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Beirut International Forum held with thundering success

On a backdrop, when the Zionist Israel, with all-out moral-material support and encouragement from particularly the US imperialists, was carrying out relentless offensive on the coastal strip of Arab world called Gaza, terrorizing and massacring innocent Palestinian civilians, and yet in face of this inhuman barbarous onslaught, when people of Gaza were putting up glorious resistance under the leadership of the Hamas, there was being held an international anti-imperialist conference in Beirut of Lebanon, setting up a remarkable and determined advancement in the global anti-imperialist struggle that had nucleated and is spreading out fast all over the world.

The conference was entitled *The Beirut International Forum for Resistance, Anti-imperialism, Solidarity Between Peoples and Alternatives*, thus signifying that, when the whole world is facing

crises resulting from the imperialist policies of war and hegemonism on one hand and of devastating globalization and accompanying neo-liberal economic measures, on the other, the Forum also aimed at reinforcing the possibility of building an 'alternative' world based on the principles of respecting humanity as a whole and defending the vulnerable and oppressed in the world.

The Forum was held between January 16 and 18, 2009, divided into a number of sessions and workshops, at the UNESCO Palace exhibition hall at Beirut. It was jointly convened by The Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation in Beirut, The International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee (IAPSCC) (Calcutta - India Conference), The International Campaign against American and Zionist Occupation (Cairo Conference), The Stop War Campaign (London) and The

National Gathering to Support the Choice of Resistance (Lebanon). In fact, it was the Second International Anti-imperialist Conference held under the aegis of the IAPSCC. In addition, hundreds of resistance

organizations and prominent individuals endorsed the call for the Beirut Forum. It came out with a tremendous success with the participation of around 450 individuals. *Contd. on page 2*

SUCI urges upon all concerned to find a just solution to Tamil minority problem in Sri Lanka through negotiated settlement

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI, in course of a statement issued on 14 February 2009 expressed grave concern over the developments that have taken place following the all-out military assault launched by the Sri Lankan army on the northern part of the country, inhabited by the ethnic Tamil-speaking people. While many inhabitants of the attacked territory have fled their homes, a sizeable number of them are perilously confined within the attack zones, noted Comrade Mukherjee. Strongly condemning the Sri Lankan army's offensive, endangering the life of civilian population as well as the attacks on schools and hospitals, Comrade Mukherjee demanded of the Sri Lankan government to ensure complete safety and security of the innocent unarmed civilians trapped inside the attack zones. He urged upon the Sri Lankan government to take all steps for economic rehabilitation of the displaced people, and for due compensation to the bereaved families and the injured, as well as needed medical care and treatment.

Our Party, recalled Comrade Mukherjee, had been having a consistent stand on this Tamil minority problem in Sri Lanka. We have been repeatedly urging upon all concerned to abjure military approach and military confrontation and instead concentrate all their strength and efforts on seeking a negotiated political settlement to this prolonged problem. There should be an end to all sorts of oppression, discrimination and injustice perpetrated on the minority Tamil population of Sri Lanka and their safety, security and right to lead a peaceful life as well as their right to equality should be fully guaranteed.

Reiterating this stand, Comrade Mukherjee once again called upon both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE leadership to cease armed hostility and sit across the table to find out a just political solution through negotiation. Comrade Mukherjee, while deprecating the role of Government of India, also urged upon it to take positive steps towards hastening the process of reaching a just and lasting solution which should be acceptable to the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka and fully safeguard their legitimate rights and aspirations.

He also appealed to all democratic-minded people and progressive forces of India and the world, especially the people of Sri Lanka, to stand by the affected Tamil people and to bring pressure upon the Sri Lankan government to stop its military onslaught and take steps to facilitate a political solution to the problem.



Inauguration of Beirut Forum on 16 January

Global anti-imperialist movement takes a long stride in the Beirut Forum

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international and Arab bodies, in addition to social movements and figures from 66 countries. IAPSCC, one of the convening organizations was represented among others by its President Mr. Ramsey Clark, who is also the Director of International Action Center based in the US and its Central Secretariat members Sara Flounders, from US, Mahammad Tay, and Comrade Mohamad Kassem from Lebanon, Alexander Moumbaris from France, Roberto Gabriele from Nino Pasti Foundation of Italy. Under the leadership of Comrade Manik Mukherjee, General Secretary, IAPSCC and Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Secretariat Member, IAPSCC, a seven member delegate team from India took active part in the proceedings. Among others, Comrade Prachanda, Prime Minister of Nepal accepted the invitation of IAPSCC and planned to be present at the Conference. But pressure of dual tasks, of the party and the government, held him back and he sent a solidarity message extending full support to the objectives of IAPSCC. The Baath Arab Socialist Party of Syria responded to the invitation of IAPSCC by sending a three-member delegation to the Conference. In response to the invitation of IAPSCC, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela sent a 30-member Parliamentary delegation including Amilcar Figueroa (President Alternate of the Latin American Parliament), Victor Chirinos (President of the Venezuelan Parliamentary Group of the Latin American Parliament), Giuson Flores (Vice-president of Inter-parliamentary Relations of the VPG of the Latin American Parliament) and Carolus Wimmer (Vice-president of Commissions of the VPG of the Latin American Parliament, and Secretariat member of IAPSCC and Member of the Polit Bureau, Venezuelan Communist Party). The Cuban Ambassador to Lebanon attended the Forum all through its entire proceedings of the three days.

The Forum was an outcome of more than a year long preparation. To ensure wide international participation, Comrade Manik Mukherjee, the General Secretary of the IAPSCC had travelled to different countries across the globe. He went to Lebanon first to meet Dr. Ali Fayyad, Director of Consultative Center for Studies and Documentation of Beirut and a

Central Secretariat member IAPSCC, and to propose to hold a Conference of anti-imperialist forces of the world in Lebanon, since that was the country which had inflicted the first ever defeat on Israel in the invincible resistance struggle in 2006. Dr. Ali Fayyad gladly consented to Comrade Mukherjee's proposal and introduced him to Mr. Naeem Qasim, Deputy Secretary General of Hezbollah, the principal organization that fought the said heroic resistance struggle of 2006. The Hezbollah leader also gave his consent. The claim of Lebanon was further strengthened from the fact that the Central Secretariat of IAPSCC also includes two members from that country, Mohammad Tay, and Comrade Mohamad Kassem. Dr. Ali Fayyad also expressed his desire to include the The International Campaign against American and Zionist Occupation (Cairo Conference), as one of the convenor organizations. Comrade Mukherjee agreed to it. Subsequently two other organizations, The National Gathering to Support the Choice of Resistance (Lebanon) and The Stop War Campaign (London) were inducted as co-convenors. Mohamad Kassem assumed the responsibility on behalf of the IAPSCC to maintain coordination with Lebanon.

To make sure that The United Socialist Party (PSUV) of Hugo Chavez of Bolivia, the Communist Party of Venezuela, as also the anti-imperialist fighters of different countries like Syria, Sudan, Jordan, Nepal and others, agree to join the conference, Comrade Manik Mukherjee visited those countries and talked with the concerned leaders. All of them gave consent and submitted the list of their representatives to the conference. As mentioned, in Nepal Comrade Prachanda, the present Prime Minister and the leader of the Communist Party (Maoist) there accepted the invitation, but could not attend the conference; however, he sent his message to the conference on behalf of the struggling anti-imperialist people of Nepal. We have already mentioned about the delegation from Venezuela and Syria. In addition, though, even after accepting the invitation from Comrade Mukherjee, Dr. Majen Hannan, leader of the Jordan Communist Party could not attend the conference owing to his illness,

a four-member delegation from Jordan lead by Hani Haddadin and Khaled Haddadin joined the conference on behalf of that party. A delegation from Sudan was lead by Dr. Ibrahim Ghandour. Comrade Willi Langthaler of Anti-imperialist camp and Ms Leila Khaled, the esteemed Palestine freedom fighter were important attendees. Dr. Yahia Bakour, the Agricultural Advisor to the Government of Syria accompanied the delegation of the Baath Arab Socialist Party of that country. Incidentally, it was Mohamad Habache, the leader of the delegation of the Baath Arab Socialist Party, who in his proposals regarding the programmes suggested to observe 29 November, the concluding day of the 2007 Anti-imperialist International conference held in Calcutta, as the "World Anti-Imperialist Day".

The Conference was inaugurated on 16 January afternoon, at the UNESCO Palace exhibition hall. The venue was placed under remarkable security arrangement of the Hezbollah. It seemed imminent, as the US-Israel nexus had already attempted five times on the life of Mr. Naeem Qasim, the Hezbollah leader. The session was also attended among others, already mentioned, by the Hamas leaders representing the Palestinian people; a delegation of the MLKP from Turkey led by Comrade Nuran; Cynthia Mckinny, former US Senator and Presidential candidate, and many other dignitaries. Comrade Manik Mukherjee and Comrade Ranjit Dhar welcomed the delegates. They also received and talked with representatives from Pakistan, Libya, France, England, Greece, Germany and other countries.

Dr. Ali Fayyad presided over the Opening Plenary Session. On the podium were present Comrade Mohamad Kassem, Comrade Manik Mukherjee from IAPSCC, Dr. Yehia Gaddar of The National Gathering to Support the Choice of Resistance (Lebanon), Mr. Mohammed Samy representing International Campaign against American and Zionist Occupation (Cairo Conference), Dr. Leila Ghanem, the Co-ordinator of Beirut Forum in Europe and others.

On behalf of the IAPSCC, Comrade Ajanta Ghosh, a member of the Indian delegation presented souvenirs to those present on the dais and later to other dignitaries. In his presidential address Dr. Ali

Fayyad said "In this part of the world the resistance is Islamic. The resistance movement here must introduce themselves to other forces of resistance to imperialism around the world. The ideological differences must be postponed. The resistance must prevail. ... An important goal of the forum is, despite the ideological contradictions, to find how to work together hand in hand to achieve unity against imperialism". Welcoming the delegates Comrade Manik Mukherjee, said that the Conference was held at a place where Israel suffered a humiliating defeat in 2006, and at a critical time when the Israelis have unleashed a barbaric attack on the Palestinian people of Gaza. While people all over the world condemned the attack, the capitalist-imperialist powers just looked away as the massacre was going on and the hated President George Bush even found justification for it. He said that we cannot dream of any lasting peace on earth till the scourge of imperialism is wiped off from the face of the earth and socialism is established. Let us all return from this Conference with a vow to dedicate ourselves to this struggle till final victory is achieved. He thanked the organizers for their tireless efforts to make the conference successful and the Hezbollah for its encouragement and support. He hoped that the conference would deliberate upon and suggest concrete measures to build up broad based effective and militant anti-imperialist movements in different countries and the specific modalities of how to globally coordinate the movements.

Mr. Ramsey Clark, President of IAPSCC talked of the great betrayal of the Palestinian people by the UN and the international community who relegated the whole Palestinian population to years and years of misery, death and destruction. He further said, he came from a country, which, in the name of peace and democracy, invaded one country after another, killed people there, occupied those countries and thus went on extending its hegemony. Now it propagates 'war against terrorism', killing thousands upon thousands all over the world. The huge sum the US spends for manufacturing weapon to use in war could meet the expenditure for common people's health and education of many countries. "I

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What a pass education has come to following commercialization !

Without education modern society cannot be imagined. We all know that progress – be it economic, social, cultural and ideological – depends on education. At the same time, education is essential for livelihood, development of thinking power and social cohesion. There is no alternative to education. Shorn of it man can not lead a life befitting human being. True education helps individual achieve self-development, acquire sense of values, sense of right or wrong, inducing him in struggle against wrongs and thereby attain full-grown humanity, complete manhood. More than simply acquiring informative and technical knowledge, education but plays an important role in developing and flourishing culture, in character building and guides the people in their struggle for emancipation from exploitation. This is how it spurs advancement of civilization and society.

What is education?

From the dawn of civilization, human experience and knowledge have continuously grown through struggles of man against Nature and through the conflicts and contradictions within society. It is the abstraction of this accumulated human experience that is conveyed through books and other media within the educational structure. The social necessity which acted behind the evolution of idea of education is that the individuals should assimilate the abstraction of this past human experience and by applying this knowledge in practice gain newer experience to be handed down to the next generations and thereby add to the repository of human knowledge. This is how education ought to illumine the path of social progress. Real education equips man to find truth, to study and know material world; it imparts in him the ability to understand the contradictions in his environment, both natural and social, and to comprehend his role in these contradictions. Real knowledge kindles in one's mind the quest for the unknown, it urges him to tackle various problems of epistemology. Education in the proper sense of the term thus should be handmaiden to acquiring real creative knowledge and through correct application and

practice, one can broaden one's knowledge and facilitate the process of advancement of the society. This is why education is indispensable to human life. Education like any other spiritual production of man in course of his life struggle is part of a superstructure of a given economic base. In a class divided society, the contradictions and conflicts that arise in the economic, political, social and cultural fields based on opposing class interests of the exploiter and exploited find their reflections in the educational sphere as well. Thus there are bound to be, in the main, two divergent outlooks, two different objects and purposes in regard to the system and method of education, — one serving the politics and ideology of the ruling oppressor class, and the other serving the politics, ideology and interest of the oppressed toiling masses. The attempt of the oppressing rulers have always been to mould the people's mind through pattern and syllabus of an education which subserves their narrow sectarian class interest in such way that people at large remain cut off from the very essence of education and remain submissive to their rule. With passage of time, even the very scope of education was being denied to the toiling masses and made exclusive privilege of the ruling class and its servitors. If one studies the course of development of human society and its transformation from one stage to another, this history of education will unfold in no uncertain a manner.

Concept of education in renaissance

It is in this way the societies changed and finally reached the modern bourgeois system that emerged through Renaissance movement against feudalism. From the core of this Renaissance movement or the bourgeois democratic revolution, there arose for the first time the demand for universalization and democratization of education. All the great men and educationists in the world stressed on this. Doyens of both western as well as Indian renaissance throughout their life fought for universal and democratic education. To every true humanist, the purpose of education is has been assimilation of truth and building of

character. Similarly, all giant communist leaders have viewed education as a means of enlightenment, tool for man-making and catalyst of social progress. According to Lenin, "You can become a communist only when you enrich your mind with knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind." To Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, "Cultivation of knowledge for mere self-satisfaction and unpurposive education has no meaning other than strengthening the forces of reaction. From the standpoint of people's interests and social progress learning and acquisition of knowledge have got only one bearing — to put it into practice in life. It will properly direct our life, mould our character."

During the advent of capitalism, the bourgeois governments under impact of the thoughts of renaissance upheld this concept of education and tried to mould the education system in accordance with that. But with the passage of time capitalism, the foundation of the bourgeois rule, got ridden with crisis from deep to deeper. It was since then, the ruling capitalist class, mortally afraid of anti-capitalist revolution, became scary about providing real education lest that should enable people to identify the very cause of their unlimited plight and misery and stand in revolt against the oppressive capitalist rule. So the capitalist rulers began to strip education system of its very essence and invoked a pattern which would only promote a career-orientated mindset, encourage all kinds of backward, obscurantist and retrograde mentality, blunt thinking process and thereby create an illogical irrational bent of mind. They know that once this mentality sets in, people disoriented from desired direction in life will remain busy in meeting petty personal ends and hence dissuaded from rising in revolt against exploitative capitalist order. In other words, from their class interest, the capitalist rulers have introduced an education structure that would only produce a handful of technical hands needed to run their administration. Also they have been drastically curtailing the scope of education because the moribund capitalist system cannot absorb more than a limited number of skilled hands in the progressively shrinking job market.

It would not be out of context to note here that the capitalists once resorted to this welfare concept after the Russian revolution. Mortally afraid of the revolutionary movements swamping the whole capitalist world including the advanced capitalist-imperialist countries like the USA, Britain, Germany, France etc., with their people imbibed and roused by the socialist ideology and demanded of the benefits and rights in all economic, political, cultural, educational fields, the socialist Soviet people had been overwhelmingly enjoying, the capitalists were desperately finding means to satiate the people and get rid of the problem, however temporarily.

It is pertinent to mention that after Russian revolution, the emancipation struggle of the toiling people in various countries gained huge momentum. Alongside, the working class movements in conjunction with democratic mass movements got tremendous fillip. This is the backdrop of emergence of so-called welfare economy and welfare states in the bourgeois world. But after counterrevolution in the socialist countries got dismantled because of revisionist conspiracy aided and abetted by world imperialism-capitalism and as a sequel to which the international revolutionary working class movement was considerably weakened, the ruling bourgeoisie took full advantage of that to mount fiercest onslaught on the people robbing them of their hard earned democratic rights and benefits. It is in this perspective that noxious formulations of capitalist globalization were translated into action which brought in its wake a total disaster in people's life. Commercialization of education and its concomitant evils have come in that course only.

Commoditization of education

In the meanwhile, world imperialism-capitalism in order to stave off the insoluble market crisis endemic of the system, embarked upon the policy of globalization following the trail of GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariff), operative since the mid-80s of the last century, as a common and mutual agreement among the

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Education is stripped of its very essence

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capitalists and imperialists internationally to do business in the global market. Since, all the sectors from which the capitalist rulers were hitherto reaping maximum profit were fast drying up for them because of shrinkage of market caused by rapidly dwindling purchasing power of the people inevitable in a capitalist set up, search was on for newer avenues where capital could be deployed for profit maximization. So globalization among other things called for opening up the areas hitherto categorized as public welfare and hence vested with the government. Like healthcare, electricity, civic amenities and others, education was also sought to be gradually taken out of the ambit of the much trumpeted welfare state and liberally handed over to private capitalists to run on a commercial basis. GATT was modified as GATS (General Agreement on Trade and Services) to incorporate service areas as tradable commodities. With this design the ruling bourgeoisie has been going whole hog for privatization and commercialization of education. Education has now been made a commodity sold at and bought from the market just as any other item of consumption. Education was christened as a 'commercial service', the financiers are the patrons, the teachers the 'instrumentals' and the students the 'buyers' or the consumers. As education now being viewed as a passport to employment scope of which is also declining with every passing day, there is a scramble for receiving a degree at any cost. This is where the private capitalists are making fortunes. Cost of education now mostly under the aegis of private sector is being systematically pushed up to make it an exclusive privilege of the rich. In tandem, the government is also raising fees and imposing various charges to take education beyond the reach of the common man. In fine, education is now a roaring trade throughout the imperialist-capitalist world.

Degeneration engulfs every sphere of education

Commercialization has not only curtailed scope of education, made it exclusive preserve of the rich but has brought about qualitative transformation in its core and

content so much so as to be on the brink of disaster. Degeneration in every sphere is vivid. It has changed the entire horizon of education system and polluted the campuses. Education institutions are no more considered as centres of learning for promoting cultivation of knowledge and for character building. As stated earlier, its purpose has been reduced to mere career-making by securing some degrees anyhow and on the part of colleges and universities, money-minting somehow by conferring those degrees to the students. We get a stark reflection of this attitude of teachers and students from the critical observation of a former chairman of the academic council at the University of London, Professor Geoffrey Alderman published in Britain's well known daily, The Independent on 17 June 2008. Professor Alderman warns that "league table culture" as is seen in soccer tournaments has crept into education and led to an explosion in the number of 'firsts' awarded in many British universities even in distinguished ones like Middlesex University, Liverpool University portending the collapse of degree standards there. Ominously, the authorities of those universities put pressure on the teachers to "mark positively" implying lavish marking in the examinations. The object is clear. Create a lure of obtaining degrees with extraordinary results as 'firsts' and 'upper seconds' from the foreign distinguished universities so that huge number of students could be drawn into their fold paving way for fetching bumper profit. As things stand, "The more 'firsts' and 'upper seconds' a university awards the higher a ranking is likely to be", the more the rush of students from around the world there, the more the profit being minted. These universities 'currently rake in fees of about 1.5 billion pound a year from the students outside the European Union - who can be charged full cost of their courses. The number of students in these British universities has spiralled up by nearly 40% in the past five years bringing the total to over 137,000. There is a mad competition in universities there to draw such students who fill the coffer through hefty fees. And the universities rely on these fees so much so that they turn a blind eye to plagiarism and cheating. Hence, out of 9,229

recorded cases of plagiarism in a year, only 143 students were expelled. It is to be remembered, this is not the case with the UK only, but everywhere including the US, France, Germany where the most traditionally enriched universities were once considered as centres of learning and cultivation of knowledge, have presently been plagued with such corruption. This shows how commercialization engenders corruption and degrades educational standard.

Indian context

India is no exception to this. Rather the scenario here is yet more harrowing. Immediately in the wake of independence, the Indian bourgeois rulers under public pressure took some steps to spread education among the masses. Notwithstanding allocation of much less funds, the government was entrusted with the responsibility of bearing the expenditure for education whether for primary or higher, admittedly though the expenditure was still low. But soon the Indian ruling class as inseparable part of world imperialism-capitalism was also plagued with intense market crisis. So in keeping with the sinister design pursued by the ruling bourgeoisie everywhere, the Indian capitalist class also started curtailing education 'in order to restrict educated unemployment' as uttered by C.D. Deshmukh, Chairman of the University Grants Commission in 1955. To this end, apart from denial of building adequate number of schools, colleges and universities proportionate to the population, the Indian bourgeoisie took another retrogressive step to deprive the legion poor from education since the fifties of the last century. They made the education dearer. Since then they have systematically reducing allocation of funds for education. With the process of commercialization-privatization of education beginning under the general policy of globalization, the Central Government washed off its hands in this regard and in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, education expenditure constitutes merely 1.2% of the GDP. Under the camouflage of education reform, the Central Government led by Rajiv Gandhi adopted and introduced in May 1986 the so-called National Education Policy (NEP) to usher in

commoditization of education. In continuity, the present UPA government following the instructions of the country's capitalist class has made prescripts of GATS operational in the field of education. Following the conditionality of GATS, the government has given permission of foreign direct investment (FDI) in education thereby opening up the area to foreign finance capital. To this end 'Foreign Provider Bill' has been framed, by strength of which the foreign investors would be able to do the profitable business in education by setting up universities at random. Notably, pursuant to this GATS, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) constituted with Sam Pitroda, a government bureaucrat, as Chairman came out with recommendations that could well be called the blueprint of total commercialization of education. Cunningly enough, NKC instead of talking about curtailment of education, put apparent emphasis on 'expansion' of and 'excellence' in education. But under such jugglery of words, what is strongly advocated for is vile 'marketization' of education. Expansion and excellence are only for the rich who can afford the exorbitant expenditure. NKC gives a seal of justification to buying education thus discarding the legitimate demand of free and universal education. Already, the private colleges and universities including medical and engineering institutions which offer courses of their own, charge under the guise of 'self-financing' astounding amount to the tune of around Rs.50, 000 to 100,000 per annum. Apart from that several lakhs of rupees are extorted as admission fees or compulsory 'donation'. This is the estimate recorded prior to 2002. During these 7 years the extortions have been obviously much more intensified and multiplied to the tune of hundreds of thousands. As per NKC, these all are perfectly in order. It even ratifies the most unjustified acts on the part of the so-called government-aided or controlled schools where the so-called free education is claimed to be provided, to collect 'development fee' or 'session fees' or 'donation' for school building etc. the quantum of which often exceed the hefty fees charged by many a general private schools.

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“Today there are two camps — of imperialism and of resistances” : the Forum asserts

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consider this to be the gravest crime against mankind”. This can be thwarted only by the people’s struggle in the countries of the world. The present conference is an important step towards this objective.

Comrade Mohamad Kassem said, “For the first time, in Lebanon, we have created a platform for struggling people all over the world, secular, nationalist, leftist and Islamic to speak their views and work together, against the wars in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, against the threats to Iran and the sanctions on Sudan, against the blockade of Cuba and the attempts to block the revolutionary direction in Venezuela, Bolivia and across Latin America.... We are building mechanisms of international cooperation and South-South solidarity, and we plan to intensify those efforts in the future.” Dr. Yehia Gaddar, Mr. Mohammad Samy, Dr. Leila Ghanem addressed the assembled delegates representing the other co-convening organizations. Professor Walden Bellow of Philippines, Professor Francois Houtart of Belgium and Mr. Victor Chirinos of Venezuela spoke representing the continents of Asia, Europe and South America.

The Plenary Session ended with a powerful speech by Mr. Naeem Qasim who said that today there are two camps in the world—that of imperialism led by the United States and that of resistances regardless of their ideological, cultural or religious affiliation. The resistance camp will overcome. The resistances must be unified against its common enemy which is only possible by respecting the diversity. Gaza today is the symbol of resistance and human dignity and he called upon all to stand with Gaza to scatter the darkness of imperialism and Zionism. Drawing attention to the resistance movement of Lebanon, he further said that the Hezbollah united all the forces, the leftists, with the secularist, the committed Muslims, and the nationalist. The Lebanese have proved that Israel is not invincible. Even the US imperialism could be defeated, as Vietnam did. The world must give birth to hundreds of Vietnam today.

In the special Plenary Session on Gaza held on the second day,



Ramsey Clark

Manik Mukherjee

Ranjit Dhar

called in the background of Israeli aggression in Gaza, the Hamas representative described the horrific suffering and heroic resistance of Gaza’s people and called for political solidarity so that the people of Palestine would not lose diplomatically what they defended on the battlefield. The session was presided over by Michael Samaha, former minister of the Lebanese government. Comrade Sara

by the Zionists. We need to make it clear that we support the right to resist, the right to fire rockets, the right to dig tunnels, the right to organize the people against sure starvation and the blockade that Israel has criminally imposed. Ajanta Ghosh hailed the heroic resistance offered by the people at Gaza. She mentioned that in many cities throughout India people have come out, under the banner of

household has at least one martyr and another disabled by the war. But when you walk among the people, you feel you have entered a new culture and new social perspective, a culture of giving and sacrificing for others, where the poorest of the poor, especially mothers, set the example.” Representatives from Greece and Cyprus told of their efforts to break the blockade on Gaza physically and of how Greek dockworkers had refused to load U.S. arms bound for Israel. Ms. Cynthia McKinney, narrated how the ship *Dignity* which was trying to bring medical aid to Gaza was rammed by the Israeli Navy. She declared with conviction that because of the inspiring resistance in Gaza, and our united support, the people of Palestine will win.

After the two Plenary Sessions seven Workshops were held in parallel sessions. The Workshops were :

1. Workshop on Supporting Resistance and Liberation,
2. Workshop on Anti-Imperialism and Solidarity between Peoples,
3. Workshop on Supporting Political Alternatives,
4. The Parliamentarians’ Workshop,
5. Workshop on Solidarity between Local Communities and Sectors,
6. Workshop on Defending Legal and Civic Rights.

A large number of delegates took part in the Workshops. Important papers were presented and there were lively discussions and interventions. Delegates from India and Secretariat members of IAPSCC had important presence in the Workshops. The opening session of the Workshop on Resistance was chaired by Mr. Ramsey Clark and Comrade Ranjit Dhar was a speaker. In his address, Comrade Dhar pointed out that the resistance and liberation movements have been gaining momentum over the years all over the globe with occasional victories on this or that instances and are continuing till date. US hegemonism is challenged everywhere, in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba and everywhere. But the forms of resistance may not be the same in all cases. People within US are

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Naeem Qasim

Dr. Ali Fayyad

Sara Flounders

Flounders, Co-Director, International Action Centre said that the imperialist powers hope that by attacking heroic Gaza they can push back and demoralize the struggle in the whole region. Gaza is a harbinger of wider war against oppressed people of the world. Saluting the resistances in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Iran and so many other places she stressed that we need to heighten the struggle

SUCI, expressing solidarity with the people of Gaza and staged demonstrations demanding immediate withdrawal of the invading Israeli forces. She voiced the resentment of the Indian people that the ruling powers in India are siding with the imperialists, forsaking the Palestinian cause which it had professed to uphold in the past. Many delegates from the Arab world, from Latin America



Mohamad Kaseem

Dhruba Mukherjee

Alexandar Moumbares

against imperialists, against USA, against NATO, against Israel. We need to militarily support Hamas, the democratically elected choice of the people, which is being demonized, hunted and assassinated

pledged solidarity with Gaza’s struggle. The Egyptian journalist Dalia Saladin described her visit to Gaza last January when freedom fighters forced open the Rafah crossing with Egypt. “Every

Corruption, Malpractice, Prohibitive cost, Curtailment of scope — hallmark of today's education system

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This is one aspect of implementing the commercialization policy at various rungs of education system in a pervasive way thus putting education beyond the reach of the millions of common poor and lower-middle class students.

Not only private schools, commercialization in the form of recovery of various fees, donation etc. has also entered the government financed public schools as well through backdoor so that those too remain elusive to the poor. Pilferage, misappropriation of funds, unauthorized occupation of school premises and grabbing of land earmarked for schools have become common features in public education system. In terms of infrastructure also, the hitherto existing public education system is in total shambles. There is no proper school building, no availability of other amenities, no teachers, nothing. Starved of all this as well as funds, there is practically no academic environment whatsoever in the government-financed primary or secondary government schools. Whatever little of primary education was available in public education system has now been practically eliminated after roll out of pernicious DPEP and *Sarva Siksha Abhijan* (education for all) programmes as part of globalization. So neither the students feel any urge to go to these schools nor are their guardians inclined to send their wards there. Quietly, this government-financed public education system is moving towards virtual extinction.

On the other, let alone these deprived millions, even to multitude middle-class students, whose parents are a little well-off, education has become so dearer in terms of expenses that any standard school or college or university or institution has become a 'no entrance zone' for them. Assocham (an organization of the industrial houses) conducted a survey on 2000 working parents across 9 cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, Dehradun, Pune, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai and Chandigarh – during April and May 2008. According to the survey, an estimated 30 million children in the country study in private schools and the cost of sending a child to school has risen by 160% over the last 8

years. What is more grisly, this figure excludes the tuition fees hiked every now and then. The survey conducted under Social Development Foundation of Assocham on 'Rising school expenses vis-à-vis dilemma of young parents' holds that annual school expenses for a single child excluding tuition fees have risen from Rs.25, 000 in 2000 to Rs.65, 000 in 2008, while the average annual income of fairly well-off parents has registered a bare 30% rise in the same period. The average tuition fee for a private school is Rs.35, 000 per year while an additional cost to the tune of Rs.30, 000-35,000 per annum is being borne to meet a host of "overheads". This education business has taken so ugly and atrocious a turn that even private preparatory schools charge Rs.25, 000 for a term. Besides that, most of these private schools net fabulous profit by way of arranging transportation (with charges as much as Rs.12,000 per year), providing packed lunch (charges around Rs.9,600) and instructing the parents to compulsorily purchase uniforms and shoes from shops specified by the schools themselves (cost ranging from Rs.4000 to Rs. 5000, per child per year). Sixty-five per cent of the respondents in the survey said that more than half of their salary was spent on their children's education. This is what commercialization of education means!

Like other countries as mentioned above, as inevitable consequence of commercialization, corruption has penetrated deep into education in India eating into the very vitals of its content and quality. In connivance with government administration, many bogus private universities and colleges have been mushrooming throughout the country. The teachers and officials of these universities leak the question and sell them to the examinees. Degrees are conferred upon and mark-sheets tampered with to inflate marks against lucrative money. State universities are also falling in that line. In the recent past a university student reportedly approached the authorities for scrutiny of marks. The brokers moving around advised him that there was no need for that. The entire mark-sheet could be changed to reflect desired result

against monetary consideration. Even the Ph.D and M.Phil degrees are available 'on the shelf' for being bought. It was reported in the media that daughter of a union minister came out first in medical examination while she had never been seeing attending the classes. When there was too much commotion over it, the girl was allowed to retain the degree against a written assurance that she would never practice as a doctor. Even in schools, corruption is rampant. If one has appropriate 'connection' and capacity to pay, questions are available in the market. It is reported that big tutorial homes floated by 'people who matter' including political bigwigs work in league with the government education boards in reaching out to their students question papers of secondary or higher secondary examinations. The examiners are said to be contacting the examinees for 'arranging' required marks in exchange for money. Different secondary and higher secondary boards and councils are reportedly changing the entire mark-sheets against this money. As inevitable fallout of commercialization, it is money which controls the present-day education system. And the students are also running after all these. Whatever little urge the students had earlier to satiate quest for knowledge and sharpening thinking faculty through formal education has vanished. There is no concern for learning values from education. Only a degree to secure a job somehow is what they and even their guardians are solely concerned about. As against text books, what dominates in the system are note books. This is how, in a class divided society, education as superstructure of the base economic

system is controlled and used by the class in power. In moribund decadent capitalist system, education is wielded and directed by this class. Commercialization of education is part of this sinister design of the crisis-ridden moribund decadent bourgeoisie desperate to prolong their exploitative class rule by squeezing the last drop of blood out of the toiling masses and rendering them bereft of any thinking power.

Save education from this bourgeois conspiracy

So we have seen to what level education has degenerated after onrush of commercialization. In every respect, the consequence is not just ominous but disastrous; completely opposed to the ethics and objective of education cherished by all the educationists, social scientists, patriots and the revolutionary political leaders. In fact, attack on education is a ploy to emasculate the toiling people, dehumanize them so that they remain ever bending to the oppressive imperialist-capitalist regime. None other than bootlickers and henchmen of ruling capitalism-imperialism can acquiesce in the materialization of such a ruinous scheme. Prove we all must that the enemy in spite of its best efforts could not wipe out the human essence in us. So this conspiracy and class design of the ruling capitalist-imperialists must be resisted and thwarted. Education must be saved in order to save the civilization, to save the humanity. For this, what is necessary is the awakening of the people in general and students, teachers, educationists and intellectuals of all walks of life in particular and development of a massive united well-knit save-education movement in its intensest form.

AIDYO meets Delhi CM

A delegation of All India Democratic Youths' Organisation (AIDYO-Delhi State) led by AIDYO state secretary Comrade Prakash Devi, Sudhir Khanna, Inderdeo, Girish, Avdhesh and Prabhaskar met the Delhi chief minister Shiela Dixit and handed over a memorandum on the burning problems of youths demanding adequate allowance to unemployed youths and sufficient

employment opportunities, abolition of the No Detention policy existing up to class VIII, taking back of the decision to implement sex education in schools, curb and prevention of liquor and drug sales, promotion of interests in sports through creating playgrounds, coaching to youths, etc. The chief minister took the delegation seriously and assured to take necessary steps.

Comrade Prachanda, Chairman, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) sends message to the Beirut Forum

The following is the text of the message of Comrade Prachanda, Chairman, Central Committee, Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) to The Beirut International Forum for Resistance, Anti-imperialism, Solidarity between Peoples and Alternatives which was held between 16 and 18 January at Beirut in Lebanon.

To
The President
The International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee
Dear Comrades,

Our party, the CPN (Maoist), would like to appreciate the initiative you have taken up to build and strengthen internationalist solidarity of the oppressed nations and people in fighting imperialism globally. The founding Conference, in 2007, of The *International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee*, in which one of the comrades of our party had participated, was a great step in that direction. We, once more, pledge to extend support and play a role, as much as we can, to strengthen it further.

It was a matter of great honour for our party when comrade Manik Mukherjee, the General Secretary of IAPSCC, presented in person a letter of invitation to me to participate in its Second Conference scheduled to be held in Beirut, Lebanon on January 16-18, 2009. Our party and I enthusiastically accept the invitation. However, given the pressure of dual tasks, party and the government, I am unable to physically participate in the said programme. We very much apologise for this.

The present world situation is marked by augmenting conflict between imperialism, principally the US, and oppressed nations and people the world over. Moreover, the recent economic crisis that has engulfed the whole world, including the third world countries, is sure to result in cutting down the economic aid to the oppressed countries and exploiting them further to make the imperialist economy recover. This, in effect, is going to sharpen further the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations and the people, the principal contradiction of the world. Apart from this, as a result of the global economic crisis, the inter-imperialist contradiction and the contradiction between capital and labour in the imperialist countries are sure to intensify further in the coming days. What all this shows is that a new wave of world proletarian

revolution and powerful people's resistance against imperialism and its system is visible in the horizon globally.

But, the subjective strength of the revolutionaries to seize this favourably developing situation for the world proletarian revolution and resistance struggle is very weak. And, our ideological and political grasp is very much divergent, which has been a barricade to develop proletarian unity internationally. The enemy is enjoying in our weakness.

In the aforesaid objective and subjective situation, the role that *The International Anti-imperialist and People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee*, can play against imperialist onslaughts all over the world is eminent. We are very much optimistic that the Second Conference of the IAPSCC can pave the way to unite more anti-imperialist organisations, individuals and the masses in it and arouse them against imperialism and its offensive globally. In the present world situation, when imperialism

has become a global phenomenon, only the unity of all the anti-imperialist organisations and masses in the global level can the imperialist plunders and wars be resisted significantly. However, it is only the world proletarian revolution that can permanently eliminate imperialism and unjust wars that the imperialism imposes upon the world people.

Dear Comrades, you are aware that the New Democratic Revolution in Nepal is scaling newer heights one after another. About 240 years old monarchy has been obliterated on the base of 10 years of great people's war since 1996 and in support of 19 days mass movement in April 2006. The Constituent Assembly has declared Nepal a federal Democratic Republic, monarchy the feudal institution has been eliminated but the Nepalese people's struggle against feudalism and imperialism is by no means over. Therefore the days ahead are not less challenging in Nepal.

In the present situation of augmenting external intervention, mainly from Indian expansionism in our case, the success of New Democratic Revolution in Nepal has been more dependent on the

international solidarity of the entire anti-imperialist and democratic forces. Without a doubt, the present political change in our country was not possible if there had been no strong external support to the struggling Nepalese masses and it is equally true for the days ahead. In the present context of growing external intervention we are confident that the Second Conference of IAPSCC, in Beirut, of the anti-imperialist forces will provide an added momentum to the Nepalese people's struggle of establishing People's Republic in the beginning of the twenty-first century and thereby doing away with feudal and imperialist exploitation forever from Nepal.

Dear Comrades, in spite of my utmost desire to participate in discussion in the Second Conference of IAPSCC, I apologise for my failure to physically attend the august gathering of anti-imperialist forces. However, we are with you in the struggle against imperialism and we wish a grand success of the Second Conference of IAPSCC to be held in Beirut, Lebanon on January 16-18, 2008. Thanks.

With Revolutionary
Red Salute.

Beirut Forum calls for unity

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building up strong anti-imperialist anti-war movements. We, in India, are organizing militant democratic movements against the ruling Indian capitalist class which has acquired imperialist character and moving hand in hand with the US imperialist regime. We are also striving to develop anti-imperialist movements across the country in solidarity and fraternity with such movements in different parts of the globe. Pushed to the wall, the imperialist sharks are trying to denigrate this legitimate resistance either as strike of terrorism or upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism and thus confuse the world.

What is of prime importance is that imperialist attack on any country, transgression of sovereignty of a weaker country is an affront upon the humanity at large. It becomes incumbent upon freedom-loving people of one country and all to rise against any such attack and resist and repel it

with all might. All these movements in the process of being properly coordinated and consolidated should logically culminate into decisive battle for overthrow of capitalism-imperialism. Comrade Dhar further said: "As a student of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the time and founder General Secretary of the SUCI, the genuine communist party on the Indian soil, I would like to stress upon the imperativeness to release this militant anti-imperialist people's movement throughout the world with communists as its core, to be led to its logical culmination."

In another Session of the Workshop on Resistance Comrade Dhruba Mukherjee, General Secretary of AIAIF, was a speaker. He highlighted the imperialist attack in the cultural arena and said that we have to strive to bring about and strengthen the unity and solidarity of the working people of the world that would be capable of

waging an uncompromising fight to break the global chain of imperialism. The basis of this unity would have to be the commitment to fight against the common enemy of capitalism and imperialism. Without a clear focus of anti-capitalist struggle we shall not be able to resist globalization or to resist imperialist aggression. Our struggle will have to be built on a vision of social justice, equality, people's welfare and their emancipation from capitalist exploitation. In the Workshop on Solidarity between Local Communities and Sectors, Comrade Amitava Chatterjee, member of Indian delegation, said that imperialist penetration and war have always been accompanied by cultural war, and the present situation calls for an all out struggle encompassing culture and ethics against capitalism and imperialism. He mentioned about the heroic battle of the peasants of Nandigram in India against forcible eviction in

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Building an 'alternative' world for humanity and oppressed: Forum sets its goal at that

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order to set up Special Economic Zones for the benefit of national and foreign capitalists, and how people from all walks of life came forward to stand by the peasants of Nandigram. The sustained struggle could ultimately force the Government to retreat and withdraw its proposal.

On the third day of the Conference, the sessions of the Workshop on Anti-imperialism was presided over by Comrade Carolus Wimmer and Comrade Mohmmad Kassem, both Secretariat members of IAPSCC. Comrade Manik

monopolists is the urge to find out on the one hand where the cheapest labour would be available, where they would get the cheapest raw materials, and on the other where they would find the market for what they produce. It is the same urge which is manifested in the drive for globalization today. The great Marxist thinker of the present era Comrade Shibdas Ghosh said in the seventies of the last century that the modern multinational and transnational corporations are nothing but the enlarged and developed forms of the giant cartels and syndicates that Lenin talked

about. To resist this menace of imperialist globalization and imperialist aggression and intervention the need of the hour is to build up in different countries broad based unity of all people who are opposed to imperialism and to organize in the respective countries

militant anti-capitalist struggles, and movements to bring in socialism. He stressed the necessity of global coordination of all these struggles so that a mighty global movement against imperialism and for socialism can be built up, which alone can block the advance of imperialism-capitalism and

ultimately lead to its overthrow freeing the world from the scourge. In another session of the Anti-imperialism Workshop, a main speaker Comrade K. Sridhar representing the All India Anti-Imperialist Forum, analysed the basics of imperialist

economy and its concomitant evils. Imperialists led by USA have devastated Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam, and Korea with wars of aggression. He saluted the Lebanese people who by their unity and will have taught a lesson to the rulers of Israel and USA by historically defeating them in the war in 2006. The ideological, political and

organizational tasks in the anti-imperialist struggle are, (a) Ideological struggles to achieve unity, (b) Political campaigns and strengthening of anti-war democratic mass movements, (c) Building up organizations to conduct and coordinate anti-imperialist struggles in different countries. Comrade Joynal Abedin, a member of Indian delegation made a brief intervention in a session stating that the crisis of capitalism- imperialism is not temporary but is structural and endemic of the capitalist economic system. Comrade Alexander Moumbaris from France, a Secretariat member of IAPSCC put forward a brief intervention on the organizational and ideological aspects of anti-imperialist struggle.

IAPSCC Central Secretariat members Comrade Sara Flounders of USA and Comrade Carolus Wimmer of Venezuela chaired two sessions of the Workshop. Another IAPSCC Secretariat member Dr. Mohammad Tay of Lebanon was a speaker in the Legal Workshop. Other important participants were professor Ibrahim Ghandour of Sudan chairing the Session on Productive Sector, Dr Yahia Bakour, chairing the Session on Food Security in the Workshop on Solidarity between Local Communities and Sectors, and Comrade Mohammad Habash of Syrian Baath Party in the Parliamentarians Roundtable.

The concluding session was held in the evening of 18 January. Addressing it, Leila Khaled, the heroic fighter and the leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine saluted the people of Gaza for their being able to force Israel declare unilateral ceasefire,

proving that even with their entire armoury of destructive weapons Israel could not reach its goal. Dr. Ali Fayyad elaborated the principal conclusions arrived at the Conference. The Declaration reiterated the goal of the Forum to reinforce the possibility of building an 'alternative' world based on the principles of respecting humanity as a whole and defending the vulnerable and oppressed in the world.

A number of publications of the IAPSCC that were presented to the delegates, were exhausted within a few hours. Representatives of different countries expressed their keenness to know about the details of the first International Anti-Imperialist Conference that was held in Calcutta in 2007. Remarkable interest was also evident among the delegates on the views of SUCI on Gaza and other issues. They also showed great interest in knowing about the anti-imperialist struggle in India being conducted by SUCI and AIAIF. A number of Marxist intellectuals attended the conference over and above the representatives of different communist parties. Indian delegates gave them the CD containing the works of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the founder General Secretary of SUCI.

On 19 January morning delegates of different countries were taken to the Lebanon-Israel border in the south. The journey took place through the villages which in July 2006 were fierce battlefields where the Lebanese fought their battle with Israel to drive the aggressors back. The entire area was replete with instances of ferocity of the Zionist force and heroism of the resistance fighters.



K. Sridhar

Joynal Abedin

Mukherjee, General Secretary of IAPSCC, a speaker in a session on Globalization said that globalization is a calculated programme of imperialism to ensure the survival of moribund capitalism and to expand its exploitative regime. But it has not been able to solve the irresolvable crisis of capitalist economy, and at



Amitava Chatterjee

Ajanta Ghosh

the same time this has led to most ruthless exploitation and oppression of the common people, threat to safety and security of peoples and nations, endangering world peace. Lenin showed that the main feature of imperialism is export of capital with giant international cartels and syndicates controlling the global market. The driving force of the

At the call of Sponsoring Committee of the Central trade union's including All India UTUC, a massive PARLIAMENT MARCH

of the workers will be held in Delhi on 18 February, 2009 on a 13-point charter of demands against anti-working class policies of capitalist globalization

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