



# COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MAOIST)

## CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Press Release

April 20, 2013

### **Fight Back The Land Acquisition Bill ! Intensify Struggles for Jal, Jungle, Zameen & Defeat The Conspiracy Of The Imperialist-CBB- Big Landlord Combine To Grab Our Lands!**

#### **Genuine Land Reforms Is The Need Of The Hour, Not Land Acquisition!**

The stage is all set to pull out Land – the chief means of production worshipped as Mother Earth by the millions of farmers in our country for providing them with livelihood since generations and for generations to come - from under our feet in the present parliamentary session. The colonial ‘Land Acquisition Act, 1894’ which was the pseudo legal garb for one of the most inhuman, cruel land grabs ever in the entire history during the British occupation of our country is up for some cosmetic changes. ‘Cosmetic’ because the content and intent remain the same – exploitation and complete loot of the natural resources of our country for the interests of the colonialists then and the imperialists now. And the ‘Change’ would parade wearing masquerading costumes like ‘fair compensation, transparency, rehabilitation, resettlement’ hiding the bulldozing of every hurdle that had remained since colonial times in the rocky rugged terrain of land grab. All the laws pertaining to the economic system that had been adopted as it is from the colonial times or in amended forms after formal transfer of power in 1947 corresponded to their international and domestic needs of the imperialists and CBB in that particular phase. The proposed Land Acquisition Bill is no different. As part of a rapid series of measures hyped by the corporate media as Big Bang Reforms and rushed in by the UPA-2 with the sly connivance of the ‘opposition parties’ comes ‘The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2012’ to replace the ‘outdated’ ‘Land Acquisition Act, 1894’.

With the impatient whips of their imperialist masters eager to come out their ever increasing financial crises caressing their backs to the accompaniment of shouts, ‘faster, faster’, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and Rural Development Minister, the most trusted agents of the imperialists panting out of breath ‘assured’ us that they would rush in more and more ‘Big Bang Reforms’ following the ones announced in September 2012. As promised the present Bill pertaining to land acquisition is now being rushed through the farce named Parliament after years of parleys aimed at consensus between the exploiters on how best to grab lands on the one hand and at hoodwinking the people about ‘democratic process’ on the other.

As the name itself suggests this Bill aims at acquiring the land of the people for ‘development’ synonymous in the parlance of Indian ruling classes with huge mining projects, big dams, SEZs, highways, airports, ports, railways, military installations etc. In fact, this process that has been going on since the formal transfer of power in 1947 (remember the big dams named modern temples by Nehru and the still uncompensated millions displaced by them?), speeded up since the neo-liberal first generation reforms of 1991. With almost no compensation, leave alone a fair one, no proper R&R, no transparency or people’s participation in decision-making, the entire history of land acquisition by the government and private capital (of imperialists-CBB) post-1947 is fraught with chaos (100 million displaced with a dismal 17-20 percent rate of resettlement and rehabilitation according to an estimate), death of large numbers of people both due to destruction of livelihood and repression of the people fighting against displacement and blatant handing over of the natural resources (forests, mineral riches, agricultural lands, water, aquatic wealth etc) of our country to the MNCs. The disillusionment with ‘development’ was complete. With more and more red dots indicating people’s struggles, ranging from hunger strikes to armed struggle, against displacement and ‘development’ appearing and widening across the map of India brakes began to be applied to this juggernaut. It is in this backdrop that ‘The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2012’ has been prepared and is ready to be passed now.

By widening the ambit of the term 'public purpose' to include infrastructure projects relating to agriculture, agro-processing, cold-storage facilities, industrial corridors or mining activities, national investment and manufacturing zones as designated in the National Manufacturing Policy; and any other infrastructural facilities notified by the Central government after tabling the notification in Parliament, the Bill blatantly facilitates the acquisition of lands for MNCs, doing away with any semblance of self-reliance and sovereignty that is still left. In our country along with the peasants directly dependent on land there are millions of people who did not have a piece of land, directly or indirectly dependent on it. With the loss of fertile land the agro based industries too would suffer. So the LA Bill disintegrates not just the peasant families but also worker families dependent on these industries.

This Bill seeks the consent of 80 per cent of landowners in case of use of land by private companies and the consent of 70 per cent of the landowners in case of land acquired for public-private partnerships. It does not even include the consent all the affected families and confines it to those families losing land. Given the depressing and atrocious past record, one can easily guess what a mockery this 'consent' business would become. Why 80 and 70 percent when it should actually be 100 percent? How informed would be the people about the consequences? How many would be the misinformation campaigns conducted to keep the people in ignorance? How much would be the bribing part of middlemen and how much would be the coercion part? What would be the scale of state repression by police, paramilitary and Special Forces to cow down the people? In every state people have painfully gone through the answers and have seen through the lie.

The Bill gives the government such arbitrary powers as the discretion to notify the limit of multi-crop irrigated land for acquisition taking into consideration the specific factors and circumstances relevant to the State. Practically this would mean that the government can facilitate the grab of any number of acres of fertile multi-crop lands by the imperialist-CBB capital. In clear violation of the PESA and Forest Rights Act, public hearing of the draft R&R scheme would be held only in those Gram Sabhas and municipalities where more than 25 per cent of the land was being acquired instead of in every Gram Sabha. The Bill also gives the government the powers to delay the issuance of the declaration for the R&R scheme. With the huge difference between what the peasants get as compensation (being in lakhs of rupees) and the price at which the land is sold again (being in crores), one can guess the plight of the peasants forced to sell their land by the unscrupulous blood suckers. Billionaires become trillionaires and the once independent owners of land become paupers. One of the most dangerous provisions is that the land should be returned to the State Land Bank instead of the land owner if it remains unutilized till five years. Such a move would lead to large scale land acquisitions and later gives the governments the opportunity to illegally hand over the land to MNCs.

In the urban areas massive scale evictions of poor and even middle classes have become the norm. The urban land ceiling Acts has been conveniently done away with. If this Bill gets implemented practically the already burdened urban employment scenario would sink further with huge rural migration to the cities. This suits the interests of the imperialist-CBB combine as they need a massive reserve army of unemployed and underemployed to depress wages to the lowest levels possible to overcome the financial crisis and gain monopoly profits in which they are bogged down since end-2007 and not finding a way out. And this Bill consequently even curbs several of the fundamental rights granted by the Constitution of India that these bandicoots in the Parliament swear by – the rights to work, livelihood, food, education and even the right to vote and very negatively impacts food and livelihood security of all those whose livelihoods depend on land. This would lead to drastic increase in regional imbalances, in the gap between the rich and the poor and the urban and rural areas. This would harm even the formal federal political structure, lead to impairment of state powers and further centralization of fascist powers.

The Congress party or the alliances led by it had been in power for the most part since 1947 in our country at the centre and in the states and it helmed the 'land grab' engine displacing millions of workers, farmers, other oppressed classes and oppressed social sections like Dalits, Adivasis, women, minorities and backward regions in its tracks. Other parliamentary parties are also not far behind. Each one of them has the accusing finger of the displaced people pointed at them. United by their loyalty to the imperialist masters, all the parliamentary parties hastily came to an agreement to pass this Bill.

While the amendments and 'objections' of the opposition parties range from demand for non-acquisition of multi-crop agricultural lands (Samajwadi Party) to demand for non-intervention of State in any kind of land acquisition (Trinamool Congress), the suggestions and objections of the NGOs are centered around livelihood based R&R, taking 100% consent of the project affected/displaced peoples, involvement of Gram Sabhas, inclusion of urban eviction for proper R&R etc. Though very partially and in parts these

objections do point to some of the basic flaws in the proposed Bill, in reality all these objections are like pointing at one or two holes in a sieve, ignoring the gushing flow of water through it.

The parliamentary parties that are or were in power in the centre and in the states are notorious for immense land grabs both in rural and urban areas, for maintaining and utilizing land mafias for forceful evictions of the peasants, particularly the Adivasis and the urban poor and for making the most of the state machinery for suppressing the people opposing displacement. In fact, any politician of some stature in these parties who is not involved in land grabs and fattening of his/her purse would be a rare breed. And the NGOs true to their original purpose of formation are acting like a safety valve – acting as if raising some genuine concerns of the people but in reality keeping a check so that they do not raise the most basic question of the peasantry in our country – the issue of land ownership - in other words maintaining a deafening silence on genuine Land Reforms.

The CC, CPI (Maoist) calls upon the people of our country to demand and fight unitedly for the withdrawal of the proposed Bill and intensify the struggles against land grabs and displacement, for their inalienable right over Jal, Jungle, Zameen by uniting huge cross sections of people ranging from poor, middle and rich peasants to the urban poor and urban middle classes who would be affected by this. It clearly reiterates that development means nothing in India without genuine Land Reforms. India is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country where 70% of the population depends on land for their livelihood. But instead of implementing genuine land reforms the looters are grabbing the lands of the peasantry for peanuts in the name of development and making mind boggling profits. The millions of poor peasants and landless laborers are getting pauperized further and their increasing number of suicides is just one significant indicator of the larger tragedy.

With the increasing intervention of the imperialists, particularly the US imperialists in all the affairs of our country and particularly the economic and political system, the process of neo-colonization of our country without the imperialist troops actually entering our country is speeding up. Doing away with the laws of our country in SEZs had already made a mockery of even the paltry sovereignty left. With increasing neo-colonization of our country under various garbs the need for genuine national revolution against the imperialists that is an inseparable part of the New Democratic Revolution (NDR) is increasing more than ever. The interests of the big land lords are also inseparable from those of the imperialists and the CBB. That is why our CC once again declares in no uncertain terms that only Agrarian Revolution as the axis of New Democratic Revolution would overthrow these three enemies of the people and lead to genuine land reforms in our country, establish genuine democracy, self-reliance and sovereignty in our country and put an end to these devastating land grabs. It calls upon the people of our country to unite against the traitors and lackeys of imperialists who are in the power under the garb of parliamentary democracy and selling-out our country on wholesale and to intensify and expand the Protracted People's War for the victory of NDR.



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