



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST) CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

9-9-2017

**Strongly condemn and protest against the assassination of
journalist Gauri Lankesh by Hindutva-terrorist Sangh Parivar goons!**

**Intensify the nationwide united people's movement
against Brahmanical Hindu-fascism!**

Well-known journalist, social activist, political commentator and translator Gauri Lankesh was shot dead by motorcycle-borne assailants at around 8.30pm on 5 September near her home in Bangalore when she was returning from work. Three bullets hit her chest and head and she died instantaneously. The Central Committee, Communist Party of India (Maoist), condemns this heinous murder in strongest possible terms and conveys its condolences to her relatives and friends. Our Party holds Brahmanical Hindu-fascist goons of Sangh Parivar led by Mohan Bhagwat & co. to be directly responsible for this assassination. This is not only a blatant attack on free speech and freedom of the press but an assault on all revolutionary, democratic, progressive, secular and rational dissenting voices of the country.

In this context, we emphatically reject and strongly condemn the patently false insinuation made by some leaders of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP suggesting that our Party might be behind this murder. This is nothing but a futile attempt to divert the growing mass anger against the Sangh Parivar. The CC of our Party calls upon the oppressed classes and the people of the country, the religious and national minorities, Dalits, Adivasis, women, students and youth, intellectuals, artists, advocates and other democratic sections – particularly the journalists working in the print and electronic media – to strongly protest against the murder of Gauri Lankesh, to demand prompt and stringent punishment of the perpetrators and to intensify the nationwide people's movement against Brahmanical Hindu-fascism.

Gauri Lankesh was the editor and publisher of the progressive Kannada newsmagazine *Lankesh* which was established by her father P Lankesh in the 1980s. After his death, her daughter took up the responsibility of continuing the magazine's publication without diluting or abandoning its progressive and democratic character which opposed the regressive and decadent social forces. The magazine and Gauri Lankesh's writings courageously challenged the most reactionary and right-wing faction of India's ruling classes represented by the Brahmanical Hindu-fascist RSS and its parliamentary face, the BJP. The last issue of *Lankesh*, for instance, carried an exposé of embezzlement involving the former Karnataka Chief Minister and BJP strongman Yediyurappa. Similarly, she had recently translated and published journalist Rana Ayyub's book *Gujarat Files* on the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 that implicated Hindutva leaders including Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Gauri Lankesh participated in the efforts to bring the untold history of the oppressed people to light like that of Prof. M M Kalburgi who established that the religion of the Lingayats was different from Brahmanical Hinduism and was never a part of it. She supported the democratic aspirations of the oppressed Kannada nationality which has been fighting against various forms of national oppression including the imposition of alien language and culture.

Apart from using her pen and her magazine as effective weapons against Hindutva-fascism, she organised and participated in protests against the combined attack of the dictatorial Indian state and the Hindu communal forces on the people – be it workers,

peasants, urban middle classes, religious and national minorities, Dalits, Adivasis, women, LGBT and other oppressed sections of the society. She fearlessly opposed fake encounters and other forms of state terror against the country's revolutionary and democratic movements. She condemned mob lynching and physical attacks on Muslims and Dalits by self-proclaimed 'cow protectors' and other Hindutva gangs. She came forward to vocally protest against the murder of Prof. M M Kalburgi by the Hindu-fascist forces who wanted to silence his irrepressible voice against Brahmanism and Hindu majoritarianism.

Through all these and in many other ways, using her writings and social activism, Gauri Lankesh contributed to the building up of public opinion and united resistance against the bigoted Hindutva reactionary forces, particularly in Karnataka which has become the advanced post of Brahmanical Hindu-fascism in South India. These RSS-affiliated forces felt threatened by the growing democratic opposition to their communal-fascist agenda, particularly at a time when assembly elections are just round the corner and BJP is desperate to come back to power in the state. In fact, she had been receiving death threats and was also subjected to abuse in the social media by these forces for quite some time. But she had refused to be cowed down by these vile tactics of intimidation and bravely carried on with her work. The RSS goons therefore decided to eliminate her through one of its numerous terrorist outfits as per a conspiracy. In addition to silencing one of its most vocal critics, the Hindutva-fascists want to send out a clear warning through the murder of Lankesh to the country's revolutionary, democratic, progressive and secular individuals, organisations and movements that anyone who dared to put up a real opposition (and not fake, parliamentary 'opposition') to the fascist juggernaut of Modi-Shah-Bhagwat ruling clique will meet a similar fate.

In fact, this is not the first murderous attack on the country's journalists by the Hindutva terrorists operating under the guidance from RSS headquarters in Nagpur. As per one report, as many as nine journalists have been killed in the country since Modi-led BJP government came to power. Many of these murders have been carried out by RSS-related outfits or individuals as a means of eliminating their critics. While a number of the staunchest anti-Hindutva journalists are being silenced in this way, others are being persecuted in various other ways – arrests, jail terms, physical attacks, abuse, cutting down of government financial support, etc. Quite a significant number of journalists in the corporate media have been co-opted or bought into championing RSS's Hindutva agenda and becoming spokespersons for the Modi government, while the majority are being suppressed, and hounded out or silenced. Thus, committed journalists have become a prime target of Hindutva terror along with other oppressed classes, sections and communities in the society.

Just as the violent attacks by the Hindutva-fascist gangs are becoming much more blatant, virulent and frequent with each passing day of Modi government, the people's movement against Hindutva-fascism too is becoming more and more widespread. People from different walks of life affected directly by Hindutva-terror or indirectly by the anti-people policies of the Hindu-fascist BJP government are resisting in various forms. The Sangh Parivar knows that it is not so easy to perpetrate its crimes on the people and get away without facing the consequences. That is why its leaders like Modi are making public pronouncements about their belief in non-violence, while instigating their storm-troopers in different ways to carry out large-scale fascist violence. The duplicity, hypocrisy and deceptiveness of the Hindutva forces need to be clearly identified to build an effective democratic counter-offensive against them.

The fear of people's anger and their united protests have forced RSS to pronounce public condemnations against the murder of Gauri Lankesh and to float the white lie that the Maoists might be behind her killing. Such misinformation is being spread by the Sangh Parivar and the BJP to divert the mounting indignation of the people from themselves on the one hand and to mislead the ongoing probes on the other. Such lies will of course convince

no one and their attempt to absolve themselves of the crime will end in utter failure. This is one more proof that these fascist forces have feet of clay when it comes to facing the organised resistance of the masses, no matter how strong and invincible they may appear.

This is a time when the shadow of fascism over the country and its people is darkening. The Hindutva forces are bent on strengthening their comprador-feudal fascist rule by using all means at their disposal. They are twisting the truth through Goebbelsian propaganda and trying to instil fear and terror among each and every person who dare to think critically by unleashing violence. At a time like this, it becomes all the more important to come out strongly and unitedly against the fascist attack on the country's conscientious, democratic and progressive journalists and intellectuals. This will be an important part of the broad-based united people's movement that is building up against the Brahmanical Hindu-fascist forces that are on a rampage against all oppressed classes and sections and all kinds of people's movements. There are only two choices before us – either we get silenced by the Hindutva-fascist forces and directly or indirectly collude with them to stand against the people, or stand with the people to unitedly fight back these most regressive and degenerate forces of reaction. Incidents like the murder of Gauri Lankesh have made this choice even more urgent for those who are yet to take their side.

At every crucial juncture of history, revolutionary and progressive forces challenges like this. Only those forces which remain at the forefront of battle to face these challenges can lead the masses in defeating the reactionaries. This is one such juncture in the history of our country, and this is one such occasion to stand firm in struggle. The Hindutva-fascists may kill some of us, jail many of us and scare a larger number into silence temporarily. But they certainly cannot suppress the people forever and turn the wheels of history backwards. They will certainly be thrown into the dustbin of history by the masses who alone are the makers of history.



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