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**Left Parties Should Work Closely With People, Says Daughter Of Che, Aleida Guevara**

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Aleida Guevara, daughter of Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara, was in India last week to take part in the solidarity meetings to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Cuban revolution. A pediatrician by profession, Guevara says she was overwhelmed by the love and following for Che's ideologies in India. In an interaction at the Cuban Embassy in Delhi, Guevara spoke about Cuba's resistance to the US blockade and the relevance of communism in the current political scenario.

**Q) You are visiting India after 23 years. Tell us a bit about your experience of solidarity meetings here.**

I will take back the huge amount of warmth particularly of the people of Kerala. It was an overwhelming experience. It's impossible to reciprocate the love I received from the people. We can have thousands and thousands of Che replicated in Kerala. My impression is that the state government has done some good work in the field of education and health. I have plans to come back next year. But I will come back as a doctor and work among the people, only then I will get to know people more.

**Q) Cuba has been facing decades-long blockade by the United States of America. How is Cuba resisting the hostility towards it?**

It's extremely important that world should know about Cuban blockade. The problem is that the US doesn't allow other countries also to trade with Cuba. For instance, Cuba doesn't produce

milk but our children love milk. US, the biggest producer of milk powder, is only 90 miles from us. Because of this, we have been able to invent many medicines and other systems to survive.

India and Cuba could have done trade on several counts. Cuba today produces extremely important medicines like vaccines for lung cancer. But India cannot acquire those medicines because of the embargo.

**Q) The recent elections saw the worst performance of the Left parties in India. What could be the reasons for its decline and how can the Left reclaim its ground?**

We have one serious problem with the Left in general. We have leaders who can speak and communicate very well. But people need something else. When they face a problem, the leaders should be around and in action. The party needs to work closely with people.

I cannot give a recipe for a country where I don't live. But I can give examples of what we have done in Cuba so that you can surge ahead. Another important thing is the unity of the Left parties. They have to demonstrate to the working class that the party is with them. Umpteen examples are out there and it can be applied to our reality.

**Q) World over, we are witnessing the rise of right-wing populist forces. Is it the cycle of history or beginning of the end?**

It is little more than the beginning of the end. The situation is of course dangerous. Any time, we think that we are close to third world war, which of course would be the last in the planet.

One of the most important things is to defend our life. The Brazilian amazon is perhaps the last lung of the planet. There you have the largest second iron mine. Every inch of growth of the mine means destruction of the forest. We cannot live without oxygen, no one is responding.

Big countries like India and China will have to help the world open this and create consciousness. You will bear the brunt more than anyone. We have to learn a lot from our indigenous people how to respect our mother earth.

**Q) In the 60th year of Cuban revolution, why do you think Che's ideology still holds appeal?**

In the last 60 years of revolution, we have suffered the impressions of the biggest empire and we have resisted almost on a continual basis. It's not that we are better than others or are braver than others, but we are united.

When united people decide to fight for an idea, no force can stop them. For any revolutionary process, it's paramount that it has the participation of youth and women. We need to take them along. That's why Che's example is always present in my heart. Che always said that 'what's important is that to make people follow you, don't push them.'

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