

## LETTERS

### PEOPLE'S POWER

We, the people's movements, welcome the decision of Ratan Tata and Tata Motors to withdraw their Nano Car Project from the land of Singur that belongs to the people, which is a victory of the people's movement supported by the political parties, especially the Trinamool Congress and SUCI, with other popular organizations, which supported the *Krishi Jami Raksha Committee*, including NAPM, West Bengal with its allies, especially the Pachim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samithi. The conflict that gets redressed with this decision after many ups and downs and threats and promises was not just between the Opposition Party and the CPM Govt. of West Bengal as Tata tried to depict, but was rather one between the state and its people. We are happy that the prime and irrigated and agricultural land of Singur would now be rightfully restored back to the hardworking rural communities.

The people's decision has ultimately over-powered as against the opposite view, backed by statutory and monetary power. We wish Tata respects people's views and it will be unfortunate if Tata asserts that it has taken the decision considering only the security of its staff and allies and not that of the people of Singur, the farmers, bargadars (share croppers) and the labourers and have not conceded to the people's demands for their own livelihood security.

Even if Tatas go away to Karnataka or Gujarat or elsewhere it would behove them to follow the democratic process and seek the consent of communities and not just the State before its cars or machines enter their land and before it makes any agreement with the State. The least of corporate social responsibility demands this as a basic principle to be followed in the industrialization process, be it in the name of SEZ or other project. Only this would decide whether and how would the people choose the right kind of industries that would be employment generating, livelihood securing and environment-protecting.

Common people in the country and the world over know that the real issue behind the Singur struggle as also Nandigram, Nandagudi, Kakinada, Raigad, Gorai, or elsewhere was undemocratic and unjust as well as forcible occupation of peasants land. It was also manipulation of people's resources imposing transfer from agriculture to industry, not even of their choice. The movement cannot be said to be either against industrialization or development per se. Rather the struggles such as Singur have helped initiate a public debate on the conception of development, the planning process vis-a-vis the constitutional framework and the land acquisition as per the British law.

What is being questioned is the imposition of an undue push given to the corporate culture as against people's interest, when no consent is sought from the immediate losers, who are never listed nor are they fairly compensated or rehabilitated. The displaced and deprived therefore have and will have a right to assert their decision if the State does not follow the democratic processes. The folly and fraud of the CPM Govt. is once again exposed after Nandigram and all kinds of oppression and repression or even the allegations of sedition have failed miserably before the people's power.

The self-withdrawal by Ratan Tata in spite of the CPM Govt. not taking a clear position in favour of its own people should set an example for others like the Ambanis who are facing conflict after conflict at many places. However, following this withdrawal, the CPM and Tata together must also clear up the mess by making the occupied land free and restoring the previous land records as also compensating the losses borne by the farmers, share croppers and labourers, as per the package that was being offered. This amounting to a few crores to Rs 1500 crores of loss as reported by TATAs would indeed bring a part of the credibility back to the State Government and the corporates both.

The whole struggle of Singur with the valiant martyrdom of Rajkumar Bhul, Tapasi Malik and others has reinforced our faith in the non-violent peaceful struggles that only can save land, water, forests and aquatic or mineral wealth of the country from unjustified usurpation for profits over people.

*Medha Patkar, Anand Mazgaonkar  
Mukta Srivastava, P Chennaiah*

### BYPASSING SOLUTION

The real solution to India's economic ills lies in diversification of agriculture and allied sectors, and shift in labour force from primary to secondary sector. Productivity in the primary sector needs to be stepped up. Agricultural prosperity contributes to steady growth of manufacturing and services sectors. But Indian planners lack this approach.

The other major problem is, steep rise in unproductive expenditure of the centre and the states. Huge expenditures incurred on populist schemes failed to eradicate poverty because they are not well-planned. The soaring subsidies have not conferred benefits on the poor to the extent expected. Huge investments and poor returns are the order of the day. New irrigation projects are started, without completing the existing ones. The pro-poor programmes suffer from high incidence of leakages. The Government speaks of inclusive growth, but this remains only on paper. Also, both the centre and the states neglect the principle of decentralisation. Mere shibboleths, in the absence of political will, cannot solve crippling crisis India has been in for quite some time.

*I Satya Sundaram, Hyderabad*

### “NO EXIT”

Recently this writer went on to see the latest production of "Pancham Vaidik", the Bengali play "Narokio". It is based on Jean Paul Sartre's play "No Exit" written in the mid-40s of the twentieth century. In this play director Arpita Ghosh has purposefully depicted its one of the main characters, corrupted politician Samrat Sircar as Joseph Stalin. Though in the original play "No Exit", the central character Garcin, a reporter, who was liar and immoral had no resemblance with Stalin. Ms Arpita has a constant habit of maligning Stalin. In her previous play "Poshukhamar", which was based on "Animal Farm" written by George Orwell, she attacked Stalin policies and Soviet Union's Socialist state. In the play, it was shown that Stalin's regime was repressive and anti-democratic. George Orwell, who claimed to be a Marxist, was originally an Anti-communist and a supporter of bourgeois democracy. He was against Dictatorship of the Proletariat and socialism. He was aided and funded allegedly by imperialist powers, the main enemy of communism and working class, to attack socialism and to malign its leaders. Persons like Arpita Ghosh and Saoli Mitra are the supporters of that so-called "Orwellian communism" which is an anti-socialist ideology to counter the real thoughts and aspects of socialism and communism. These self-proclaimed champions of humanity judge Stalin's thoughts and activities by the anti-people policies of CPM, which is a revisionist social-democratic party and not a real communist party in any case. People who don't know the abc of communism should not have the right to judge and criticize the great leaders of communism.

In her last column in *The Telegraph*, Malavika Singh called Stalin and Mao Tse Tung mass-murderers. These types of miss-propagandas are based on utter lies and misinformation.

*Rudra Sen, Kolkata*

### THESIS ON VENEZUELA

An Achilles' heel of the Venezuelan revolutionary process is the absence of adequate two-way connections between the political leadership and its base. To consider Chavez as a mere heir, only a more radical one, of Caudillism and Peronism is not acceptable. This analysis is proved wrong by the reiterated and sincere Chavist attempts at encouraging popular participation from above, at giving power to the oppressed people. But the relationship between the leadership and the base, founded mainly on the charisma of the leader, turned out to be a drawback instead of an advantage.

The last but not the least Achilles' heel of the Bolivarian system is that it was not able yet to destroy the institutional presidentialist and bonapartist system, a poisoned legacy of the rotten oligarchic two-party system which is a carbon copy of the Northern American regime. The proof being that, of the 36 articles submitted to referendum, not only there was not a single one proposing the abolition of presidentialism, but on the contrary, the proposed constitutional reform—credible as far as the social measures inspired to principles of justice and solidarity were concerned—would have strengthened the President's prerogatives and executive and veto powers. The, decision to increase the President's powers (and to extend his term of office) meant to be the solution to the social and political problems. But it would have worsened them instead. It is true that the constitutional reform voted down by the referendum included strong institutional and legal proposals in favour of territorial self-administration which meant to assign ample powers to the local and grassroots communities, precisely in order to encourage the citizens to take over the political and administrative machine. Would such a mechanism have worked? These two aspects are irreconcilable. An institutional system with a powerful presidentialism and structures of direct democracy is bound to be paralyzed every time there is no perfect correspondence and balance between the two parts. The attempt left room for the demagogical accusations of populism and authoritarianism, and gave a certain legitimacy

to the reactionaries wishing to ridicule the "socialism of the 21st century".

*Anti-Imperialist Camp*

## ARVIND

Leading member of the editorial board of *Dayitvabodh*, intelligent and experienced revolutionary left organizer Arvind is no more. He died on the night of July 24 in a nursing home at Gorakhpur after three consecutive massive heart attacks. He was suffering from viral fever for some days and was admitted to a private hospital on July 23 when he complained of difficulty in breathing. There it was diagnosed that his heart was under too much pressure due to severe infection in his lungs. His intestines were also badly infected and kidneys were also not functioning properly. He died before he could be put on dialysis.

Arvind lived a short life of only 44 years and he devoted 24 years of this brief life as a revolutionary left activist doing organizational and agitational work among the masses or editing or contributing to various left journals and magazines. He lived his short life in a busy and militant way and with full involvement in whatever he did. He was an extremely simple, sensitive, refined and organized person. Anybody who met him even once, was impressed by his personality. He never compromised on matters of principle but he had hardly a single enemy in his personal life. He was a thoughtful writer, powerful orator and propagandist and a skilled organizer. He had multi-faceted talent in the real sense of the word.

Arvind was associated with the editing of intellectual magazine *Dayitvabodh* from 1991. He also wrote regularly for the student-youth magazine *Ahwan* for 18 years, and also played an important role in the editing of workers' paper *Bigul* apart from writing in almost each of its issues. He had a keen interest in world classic literature and the range of his literary study was as wide as his political study despite a busy political-organizational life. His Hindi translation of Diderot's famous work *Rameau's Nephew* (published from Rajkamal Prakashan) is well known.

Arvind lived a short but full of struggles and ups and downs. He lived and died like a fighter.

Katyayani, *Dayitvabodh*, UP

## SAY 'NO' TO TERROR

We, the people of Mumbai, from all walks of life, of all faiths, all linguistic groups, all ages, expressed our commitment to peace, and our condemnation of terror and violence in any form, by coming out on the streets on the day (December 10) when the world commemorated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. The theme for 2008, which was "*Dignity and Justice*" had a poignant resonance for the people of Mumbai, traumatized and fearful after the attack on its spirit by criminals who are without a shred of humanity or conscience.

*The Citizens' Initiative for Peace, Mumbai*