

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram Will Always Remain Alive in Ours Hearts

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CPI(ML)'s senior-most leader and architect of the people's revolutionary struggles led by the CPI(ML) in Bhojpur, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram (Paras ji) passed away on 26 October 2010 at the age of 86. He was one of the founders of the revolutionary CPI(ML) current in the communist movement in Bihar. With his demise, a glorious chapter in the history of post-independence revolutionary struggles comes to an end. Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was born in 1924, in Ekwari village in the Sahar block of Shahabad district (now called Bhojpur). As an 18-year-old he participated in the Quit India movement of 1942 and thus began his political career with the freedom struggle. Some years later he entered the communist movement and joined the peasant movement. The voice of the peasant insurgency of Telengana touched him and in 1948, he participated in a campaign to collect funds in support of that movement. In 1951 he became a member of the Communist Party of India and in 1952-54, he was one of the leaders of the CPI-led peasants' struggle against hike in the canal irrigation rate by the Bihar Government.

At the time of the division of the Communist Party he joined the CPI(M) and in 1965 he contested for the post of mukhiya of Ekwari panchayat. This step was an open challenge to the feudal forces because till then, the feudal forces of Ekwari village had been electing their own candidates unopposed and on this pretext, they tried to stop Comrade Ram Naresh Ram from contesting elections. But he defied every scheme of the feudal forces and, on the strength of the unity of the poor and oppressed of Ekwari under the communist banner he gave a crushing defeat to the feudal candidate and opened a new chapter in the assertion of the oppressed. He was hailed as Ekwari's 'mukhiyaji' ever since.

In 1967, he was the CPI(M) candidate in the Bihar Assembly elections. This election became a direct contention with the feudal forces and during the elections, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's comrade and fellow-fighter 'Master' Jagdish was captured and beaten nearly to death and Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was locked in a room to prevent him being able to come to Comrade Jagdish's rescue. This incident gave birth to the resolve in Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's mind to wage armed struggle against feudal forces.

Soon after, the 'spring thunder' of Naxalbari could be heard in Bhojpur and Comrade Ram Naresh could see in it the future trajectory of anti-feudal struggles. He internalized Comrade Charu Mazumdar's idea that people's democratic revolution is the only way ahead, and peasant revolution is its essence. In the phase following Naxalbari, those comrades of Bhojpur who were disillusioned with the CPI(M) went straight to Kolkata to seek out and make contact with the CPI(ML). In 1970, Comrade Ram Naresh along with other comrades of Bhojpur joined the CPI(ML) and as an underground leader, he took responsibility for the peasant struggles led by the party. With this starts the glorious saga of the revolutionary struggles of the Bhojpur plains.

In underground life, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was known as 'Parasji.' He had become a popular mass leader whose relations with the masses were as deep as that of fish with water. This was why, even while he was underground, he was successful in ensuring the participation of the masses in CPI(ML)'s revolutionary struggles, and in the decade of the 1970s, the armed struggle of Bhojpur's peasants always had a mass character and the emphasis in these struggles remained on opening the

doors for people's initiatives and on mass actions. In 1974, after the reorganization of the party, it was Bhojpur's experience that showed the party the way for the rectification campaign and even in underground circumstances it was in Bhojpur under Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's supervision that the party's special All India Conference was successfully held.

In the CPI(ML)'s Third Congress (1982) Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was elected a member of the party's Central Committee, since when he remained a member of the Central Committee all his life. After the Congress he took up the post of the party's Bihar State Secretary and in the 1980s he led the fresh upsurge of the peasant struggle in Bihar. Later he was given responsibility of Secretary of the special regional committee which functioned under direct leadership of the Central Committee. In 1990 Comrade Ram Naresh Ram took on the responsibility of the party's open front and in the same year, addressed the massive 'Dam Bandho Kam Do' Rally organized by the Indian People's Front (IPF) at Delhi as CPI(ML)'s representative. After this, he was elected National Vice President of the IPF and attended the CPI's Vijaywada Congress as the fraternal representative of the CPI(ML)-IPF. Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was a Polit Bureau member of the party between 1989-1992 and 1995-2007.

In 1995 when CPI(ML) decided to participate in elections for the first time in the Party's own name, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram led the election campaign, and filed nominations in the name of Parasnath in the Sahar Assembly constituency. This caused great consternation in the ruling class camp. The Government and administration put up many hurdles to his candidature and indulged in widespread slander. In the face of all this, he won the seat by a wide margin. Thus, after a relentless struggle of 28 years, he entered the Bihar Assembly and took up the post of the party's legislative group - a responsibility he retained till the end.

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's victory caused deep demoralization among the feudal and communal forces. The Ranveer Sena (a private feudal militia) was born out of this demoralization and reaction, and then began the phase of barbaric massacres in dozens of poor hamlets like Bathani Tola, Bathe, Nagri, Shankarbigha, Narayanpur, Miyanpur, etc. In these massacres, the Ranveer Sena took the lives of hundreds of dalits and poor people, including a large number of unborn babies, children, women and old people. Under the perceptive political guidance of Comrade Ram Naresh Ram and the leadership of the CPI(ML), the poor people of Bhojpur and Bihar defeated this feudal ploy. Today the Ranveer Sena along with all other private armies no longer exist in Bihar.

His role as an MLA representative of the revolutionary opposition was unparalleled, and a model for all communist legislators. As an MLA, he always led the people's struggles of his constituency from the front and always posed a challenge to the Government and administration. In particular, he waged powerful struggles inside and outside the Assembly on the question of political patronage to the Ranveer Sena and imposition of draconian laws (especially TADA) on the struggling poor. On the other hand, he himself gave direct leadership to the process of establishing people's supervision and regulation over the development undertaken by government machinery and in reining in the corruption by government officials and contractors. As a result he became such a popular MLA from his constituency that all his opponents considered him invincible.

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram always remained a major challenge for the ruling class. Be it the Congress Government, the 'social justice' government of Laloo-Rabri or the Nitish Government with its rhetoric of 'good governance-development', all felt threatened by him. Not only during the Emergency but during Laloo's rule (1995 and 1997), Rbari Devi's rule (2000) and during Nitish Kumar's rule (currently), fresh false cases were concocted and filed against him and there were plots to arrest him. In one such false case, a warrant for his arrest was issued which was never scrapped even till the day of his death, in spite of the fact that the entire Opposition united inside the Bihar Assembly to protest the police's attempt, through this warrant, to brand him an

'extremist,' and even the Bihar CM was forced to issue a statement on this question.

From the first war of independence of 1857 through the 1942 Quit India struggle, and beyond, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram was a torch-bearer of the revolutionary anti-imperialist anti-feudal legacy of the entire freedom struggle. It was this legacy that he carried forward by leading the revolutionary communist movement. In his constituency he had a memorial to 1942 martyrs constructed at Lasarhi - something which no previous MLA of this constituency had undertaken in 50 years of India's independence. Every year a 'Shaheed Mela' would be organized at this memorial and this year too Comrade Ram Naresh Ram actively participated in this event.

During the freedom struggle Swami Sahajanand Saraswati had played a vanguard role in lighting the spark of anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggles among India's peasants; in the period of India's 'second Independence struggle,' Comrade Ram Naresh Ram under the leadership of the Communist Party played the same role - lighting the revolutionary spark of political assertion in the most oppressed sections of society from the initial phase till the revolutionary anti-feudal struggles of the Bihar plains. As a result of these struggles, the dalit-backward rural poor of independent India achieved their basic democratic right - the right to vote - for the first time and not only sent their representatives to the Parliament and Assembly but also changed the balance of forces in local self-governance bodies. Comrade Ram Naresh raised the issue of land reform in Bihar with such commitment that he can be called the Swami Sahajanand of independent India. At the founding Conference of the All India Agricultural Labourers' Association (AIALA) at Ara in 2003, he was elected the National President of the organization and till the end, he remained the Honorary President of AIALA.

In spite of the travails of old age and serious illnesses, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram remained active till his last days and participated actively in mass programmes. He not only addressed the Jan-Adhikar (People's Rights) Rally this very year in Patna, he was even present at the mass meeting for the nomination of party candidates in Ara a few days before his demise. Expressing outrage at the arrest of Comrade Rameshwar Prasad during nominations, he asked the assembled people to ensure the victory of Comrade Rameshwar as a fitting rebuff to this unjust and biased move of the administration.

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's wife passed away last year. He is survived by two daughters. Comrade Ram Naresh Ram's personality was steel tempered in the fire of revolutionary struggles. He was a peerless leader from among the dalit-oppressed people, speaking their own language. On the one hand he was known for his simplicity, his friendly and simple nature and his humility and on the other for his firm principles and his dauntless commitment. He was a unique icon of struggle and simplicity. He grasped a range of immensely varied responsibilities given to him by party and successfully undertook them with great commitment. His entire struggling life will be a lighthouse of inspiration not only for the present but for the coming generations.

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram is no longer physically present among us. As long as oppression, exploitation and inequality remain in society, until struggles for land reforms and social transformation achieve their goal, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram will continue to guide our way like a flaming torch in fields of struggle of Bihar and India's democratic revolution. Only by marching in the light of that flaming torch to realize his dreams can we pay true homage to Comrade Ram Naresh Ram.

Red Salute to Comrade Ram Naresh Ram!

***Central Committee,
CPI(ML) Liberation***

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram is no more

Veteran leader of historic struggles in Bhojpur, Central Committee Member and leader of the CPI(ML)'s legislative group in the Bihar Assembly from 1995-2010, Comrade Ram Naresh Ram passed away around 4 pm in PMCH, Patna, where he had been in a coma and battling a cerebral stroke for the past several days. 87-year old Comrade Ram Naresh Ram, popularly known as 'Parasji,' is among the tallest leaders of the revolutionary struggle and is an icon for the downtrodden and oppressed people, not only of Bhojpur and Bihar but the whole country.

Hailing from a dalit family of Shahabad (Bhojpur) region in Bihar, he became a full-time communist organizer in the 1940s, participating actively in the freedom struggle as an activist of the undivided CPI. When the CPI(M) was formed in 1964, he became one of its founding members in the Shahabad region. In 1967, he was elected mukhiya and then contested the Assembly election, during which Comrade Jagdish 'Master' was brutally attacked and Comrade Ram Naresh Ram himself was imprisoned by feudal goons. Inspired by the Naxalbari struggle, he became one of the founders of the CPI(ML) movement in Bihar, along with other legendary leaders like Jagdish 'Master.'

In the 1980s, he was the Secretary of the Bihar unit of the CPI(ML). Ever since 1995, he consistently represented the CPI(ML) in the Bihar Assembly, and was the leader of the party's legislative group. In 2003, when the founding conference of the All India Agricultural Labourers' Association (AIALA) was held in Ara, he was elected the founding President of the AIALA.

Sahajanand Saraswati galvanized the peasantry of central Bihar in militant anti-feudal and anti-colonial struggles during the pre-Independence period; Comrade Ram Naresh Ram played a comparable role along with others like Jagdish 'Master' in galvanizing the rural poor in the post-Independence period in anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggles.

Comrade Ram Naresh Ram had a deep sense of respect for the legacy of the First War of Indian Independence of 1857 as well as for the freedom struggle. As a legislator, he had had a memorial to the 12 peasant martyrs of 1942 constructed at Lasarhi village in Bhojpur.

In his simplicity and his life-long organic link with people's struggles, combining both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, he was a model for communist parliamentarians and people's representatives.

His abiding legacy will inspire the entire communist movement and the struggles of the oppressed for time to come.

Red Salute to 'Parasji'!

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Condolence Meetings

There are reports of country-wide condolence meetings organised by district and state committees at the passing away of CPI(ML)'s senior most and veteran leader of the Indian communist movement Comrade Ram Naresh Ram. Condolence meetings were also held simultaneously for Comrade Rajesh Ranjan, a young Party leader in Delhi. We are able to reproduce below the reports of only a few of the meetings.

New Delhi: Condolence meeting was held on 3rd November at Gandhi Peace Foundation hall to pay tributes to Comrades Ram Naresh Ram and Rajesh Ranjan, both of whom passed away on 26th October. Hundreds of Party members attended the meeting and observed two minutes silence in their memory. All those present pledged to carry on the struggle till the dreams of the departed comrades were realised. Meeting was addressed among several others by Comrades Swapan Mukherjee, Rajendra Pratholi, Ranjan Ganguly, PS Gahlawat, Meera di, Sucheta De, Gopal Pradhan, Shweta, Martand, Roop Narayan, and AN Tiwari. Delhi State Secretary Comrade Sanjay Sharma conducted the meeting.

Rajasthan: Condolence meetings were held in four districts of Udaypur, Jaipur, Azmer and Pratapgarh. Comrades Srilata Swaminathan (AIPWA's National President and Party CCM) and Mahendra Chaudhary (Party's State Secretary) among several others addressed the meetings.

Chhatisgarh: Condolence meeting was held at Bhilai on 27 October attended by all leading comrades of Bhilai, Party's State Secretary Com. Brijendra Tiwari and AIPWA's National Secretary Com. Kavita Krishnan.

Uttarkhand: Condolence meeting was organised at CPI(ML)'s State Office in Haldwani in Nainital District, where Com. Raja Bahuguna (Party's State incharge) spoke about the revolutionary life of Comrade Ram Naresh Ram. Comrades Rajendra Pratholi (Party's CCM), BS Jangi, KK Bora were present among other comrades.

At Deghat in Almora district, comrades Purushottam Sharma, Vijaylakshmi, Shanker, Dinesh Pant, Geeta Sharma and many other comrades paid tributes to the departed comrades.

Meetings were also held in Dharchula led by Com. Jagat S Martoliya, at Munsyari led by Com. Surendra Brajwal, Srinagar in Garhwal dist. where comrades Kailash Pandey, Indresh Maikhuri, Malti Haldar among others addressed the meetings. Apart from this, the Nainital Film Festival (29-31 October) also paid tributes to the departed comrades.
