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Anna Hazare's anti-corruption fast and its aftermath

The second phase of the non-violent *satyagraha* movement launched by Shri Anna Hazare, a septuagenarian Gandhite social activist, demanding immediate legislation of a suitably empowered Jan Lokpal (Ombudsman) Bill with a view to stopping corruption at high places of governance had come to an end at the fag end of August last after the government had come forward with a reconciliation proposal. It bears recall that following unfolding of a series of mega scams involving thousands of crores of money, the people of the country seething within at the vulgar display of institutional and government level corruption in league with dishonest self-seeking politicians and unscrupulous corporate houses sincerely desired that there should be a move to stem the rot. Sensing people's mood, Shri Hazare along with his associates launched an anti-corruption agitation as per their understanding and conviction on the Gandhite line. Their demand was that the government ought to accept the draft of Jan Lokpal Bill as prepared by them and take steps to enact the same through introduction in Parliament. Since the issue was burning and the demand in the context of democratic movement was totally legitimate, Shri Hazare's movement received overwhelming support from all sections of the toiling people. Not only people's indignation against the spurt in corruption but even their accumulated grievances against the rising onslaughts in every walk of life found expression in this movement. The Congress-led UPA government who initially showed a stiff attitude had to bend a bit later

under public pressure and agreed to the demand of Shri Hazare to constitute a joint committee with equal representation from both the sides for drafting the Bill. Following that, Shri Hazare withdrew his agitation and the joint committee began its sessions. But soon he found that taking advantage of subsidence of people's pressure, the government was drifting away from its earlier position and persisted on acceptance of its own version of Lokpal Bill which was nothing but a

caricature of legislation bereft of any tooth or claw. While Shri Hazare rightly insisted on bringing, among others, the prime minister, bureaucracy and judiciary within the ambit of the Bill, the government under this or that plea was turning down all such demands. Instead it introduced a Bill in Parliament as per its own draft. When Anna Hazare found that the government was averse to bring any effective Lokpal bill and was in fact indulging

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SUCI (C) strongly condemns recent price rise of petrol

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (C), in a statement issued on 16 September, 2011, stated :

The Congress-led Union government has again allowed the oil companies to increase petrol prices which will trigger further spurt in the prices of essential commodities, thereby aggravating the hardship of the common people. We strongly condemn this anti-people decision and demand immediate withdrawal of the same.

RECENT UNREST IN BRITAIN

What portent does people's resentment carry and lead to ?

For nearly a week since 6 August last, United Kingdom or Great Britain was rocked by vehement surges of people's unrest which sprang from the killing of a local 'black' resident, Mark Duggan by the police on 4 August at Tottenham in London. It could have been one more of the incidents in which by virtue of a recent law enacted by the rulers in the name of fighting terrorism, but given effect to as blunt examples of racial discrimination, the police stops, searches, harasses, physically assaults and even kills 'black' and South Asian people on the streets, the number of such incidents having been doubled to 310,000 in the past five years. Such acts of rabid racial discrimination perpetrated by the rulers and their appendage, the police, seldom created hardly any stir, though those acts plainly hurt the democratic and multicultural

set-up based on the liberal bourgeois concepts of welfare state for which Britain often took pride. This time with Duggan's killing, however, local people refused to lie low; they sought investigation reports and justice, only to face police indifference, arrogance and finally assault on a teen-ager girl. It sparked off violent protests which spread out like a wild fire from London to many other cities and towns, proving that the protest was not just local. Rather it suggested clearly that there was something like a common ground for protest all over the country, that might have led to the fast and vast spread of the unrest. Media coverage also showed that people on the streets came largely from the poorest sections of the population, where unemployment and poverty were making life unbearable, but they did not exclude those of rich families,

or people with a 'steady job'. So the reaction was more than just an expression of frustration of the have-nots. People, including youth and children, were indignant and restive at the police having 'too much power' and 'using it', at the government and the vulgarly 'rich' for perpetrating discrimination and deprivation, and at the phenomenal rise in unemployment and poverty along with severe cuts in spending on welfare measures and social services. They torched vehicles including police jeeps and fought pitched battle with the police to show "we can do whatever we want". Although non-white population formed undisputed majority, substantial number of whites also took part, unmistakably diluting the claim that the unrest was racial.

The raging unrest shook the
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UNREST IN BRITAIN

Crisis-ridden capitalism made it difficult for people to breathe

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government, administration and police who jumped in with vengeance. For immediate crackdown a huge additional force of police was deployed and several thousand protesters were arrested. Added to it, frantic people in power or in opposition in the sacrosanct parliamentary politics, warned 'rioters' with venom to "feel the full force of the law". Expressed with hatred, they branded the 'grubby hooded lowlies', the common poor youth and teenagers, as coming of a "broken society" in "moral collapse". They held parents of those youth and children, responsible, and became active to throw the families out of the state-subsidised housing or withdrawing the welfare benefits they enjoyed, because of their nears and dears being involved in the unrest.

The outburst was suppressed with brute force. But it reiterated a big question that had been doing its round for quite some time. For long, Britain had been a country in which the ruling capitalist class could contain people's discontent or disaffection, to a large extent, within the four walls of bourgeois parliamentary politics. They gave effect to this design through a two-party parliamentary system compelling people to chose almost at regular intervals between two trusted sentinels of the ruling class, the Conservatives or Tories and the Labours. In course of this, Britain had turned into a so-called democratic country with hardly any extra-parliamentary movement of people.

But even in such a country, a few months back towards the end of 2010, nearly 50,000 students poured out into the streets of London, the capital, to fight against severe, about three-fold increase in tuition, and cuts and changes to the funding of higher and further education in England. Earlier to it, during such a demonstration angry students had gheraoed the automobile in which Charles, Prince of Wales and his wife Duchess Camilla, were riding and which vehicle had come right into the demonstration. On 26 March this year a rally of 500,000 people took to London's streets in protest of spending cuts in welfare services being carried on by the

government. It was followed by smaller local demonstrations and major rallies in London, Brighton, Sheffield, Birmingham and Newcastle, and massive strike actions by teachers and public sector workers. Then finally for this spell, the strongest one-day strike in the country since the 1980s was held on June 30 by some 750,000 public sector workers, including university, college and school teachers to protest the government's proposed spending cuts and changes to pension plans and retirement policies. For the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), one of the major unions participating in that strike, it was its first national strike in 127 years. Overwhelming majority of schools and many colleges were closed or disrupted in support of the strike. Around 30,000 workers marched in London on the day, with thousands participating in pickets and rallies elsewhere. The series of these movements brought in a new phenomenon of extra-parliamentary movement in a country held back within the confines of parliament and parliamentary activities.

The present unrest took place in this backdrop. Despite all deviations and aberrations, it expressed people's deep anger clearly directed against the government policies that created mounting deprivation of common people and yawning gap between the poor and the rich, against the shamefully discriminating racial attitude and oppressing highhandedness of the police-administration-government. The question that loomed large was what made the British people take up this long-forsaken path of extra-parliamentary movement, with thousands of people coming out on streets, and now thousands of youth daring to fight the police, hitherto unscathed by any such audacity!

To find the answer, it must be recalled that Britain had been a belligerent capitalist-imperialist state, which robbed people and wealth of its colonies, such as India and others, to feed and appease its own people and built the enviable fortune of the British capitalists. However, at the same time following the inexorable laws of society, like all other capitalist countries Britain too had to face the

intense crisis of the world capitalist-imperialist system. It had to bear the thrust of the two world wars, which were nothing but imperialist efforts to avert crisis, instead producing more of it. In the post second world war days, with emergence of the mighty socialist camp and independence of former colonies, the imperialist countries including Britain, faced severe loss of the perennial source of money and market on which, as mentioned before, they fuelled, pampered and appeased their own people. Thus shadow of crisis constantly accompanied any signs of prosperity and affluence, rather deepened with each passing day, not only in Britain, but in the entire world capitalist-imperialist system too. The latter sought relief and solace in the policies of globalization-liberalization-privatization, the imperialist panacea to tide over their crisis. Britain already shaking with deepening market crisis and industrial stagnation, along with rising unemployment, poverty, and associated cultural-moral degeneration going hand-in-hand with economic crisis, also tried to get over its crisis through vigorous implementation of the policies of globalization-liberalization-privatization, since the days of the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. From then on, the succeeding governments led by the Labours or the Tories, including the present Coalition one under the leadership of the Tories, all treaded the same path of faithfully serving the ruling capitalist class whose representative they work as, naturally at the cost of people. As in other countries, in Britain too globalization-liberalization-privatization turned out to be a merry-making for the capitalists and the rich, while with overflow and trickles from their purse filled with fabulous profits, upcoming businessmen, professionals, bankers, fund managers and speculators made obscene money. But the shadow of crisis did never disappear for people. Rather, since the Thatcher regime crisis deepened with time, taking shape of a more acute and further extensive all-out economic-political-social-cultural crisis. People faced manifold rise in ruthless exploitation, brute

curtailment of many traditional, hard-earned rights and welfare measures. The so-called reforms these governments brought about produced a kind of social apartheid: physical segregation of marginal communities from the glistening social stream of the capitalist and the affluent. Public housing became the perverse of the most vulnerable, after better-off residents were given the option of buying out housing they had previously rented from the state. Education, health and other services became costlier and costlier. The economic policies rendered large number of working people unemployed and unemployable, with young people from poorer backgrounds being the worst hit with their less education and training made still lesser from the policies. Thatcherite philosophy, emanating from the Conservatives, had pronounced that "There is no such thing as society" and that "greed is good"; Labours posing radical, gave respectability to that philosophy pronouncing that their party was "intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich". The affluent professionals were applauded for their "enterprise". Obviously, the others, the common people, the 'lousy lazy fellows' were left in the lurch! Crisis of values reached its height! Such incessant ruthless exploitation, glaring discrimination and pervasive degeneration drove people to express their indignation, bringing them on the verge of revolting.

Added to it, the British government under Blair forced the country to join the bandwagon led by the war-monger US imperialism, in the design of the latter to establish hegemony by sheer brute force over the world without the socialist camp. In fact, Britain was reduced to acting as a second fiddle to the US imperialism, rather a lackey, in giving effect to its aggressions and naked oppressive transgression of sovereignty of different countries of the world. A sizeable population of Britain also refused to accept the shameful degradation of their country.

To cope with people's indignation and dissent the ruling parties recurringly brought about changes in their leadership with

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UNREST IN BRITAIN**Criminality-immorality generated by capitalist state itself**

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changes in government, though without any result. Ultimately in the May 2010 election, none of the two major parties could achieve single party majority to form the government. The Liberal Democratic Party, hitherto close ally of the Labours, and arch political rival of the Tories, emerged as a third force and with all greed for power and pelf joined hands with the Tories to form a coalition government. By that they only and solely served the aggregate interest of the ruling class to run the capitalist order averting the ensuing political crisis and maintaining stability. But even this change could not meet their desired end. Far from satisfying people, resentment further intensified bringing people out on to the streets, as described earlier.

In fact to the British people the situation was worsening with days. British capitalist economy, inalienably belonging to the crisis-ridden world capitalist-imperialist system and tagged miserably with the crisis-ridden US economy, had to face the recent intense global recession, similar to, even stronger than the one during the times of world wars, the subsequent devastating sub-prime crisis and the debt crisis, perpetrated by enormously powerful fraudulent profit-hungry banks and financiers, all these coming in succession in the recent past. The monstrous effect of the crisis brought for Britain record peacetime deficit and the risk of suffering a debt crisis like those seen in Greece, Ireland and Portugal. As elsewhere, the present Coalition government of Britain stood for the capitalists, their profit-hungry banks and financiers. Instead of laying hands on the frauds who really caused the crisis, the government stepped out to bail the capitalists out of the crisis. With sugar-coated words of sharing the crisis, for people it planned and effected sharp spending-cuts, the toughest in the United Kingdom since the second world war. The effects were devastating for common people. The austerity program to accommodate these spending cuts meant loss of around 300,000 public service jobs and pay freezes, accompanied by hiked flat taxes (VAT) and no jobs programme. Unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, rose to alarming

height, roughly 18 % between 16 and 24 years. (*Times Of India*, 14 August) The gap between the rich and the poor went on yawning; in the last one year the 1000 richest in Britain had increased their asset by 30%. On the other hand poverty spread out its root further, a survey (HBAI) showing that 13.5 million people in the UK (22%) are income poor. Already England is held to be having the "worst record in family breakdown in Europe", as a result of economic crisis in the main.

Spending-cuts in service sectors had other social effects. Closure of social service institutions including youth clubs not only terminated jobs of thousands of youth workers. As a senior lecturer in social psychology at the University of Liverpool commented: A lot of those youth who were on the street (during the present unrest) would have been going to these youth centres. They no longer had anywhere else to go. Scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance, fund-cuts for courses to raise qualification and trebling of university tuition fees only added to misery and helplessness of these youth. Britain reportedly has one of the highest violent crime rates in the EU; these youth left further alienated by the state itself, would always remain prone to turn into criminals, ultimately listed in the pay-roll of the rich and the capitalists. The government called black kids coming of poor families 'rioters' and 'criminals' and sent them to prison for loot and arson. But the same government shut its eyes to, say, the Barclay's Bank paying only 1% of its 2009 profits in taxes while the corporate tax in the UK is 28% and even rewarded those frauds, the banks and financiers, who wrecked the nation's economy with billions from people's money as stimulus or compensation.

To all these is added the social-cultural ambience of consumerist culture of decadent capitalism. Young people born and brought up in it, are left to a world that does not promise them any decent life. Rather they see few people, already with the privilege of better living, are minting further money like anything and enjoying everything. Seeing youth looting, lamented a bystander: "If they had something to do, if they had money and jobs, they wouldn't do this". Ladies and gentlemen in power call those

involved in the unrest 'criminals'. But are not they the same ladies and gentlemen who were exposed not so long ago for lying, cheating and swindling? They stole large amounts of public money to refurbish luxury flats, pay for non-existent premises and even repair moats around castles. What was this, if it is not sheer greed and criminality?

These facts prove beyond doubt that the government played and continues to play totally subservient to the capitalists and its calls for 'inclusive growth' or 'sharing the crisis' are nothing but hoaxes meant to hoodwink people. It also attests to the truth that the British capitalist society has plunged into such a crisis where the rulers do not care for any values, any consideration for its common toiling people. Rather it created such an ambience where it was becoming impossible for common people to breathe! They seem to be feeling more and more to come out of the shell of parliamentary politics and take to streets to wrest their legitimate demands. As enumerated people's movements were gradually snowballing; students, teachers, public sector workers and others were more and more coming out in extra-parliamentary movements.

The ruling capitalist class and their subservient governments could hardly afford to sit idle to see these people, victims of their exploitative, oppressive and discriminatory policies and measures, unite, be active in launching democratic movements and finally revolt against the system. The land which once was the standard-bearer of individual liberty, came out with a heinous design.

There was once a time when immigrants from different countries came to Britain, for various reasons; the lure of affluence, the halo of bourgeois liberalism and such other factors attracted people to Britain. At that time as a leading imperialist power Britain could 'afford to pay high wages to its workers' with the crumbs of the enormous wealth robbed from the colonies and could also afford to accommodate the immigrants. In fact this was the picture with nearly all traditional western imperialist powers. At that time, 'the immigrants needed Europe', though 'Europe did not need the immigrants' really. But as crisis of

the world capitalist-imperialist system deepened, Britain, as also other imperialist countries lost their colonies, the source of their booties, though their greed for the maximum profit did not wane. They found it increasingly difficult to pay high wages to their own working population, without affecting their profit-earning. They thus needed cheap labour to keep the cost of production down and their profit unaffected. Immigration then became 'an economic necessity', and the immigrants from poorer countries provided the cheap labour. Afro-Asian-Caribbean countries were the traditional supplier of immigrants; now there were immigrants from the erstwhile socialist countries of East Europe, where collapse of the socialist camp and counter-revolution totally wrecked their economy and society. Thus 'The UK alone received 76,000 applications, up from a mere 4,000 in 1988.'

At the same time, this large influx of the immigrants created pressure on the working population of the countries they migrated into, as mounting unemployment and poverty had already eaten the marrow of their life and livelihood. From a sense of insecurity, an anti-immigrant mentality worked in latent in them. Unable to solve the problem of unemployment, the rulers tended to take advantage of the situation, of the anti-immigrant mentality among the indigenous workers. They fomented racial hatred, enacted racially discriminatory measures and laws plainly with a view to driving cleavage between the indigenous and immigrant working people and thereby disturbing any unity between them. So, as it came down to, the ruling class allowed immigrants for their own interest, fanned up conflict between them and the local people, and then taking advantage of this conflict and contradiction created condition so that united working class movement might not develop involving both the immigrants and local people. It was a double-edged sword; immigrants are encouraged 'underground' to feed their crisis-ridden, yet profit-hungry economy and are condemned 'overground' to hoodwink local people and earn their confidence. It was for this reason, that the powers-that-be in

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British people appear to be longing for a change

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Britain, including a section of the media were all enthusiast to prove the present unrest as acts of racial vandalism and criminality.

Thus the crisis-ridden capitalist system of Britain lay at the foundation from which was springing up the series of extra-parliamentary movements and lastly the recent unrest giving expression to all frustration-anger of the youth in particular and common people in general. Remarkably on several occasions during the movements, students came out in solidarity with their teachers' demands or teachers stood by the workers. A teacher from Luton said: "I work in the public sector and I think we teachers, nurses, dinner ladies, lollipop ladies and people like that were not the cause of the crisis but the government want to punish us and rip us off." and then went on to say "The government, a cabinet full of millionaires, are quite happy to slash our pensions. They don't need to live on a pension when they're older. We do, we are normal working class people." Hence it meant, that the crisis of capitalism in Britain not only created plight and oppression, it sharpened class division and tended to unite common people on a common ground of a desire for a drastic change of the existing situation, to come out of the chains of the two-party parliamentary democracy. The lightening speed at which the recent unrest spread out, points to the same. However may the rulers try, as usual for them, to paint the unrest as a mark of 'criminality', 'irresponsibility', below all its aberrations lay the truth that the recent unrest in Britain was not isolated phenomenon. It is an outcome of the acute crisis of the decadent capitalist society.

It was neither an isolated phenomenon of Britain only. All over the world and not excluding the traditionally rich and developed countries like USA, Germany, France and others, or the countries of the Middle East and Africa, where the ruling class and their henchmen roll on money generated from the liquid-gold, the natural oil and gas, the crisis of capitalism is pushing people to the brink. Massive movements are generating everywhere, often raising slogans against the capitalist system itself. There are still people, in our country and elsewhere, who tend to think

that movements are characteristic of so-called underdeveloped countries. Their developed counterparts on the other side of the world prosper as they do not have to face the impediment of movements. Recent people's movement in Britain, as well as in other western countries must have acted as an eye-opener to them. These proved that movement was not characteristic only of poorer, less developed countries. Even the apparently prosperous capitalist-imperialist countries are not being able to hold back their people any longer from taking to streets and launch massive movements.

The rising class conflict and the desire for change are also telling upon political leadership in Britain. As mentioned earlier the two major parties, the Tories and the Labours, had to change their leadership. Further, it is not difficult to understand that the same deepening crisis had definite bearing upon the emergence of the Liberal Democrats as a third force in the two party system in addition to the Tories and the Labours. On another side, there is unmistakable signs of the traditional labour aristocracies, represented largely by the Labour Party, losing grips upon the movement and people. They are no longer being able to maintain status quo of the docile parliamentary politics within the confines of the legislative houses. Increasingly, people are coming out on to the streets in extra-parliamentary movements with potentialities of turning into militant ones. In essence, breaking the long-continued inertia, there is developing objective conditions in Britain for freeing people from the shackles of illusions of the parliamentary system.

But to lead the rising extra-parliamentary movements and the class struggle between the exploited and the exploiters to their logical culmination, to the end that ensures emancipation of people from all exploitation, oppression, deception and deviation, these struggles need to be led to, and for that matter, to be made conducive to the struggle for a revolutionary overthrow of the exploitative and oppressive capitalist-imperialist state. In any and every country, fighting people can develop their struggle with this revolutionary goal of anti-capitalist revolution, only when they are guided by the leadership of a genuine revolutionary party. It is only such a

revolutionary party which can lead the working class to the correct revolutionary goal on the strength of the correct revolutionary ideology and culture. It can be visualized easily that the real working class movement can not develop till such a leadership is born and acquires strength to lead people's movements. Hence in these countries, Britain or other western countries the need of the hour is the emergence of that kind of revolutionary leadership which can effectively lead the working class struggle making them

conducive to overthrowing of the ruling capitalist order.

In any case the British society seems to be shivering with the throes of rising class and mass struggles. Well meaning people of the world will always hope that the fighting and thinking section of the British people, would seriously and deeply ponder over and examine the possibilities and promises that the recently rising people's movement, including the people's unrest, have left behind them, thereby acting to fulfil the need of the hour.



Comrade Tarun Mondal, SUCI(C) MP, visiting one of the examination centres spread out in seven Assembly Constituencies included in his Jaynagar Parliamentary Constituency for awarding stipends to needy and meritorious students, out of his recently enhanced emolument as MP; at least 36 candidates were selected for the stipend; his effort was widely appreciated as an example of pro-people principled approach rare these days.

Significant Victory of Saruabil Chromite Mines Workers of Orissa

The workers of Saruabil Chromite Mines of Orissa under the leadership of Sukinda Upatakya Mines Workers Union, founded and led by the departed leader Comrade Tapas Dutta, the former General Secretary of AIUTUC and member, Central Committee SUCI(C), achieved a significant victory in their last agreement with the management in course of a month long cease work movement. The previous agreement expired on 31 March, 2010. But the mines management delayed negotiation on the basis of the charter of demands of the union and even denied to pay to the workers the revised variable DA notified by the Government. The workers of the mines had no option but complete

cease work movement from 19 May, 2011. The management was compelled to sit for a negotiation on 21 June, 2011 and ultimately reach an agreement on the charter of demands of the union on 23 June, 2011.

In the new agreement, the workers could achieve significant demands including that workers also would get all benefits for even the strike period. This movement was led by Comrades Shambhunath Naik, Jagabandhu Baral and Shankar Dasgupta, the Union President, General Secretary and Vice President respectively. Comrade Shankar Saha, General Secretary, AIUTUC played a leading role in this movement and negotiation.

Government keeps escape route through ‘Sense of the House’ resolution

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in double-dealing to skirt the issue, he, taking into cognition that there was no ebbing of people’s fighting mood, decided to resume his agitation by sitting on indefinite fast at Jantar Mantar, a prominent location in Delhi.

Second phase of movement and the government

But the government in clear breach of the fundamental right of any citizen to protest denied him permission to fast at Jantar Mantar. Instead it dictated an alternate venue and even had the audacity to stipulate that Shri Hazare could stage hunger strike only for three days. It contended that since a Bill had already been introduced, any such agitation by “a section of citizens having no popular mandate to do so” is tantamount to undermining Parliament and democracy. The prime minister described Shri Hazare’s insistence on going on a fast to press for a stronger Lokpal Bill as “misconceived and fraught with grave consequences for our parliamentary democracy” as he “had questioned the sole prerogative of Parliament to make laws”. One wonders where the country is heading to! First of all, the government itself clearly went back on its promises and thereby acted undemocratically. Secondly, in order to compel a government refusing to heed to legitimate demands, a democratic movement can step by step be escalated to any height. Even the exponents of bourgeois democracy starting from John Stuart Mill to Harold Laski, it may be mentioned, held that public opinion, expressed through well-intentioned voluntary organizations of the citizens and various democratic bodies, ought to be duly recognized and given due weightage. This is the fulcrum of parliamentary democracy. Any curtailment of this right to ventilate opinion through democratic mass movement not only militates against the very fundamentals of parliamentary democracy but smacks of administrative fascism. If the question is whether Parliament or mass movement should ultimately decide which legislation is to be brought in people’s interest, the answer obviously is mass movement. In fact this concept was ensured during the introductory stage of bourgeois democracy.

Parliament itself, it may be added, is a product of mass struggle. However, now when capitalism is in its death throes, it itself is trampling underfoot these basic tenets of bourgeois democracy lest that should endanger its very existence. So, it wants that whenever people’s outrage is ventilated through agitation, the same should remain confined within an orbit of mere protest and subside in normal course. If any movement tends to cross the precincts of that confinement, it would be curbed either with the help of coercive machinery or through other manipulative methods. The Congress-led UPA government is a trusted representative of ruling capitalism. It only carries out the orders of its masters. That is why, creating a smokescreen of protecting parliamentary democracy and constitutional provisions, it did not hesitate to even order a crackdown on Shri Hazare’s movement with a view to suppressing it. In a pre-emptive sweep, Shri Hazare was arrested on 16 August before he started his hunger strike and sent to jail. But that infuriated the people at large and a spontaneous protest erupted round the country.

Noticing this express anger and wrath of the masses, the government had to change its position. It conceded to the demand for organizing the indefinite fast at a better venue where Shri Hazare began his fast. With every passing day, people’s support swelled in favour of the movement. Once again, public pressure worked on the government and the prime minister convened a meeting of the big recognized parties to evolve some way out. It needs to be mentioned here that all the parliamentarian parties including the self-proclaimed leftists-Marxists today are committed to serve the aggregate interest of the ruling capitalist class. So inside Parliament also notwithstanding occasional din and bustle, exchange of verbal duels, trading charges and counter-charges, they all ensure that no danger is posed to ruling capitalism or nothing should occur to embarrass the class beyond a point. Shri Hazare’s movement virtually took the wind out of their sail as it was assuming a mass character and could well trigger a mass upsurge if channelized properly. No doubt they could not oppose the movement

because of overflowing mass support behind Shri Hazare, but they were never comfortable with the movement gaining strength with every passing day. Theirs, therefore, had been a lukewarm attitude towards the movement and to be on the lookout for the earliest opportunity to down shutters on the same. So, they all joined the chorus that it is an exclusive prerogative of Parliament to enact laws, and mass movement and for that matter people’s opinion has no say in this. So the meeting of the government and the ‘responsible’ opposition members unanimously gave an assurance of enacting a powerful Lokpal Bill and made an appeal to Shri Hazare to give up his fast. But that did not cut any ice as Shri Hazare could not keep faith in any such verbal assurance. He said he would end his fast only after the government withdrew its Lokpal Bill and instead adopted their version of the document (the Jan Lokpal Bill), which contained inclusion of prime minister, judiciary and lower bureaucracy in its ambit. Finding increasing mass support behind Shri Hazare, the prime minister, on August 25, no doubt with a view to averting any direct commitment on the part of the government, announced that he would refer the matter to Parliament. But public opinion was strongly against any such vague reference. So Shri Hazare also rejected it. Instead, he, though not opposed to the proposed reference to Parliament, insisted that a resolution accepting the draft Jan Lokpal Bill as prepared by him and his associates should be passed in Parliament. The government refused to comply with that proposal as well citing some constitutional and other procedural constraints. In the meanwhile, the monopoly-controlled media which began to plead with Shri Hazare for withdrawal of the hunger strike soon after the appeal of the prime minister raised the pitch of its orchestrated campaign for immediate calling off the movement. In the face of such mounting pressure, Shri Hazare and his associates, in partial modification of their earlier stand, said that the government should pass a resolution on the floor of the House agreeing on (i) a citizen charter for government departments providing public service., (ii) including the lower bureaucracy

under Lokpal through an appropriate mechanism, and (iii) a central law for creating *Lokayukta* (local Ombudsman) in the states. Visibly uncomfortable at the rising mass support behind Shri Hazare, the government then in consultation with its ‘friendly’ opposition proposed to bring a ‘Sense of the House’ resolution in the special sessions of the two Houses of Parliament to agree ‘in principle’ to the three points of Shri Hazare as stated above. Thus, the government instead of bringing a specific resolution managed to get away with a rather ambiguous ‘Sense of the House’ resolution. Notably, self-styled Marxists like CPI (M), CPI practically played second fiddle to the Congress-led government in working out this vile design and pressurized Shri Hazare to abandon movement. “...a new Bill,” wrote People’s Democracy, CPI (M)’s central organ dated 28 August, “incorporating the suggestions from the Jan Lokpal Bill and other quarters will be brought before Parliament. The mechanism for drafting this new Bill must be worked out by government and, on the basis of this assurance, Anna Hazare must withdraw his hunger strike.” Once the ‘Sense of the House resolution’ was passed, the bourgeois media further intensified the campaign that Shri Hazare should no more continue his fast. Under the circumstances, Shri Hazare and his supporters thought it fit to call off the movement although specific commitment from the government was still wanting. Though the government and some other quarters hailed the resolution as “the result of a remarkable display of give-and-take by all the protagonists” and “a rare gesture on the part of Parliament” and some of Shri Hazare’s associates called it a ‘victory of popular will’, the fact is that through this “Sense of the House” resolution, the government, under the pretext of compliance with constitutional requirement, ensured that a Standing Committee on Law and Justice would finalize the things and thus cunningly kept an escape route wide open so that taking advantage of plummeting pressure of people’s movement, it could sabotage the process of enactment of Jan Lokpal Bill in future. Had the government had an iota of good intention, it could have directly agreed to the demands. But

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Only sustained organised mass movement under correct leadership can lead to logical culmination

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as corruption has become the characteristic of capitalist order today, the Congress-led government wedded to the task of serving and protecting ruling capitalism, never wanted to bring any legislation that could put some fetters on the unlimited loot and plunder, swindling and squandering, which have been going on with alacrity. So it was always trying to delay the proceedings or take recourse to certain trash argumentation to divert attention and dodge the issue. It would not be incorrect to say that ultimately the government with necessary inputs from its mentor i.e. the ruling capitalist class succeeded in finding a leeway despite such a powerful mass backing behind Shri Hazare's movement.

Danger of the government's watering down the Bill

Therefore, though a good number of people who have not gone that deep into the matter and have largely been carried away by the media propaganda presume that the government had been compelled to yield to the demand of Jan Lokpal, the fact is not that. There is enough scope for the government to manoeuvre things as the recommendations of the Standing Committee of the parliament which will be constituted by the government only, will be final. Incidentally, it may be added that it is customary in any democratic movement to place the demands before the government which is supposed to take necessary action in the matter. It was the same in the instant case also. The government could itself take up the issue and settle it. Instead, the Congress-led government evidently in order to avoid any direct commitment on its part over introduction of Jan Lokpal, motivatedly brought the parliament into the picture and quietly moved out of the scene leaving the scope for future manipulation wide open. Apprehension that the Standing Committee would never accept a suitably empowered Lokpal is gaining ground. Of late, the associates of Shri Hazare also are expressing doubt about the government's intentions and hence trying to exert some pressure on the MPs for not opposing the Jan Lokpal Bill and also talking of

reviving the movement if the government backtracks.

Lately mooted proposal to fight for electoral reforms

In the meanwhile, Shri Hazare has announced that expanding his ambit of anti-corruption campaign, he would next take up the issue of electoral reforms. What has come out in the media is that he would soon write to the PM seeking the latter's opinion on introducing the 'right to reject' for voters and the 'right to recall' elected representatives. We are of the opinion that had the Jan Lokpal movement developed along the desired track as explained above, the legitimate demands for suitable electoral reforms could well be incorporated in the charter of demands and given the overwhelming mass support behind the movement, could be realized as well. Our Party since 1952 has been demanding 'right to recall' because in a capitalist society like ours where election results are rigged in various forms to suit the class need of the oppressive ruling class, this would no doubt be powerful weapon in the hands of the people. At the same time, we have been maintaining that mere adoption of the same might at best create some pressure on the elected MPs, MLAs and all other elected members. The "right to reject" also, according to us, is a logical demand. But it is to be emphatically stated that if there is no sustained pressure of people's movement, the effectiveness of 'right to recall' can never be guaranteed. But once again we want to firmly reiterate that it would be unwise to create an illusion about the electoral process being cleansed of all aberrations, manipulations and malpractices if these two demands are acceded to. As the days will roll by, crisis-ridden dying capitalism will seek to tighten its control on and expand its maneuverability in the electoral system and process to ensure victory of only its trusted representatives who might even be rogues, smugglers, arch criminals, anti-socials and self-seekers and scuttle the prospect of pro-people forces particularly the revolutionary party to enter legislature and reflect people's voice there. So people ought to depend on the invincible power of organized mass movement to frustrate the sinister moves of the

ruling class and its subervers, prevent any step to make election an exclusive preserve of the ruling class and its bootlickers and protect whatever little of democracy is still remaining in the electoral system.

In this connection, it is relevant to mention that when money has been overwhelming the election process, and flushed with funds liberally provided by the corporate houses, the parties and combinations wedded to bourgeois class interest are manipulating the outcome to their favour, a section owing allegiance to the ruling class is strongly promoting the concept of state funding of political parties as an effective prevention. They are arguing that since the corporate houses are funding the political parties of their choice on a massive scale to corner votes based on money power, state funding would act as a deterrent. Even CPI (M) is also found to be strongly preaching for state funding of elections as against corporate funding of political parties as an electoral reform to curb corruption. The 'miracle' which these parties and quarters expect to happen is that once state funding is implemented, there would be no more inflow of money from the corporate houses to the parties. It really needs a super brain to understand how state funding in a capitalist system can contain high place corruption and free the election from the clutches of the monopolists who own the corporate houses! Barring fools or insane humans, everybody knows that in order to have its own men elected to legislature, ruling monopolists will go to any extent to tamper with the electoral process and to manipulate election results riding on money power. So, whether there is state funding or not, nourishing parties or combinations of their choice with unlimited funds cannot and will not stop. So these big parties or combinations will continue receive funding as is the case today. Over and above, in the name of state funding, these parties and forces will get additional money from the state exchequer. Thus, even hard-earned public money will through the conduit of state funding mechanism be channelized to these same very parties who thrive and thump around on huge money power and are immersed in corruption of all kinds. Strangely, parties like CPI (M), CPI

wearing the cloak of Marxism-leftism have become an accomplice to this heinous conspiracy and are in fact spreading illusion that state funding is the solution to rampant corruption which has engulfed the poll process. Absurdity and trickery par excellence! People must rise up against such deceptive moves.

Lessons to be drawn

Coming back to the Jan Lokpal movement, the question that comes first is what it lacked that the government could manage to keep the door ajar for manoeuvrability? There can be no doubt about honesty, integrity and sincerity of Shri Hazare. As a Gandhite reformist leader, he has practically done whatever he could do as per his philosophical outlook. But what the movement, it ought to be understood, was found lacking is the time-tested scientific mechanism of developing a well-knit well-coordinated movement involving the masses organized right from the grassroots level with formation of necessary instruments of struggle like people's committees, voluntary corps as well as creation of a mentality conducive to protracting the movement till the demands are met. Bereft of that, any movement surging forth with a kind of spontaneity with an amorphous mass, would flare up with a sudden blaze and then subside abruptly. So the mass support instead of being crystallized in the manner desired also fizzles out quickly. In the obtaining bourgeois rule that is descending one after another attack on people's life with yet more ferocity, what is imperative is to sustain pressure of well-organized powerful mass movement as an antidote. Moreover, unless the movement grows with an anti-capitalist orientation, it cannot reach its logical culmination. It is more so in the instant case because this very capitalist system is breeding corruption through a nexus of monopolists-big business-dubious politicians-dishonest bureaucrats and their henchmen. Hence is the overriding need to exert pressure of conscious mass movement at every hour to keep the scamsters, fraudsters and wrongdoers under some check. But, in course of the movement, the murky face of capitalism as the root of all evils did

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People's movement must have anti-capitalist outlook

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not get exposed. The hatred against the culprit corporate houses and business tycoons whose complicity in the mega scams like 2G spectrum, Commonwealth Games, Indian Premier Cricket League etc., which is glaringly manifest, could not be given an anti-capitalist orientation. The reality that under the capitalist system powerful organized mass movement is the only antidote against growing corruption did not come to the surface. Obviously the prime consciousness that eradication of corruption is inseparably linked with the question of overthrowing capitalism did not dawn upon the people.

The question that follows next is why the movement did not grow on the desired line? The answer is not far to seek. One would recall that a similar situation appeared in mid 1970s. Unable to bear the brunt of ruthless capitalist exploitation, people in swelling number came out on the streets in protest and seeking redress. At that time, Shri Jayprakash Narayan, another stalwart Gandhite leader of that

time, came forward to lead that people's movement. This historic movement known as JP movement sent a chill down the spine of the rulers and the then Indira Congress government. But, the pseudo-Marxists like CPI (M), CPI did not join the movement. While CPI was in alliance with Indira Congress, CPI (M) stayed away raising the plea that known rightist forces were within the movement. But Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary of SUCI(C) and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the era, in course of his penetrating analysis said that if the demands of a movement are legitimate and common toiling people are involved in it in large number, the genuine revolutionaries cannot but wholeheartedly join the movement and try to give it a proper left-democratic direction and free it from the clutches of right reaction. Accordingly, our Party with whatever strength we had at that time, jumped into the JP movement with correct Marxist outlook to give it a left orientation. So, the JP movement which had immense

possibility could not be channelized along leftist line. As a result, the rightist forces usurped the entire benefit and rode to power in 1977.

JP movement was in the Hindi-speaking belt of Eastern India. But the movement of Shri Anna Hazare spread throughout the country including the southern states. So, it had tremendous possibility. But the self-proclaimed Marxists like CPI(M), CPI for reasons stated earlier kept themselves out of this movement. Our organizational strength was not enough to meet the need of providing a correct leftist direction to the movement. True, under pressure of such a gigantic movement in demand for Jan Lokpal to curb corruption, the government had to bow down and make some commitment which though was not enough considering what could be wrested. It is to be borne in mind that even if a suitable Act is passed by the parliament, its implementation would never take place unless there is constant pressure and vigil of organized mass movement. If the government thinks it can get away by playing tricks, it

is living in a fool's paradise. People of the country are so pressed under the grinding wheel of capitalist exploitation that today or tomorrow, they would once again rise in protest. The way this Jan Lokpal movement took off as an outburst of people's accumulated grievances against all kinds of injustice, deception, deprivation and aberration, in future movements will surge forth as well. But it is imperative to turn these movements into well-knit powerful protracted people's struggles based on higher ethics and morality by building up organized disciplined people's struggle committees and volunteer corps right from the grassroots level involving workers-peasants and all other sections of the toiling masses under correct revolutionary leadership, because without having an anti-capitalist outlook, no movement today can be led to its logical culmination. Taking due lesson from the Jan Lokpal movement, the genuine revolutionary party, left forces and the masses must gear up themselves for shouldering this responsibility.

SUCI (C) pledges to remain firm and active with the fighting villagers against the POSCO project

People of Odisha (Orissa), particularly peasants and other sections of common villagers of Jagatsinghpur area of the state have been struggling hard and firm against forcible grabbing of their land for a proposed steel plant by Pohanga Steel Company- POSCO- a South Korean based MNC vide a MOU signed on 22 June, 2005 between that company and the Odisha State BJD-BJP government. Our party has all through been in the thick and thin of this legitimate movement of common villagers against virulent attack of multinational corporates and the governments subservient to them upon life and livelihood of common people.

As per the MOU the Company was supposed to acquire 6025 acres of land for a proposed steel plant and the accompanying steel township covered under the Special Economic Zone. The plant built upon an FDI of Rs 52000 crores invested by the company would have 12 million tons of production capacity per year which would be fully export-oriented. The company would acquire necessary land in three

Grama Panchayats namely Dhinkia, Nuagan and Gadakujang in the Erasama Block of Jagatsinghpur District of Odisha. The company would also establish a private port at Jatadhar Channel, which would greatly affect the growth of the upcoming Paradeep Port of the state. The project based on the modern processes with high-tech facilities would create a meagre employment opportunity, whereas from the three Grama Panchayats 25000 people will be evicted from their fertile agricultural land and villages where they have been residing for more than scores of generations. The entire area lies in the coastal forest belt in the eastern sea coast with remarkable biodiversity. People settled there clearing the forest land and turning it into a fertile agricultural-habitable land made it specially known for betel cultivation, particularly for growing *Paradeep Pana* brand of betel vines. Of these some eighteen thousand vines of the area will be smashed for the sake of the Posco Project. The total, one time compensation the state government has offered to the

farmers presents a dismally paltry figure by all counts, in comparison to the fairly good amount of money the farmers make from the rich betel-cultivation every year. In addition, the project would destroy rich fruit (Kaju or Cashew nut, Coconut, pineapple, Sajana trees etc) vegetation in the area. The package offered by the government as compensation was thus refused by the people.

Protest movement started in the proposed Posco area since 2005 under the leadership of Posco Pratirod Sangram Samiti (PPSS) against this anti-people Posco project. By now the movement has assumed the character and spread of a strong peoples' resistance movement.

The Committee is broad based, its President being a State Committee member of CPI. Since 2006 our party SUCI(Communist) has been organising movements against the Posco project jointly with the PPSS, as well as on independent initiative and strength. Since the beginning till to date, our party organised a cycle rally through

the district in 2007, held meetings, did wallings, distributed hand bills against the Posco, organized number of demonstrations, rallies, as also *Gana Dharna* or mass squatting in front of Jagatsinghpur Collectorate and State Secretariat, or even the Odisha Rajbhavan, in Bhubaneswar demanding cancellation of MOU with the Posco and stopping of forcible land grabbing. Memorandums were submitted to the State Governor and President of India urging intervention in the Posco issue.

In 2008 a joint Padayatra was organised from Posco to Vendanta (Puri) in which our comrades participated actively. In the latter instance of the Vedanta, some 8000 acres of land were being grabbed from the villagers for the proposed Vedanta University. The rally was addressed by Medha Patkar at Beladala Puri.

Two years back a Committee formed with the help of and including pro-Government persons connived with the police and administration and with direct

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Third World Congress For Friendship and Solidarity with Soviet People

The Third World Congress of the organization, 'For Friendship and Solidarity with Soviet People' was held at the Friendship Hall in Toronto of Canada from 9 to 11 of September. Delegates from different countries of the world viz., Russia, Australia, Chile, United States of America, India etc. attended the same. The World Congress was inaugurated by Michael Lucas, General Secretary of the Organisation. The organization deals with the issue of restoration of socialist Soviet Union again, in place of the present capitalist Russia. Comrade Manik Mukherjee, Polit Bureau member of our party SUCI(C) and member of the Executive Committee of the Organisation, spoke at the Congress dwelling at length on the issue.

In this context he said that the downfall of erstwhile Soviet Union into capitalism had been effected through counter-revolution. Lenin, the great undisputed leader of the

international communist movement had taught on the basis of Marxism that to uproot capitalism and establish socialism in any country, anti-capitalist socialist revolution is imperative, it being wrong to think of any other way. Lenin also said that revolution can not be achieved without correct communist ideology and correct communist party. Socialism can be established only by overthrowing the capitalist state, in the process of identifying the correct communist party and then conducting class struggle under the leadership of that party.

Comrade Manik Mukherjee added that Marxism has taught us that revolution cannot be exported. So for restoration of socialism once again in the present capitalist Russia, the prime responsibility has to be borne by the Russian people themselves. From our commitment to proletarian internationalism, we on behalf of the organisation of our kind can help their effort from



Comrade Manik Mukherjee delivering his address at the Third World Congress in Canada

outside, mobilizing world people's opinion in favour of restoring socialism in Russia. This we should carry on in a more fitting manner.

Comrade Mukherjee cited the instance of extension of Friendship Society to Nepal pointing out, it was indeed a positive sign that

despite the deluge of slander campaign against socialism, common people are getting active in support of socialism in different countries. He asserted that such movements in support of socialism increasingly developing in different countries mark definite steps towards emancipation of mankind.

SUCI (C) fights along with villagers against POSCO

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backing of ministers of the state government and leaders of the ruling party they took entry into the area, smashed some of betel vines with the help of police, hired goons and criminals and creating a reign of terror, compelled the farmers to surrender their betel vines. One activist Dula Mandal died and many others suffered grievous injuries on account of bomb hurling, lathi-charge, tear-gas shelling. The police and the goons burnt down dharna tents and houses of the people who actively participated in movements.

However, in face of continuous protests and demands, two panels sent by the Forest and Environmental Ministry of the Union (Central) government undertook on-the-spot studies in July to October 2010. Both the panels in their reports vehemently opposed the project in that eco-sensitive zone of the Orissa coast. Despite that the Central government finally gave its clearance on conditional basis on 31 January 2011. Taking advantage of this attitude of the Union government,

the BJD-BJP government of the state declared their move for land acquisition on 18 April, 2011, fulfilling the conditions only on paper.

On 1 March, 2011 our party took part in a state level convention held at Bhubaneswar and joined the huge rally at Balitutha called by the PPSS. After the declaration of land acquisition our party along with CPI(ML), CPIML(Liberation) and CPIML(ND) organised joint demonstration at Bhubaneswar. On 18 June our party SUCI(Communist) organised a demonstration before the State Secretariat, Bhubaneswar and our leaders and cadres including two State Committee members of our party, Comrade Bishnu Das and Comrade Sadasiv Das joined a massive and continuous sit-in demonstration at Dhinkia, since 21 June 2011 in demand of cancellation of MOU with the Posco, stopping of forcible land acquisition and withdrawal of armed police. A Black day was observed on 22 June on the completion of 6th year of the MOU. The firm and determined villagers thrice thwarted police attacks on them. A group of

State Committee members led by Comrade Dhujati Das, State Secretary and member Central Committee, SUCI (Communist) participated in the *Gana Dharna* on 28 June and addressed the demonstrators attending the *Dharna*. On 23 July Dr. Tarun Mandal, M.P, SUCI(Communist) went to the spot, talked with the people and addressed the gathering. He said that taking lessons from the Nandigram and Singur Movement, the peasants must carry on their struggle till the final victory. He assured them of his raising the Posco issue in the monsoon session of the Parliament. A group of Mahila Sanskrutik Sangathan leaders, led by Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, President AIMSS and member Central Committee, SUCI (Communist) also went to the spot and addressed the gathering.

On 16 July at Nuagan village when district administration with armed police started felling trees in the forest, villagers, particularly the womenfolk in hundreds and then in thousands resisted and braved brutal lathi-charge by the police. Our party workers, men and women,

volunteered themselves in the movement and developed close relationship with the fighting people of the locality. Despite oppression, the movement grew stronger and on 22 August when Posco officials, government officers, ADM and police force reached the spot of an on-going road blockade, they were gheraoed for several hours. Ultimately armed police was deployed. Comrade Sadashiva Das, state committee member of the SUCI(C) and incharge, Jagatsinghpur district unit of the party, along with Avinna Rout, a leading member of PPSS(Posco Protirodh Sangram Samiti) and others were arrested and sent to jail custody. After they were released in a month's time, a meeting was held at Dhinkia-Govindpur *dharna* site to greet them. Comrade Das addressed the gathering and called upon the people to strengthen the anti-Posco movement and culminate it into victory taking lessons from the historic Nandigram and Singur movements. He pledged that our party SUCI(Communist) has been and will remain actively with the anti-Posco movement.

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