

LONG LIVE HISTORIC MAY DAY



CALL OF MAY DAY
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE
AGAINST THE FRESH VICIOUS
ONSLAUGHT FROM THE RULING
CAPITALISTS-IMPERIALISTS
TAKING COVER BEHIND AND
MAKING USE OF THE DISASTROUS
COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Plight and Peril of Indian Migrant Workers in Lockdown — Shocking Apathy of the Government-Administration

Jamlo Makkam an impoverished 12 year old girl, died in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur after walking for three days through dense forests to reach her home. She had undertaken the desperate 100 km walk from the chilli fields in Telangana where she had gone with other migrant workers to work before the lockdown. She had almost made it, was just 11 kms away from her home. But as the cryptic post-mortem report indicated, she appeared to have died due to muscle fatigue, hunger and dehydration. A 39-year-old man, employed in Delhi as a home delivery worker, died in Agra on March 28 while on his way home to the Morena district of Madhya Pradesh because of exhaustion after covering around 200 km on foot in the scorching sun. A fast moving tempo van hit as many as five persons belonging to migrant labour families while they were walking home in the Bilaspur area of Haryana, leaving all of them dead. Four migrant labourers, who were originally from Rajasthan and trying to reach home from Maharashtra were run over by a truck at Virar on the

Mumbai-Gujarat highway. In Gujarat, two women migrant labourers who were heading for their home state of Rajasthan were run over by a freight train in Vapi district.

Such heart-rending incidents are galore since corona lockdown was clamped with barely 4 hours' notice by the government. In a sweet voice, the BJP Prime Minister of the country preached before announcing the lockdown: "First life, then the world" and then instructed all to stay at home only. If viewed from the danger of spread of deadly Covid-19 virus, the lockdown is justified. But, the central government which was aware of the corona infection of Indians two months back, took no pre-emptive step in right earnest to contain its geometric progression in time. It only awoke from slumber when the danger was at the doorstep. As usual, the BJP government whose track-record has been of faithfully serving the ruling monopolists, corporate behemoths and a few super-rich at the cost of escalating peril, penury and misery of the 95% of

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MAINTAINING LOCKDOWN PROTOCOL, 73RD PARTY FOUNDATION DAY OBSERVED ON 24 APRIL WITH DUE SOLEMNITY AND RENEWAL OF THE RESOLVE TO INTENSIFY REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE



Comrade Provash Ghosh, beloved General Secretary, offering red salute to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary of the Party, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era and our leader, teacher and guide, at Shibpur Party Centre, West Bengal



Comrade Manik Mukherjee, veteran Polit Bureau member, at Salt Lake Party Centre, Kolkata



Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, veteran Polit Bureau member, at Salt Lake Party Centre, Kolkata

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Migrant labourer**Inhuman attitude of bourgeois government towards real creators of wealth glaringly manifested***Contd. from page 1*

the toiling countrymen, conveniently overlooked the impact of the sudden lockdown on the millions of hapless migrant workers, hungry, unfed or half-fed, shelterless across the country and their families. The Prime Minister and his government had forgotten that its celebrated economic growth model—based on high-growth sectors like real estate and world-class infrastructure in large urban agglomerations—is built almost entirely on the backs of these rural-urban migrant workers. These penury and misery-stricken workers toil from dawn to dusk, sweat out day in and day out to create wealth for the nation. They are the real wealth-creators, not the multi-billionaire industrialists and business tycoons who, as real parasites of society, appropriate the fruits of the labour of these helpless countrymen to stack their chests. While the benefits of a lockdown preventing the infection from spreading would equally accrue to everyone, the costs will be disproportionately higher for the myriads of poor like the migrant labourers, who, unlike the better off, have neither the luxury of working from home nor enough of a savings pool to exhaust while not earning. Daily earnings of theirs barely suffice to enable them to eat and feed their families. Anecdotal reports of thousands of workers walking on foot trying to reach their homes hundreds of kilometres away glaringly confirm that. And the less said about the condition of those forced by circumstances or police to stay back, the better.

Sub-human life of the migrant workers

Migrant labourers are among the most vulnerable parts of the “informal sector of economy” which make up around 80 percent of India’s workforce. There are estimated 10 crore (100 million) internal migrant workers in the country. They build malls, multiplexes, hospitals, apartment blocks and hotels as construction workers on contract basis at throwaway remuneration in most hazardous working condition. They work as factory hands, delivery boys, sweepers, conservancy workers, loaders, coolies, cooks, hand-painters, rickshaw pullers and so on and so forth. Many of them stand the whole day by the side of

the road selling fruits, vegetables, tea, flowers and balloons. They are forced to come to the cities—even hundreds of miles away from their homes—to look for work, because they cannot make a living in the villages. If there are 5 people on average in each family of the 10 crore migrant workers, then, around 50 crores people are dependent on their earnings. Most of these workers live on high-risk worksites: cramped and poorly ventilated, where they sleep. Many of them spend their entire days—near old, hazardous, second-hand industrial machines, including metal cutters, power-presses, and drilling machines. Their dwelling place is mostly an informal rental space. 15-20 workers cram themselves into single, unventilated rooms—the most premium of which are 10x12 feet in size normally going at the rate of Rs.500 per worker. Many of the workers sleep on the tin roofs of the rooms, while others squeeze themselves in the hollows of the walls meant for storage. To expect even a semi-normal life is a luxurious dream for them. These migrant labourers are not factored into any legislation or scheme on social security available at least on paper for unorganised workers. They are not treated at par with other workers in the destination states and deprived of portability of welfare schemes, access to healthcare and allied benefits, whatever little of those are available. Their sub-human life condition bereft of least of social security is a damp squib on the ‘Preamble of Indian Constitution’ which speaks of ‘equality of status and opportunity’ and ‘fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual’.

Humanitarian crisis created by sudden lockdown

In a matter of hours, the unanticipated public health crisis in India due to Covid-19 has triggered an even larger, humanitarian crisis, the toll of which is being borne, among other pauperized vulnerable sections of the population, by these migrants labourers as well. They knew they could not afford to stay in the city if they had no income. They were worried they would get sick. Back in their village homes, the somehow dragging life of their families would come to a grinding halt and death would stare at them.

So, more worried about their families as well as their life and livelihood rather than community spread, more than half a million people have been reported to have desperately left the cities and towns where they went to work. First they started walking in a trickle and then in a flood. Within days, a shocked nation began to see images of thousands walking down highways on foot, braving hunger and thirst, the sweltering summer heat, densely forested areas and with continuous threat of disease and death looming large. Walking miles after miles, many of them have died out either of fatigue or accident. But even that huge number is but a trickle compared to the millions of migrants forced to stay back and herded together in terrible conditions for the greater part. Clearly the poor in capitalist India are on their own. They are poised to die more of hunger and malnutrition and other diseases but also of Covid-19.

Those who could not leave their current place of work called helplines in desperation, seeking food, other essential supplies and shelter, or begging to simply be transported back to their villages. “Pro-people government-administrations” who could arrange chartered planes to bring back affluent Indians from abroad, could despatch hundreds of luxury buses with special permission to bring the stranded students and pilgrims to their respective places of domicile, did not have any mercy, let alone concern, for these impoverished migrant labourers. Instead, the administration forced them to flock together inside so called relief camps which often have been short of cowshed-converted rooms with temporary asbestos shades making the roof. Many of these centres lack drinking water and have either nil or highly unhygienic sanitation facilities. Food is either absent or available at times in scant quantity and that too often of questionable quality. As per a sample survey based on talk with 11, 159 migrant labourers struck in the shelter homes, 96% did not receive government ration, 70% did not get any cooked food, 89% did not receive any wage and 78% possess less than Rs 300 of cash. The Prime Minister has been advising ‘social distancing’ (meaning physical distancing) and self-isolation to beat Corona. How is that feasible for

these homeless migrant labourers who have no option but to stay in overcrowded unclean government shelters? Besides being compelled to spend 24 hours jam-packed in such ‘relief shelters’ which are veritable breeding centres for infections, these hapless labourers also run the risk of police action and repression. Worst of such repression and cruelty were seen in the BJP-run UP. There many migrant labourers stuck at the border were asked to provide “health certificates” which they had no means to procure. So, the police sprayed disinfectants on them as if they were criminals. Similarly, the police swung batons at random to disperse a large group of migrant labourers at a Mumbai railway station where they gathered hearing the news of running a special train to transport them to their homes. After being beaten by the food-distributing staff, four terrified migrant labourers from a Delhi shelter jumped into the nearby Yamuna river and one of them was drowned. Such pathetic incidents bearing the inhuman approach of ruling capitalism and its servitors are not in short supply.

What prevents the very government that can afford to forego a tax revenue of as high as Rs 1.43 lakh crore in just one year by reducing corporate tax rate to come to the rescue of the millions of migrant labourers, the real architects of civilization with adequate monetary help, food, shelter and guaranteed support to their families in their native places? Would it entail more cost than foregone corporate tax revenue?

Did the migrant labourers import COVID infection?

As is known to all, the COVID-19 infection was brought to the country by well-to-do Indians from overseas. But the central government did not stop operation of international flights till 23 March lest the privileged Indians should be inconvenienced, no matter if they were vehicles for importing the virus. The irony is that when the pandemic has been brought into India by people who can afford plane tickets and buy private health services, the virus is devastating the abjectly poor whom these affluent have infected and who have little or no access to health care. This is the

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BJP agenda with Kashmir

A new Domicile Law and other changes imposed during corona-virus lockdown

The country with its 1.3 billion people had been reeling under the phased lockdown clamped by the BJP-led Indian government to prevent devastating corona-virus pandemic from entering into community transmission stage. As in most of the states, the two newly formed Union territories, Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh, particularly the former had also been feeling the heat of the pandemic and lockdown. By the middle of April, J & K had near to 300 affected, 30 cured and 4 dead. The Prime Minister, the man at the helm of the fight against the pandemic, had been repeatedly appealing to his countrymen on the small screen to stand united with him. But he and his party, BJP had their own agenda which time and often speak otherwise. Kashmir comes out as an example.

Covert operation when all eyes are focussed on Covid-19 pandemic

Well within the lockdown on 1 April 2020, the Indian government announced a new set of laws for Kashmir, including domicile rights for Indian citizens. It is alleged that the law which was to govern the 12 million population of J&K was so offhandedly drafted that the Union government had to change it within 72 hours. In any case, under the new amended law announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs, those who would have resided for a period of 15 years in Kashmir or studied for a period of seven years and appeared in Class 10/12 examinations in educational institutions located in the region would be eligible to become permanent residents. The new law also provided domicile status to the children of central government officials who served in Kashmir for a total period of 10 years.

It may be recalled that the BJP-led Union government abrogated Article 370 on 5 August 2019 whereupon the geographical and political status of Kashmir region was significantly changed. Article 370 which was part and parcel of the treaty of accession of the Princely Kashmir state to India, had given the permanent residents of Kashmir their rights over jobs, scholarships and land. Its abrogation terminated that provision. It also stripped Jammu and Kashmir, avowedly in the name of bringing development, of the limited autonomy that had protected the

region for decades from demographic changes. Subsequently, Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two Union territories, namely Jammu and Kashmir and the other Ladakh, placed directly under the administration of the Union government with little power vested in the hands of the local people to decide their future. The announcement of the new Domicile Law by the now-all-powerful Union government came nearly eight months after these events and that too in a situation when the country, including J&K is busy fighting the dreaded pandemic. This was the point that Omar Abdullah, the former Chief Minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and Vice President of the National Conference party, recently released after seven months of detention, highlighted in his criticism. He is reported to have commented: "At a time when all our efforts and attention should be focused on the COVID outbreak the government slips in a new domicile law for J&K. Insult is heaped on injury when law offers none of the protections that had been promised." He demanded restoration of statehood and holding of elections in J&K. "It's high time people of J&K get to decide the laws that will govern them rather than being subjected to the whims and fancies of the Centre, where orders are issued in the morning and changes issued in the evening."

New Domicile Law faces sharp criticism

The new Domicile Law amended within days of its issue drew sharp criticisms from different circles of Jammu and Kashmir. While the law has triggered fear among Kashmiris about the "permanent settlements by the outsiders", the experts say it will lead to "demographic flooding".

Retired Air Vice Marshal Kapil Kak, who has challenged the abrogation of Article 370 in the Supreme Court, said it is "a permanent resident by stealth". "It should worry the Kashmiris." "The effect of this notification would be felt in [the] Jammu [region] because there are not many people who have come into Kashmir in the last 15 years," he told Al Jazeera.

Sheikh Showkat Hussain, a professor of legal studies said: "It was in the offing". "The whole purpose of revoking Article 370 was to settle outsiders here and change

the demography of the state. Now this provides the modalities and entitles so many categories of Indians whose settlement will be legalised over here." Khurram Parvez, a human rights defender, said: "By virtue of this order, outsiders are also going to be the claimants of jobs in Jammu and Kashmir, which already has a huge unemployment problem. This is an act against the interests of unemployed youth."

Spokesmen of the two major parties of J&K, PDP and NC reiterated this point that there is not an iota of doubt about this domicile law bringing drastic change in the demography of J&K and essentially robbing the local educated and uneducated youth of their 'right to job' in the state. Such a major decision has been taken just by the stroke of pen and without any consultation with anyone, that too in the middle of night.

Expectedly, the elated BJP spokesman and party leaders hailed the move. They did not fail to reveal that this was part of a design, long-thought and worked out in steps. "Hectic lobbying and efforts of J&K-based BJP leaders succeeded in persuading to amend the domicile law, in which all jobs have been kept reserved for the J&K youth in government sectors," said Altaf Thakur, Kashmir BJP spokesman, while praising the party's top leadership. Ashok Kaul, the general secretary for the BJP in Jammu and Kashmir told boastfully "We have been pitching for it. Everyone in Jammu and Kashmir is happy, let people who live here for 15 years get the benefits, no other outsiders will get it." So they accepted the planned design as also the demographic change as they welcome the outsiders as permanent residents after being qualified by their 15 years of stay. However, Jammu BJP may have raised concerns over new J&K domicile law with Amit Shah, party boss and Union Home Minister.

The above responses from the political leaders-intellectuals of Kashmir speak adequately how Kashmir is receiving the BJP move on domicile status, a sensitive issue that people of Kashmir have fought for long, since accession of Kashmir to India was accepted unhesitatingly by them under the then leadership of the National Conference led by Sheikh Abdullah. But the present BJP leadership and their government at the Centre do not end with only this change in domicile

status. Certain apparently innocuous moves made, again to use the term stealthily, during this lockdown period, may raise serious concern.

More steps to devastate poor Kashmiri people further

On 8 April, the J&K Union Territory (UT) government issued an order approving a policy to regulate functioning and operation of houseboats in two iconic water bodies of Srinagar, namely Dal and Nigeen lakes. The order banned construction of new houseboats and shikaras and categorization of the existing ones based on facilities available. Ostensibly issued with an aim to preserving the lakes for future generations, it provides guidelines to prevent pollution of the lakes and adopt sustainable tourism by providing conducive and pleasant atmospheres for the tourists. It is claimed that thus developed, the houseboats and shikaras will turn out to be sustainable source of living for their owners. Only they will have to fulfil certain general conditions and register or renew their houseboats with an advisory committee to be constituted by the government.

Apparently innocuous, eco-friendly, and development-oriented policy contains ominous signs for the houseboat-shikara owners, who are, by and large, common people of Kashmir. From now on they will have to obtain registration or renewal from a bureaucratic body. In the name of sustainable tourism patterned to attract more tourists and earn more profit as the livelihood, the controlling body is likely to set guidelines to furnish and develop the houseboats in ways that may themselves be not sustainable for the present owners. One can look at the tourist facilities on rivers of Goa, like Zuari etc., for example. On the other hand, the prospect of attractive and profit-making tourist facilities will attract big corporate bodies to invest in the project and push out the common existing owners. The latter will lose their livelihood or turn into appendages of the big corporate bodies.

Introduction of the new Domicile law did not take the corona-virus pandemic into account. But when it comes to felling of lakhs, if not crores, of female Russian Poplar trees before onset of the flowering season in April, the J&K administration represented by Deputy Commissioners of all ten districts are

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73RD PARTY FOUNDATION DAY OBSERVED ON 24 APRIL

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Comrade Debaprosad Sarkar, veteran Polit Bureau member, at Jaynagar Party Office, West Bengal



Comrade K Radhakrishna, Polit Bureau member, at Bangalore party Centre, Karnataka



Comrade Gopal Kundu, Polit Bureau member, at Salt Lake Party Centre, Kolkata



Party Central Office, Kolkata



Comrade Rabin Samajpati, Central Committee member, at Ranchi Party Centre, Jharkhand



Comrade Dwarika Nath Rath, Central Committee member, at Ahmedabad Party Centre, Gujarat



Comrade Chiraranjan Chakraborty, Central Committee member, at Rashbehari Party Centre, Kolkata



Comrade Chandidas Bhattacharyya, Central Committee member, at Dhakuria Party Centre, Kolkata



Comrade Pratap Samal, Central Committee member, at Bhopal Party Centre, MP



Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh



Agartala, Tripura



Pilani, Rajasthan



Sonipat, Haryana

TABLIGHI JAMAAT AND THE EVIL COMMUNAL CONSPIRACY OF THE HINDUTVA CAMP

While the corona virus is confounding scientists-medicos worldwide, another disease, nurtured by the communal-fundamentalist politics of hate and bigotry also continues to afflict the suffering humanity with no less ferocity. The coronavirus pandemic has so far taken over 700 lives in India. But the disease of communal hatred precipitated by the quarters of vested interest has killed thousands over the years and even at this hour of grave health crisis, is showing no sign of relent. A glaring case in point is the communal virus spread by the arch Hindu communal RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar centring on the Tablighi Jamaat meeting held in mid-March at Banglewali Markaz Masjid at Nizamuddin Mosque in Delhi. Tablighi Jamaat is a radical religious organization of Sunni faction of the Muslim Community. There is no reason to believe that it represents the entire Muslim people just like the way RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar are no representative of the Hindu populace. These are all self-appointed guardians of the respective religions though what they preach smack of fundamentalism, religious blindness and fanaticism which have nothing to do with the concerned religions at all. They all are hypocrite flaunters of their respective religious doctrines. No religion or for that matter, none of the revered religious preachers of yester years ever preached any such blindness, fanaticism or hatred towards other religions. Coming back to the Tablighi Jamaat conclave, it was on 13 March last that around 3000 people including participants from several foreign countries gathered at the Nizamuddin Markaz. Two days back, WHO had declared Corona-19 as a pandemic. But the BJP-led Indian government showed no concern at it at that point of time. Only on 16 March, the Delhi government declared health emergency and restricting religious gathering to 50 only. But it is true that the people at the Nizamuddin Markaz still continued to stay put and the organizers also did not show any concern. The local Police Station is virtually adjacent to the venue of the conclave.

But neither the Delhi Government nor the Delhi Police under the Union Home Ministry took any effort to stop the entry of any person or vacate the premises. Even the BJP-led central government which issued visa to reportedly around 800 foreign nationals attending the conclave made no attempt to deport them. It was on 4

March that the union minister of health and family welfare, announced compulsory screening of all international passengers arriving in India. Were not the foreigners who came to join the Jamaat not screened? If screened, did they test positive? If so, why were they allowed entry? If not, how could have they infected others in India? There is no answer to all these crucial questions. Everything happened under the very nose of both the central and state governments. While the Maharashtra government stopped Tablighi Jamaat from holding a similar meeting in Upnagar, Mumbai, what prompted the Central government to grant them permission? Why was the huge gathering of people from different parts of India and the world allowed to stay on till 20 March, a day before all the trains to and from Delhi were stopped? Why did they not intervene in time when such a gathering was perceived to be a potential threat of corona contagion? The Prime Minister called for Janta Curfew throughout the country and banned public gathering on that day. By that time, many participants had left the place and spread at various places of the country. Is it to be believed that the police or central home ministry had no knowledge of that? On 24 March when 21-day lockdown was announced, the local police asked the remaining people to vacate the area. But, it was found on 25 March that around 1000 people were still residing in the area defying lockdown orders. It was only as late as on 28 March that Delhi police started to escort people out of Nizamuddin Markaz. By that time, it came to light that some of the people who attended the conclave tested positive of corona infection. Also conspicuous is the meeting of Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor of the central BJP government with Maulana Saad, Tablighi Jamaat Markaz chief, at eerie hours on 28 March and then the sudden vanishing of Maulana Saad on the very night. Questions have been raised, and rightly so, as to why did Doval and not the Delhi Police Commissioner meet Maulana Saad? Who deputed Doval to meet the Maulana and why? Why till 28 March Maulana was not arrested or FIR lodged when the action had begun against Tablighi Jamaat by that time?

Though all these questions remained unanswered, a few toxic television channels owing allegiance to the ruling dispensation did not delay in pushing up a narrative that Tablighi Jamaat is solely and singly

responsible for the spread of coronavirus infections all over India. Immediately dozens of fake videos and WhatsApp messages became viral accusing the entire Muslim community of flouting social distancing, alleged spitting at people to "infect" them got into circulation. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, a central BJP minister called the Markaz gathering a "Talibani crime". On 1 April, Amit Malviya, BJP IT cell head commented on Twitter that "Delhi dark underbelly is exploding! Last 3 months have been Islamic insurrection of sorts, first in the name of anti-CAA protest from Shaheen Bagh to Jamia and Jaffrabad to Seelampur. And now the illegal gathering of the radical Tablighi Jamaat at the Markaz. It needs a fix! Foremost is the chronology of the Nizamuddin Markaz episode that needs to be solved in proper order." Do not all these smack of a definite design? True that the organizers paid no heed to the early warnings and violated lockdown protocol. It is also true that person of any religious faith is also supposed to be a responsible citizen. He or she needs to uphold the law of the land and follow what is good for the fellow citizens. Complying with government-formulated rules and medical advice of experts are essential obligations, incumbent upon each one of us. These precautions are to secure the safety and health of all citizens – no one has the authority to override them. But why did it take as long as upto 28 March for the Delhi Police to swing into action? Moreover, a *gomutra* (cow urine) party was allowed to take place in Delhi on 14 March. On 17 March, 40,000 visitors were allowed to assemble at Tirupati temple. Amid the nationwide lockdown, Yogi Adityanath, BJP Chief Minister of UP, led a contingent to Ayodhya on 26 March to put Ram Lala from pandal to silver pedestal. On 16 April, the people of Kalaburgi in Karnataka turned out in crowds to celebrate the Siddhalingeswara temple chariot festival. Kalaburgi is a coronavirus hotspot in Karnataka. In the way Talibagh Jamat are guilty of violating health warning and some of their members accused of being carriers of this deadly virus, are not the others championing so called Hindutva and having organized or allowed to organize religious festivals equally guilty of defying government orders and threatening spread of Covid-19? Why then single out the Tablighi Jamaat? It is a fact that the Tablighi participants did spread the virus in parts of Delhi, Tamil Nadu

and Telangana, but it defies all logic to say that it is they who are responsible for all Covid-19 cases in India, in every state and town. In Mumbai, the worst affected city, corona virus is cutting across religion, caste and class, with Dharavi slum being the most affected followed by the posh Malabar Hill area. Even 'The Indian Scientists' Response to Covid-19' (ISRC), a group seeking to provide authentic information and bust myths about the pandemic, strongly condemned on 11 April last any attempt to communalise the pandemic. While the Tablighi Jamaat had erred by not cancelling the event, the ISRC said, the central and state governments should acknowledge their administrative lapses. Visibly upset over the issue, even the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) asked the Indian government to check growing 'Islamophobia' in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak.

But the government or RSS-BJP-Sangh Parivar and their pliant media are not putting the Hindutva brigade in the dock for the wrongdoings. Their whole and sole target has been to find a scapegoat in Tablighi Jamaat with a view to spewing anti-minority venom. It is obvious that with countrywide surge of massive anti-NRC anti-CAA protests involving all sections of the toiling masses and cementing the struggling unity of the people rising above all so called religious-casteist-ethnic divides, the ploy of the RSS-BJP to drive a wedge into the unity of the countrymen raising bogey of illegal infiltration and stay of 'illegal foreigners' fell through. Moreover, Shaheen Bagh of Delhi became an icon of that movement. In such a position, outbreak of Covid-19 and then irresponsible convening of the Tablighi Jamaat opened a new opportunity before the Hindutva zealots to uproot the Shaheen Bagh movement and instead stoke and intensify anti-minority hatred and pose before the majority population that had not the Tablighi Jamaat taken place, blowout of the contamination would not have been so much. Is it then to be inferred that the central government deliberately allowed such a violation to take place with a view to communalizing even such a deadly pandemic and the AAP-led Delhi government acquiesced in the move? It might apparently look mysterious but a careful rational analysis of the sequence of events, acts and utterances cannot but point at the aforesaid inference to be a logical conclusion.

Migrant labourer

Lenin's prognosis of capitalism being always 'horror without end' is proved once more

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unfeeling face of "civilized" "democratic" India. Why is it that in one surgical move, the government left millions of citizens – casual and migrant labour – marooned, homeless, jobless, foodless, penniless, herded together and locked up? Is it that those who live in skyscrapers or posh bungalows in sprawling cities, frequent cafes and malls, are attuned to digital transactions and capable of flying abroad for spending holidays or building lucrative career, alone are Indian citizens? Are not the semi-clad semi-fed appallingly poor migrant workers who leave their home and hearth and forced to be in tryst with dust and accompanying hazards to create the pillars and columns of the high-rise buildings, serve at cafes, sweep and paint the malls, citizens of 'democratic' India? The answer goes abegging. One is only reminded of what Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, the great Renaissance litterateur of India, had observed in the third volume of his celebrated novel 'Srikanta' while dwelling on the subhuman and distressed condition of the workers: "But, you, the bearers of modern civilization, you are dying, you die! Forgive not, in the least, this cruel civilization that has made your life such. If you are to carry it, carry it down speedily to the abysmal depth of its grave."

Futile knocking at the Judiciary

Another farcical side of "democratic" India has once more been laid bare centring on the immense hardship of the migrant labourers. Human Rights activist Harsha Mandar, Anjali Bharadwaj and lawyer Prashant Bhusan had approached the Supreme Court with the plea that the court might direct the Government for suitable monetary compensation to these hand-to-mouth migrant workers who have lost their jobs due to lockdown and whose employers would not pay them without work. Without such financial help, they could neither feed

themselves and nor send money to their families at home. The petitioners appealed that consumable food in required quantity be distributed to these workers now straddled in the relief camps. Under the leadership of Chief Justice, a bench of 3 judges heard the petition. But after hearing both the petitioners and the government side, the Chief Justice observed that there was not sufficient information available to say that the stranded migrants were not receiving food nor could the Court monitor as to whether the food served is 'inedible'. The Court, he said, did not intend to interfere with the efforts of the government nor could do anything better than the Government. The Bench advised all to wait for 10-15 days. It meant that the millions of migrant workers had to stay satisfied in the crowded filthy relief camps and the low quality of food Government was providing them, seemingly out of mercy. This was not unexpected. Of late, quite a good number of eminent jurists including Supreme Court Judges have been openly expressing wrath and disgust at the way the juridical process is being tampered with to give a stamp of legal approval to the whims and dictates of the 'Executive' and also even scathingly indicting many of the Court judgments. Certain developments did lend credence to such observations. In fact, today when capitalism is in its death throes, flouting, trampling and even overriding the basic tenets of functioning of bourgeois democracy, the political superstructure of capitalism, is bound to reflect the reality. The founding fathers of bourgeois democracy said that "everyone will be equal in the eyes of law". Clause 21 of the Indian Constitution stipulates that the Government should secure the 'right to live' for these workers. But what is seen in reality? Just the opposite as is being seen in the case of the migrant labourers.

The Prime Minister has announced that during lockdown no worker would be terminated, even if they cannot pay rent and should be

allowed to stay in their rented houses without eviction. But to ensure compliance with this directive, who will undertake the administrative initiative? Is there any imposing government order in this regard. Unfortunately not. Everything is left, so to say, to the piousness of the employers and houseowners. Incredible indeed! If unable to compel the employers or the houseowners for whatsoever reason, should not the government ensure a basic income and livelihood of the migrant labourers as per the Constitutional rights? Should not the honourable Judges as the spinal cord of the rule of law, and the final interpreters of the Constitution ensure that their judgments do govern social and economic justice? One is prompted to recall what late Justice V R Krishna Iyer of Supreme Court once commented. He said that "a judicature (should)...be fundamentally fair and passionately indignant so that everyone gets what is due to him, securing dignity, morality and spiritual integrity. The executive administration of a society can be truly sacred and sublime only when the judiciary and the legal decisions it pronounces are altogether unaffected by considerations of class, community, fraternity and cultural ethos.... But (in capitalism), even the judiciary and the jurisprudence they enforce have a class character."

Recalling the teachings of great Marx and Lenin

Way back in 1844 when capitalism had not attained the stage of imperialism, its highest stage of development and entered into its inevitable state of decay, great Marx, in his "Economic and Political Manuscripts", said: "It goes without saying that the *proletarian*, i.e., the man who, being without capital and rent, lives purely by labour, and by a one-sided, abstract labour, is considered by political economy only as a *worker*. Political economy can therefore advance the proposition that the *proletarian*, the same as any horse, must get as much as will enable him to work. It does not consider him, when he is not working, as a human being; but leaves such consideration to criminal law, to doctors, to religion, to the



Inhuman spraying of disinfectant on home-bound migrant workers in UP

statistical tables, to politics and to the poor-house overseer." Later, in the chapter captioned "Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production" in Capital Vol. I, he observed, *inter alia*, that "within the capitalist system.... accumulation of wealth at one pole is, ...at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole". Later, great Lenin, his worthy student and continuer, held that "Capitalist society is and has always been *horror without end*. If this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society an *end in horror*, we have no reason to fall into despair." ("The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution", CW Vol XIX)

The unfolding horror and terror gripping the migrant workers show how prophetic these great Marxist authorities were about the ruthlessly oppressive and inhuman character of capitalism.

In discharging due social obligation in this critical period, all right-thinking conscientious persons need to raise a united voice of solidarity with the distressed fellow citizens who are compelled by the exploitative highly discriminatory capitalist system to somehow eke out a bare living by working as migrant labourers. The organized voice of this conscious humanity ought to be so powerful as to compel the bourgeois governments, both at Centre and in the states, to accede to the legitimate demands of the migrant labourers, the worst victim of the hastily clamped lockdown by an irresponsible inhuman government whose timely intervention and preventive steps could help the country avert this catastrophe.

(source of information: The Hindu 29.12.2013, 23-04-20, 02-04-20, The Week-29-03-20, The Print-30-03-20, The Wire 30-03-20, 31-03-20, ABP 27-03-20, 29-04-20, Hindustan Times 04-04-20, The Quint 07-04-20, Frontline 24-04-20, Times of India 23-04-20, 25-04-20, NDTV 12-04-20)

**SUCI(C) gave call to observe
All India Demand Day on 30 April 2020**

- # Save Life, Save Farmers
- # Save Working Class
- # Provide PPE Security to Health Workers
- # Provide Sufficient Ration
- # Bring Back Migrant Workers

Not just demography, BJP attacking land and livelihood of Kashmiri people

Contd. from page 3

pro-active to issue orders to get the work done in one week from the first week of April. The order comes in the wake of alleged apprehension prevailing among some people that the pollen shed in April causes respiratory problem and may thus be carrier of COVID-19. After all the number of coronavirus patients is increasing in the state. It is also alleged by locals that the trees are water consuming and may lead to water scarcity in future. However, the said order completely bans plantation and growing of female Russian Poplar trees and directs to axe existing ones on government – owned Social Forestry or private-owned lands. It is true that generally pollens affect people with allergies to these and may cause respiratory trouble for some. But the point to

note is that there is no scientific proof so far, not in the country or elsewhere in the world, that pollen of this Poplar species can be a COVID carrier. The hectic order without any probe on whether the allegations of some locals have any scientific basis, has naturally triggered severe criticism from environmentalists. The trees are also income generating for a section of small farmers. It may be recalled that the species was introduced in Kashmir in 1981-82 under the World Bank-aided Social Forestry Project of the state government and has grown to more than a crore trees by this time. Either way the callousness of the government is clear. While introducing it, it was not checked if the pollens are especially allergenic and the trees are water consuming in an area like Kashmir. And now, under

a dreaded virus attack, the government feels little compunction in issuing an order to fell lakhs of trees at one stroke, without confirming if the pollens are carriers of COVID 19. But what will be the fate of the land thus denuded? Will the people of Kashmir earn any benefit from that denuded land or will it go to the land-mafias and corporate houses in an ambience where the domicile status of Kashmiri people is already under attack with the introduction of the new Domicile law and their rights curbed with the abrogation of Article 370?

Surely time will say what will be the fate of the existing houseboat owners or the land denuded by felling of lakhs of Poplar trees. But is it not very interesting to find that all these measures are coming in a chain: the abrogation of Article 370,

arrest and detainment of political leaders of even parliamentary parties for months together, introduction of new Domicile law, ban on new houseboats and felling of Poplar trees, the last three, to quote once more the words of Air Vice Marshal Kak 'stealthily' at a time when people of the country are helplessly trying to cope with the loss of life and livelihood under the spell of the dreaded pandemic and the government urging them to fight together by clapping, lighting candles and herding together the poor and migrants under lockdown. The entire script thus smacks of a clear ulterior motive of the BJP-led Union government for extending grip over Kashmir, this or that way.

(Source: Al Jazeera News 01 April 2020 Srinagar, Kashmir & Peerzada Ashiq Srinagar 04 April 2020)

AIUTUC writes to the Prime Minister on steps to take to fight COVID-19 pandemic

Comrades Sankar Saha and Shankar Dasgupta, respectively President and General Secretary of All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC) submitted a memorandum to Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, on urgent steps to take during this lockdown period. Written on 15 April 2020, the memorandum pointed out that the PM's address to the nation on 14 April 2020 announced extension of lockdown till 3 May 2020, while reality, that the AIUTUC also visualized, is that mere lockdown will carry no substance in the fight against COVID-19 virus without extensive testing to identify infected persons, their proper treatment and strict implementation of government directions and advisories. The AIUTUC noted with serious concern that despite there being a note of caution from WHO, the Union Health Ministry declared on 13 March 2020 to the Press that "Coronavirus is not a health emergency". It revealed insincerity and insensitivity of the Government in the fight against this pandemic. Nevertheless, the Union Government now needs to act on the ground in close coordination with state governments, political and trade union organizations and other agencies. The tasks among others, involve surveillance, screening and mass testing, proper treatment, supply of test kits, erecting sufficient test centres, all to be done on emergency basis. Medical-para-medical persons, all categories of associated health workers – cleaning staff need

be provided with standard quality personal protective gears. Hospital beds, ICUs, ventilators etc., medicines including prophylactic ones as per ICMR guideline are to be ensured in increased adequate numbers. Food and financial relief are to be provided to all needy, more so the daily wage earners, agricultural labourers, migrant workers, all categories of domestic and self-employed workers without suppressing the real grave picture of these sections of working people who bear the brunt of the economy. To be ensured also, are protections of jobs, earnings and social security benefits in both public and private sectors. Labour laws on working hours and conditions should not be changed against workers' interests, on the plea of 'exceptional circumstances'. In summation, in face of the emergent grave humanitarian crisis, it is expected that the government act on war footing.

Haryana construction labourers place demands

In a Press note on 18 April 2020, Balbir Singh, Haryana State Secretary of AIUTUC affiliated House Construction Labour Union (Bhavan Nirman Karigar Mazdoor Union) expressed gratitude and thanks to the doctors, nurses, cleaning staff, employees in the police, post office, banks, print and electronic media etc., who are rendering their invaluable service even risking their own life in the prevailing pathetic situation arising from the outbreak of COVID-19

pandemic. He also appealed to people to go sincerely and strictly by the protocols of lockdown.

Drawing attention to the ordeal in which these migrant daily wage earners associated with construction activities have been placed in, Balbir Singh said the governments, the Union and the state, should have formed people's committees in villages, towns and cities to face the problems effectively. Instead, Haryana Labour Welfare Board (LBW) has prepared online and offline copies of registers and is planning to clamp new conditions of work. Balbir Singh said that the Union demands of the government to simplify the registration process, include Union representatives as the members of the LWB, to help place and accelerate solution of local problems. He urged workers to remain conscious, safe and organized during this difficult condition under COVID-19 lockdown.

SUCI(C) Delhi expresses concern at the plight of migrant labourers in Delhi

In a statement on 13 April 2020, Secretary, Delhi State SUCI (Communist), condemned the callous and careless attitude of the functionaries of the Delhi government led to the violence at the three shelter homes near Kashmir Gate, death of one migrant labourer by drowning in river Yamuna and finally setting these homes on fire. The incident, he

stated, has also exposed the hollowness of the tall claims made by the Modi-led central government and the Kejriwal-led Delhi state government state about providing free food and shelter to these hapless poor migrant labourers. Reportedly, these destitute migrant labourers were accommodated in the so-called shelter homes in addition to the original inmates, mainly beggars and vagabonds of the area. With a capacity of only 250 persons, the numbers swelled up resulting in sub-human condition of living giving rise to complaints about lack of food, space, heat and mosquitoes, which naturally caused tension to rise during the past two weeks. The civil defence volunteers and the police ruthlessly put down any complaints and protests from the migrant men and women labourers and the print or electronic media cared the least till any major incident took place. SUCI(C), Delhi, demanded that the role of the police, management and the Civil Defence Volunteers in the happenings in the three shelter homes be thoroughly probed through a judicial enquiry with a view to meting out exemplary punishment. The party had earlier suggested measures in its 7 April 2020, to the CM, Delhi and demanded their implementation. It apprehended that otherwise deteriorating condition of the migrant labourers would defeat the very purpose of the Corona lockdown, for which both the Central and the Delhi State governments would be squarely responsible.

Party paid glowing tribute to great Lenin on his 150th birth anniversary on 22 April



Comrade Provash Ghosh, beloved General Secretary, at Shibpur Party Centre, West Bengal.



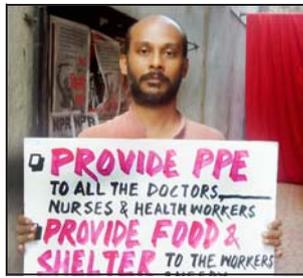
Party Central Office in Kolkata

Lakhs of Students Participated in Online Campaign by AIDS0 in COVID-19 Lockdown in the name of ‘Stand For Humanity’ demanding adequate and qualitative PPEs to all medical and paramedical staffs, who are serving the patients affected by deadly and highly communicable COVID-19 and food and shelter to workers and all needy.

Strictly adhering to Lockdown codes, SUCI(C) workers as well as volunteers of its class and mass organizations, AIDS0, AIDYO, AIMSS, AIUTUC and AIKKMS have been engaged in distribution of relief, masks, sanitizers and other essential commodities to the poor and needy by collecting donations from common people. Given below are some photos.



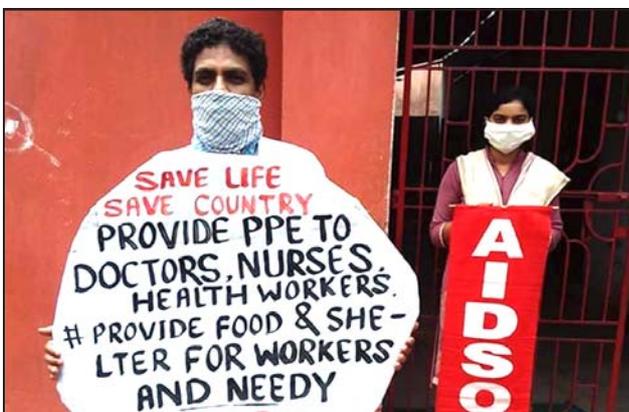
VN Rajashekhar, President, AIDS0



Comrade Sourav Ghosh, General Secretary, AIDS0



AIDYO BANGALORE



AIDS0 activists



HAZARIBAGH, CHHATTISGARH



SUCI(C), TAMLUK WEST BENGAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH