

## The Myth of 'AID'

PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE world are being bombed day in and day out that western aid is of massive transfers of aid to poor third world countries for purely altruistic reasons. The reality is otherwise. This widely-orchestrated propaganda is a myth. Aid is a weapon used against the poor. Even according to conservative estimates of every US\$10 of Western and American aid that is reportedly spent in third world countries, \$8 returns to donor country in the form of administration expenses, consultancy fees and contracts for donor country corporations. In other words there is very little actual transfer of aid to the developing countries. Then there is corruption in recipient countries.

Western countries do not hesitate to pull the plug if any recipient country fails to support their foreign policy agenda. The donor countries are often able to control the agenda of the multilateral aid organisations and also ensure that the budgets of these organisations are used in favour of their countries.

In 1999, the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan decided to choose the new Administrator of UNDP on merit and not select the candidates traditionally imposed on the UN by the EU. The EU had nominated Poul Nielsen, the Danish Development Minister at the time. On the basis of merit, Kofi Annan chose Mark Malloch Brown, a British national, instead. The Danish government retaliated by slashing Danish aid to UNDP by 23%. No one knows how many poor Africans or Asians suffered because Danish national pride had been wounded.

Also, Western aid does not go to the poorest and neediest countries. It goes to those countries which support the foreign-policy agendas of the donor countries. American aid is the lowest among the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. But even the relatively little amount that America gives goes only to select countries, like Israel or Egypt even though Israel is a developed country.

The tragedy is that even marxists these days seldom expose the myth of western aid. They are equally interested like their opponents in sharing western aid and spreading the myth that 'foreign aid' is essential for development and progress in third world countries. The 'marxist' government of West Bengal is using British funds to retrench workers in state-run enterprises and they say 'this aid is good for the people'. And the myth of western aid persists. No progressive movement can really develop in depth without exposing the real face of 'Western Aid'. □□□