

# **Stand by the People of Singur; Support their Just Battle for Land and Democracy**

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The Buddhadeb Bhattacharya government of West Bengal and its police have started going berserk in exhibiting their loyalty to the Tatas. In order to overcome the just opposition of the people of Singur to the state government's attempt to forcibly acquire their multi-cropped agricultural land, the regime has now shed all democratic pretensions and bared all its repressive fangs. The combined effect of the intoxication induced by the slogan of 'industrialisation' and the arrogance generated by thirty years of uninterrupted service to the Indian state is there for all to see.

The images of police setting crops on fire and raining lathis and firing teargas shells and 'rubber' bullets on one and all, not sparing children, women or the elderly, that we have been seeing on television may seem to belong to another time or another place. Like colonial Bengal, when peasants were coerced by the colonial masters and their state into cultivating indigo; like Bihar, where the feudal forces and the state have earned exceptional notoriety for unleashing gory violence to silence the voice of the rural poor, or like Haryana where Huda's police behaved as the henchmen of Honda to stop workers from forming a trade union. But this is reality television from Buddha's Bengal in December 2006. Truth can indeed be more shocking than fiction.

Unable to face the real questions posed by the peasants of Singur, the CPI(M) is desperately trying to divert the issue and Mamata Banerjee and her men are doing the CPI(M) a great service in this diversionary game. At a time when the state government would like everyone to forget Singur, the TMC MLAs have virtually joined that mission by ransacking the State Assembly. The powerful movement of Singur certainly did not need any such sideshow. And look what the CPI(M) has done – it has opened the Assembly to the people to exhibit the TMC's vandalism while sealing off Singur and its people!

We cannot allow this game of diversion to succeed in West Bengal. The issues raised by the people of Singur must not be allowed to be skirted or suppressed. If the CPI(M) in power is free to side with the Tatas, the peasants of West Bengal are also free to wage their own battle and draw their own political conclusion. It is the organised peasantry of West Bengal which has been the mainstay of the Left movement and also of the Left Front government over all these thirty years. Now that the Left government has turned unabashedly right, we must stand by the fighting peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers of Singur in their great battle to defend their land and their rights and script a resurgence of the communist movement on the basis of peasant resistance.

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