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Guest Columns

Interview with Com. Ganapathy

[Comrade Ganapathy is the General Secretary of the newly formed Communist Party of India(Maoist) after the unity between the erstwhile CPI(ML)(PW) and MCCI and he was also General Secretary during the period of CPI(ML)(PWG) and thereafter CPI(ML)(PW) which was formed after the merger of erstwhile CPI(ML)(PWG) and CPI(ML)(Party Unity). This interview was prepared by CPI(Maoist) by collecting the questions sent by various news papers and media including the BBC and the reply given by Com. Ganaathy. Hoping that it will help many many readers of various parts of the world who strive very hard to get information of the revolutionary activities of the world in general and that of South Asia in particular which is considered as the storm centre of the world revolution, this interview has been published here by selecting some of them. —Editor]

Q. What are the major decisions of the Unity Congress will there be any change in your overall plans and tactics now?

The general direction of the Congress is to intensify the people's war and to take the war to all fronts. Concretely it decided to take the guerrilla war to a higher level of mobile war in the areas where guerrilla war is in an advanced stage and to expand the areas of armed struggle to as many states as possible. The destruction of the enemy forces has come into the immediate agenda in these areas without which it is very difficult to consolidate our gains or to advance further. Likewise, there is an immediate need to transform a vast area into the war zone so that there is enough room for maneuverability for our guerrilla forces, and in expansion the element so secrecy is very important; keeping in view the massive deployment of the central forces and special police forces of the states the Congress had drawn up plans to adopt various creative forms to cause serious damage to the enemy forces. The police and central forces will be taught how dangerous it is to enter our areas. We decided to strengthen the Party and the PLGA, mobilize the masses actively to resist the enemy forces, and to transform these areas into our strong bases by destroying the enemy's power in all forms. And all this will be achieved by wide mobilization of the masses into the war. As it is, hundreds of people, and at times even more than a thousand, are involved in the attacks against the enemy as you can see from the recent counter offensive operations as in Rani Bodili, Riga, CISF

camp in Bokaro district, and so on in the past one month itself.

With the experience we gained in AP in the midst of ever-increasing and continuous state repression and state-sponsored repression, it is all the more important that our forces are not exposed wherever they are working. But at the same time we shall be in the forefront of every people's movement. The Congress has decided to take up struggles against the SEZs [Special Economic Zones] which are nothing but neo-colonial enclaves on Indian territory. They are not just snatching fertile farmlands of the peasants but are transforming the entire country into special zones for the unhindered ruthless exploitation and control by imperialists and the comprador big business houses. The congress gave the call to go deep into these struggles. We have no illusions on the cruel, fascist nature of the Indian state, and hence there is utmost need for maintaining secret methods of work as well as to be prepared for every kind of sacrifice.

Q: Finally, how do you I sum up the achievements of your Unity Congress and its significance?

Ans: Our Unity Congress is an event of great historic significance in the history of the revolutionary movement of India. It not only marks the near-completion of the process of unification of the Maoist forces in the country but also the consolidation of the Party and the political line for the Indian revolution. The reaffirmation and enrichment of the revolutionary political line established by our founder leaders—comrades CM and KC—is the biggest achievement of significance is the establishment of a unified centralized leadership for the Indian revolution.

After a long time in the history of the revolutionary communist movement in India since the 1970s, a single directing centre has come into existence, with the merger of the MCCI and CPI (ML) [PW] in September 2004 and this center has become further consolidated and firmly established in the unity congress with the approval of the entire Party.

Q: There have been serious losses in Andhra Pradesh in recent times. What are the reasons? Has your movement become weakened overall? How do you plan to overcome these losses and regain the initiative?

Ans: I agree that the losses in the state of Andhra Pradesh are quite serious. They certainly have a considerable impact on the revolutionary movement in the country as a whole. AP, particularly the region on North Telangana, has been an important centre of revolutionary movement for a long period and a great inspiration to the revolutionary masses of our country. But we have to keep in mind that so far as the question of establishing base areas goes, it has been the more backward areas falling in central and eastern India that were selected by the Party, with the immediate task of liberating these vast areas. Hence the focus of our movement had gradually shifted to Dandakaranya and Bihar-Jharkhand.

You must have known that AP was made into a model state, an experimental state where

the imperialists, particularly the World Bank, and the Indian ruling classes had concentrated to implement their multi-pronged LIC strategy against the revolutionary movement, with its focus on brutal suppression and reform. No other state affected by the Naxalite movement has such a massive police commando force as in AP, nowhere do you find such extensive intelligence network, infrastructure, funds training in counter insurgency warfare, and unlimited powers to the police. No other state had witnessed such a bloodbath as AP had for the past four decades and particularly from the mid-1980s. There are hardly any political prisoners in AP jails since the policy had always been to bump off the revolutionaries—where they are members of the central committee or sympathizers—after they are arrested. Fake encounter killings had been the tradition right from the time of Vengal Rao during the struggle of Srikakulam almost 40 years ago. Thousands of crores have been spent on so-called reforms with the aim of weaning away a section of the people from the revolutionary movement. It is a fact that a small but articulate and influential section in the countryside has been won over through these reforms. In a word, we can say that the Party and the revolutionary movement in AP bore the brunt of all the counter-insurgency measures initiated by the reactionary ruling classes in the initial stages. Today these are being implemented in several other states. We are making an in-depth study of enemy's counter-revolutionary tactics, plans and methods and taking lessons from these. The movement in AP, at the cost of huge sacrifices of thousands of comrades has given us invaluable experiences on how to counter and defeat enemy's tactics and plans. With these, the party is now more equipped to defeat the enemy's tactics in other states.

Setbacks and losses are not unnatural in protracted people's war. Revolution proceeds along a zig zag course and not along a straight line. The movement in AP has seen many ups and downs. But always it rose up like the proverbial Phoenix. No doubt, at the present juncture, we are facing a tough situation in AP and the enemy has the upper-hand from the tactical point of view. We had lost a good part of the state leadership and cadre but the most promising aspect is that the people are still with our party. The support base of the Party has not eroded much although they meet us secretly, ask to solve their problems, and they work without getting exposed to the brutal state. For them our Party is the only hope. People are pained at every loss suffered by the revolutionaries. You can gauge the mass support from the turn out at the funeral meetings of our martyrs. In spite of the threats and restrictions imposed by the police goons, more than 20,000 people had turned up at the funeral of comrade Chandramouli (BK) and Karuna in the former's native village of Vadkapur in Karimnagar district. The pent-up anger and hatred of the people for the reactionary rulers and their police—Grey Hounds—SIB goons will grow into a movement of such great proportions that it will wash away the exploiters and oppressors and all the muck accumulated in society for long. No force on earth can stop this high tide of revolution whatever losses and setbacks we might be facing today in AP; that is why while boasting that Maoists in the state had become completely weakened and that AP will serve as a model on how to deal with the Maoist movement, the fascist YSR government has initiated several measures with a long term plan such as a hundred percent increase in the strength of the Grey Hounds commando force, acquitting helicopters for anti-Naxal operations, sanctioning of Rs. 2000 crores of central aid to deal with the Naxal movement, and so on.

The present historical epoch is an epoch of great turmoil with tumultuous changes taking place worldwide. Even the most powerful militarized imperialist power like the US is finding it impossible to suppress the national liberation struggle in a small country such as Iraq or Afghanistan. In India the ruthless exploitation and oppression of the people by the ruling classes in collaboration with imperialism has created an explosive situation. Utilizing the excellent international and domestic situation prevailing today we are confident we will be able to come out of the temporary setback in AP.

And what is more important, we made advances in many other states in spite of the losses we had suffered in AP. The situation is now qualitatively different from that of the earlier periods in that we are now able to advance the movement in a number of states even if we suffer losses and setbacks in one or two states. Way back they could suppress a Naxalbari, a Srikakulam, a Birbhum, a Mushahari, a Kanksa or Sonapur but today the revolutionary movement has become further strengthened, has spread to large tracts of the backward countryside, has well-knit party structures, Army and vast mass base. It is advancing through centralized planning and direction. Hence it is not an easy thing for the state to suppress the movement as in the past although it might achieve an upper hand in one place. The congress had chalked out a concrete plan to overcome the setback in AP by transforming the unfavorable factors into favorable ones. Overall there is great future for the Party and revolution.

Q: Recently your PLGA had inflicted one of the biggest blows to the police force and the salwa judum by killing a huge number of police and SPOs in Bodili in Chattisgarh. Do you foresee more such attacks in near future? And do you believe the salwa judum can be stopped through such actions?

Ans: The daring tactical counteroffensive operation carried out by the PLGA led by our Party, the CPI (Maoist), on March 16 on a police base camp in Ranibodli in Bijapur police district in Chattisgarh in which 68 policemen including Special Police Officers (SPOs) were wiped out is an inevitable consequence of the brutal reign of terror unleashed by the state and central governments in the name of salwa judum. You must know the actual ground situation in Dandakaranya to understand why such a massive operation had to be planned.

For almost two years since June 2005, the BJP government in Chattisgarh and the Congress-led UPA government in the Centre had sponsored a counterrevolutionary terrorist campaign of mass murder, torture, and arrests of thousands of the adivasi peasantry, gang rapes and murder of hundreds of women, destruction of thousands of houses, food grains, and all property of the adivasis, killing or taking away thousands of cattle, forceful evacuation of tens of thousands of people from almost eight hundred villages and issuing threats and intimidation to anyone suspected of being a member of revolutionary mass organization or sympathetic to the Maoists in Dandakaranya, particularly in Dantewara, Bastar, Kaner, Bijapur and Narayanpur districts. Over 5000 youth were inducted into a state mercenary armed force, paid monthly salaries, and pitted against the native adivasis who are fighting for land, livelihood and liberation under the leadership of the CPI (Maoist). The Naga and Mizo Battalions were specially brought in

along with a huge CRPF and other special police forces to Chattisgarh who had been committing the most barbaric and inhuman acts against the adivasi population.

All these cruel acts against an entire population are meant to establish peace of the graveyard and clear the way for the unhindered loot [by] rapacious hawks like Tatas, Ruias, Essars, Mittals, Jindals and imperialist MNCs. Over one lakh rupees worth of MOUs were signed by the Chattisgarh government with these corporate comprador big business houses to drain the rich mineral and forest wealth of the state. At the behest of these day-light robbers, adivashi dalals like opposition leader of the Congress, Mahendra Karma, Home Minister Ramvihar Betham of the BJP and others have been leading this counter-revolutionary war against the adivasi population.

A huge central force is deployed which is now more than 13 battalions, recruited 10 additional battalions of state forces and inducted even minors of 14 years of age into their mercenary police force. KPS Gill, notorious for the mass murders of youth in Punjab, was specially appointed as advisor to the Chief Minister. A carpet security system is initiated with police camps in close proximity in order to strike among the people.

We, on behalf of the CC, CPI (Maoist), once again warn the state and central governments that our Bhurmkal Sena and PLGA and people will carry out attacks on a much bigger scale if the murder campaign in the name of salwa judum is not disbanded immediately. We declare that the sole responsibility for such needless loss of lives of hundreds of policemen and SPOs lies squarely on the shoulders of the state and central governments. Large-scale armed retaliation by the adivasis led by our Party is inevitable if the atrocities on the adivasi people continue in the name of salwa judum. Like George Bush who can only think in terms of using more brute force to control the fire of national liberation in Iraq, the Indian ruling classes too can only think of sucking in more and more repressive forces in order to suppress the people's war and grab the mineral wealth of Dandakaranya. However, they will only end up in further escalating the civil war in Dandakaranya.

We do share the grief of the families of the dead policemen and SPOs but we are being compelled to wipe out the police and mercenary gangs who are obeying the orders of the ruling classes and their imperialist mentors to suppress the revolutionary movement for looting the wealth in the state. We appeal to the jawans of the central forces, particularly the Naga and Mizo battalions, to disobey the orders of the rulers and to withdraw from Chattisgarh. We appeal to the SPOs who are being pitted against the adivasi people to quit the mercenary force as they are fighting an unjust war against their own brothers and sisters in the interests of the reactionary rulers. We call upon the democratic organizations and individuals and the vast masses of the country to condemn state terrorism on the adivasi people of Dandakaranya, to demand immediate disbandment of salwa judum and the mercenary SPO force, to fight for the withdrawal of the notorious central forces from the region, set up a judicial enquiry into the killing of over 500 adivasis by the police-salwa judum mercenary combine.

Q: History shows, the middle class wants status quo. Indian middle class is growing

more powerful. How do you plan to co-opt them?

Ans: It is true that the Indian middle class has grown in number. At the same time, a sizable chunk of the middle class is facing acute crisis due to soaring prices, unemployment, growing insecurity of life, steep increases in family expenditure due to high cost of education, health, transport etc., which have become privatized to a great extent and had gone beyond the reach of a significant section of the middle class. In short, despite the numerical growth of the middle class it is at a receiving end. Hence we see that the growing frustration in large sections of the middle class is forcing them into streets for their demands as witnessed in strikes and other forms of struggles by teachers, government employees, students, and even shopkeepers who are affected by the shopping malls and FDI in retail sector. Another important factor has to be noted—most of yesterday's luxury consumer goods have become today's daily necessities. And the list of necessities is growing by the day with the large-scale proliferation of consumer goods and the promotion of consumerism by the market-place. Hence frustration is growing among members of this class as they are unable to procure these goods since much of their incomes have to be spent on the basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter.

Middle class is terribly affected by such issues as price-rise, insecurity, corruption, unemployment for their children, high cost of education and health-care, threats from real estate mafia etc. Keeping these in mind our party has drawn up plans to mobilize the middle class into struggles on such issues.

Q: Why armed struggle is a must? (Isn't it a fact that violence pushes a large chunk of people away from the Party?)

Ans: The question of armed struggle or non-violence struggle is not based on the subjective whims and wishes of any individual or Party. It is independent of one's will. It is a law borne out by all historical experience. It is a fact of history that nowhere in the world, nowhere in the historical development of the class society, had the reactionary ruling classes given up power without resorting to violent suppression of the mass protests, without violent resistance aimed at clinging on to power until they are thrown out by force. Of course, one can cite instances of regime changes occurring through peaceful movements, through massive protests, but all of these were mere regime changes—not systemic changes. A section of the ruling classes might give up power to another section of the same class without the need for a violent upheaval but the same is not the case when one ruling class is replaced by another with diametrically opposing class interests.

However, we find that even these regime changes are not infrequently marked by violent clashes as witnessed in several parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. We will indeed be the happiest people to bring about systematic change without the need for armed struggle.

When we began the struggle it was basically a peaceful movement on the various issues of the people such as land, livelihood and liberation from feudal and imperialist

exploitation and oppression. It needs hardly any genius to grasp the fact that no feudal lord would give up his land or power just because the masses demand it as their democratic right. The landlord would use all means at his disposal to suppress the mass resistance by brute force. He would get the local police and special forces, the central Para-military forces and, if needed, the army. We had seen this whenever we had initiated the anti-feudal struggle. In Jagtyal during the late 1970s, social boycott of the landlords imposed by the peasantry had forced them to flee the villages our revolutionary movement had spread to over a hundred villages which shook the powers that be. What happened next to this non-violent struggle should be an eye-opener to all those who harbor illusions or biased against armed struggle. After few weeks landlords came back with the mercenary forces and unleashed large-scale violence and cruel repressive measures such as arrests, torture of peasants, destruction of their property, declaration of the area as disturbed, clamping down on the civil rights of the people, and so on. It was at that juncture that the Party was compelled to take up arms and not out of any romantic notion. The same is the case with anti-imperialist struggles and nationality movements, who would want to give up their precious lives and undergo harsh, rigorous lives tortures and hardships when the demands of the masses such as land, national self-determination and liberation from imperialist exploitation and oppression are achieved through peaceful means? All movements began as peaceful movements but had to take the form of armed struggle due to the moves of the reactionary ruling classes. The case of Iraq is a classic illustration of how an entire population has been compelled to take up arms due to the unbridled violence unleashed by the imperialists for satisfying their insatiate greed for oil. The same is the case with Palestine, Kashmir or elsewhere.

The second part of your question is a big myth. Nowhere had the masses been repelled from the Party on account of armed struggle. Rather it is the lack of effective resistance that is acting as a discouragement wherever the state had bared its fangs. Without destroying and defeating the armed forces of repression it is impossible to rally the people or give them confidence. In fact, it is not our guerrilla squads alone that are putting up resistance. The people are playing a great role in heroically resisting and actively supporting the PLGA in its armed resistance to the police forces. Well, that's the ground reality notwithstanding what the intellectuals analyzing events from their ivory towers might think and theorize.

Q: Why there can not be protest in a non-violent way?

Ans: You must rather put the question the other way round. You must ask the reactionary ruling classes—the big landlords, the big business houses, the imperialist MNCs, the powerful Indian state and its armed forces, the state police and the bureaucracy—if at all they would listen, as to why they do not allow protest in a peaceful way. Why do they beat up, arrest, torture, and kill people who dare to go on strike? Why do they terminate the services of workers and employees for going on strike? Why do they send their mercenary police forces, the CRPF and the army to open fire upon people staging peaceful marches, dharnas and meetings without any provocation, why do they allow the khaki gangs to rape women, destroy property, enact fake encounters in violation of all provisions of the Indian Constitution, and for all these crimes against humanity, are let

scot-free? Why do they create a Kalinagar, a Nandigram, an Arwal, an Indravellim and scores of such barbaric acts? Why peaceful protests of people in Kashmir against disappearances are not just ignored but even attacked with such ferocity? Why do they continue to enforce the savage Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Manipur when it is actually the Indian army and the police forces that are committing atrocities upon the people as the case of the rape of Manorama classically illustrates? Can you ever forget the savage beatings of the protestors by these khaki clad or olive green goods breaking their skulls, and not sparing them even after they fall down seriously injured?

No ruling classes anywhere in the world had allowed the people to achieve their basic demands of land and liberation from oppression in a peaceful way; even the so-called democratic states allow it only to the extent they do not pose a threat to the status quo, to their exploitation and amassing of super profits. Ahimsa (non-Violence) and Karma (fate) are the ideological bases and the dubious catch words of the exploiting classes to perpetuate their violence and hegemony over the vast masses.

To begin with, none would or could go directly to violent ways to solve their problems. It is only after their peaceful marches, rallies, dharnas, hunger-strikes, general strikes etc., go unheeded or sought to be crushed that they are forced to resort to violent methods. This is an incontrovertible fact whether it is the anti-feudal armed agrarian struggle led by the revolutionaries, nationality movements of the North East, Kashmir or the anti-imperialist struggles. You only have to take a glance at the origin of the armed movements anywhere in the world, not just India, to appreciate this universal truth. To put it shortly, forms of struggle adopted by the people always depend upon the moves of the ruling classes and not vice versa. And you should also bear in mind that even today we use both violent and non-violent forms of struggle and not just violent forms.

Q: Is your violence for self-defence or to grab state power?

Ans: Strictly speaking you cannot separate the two. In the long-term perspective, or ultimately our goal is to seize state power without which it is impossible to liberate the people of our country from the clutches of imperialism, feudalism and the big comprador bourgeoisie i.e. change the existing unjust socio-economic system. But in the process of preparing the people for the ultimate goal of establishing their own power, the ruling classes are resorting to savage repression on the party, the masses and the revolutionary movement as a whole. Hence in the course of mobilizing the masses into movements we are compelled to take up arms for self-defence even at an early stage. And for a relatively long time our war will have this nature and all our tactical counter offensive operations and campaigns should be seen as part of the war of self-defence at this stage.

Q: Why can't you fight [in] elections and go [to] the Parliament and raise issues in a democratic way?

Ans: It is indeed a logical question which anyone who sees only the outer shell of so-called parliamentary democracy would ask. What is important is the kernel, the essence, the content and not just the form. When you strip off the outer garment of democracy you

find the rotten, stinking corpse inside. That is why Lenin described Parliament as a pigsty and a mere talking shop. Why are we calling it a talking shop?

Firstly, the real problems of the people can never be addressed by the Parliament and Assemblies, not to speak of solving them. The Parliamentary institutions are not meant for that. They have no real power. They may pass some resolutions that seem to do good for the people but these have to be implemented through the Executive which has the real power. We know the fate of the Lank Ceiling Acts, legislation on untouchability, dowry, etc which are only showpieces. It is the executive which carries out everything. In periods such as Emergency during Indira Gandhi's regime, when the Parliament itself was subverted, the real power of the Executive had come openly to the fore. But, the man on the street knows how it is the revenue official, policeman, and the local magistrate who decide his life. However good a legislation act might seem to be, it is money power, muscle power and nepotism that decide every aspect of his life.

Secondly, Parliamentary institutions are meant to defend the status quo, not to change the system. They do, of course make some cosmetic changes now and then to maintain their credibility among the masses. Most important of all it is the imperialists comprador big business houses, big landlords, contractors and the mafia which control the Parliament. Those who enter the Parliament are the representatives or mere puppets in the hands of these powerful lobbies. Even a good intentioned parliamentarian cannot go beyond the rules drawn up by these bigwigs. If you see the business transacted in the parliament, you would find that more than 90% of it is just trash, with no bearing on the real problems of the country.

That the system of elections is a big farce needs no elaboration as it is known even to a school child. Do you call it democracy to purchase votes with liquor and money, whip up caste, religious, and ethnic sentiments? And even after the election, purchasing the legislators as you purchase any other item in the market place? If Narendra Modi, the butcher of thousands of Muslims in Gujrat can win elections and get reelected as the chief minister. If criminals, dacoits, and most notoriously corrupt politicians can get elected; and if votes can be obtained at gun-point and through booth capturing and rigging then do you really think that there is any meaning in this so-called democracy?

That is why our party has complete clarity on the nature of legislative system unlike some other parties that swear to be revolutionary in parliamentary politics in practice. We are firm in our belief that it is only through struggle that people can solve their problems and the parliamentary institutions can do nothing good except creating illusions. Parliament is a safety valve to let out the pent-up anger of the masses lest the system blow to piece. You think raising issues in the parliament is the democratic way through organized protests. We shall always be at the head of such struggles and not step into the mire of the undemocratically elected powerless talking shop called Parliament that serves as the instrument of the big business and the feudal forces and is subordinate to imperialist dictates.

Q: Do you fear that if you go to Parliament, the party can become corrupt?

Ans: The answer to this question is already covered in my earlier elaboration. To say in one word, more than being corrupted after entering Parliament, which is also true in the case of the ML parties, it is the corrupt parties and individuals that can really become part of the parliamentary system. Our party firmly believes that as against the money power of the Parliament the real alternative before the people is the establishment of genuine people's democratic power. We had built such organs of people's power in some parts of the country such as Janthana sarkar in Dandakaranya. These revolutionary organs of power show how real power is exercised as compared to the impotent, corrupt and criminal parliamentary institutions.

Q: What do you mean by people's power—we have seen in a communist state in West Bengal what communists do when they come to power. How would you ensure you will be able to give power to people?

A: It is not surprising that like most people, you too are confused by the names. Just because a Party calls itself Communist does not make it communist just as a party calling itself Bharatya Janata Party does not make it an Indian people's Party or a Samajbadi Party into a socialist party. The stark fact is that the CPI (M) had long back abandoned the communist project and Marxist ideology though it calls itself a Marxist Party. It had become a social fascist party from the time of the outbreak of Naxalbari armed peasant uprising in 1967 when thousands of revolutionaries were massacred upon the orders of the then Home minister Jyoti Basu in West Bengal during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The recent massacre of scores of people in Nandigram on March 14, the brutal suppression of the people's struggle in Singur, and its open declaration to allow the MNCs and big comprador houses to set up SEZs and transform the state into a heaven for these sharks had shown how the Buddhadebs Marxist Party is acting at the behest of the Tatas, Salems, and imperialist MNCs. The pre-hatched systematic execution of the massacre in Nandigram by the police-CPI(M) goons combine, in particular, has revealed their social fascist character to the new generation of the Indian people. So what you are referring to in West Bengal is nothing but social fascist rule.

Now coming to your question about people's power—we call it people's power only when real power is exercised by the people themselves. You can see it in parts of Dandarakanya, Bihar and Jharkhanda. We had developed it in some villages in AP but these were destroyed due to the weakness of our armed strength which could not counter the massive offensive by the central and state's special forces. Wherever we had established organs of people's power in embryonic form, there you can see the initiative and energy of the masses being released and coming into full play, active participation of masses in administrating their own lives, collectively developing their villages through construction of schools, tanks, hospitals, etc and increasing production, resolving the local disputes by themselves without ever any need to go to the bourgeois feudal courts, in short shaping their own destiny. Where our people's army and people's militia are relatively strong and succeeded in destroying the state's assertion has also kept the big industrial sharks and the imperialists MNCs at bay. Women enjoy relatively greater freedom than their counterparts in the rest of the country.

We have to develop this people's power that the lower to higher levels by strengthening the people's army and transforming it into a mighty force, destroying the enemy power by intensifying the people's war and establishing the base areas. It is in the base areas that this power becomes relatively more consolidated. However, until the final capture of state power on a country wide scale there will be severe constraints to the exercise of the people's power at the village and area levels. You have to look at the power the people are exercising in these areas of struggle keeping these limitations in mind.

[Q:] Developments are taking place at a rapid pace in both international and national arena. How do you see the role for your Party in this turmoil?

Ans: Our Party has a great role to play in the contemporary international and domestic situation. Our Congress has analyzed the present political situation and issued calls to the Party and the people. It drew up the necessary immediate tactics and tasks to utilize the situation and achieve advances and leaps in the ongoing people's war in India. The new Central Committee had further concretized these in the form of time-bound programmes and plans. Several resolutions were adopted by the Congress on the issues confronting the people in our country as well as the world. We hope to actively intervene in these issues and build a broad based militant political mass movement.

The next ten to twenty years will witness massive political and social upheavals all over the world and our country is going to witness mass upheavals in several states against the onslaught of imperialism, anti-people policies of the Indian ruling classes such as carving our neo-colonial enclaves called SEZs, massive displacement of the poor in both urban and rural areas, against draconian laws, state repression, unemployment, corruption, inflation, neglect of social welfare, and so on. Military confrontation between the people and the state will become a general feature throughout the country and I am sure our Party will be at the head of these movements. It will grow to the status of providing leadership, to the vast majority of the oppressed masses of our country. Imposing ban on our Party and the mass organizations, murdering our comrades, unleashing cruel repression on the people, intimidating and harassing all those associated with the revolutionary movement and all their repressive measures cannot prevent this inevitable establishment of our Party's leadership over the vast masses. The reactionary and revisionist parties, the Parliamentary system are very much discredited in the eye of the people and they cannot but see our party as the only alternative before them to achieve their real liberation.

Q: And finally do you feel it is a very crucial moment in history of India's Maoist struggle? If so, why?

Ans: I do not know what exactly is in your mind when you placed the question. But I would say yes, for several reasons. When for the first time you see the emergence of a single directing centre for the Indian revolution after the merger of the two major Maoist streams in the Indian communist movement, when you hold a Congress—the highest authority in the Party—after over three and half decades, 37 years to be precise, it indeed becomes a crucial moment in the history of India's Maoist struggle. And it is more than

that. Holding the Unity Congress itself has been the greatest challenge to our party in recent times. The reactionary ruling classes, of course with the advice of the imperialists, had tried by all means at their disposal to disrupt the Congress. However, with meticulous planning by our Central Committee and various leading committees of our Party, with the protection provided by the heroic fighters of our PLGA, and the ever-vigilant people's militia and revolutionary masses, we could complete this gigantic democratic exercise that was initiated two years ago. It is a matter of pride that we could give a fitting rebuff to the enemy by successfully holding the Congress for over a fortnight.

It is crucial moment for another reason too. Today the Maoist movement is facing the great challenge of building a strong PLA and establishing the base area in the remote countryside as an immediate task. The reactionary ruling classes are sparing no stone unturned to prevent the emergence of such Red bases (democratic government of the people) in India's heartland as that would mean the emergence of a real alternative to the rotten, Parliamentary system and the criminal, communal, fascist, comprador parliamentary parties. Hence we see the massive deployment not only of the central forces, state's special forces but also setting up huge armed force from the local population, arming and training them, and pitting them against the revolutionary movement organizing massacres that remind us of the pogroms of the Black Hundred in pre-revolutionary Russia, and Nazi gangs of fascist Hitler. Such is the scenario enacted in Dandakaranya in the name of *salwa judum* and to a lesser extent in Bihar-Jharkhand in the name of *Sendra*. They would not hesitate to send the Indian army to create more bloodbaths and, the Maoist movement can advance only by smashing these attacks by the enemy forces. That is how we see the present moment as a crucial moment in the history of the Maoist struggle in India.

And the last reason why we should call the present moment a crucial moment is that we, the Maoists, are confronted with the great task of providing revolutionary leadership to over a billion people at a time when the entire country is being transformed into a neo-colony, when the country is being sold away to the imperialists and the big business is in the name of SEZs, when workers, peasants, employees, students, sections of the intelligentsia, dalits, women adivasis, nationalities, religious minorities and others are seething with revolt.