

ILPS Condoles the Death of Indian Comrade GN Saibaba

Len Cooper, ILPS Chairperson, 16 October 2024

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The International League of Peoples Struggle, deeply shocked by the news of comrade Gokarakonda Naga Saibabas untimely passing on October 12, 2024, extends its heartfelt revolutionary salute in his honour.

Born in 1967 in Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh, Saibaba, who was 90% disabled due to polio, passed away while receiving treatment at Nizams Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad. After being freed from jail in 2024, his health had severely deteriorated due to prolonged torture, degrading treatment, and lack of proper medical care during his incarceration in Nagpur jail. He was held in the notorious Anda Cell under unsanitary conditions, which further contributed to his complicated health issues.

A Ph.D. holder in English, he served as an Assistant Professor at Ram Lal Anand College, Delhi University, for several years before being dismissed in 2021 on charges of involvement with outlawed activities. Arrested in May 2014 for alleged connections to banned Maoist organizations and terrorist conspiracies, he was released on bail in June 2015 due to medical reasons, but returned to jail in December of the same year. After being bailed out again in April 2016, he was subsequently re-incarcerated. In March 2017, he was sentenced to life imprisonment, but in March 2024, he was acquitted once more.

Saibaba, deeply influenced by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology since his student days, was a lifelong advocate for a society free from exploitation and oppression. To advance these ideals, he actively worked with students, teachers, tribal communities, various nationalities, academics, and mass organizations. He stood resolutely against imperialism, exploitative neo-liberal developmentalism, repressive laws, and the State state-sponsored terrorism that perpetuated all these. His unwavering stance made him a target of persecution, leading to his imprisonment, where he endured severe torture, inhumane treatment, and degradation.

Saibaba, known for his commitment to internationalism, was connected with numerous progressive global organizations. He was involved in the founding of the International League of Peoples Struggle in 2001, served on its International Coordinating Committee, and remained actively engaged with the organization for nearly a decade. He was forced into solitary confinement in the Anda Cell to prevent him from communicating with and influencing other inmates, receiving physical support for his disabled body, and continuing his engagement in progressive writings. May the memory of life and work live long and inspire many.

Saibaba wrote:

When I refused to die
my chains were loosened
I came out
Into the vast meadows

Smiling at the leaves of grass
My smile caused intolerance in them
I was shackled again
Again, when I refused to die
tired of my life
my captors released me
I walked out into the lush green valleys
under the rising sun
smiling at the tossing blades of grass
Infuriated by my undying smile
They captured me again
I still stubbornly refuse to die
The sad thing is that
They dont know how to make me die
Because I love so much
The sounds of growing grass

November 2017.

(Remembering October 1917)