation. China's steady entry into India's textile, food, information-technology, pharmaceutical, automobile and other sectors may result in the collapse of many Indian industries - in both organised and unorganised sectors.

'Made In China' can be classified into three categories: 1. Products Made in Forced Labour Camps 2. Products Manufactured by the Chinese Military 3. Products Manufactured by the Disenfranchised Labour Force. It is also a well-known fact that the ironically named People's Liberation Army (PLA), party leaders and cadres own over 95% of the Chinese economy (directly or through a variety of proxies).

Business is everything! In 1998, the New York police busted a racket of some senior Chinese officials involved in the sale of the organs of executed prisoners for transplantation. It is estimated that more than one crore people work in thousands of forced labour camps across China. This includes a big majority of political prisoners. China tops the world with more than 2,300 executions per year. Most of the executions take place in front of crowds inside sports stadiums or public squares in the most preferred way, 'a bullet to the back of the head,' because it does not contaminate the prisoners' organs with poisonous chemicals, as lethal injections do.

Buying a product 'Made In China', means funding and empowering of brutal regime.

Friends of Tibet (India), Mumbai

BUSH & HITLER

Instead of accepting the face-saving recommendations of the ISG report for an exit from Iraq, President Bush has announced as expected a "surge" in American forces by an addition of 21,500 troops. Even before this announcement, this "battle of the surge" was being compared even by bourgeois commentators to Hitler's battle of the bulge. When facing total defeat, the Führer fell for the temptation, as has George W Bush now facing defeat in Iraq, to order one more push - one last heave. But it will not work. The idea that the raging inferno of resistance to the occupation can be policed into submission with an extra 21,500 troops is an absurd fantasy and a reflection of Bush's deluded state of existence and his total disengagement from reality.

In fact the very attempt to increase US troop levels in Iraq is an admission that all past US efforts at pacifying Baghdad, let alone the whole of Iraq, have been a total failure, when all along Bush and his cronies were feeding the world the lie that America was winning the war and the "terrorists" were on the run. Further, the latest surge in US troop levels is an admission that the Iraqi puppet government faces an imminent collapse if it is not propped up by additional American soldiers, when all along the world has been fed the lie that the Iraqi government, this tiny collection of despicable stooges, represented the democratic will of the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people. Now, it is clear that it represents the interests of US imperial capital

and a handful of its venal stooges, brought from emigre existence abroad on US tanks and with no social base in Iraq.

Lalkar, London

TATA SAGA

Five years back, Tata Motors were producing 129,400 vehicles for which it employed 35000 workers. Today, it produces 311,500 vehicles with a worker strength of 21000. The relation between productivity and workers in Tata Motors over a period of time is obvious. It has also been reported that Tata Motors do have the flexibility to incorporate additional assembly lines for their "People's Car Project" using their existing facilities which have still not reached their peak production capability. The claim of West Bengal government that Tata group is going to create more job opportunities over a period of time will be difficult to prove with existing company performance track records. Economist-planners will now have to come out with their usual theories of "creation of indirect employment opportunities in interconnected subsidiary sectors" to bail the government out. The group's non-transparent indulgences have already resulted in loss of credibility in acquisition of land resources through subsequent real-estate activities.

All these developments are happening at a time when the Planning Commission is coming out with new facts - that service sectors are contributing to Indian economy more than production or manufacturing sectors. The Reserve Bank of India also has reported this "phenomenon" and has even "advised" governments to "make appropriate investment choices". That the high performing service sectors make least claims on land is there for all to see.

The above issues will make it more difficult for the CPM-led left government to substantiate its claims vis-a-vis health of "investment climate" in its territory. Citizens' reactions and subsequent unrest at Singur, indirectly convey that the current "People's project" has very little to do with similar rhyming projects in China. Or is it part of a general weakness-syndrome of CPM outfit, that it becomes uncritical when it hears such a Maoist terminology uttered from a capitalist. (The Kerala chapter had earlier colluded with Bill Gates, perhaps, after learning that he was an atheist.) To allege that the unrest is the result of handiwork of a certain splinter group isolated from mainstream would be to belittle a genuine political uprising, one that is becoming the norm of the day, wherever erring governments set upon on a development drive abusing the will of the people who voted them to power.

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