

# People's March

*Voice of the Indian Revolution*



COMMEMORATE MARTYR'S WEEK ON

A WIDE SCALE

DISPLACEMENT UNDER THE PLEA OF  
DEVELOPMENT:

TWO MODELS AND TWO PATHS OF  
DEVELOPMENT

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GANAPATHY

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## COMMEMORATE MARTYR'S WEEK ON A WIDE SCALE

**N**O revolution can succeed without enormous sacrifices; yet every loss is a loss to the movement, a gain to the enemy. Revolutionaries fear no sacrifice; proletarian parties seek the minimum loss of their cadres and maximum of the enemy. A revolution is victorious only when the enemy is crushed and the party of the proletariat lives and grows to encompass the vast masses of the country. The CPI(Maoist) commemorates its martyr's day on July 28<sup>th</sup>, the day comrade Charu Majumdar was martyred in a West Bengal jail. Not only the Maoist Party but all should pay homage to these great comrades who have given their lives for the liberation of our country.

When comrades fall, their death is mourned and comrades vow to carry forward their revolutionary ideals with even greater determination. There is sadness when beloved comrades are killed so ruthlessly. We then recollect them for all their communistic values of simplicity, modesty, selflessness, caring for others, hard work, straightforwardness, courage to face the enemy, etc and seek to emulate these in our own lives. Of course no comrade is pure and the degenerate values of the existing order do exist, this is natural as we live in the muck and filth of this system, but with the recollection mainly of the positive of the martyrs, one seeks to wash this filth away.

On this week, while commemorating the great martyrs, and particularly the founders and teachers of the Maoist movement in India, comrades Charu Majumdar and Kanai Chatterjee, let all leaders, activists and sympathizers vow to deepen their communist values and of those around us. Thereby let us build and develop new communists from amongst the masses by the thousands and lakhs to take the place of the fallen heroes.

Only since the Congress of the CPI(Maoist), in just these past five months to June 2007, 130 comrades have laid down their lives for the revolution. In the past year the figure is about 210 and 700 have been martyred since the merger in Sept 2004. Besides, hundreds more have been arrested and tortured in the dungeons of the Indian ruling classes. Most were killed by police/

para-military forces while some were killed by the vigilante gangs like the Cobras in AP, the Salwa Judum in Bastar and the TPC in Bihar-Jharkhand. Since Naxalbari, over 11,000 comrades have laid down their lives for the liberation of our country from the yoke of imperialist and feudal oppression. They were the cream of our society; many of them were the topmost leaders of the revolutionary party.

Since the formation of the CPI(Maoist) they have lost two of their top leaders — PB member com. Karam Singh and CC member com. Chadramouli (alias Balakrishna or BK). The latter, together with his partner Karuna, were on their way to the Congress when they were picked up by the AP police from Raipur, brutally tortured and then killed on Dec. 27, 2006, their body being thrown in Vishaka hills. Through the inhuman torture neither comrades gave any inkling to the police of the impending Congress where all the top leadership were to gather. Such have been the dedication and commitment of comrades of the Indian Maoist movement.

In addition since the formation of the new party a number of other leadership comrades have been martyred while countering the police and para-military forces like comrades Saket Rajan, Madhav, Naimuddin (Ravi), Shridhar, Vikas, Sudarshan, Pran, Mangtu, Raghavalu, Gautum, Satyam, Shravan, Nathun. In addition since the formation of the new Party, in AP alone, about 60 women comrades have been martyred (see last issue). The toll in the Salwa Judum offensive in Bastar over the past two years is now crossing 500, many of them young village girls who have been brutally gang-raped before being murdered. Their only crime is that they sought freedom, after living for generations in conditions of unbelievable backwardness.

The rulers and their media justify these killings in the name of countering 'terrorism'. But is that the fact? The reality is that these rulers are acting as agents of the imperialists, big business and the powerful landed elements to secure their ill-gotten wealth. Is this not crystal clear in Nandigram, Kalinganagar, and even Bastar where Tata, Essar and other mining mafia

plan gigantic investments to extract the iron ore. Here the ordinary people have given their lives to defend their right to decent existence fighting the rapacious greed of big business and the the government. It is in fact the State that is more and more resorting to terrorist methods to sustain the rule of the moneybags. For them there is no 'rule of law'; anyone is killed and it is put down to an 'encounter'. Today they are not even sparing human rights activists as indicated by the extra-judicial killings in AP and the recent arrest of a top human rights activist in Chhatisgarh. The so-called 'rule of law' is for the oppressed while the rulers and their hangers-on act as they wish, amassing huge wealth and resorting to openly mafia methods to extract and protect it.

And as for the suffering nationalities of Jammu & Kashmir and the North East the horrors they have faced over the past two decades are unspeakable. The entire peoples of these states have been traumatized to a level only seen in the worst of wars — with the killings going into the lakhs. They are forced to be part of India at gun-point. Their aspirations for self-determination and liberation from the jack-boots of the Indian rulers and their military are crushed without mercy. India is nothing but a prison house of nations, masquerading as a federal body.

Finally, in this period of massive imperialist offensive, and particularly the offensive of US imperialism, lakhs and lakhs have laid down their lives fighting for the freedom of their country and people as in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries of the world.

This year, while commemorating Martyrs week, on the occasion of the death anniversaries of CM and KC, on the widest possible scale, let all comrades carry the message of these beloved martyred comrades far and wide — for what they stood, the lives they led, the examples they set — and thereby arouse lakhs more to the cause of the Indian revolution, to free our country and its people from the tyranny of the imperialists (particularly the US) and their ruling classes agents within the country.

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# DISPLACEMENT UNDER THE PLEA OF DEVELOPMENT: TWO MODELS AND TWO PATHS OF DEVELOPMENT

*Rashmi*

{As this issue has assumed great significance in the Country this article will be followed by other articles on the issue of displacement and development ...Editor}

**G**IGANTIC mining projects, Singur, Nandigram, Posco, Reliance SEZ in Mumbai and in Haryana, huge dams like Polavaram, — the speed with which Indian ruling classes have been embarking upon various industrial and infrastructural projects has once again brought the question of path of India's development to the forefront. The Indian economy is bouncing ahead, new industries are being set up, very high rates of savings and investment are clearly visible and there is a section of populace, which has never had it so good. This has become the basis for the optimism that this is the correct path for development of both the people and the economy. But this very path is based on adverse consequences for the majority of people and even after more than two decades of economic reforms, no 'trickle down' has taken place. The extremely high growth rates of the GDP are based on a widening gap between the sectors which contribute to the output increase (mostly the services sector) and those, which provide employment to majority of the people viz. agriculture. The high savings and investment rates are themselves, a product of widening income inequalities and growth of those sectors, which have high profit incomes and high savings. In the words of the eminent economist Amit Bhaduri, "...selected non-agricultural products consumed typically by the rich command higher and higher price...higher growth is then achieved by transferring more and more resources to the so-called high productivity sector producing for the rich in the name of comparative sectoral advantage..."

If the trickle down had worked, India would not have the dubious distinction of possessing 127<sup>th</sup> rank in the Human Development Index of 177 countries. 50 percent of India's children are still afflicted by malnutrition whereas India's richest 40 persons are collectively worth \$106 billion (the corresponding figure for China is \$ 26 billion).

It is interesting that not only do the Congress, BJP-type political parties support the 'development' taking place leading to mass eviction of the rural population, but also the so-called Marxist CPM in the name of industrialisation. Interestingly the bulk of the M-L groups like that of Liberation, New Democracy and Kanu Sanyal's CPI(ML) take a similar stand saying industrialisation is inevitable; and their focus is mainly on the extent of compensation and not against the very model of development itself.

The real question before us is that can this imperialist-dictated model really lead to the industrialisation of the country as these 'Marxists' claim. If not what can be the real path of development.

## **Comparison with the Industrial Revolution**

Mining projects, big dams, Special Economic Zones, industrial projects like Tata Motors' Trident, etc, infrastructural projects like the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Project, are resulting in massive displacement of the rural population, both from their lands and livelihoods. According to some estimates, as many as 60 million or 6 crore people have been displaced or affected on account of various development projects from 1947 to 2000 (this also includes people displaced on account of construction of dams and digging of mines).

It is often argued that occupational shift from agriculture to industry is essential for development of any country. The latest and the loudest proponent of this view is the CPI(M) which keeps harping on the experience of the industrial revolution. In fact the CPM refers to those opposing the 'industrialisation' as "Narodniks" (See: West Bengal Govt's Industrial Policy: Fact & Fiction by CPM Delhi State Committee, March 07). They say here that "*the CPM will continue to refute the modern day Narodniks who claim to champion the cause of the peasantry*". They also call them "*rural romanticists*". They add in the

booklet that ".....some left intellectuals and progressive personalities have mounted an all-out attack on the CPI(M). It must be made clear to these quarters that, as a Marxist Party the CPI(M) rejects the platform of the anti-industry wallahs. The working class movement has suffered as a result of the de-industrialisation of West Bengal. The party wants the Left Front government to make all efforts to make the state a manufacturing base. The Tata automobile plant is one step in that direction". (Page 47)

The comparison with industrial revolution needs to be looked upon a little more carefully. It is true that industrialisation has been accompanied by occupational shifts in history, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Forcing the occupational shift and removing people from agriculture does not lead to industrialisation and development.

Firstly the industrial revolution was accompanied by a smashing of the prevailing feudal estates and the redistribution of land. The vast population displaced from agriculture found employment in the sprouting townships. No doubt the condition of the nascent working class was then abysmal, but the break-up of the feudal system and the development of capitalism lay the basis for regeneration of the economy and the continuous absorption of the displaced population. The growth of capitalism generated a home market which further acted as the impetus to growth.

By no stretch of the imagination can the present displacement by big projects taking place in India be compared to the industrial revolution.

Firstly, the industrialisation is not linked to the breaking up of the semi-feudal relations in the country and land reforms; but with the perpetuation of rural backwardness and a vehement opposition to any form of land reform. Even the limited land reforms introduced earlier have completely been removed from the agenda.

It is not in anyway linked to the extending of the Home Market (as was the case with the industrial revolution) within the country. In fact the marginalisation of huge sections of the population further reduces the purchasing power of the bulk of the population.

Secondly, as admitted earlier in the booklet even by the CPM, the policies of imperialist globalisation has led to de-industrialisation in the country. The setting up of such big projects like cars and the Salim group complex are nothing but part and parcel of the policies of imperialist globalisation — all of which are done with the State and central governments giving these industries huge concessions. This has also been given by the West Bengal government to Tata, Salim Group and others. For the Singur car project the estimated subsidy to the Tatas by the West Bengal government is Rs.850 crores for an investment of Rs.1,000 crores. (*EPW; May 5, 07; pg 1598*) In this there is not an iota of difference between the CPM governments and any other state government. The demagogic CPM in the same booklet says (page 6) “*the new economic policy marked a watershed in the history of post-independence India, leading to massive de-industrialisation, unemployment and agrarian crisis*”. Then how can implementing these very policies of LPG, which they themselves claim leads to de-industrialisation, result in the ‘industrialisation’ of West Bengal. This is self-contradictory and amounts to nothing but double-speak.

Thirdly, the new industries coming up in India are capital intensive and need to adopt the international technology in order to remain competitive. There is no way that they can create sufficient and dignified jobs for the people whose livelihoods are threatened because of takeover of agricultural land. A cursory look at the employment statistics will prove the point.

The 1990s, which corresponds to the period when many of the present industrial projects were undertaken, saw a decrease in the rate of employment generation across both urban and rural areas. In other words, the sectors whose output showed a marked rise in this period did not add much to employment. The heavy concessions being given to industry and services is not resulting in absorption of people displaced from agriculture. Between 1993-94 and 1999-

2000, 27 million people were released from agriculture, but of these, industry absorbed only 9.2 million. Even this absorption was not in secure, regular jobs but in small units or in home-based manufacturing such as making pickles, rolling *beedis* or making bangles etc. During the controversy around the Singur project, Benoy Konar — a veteran leader of the Left Front — promised jobs as domestic help to the women displaced from agriculture! Investigations of the Tata project revealed that more than 47,000 people are likely to lose their livelihood due to takeover of agricultural land but the employment in the factory can never be more than 500-1000; that too highly skilled labour from outside. Another example of this model of development is the plant of Tata steel at Tatanagar, which increased its annual production five times from 1 to 5 million tonnes, but nearly halved its workforce from 85,000 to 44,000. (*EPW; May 5, 07; pg 1599*)

So, what is taking place can in no way be likened to the industrial revolution. What this model of development is achieving is de-industrialisation and marginalisation of huge sections of the population on the one hand, and the creation of oasis of affluence on the other. This is unsustainable in the long-run and will only lead the economy from one crisis to the next. Any small disturbance in the international economy will have disastrous result in the home economy.

### **‘Industrialisation’ or Impoverisation?**

During the decade of 1990s, while the employment in the formal sector had been stagnant, employment had largely been created in the informal segment of the economy. The overall annual growth in employment was 1.99 per cent but the same for the organised sector was 0.34 per cent. And this also includes the growth of informal workers within the organised sector. If one were to look only at the rate of growth of formal workers within the organised sector, it would be close to zero!

The period of 1999-2000 to 2004-05 has been no different in terms of the nature and quality of employment generated. Using the data of the 61<sup>st</sup> Round of NSS, some studies have pointed out the worrisome feature of the recent growth in employment namely the growth of part-time workers. These are unemployed people engaged in an

economic activity for part of the year. Women are entering the workforce in both full-time and part-time capacities. There is also a growth of part-time self-employed activity in urban areas.

According to various estimates, nearly 92-93% of India’s workers have informal employment. Either they are employed in the informal sector itself, or they are part of growing numbers of casual and contract labour working for the organised enterprises.

When the employment statistics show any growth in employment, it is mostly those people who are thrown out of agriculture and have no other means of subsistence, and thus take up all kinds of odd-jobs on the worst possible terms, in order to survive.

All this means that the present drive of industrialisation cannot absorb people removed from agriculture in a dignified way. In fact, even the security offered by land is taken away from them. At the time of the industrial revolution in Europe, a large proportion of the displaced population was sent off to colonies and the rest were absorbed in the new factories albeit in wretched conditions. Even this kind of absorption is not possible due to the capital-intensive nature of technology today.

Industrialisation in the normal course as in the industrial revolution will absorb the surplus labour from agriculture, but this is not happening here due to the hi-tech industry. In today’s globalised economy highly capital intensive and labour displacing technology has become a compulsion to survive in an increasingly competitive market. An 8 percent growth in output led by the private corporate sector has been accompanied by just 1 percent growth in regular employment.

It is sometimes argued that the economy and the people need to go through the ‘pain’ and ‘hard times’ so as to pave the way for development. The first problem with this argument is that the people who have to bear the pain and those who reap the benefits of so called development are not the same. Those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and forests are the ones who have to bear the cross of so-called industrialisation. Their lands are being taken away, their livelihoods are threatened and they have no use or means to buy the products of new industries. The real per capita consumption of the bottom 80

percent of the rural population (which forms more than half of the country's population) actually declined over the period 1989-90 to 2001-02. On the other hand, the beneficiaries of the development process i.e. the urban rich have seen a huge increase in their incomes. The real per capita consumption of the top 20 percent of the urban population increased by as much as 40 percent over the same period! Even if one were to look at the income inequalities, the gap between the incomes of agriculture-dependent population and informal workers and those at the top of the organised sector and the recipients of profit incomes is widening continuously. As far as the unorganised sector workers and contract labour are concerned, there is no concept of minimum wages itself, needless to talk about any other kind of benefits or job security. Thus, since the process of industrialisation can largely generate only this kind of employment, it is fallacious to argue that the 'pain' is temporary. This process of industrialisation can only benefit the chosen few at the cost of majority of large masses of people! As pointed out by Amit Bhaduri, the annual tax concessions envisaged originally in the SEZ proposals could feed some 55 million people a year!

The second problem in the forced comparison with industrial revolution is that it implicitly justifies the pauperisation of the working class. It is no secret that newly formed proletariat of the 18<sup>th</sup> century lived and worked in abysmal conditions. After decades of relentless struggles, the working class managed to get certain rights such as the eight-hour workday. In the name of industrialisation, these rights cannot be snatched away and people cannot be forced to relive the conditions of pre-struggle years. The present process of industrialisation will do exactly that since capital-intensive technology cannot generate dignified jobs; besides, it is being introduced with a massive casualisation of even those jobs.

### **Present Model No Panacea to Agrarian Crisis**

This certainly should not mean to imply that people should not be shifted out of agriculture. There is a tendency to discredit the opponents of the present path of development as Narodniks or Gandhians or being anti-industry/anti-development. Industrialisation as well as infrastructure

is essential for every country. The moot point here is the kind of industrialisation and infrastructure development. Industrialisation and development has to serve the needs of the majority of people and not take place at their cost. On the one hand mega cities are being developed, and on the other, farmers are starved of water, electricity and sanitation, which is a luxury in urban slums and rural India.

For a country like ours where three fifths of the people are employed in agriculture, the starting point of any industrialisation has to be increasing the purchasing power of this section of people through radical land reforms and the releasing of the initiative of the peasantry. This would itself create a large domestic market, which can then act as the engine of growth. This will create the demand for mass consumption of goods, which the new industries will provide. The technology adopted in the new industries would be labour intensive so that large-scale employment can be generated. Technological development will take place from the bottom and not from the top. (Today's India has extreme hi-tech lives and production for the elite and the most backward existence and production for the masses). The first step would be to develop the extreme backwardness in which the bulk of our population live; and thereby the process of modernisation will proceed from bottom upwards. Additionally, the state would provide access to education, health, training and skills to the vast majority so that they can get employed in the newly set up industries. This would automatically ensure that the surplus population would shift out of agriculture, as it will no longer be necessary to cling on to the ancestral land for security.

The problem does not lie with industrialisation *per se*, in fact that is essential. What needs to be settled however is that industry and infrastructure serves the needs of vast masses rather than the imperialists and their hangers-on. And this cannot be ensured unless the process of industrialisation is linked to upliftment of the standards of the vast rural population. And the increase in purchasing power of the agriculture-dependent population can start only and necessarily with genuine land reforms.

Today, Indian agriculture is in such a deep crisis that suicides by farmers have

become a routine phenomenon. Post 1990, the annual growth in production of food grains has been even lower than the population growth. Both the availability and absorption of foodgrains per capita has declined. Utsa Patnaik has shown quite clearly that per-capita food grain absorption for the country as a whole for the triennium ending 2002-03 was 155.7 kgs per annum which was lower than the figure for 1933-38 of British India at 159.3 kgs.

Ironically this crisis has also been made the basis for arguing that people need to be shifted out of agriculture. Yes, the people need to be shifted but where are the jobs or at least jobs with some security? Also, it should be noted that this crisis is also a creation of the ruling classes. The roots of this crisis can be traced to the existing land relations in agriculture. It is no secret that the model of development chosen has subverted the entire process of land reforms in India.

The policies followed after the 1990s has worsened the situation, practically reversing the little gains from half-hearted land reforms. On the one hand, the government has been reducing its expenditure on this sector and on the other, has implemented a variety of reform measures, which have accentuated the crisis in Indian agriculture. The government spending on this sector has declined continuously. Less than 5 percent of planned investment has gone to the sector, which supports nearly 60 percent of the population. Plan expenditure on agriculture and allied activities declined from 15.66 per cent in 1991-92 to 13.65 per cent in 1995-96 and further to 9.04 per cent in 2003-04. The non-plan expenditure has also declined over this period. Indian agriculture is still largely dependent on monsoons but instead of concentrating on provision of irrigation, the share of expenditure on irrigation and flood control in total expenditure declined from 8.63 % in 1991-92 to 5.81 % in 2003-04. The budget estimate of 2005-06 showed that the percentage of state government revenue expenditure on agriculture and allied activities as a percentage of total revenue expenditure was the lowest for West Bengal followed by Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

With the ushering in of such 'reforms' in this sector, agrarian crisis of acute proportions has been unleashed. Import duties on agricultural products have been

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removed, so have the minimum export prices and quantitative restrictions. Foreign direct investment in food processing and marketing (up to 100%) is now being allowed. Integration of the global markets have made the farmers vulnerable to international prices. The rise in the prices of diesel, fertilizer, power and seeds has increased the costs of cultivation. 'Reforms' have also meant that institutional credit to agriculture has become almost negligible. Farmers are forced to take loans from informal sources at usurious rates of interest leading to increase in indebtedness. The phenomenon of micro credit schemes has not improved matters much and the rates of interest charged by them are also around 24 % per annum and can rise as high as 70%. The proportion of indebted farmers rose from one fourth (25.9%) in 1991-92 to almost half (48.6%) by 2003.

So, due to ruling class policies a crisis is created in agriculture and then these same rulers (including the CPM) say agriculture is not viable so "sell your land and get out". The panacea being offered now would throw the people from the devil to the deep sea. Firstly the agrarian crisis is engineered and now people are being forced to give up even the semblance of insurance and security, which they have i.e. the land and access to forests and common lands! It is quite obvious that the imperialist-dictated technology has not and cannot provide employment for even a small fraction of all those who would be thrown out of agriculture.

This reinforces the argument that unless conditions in the agricultural sector are improved, purchasing power of people dependent on this sector is increased and industry linked to their needs and also employing labour-intensive technology is employed, people cannot be thrown out in the name of industrialisation and development. At the risk of being repetitive, let us reiterate that this does not mean that people should never be shifted out of agriculture or that there should be no industrial or infrastructural development. It should be obvious that the vast masses of the people have little use for fancy shopping malls, gems-jewellery parks or even Tata motors! Expressways and roads are primarily for the easy access of elite throughout the country; and for 'free' movement of the police/paramilitary/army

in the backward areas' of people's revolts.

Yes there must be development. This development entails first and foremost a redistribution of land through radical land reforms; development of the infrastructure for agriculture — irrigation, soil conservation and enrichment, forestation, health and education, cheap credit and inputs, etc. Then development of industries must be organic to the growth in people's living conditions, serving their needs and must rise from an indigenous bourgeoisie and not from giant corporations of the TNCs and compradors (which in fact retard genuine industrialisation).

The irony of our situation is that today both the right and CPI(M) kind of left have joined forces to thrust the imperialist-dictated model of development on the country. And the opponents of such a model are being called all kinds of names and dismissed as being anti-development. But development has to be for the people and not for serving the imperialists, compradors and the elite. And this development can only become possible by launching an uncompromising struggle against the perpetrators of the current model of industrialisation and development. And this uncompromising struggle is only possible building a vast movement of all those resisting, in whatever way, the present policies of so-called development being pushed in the country. So, the question before us is opposition to this very model of development, not begging for better compensations.

### **Alternative path of Development**

The only alternative can be a people-oriented model of development. A model of development that enhances the well being of the majority, conserves the natural wealth, and protects the environment. A model that builds the domestic market for commodities by enhancing the purchasing power of the masses. This would act as a motor for industrial growth and development of the economy. A model of development that is holistic, serving the needs of the people as well as the environment. That is equitable, fair, just and humane.

But moving to this model is not possible without, fundamentally and decisively moving away from the present path of development. There can be no halfway measures. The present model is an

integrated whole with each aspect linked to the other, all serving imperial, comprador and feudal interests. The only way out can be an alternative model of development.

There can be no compromise with the present model, which is driven by imperialist-dictated policies and implemented by their comprador agents within the country. This model of 'development' goes against the interests of the people and that of the country; it is anti-national, destructive, inhuman, and extremely elitist. It marginalises lakhs while filling the coffers of a handful of local and foreign monopolies. A small (but growing) upper-middle class elite—who dominate the media, entertainment, TV, professionals etc.—get a few crumbs, and become the loudest drum beaters of this imperialist-sponsored model, and vulgar apologists of the neo-colonial policies within the country. It is the masses, the people, the middle classes who suffer the most.

This alternative, which is in the interest of the masses, not at their cost, can only ensure progress. The natural wealth of the country must be extracted only to the extent that it serves the needs of the people—not for imperialist profit; not for the extravagant needs of private capital.

The rural economy, on which seventy percent of the population is dependent, must be overhauled. Agriculture must be developed and the purchasing power of the rural poor increased so as to create a large domestic market, which will act as the main engine of growth. Export of raw materials and luxury goods cannot take precedence over domestic mass consumption requirements. Rather, development has to be initiated through genuine land reforms, by the redistribution of land on the basis of 'land-to-the-tiller'. Land reforms should be coupled with greater investments in agriculture and allied activities. This includes technology and irrigation; regeneration of the soil destroyed by green revolution and forests by commercial robbery. This has to be evolved towards cooperative farming—the path of agricultural development that would generate purchasing power and thus, a market for the basic necessities of life. Further, there must be access to education, health and training so that people can develop the requisite skills for other sectors thus laying the foundation for the establishment of indigenous labour-

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intensive industries and large-scale employment generation.

This employment would mean two things: One, the surplus population dependent on agriculture would shift to industry, since clinging on to ancestral land for the sake of security will no longer be necessary. Two, the purchasing power of the people would increase further and they would also have surplus left for reinvestment. Both these factors would act as the impetus for further growth and a spiral of economic development.

Land redistribution should be undertaken in urban areas as well. Urban town planning should factor in the needs of all, not just the rich and the elite. Space and amenities—water, electricity and sewage—should be equally distributed. It is only natural that people will migrate from the rural areas. Instead of treating them like a burden, the city should provide houses and jobs for them. New industrial townships near the rural areas would ensure that there is less pressure on the existing cities. In the existing cities however, wasteful consumption of the rich must be curbed. The space occupied by golf courses and five-star hotels, and unused public land should be used for resettling people who live in slums and unauthorised colonies.

Urban wages should provide for a life

of dignity and security for the workers. And the wage differentials, which exist between manual and mental labour, must be reduced. There should not be any wage discrimination between man and woman. The security of livelihood of the people in the urban areas would also reduce the necessity to retain their landholdings in the villages.

Land must not go to big capitalists for private mining, other projects, or for SEZs; it must stay in the hands of the people and the revolutionary committees as and when they are formed. The SEZ policy must be totally reversed and the land handed back to the owners. Land ownership must no doubt be re-organised not through such seizure by land sharks and big business, but on the basis of “land to the tiller”.

Alternatives to big dams should be considered seriously, as scientific evidence and past experience have shown big dams to be less effective than other watershed management projects entailing smaller dams.

Infrastructure, both urban and rural, must be geared towards the needs of the people, with an emphasis on health, hygiene and education. The interests of global finance capital and the needs of their agents should not be the criteria for developing infrastructure. Expressways and roads are primarily for the easy access

of the elite throughout the country; and for the ‘free’ movement of the police/paramilitary/army in the backward areas of peoples’ revolts. It is not to serve people’s needs though it is done in their name. So also is the case with “urban renewal”.

Such a model of development is only possible by building new democratic organs of power from the village level upwards who decide themselves on their own future and have control over the land, forest and all natural wealth of the region. The new people’s power, as it evolves, would take the responsibility of providing the basic necessities of life to all. Schools, colleges, hospitals and health centres should be free for all. Resources for this can be generated by seizing the wealth of the foreign predators and their local comprador agents and also by curbing wasteful expenditure of the bureaucracy and through a system of graded taxation of the incomes of the rich. Resources, which are otherwise used against people in the name of internal security, can also be diverted for this purpose. Last but not the least, environmental regeneration must be an important active concern and result of this alternate vision.

It is such a model alone that can ensure livelihood to all and bring justice and equality to the vast populace. P M

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daily needs. The change being effected by the anti-people policies of the government is not going to stop anywhere. Only a resistance movement of the vast affected masses, keeping in mind the objective of overthrowing this anti-people system, is the need of the hour.

But it is strange that some progressive and democratic organisations and economic analysts are overlooking the entry of these big comprador companies in the retail market and talk only against the foreign companies. The voice has to be raised against these sharks and a movement built up against the government and the MNCs of international and local brands, who are preying over millions of small businessmen and shopkeepers. Already, in numerous cities open protest has broken out against these retail chains; but these have been crushed by an iron hand, with the police acting as tools of big business. The target has particularly been the new

stores of Reliance Fresh (RF) that have begun entering in an aggressive way. A few months earlier the wholesalers for vegetables and meat of Chennai claimed their business had dropped by 40% with the entrance of RF — they called a day’s bandh against Reliance. Later as RF entered Ranchi the small retailers came out on the streets for days smashing Reliance stores. This could only be brought under control through police action and large scale arrests. A similar action was repeated in Indore and in Kolkatta. Here too the establishment and police came in defence of the RF stores. In Kolkatta RF plans to open 200 stores. In Kerala the State’s traders association has threatened a boycott of all Reliance products if Reliance Fresh is opened in the state. Here RF has plans to open 200 stores.

In this situation, it is the bounden duty of all the patriotic, democratic and revolutionary forces to come

together and work for developing such a movement, a vast movement against the government, which has given permission for foreign investment in the retail business and is handing over such an important sector of economy to foreign and local sharks. The common people must be informed that so long as the pro-imperialist exploitative rule of the compradors and this system continues, the Indian people cannot be saved from the marauding onslaught of foreign MNCs and that of their local agents. There is need for a strong opposition to be built up against these giant retail chains that will result in a massive leap in unemployment in the country by destroying the lakhs of small retailers, wiping out lakhs of middlemen between the producer in the field and the retailer and in its place generating a hand full of jobs in high-tech departmental stores in its place. P M

## CPI(MAOIST) UNITY CONGRESS-9<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS STAND ON CASTE QUESTION IN INDIA

Dr. Gupta

**T**HE Unity Congress- 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPI (Maoist) held in January-February 2007 brought under sharp focus the caste question of India and charted out a revolutionary path towards its annihilation. The new party programme, with the required emphasis on this question of cardinal importance, is a great victory of revolutionary Marxism with its Indian specificity. The theoretical enrichment and precious experience gained over decades of revolutionary movement with the most exploited Dalits and tribals emerging in the forefront, paved the path for the formulation of the present policy on the jati-varna system. In what follows is an attempt at elaborating the caste-related aspects incorporated into the CPI (Maoist) Programme and other basic documents. A more thorough analysis will be taken up later.

In India the earlier communists (read revisionists) have never considered the caste question as anything more than part of the superstructure of society. They mechanically interpreted that with the change of the system the caste system would automatically disappear. They never took seriously the question of caste oppression and particularly its most obnoxious manifestation in untouchability. All these points have been corrected in the basic documents of the CPI(Maoist) passed at its recent Congress where it sees that the caste system is clearly a part of the base and not merely the superstructure. It not only calls for the fight against caste oppression and untouchability but for the total annihilation of the caste system. To do so it speaks of the need for various organizational forms. It clearly states that in India, feudalism (and even today's semi-feudal system) is not like that in Europe and is intrinsically linked to the caste system and brahminical ideology.

In India we find that from its very inception class society emerged from primitive society in a caste or varna form. These caste formations consolidated into a rigid social stratification in the period of feudalism from roughly the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD onwards. This caste-based feudalism was

intrinsically interwoven with Brahminical ideology. There has been a close inter-connection between caste and class in India. During some periods they were virtually synonymous; in other periods, though not absolutely synonymous the oppressed invariably belonged to a set of Shudra and Panchama castes while the oppressor to a set of Dwija castes. In some castes, like the Vaishyas a section became a part of the rulers while the rest were the ruled. Though the caste formations have been rigid there has been some element of mobility, particularly in the higher castes (more particularly Kshatriyas and not Brahmins).

It was only with the consolidation of feudalism, from around the 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. that caste took on its present rigid form. It is in this period that the innumerable number of castes (or Jatis) developed and got consolidated as separate endogamous communities with a separate occupational role within the self-sufficient village economy. These castes (or Jatis) became the prime unit for a person's identity or social and economic inter action. The countless castes that developed as feudalism grew were different from the broad varnas of the earlier period. But they were fitted into the frame work of Varnashrama Dharma by the ruling classes. Also the new entrants were given befitting status according to the newly invented 'Varnasamskara' theory. Thus the varna ceased to be the endogamous group but instead became a category indicating the broad status of each caste which became the actual endogamous occupational group.

In India the caste system is very much part of the relations of production in the Indian feudal system. It has also facilitated the extraction of surplus, wherein much of the extra economic forms of coercion have taken a caste-based form. The caste-based occupations were part of the division of labour in society. In addition the caste system determined the relation to the main means of production, i.e. land. So, the upper-most castes were allowed to own/control land while the lower castes could not own land. In addition, collective

irrigation, which was an important part of agriculture in feudal India, was primarily controlled by the upper-castes, particularly Brahmins. Also the ideology of brahminism did not permit Brahmins to do physical labour on the land, while the lower castes were expected only to labour. In addition the lower castes worked and gave free to the Brahmin 'gifts' like grain, vegetables, fruits, milk and ghee.

Given its usefulness to any exploitative ruling classes, they have all maintained the caste system notwithstanding the changes that may have occurred through history. In the feudal period the Muslim Mughal rulers and the Christian British conquerors maintained it. And in semi-feudal India it continues with certain cosmetic changes.

The Programme declares in clear terms that the: *"Condemnable caste system and casteism, especially the Brahminical casteism, is a special feature of the semi-feudal system prevailing in India...."*

In the document on the Strategy and Tactics of Indian revolution it states:

*"In India feudalism/semi-feudalism does not take the conventional European form. Here caste oppression and Brahminism are inextricably interwoven with the existing semi-feudal, semi-colonial system. The Caste system is not only a super-structural phenomena but it is also a part of the economic base. For this reason the destruction of the caste system, including the eradication of untouchability, together with a struggle against all manifestations of Brahminism, is a necessary part of the NDR in the country. Casteism and Brahminism are essentially elitist, hierarchical, and gives people a sense of superiority over other castes lower than theirs from very birth itself ..... and all this is sanctified in the name of religion. It is also a deadly weapon with which to divide the oppressed masses. Such an elitist structure is ideal for any exploitative system". (Page-6)*

*"Socially and ideologically, Brahminism and the caste system brings an added oppression to the lower castes and dalits. With Dalits it takes the inhuman form of untouchability. These also*

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*act as measures for extra-economic forms of extracting surplus by the feudal interests”.*

Explaining the landlord class the document added that *“The landed sections in the countryside largely come from the upper-castes and upper rung of the backward caste. They use brahminical ideology under the garb of religion to keep all other sections of the population under their domination, particularly Dalits”.* (Page-9)

Again, describing the landless, poor peasants and semi-proletariat the document said that *“The landless and poor peasants face not only economic exploitation but also social oppression as they come basically from backward castes, tribes and Dalits. Due to these extra-economic forms of coercion they live a life of, not only starvation, but also marginalization on the fringes of society”* and *“mostly comprising the artisan and service castes they too belong to the oppressed castes. Though some of themselves practice untouchability, they face acute caste oppression from the upper castes. This too is over-and-above the economic exploitation that they have to face”.* (Page-12)

Explaining feudal culture the document adds, *“feudal culture is primarily the Brahminical caste-based culture of engrained superiority. This Brahminical culture puts its stamp on nearly all aspects of social interaction and thinking, from approach to labour, women, oppressed castes, other communities, marriage norms, birth, death, language, etc and even has numerous caste symbols. Ironically the so-called modern imperialist culture easily adjusts with the archaic and retrogressive Brahminical culture”.* (page-19)

The above encapsulates a wide range of theoretical positions of the Maoist revolutionaries in India. The obnoxious caste system is unique to India. This is a specific form of social, economic and culture domination over the masses of India. Caste is birth ascribed and a hierarchical ordering of the society. And this pernicious caste system has been of enormous value to extract surplus from the oppressed particularly the so-called outcastes of India. This system not only divides the society into the so-called upper and lower

castes, if ensures a division based on the mental and manual labour and thereby divides even the oppressed.

The programme not only condemns the pernicious caste system it goes further to launch its attack on casteism in general, and Brahminical casteism in particular. Brahminism as an ideological pillar of the caste system and the feudal/semi-feudal order encompasses the whole of the caste hierarchy from top to bottom. The programme staunchly opposes this divisive and elitist feudal ideology helping in the sustenance of the caste system itself. This ideology has always been used by the oppressor castes in the feudal and then semi-feudal India. This casteism is also dangerous for the real unity of the exploited *jatis* breaking the age-old endogamous relations. The significant aspect of the Programme is that alongside the broad opposition to the whole gamut of casteism, it has been specific in its spearhead of attack against the ideology of Brahmanism. The vast literature of the anti-revolutionary CPI, CPM variety has always been markedly bereft of even any verbal attack against this despicable Brahmanism. The Brahministic attitude and inherent fear to lose quite a big chunk of votes of the so-called upper castes of the Hindus made it a taboo for them to speak out adversely against Brahmanism. The CPI (Maoist) with its bold revolutionary line against caste and casteism, especially Brahministic casteism has promised to deliver deadly blows against the centuries old caste system in India.

It is necessary here to state that writing on kinship tribes Marx made his insightful comment: *“Their most extreme and rigid form is the institution of castes, separated from one another, without the right of inter-marriage, with its exclusive, unalterable occupation”* [Pre-capitalist, Social-Economist Formations, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, p.93] To be precise, it is the *jati-varna* system with a strong tie between varna and occupation, religious beliefs, more and norms, faith in the Brahminical Karma theory, endogamous marriage, patriarchy, acceptance of Brahmins as superior humans , etc. persist in India with no basic changes over the past three centuries of colonial and the semi-colonial rule with the tying of the country with the capitalist imperialism

and entry of capitalist mode of production in India.

The CPI (Maoist) Programme makes the poignant reference to the naked fact that *“It (casteism) is such a weapon, which is used both by the Indian ruling classes and the imperialists to instigate and divide the poor people and the oppressed. The majority of the oppressed castes are poor and face caste oppression in addition to the class oppression casteism is used for derailing their actual struggles against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capital.”* Casteism, especially Brahminical casteism, the Programme unequivocally states, has its origin in the existing feudal/semi-feudal system and flowers from this system itself, and is not merely the left over of the decisively broken down caste order as some pseudo Marxists and their organizations in India say.

The Programme clearly speaks of *“extraction of large surpluses”* from the toiling oppressed, particularly the so-called out-castes over centuries on the basis of the caste system. The caste system operates both structure and superstructure. Simple opposition against untouchability or mere extension of support to the Dalit cause or the like would not go to destroy the caste system lock, stock and barrel. The CPI (Maoist) considers a multi-pronged attack against the roots and branches of this caste system, particularly the obnoxious practice of untouchability, as a simultaneous process with a bevy of initiatives on multiple fronts.

The Programme has pointedly referred to the Brahminical *“social hierarchy with each rung in the ladder looking down on the other”* top to bottom wise. This is a bold and clear denouncement of the *varnashramic* four-fold division of the Hindu population in India. Brahmanism as an ideology of the exploiters has always tried to bind the caste order to continue the cruel system of exploitation and domination projecting it as a natural order. Outside this 4-fold divisions, the *Pancham Varna* – the lowest layer as of outcastes was created for the socio-economically most distressed class of Dalits. However, the four-fold Varna divisions can not find exact replica in all the regions of India. Yet the Brahminical Varna-based identity, particularly of the top layer(s) has come to

stay under the jati-varna system. Similarly, it is also a fact that the dialectics of the social process germinated a counter trend, however weak, against this domination of the Brahministic arrangement in an explicit manner to iterate here that the Portuguese word 'caste' has been in use from the heyday of the colonial ethnographers while *jati* (or its local equivalents), a more or less localized with some regional spread has remained in use for centuries alongside varna in India. Historically speaking, the caste system has remarkably adjusted itself with necessary changes to some degrees over the centuries till the current period of semi-colonial and semi-feudal India. The Unity Congress-9<sup>th</sup> Congress Programme has rightly pointed that this jati-varna system and its ideology in our semi-feudal India perpetuates the semi-feudal condition with its attendant methods of medieval barbarity:

*".....This class of feudal landlords protect and instigate casteism, communalism, superstition and maintains private armies, or goonda forces, perpetrating massacres, rapes, etc. It is this class of oppressors who hold social and political power, ensures perpetuation of decadent feudal culture along with undemocratic authoritarian ideas, etc. in the vast countryside. The feudal landlords' authority is caste based. They use their upper-caste social and political links to sustain this authority and terror in the countryside. Brahminical ideology is used to give it a religious sanctity. This is the overall dominant aspect of the rural society of India and the main obstacle to the release of productive forces and the progress of our country ...."*

The above graphically explains how the land owning classes and their ideology hugely depend on the caste system, varnashramic ideology and the feudal armed forces in rural India. Not only for the present stage of semi-feudalism, the Programme assertively states that for thousands of years the Indian feudalism, the dominant mode of production, was caste based and built on Brahminical ideology. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism teaches about the imperative need to find out the specific aspects of a social formation for the radical change on the basis of the general theory of dialectical and historical materialism. The CPI (Maoist)

in its Unity Congress-9<sup>th</sup> Congress has adopted such a Programme integrating this general theory with the particularities of Indian society to carry on its multi-frontal struggle retaining the agrarian revolution as the axis for the revolutionary transformation of the society. The class analysis for determining the enemies and friends of revolution receives a totality with this ample attention to the caste question of India.

The Unity Congress-9<sup>th</sup> Congress Programme has shown its adequate concern about the brutalities and massacres the Dalits have been facing in India, occupying the bottom of the caste ladder and living in perpetual poverty. The Programme never considers the Dalit question from a liberal bourgeois outlook but from a revolutionary Marxist standpoint as a part of the whole ongoing process of destroying the existing system itself. Yet the Dalit question and the need for struggles against untouchability and for human rights of the Dalits and such immediate questions have been duly addressed and solution suggested. Let us straightaway quote from the Programme itself.

*"....Dalits are at the lowest rung of this casteist ladder facing social oppression from all social categories above them, particularly from the feudal forces. The inhuman practice of untouchability is still continuing and is being maintained. Accordingly the Dalits are being treated as second-rate citizens. Even today 90 to 95 percent from among them are either landless and poor peasants or village labourers.*

*Even today their age-old struggles against feudal oppression and for getting equal status in the society are being targeted and Dalits have become victims of these vicious attacks by the feudal and fundamentalist Hindutva forces patronized by the ruling classes and their state machinery. These attacks are being manifested in the form of massacres and en masse gang rapes."*

Thus the Dalits who are the lowest caste as well as from the economically most exploited classes are targets of the landlords, reactionary political forces and the state machinery, who have been identified as forming a composite whole to subject the Dalits to savage exploitation

and barbarities. Alongside the caste-related oppression of the Dalits the class-based exploitation is taken up to lead the Dalits to break loose from the shackles the Dalits are bound up with in this caste society. The Programme is clear to state that *"the Dalit question is essentially a class question"*. However, in the name of economic struggle the anti-caste struggle is not evaded. It unambiguously asserts that *"the party should lead the struggle against caste oppression on Dalits and other backward castes as a part of New Democratic Revolution and fight for their equal place in all spheres of social life by fighting all forms of caste discrimination and oppression, towards abolishing the caste system."*

The CPI (Maoist) Programme expresses the principled stand in support of *"reservations and special privileges for Dalits and other backward castes"*, against the opportunism of the Dalit leaders bent on reaping electoral gains, on initiating and leading the struggles against *"all forms of violence and discrimination against Dalits from our own class organizations"*, etc. The very important decision that this Unity Congress-9<sup>th</sup> Congress Programme has boldly taken up reads: *"There is also urgent need to build organizations to fight untouchability, caste discrimination and for the eradication of the caste system as part of the new democratic transformation of society."* This is a significant development in the revolutionary communist movement in India. Simultaneously, the Party vows to carry on battles in all spheres against casteism and the practice of untouchability.

For the eradication of the caste system and all forms of caste discrimination and brahminical ideology the documents presents an attack on varied fronts:

In the struggle against non-proletarian tendencies the S & T says on page 50 *"These are particularly reflected in Brahminical ideology which is deep-rooted in the people's psyche. Its worst feature is the casteist superiority it inculcates; with its extreme form being the practice of untouchability" and, "in a country like India this particularly means breaking caste barriers and thoroughly integrating with Dalits, tribals and other oppressed castes"*.

On the question of building the United

Front the S & T says "Particularly in our country where casteism and caste oppression is so widespread, drawing Dalits and other oppressed caste into the UF is an important aspect of building the new democratic front". (page-63) "We should work jointly with these petty-bourgeois organizations on these issues while at the same time conducting ideological and political debate with them on their orientation towards reformist solutions to eradicate caste, like conversion and reservations. We should propagate the revolutionary policy on the caste system".

On the question of Dalit oppression and untouchability it says "India is a deeply caste ridden society where caste oppression and Brahminical superiority is widespread. Dalits are at the lowest rung of this ladder facing the inhuman practice of untouchability. Though all forms of caste oppression must be opposed the Party must particularly focus on the

oppression of Dalits and eradication of untouchability". **"We must initiate and lead the struggles against all forms of violence and discrimination on Dalits from our own class organisations. There is also urgent need to build organizations to fight untouchability, caste discrimination and for the eradication of the caste system as part of the new democratic transformation of society"**. (Emphasis added) It further says that in the urban areas "There has been a strong dalit movement in the country fighting untouchability. Though part of this has been co-opted by ruling-classes the spontaneous struggles keep breaking out against attacks on Dalits and against their humiliation. This is so not only in the rural areas but also in the urban areas where Dalit assertion has increased. It is important to participate in these movements and where possible lead them. While doing so we should seek to give these movements a correct orientation linking

caste oppression and untouchability to the task of the entire democratization of society, i.e, the tasks of the NDR".

And finally and most important of all, on the question of the new power, the leadership would be, as said by Mao, firmly in the hands of the landless and poor peasants (a large proportion of whom come from dalits, tribals and other oppressed castes). In addition the S & T on page 38 adds that "The cooperatives should not in any way be caste based, and the traditional caste-based occupations should be gradually abolished".

To conclude, the CPI (Maoist) Congress has gone many steps ahead by giving all emphasis on the crucial question of caste and formulated revolutionary policies to unleash blows on this obnoxious system, its ideology, its menacing savagery, its divisive nature and its economic roots for its complete abolition for a caste-free equality-based society in India. [PM]

## Continued from page 21

for equality between women and men and hailing International Women's Day. JMKS speakers said that even today women enjoy a secondary status. They called on the women to fight against rape, dowry deaths, foeticide and violence in the household. They also called on the women to join with other democratic forces for changing the existing system, without which women cannot achieve real freedom. They also spoke on the varied aspects of women's oppression and different types of women's movements. They also said that on the one hand the government talks of 33% reservation in Parliament, while on the other even the limited democratic rights of women are being snatched away. The secretary of the Bihar Jan Pratirodh Sangharsh Manch spoke of the significance of International Women's Day and its history. The speeches were interspersed with slogans and songs. Over 5,000 people attended the public meeting; besides large numbers of women, there were a significant presence of student and youth.

## Uttarkhand

For the March 8<sup>th</sup> programme, handbills were widely distributed in villages, towns, slums and colleges all over the state. Four programmes were organized in villages jointly by the revolutionary women and

students organizations. The meetings were more organized in the form of a cultural festival where sweets were distributed by local women. In these programs the focus was on cultural performances and a poster exhibition through which women were aroused against the oppression they face and encouraged to fight against it. The meetings were well attended by numbers of young girls and even a lot of children. About 200 women participated in each of the programmes. In addition in one town a programme was held centrally where over 100 attended and also in a slum. In another town handbills were distributed house to house in a slum area.

## UP & MP

On March 8<sup>th</sup> at noon about 600 people (60% women) gathered at the Town Hall in Ballia (district headquarters) for a centrally organized programme organized by the NMS. Shouting slogans the rally wound its way to the Collectorate, where it converted into a public meeting. They shouted slogans for the arrest of the culprits of the Sindhoi massacre, against dowry, against intoxication, foeticide, and against all forms of women's oppression. They also shouted slogans against imperialism and feudalism. At the public meeting many women speakers spoke. They said that in

this male-dominated society men have always considered women as slaves; they see women merely as a commodity and utilize them in that way. They added that today even internationally women are joining with men in revolutionary organizations and participating in armed struggles for the liberation of society. Speakers particularly focused on the need for the awakening of women to fight for their liberation. They said that without the liberation of women it was impossible for society to advance. Many also spoke against the increasing degenerate imperialist culture being promoted by films and TV. The meeting culminated in a cultural programme. After this central programme, a number of smaller ones were held in the Poorvanchal region.

In addition to this NMS held three programmes in the Khatri area in UP and three more in the Jhind district of MP. In all these meetings the root cause of women's oppression were explained and the women were called upon to unite to fight it. All utilized the song and dance form to more effectively propagate against women's oppression and to arouse them against it. Though only 50 to 100 attended each programme handbills were distributed on a wide scale and extensive posterung was done. [PM]

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## PRESS RELEASE ON GUJARAT ENCOUNTER KILLINGS

**T**HE brutal murder of Sohrabuddin Sheikh and his wife Kausar Bi in November 2005 in Ahmedabad after arresting them from a bus in Hyderabad is only the tip of the iceberg of the cruel deeds and inhuman acts of the lawless police system in India. The khaki-clad criminals had proved themselves to be paid mercenaries as they had murdered Sohrabuddin after their pockets were filled by the builder lobby of Gujarat and Rajasthan for the ghastly act. And to eliminate all evidence of the gruesome murder they murdered Kausar Bi three days after the murder of her husband at a farmhouse in Gandhi Nagar and her body was burnt in the ravines in Illol village in Sabarkantha district. Kausar Bi was also raped which has become the natural fate of any woman in police custody. These IPS criminals, with the full backing of the BJP governments in Gujarat and Rajasthan, had also eliminated the only remaining eye-witness to their arrest in Hyderabad, Tulsiram Prajapati, in December 2006.

The arrest of the three IPS officers—DIG Vanzara and SPs, Raj Kumar Pandian of Gujarat and Dinesh Kumar of Rajasthan, and their suspension after more than a week following the arrests, is a mere eye-wash as the killings were carried out clearly at the behest of Narendra Modi, the trader lobby and the political big-wigs of the BJP. The Congress, which has been clamouring for the resignation of Narendra Modi, is no less a culprit as its government in AP led by fascist YSR had fully cooperated with the BJP governments in Gujarat and Rajasthan in the illegal arrest of Sohrabuddin and Kausar Bi.

The Gujarat fake encounter is only one of thousands of such cases that have been taking place in various states in the country. In Kashmir alone over 70,000 youth had been killed after being arrested and several women were raped in the past two decades. Mass demonstrations against illegal arrests, murder and rape by the Army besides the central and state police forces have become a daily feature of Kashmir. And

these repressive forces are also obsessed with communal bias, particularly against the Muslims, which makes the atrocities more brutal and inhuman.

Mass murders, fake encounter killings, brutal torture and rape, are an inseparable part of the state system in our country. Whether it is the government ruled by BJP or Congress, TDP, DMK or AIDMK, RJD or BJD, or the so-called Left like the CPI(M), or whichever party is in power, it basically relies on state terror and state-sponsored terror to control the masses and to eliminate the opposition. The police, para-military forces and the Indian armed forces are all adept in staging fake encounters and committing indescribable atrocities whether it is on the revolutionaries and the struggling masses in Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Bengal, Maharashtra, MP, UP, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the national liberation fighters in Kashmir and North East, Muslims in various parts of the country, particularly in states such as Gujarat. The rape and murder of Manorama in Manipur highlights the plight of women under virtual Army rule in North East. Besides, daily killings of petty criminals, rape and killing of arrested women is a feature of these trigger-happy cruel forces.

The AP police are even more notorious than their Gujarat counterparts in staging fake encounters. They had committed the worst atrocities during the Congress rule under Vengal Rao, Janardhan Reddy and the present YSR's fascist rule,1 murdering almost 2000 revolutionaries and sympathizers while over a thousand murders were committed during the nine-year rule of the TDP. AP can boast of several Vanzaras who had committed brutal murders after arrests and torture and all of them had got away unscathed as it had always been the policy of the successive governments to carry out fake encounters. Murderous DGPs like HJ Dora, Ramulu, Swaranjit Sen, DIGs

like Gautam Sawang, Aravinda Rao, SPs like Balasubramanyam, Srinivasa Reddy, DT Naik, Surendra Babu, Praveen Kumar, Meena, Stephen Ravindra, Murali and many others are all masters in the art of torture and murder of revolutionaries. And all these criminals received promotions and huge incentives from the government for committing these murders. In just over two years since January 2005, YSR's Congress government in AP had murdered several leaders like Vadkapur Chandramouli, Gautam, Jagadeesh, Samala Venkatesh, Jangaiah, Mohan, Karuna and over three hundred revolutionaries and sympathizers after arresting them. And each of these officers is corrupt to the very core as the case of Murali, the SP of Vishkha rural, who is presently in jail for amassing illegal assets to the tune of Rs. 30 crores, clearly shows.

Gujarat fake encounter reveals the real face of the political system in India. It is not an exception but the rule in present-day India. It had come into focus only because of the serious internal contradictions within the BJP and among the various ruling class parties. No political party is really serious in stopping the fake encounters as brutal repression is the very basis for the survival of these parties.

The CC, CPI(Maoist) calls upon all the democratic organizations and individuals, people of various nationalities oppressed by the Indian state, and the oppressed masses of the country to build a strong, united and militant mass movement demanding an end to fake encounters, illegal arrests, torture and atrocities against the people by the police, para-military and the Army, and to punish the perpetrators of such heinous crimes.

*Azad*

Azad,  
Spokesperson,  
Central Committee,  
CPI(Maoist)  
**May 8, 2007**



## EXCERPTS OF INTERVIEW WITH COM. GANAPATHY, GENERAL SECRETARY, CPI (MAOIST)

[The questions that follow have been sent by various newspapers to Ganapathy, General Secretary, CPI(Maoist). The answers by Ganapathy were printed partially in the Times of India and Enaadu (Telugu) in the background of the successful completion of the Congress of the CPI(Maoist) and other recent developments.]

**Q: We heard that you had successfully held your Congress recently after a gap of almost 37 years. Why has there been such a long delay?**

**A:** It is true that we held our last Congress—8<sup>th</sup> Congress—way back in 1970. The reason for not holding it for almost 37 years is the condition of the revolutionary forces in the country. Two years after the last Congress the movement suffered a serious setback; the highest committee, the CC, became disintegrated following the martyrdom, arrests, and even betrayals by some members like SN Singh who had, in fact, split the Party in September 1971 itself. After the martyrdom of comrade Charu Majumdar, the entire CC ceased to exist as it got splintered into several factions. I say factions because they were all part of the original CPI(ML). Prolonged existence as separate groups gave them distinct identities in course of time as independent groups and parties with their own respective programmes and tactics. Moreover, they made their own self-critical reviews of the past. Such a state of affairs had rendered the prospects of unity all the more difficult.

Some groups began to traverse the same old path of the Danges and Joshis, although they claimed to oppose their line, such as the “Liberation” group led by Vinod Mishra whose degeneration began in the early 1980s after a history of glorious struggle during the 1970s. There were some that went on postponing the initiation of armed struggle against the state indefinitely to some auspicious day in the future with the plea that the state is too powerful and armed confrontation with it required more time and preparation. Hence they confined themselves to so-called phase of armed peasant resistance or the anti-feudal phase of struggle. Till today these groups have not completed their preparations to begin their armed confrontation with the state! These were the Right opportunist groups such as TN-DV, ND, various factions of CP Reddy etc. Then there were some others that stuck to the original programme of the

CPI(ML) but refused to adopt a critical outlook towards the past mistakes. They continued dogmatically with the Left sectarian mistakes such as over-assessment of the international situation and the subjective strength, and an underestimation of the enemy forces and hence could not build any movement of significance. It was only a few Parties such as the CPI(ML)[PW] and CPI(ML)[PU] which had upheld the basic line of the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress, made a self-critical review of the past tactical mistakes and shortcomings in the movement thereby enriching the line further, carried on the people’s war based on the enriched line, and hence could develop relatively strong movements in different parts of the country.

While this was the condition of the CPI(ML), on the other hand, the MCC led by comrades KC, Amulya Sen and Chandra Shekhar Das, grew up as a separate party with almost the same programme as that of the CPI(ML). Both parties would have been part of a single party but due to some historical reasons this did not materialise during the time of comrade CM. Later, as the CPI(ML) itself got split by 1972, unity became a thing of the future. From then on unity of the Communist Revolutionaries remained one of the principal tasks in the agenda of every revolutionary organisation. But unity cannot materialise due to the desire of the revolutionaries itself. The will, i.e., the sincere desire for unity, is no doubt, an important factor but what is decisive is the political line and practice of the parties. Hence it was only during the 1980s and 90s when movements were built by Parties such as the MCC, CPI(ML)[PW] and CPI(ML)[PU] that a strong basis for unity was laid. However, the unity between these Parties could not materialise for a long time due to political differences and also due to shortcomings on the part of the leaderships to make conscious efforts for unity. I can elaborate this if needed. The main reason for the long delay in holding the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress has been the failure to achieve unity among the major

revolutionary forces in the country.

**Q: Do you say there are no differences in the Party at all?**

**A:** Why not? Ideological-political debates are the life-blood of any communist party. It is through such internal struggle that a Party’s line gets further enriched and the Party becomes stronger and more unified. We never keep our differences secret. We had published the differences in the last issue of our theoretical magazine, the *People’s War*. In the current issue of the magazine the debates which took place in the Congress are reported in detail. These debates indicate the strength of the party, not its weakness. It shows the democratic credentials of the Party which allows freedom of expression for all kinds of opinions and viewpoints, and its ability to digest various opinions if they are expressed in a constructive way to enrich the Party line and not with a malafide intention to wreck the Party. Whatever opinions had come up at the Congress were placed by the comrades in all sincerity, with a view to enrich the line and find solutions to the problems confronting the Indian revolution.

One very important point to be noted here is that differences which had come up at the Congress were not differences between erstwhile MCCI and CPI(ML)[PW] but were those within a single Party. If you are aware of the history of our Party you would find that even more serious differences had come up in our earlier conferences and Congress. In the AISC of PW in 1995 or the central conferences of PU in 1987 and 1996, or in the 2001 Congress of the unified PW, the differences were of quite a serious nature. There were differences on the principal contradiction in the world, on the contradiction between the CBB and the Indian people, mode of production in India, and so on. There was also a sharp debate on the question of Right deviation in the Party line during the 2001 Congress of erstwhile PW. All these serious differences were resolved through a healthy debate and by placing the issue

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for vote where needed. This time the differences were not as much serious as in the past. The media reports, obviously, were wide off the mark. Thus the differences within the old PW, or the unified PW after the merger of PW and PU in August 1998, or in the CPI(Maoist) after the merger of the PW and MCCI, are very much normal in a Communist party. Any difference, even the most serious ones, can be resolved in a Communist party by adhering to the principle of democratic centralism. That is the greatness of the principle of democratic centralism which is the basis for the existence and functioning of a communist party.

It was only in Karnataka that a small group calling itself the Minority had split away from the Party after they had lost the majority for their Right opportunist line in the state conference. If they had the communist spirit and discipline and were not carried away by petty-bourgeois individualism and anarchic methods, they would have remained in the Party and fought for their line in the Congress. Of course, while carrying out the line and policy decided by the majority in the Congress, one has the right to bring up one's line or standpoint on any question once again as part of the next Congress.

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

**A:** 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 manoeuvrability for our guerrilla forces. And in expansion the element of 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, mobilise 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 mobilisation 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 counteroffensive operations as in Rani Bodili, Riga, CISF camp in Khasmahal in Bokaro district, and so on in the past one month itself.

With the experiences 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 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 sum up the achievements of your Unity Congress and its significance?**

**A:** 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 the Congress. Several ideological-political questions were debated and settled by the Congress thereby bringing about a higher level of unity. Another achievement of significance

is the establishment of a unified centralised 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 centre has become further consolidated and firmly established in the unity congress with the approval of the entire Party.

**Q:** How do you see issues like Singur and Nandigram? Are your people involved in inciting violence in Nandigram as claimed by the CPI(M)? Do you intend to get actively involved in such issues?

**A:** One should only be surprised if we are not involved in such life-and-death issues of the masses. We intend to mobilise the masses against the conspiracies and treacherous policies of the rulers to snatch the land of the people and hand over the same to the MNCs and the comprador big business in the name of development through creation of hundreds of SEZs. The policy of SEZ is aimed at creating neo-colonial enclaves within our country where no laws of the land can be applied. The SEZ policy is being aggressively pushed by the Indian ruling classes goaded on by the imperialist MNCs as part of their globalisation offensive. Struggles against the SEZs acquiring fertile farmland of the peasants and also huge projects are turning more and more militant as witnessed in Kalinga Nagar, Singur, Nandigram, Lohandiguda, Polavaram, etc. Kalinga Nagar, Singur and Nandigram, in particular, have become important symbols in this struggle against exploitation by the big comprador houses and the imperialists.

As regards Maoists inciting violence in Nandigram, the entire world would laugh at the temerity of these "Left" Front rulers. Even Goebbels would turn in his grave seeing how much his art of lying has been improved by "Marxists" like Buddhas, Karats, Yechuris etc. These political brokers have been desperately trying to divert the issue by repeating ad nauseam that Maoists from outside had incited the local people and hence the police had no other alternative than to open fire in self-defence. Like every reactionary ruling class the "Marxist" rulers of Bengal too are harping on themes such as "foreign hand" for the mess which they themselves had created.

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Brinda Karat had commented that Maoists had used the sea-route to enter Nandigram. It is sickening to see the utter political bankruptcy of these so-called ideologues and the poverty of their logic. In the eyes of these hypocrites and double-dealers, a Salim or a Tata, are not outsiders while Maoists, who live and die for the people, become outsiders. Worse still, like ostriches, they think that the world does not know how thousands of armed goons had been brought by their Party from different parts of the state to Nandigram along with a huge police force to enact the massacre. Karats and Yechuris are placing the blame on outsiders in their sheer desperation to justify their savage massacre in Nandigram.

Nandigram reveals the ugly cruel face of the social-fascist CPI(M) whose goons along with the police had committed indescribable atrocities on the people, raped women, killed over a hundred people including even children, and, what is most abominable, had buried the corpses or thrown them into the river. Buddhadeb had emerged as Bengal's Dyer and has proved himself to be a loyal servant of the big comprador houses and the MNCs. Like a true dalal, his government had taken up the task of acquiring lands from the people to hand over to the big business. One thing has become established beyond a shadow of doubt with the state terror and state-sponsored terror in Nandigram: the CPI(M) is the best bet for the MNCs and comprador big business for securing their class interests in the country. It will not be a surprise if they choose to bring these most loyal servants in Marxist guise to power even at the Centre in the future.

As for our role in such movements we shall definitely make all efforts to be in the forefront and lead the movement in the correct direction. We call upon the people to turn every SEZ into a battle-field and assure them that we will render all support to the people's movements against SEZs.

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

**A:** The question of armed struggle or non-violent 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 harbour illusions or biased against armed struggle. After few weeks the 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 of 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 unsatiated 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 theorise.

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

**A:** Our Party has a great role to play in the contemporary international and domestic situation. Our Congress has analysed the present political situation and issued calls to the Party and the people. It drew up the necessary immediate tactics and tasks to utilise the situation and achieve advances and leaps in the ongoing people's war in India. The new Central Committee had further concretised these in the form of time-bound programmes and plans. Several resolutions were adopted by the Congress on the issues confronting the

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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 out 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. Militant 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 organisations, 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 eyes 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?**

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**Continued from page 22**

shielded by a 12 km (7.5 mile) multi-million dollar fence topped by barbed wire. The protesters continued to gather in Heiligendamm on the second day of the summit as well.

The spate of protest demonstrations had begun from 25<sup>th</sup> May itself. Anti-globalisation activists of varied ideological persuasions gathered in different towns of Germany to resist the G8 summit. Some 300 people took to the streets of Hamburg on May 25<sup>th</sup>, in a cycle rally, protesting against the upcoming G8 summit. Police vans tried to break up the ride by driving into and standing in front of them, but

**A:** 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 3 ½ 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 or 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 a crucial moment for another reason too. Today the Maoist movement is facing the great challenge of building a strong PLA and establishing the base areas 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 the 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 in the name of SEZs, when millions upon millions of people are being displaced by so-called development projects, when workers, peasants, employees, students, sections of the intelligentsia, dalits, women adivasis, nationalities, religious minorities and others are seething with revolt.

24<sup>th</sup> April, 2007

PM

protesters managed to disrupt the traffic in the city centre during rush hour. Masked demonstrators held a protest march in Rostock town on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June and hurled rocks and flagpole at the German riot police. According to the organisers, nearly 80,000 protesters had gathered here. Many were arrested while 25 police officers were seriously injured. On 4<sup>th</sup>, there was again a march in Rostock to a detention center for the "Right to Movement: No Borders, No Nation, Stop Deportation!" The police did their best to prevent the movement of the march, and attempted to prevent demonstrators on trains from joining the march, but, after several

blockages, police had to relent and the march reached its final destination at the harbor for a planned rally.

The G8 summits have become an annual exercise in hypocrisy. The agenda covers problems and issues for which, these very nations are responsible. The only ray of hope is the persistent resistance by anti-globalisation and anti-imperialist groups and individuals, year after year drawing attention to the fact that only people's struggles against imperialism can end imperialism and also the problems of poverty and inequality created by imperialism.

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## **RETAIL BUSINESS IN INDIA AND THE DANGERS AHEAD**

*Ashish*

**R**ETAIL trade has been designated as an industry in the developed countries of the world; it is the world's biggest enterprise sector. The mega MNCs (Multinational Corporations) have almost taken control of the retail trade of the capitalist-imperialist countries of the world. Now they are looking greedily towards the retail trade of Asian countries like India and China. The global retail trade is valued at about Rs 315 lakh crore, in which the American share amounts to an enormous Rs 53 lakh crore.

The annual turnover of retail trade of India is valued at Rs 5 lakh crore; it is estimated that this will increase to Rs 7 lakh crore by 2010 and Rs 10 lakh crore by 2015. For the last five years, the average rate of growth of the Indian retail market has been 10 per cent, higher than the average growth rate of any other retail market in the world. Today, India has gained fifth place in the world in terms of retail sales and second in Asia after China.

The retail market has a very important role in the economy of India. There are about 1 crore 30 lakh retail shops that provide employment to about five crore people; altogether about 20 crore people are dependent upon this sector. Therefore, in respect of offering employment and livelihood, its place is second to agriculture. In gross domestic production (GDP) of our country the share of retail trade is more than 10 per cent. About 97 per cent of this trade is unorganised even today. The government Public Distribution System, government-aided Khadi boards and other cooperative societies and Tata Trent, RPG Group, Pantaloon, Shopper's Stop, Reliance, Planet Sports and DLF like Indian retail companies have succeeded in converting only 3 per cent of Indian retail trade into the organised sector. About 96 per cent of retail shops cover an area less than 500 sq. feet per shop even today. The retail trade of India has a direct and organic relationship with the wholesale trade. Existence and growth of both are interdependent.

As the retail trade of our country is growing very fast, its vast portion is unorganised and scattered, and just by investing meagre capital billions of rupees

can be earned; therefore, foreign MNCs are trying their best to have control over this sector. Especially after 1990-91, when new economic policies of liberalisation-privatisation-globalisation (LPG) were implemented, the foreign companies such as Wal-Mart (USA), Carrefour (France), Tesco (UK) and Metro (Germany) hoped for an early entry in India's 'sunrise sector', i.e., retail trade. But, when it was delayed, they started pressuring the Indian government through their respective imperialist governments. Moreover, the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Trade Organisation (WTO) and other similar imperialist institutions also issued instructions to the Indian government to open the retail sector outright for the foreign MNCs. Particularly, during the Doha round of talks, WTO issued clear-cut instructions that the Indian government should remove the ban on the entry of foreign capital in the retail market; otherwise, India would have to forsake the concessions given under the General Agreement in Tariff and Trade (GATT). After this, the Indian government announced permission for foreign investment in the retail business during the review of the Tenth Five-Year Plan [2002-07]. The representatives and high officials of companies such as Wal-Mart, Carrefour, Starbucks and West Buy started visiting India. These representatives met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and high-ranking officials. After meeting Manmohan Singh, the Chief Executive Officer of Wal-Mart International John Major released a press statement saying that the Indian government was ready to open retail market for foreign investment. After some time, he also added that as the permission from the Indian government had been obtained, Wal-Mart would invest capital totalling Rs.1 lakh crore at least, and would seek the help of some Indian partner. In the same way, other foreign companies also made plans to invest capital in a big way.

### **Foreign Investment in Single Brand**

But when the plan of the Indian government to give permission to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to participate in the Indian retail market was made public,

different political parties and pro-people organisations reacted sharply. However, the UPA government, propped up by the CPM, issued a press note on 10.02.2006, allowing 51 per cent FDI in the retail market of Single Brand products, stipulating the under mentioned conditions:

(a) Saleable products should be of a Single Brand.

(b) Products should be sold under the same brand internationally.

(c) Only such products of a single brand could be included in retailing, as had been branded during production.

It is to be noted that in wholesale trading and in warehousing, the Indian government has allowed 100 per cent FDI. The government has made the way clear for opening the retail market to the MNCs by allowing FDI in Single Brand products. Now foreign companies like Nokia, Marks & Spencers, Nike, MacDonald, Reebok, etc. (who sell Single Brand products) will not be required to seek permits to enter the retail market. Now, they can open their own retail chain in our country without any local partner whatsoever. But the foreign companies are not going to be satisfied by this partial liberalisation. Their real intent is to have full control over this 'sunrise sector' of India. Therefore, they are pressurising the government to open the retail market completely. They are of the view that if the Indian government opens the retail market completely for FDI, only then can India get expected results in the field of foreign investment. To fulfil their aim, they are asking their respective governments and international institutions to increase pressure to compel the Indian government to yield. The USA and other imperialist countries and WTO and other international institutions have stepped up this pressure.

The effect of all this is visible now. Only recently in Delhi, a high-level seminar was organised with the support of the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry concerning FDI in the retail business sector. Indian government spokespersons expressed the hope that by opening the retail market foreign capital would enter the country in a big way, that the unorganised and scattered retail market would be

transformed, the unemployed would get jobs and the common consumers get cheap and best products. The organisation of the industrialists (FICCI, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) has also said that in the era of globalisation, like other sectors, FDI is essential in retail business too. ASSOCHAM (Association of Chambers of Commerce) has expressed the hope that by the entry of FDI, the Indian retail market would be reorganised and that, along with consumers, the producers too would be greatly benefited. The Indian Council of Research on International Economic Relation (ICRIER) has strongly advocated for the entry of FDI in retail business. It also advised the government that it should grade the retail business as an industry, and arrange proper credit facilities for this sector. Contract farming, direct procurement and sale should be given legal status. In the same way, big businessmen engaged in real estate are also very enthusiastic about the organised retail sector growing. They think that if the retail markets opens for foreign investment, then big shopping malls, departmental stores, speciality stores, super markets and hyper markets will flourish in the different cities of the country giving them greater scope for investing and profit-making.

### The Entry of WAL-MART

On seeing this situation, Wal-Mart of USA, the biggest company in the world, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with one of the leading Indian companies, Bharti Enterprises, on 27 Nov. 2006. The aim of both is to eat up a big chunk in the Indian retail market and to jointly raise an enterprise in which the share of each will be equal at 50 per cent. According to the agreement, the Indian group will take responsibility for sales centres, i.e., the 'front end', while Wal-Mart will manage the 'back end', i.e., the supply chain, for which it is already world famous.

It is well known that in India Bharti Enterprises is the leader among private telecom service companies and it controls a market of three crore mobile holders. And

Wal-Mart is the biggest retail company in the world, whose business is spread over 15 countries. Both of them expect that their joint venture will become the number one retail company in India. In this way, Wal-Mart will have ensured a back-door entry for itself in India's retail market. Now Carrefour, Tesco, Metro and other foreign companies are trying to enter the retail market in the same way (because so long as in the whole of Indian retail market foreign investment is not allowed, it is not possible for any foreign company to enter through the 'front door'.)

Wal-Mart and Bharti announced this agreement when the Indian economic summit was in progress at the Taj Palace Hotel in Delhi, at which big industrialists from across the country were present. This caused a furore among Indian companies in the retail sector, especially companies

**WAL-MART'S** sales turnover grew from US\$1 billion in 1980 to US\$26 billion in 1989. In the meantime, it departmentalized its business and extended it into foreign countries in the name of 'Sam Club' and Wal-Mart International. Today, Wal-Mart controls 6,500 stores and clubs in 15 countries, and has 18 lakh workers (who are called 'associates').

Wal-Mart sells goods to 17 crore 60 lakh consumers every week. Fortune Magazine has called it the "most admired" retail company in the world. It generated an annual income of US\$312.4 billion in the financial year ending 31 Jan 2006, which is 9.5 per cent more as compared to the previous financial year.

like Reliance Retail, headed by Mukesh Ambani, who dreams of becoming the No.1 player in the Indian retail business. It is to be noted that Mukesh Ambani has announced an investment of Rs 25,000 crore for a retail business covering 1,500 cities across India with 1,000 hypermarkets, 3,000 supermarkets and hundreds of speciality stores.

Wal-Mart, along with the Bharti Group, is investing capital extensively (an estimated Rs. 2 lakh crore) to strengthen the supply chain. It is to be noted that well before this, it has been sourcing huge quantities of cheap goods such as apparels, textiles and shoes and so on. It has opened a link office in Delhi for speeding up its operations. During the last year, it made purchases from India to the tune of US\$16 billion.

### Effects on Indian Economy

Despite the claims of the Indian government, the entry of giant MNCs and big comprador houses in the retail business will shatter the entire existing network of the economy in our country. While Unilever, Pepsico, Coke, General Electrical, Union Carbide, Monsanto, Microsoft, Intel, Motorola and other mega companies have been earning huge profits by selling their products in the Indian markets, the entry of MNCs and comprador big business in the retail market will only compound the problem further and have a more dangerous and far-reaching effect.

The first and foremost effect of it will be putting at stake the livelihood of crores of people engaged in the retail business. According to an estimate, just in the first year alone one crore of people will lose their jobs. The foreign companies and big business houses engaged in retail business use ultramodern technologies. As a result, the need of labourers and employees decreases. For example, every product of a supermarket or shopping mall is marked with the radio cable called R.F.D.I., which makes the stock counting of an article very easy. By this method, the work of cash register can also be accomplished. Consequently,

looking after the work in any such shopping centre is handled by very few employees. Moreover, these companies purchase their goods directly from the producers and thus shunt out mediators engaged in the retail market. With this, the army of the unemployed will become bigger and bigger.

The next thing, which will have an adverse effect, will be on the prices of the products. The mega foreign companies claim to supply cheap and standardised goods to the consumers. But the truth is, they emphasise much on advertising and packaging, with which they succeed in getting excess money by selling the most inferior goods to the consumers. Their management is so clever that it keeps on creating demand for unnecessary articles in the market through heavy advertising and the pockets of the common consumers are picked. The companies in general

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purchase goods from every nook and corner of the world and sell it where they get the highest profits. According to an estimate, the Indian small retailers in general sell their goods at a rate of 10 to 20 per cent of profit whereas the mega companies of America and Europe sell it at much higher rates.

The third effect will be on the quality of goods. The MNCs/Indian Big Business use insecticides and other chemicals on a large scale to keep fruits, vegetables, foodstuffs and other items fresh and in good state. They even compel the peasants and farmers to use these dangerous things during the whole process of production. With the consumption of these foodstuffs, the health condition of the people becomes more precarious.

With the entry of these mega local and foreign companies, the urge for monopolisation would rapidly increase as another effect. It is quite possible that in the first phase of this cutthroat competition, some cheap goods would be made available. However, when some very few companies establish monopolies in this sector, they would sell their goods at exorbitant prices at their will.

Along with this, the social and cultural impact of the imperialists would be enormous. Shopping malls and supermarkets not only affect the economy on a vast scale but also impress upon the way of life and eating habits of the people. People of every age, especially children and women, become the special targets of these companies in the sphere of tastes, nature, dress and expression, which will push the disease of consumerism to an even greater extent. The crux of the matter is that the foreign investment and entry of MNCs and comprador big business in the retail market will further enhance the process of cultural alienation and degeneration among the vast masses.

### **Role of Political Parties/ Organisations**

It is evident that all the political parties and organisations related with the ruling classes, support directly or indirectly the entry of local and foreign MNCs into the retail market. The ministers of the UPA government are misleading the common people by presenting wrong facts in the Parliament about retail trade. On the other hand, the 'Left' parties supporting the

central government formally oppose the permission given to foreign investment in this sector but in practice they oppose the struggles of the people against it. They have supported the entry of big retail chains in West Bengal and Kerala, while making a show of opposition at the centre. The position of the biggest opposition party BJP is quite ridiculous. This party claims to be the party of traders, and thus, is caught in its own web. For the time being it is in the grip of an internal brawl over this policy. On the one hand, like the Congress Party, it supports the policy of globalisation and liberalisation, while on the other hand, its Swadeshi Jagran Manch (allegedly a body to awaken the people to make the country self-sufficient by relying on local means) 'opposes' the entry of foreign investment in retail trade. It organised an all-India movement of retailers on this issue to befool common people and traders.

### **Internal Dangers**

Indian comprador companies involved in retail trade are, on the one hand, increasing their capacity, and on the other, befriending the foreign companies. Especially, the Reliance Retail has taken the challenge very seriously. Recently, it has taken some solid steps (already mentioned above). It has been opening mega-stores in the name of Reliance Fresh all over the country selling fruits, vegetables etc. It has announced that it will open hundreds of such stores in the states of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh during the coming months. Despite this, it has planned to open an electronics chain in the name of Reliance Digital and Reliance Mart for initiating hyper-markets. The Future Group of Kishore Bimani, which is presently running retail openings with 40 lakh square feet in different cities of the country, has also planned to expand. It has opened 40 stores in the name of 'Big Bazaar' and announced it will increase the number of such stores to 100 by the end of 2007. Only recently, its Pantaloon retail company has planned to build mega stores for storing domestic and decorative clothing, furniture, electrical goods and other materials. It is going to build hometown stores in Thane, Bangalore and Gurgaon, which will have an area of 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh square feet. RPG has signed an agreement to expand its business with a mega company of Hong Kong. This Goenka

Group company is running 110 food stores and 200 music centres. It has announced plans to increase the number of food stores to 1900. Kodak Pvt. Ltd. Equity, situated in Chennai, has taken the responsibility to export on a mega scale table cloth, kitchen and window curtains, rugs, beddings, and other cloth products to American companies like Wal-Mart, Target, and JC Penny. The Tata Group has also opened dozens of departmental stores, hypermarkets, book and music chains and consumer durable chains, under the names of West Side, Star India Market, Land Mark and Kroma respectively.

Now Kumaramanglam Birla and the A V Birla Group also have planned to launch into retail business. Shopper's Stop too is running mega retail stores in New Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Gurgaon, Bangalore, Pune and other cities. This company has also planned expansion. For the time being, an average of 50 thousand consumers visits the different Shopper's Stop stores everyday. The retail company named Planet Stores has about one-and-a-half dozen outlets in the country. Its plan is to open five new outlets every year. Despite this, Life Style, Subhiksha, Trimeter and Neelgiri, like dozens of other tiny players, are trying their fortunes in the Indian retail market. However, the point to be noted is that the real target of all these local companies is the same five crore shopkeepers engaged in Indian retail business.

The biggest question for crores of petty and small businessmen, 'rehri-wallas', street vendors and kiosk owners is: What will they do when the sharks come to gobble up their markets? The process of uprooting their businesses has already started in some places in the name of ceilings, in others in the name of beautification of the cities, or through setting up SEZs and shopping malls or under some other pretext. A sword of Damocles hangs over their heads ready to fall and chop off their heads. No government is willing to listen to the woes of these crores of people. A wind is sweeping across the land uprooting and devastating small entrepreneurs, leaving them rootless and roofless. Big Bazaars are preparing to gobble up small and weekly *haats* from where the common people purchase their

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## COMMEMORATION OF MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup> BY REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

**M**ARCH 8<sup>th</sup>, the International Women's Day, is a day of great significance symbolizing the struggle of women around the globe for their emancipation. Its origins are traced to the struggles of the toiling women from both class and patriarchal oppression. But, today March 8<sup>th</sup> is sought to be co-opted by the establishment with even the ruling establishment organizing functions. Yet, it is the revolutionary women's organizations in the country that are the true flag-bearers of the great traditions of March 8<sup>th</sup>. It is then quite natural that these organizations commemorate March 8<sup>th</sup> on a huge scale; not in fancy halls but deep amongst the people in the villages and slums throughout the country. They utilize the occasion to mobilize women on a ever-growing scale and raise their consciousness to break the chains that bind them to their traditional past and partake in the struggle not only for the own emancipation but also for the freedom of all the oppressed of society.

People's Mach Office has receive just a handful of reports of the functions held; but it gives some insight as to how the revolutionary women's organizations in the country commemorate the event in varied ways. We reproduce some of the reports sent in:

### **Ranchi District of Jharkhand:**

Here reports came in of a meeting organized by the local unit of the Nari Mukti Sangh (NMS).

The meeting in Humta village (Bundu Thane) was attended by 3,000 people; both women and men, in which also hundreds of children also participated. The people who attended were from the village and neighbouring villages who trekked upto 5-7kms to attend the programme.

First the meeting paid homage to the martyrs who had laid down their lives for the revolution; particularly the women martyrs. The meeting was inaugurated by a local leader of the NMS. She recalled how women's life in the prevailing system is nothing but drudgery; where they have to toil from morning to night without any

recognition. It, she said, is nothing but a life of slavery where women have no self-respect. She also spoke at length of police atrocities on women and gave her example on how she was incarcerated for nine months in jail just for possessing a cassette of revolutionary songs. She ended her speech calling the women to join the NMS in large numbers. Other women also spoke on the varied forms of oppression that they face and the need to struggle against it.

The meeting ended with a cultural programme of songs, dance and plays mostly focused on women's oppression.

### **West Singbhum District of Jharkhand**

Here reports came in of programmes in three villages. Programmes were held in Lodahi village (Sonnuva Thane), Tholkovad village and Lumtu village (Lumtu Thane). In these meetings besides the leaders of the NMS, village women also spoke. All the meetings first began with a homage being paid to martyrs. Most speakers focused on the varied forms of women's oppression and the need for women to organize and struggle against it. The NMS speakers particularly focused on the increasing police repression on women; their arrest, torture and even rape. The examples were given of the arrest and torture of Sheiladi, the founding president of the NMS, who continues to languish in jail; arrest of Lalmuni Munda in July 2005 from a village in West Singbhum; and the arrest of one mahilla comrade from village Goilkhara (in West Singbhum on the Orissa-Jharkhand border) in May 2006, who was continuously raped. They said that if any woman raises their voice against injustice they have to face police brutality. They called on all women rise and fight against all forms of oppression of women.

All meetings were interspersed with slogan shouting and cultural programmes depicting women's oppression and their struggles against all forms of injustice. In the programme at Lodahi village on March 17<sup>th</sup> 1,200 participated and the one at Tholkovad village on March 27<sup>th</sup> 500 participated.

### **North Bihar**

This year given the growing repression in the region NMS did not hold any local programme, but district-wise programmes where large number of women participated based on local initiatives.

Reports particularly came in of March 8<sup>th</sup> programmes in East Champaran and Khagaria districts. Besides the central handbill the North Bihar NMS distributed another handbill linking up with issues affecting women in the region. The handbills explained the significance of International Women's Day and in what way women should celebrate women's day in the present context.

In spite of the repression campaign hundreds of women participated in the programmes held at Bakhri bazaar in East Champaran. First the NMS flag was hoisted and then a song was sung to the red flag. After paying homage to martyrs the women and men present began a rally which wound through a number of villages and culminated in a public meeting at Chowfa Bazar. NMS speakers spoke on how imperialism, feudalism and their agents perpetuates women's oppression. They explained the nature of women's oppression and on how to fight it in a revolutionary way. A resolution was introduced and passed which specifically condemned the police repression of women activists and demanded the release of all women activists in jail, including comrade Sheiladi. The resolution also opposed setting up of SEZs and other such industrial projects which is leading to the displacement of lakhs, causing untold suffering to the people, particularly the women.

On March 8<sup>th</sup> the Janwadi Mahilla Kalyan Samiti held a rally and public meeting at Alloli in Khagaria district. People from villages of 5-7 kms converged onto the Saraswati Grounds at Alloli. They came shouting slogans holding aloft hundreds of banners and flags. A rally was taken out and slogans were shouted against foeticide, the dowry system, rape, against feudal and political oppression of women,

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## G8 SUMMIT-THE ANNUAL THEATRE OF HYPOCRISY

ONCE again, the leaders of the developed capitalist world met from June 6<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at Heiligendamm town in Germany for the 33<sup>rd</sup> summit of the G8 countries. This year, the focus was on controlling the emission of greenhouse gases and climate change. The heads of states of US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia called for "substantial cuts" to greenhouse gas emissions responsible for global warming. The G8 leaders also met leaders of five 'emerging' economies, viz. China, Mexico, India, Brazil and South Africa on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June. Although the summit called for cutting emissions to half by 2050, the language of the declaration does not convey a binding commitment. US President, George W. Bush persistently opposed such a commitment and finally the

declaration says that the world's biggest emitters of greenhouse gases should "seriously consider" following the EU, Canada and Japan in seeking to cut emissions in half by 2050. While Bush insisted that efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would not succeed until India and China are involved, Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair said that there would be no agreement until "there is an agreement that has America and China in it".

G8 countries consume most of the world's oil, and have been responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions that are said to be contributing to global warming. Most of them, particularly the US, have not fulfilled commitments under the Kyoto protocol to cut back on energy consumption. Instead of cutting the emissions themselves, the declaration

issued at the end of the G8 deliberations called on the emerging economies of India, China, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa to reduce the carbon intensity of their emissions.

Other issues discussed at the G8 summit were poverty in Africa and UN proposals for internationally supervised independence for the Serbian province of Kosovo. The group agreed on a \$60 billion program to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases in Africa. But they reportedly failed to agree on a compromise solution to the thorny issue of Kosovo's future status. There was a surprise proposal on June 7

growing tension between Russia and the USA over both, the US's proposed missile shield in Europe and Kosovo independence. These are being aggressively pushed by the US and as strongly resisted by Russia. Iran is using the Iraq card to counter the US plans.

### Protesters gather in thousands

As the world leaders gathered for the summit, anti-globalisation protesters from across the world also gathered in large numbers. The first day of the summit saw most of the roads that lead to Heiligendamm

blocked. Throughout the day different groups set out to shut off access points to the G8 venue. Many groups used a variety of tactics during the day, from sit-down

road occupations to building barricades to breaking through police lines to reach their blockade locations. Despite police use of water cannon, mounted police, and helicopters to ferry in reinforcements, many more than the expected turned in to oppose

the exercise in hypocrisy. As the talks began on 6<sup>th</sup>, Greenpeace boats forced their way into a maritime exclusion zone. There were mass blockades despite the fact that the German federal constitutional court had banned the proposed march on that

day. More than 1,00,000 people participated in the protests and nearly 140 were arrested. 16,000 police personnel were deployed to stop the protests and almost \$134 million was spent on the summit, most of which was for security. The G8 leaders were

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#### *Culprit number one*

*CURRENTLY the worst offender in terms of human induced climate change is the US on the basis of both absolute and per capita carbon dioxide emissions. It accounted for 23.8 % of total world emissions in 2001. China ranks second at 13.6% of the world emissions. India is the fifth largest emitter of carbon dioxide but at present growth rates, in about 30 years, India's emissions will reach European per capita levels.*

by Russian President Vladimir Putin that the United States use a radar station in Azerbaijan instead of building facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic. The suggestion appeared to cool mounting tensions between Moscow and

road occupations to building barricades to breaking through police lines to reach their blockade locations. Despite police use of water cannon, mounted police, and helicopters to ferry in reinforcements, many more than the expected turned in to oppose

#### *Origin of G8*

*AFTER the oil crisis of 1973, US took the initiative to form an informal group (G6) of the six most industrialised countries in order to discuss issues concerning them. With the joining of Canada, the group came to be known as G7. Russia joined formally in 1997 and since then G8 or the group of eight countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada and Russia) meet every year in an annual summit. It is to be noted that China has not been included in G8.*

*These annual summits have to face major protests by the anti-globalisation activists. The largest protest was at the 27<sup>th</sup> summit of G8 held at Genoa in 2001.*

*Since then, the summits are being hosted outside the major cities.*

Washington over the U.S setting up a missile shield in Europe. It should be noted that the earlier agreements on aid to Africa have not been respected till date. Most importantly, G8 countries are themselves responsible for the poverty in Africa.

A notable point at this Summit was the

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# PULSE POLIO IMMUNIZATION – A BIG FRAUD

{This article is based on a report by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in India-1995- 2006 which was submitted to the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2006}

Surekha

WE are witnessing a large campaign in all spheres of the media, roping in a wide range of celebrities day in day out, boasting the governments' claims of creating a polio free India. Yet in spite of eight years of massive campaigns for the eradication of polio there was a resurgence in the number of polio cases in 2006. After about Rs.10,000 crores has been spent on this, the number of cases which was roughly 24,000 (before the beginning of the programme) actually increased to 32,000 in 2006.

Polio is caused by Wild Polio Viruses (WPV) of three types I, II and III. The Virus spreads from person to person through water or food contaminated with the stool of infected children. Poor environmental sanitation, and poor personal and food hygiene, make ideal breeding grounds for the virus.

The World Health Assembly had passed a resolution in 1988 for the WHO to take step for the global eradication of poliomyelitis. Due to the strong advocacy of the WHO and UNICEF, Government of India (GOI) launched this program countrywide in the year 1995. The National Pulse-Polio Program was started by GOI in the year 1995 with the objective of eradication of the Wild Polio-Virus (WPV) transmission in the country. This program is an integral part of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

The Government of India, decided to use the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) in 1978 to control Polio occurring then at an average rate of 500 cases per day and the same was incorporated in the Universal Immunization Program for children in 1980 which became operational in all districts of the country during 1989-1990.

The Pulse polio campaign is being conducted at the behest of the WHO, which in its assembly in May 1988 passed a resolution No 28, which directed the WHO to achieve global polio eradication

by 2000, exclusively by the use of OPV. This was to promote the sales of the less effective polio drops (compared to the injection). Polio drops have long since been abandoned in the West where every child is immunized through the injection. Besides, polio drops, to be effective, have to be maintained at minus eight degrees centigrade; its effectivity reduces if it drops below that. This is difficult to maintain during the campaign. In fact there have been an increase in the number polio incidences caused by the polio drops in recent years. There has been an increasing trend in the vaccine virus cases since the



year 2002. There were 500 cases in 2002, 474 in 2003, 894 in 2004, 1644 in 2005 and in just the first thfour months of 2006 there were 195 cases. This is only possible with the OPV and not the injectable vaccine as it does not contain live polio virus as the drops contain.

Though some money is given by international agencies the cost to the Indian Government is huge. Vaccines are being procured centrally and supplied to the States. Cash assistance is being provided to the States for carrying out IEC and social mobilization, booth management, transport and mobility and contingencies.

In addition to the funds received from international agencies India is spending huge amounts, more than Rs.600 Crores per year on the polio eradication program.

While the production of all vaccines, including measles, required for the National Immunization Programme is done in India, **the Polio vaccine is being imported in bulk** in a concentrated form and blended at the Haffkine Bio-Pharmaceutical Corporation Limited, Mumbai, Bharat Immunologicals and Biologicals Corporation Limited, Bulandshahar (UP), Radicura Pharma, Delhi and Biomed Private Limited, Ghaziabad (UP). Such large imports for over a decade has created a huge market for the international pharma companies giving them windfall profits on a sub-standard vaccine.

The list of international agencies involved in the Polio Program are:

**1) Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Canada**

**2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USA**

**3) Cooperazione Italiana (Italy)**

**4) CORE Group Partners Project (CGPP) in India, USA: A coalition of four private voluntary**

organizations (PVOs: ADRA India, CRS, Project Concern International & World Vision India) which carries out social mobilization activities in Uttar Pradesh to increase acceptance of OPV. (From 1999 - Present)

**5) Danida, Denmark: Funding AFP surveillance and cold chain equipment (From 1997-present).**

**6) Department for International Development (DFID), UK: Funding AFP surveillance, social mobilization, polio vaccine purchase and operations for polio immunization campaigns (From 1998-present).**

**7) Japanese International Cooperation Agency, Japan: Funding purchase of polio vaccine and cold chain equipment.**

**8) Rotary International: Funding AFP surveillance, social mobilization and**

immunization campaigns, purchase of polio vaccine, providing operational assistance (From 1997-present).

**9) UN Foundation:** Funding AFP surveillance, social mobilization and immunization campaigns.

**10) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), India:** Providing technical leadership in social mobilization

**11) United States Agency for International Development (USAID), USA:** Funding AFP surveillance, social mobilization and national laboratory support for polio (From 1996-present).

**12) World Bank:** Funding operations for polio vaccination campaigns and vaccine purchase.

The above list indicates the key players are all imperialist bodies and their vested interests are involved in this program which is going to cost Rs. 2,000crs (2004-2006).

The World Bank is directly involved in the Pulse Polio Program by extending the following loans:

\* RCH & subsequent India immunizing strengthening project with an IDA credit of SDR of 106.5 million, Rs. 700crores

\*supplementary credit: India Immunization Strengthening project Rs. 400crores

\*polio restructuring project Rs. 450 crores

\*RCH 2 polio component Rs. 1580 crores

Total Rs. 3100 crores

With large chunks of the health funds being earmarked for the Polio eradication program the causality is seen in the Routine Immunization programs. Some of the facts to emphasize these aspects is to be seen in the report: "*Inequities in current Immunization Services*". (WHO Immunization Strengthening Report 2004-2007)). The following are their findings:

\* **Weak service delivery over 5 years:** Rapid household surveys performed in 260 districts in 1998/9 & again in 2002/3 showed that full immunization rates have decreased in 176(76%) of the districts.

\* **Low Coverage rates:** on an average 35% of infants in each state are not fully immunized. This is as high as 90% in Bihar

& 81% in UP. Nationally there are 18 million infants who are not fully immunized.

\* In the year 2005 the GOI spent Rs.1,000 crores on the programme while the amount spent on the remaining Vaccine preventable Diseases was Rs.300 crores. **Since the pulse polio campaign was started in 1998 the government would by now have spent to the tune of approximately Rs.10,000 crores, while massively cutting down on expenditure for eradication of TB, malaria & other diseases which takes lakhs of lives each year & debilitates millions.**

It is interesting to note that the vaccine being pushed in India is not the one that is being practiced in developed countries. **The Annual Report of WHO (2005)** published its guidelines for the post eradication strategies. It is now envisaged that OPV will not be available any longer, once the global certification of the cessation of the transmission of the WPV is achieved. Abandoning the global perspective, these guidelines give the choice to the countries to either shift to the IPV (injection) regime as routine immunization or stop polio immunization altogether. It is likely that the developed countries of the world which have already been using IPV will continue with that for routine immunization. The backward countries are meant to make their cost benefit analysis of shifting to the costly option of IPV or face the unknown danger of cVDPV, iVPDV or bio-safety or the reintroduction of WPV on cessation of OPV (Cost of OPV is Rs 5 per dose Vs Rs 25 for IPV, 5 times higher than OPV).

The results from this giant polio program are far from satisfactory. The AFP (Acute Flaccid Paralysis) or polio cases have shot up very high. **Incidentally, the monovalent polio vaccine, effective against only one of the types of the polio as against all three, used in UP (since 2005) is an untested and unlicensed one and was used unethically without informing the people.** No wonder UP has the largest number of cases.

Findings have shown the following facts:

1. Failure to interrupt transmission of WPV
2. Alarming Rise in the reported

cases of AFP in the year 2004-05-06, particularly in UP and Bihar

3. Multiple, sudden, and arbitrary shifts in the strategies for polio-eradication in the last 13 years

4. Pushing the pulse-polio strategy to the detriment of the health systems development in several states

5. No consideration given to the recommendation of the IAP (March 2000) for phased introduction of IPV in routine immunization & also IMA sub committee on immunization to inquire into the vaccine related paralysis suggesting that the vaccine was not effective.

6. Earlier it was asserted that with the end of transmission of WPV, all vaccine use will come to an end and there will be a saving of more than US\$ 1 billion per year and in fact this was the major motivation and economic justification for the campaign.

From the above facts it is very much evident that the much publicized polio program is a big failure. It is not that such a body as the WHO could have been ignorant of the efficacy of such a programme. The advantage through this has gone to the pharmaceutical companies and the media barons and has not much helped the people of the country.

The only way to eradicate polio is to make compulsory the child taking the injectable polio vaccine together with the triple vaccine — this must be distributed free and made easily available throughout the country, no matter what the cost. The activities of the polio-immunization should be re-integrated into the Universal Immunization Program. Besides the main source of the polio disease is the unhygienic condition of the lives of the masses. Unless this is improved, merely giving the drops will not prevent the spread of the disease. The cost entailed here should not in any way impact on the immunization programmes against TB, Malaria and such diseases that take lakhs of lives every year. Today the health condition of the people of the country has dropped phenomenally. It is sucking up a large part of their savings. The deterioration in the health conditions of the people is one of the most serious problems facing the country. **PM**

## EXCERPTS FROM AN INTERVIEW OF KABIR SUMAN

(Suman Kabir is a versatile personality in the pro-people cultural field in West Bengal. He has been actively involved with the Singur and Nandigram peasants resisting the CPI(M) government's heinous land acquisition bid and massacres of peasants who found in Suman an unwavering friend and activist. Suman supported the Naxalbari struggle, composed songs in honour of Maoist martyr Kanchan and Manipur's martyr Monorama, participated in the struggle with the guerrillas in El Salvador (sandinista). A progressive journalist, a singer setting a new life-centred song trend in Bengal, a composer, music director, lyricist, poet are combined in this single personality. This disciple of Bob Dyllan has stood his ground. Nandigram massacres have once again proved Suman Kabir's pro-people steadfast stance. On behalf of People's March Com. Prasoon conducted the interview. The views presented here are those of the artist and do not necessarily fully conform to those of the magazine)

**Peoples' March : As a convener of Pashchimbanga Krishi Jami Raksha Committee (Farmer's land protection committee) how are you seeing the problem of Jami (land)?**

**Kabir Suman:** Frankly, I still don't understand what made Ms Mamata Bannerjee propose my name as the 'Convener' of the Advisory Committee of the Pashchimbanga Krishi Jami Raksha Committee and what made the other noted members of the committee second her proposal. Never have I ever occupied such a position. I am just an ordinary TV anchor, a journalist, a scribbler and a songwriter-musician.

As a journalist I spoke to the peasants of Singur and Nandigram, and I found out that most of the land that the Left Front Government of WB has been branding as merely monocrop and infertile land was actually multi crop. The land in Singur is by far more fertile and better irrigated (3 deep tube wells and over 25 shallow ones + neighbouring canals and a river). However, a part of the Singur land has traditionally been owned by people whose livelihood didn't depend on agriculture. Many of them don't even live in Singur, and those who still do have jobs in Calcutta. These were the people who started selling their land to promoters a few years ago. As opposed to such landowners, those people who depend on agriculture for their sole source of income have been more or less satisfied with their yield and their income. Besides, there have also been many unregistered 'Bargadars' and landless peasants who have depended absolutely on the work they got on the fertile land in Singur. It's curious that despite the tall claims of the CPI(M) about their 'Operation Barga', there were and still are hundreds of unregistered Bargadars in and around Singur. When I interviewed such a peasant in November 2006, as a TV anchor (the

session was televised live from Singur) he told me in a tone that verged on a strange sort of caustic humour that he never got his name registered because had he done so the 'Babu' would be peeved.

Hundreds of peasants in Singur told me that they wouldn't part with their land even if the CPI(M) would give them bags of gold for a single bigha. They, especially the women — and in both Singur and Nandigram I found the women to be more vocal and militant than the men in their rejection of the proposed land acquisition by the CPI(M) led WB government — steadfastly said that they were happy with their life as peasants and they would not budge from their ancestral land. All of them declared with great determination: 'We'll sacrifice our lives but not our land.'

Nandigram land is also fertile. Most peasants, both men and women, told me before the TV camera that they were proud to produce various crops and they just didn't want to sell their land for whatever price to the government and end up with some money in their hand which, they knew for sure, would soon be spent and/or squandered. I didn't find a single landowning or landless peasant who didn't claim: this is my ancestral land, I live and work, produce and reproduce on it and that's how I wish to live and toil till I die.

Curiously, while most of the peasants whose land has been acquired by brutal force, threats and coercion by the CPI(M) led government in Singur were not CPI(M) supporters, whereas almost all of those in Nandigram who have been opposing land acquisition and who have bravely tried to resist the incessant attacks on them by armed CPI(M) cadres and police and hundreds of whom (the peasants) have been killed and maimed on 14th March, 2007, in the CPI(M) led genocide have always been supporters of the CPI(M). During my several visits to Singur and Nandigram I

learned from direct interactions with many peasant men and women that they not only didn't want to part with their land and get dislocated from it but they also felt enormously insulted by the arrogance with which the CPI(M) leaders had been going about the business of land acquisition by just serving a notice on them. In both Singur and Nandigram, the insult the peasants received from the high-handed CPI(M) leaders and their cronies added to the injury of the approaching loss of their ancestral land that was almost an organic part of their Self as human beings.

The Jami Problem is not just a problem regarding the livelihood of the hundreds of thousands of peasants but also a crisis of their Identity, the very essence of their Existence as individuals and as members of a society.

**PM: Prior to Naxalbari, at the time of Naxalbari and now to oppose SEZs, the land question has come as the axis of the struggle. What is your comment on the land question?**

**KS:** As an urban man, I have no right to even make any comment on what Land means to those people who live and work on that land. But if I am forced to make any comment then I can only say on the basis of my interactions with the threatened and struggling peasants that before any government makes any plan in regard of agricultural land or forest land the people who live on that land and in that forest must first be asked about what *they* think should be good for them. Should there be even a semblance of democracy, a referendum should at least be organized on such matters, though not in the way the so-called 'fair' elections (a cruel joke!) takes place in this country. **The current developments** only prove the extent to which the government and the ruling parties in West Bengal (and also elsewhere in India) have coolly violated the basic principles of

democracy, shown their diabolic eagerness to force their will and guile on the poor and unarmed rural people, to kill, maim and humiliate the rural people by using the State Power of Police Repression as well as the might and cruelty of the armed party cadres, and, at the same time the great determination of the rural population to resist the invading state power and the CPI(M) even at the cost of trying to combat the fully armed police and the CPI(M) cadres almost with bare hands, so to say. The will of the peasants who have been repeatedly attacked, killed, injured and raped doesn't seem to slacken. The CPI(M) led government has declared war on our peasants, and the peoples' resistance, their struggle, determination and sacrifice are sending electrifying messages throughout West Bengal and is polarizing the entire society at a steady pace. What will happen next is not easy to say. But one thing is certain: after a long time, such a large scale peasants' struggle, such a boiling controversy centering around the CPI(M)'s schemes and their extreme cruelty that hasn't spared even pregnant women and children by the hundreds and the lies this ugly party is spreading to hide the horrifying facts of genocide, mass rapes and child-slaughter, such a series of protest demonstrations in many corners of the state are all happening at the same time. Such massive unrest was not seen and felt during even the great Naxalbari movement. This is generating a new power, though certain 'leftist' parties have already started to indulge in being unduly selective, thus alienating those social forces that are sick and tired of the Left Front. Certain so-called 'leftist' parties seem determined to undermine the movement against the CPI(M) by incessantly invoking an imbecile fear of the so-called 'rightist' Trinamul Congress, who, in the role they have taken in Singur, Nandigram, Bhangar, Barasat and Deganga, seem to be more pro-people and pro-peasant than some of the 'leftist' parties. I, for one, have never trusted any of the parliamentary political parties of this country. But in combating the CPI(M), in giving relief to the thousands of jobless and hungry people in Singur and in Nandigram, in trying to keep together many small political groups so a combined resistance can be put before the aggressive anti-peasant policies and armed campaigns

of the CPI(M), Ms Mamata Bannerjee is desperately trying to mobilize her party which, sadly enough, is not as organized as it should be.

**PM: Semi-feudal Indian agriculture is facing loot and penetration of the imperialist's, which has been increasing even more than during the British colonial days. So how are you viewing the ongoing struggle with respect to that against imperialist globalization?**

**KS:** Since the Political Establishment of India has sold the country out to the *globalizing* Imperialists, any massive struggle, especially by the poor peasants in India must **necessarily be a part of the Struggle Against Imperialist Globalization**. The very fact that almost a thousand acres of fertile agricultural land has been diabolically acquired by the CPI(M) led government and the fate of the peasants and the landless field workers have been brutally dealt with is nothing but a glaring lesson to the suffering peasants on what *globalizing industrialization* means and the price the toiling masses must pay for that to occupy the space that actually belongs to the cultivators. Similarly, the very news that a 'Chemical Hub' would be built on thousands of acres of land at the expense of massive dislocation of hundreds of thousands of people who would surely lose their land, their ancestral homes and their identity has been enough to impart to those toiling people a taste of *imperialist globalization*. It goes without saying that few among the struggling peasants who have been keeping month-long vigils to keep away the CPI(M) incursions into their villages, put up road blocks and demolished parts of bridges to stop police vehicles, set up human barricades to challenge the invading heavily-armed CPI(M) killers and their guardians, the West Bengal Police, sacrificed their lives before indiscriminate firings, suffered great physical and mental injuries, etc, possibly do not yet know the term '*imperialist globalization*.' But in spirit as well as in action, these brave and undaunted peasants of West Bengal have joined the struggle against *imperialist globalization*.

**PM:** You have visited Nandigram, once the bastion of the CPM. From Singur to Nandigram and Salbani now the CPM is deploying its armed vahini (wing) so

nakedly and killing Tapasi like girls and many Nandigram people. So how is it possible to advance the movement to an advanced stage? Is it possible to resist the armed CPM goons and police without developing armed resistance groups of the people?

**KS:** I don't think without developing armed resistance groups of the people the CPI(M) killer brigades and their guardian, the Police, can be adequately and effectively resisted. Now that the CPI(M) and their government have waged a war on our peasants and hence on us all, now that they have, in a planned way, executed a genocide, complete with mass rape and child-mutilation, against the people of Nandigram, now that they are known to have been disposing off hundreds of dead bodies and mortally injured people by various methods and ways, I should think that it ought to be considered *LEGITIMATE* to train and arm the peasants so they can at least resist the armed invaders and save their own lives. Personally, I am not for violence per se. As any normal individual who wishes to live and die in peace I am, in principle, against the use of violence of any nature. But if an organized party wages war on my people with the help of trained armed personnel and weapons and ammunition that the state police is provided with by taxpayers' money (I happen to be a taxpayer too) and revenue earned by our state government then I am forced to think and say that the unarmed people who are under attack and who have to die and get maimed and raped in the *military operation* that is being run against them **ought to have the right to arm themselves and fight back simply in order to defend themselves. One must not forget that in the entire armed operation against the people of Nandigram not a single policeman had died.**

**PM: SEZs problem is an all-India problem. How do you opine to rally the masses all over India against the issue?**

**KS:** Fact-based, targeted propaganda must be organized through various media against SEZs to generate a general awareness and consensus against that curse. I think soon the political parties have to decide whether they will support SEZ or oppose it. If any party claims that it is pro-people and democratic then it has to oppose SEZ. The sooner it does that, the

better its electoral prospects, provided the opponents of SEZ can launch and organize a nation wide anti-SEZ campaign. If this campaign lags behind or shows any lack of will and strength, opportunistic parties will try to get away with whatever financial profit they can acquire through means that too many people call *democratic* in India!

**PM: Due to the general crisis world over, the imperialists have designed LPG policies which the 3<sup>rd</sup> world governments are carrying out. How do you view the whole process of loot and its consequences?**

**KS:** The process of any loot is nothing but a process of looting and plundering. Its consequences are as abominable as the process itself.

**PM: In the backdrop of development of some factories and the urbanizations process at the dictates of World Bank, IMF, MNC, the CBB how can it be pro-people and real development?**

**KS:** I am no economist, no specialist. But I doubt if anything that happens in a developing country at the behest of World Bank, IMF, MNC could ever be really pro-people and be conducive to real development. The very idea negates the well being of the people and the development they really need.

**PM: Why are the CPM and BJP ruling states are vehemently implementing the policies of SEZs, while the central govt. is advising go-slow? What ideology is leading these two parties towards disastrous designs and naked surrender?**

**KS:** I think quick money. The only thing that matters to parties such as CPI(M) and BJP and the leaders thereof seems to be money, more money, even more money as quickly as possible. I don't wish to sound moralizing, but it's nothing else but *mindless and limitless greed* that seems to feed the minds of those leaders.

**PM: What are the problem the WBKJRC facing to unite other struggling**

**forces on the common issue?**

**KS:** Calculations relating to *votes and seats* in the coming Panchayet elections, I guess. Added to that, a queer sort of mistrust. At times I also feel that there is an *ego related* problem too. I think the target must be to oust the CPI(M) and the Left Front government, to destroy its support base. This ought to be *our own Common Minimum Programme* to start with.

**PM: You are known as a versatile cultural personality. Right at this juncture of the massive attack on the peasants of Bengal and the resistance against it, you are expected to contribute substantially to the field of revolutionary cultural movement. How can you fulfill our expectations?**

**KS:** Oh no! I am just an ordinary TV anchor, a scribbler and a songwriter-musician. I have already made four songs since the brutal police attack on a peaceful demonstration in Singur and I have been singing them at rallies, though I wish I could use my guitar. This is one major problem in our political rallies. I am a professional singer-musician and I need my guitar to give a proper and musically meaningful performance. Besides, the guitar has always been an integral part of my personality. But when I am made to sing at rallies I am always dissatisfied, because I am always forced to do something utterly unprofessional, thus robbing the performance of the accompaniment that should be fundamentally important for making a proper cultural-political statement. I wish someday someone will finally think of the predicament of people like me who look upon themselves as activist-performers and who need a proper sound system (which is not more expensive than the one that's normally used at political rallies) with the facility to use a guitar or some other musical instrument. I wonder why people

enthusiastic about protests and public demonstrations as well as the need to have songs never think of the role of musical instruments without which most songs are hardly complete and meaningful. And if we have a singer who also plays an instrument and if we are determined to use his voice and his songs why can't we arrange for an extra microphone that would amplify the instrument as well, thus giving the gathering of human beings a better and musically valid performance. – As a songwriter and musician I feel filmmakers and theatre people should also incorporate appropriate music to accentuate their work especially in such hours as these when more and more people are joining hands with a movement that expresses its solidarity with the struggling people in our villages as well as its opposition to the CPI(M) and its cronies. – New plays and operas need to be created, new films need to be made and shown around regularly to make people aware of what is happening outside this metropolis and to mobilize their support for the movement. Dance can also be an attractive medium to uphold the cause and to generate enthusiasm. What is equally important is the supply of competent artists and performers. Having a lot of enthusiasm and desire to perform at demonstrations is not enough. One must be adequately trained and equipped to entertain as well as inspire the people who come to the rallies and protest demonstrations. Apart from demonstrations and gatherings, to create a special cultural atmosphere in our society in times like this professionally equipped artists and performers are badly needed. – As a songwriter and musician, I hope to create more songs that will make statements appropriate for this great moment of mass uprising and will also celebrate the peoples' struggle against an oppressive and cruel regime and its heartless supporters. 

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# MARTYR'S DAY OF THE PLA IN MANIPUR COMMEMORATED ON APRIL 13, 2007



PLA after the arrest and surrender of the founder leader Bishweshwar Singh. On that fateful day Kuj Behari Singh and 10 of his comrades were surrounded by the Indian Army. They called on him to surrender. He refused, and in the heroic on-going battle he and all ten comrades were martyred. Since then the PLA commemorate Martyr's Day every April 13<sup>th</sup>. Huge rallies are held publicly and also by the armed forces of the PLA. The PLA is the main force leading the national liberation movement of Manipur and was established around the late 1970s and till today continues to be a major force in Manipur. People's March also pays its respect to Kuj Behari Singh and the other heroic martyrs of Manipur.

**L**IKE the other peoples of the North-East the people of Manipur have been fighting a heroic battle for their freedom from the jackboots of the Indian rulers and their local Manipuri agents. Lately Manipur has been in the news when the entire society came out on to the streets against the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Particularly the women of Manipur have been in the forefront of the agitation, including the six-year long hunger strike. There are a number of groups fighting for the national liberation of the Manipuri people, the most prominent being the people's Liberation Army (PLA).

Kuj Behari Singh the President and Commander-and-Chief of the

PLA was martyred on April 13 1982. He was the leader of the

