

## Bashai Tudus Never Die

Mahasveta Devi

*[Shocked by the political murder of T P Chandrasekharan, a CPM activist, Mahasveta Devi, the voice of voiceless, despite her advanced age, reacted in her very own indomitable way and sent an open letter to Pinarai Vijayan, the CPM State Secretary of Kerala. We reproduce below the letter that speaks for itself.]*

### AN OPEN REQUEST

TO

PINARAI VIJAYAN

Majeendran from Thoppumpady telephoned me yesterday (31-05-2012) and he was very upset. One Mr Mani, a leader of CPI(M) from Kerala, I was told, justified the political killings, including T P Chandrasekharan's brutal killing. Majeendran, a grassroots level fishermen leader. Majeendran, I deciphered, was more agitated about the obscene remarks by this CPI(M) leader, of all the people in the world on me! What crime did I commit to deserve this?

I write this letter in my handwriting as I am not a techno-savvy person at all. And sitting in Kolkata, I see this crude and uncouth character spitting venom on me. But I am not angry with Mani. Watching him was great fun. I can't take any action against Mani.

In a strange and metaphorical manner he is true. At the young age of 87, I am still suffering from lust of life.

I do not want to die—I want to live forever. Joshy Joseph knows it better. (You should see his films yourself, unlike Buddhadev Bhattacharya who banned his film. Thanks to Buddhadev, I met Joshy).

While I was going to meet T P Chandrasekharan's wife Rama, I was telling the young comrades that they should translate my book *Bashai Tudu* into Malayalam. Bashai Tudu, my hero, was a peasant, a rebel. The then government wanted to kill him. And he was killed. His dead body was identified. But again a rebel, a fighter started his action and declared that he was Bashai Tudu. My Bashai did not die as he was a true people's leader, and he continued to live in the memory of the people. And T P Chandrasekharan is also deathless. He will continue to live in people's memory and will guide, like my Bashai Tudu.

All sorts of people came, met and talked to me. One of the stories horrified me. Nobody in Kerala can go anywhere near the mansion of CPI(M) state secretary Pinarai Vijayan's! I can't believe it. The horror shoots up within, when they say that one of the reasons for which Chandrasekharan had to pay with his life is that he dared to take some Onchiyam comrades to see this palace with their own naked eyes! I can't believe it until and unless I see it myself.

I have seen the blood stained stair on the nearby wall which was still red, where T P was butchered on 4th May 2012. Jamaraj is identified with south direction. But it cannot be Kerala. It is so green. And I lust for green!

I request Keralan writers, film makers and cultural workers to stand up and protest. We, the cultural people, have only one weapon. We can protest. In West Bengal we do, openly. Protest.

1-6-2012