



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

June 22, 2011

**Hail the heroic resistance of the anti-POSCO agitators against a project which not only grabs their land but also the future of their children!
People of Odisha have the right to decide what kind of projects they need, not comprador despotic rulers like Naveen Patnaik or Sonia-Manmohan-Jairam-Chidambaram combine!**

Build widespread agitations in support of anti-POSCO agitation all over India!

It has been one week since the people of India has been witnessing one of the firmest, staunchest resistances in the history of modern India against an imperialist MNC project in the form of anti-POSCO agitation in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha. CPI (Maoist) hails the people of Odisha who are determined to stop the much-touted 52,000 crore 'biggest foreign direct investment' in India and declares its full support and solidarity for them.

The central government hastily cleared the POSCO project on 15 May 2007 and Manmohan himself had given full assurance to the South Korean government that he would do everything for building the project in the backdrop of people's rage erupting in severe opposition to it. The MOEF and the Odisha government have avoided compliance to the requirements under the Forest Rights Act and the MOEF guidelines issued in August 2009. In fact this is the ground for the Ministry's issuing stop work order on 5th August 2010. The state government has been repeatedly denying the existence of tribals in the proposed project area whereas subsequent visit and fact finding by the Saxena committee and the Meena Gupta committee has proved beyond doubt that there are other traditionally forest dwellers in the proposed areas depending traditionally on the forests for their livelihood, that sufficient documentary evidence is available which shows the existence of forest rights and that the FRA is not implemented by the state government in the area. The Central government the state government of Odisha disrespected the resolution of more than 65 % of the villagers who participated in both the Palli Sabhas of Dhinkia and Govindpur which unequivocally rejected the proposal for diversion of land. The government authorities deliberately suppressed facts and declared in the government's submission to the MOEF that such resolutions were fake! There are number of such instances where the government is suppressing the facts and figures and lying through the teeth. Based on the Meena Gupta committee's report the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has recommended withdrawal of forest clearance. But in violation of all this and making a complete U-turn, environmental clearance was given by Mr. Jairam Ramesh on May 2, 2011 and this proved to be the last straw. The state government immediately deployed the police in June to grab the land.

This whole period saw severe opposition from the people to any kind of land acquisition for the 12-million-tonne-capacity steel project, against mining lease for its Khandadhar iron ore reserve in Sundargarh district and the company's private port near the proposed steel plant about 12 km from the Paradip port. The fact is that both the central and state governments conspired for this and the statements by Jairam that environmental clearance doesn't mean that land should be acquired forcefully or Congress rushing to Govindpur supposedly to support the agitation are nothing but a big hoax. Jairam is advising the Odisha government to acquire land 'democratically'. Going by recent evidence, his 'democracy' looks like it includes lying and kickbacks from MNCs to keep shut. The only forms of democracy the people (mostly *Adivasis*) opposing such projects could see are fake encounters, tortures and incarceration for years together in jails !

Union Home Secretary GK Pillai in a recent interview asked the people to check the website of the Planning Commission and see the photos there to know how rapidly 'development' is progressing in the form of roads, *anganwadi* and school buildings coming up in backward (particularly 'Maoist') areas. He said 'Photos speak for themselves'. One wonders if the Pillai and his ilk have seen the photos of rows and rows of children, women and elderly persons lying on their land in Govindpur area of Jagatsinghpur district under a hot sun or in pouring rains to save it from being grabbed by the MNC shark POSCO with the muscle power of the Naveen Patnaik's fascist 'licensed killers'. Do these photos speak anything?

Why are the thousands and thousands of anti-POSCO agitators fighting a life and death struggle not to allow POSCO's entry? Why is the number of people who agitate against the governments' policies swelling with each attempt by the comprador rulers to sell this country's resources to neo-colonialists? Do the numbers speak anything?

Why is that there seems to be no end to these agitations involving a sea of masses in Singur, Nandigram, Kalinganagar, Lalgargh, Narayanapatna, Bhatta Parsaul, Srikakulam, Bastar, Lohardagga and scores of other villages and towns in almost every state in this country? Does this long list of militant agitations of the recent past speak anything?

Do the sacrifices and people thronging to the funerals of mass leaders and agitators (from Tapasi Malik of Singur to Tabrez of Jaitapur, from the 13 *adivasis* in Kalinganagar to the peasants of Sompeta and Kakarapalli) who fought and

laid down their lives in such agitations speak anything? Why are thousands of more people taking the place of these fallen heroes with silent determination waving the flag of 'Jal, Jungle, Zameen Hamara Hai'?

For those who care to listen – the message is clear. The overwhelming majority of this country's population is rejecting the profit-centric pro-imperialist development model and embracing the people-centric pro-people development model. The message from the ruling classes is also brutally clear. Whatever may be the 'cost' the people of India may have to pay – the comprador ruling classes with the strong support and guidance of the imperialists would continue with their plunder and pillage. **This 'cost' would include not only loss of land, water, air, seas, ports, natural resources, forests, ecology, rare flora and fauna, ancient civilizations, properties, limbs and not the least lives in the 'material' sense but would also include loss of self-respect, sovereignty, independence, freedom, dignity and pride which are inalienable for our existence as human beings.**

The people of Jagatsinghpur are asking a simple question - So why should we lose all these things and moreover who are you decide that we lose these things? They are stating an obvious truth – it is the people who have the right to decide what they need. They are posing a straight challenge to the ruling classes – face the fury of the people, we are not the ones to surrender. They are declaring a principled fact for the world to hear – the people of India refuse to be pushed into a slave-like existence.

We are afraid that sometimes even photos always do not speak for themselves. For example, the photos of school buildings (in 'Maoist areas') do not show the security forces which would be occupying them as soon as they are ready for it. **But agitations which are being carried on for years together by lakhs of people putting everything at their stake including their lives do speak something. They speak something which is the most important thing to be spoken or heard in this country at this point of time and one which would decide its future.** They are speaking the same truth which was spoken by the countless peasant and adivasi struggles (mainly armed but also unarmed) which were waged against the British colonial rulers in the 19th and 20th centuries, a truth which seeks to end all kinds of colonial/neo-colonial exploitation and oppression. The British tried to close their eyes and ears to this din of truth opting instead to suppress them using brute force. The Indian ruling classes are tracing their steps and they are bound to trace their steps to their own graveyards too if they continue in their 'unjust, brutal wars on people' in the name of development just like their imperialist masters. Whether it is direct armed suppression by deploying police and paramilitary forces in Maoist areas (and now the army too) in the name of Operation Green Hunt or by deploying police and paramilitary forces in places like a Bhatta Parsaul or a Govindpur all are for brutal suppression of genuine people's struggles. The killing of more than twenty-five many anti-mining activists in fake encounters by Naveen Patnaik government since December 2010 and the recent meeting by P. Chidambaram with Naveen Patnaik and Raman Singh for anti-Maoist operations to be carried on in Odisha and Chhattisgarh in June point out how the central and state governments are planning to suppress the people's agitations.

The anti-POSCO agitation along with many other struggles being waged against land grabbing and loot of natural resources of our country has the potential to decide the fate of the many other foreign investments coming unchecked into our country. The CC, CPI (Maoist) exhorts the people of Odisha to go ahead firmly with steadfast determination in their struggle and calls upon the people of India to build solidarity struggles in support of this brave people. While it is necessary for the people of Jagatsinghpur to take the support of every political and civil party or group which is coming to them in solidarity, they should also be alert to the ploys of some of them, particularly that of parliamentary parties to divert their struggle into various kinds of compromises. It should not be forgotten that almost all the parliamentary parties have been following or supporting such pro-imperialist projects wherever they have been in power or have been sharing power or were giving tacit support even when they were in opposition.

It is not only necessary to go to Jagatsinghpur in support of anti-POSCO agitation but also to take up various forms of supportive propaganda and agitational forms in every state in their support. CPI (Maoist) is calling upon the people of India and the world to express the widest possible solidarity to this courageous struggle. The need of the hour is for all such struggles to broaden into a coalition of anti-imperialist struggles which would not only fight for scrapping of projects like POSCO but would also fight for kicking off all kinds of imperialist control and exploitation from our country.

- ★ **Stop land acquisition for POSCO project immediately!**
- ★ **Withdraw all police and paramilitary forces from Jagatsinghpur district and stop all kinds of intimidating tactics to cow down the people!**
- ★ **Scrap all country-selling MoUs signed with MNCs for looting the natural resources of our country which rightfully belong to the people and only to the people!**



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