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**10 Reservation and Upper Class Backlash**

**23 The Phillipines : Killing fields of Asia**



**27 “There is need for caution with the present tactics” : An Interview with the Spoksperson of CPI(Maoist) on Nepal Development**

15

**Editorial**

Comamorate Martyr’s week countrywide 3  
Homage to Marty’s 5

**Letter from Battle field**

Deploying Army in the role of Police 7

**Report**

Imperialist MNCs and theri Indian agents get out of India 6  
R(E)volution of a Child revolutionaries 9  
Repression and Heroic Resistance in DK 36

**Ideological**

Uphold the Theoretical Weapon of Prolitarian Dictatorship 18

**Political**

Dismantaling of PDS - Another Imperialist decision 14  
Deliberate misleading Official estimates of Poverty 16

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July 28<sup>th</sup> :

## Commemorate Martyr's Week Countrywide

July 28<sup>th</sup>, the day comrade Charu Majumdar was martyred is celebrated as Shahid Week (Martyr's Week) throughout the country. A couple of weeks earlier is the martyrdom day of Comrade Kanai Chatterji. In memory of both comrades who paved the path of Indian revolution, July 28<sup>th</sup> has come to be known as Martyr's Day. It is these two comrades who brought the issue of armed struggle and people's war on to the political agenda of India.

Since then the Indian political scenario has never been the same. Since the launch of the Naxalbari movement over 10,000 comrades have laid down their lives for the cause of the Indian revolution. Just in the 20 months since the unity of the two main streams of the Maoists and the formation of the CPI(Maoist) about 600 comrades have been martyred. They comprise the best sons and daughters of the country, examples in selflessness and dedication to the cause of the poor.

On this day we cannot but remember their self-sacrificing nature and their spirit of selfless dedication to the cause of the oppressed masses of the country. All these comrades, whether leaders, rank-and-file, sympathizers, mahilla comrades or even the ordinary rural populace dreamed of a new future of a genuinely free India, free from injustice and inequality and for a genuinely democratic order. They all hated the present mafia raj that only benefits the rich and wealthy and serves the imperialists to loot our country. Can we ever forget their great and heroic sacrifice?

The government and its forces like ferocious monsters, man-eating rakshas, are massacring hundreds of revolutionaries in the name of the Salwa Juddum, Sendra, Cobra, etc. In DK even children of the age 12-14 were beheaded and their severed head put on their own houses. Pregnant tribal women were gang-raped and their stomachs then ripped open and brutally killed. Houses have been burned, crops destroyed and the meager tribal belongings looted. In AP the extra-judicial Cobras torture and kill mass leaders and even chop up their bodies while still alive. The greyhounds brutally torture and kill any Naxalite they apprehend. Similar is the trend in the other states, where the Naxalite movement is present, like Jharkhand, Bihar,

West Bengal, etc. Besides this, thousands are being incarcerated in false cases and tried in fast track courts like the senior Politburo members Sunil Roy and Narayan Sanyal. Similar is the situation with the Nationality movements of Kashmir and the North East.

Can one keep silent in the face of all this terror? To keep silent in the face of such brutalities amounts to consent. Let us all break this conspiracy of silence and celebrate Martyr's Week in memory of these heroic and dedicated comrades that gave their lives for the oppressed people of our country and thereby voice our dissent on what is going on in the name of 'democracy'. Thousands and lakhs need to come out on this week and raise their voice in condemnation of the brutalities and in salute to the martyred.

On this July 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 we particularly remember the lives of those who were martyred in the last year. Leading amongst them is comrade Karam Singh, the politburo

member from Punjab who died of illness; unable to get medical treatment in time due to the rigours of underground life. Active for four decades he dedicated his entire life for the cause of the Indian revolution. He was one of the founding members of the Maoist movement in Punjab. He dedicated his entire life in the service of the oppressed masses of the country and never feared any sacrifice. He will remain a great symbol of revolutionary commitment, courage and sacrifice for generation of revolutionaries to come.

Then the UP-Uttarkhand-Uttar Bihar suffered a great blow when the police forces brutally murdered comrade Ravi (Naemuddin) the Secretary of the Special Area Committee on the Dec.28<sup>th</sup> 2005. He too was an exemplarily comrade who at a young age shouldered such an important responsibility of the Indian revolution.

In AP the movement suffered a severe loss with the martyrdom of Com Mattam Ravi Kumar (See Box) a member of the

### Red Salutes to Heroic Martyr Ravi Kumar

Com. Ravi Kumar (alias, Shridhar, Mahinder), who had just crossed 40 years, hails from a middle class family of Tandur, a small town centre in Ranga Reddy district, 30 kms from Hyderabad who was brutally killed on June 9th by the notorious Greyhound forces in Prakasham district.

He was a State Secretariat member and a member of the state Military Commission. He was a gold medalist in B.Tech from Hyderabad and joined in the RSU (revolutionary student union) in the early 1980s and became a professional in 1984. Then onwards, for the last quarter century, he took many a job and completed the tasks confidently. He was an organiser, commander, writer, poet, critique, doctor, and had a good grasp on guerrilla war tactics.

He was also a theoretician and studied deeply. He learned editing abilities from martyr Parkash master, the then leading CCM. From magazine work he shifted to Dandakaryana and stayed two years as a State Committee member and participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress of the erstwhile PW. Later he was shifted to AP and took charge as an SCM and directly guided the Nallamala guerrilla zone. To advance the revolutionary movement in Nallamala when it is facing hardships to resist the enemy offensive, he made a breakthrough and for almost five years he intensified the guerrilla war in Prakasham and Guntur districts and gave a befitting reply to the enemy offensive.

He was very much influenced by the Nepal revolution and tried to influence others on the same lines and translated and published all the earlier documents of the CPN(Maoist) into Telugu. When he was editor of Kranti, the official organ of the State Committee (between 1994 to 1998) he wrote many of articles on the LTTE, Philippines and Peru revolutions, and other contemporary revolutionary and nationality movements of the world. He was an emotional poet who wrote many a poem under the pseudonym, *Manjira*.

Due to his martyrdom the Indian revolution has lost a young theoretician and an able proletarian leader who defended Maoism till his last breath.

secretariat of the AP State Committee on June 16 2006. In the past one year a number of other senior comrades of AP and NT have laid down their lives, many of them District Committee members. Com Jagdish was one such DCM from the district of Khammam in North Telangana. Com. Kamlakar, a young guerrilla fighter, was martyred on June 10<sup>th</sup> on the border of AP and Chhathisgarh (Cg) during a joint combing operation by the AP and Cg forces. He hails from Ranapur village of Karimnagar district in North Telangana. He joined the Party in the 1990s at the age of 16. At the time of his martyrdom he was a young guerrilla of around 30. He was very influenced by the peasant struggle of Peddapalli in the 1980s and a number of professionals who joined from his village were influenced at an early age. He joined the PLGA in 1992 and transferred to DK in 1999 as a section commander of a platoon. Later he grew step by step and became a divisional committee member in 2005. He was a good fighter and participated in many an action as a daring commander and was a model guerrilla fighter.

### **Hail the Heroic Mahilla Martyrs**

Com Eswaramma fits Gorky's "Mother" in Every Way. She was a 55 year old widow of poor peasant background. She dedicated all her four children — three daughters and one son — to the Party and revolution without any hesitation. Later she herself became a full timer, serving the Party. The AP police captured her from a house in Mydukur town of AP and murdered her after brutal torture.

Comrades Konsa Santu, Modium Sukki and Kurram Lakki of Dandakaranyawere leading activists of the revolutionary women's organisation of DK, the KAMS. All of them were brutally murdered in a most barbaric way by the para-military forces and Salwa goons, since they stood defiantly, without surrendering to the state.

### **Red salute to Com. Raju, Tuna & Jayanta of Orissa**

At 1.50 P.M of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2006 three comrades of the CPI (Maoist) got their martyrdom in the Hilang jungle of village Barakhhol of Adasha Panchayat, P.S- Riamal of Deogarh District in the sudden attack of the Police and the Para-military Forces. They all were working under the leadership of the Sambalpur-Deogarh-Sundargarh Zonal Committee. This team had reached in that village on that day. The team had arranged a Jan-Adalat basing on the complaint of the local woman where the village Gountia (Zamindar) was the president. The problem was solved and the comrades were about to leave the spot. But the people requested them to take their meal and that is why all of them took a little rest beneath a tree. But as they were tired they soon fell asleep. Getting information from before, armed with sophisticated weapons, the class enemy's goons started relentless firing on them. In retaliation the comrades fired on them. But the pre-prepared enemy's bullet entered their bodies and they laid down their lives for the cause of the international proletariat.

In Bihar and Jharkhand too a number of comrades have laid down their lives. Women form a significant part of the martyrs this year. These heroic women comrades, prove through their blood sacrifices that they are at par with their male comrades in all aspects of revolutionary live. In fact, in many instances of heroic attacks, ambushes and raids women comrades stood in the forefront and died fighting valiantly.

On this solemn occasion the Central Committee of the CPI(Maoist) has given a call to the people of the country. In a press release they have said:

*We call on the entire Party, the PLGA, the Mass organisations, the revolutionary organs of the New Power and the entire masses of the country to observe the Martyr's Week beginning from July 28<sup>th</sup>, taking a pledge that come what may we will resolutely march forward on the path reddened by the blood of thousands of our beloved martyr comrades and that we will fight until our last breath to achieve the goals for which our comrades willingly laid down their lives. We call upon you to propagate by all possible means the cherished ideals of our great martyr comrades, by exemplifying their lives, their dedication, their resoluteness while facing the worst odds, their courage and above all the great sacrifices they made.*

*During the past one year we lost more than 500 of our most beloved leaders and cadres of the party, fighters and commanders of the PLGA, leadership lights*

*of the newly emerging organs of revolutionary people's power, and the leaders and ordinary members of the revolutionary and democratic mass organisations. In the last one year around 250 comrades became martyrs in the Dandakaranya area, the majority of them being members and leaders of the revolutionary mass organisations, militia and Janata Sarkars; around 200 comrades became martyrs in the three areas of AP; 34 comrades in Bihar-Jharkhand, 7 comrade is the 3-U area (Uttarkhand, Uttar Bihar, and part of UP); 2 comrades in UP; 2 in Karnataka and one each in Maharashtra and West Bengal.*

*One of the biggest losses faced this year was of com Karam Singh a politburo member of our party and one of the founders of the Maoist movement in Punjab. Other major losses were com Naemuddin (Ravi), the secretary of the 3-U SAC Committee and com Ravi Kumar (Shridhar) a secretariat member of the AP State Committee. While hailing the sacrifices of our women martyrs special mention should be made about comrade Eswaramma of AP and comrades Konsa Santu, Modium Sukki and Kurram Lakki of Dandakaranya.....*

The CC statement culminated with a call to all the oppressed and democratic people of the country to honour these comrades and tread on the path they laid for the liberation of our country and a bright genuinely democratic future.

## Our Homage to the Martyrs

- Rabi

On 26 February 2006, a police jeep was blown to smithereens in a landmine blast that killed five policemen at Belpahari in the West Medinipur district of West Bengal. This armed action carried out by the Maoist guerrillas was aimed at avenging the “inhuman torture” of their suspected sympathizers and cadres by the police. After their death, all the leading dailies, for the next few days, carried pictures of those who fell, the wailing relatives of the deceased, the wreckage of the police truck as also the guard of honour paid to them by the police force. How could the Maoists be so cruel and inhuman as to torment the lives of the family members of the dead? The state seems busy to drive home this point.

There is no doubt that deaths such as these might be unfortunate, more particularly because most of them hail from the lower middle-class or peasant background. In fact, the Indian armed forces or paramilitary forces come overwhelmingly from peasant background. But the fact is that as they become part of the state machinery—the main instruments of state oppression and control—they get isolated from the people and act as tools for suppressing people’s resistance and revolutionary movements. “Where there is oppression there is resistance”. The people take up arms not out of their sweet will, but because this oppressive man-eating system compels them to take up arms. No revolution can succeed without wiping out or neutralizing such counter-revolutionary forces. But the revolutionaries of all countries know from their own experience that as the revolutionary movement progresses, as the enemies face defeat in one battlefield after another, dissension is caused in the enemy ranks, and they turn their weapons against the exploiters and side with the revolutionary forces. Our country will also be witness to such developments in the days to come.

However, the Maoist revolutionaries of India, as has been evident on a number of occasions, try to avoid unnecessary deaths

and tender apologies when innocent people are killed by mistake. Even when they take hostages, be they policemen or government officials, they behave well with them. They even treat wounded policemen first even before treating their own wounds, and always keep in mind Mao’s dictum “*Do not misbehave with the prisoners*”. Very recently, the officer-in-charge of R.Udaygiri town and superintendent of the local sub-jail who were taken hostage, were released for humanitarian reasons. After their release, both said their captors treated them well and took care of their needs. The mother of the police officer admitted that “*The rebels are not terrorists as they are perceived to be*” (*The Telegraph*, 5 April 2006). The most oppressive and hated of the landlords, of course, are tried in people’s courts and in many cases put to death. But many others were actually released after warning. On the contrary, the police and paramilitary forces treat the revolutionary prisoners in the most brutal way, seldom take them prisoners, torture them, cut their limbs into pieces and distribute the money they could lay their hands on even when the revolutionaries are alive and bleeding. In the Chhathisgarh region, thousands of villagers, sympathetic to the revolutionary cause, are forcibly evicted from their village homes and herded into concentration camps—reminiscent of the US imperialist policy in South Vietnam during the period of the war of national resistance waged by the heroic Vietnamese people. In the name of Salwa Judum, the state with the full backing of the central government has been pursuing a policy of untold persecution of people—murder, rape followed by murder, cutting of limbs, torture. It has been a story of cruelty at its worst that beggars description.

Let us now get back to where we started. When the paramilitary or combat forces die, condolence meetings are held, their pictures are shown on the TV, newspapers come out with pictures of the bereaved members of the families. But do they do the same when revolutionaries fell to police

bullets in numerous staged encounters, when they are tortured most cruelly and driven to their end, do the wails of their parents, brothers and sisters find any place in the leading print media or the TV? Do the state officials express any genuine regret for the sufferings caused to them? Never. Thousands of revolutionaries, progressive people, peasants, workers and other toiling people have fallen victims to state repression in the recent years in the most brutal manner, but the sufferings caused to them, the trauma caused to their near and dear ones were seldom highlighted in the press or the TV. Who would mourn their sufferings and pay homage to those who valiantly laid down their lives?

It will be pertinent to refer to a statement made by Karl Marx during 1848—the ‘year of revolutions’ in a somewhat similar situation. “*We may be asked, do we not find a tear, a sigh, a word for the victims of the people’s wrath, for the National Guard, the mobile guard, the republican guard and the line? The state will care for their widows and orphans, decrees extolling them will be issued, their remains will be carried to the grave in solemn procession, the official press will declare them immortal, the European reaction in the East and the West will pay homage to them. But the plebeians are tormented by hunger, abused by the press, forsaken by the physicians, called thieves, incendiaries and galley-slaves by the respectabilities; their wives and children are plunged into still greater misery and the best of those who have survived are sent overseas. It is the right and privilege of the democratic press to place laurels on their gloomy threatening brow*” (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 29 June 1848).

It is indeed the right and privilege of the democratic press like the *People’s March* to pay homage to the martyrs and place laurels on those who are the victims of state persecution, for it is on the victory of the armed struggle they have been waging that the future of our country depends.

## Imperialist MNCs and their Indian Agents get out of Bastar!

- Sharda

This was the slogan with which the Adivasi peasants of Dandakarnaya launched a militant anti imperialist struggle as a fitting tribute to the memory of the three great revolutionary heroes, comrades Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their martyrdom.

Defying the on going brutal campaign of suppression, the “*Salva Judum*”, thousands of Adivasi peasants held series of meetings in hundreds of villages all over the Dandakaranya area, distributed thousands of leaflets, pasted hundreds of posters and erected banners during the period 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>th</sup> March, paying rich revolutionary tribute to the three most beloved sons of our land, comrades Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

Speakers at these meetings dwelled at length on the great patriotic zeal and staunch anti-imperialist stand of the three great martyr heroes, particularly emphasising that the only true tribute the people can pay in their memory is to carry forward the immortal heroes’ banner of struggle against imperialism through to the end, to wipe out once for all both imperialists and their Indian agents.

Focusing in particular on Bastar, the speakers pointed out how the imperialist plunder is going on unhindered for the past six decades and how this process is being accelerated under the impact of the globalization policies of the ruling classes.

Bastar, they pointed out, with its vast mineral and forest resources has for long been the happy hunting ground for the imperialists and their Indian agents like the Birlas, the Thapers etc. The Japanese imperialist have been plundering iron ore from Bailadilla mines from decades on, that too yet dirt cheap rates. The Indian ruling classes, forever at the service of their imperialist masters, have even constructed a railway line right from the mines all the way up to Visakhapatnam port in Andhra Pradesh – Kirundum – Waltair line – spending thousands of crores of people’s money, solely to benefit the Japanese imperialist. To further accelerate this export of the ore at a much cheaper cost of transportation, the rulers recently completed the laying of a pipeline upto Visakhapatnam, to carry the ore through the slurry method – this project was executed by one of India’s big comprador houses, the ESSAR.

Moreover, the National Mineral Development Corporation (a central government undertaking), which is the main facilitator for the Japanese imperialists in this route of looting our ore for the past four decades, recently concluded another agreement to continue to supply ore for ten more years – which is certain to be extended until all the mines are totally depleted. **This, the speakers pointed out, happened at a time when 112 iron industries of the small and medium sector, located in Chattisgarh, closed down as the raw material was beyond their reach – they had to pay four times the rate at which Japan is purchasing the ore. This is in essence is the patriotism of our rulers, the speakers pointed out – the rulers are feeding more and more iron ore to satiate the hunger of Japanese steal industries, while pushing national industries out of existence by denying them the raw material.** The BJP government in Chattisgarh, for all it’s rhetoric about “*Swadeshi*”, did not lift even a finger to rescue these Indian industries, which are dying out. Moreover it is busy signing MoUs with big comprador houses like the Tatas, the Jindals, the ESSARs, selling away all the forest and mineral wealth of Bastar forever. Thus, the speakers urged the masses, unless they stand up and fight for the retention of their traditional right of ownership over the land, water and mineral resources of Bastar, the entire Koya (or Gond) race will get trampled out of existence.

This, the speakers emphasised, was the background and one of the main reasons for the launching of the genocidal ‘*Salva Judam*’ campaign.

Since, the people of the Dandakaranya, during the last 25 years of the revolutionary

struggle under the leadership of the Maoists, have not only vanished all institutions of the exploitive state from their area but also started building their own organs of peoples power – the *Janathana Sircars* - including military organs, with good capabilities. Moreover through this process they not only accepted their traditional right of ownership of their land and are firmly determined to defend their right. So, the rulers at the state and centre were in a quandary, as they were not in a position to hand over DK on a platter to the compradors and the imperialist MNCs. So, the speakers explained, the state government, with the active backing of the centre, launched the genocidal *Salva Judum* campaign, aiming to achieve their objectives. The first being to try to wipe out the revolutionary movement led by the Maoists, under which the people were running their own organs of power, and the other is to wipe out villages one after the other and forcefully herd the people in new settlements located on highways, so that, the MNCs, and the comprador houses will have all the forest areas for their free exploitation and will, in addition, have a vast reserve of uprooted Adivasi peasants as a cheap source of labour. As such, the speaker pointed out the fight against *Salva Judum* is in essence a fight against the imperialists and their Indian agents. The speakers urged the Adivasi masses to act as the true inheritors of the anti imperialist struggle legacy of comrades Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Shukhdev by defeating *Salva Judum*, thus dealing a telling blow to the imperialists and their Indian agents.

Enthused by this, the Adivasi masses responded with a firm resolve “*Come what*

**Contd. at page 8**

### People Make the Polish stone and burn the effigy of George Bush

The revolutionary masses of the DK joined their brothers and sisters all over the country in taking up protest actions against the visit of the genocidal Maniac of the No.1 terrorist of the world, the president of the US, George W. Bush. Thousands of people participated in a week long programme of protest all over the DK. As a part of this the people erected an effigy of Bush on the Bijapur- Gangaloor road. Knowing well the cowardice of the police forces, the people attached some wire to the effigy. Soon a police force arrived on the spot to save Bush from such ignominy. But as soon as they saw the protruding wires, all their apparent bravery vanished and none dared to approach it fearing that it may contain a pressure mine. They started pelting stones on it and finally brought it down. Even then fear did not leave them; finally they set fire to it from a distance and to their surprise it burned completely within minutes, as it had nothing but grass inside it.

## **Deploying Army in the Role of Police**

*(Dear Editor, I am a revolutionary, sending this letter to People's March from the battle field somewhere in central India. This letter deals with the subject as to how the ruling classes are getting prepared by forming various new types of forces to smash the revolutionary war in our country.)*

A decade back the Indian Army South Command conducted a preliminary survey for sending the army to the Nallamala forest region of Andhra Pradesh. At that time the HQ of the South Command said "we can swing into action to help the state government at any moment." But the moment did not come at all. What was the reason that the 'said moment' did not come? Here lies the answer. Our class struggle did not develop to that extent nor did the guerrilla war gain that kind of momentum in that region to demand the need of the army. With the aim to totally wiping out the class struggle and our forces the government utilized the STF, the APSP, the CRPF and the most vicious Greyhounds through the directives of Andhra Pradesh SIB officers. So the enemy forces controlled the movement utilising only state-level forces. And so the army was not deployed.

From the year 2005 Dandakarnaya has grown to be an important centre of the revolutionary movement in the country. The Indian army chief thought of sending the army to control that region. From 2003 to 2005 people's war grew extensively in Baster and now it is getting more intensified. From the middle of 2005 a state onslaught started by the name of 'Salwa Judum' (SJ). Along with the Special Forces under the leadership of Mahendra Karma, a Congress leader built up a Salwa Judum force with a section of non tribals as leaders and a tiny section of land lord and bad gentry of local tribal. With the help of this 'Salwa Judum' force the state BJP government is attacking us and wants to trigger a civil war. And the party is completely successful in resisting this civil war from all quarters. Now It is being planned to deploy army in that region. Four-five days ago 20 retired army officers who are experts in explosion have been recruited.

Besides this the administration has clearly chalked out its various plans. A jungle war fare school has been set up in the Kanker town to impart anti-insurgency training. In a recent press meet head of the school a Brigadier from Indian Army Commented 'Salwa Judum' is an effort and

will be utilized as a springboard for the Army operations because depending on SJ Maoists can never be coped with. So it is crystal clear that Central government is planning to deploy army as solution to counter the revolutionary movement particularly the upcoming revolutionary peoples committees and the peoples army the Indian army will be deployed. And the Maoists bases should be targeted.

The state is working out different plans to repress the movement extensively in Dandakaranya along with all other states. Meanwhile putting the army jawans as the police force is a brain child of Nitish Kumar, the new chief minister of Bihar.

There is lack of enough police to combat the Naxalite problem. So, within a short period the chief minister planned to build a greater number of new forces. Hence, the birth of the SAP (State Auxiliary Police) was shaped. All of them being retired army men they need not have to undergo basic training course one year. Within only 20-30 days 2200 army soldiers were recruited, put into some essential basic training and were sent to several districts of Bihar. There is a plan to take 6000 more army men. In exchange for Rs. 6000 a month this force has been recruited on the basis of a 1 year contract. The time limit would be reviewed later on. Compared to the common police and special state police this force is more experienced and has more expertise in matters of war tactics and war strategies as well as it is psychologically more militant. Within the last 2 to 2½ decades no force has been formed and sent to the guerrilla area by recruiting from the common police force. Special selected forces have been deployed, who have a training mentality and who are skilled in handling different weapons. That is, forces with military skills and a mentality of leaving their homes and native places for years have been deployed against the revolutionaries. And such type of forces are as suitable as the SAP.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April in a celebration for this force Asish Ranjan Sinha the home secretary of Bihar said "This is first time this type of force has been formed after independence.

*Formation of this special force is highly a matter of pride. I hope it is only the beginning of a positive trend, which will be implemented in the other states afterwards."*

On the aforesaid occasion the Bihar-Orissa-Jharkhand sub-area commander S.K.Bisweswar said "This force is formed for anti-terrorism campaigns and is a completely trained and effective force. Other than getting used to the incoming situation this force does not need any special training."

Many say Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is a liberalist. But that was never right and now too it is not correct. The recruitment of the army in the role of the police is the brain child of Nitish Kumar which, as new war tactic, is being applied against us. Officials of other states have been given the advice to implement the same process. Very shortly this plan will be enforced in other states too. It is the back door policy of the ruling classes.

In Dandakaranya and Jharkhand new forces are being formed in new names. If we try to find out the class character of those who are working as the special police officer (SPO) in Dandakaranya, it is seen they are all the elite and zamindars and reactionaries. Their role is anti-revolution. They are all state leaders and workers of 'Salwa Judum'. In the name of police camps and refugee camps, the people who are living in the state camps are considering SPOs as their adversary. The work of the SPO is to vacate all the villages and force the people of the villages to stay in the refugee camps. This force is a very ruthless and brutal force in plain clothes that seeks to ruthlessly crush the revolutionary movement. Already 3000 armed forces have been pressed into service and the home department has passed orders to recruit 12,000 more.

Such forces are also being set up in Jharkhand. Like the Salwa Judum, governmental terror is also going on in Jharkhand, under the name of "Sendrara". Sendrara leaders and workers are originally the members of the Association for Citizens

Protection Organisation created by the police. Now they will trigger civil war legally with weapons in the village areas of Jharkhand. A directive has been passed for the SPO to organise the force in the name of the village protection force.

One more similar type of organised force is being built with the extremely backward Paharia tribe of Jharkhand. In 1779, that is two hundred twenty-six years ago, the British Colonial India's Collector of Bhagalpur, Augustus Claveland, sent a letter to the then Indian governor Warren Hastings, with a proposal to set up a Pharia battalion. But that proposal was never implemented as the East India Company was not prepared to spend Rs. 30,000 for the said battalion. But today according to the plan of Arjun Munda, the home department of this so-called independent country, is going to put the dream of Claveland into a reality. Arjun Munda said, "we had approached the Centre with a concrete proposal to raise a Paharia battalion, which would not only boost the economy of the tribe, residing largely in Santhal Parganas, but would also go a long way to counter the menace of extremism in the remote corners of Jharkhand where even trained police personnel do not have easy access due to a lack of knowledge about the difficult terrain".

This comment of Arjun Munda itself makes it evident, what he really wants. Development of the paharias or civil war amongst the tribals? America had set up more or less a similar type of new contractual army in Iraq war. The people of Iraq put up a mighty resistance which resulted in the death of many American army men and this led to the building up of grievances among the Americans. This is the reason for setting up the contractual army so that in Iraq, the American army could be kept behind and

#### Contd. from page 6

may, we will certainly defeat the Salva Judum!", "We will not allow Bailadilla ore to be exported to Japan!", "It must be supplied to the national industries only!". The people then gave a call to the owners of local industries "Come join hands with us in the fight against the imperialism!"

Having taken this pledge they immediately went in to action. The Koya Bhumkal militia of Bailadilla, at first, conducted an extensive campaign against

this contractual army could be put in the forefront. The NDA government also decided to send the army from our country in the Iraq war. But the NDA government was forced to retreat from its decision keeping in mind the forthcoming parliamentary elections and the objections raised by the other parties. But a contractual army was sent. Many retired army officers and jawans were sent. Many contract soldiers died in the Iraq war and their bodies remained strewn openly on the roads. Seeing this the American people raised their voices against it and only after that the governments of the respective country started announcing which soldier was dying from which country. Then only it became known that such an army was also sent from India. The ruling classes can set up any type of army according to their plan and also resort to which ever process they wish for self protection.

It can never be denied that this plan and the brain child of a contract army of Nitish Kumar will have a very drastic impact. There are many lakhs of such retired armymen and there is much possibility of a section amongst them to be with the ruling class in order to earn money. We have to stand forth as the new mighty force by extensively propagating our revolutionary politics against imperialist culture and values.

Hope, the revolutionaries will be successful in exposing the plans of Nitish Kumar in front of the people and intensify the resistance movement. Along with this we have to make an appeal to the retired jawans and their families so that they may not stand against the revolutionary war.

#### Post Script:-

As I was trying to send this letter some two-three matters more have caught my attention:

i) The retired DGP K.P.S Gill of the Punjab

the policies of the NMDC, which is exporting iron ore depriving the local industries of this ore and thus leading to their closure. They distributed leaflets and pasted posters about this. There after they raided the Banse railway station on the Krundul-Waltair line, blasted a railway engine, due to the impact of which the warhead electric traction also got damaged. There they removed rails to a length of 30<sup>th</sup> meters. Meanwhile the Koya Bhumkal militia, roared that they are the rightful owners of all lands, water and mineral

Police has been appointed as the counselor by the Chhathisgarh government. They have made a special plan and had sent it to Delhi. Now Mr. Duggal would think over it, if the plan could be enforced. Counselor Gill advised Centre for "more more .....more para military forces"

ii) The Home department proposed to deploy the air force in Chhathisgarh and Jharkhand. The Home minister advised and asked to discuss more on this subject. Air force officer says it is necessary to think deeply over the political matters as well as to use the air force directly against the Maoists. While these discussions were going on all were united in their opinion that the helicopters which are with the BSF, can be deployed against the Maoists in several states. What ever it is, air strikes, air dropping, air lifting will be carried on.

iii) The Centre has decided to set up nine more battalion forces immediately. These forces will be deployed in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Karnataka, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhathisgarh. More forces will be put into service in Tamilnadu and West Bengal. Only a few days ago the Center decided to build up a dozen IRBs in various states. Andhra Pradesh, Chhathisgarh forces will be set up in the name of the Adivasi battalion. Recruitment for this is going on. In the Kanker forest many adivasis are being trained in military skills in the jungle warfare school.

To supervise all these matters the PMO (Prime Minister Office) has constructed a special cell.

We have also to prepare the masses keeping in view the preparations made by the central and state governments in the past 5-6 months to intensity war against us.

May 2006

resources, burnt a conveyer belt at Bachali to a length of fifty meters. Than another batch of this militia blasted a tower carrying 220 KV(HT) electricity supply lines near Barsoor in protest against the state and central government negligence towards the closer of the 110 industries.

Finally, the entire DK area observed a *Bundh* on March 23<sup>rd</sup> as a militant anti imperialist protest in commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> martyrdom day of the three great anti imperialist patriots. ■ ■



## (R)Evolution of child revolutionaries - *tender voices from Jharkhand*

'Children are the future citizens' is the most frequented phrase coming out of the mouths of politicians and philanthropists. Children's day is observed with artificial spirit publicizing the long kurtha and a red rose as the symbol of children's prosperity. But in fact, most of the children in our country do not have a little bread to eat and a small cloth to wear. This has to change. This change has already started. Here are some children in the actual path for children's liberation. They are born poor. They are born into revolution. This is the ongoing history in the state of Jharkhand.

Few feel that keeping children out of physical work alone is taking care of them. Development does not take place without physical labor. But what is the actual process of development of children? How should it be? The revolutionary struggle areas of Jharkhand have successfully experimented on this.

A generation has grown in this process. The young child of 7 – 8 years of age starts with just watching the armed squad that visits the village, with a running nose from a considerable distance out of fear. Later they have developed as organizers, singers and leaders of higher committees.

These are the quotes of a few child revolutionaries in the forests of Jharkhand. They are all from poor adivasi peasant families.

'I looked after the cattle. I had no mother. My elder brother used to beat me that I did not work properly. I had nothing at home. So I thought I could learn to read and write well in the party. So I joined the party. I ran with a friend in the village, walked for one full day and reached the squad'.

'I was going to school when I first knew of the armed squad. I used to think about them. Once they came to our village. I went and met them. The same day I decided to join them'.

'I had to go to school in the neighboring village on a cycle. After a while the cycle was damaged. My father did not have enough money to get it repaired. I stopped going to school. At this time, the armed squad came to our village. My mother objected me joining the squad. But I opposed her. Now I am learning to read and write in the Party'.

All these children are not above twelve years of age. They are moving along with the squad, in uniform, carrying their belonging with themselves. Here are some more....

'I used to rear cattle. Before I actually saw the party people, I heard about them. It was said that the party people would dip

children into hot water. It was 'R' who told me that the party would give us a good life. I understood what it was. So I joined'.

There are instances where parents themselves sent their children to join the party.

'I was going to school when I heard of the party. My father was in touch with them. I was assisting him in catching fish when I first saw the uniformed comrades. Initially I was afraid. My uncle was working in the Kranthikari Kisan Committee. My father wanted me to join the squad. I was already interested in them. Thus I am in the party'.

Here is the story of a much younger boy whose voice is yet more childish –

'My father died. My mother left me to start a family with another man. My uncle brought me up. I was interested in school but they did not send me. When I saw the squad, I requested them I would join them'.

This is the story of a girl who has joined the party due to nothing but patriarchy.

'My father had two wives. My mother is the second wife. The first wife illtreated my mother. My mother left to her father's house where I was born. I was sent to school. Anyway life was not that easy. My mother remarried.

When comrades came to our village I used to take water and food to them. Once I took that chance and left from the back of the house and went to them. Neighbors told my mother and she came along. But I did not listen to her. I stayed with the party'.

See another example:

'My father worked as a full time activist in the Kranthikari Kisan Committee. He sent me and my brother to school. I used to return from school at 3 in the afternoon and go to get back the cattle. Whenever the squad visited the village they used to encourage me to join the revolution. When I told my father of my interest he said I should wait until I am a little old. But I was eager. So I ran away from home with a friend and joined the squad after walking for one full day'.

There are as many girls as boys in this process. While for boys it is the liberation from a backward society, for the girls it is additionally liberation from the patriarchal oppression.

What can children of such a small age do for revolution? When children could do laborious work in hotels and dangerous works in industries like explosives (in Sivakasi), garments and other such things, they can definitely do work of opposing the same.

Childhood is normally understood in a romantic, emotional and sentimental manner.

But in reality it is not. It is not so, anywhere in the world. The naked, stark reality in their lives makes them mature at a very early age. It is not the so called precociousness of children who perform the ability to write PG examinations at the age of ten, or do this and that extraordinary things that are recorded in the books with much publicity.

These children are not educated through books. They are educated through life. So they easily imbibe the revolutionary politics. They are not pure mental beings. They are physical laborers. Once armed mentally, their energies develop in a diversified manner. They start to learn singing. The cultural organization 'Jharkhand Abhen' provides them a good opportunity. In fact more than 90 per cent of the members of the cultural organization are children below 15 – 16 years.

After becoming full timers in the party, they move with the women organizers or with the squad. During meetings in the villages, they sing, perform play-lets and other such things. They carry out certain important tasks too. At times they even help the higher committees. Thus they are part and parcel of the Party. They are part and parcel of revolution.

This happened in Vietnam. This happened in China. Now it is happening in India, in the state of Jharkhand. And undoubtedly the Revolutionary Children in India are going to achieve more and more strides in their Revolutionary practice.

Yes. Children are the future citizens of a Socialist society.

Lastly –

Journalists coming to meet the leaders of the revolution normally criticize that children are robbed of their childhood and are forced to join the party. The above instances are enough to understand what is being robbed off, and what is being given to the children by the revolutionary party. Taking children into the Party does not mean that they do all what a grown ups do. There is the age limit of 16 years to become eligible for Party membership. Meanwhile the children are not only looked after. They are developed in a creative manner, perhaps in a manner not possible elsewhere.

Anyway this is the simple answer they gave when questioned why they preferred the party life despite difficulties :

**'In the village we cannot know anything. But in the party everything is taught. We can get a better understanding of things. We can develop ourselves and also develop the society'.** ■ ■

## Reservation and Upper Castes' Backlash

*Dr. Gupta*

The Constitution of India had to accept reservation for the socio-economically unprivileged castes and tribes in India. In clauses 340, 341 and 342 of the Constitution the question of reservation was incorporated for the SCs, STs and OBCs. Even after half a century reservations have been ignored or half-heartedly accepted. Commissions after Commissions were set up but the net result was not impressive. In fact even for the dalit reservation quota (except for the Class IV sweeper category) are to quite an extent not filled up. Only when the Mandal Commission Report was tabled and a stormy wind passed throughout India in 1991 the question of caste-based deprivation, the question of 27% reservation in the central government services for the OBCs as well as upper caste frenzy against reservation on a wide scale brought forth the pertinent question of OBC reservation to centre stage. The current country wide debate and upper caste hideous move to banish reservation policy have come up in the wake of the Arjun Singh announcement to reserve 27% seats for the OBCs in all educational institution under the purview of the central government. It should be made clear here that the Constitutional provisions of reservation are only a partial acknowledgement of the wide inequalities based on the caste system and its perennially depriving role. Yet the minimal reservation of 27% in central government institutions has been intolerable to the upper castes and their mentors. The prominent industrialists of the country have gone hammer and tongs against the current move. Infosys Chairman Mr. N R Narayana Murthy (he is also chairman of the governing body of the IIM, Ahmedabad), an anti reservationist sermonised "*We should concentrate more on primary education and provide students with more nutrition, books and other facilities*" [Statesman 20 May'06]. Some wise anti reservationists claim "*that reservation is partly responsible for the decline in efficiency among government and public sector staff*" [ibid].

The main aim of the current anti-reservation protest is to maintain the hegemony of the upper castes in professionally higher posts, medical,

engineering streams and the centres of culture. So long in the service sector reservation in a very limited way was prevalent for the OBCs courtesy Mandal Commission recommendation, and now this privilege is extended to the educational sector by way of 93<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment. It should be known that even if the OBC people's percentage crosses 52% the reservation can not be considered beyond 50% mark. And the Supreme Court verdict fixed OBC reservation at 27%. The upper castes are afraid that if reservation is allowed to some extent it will make a dent into the centres of their hegemony and so they prefer competition limited within the upper castes. The weak competitors in the socially and also economically unprivileged groups can never match minus reservation the socio-economically powerful upper caste people enjoying the top all the socio-cultural benefits. The upper castes have a social and educational environment due to centuries of elite education. Besides, they have deep cultural links with those in authority who favour them for the limited jobs and educational seats. From the very start there is no level playing field between the upper castes and the OBC/SC/STs even if equal in economic levels.

The power of the upper castes is all too evident. The media coverage through a number of visuals, hours given over mainly anti-reservation view points and frequent high-light of anti-reservation stirs make a telling commentary on the upper casteist bias. The news paper coverage, editorials, letters to the editors, etc. are overwhelmingly anti-reservation. It is crystal clear how upper caste Brahministic mindset works so efficiently in the main cities and institutions to resist the very minimal move in favour of the OBCs. This is not surprising as the media is packed with upper caste elite. For example, amongst the 315 senior journalists (English and hindi) of Delhi not one was from the SCs and STs and 71% were from the Hindu upper castes.

Those who clamour for the economic criteria, like the CPI(M), do not take into account the harsh fact that a poor Dalit or low caste and a poor Brahmin or the upper caste do not stand on the same position vis-à-vis opportunities and life chances. By virtue of birth ascribed higher status of a Brahmin or an upper caste person in our

class-caste based society with strong correlation of caste and class the upper caste person shall be endowed with a great many advantages to easily outsmart a poor Dalit. The special advantages are born out of the power of the jati-varna system itself.

It should be kept in mind that the Mandal Commission recommendations or the present decision on reservation is basically Varna and Jati based affirmative action. Such reservations can not eliminate poverty, nor can they ameliorate the economic condition of the poor as such, they are only meant to destroy the monopoly reservation of the upper castes in services and educational fields and to bring about some economic change of a small section. This endeavour to implement the policy of the reservation is a part and parcel of the democratic movement. The struggle for reservation has also brought to the forefront the very question of integrating class and caste questions in Indian society. For a long time the Revisionists in India has simply ignored the caste question as something of the superstructure which will automatically vanish in the process of economic development. They completely failed to realize that this caste system is being maintained by the ruling/exploiting classes for perpetuating their ruthless exploitation and suppression, and that this is one of the vital issues of the revolutionary class struggle. The reservation debate has brought to the fore the question of caste, the need for anti-caste struggle as part of the class struggle.

Basically the question of the reservations to the higher institutes of learning is an issue of the middle classes. It is irrelevant to the poor, whether from the oppressed castes or the higher castes as they can never even dream of such education due to their economic plight. So all talk of economic criteria is a hoax and a cunning brahminical ploy to maintain the upper-caste supremacy in the institutes of higher learning.

The upper caste students, teachers and casteists of the top layer of Jati-Varna system now raise similar hue and cry that inefficient people of the OBCs (and obviously of the SCs and STs) would lower the educational standards, professional skills. They also argue that all the OBCs, STs and even the SCs – about the last two, the voice

is not so vocal though – are not always deprived too. So a rich section of the OBCs would grab the opportunities by way of reservation facilities. It is implied that the economically better placed of the OBCs will be the gainers and can continue with their studies in the above mentioned institutions. But it will make those OBC students to make inroads into the domain so long well-preserved by mainly upper castes.

It is notable that the upper casteists seldom openly vent out their anger against the SCs and STs over reservation for the Class IV posts. That is anyhow the reserve of the SCs. What they fear is them making inroads into their well fortified domain. At the time when higher education has come into sharp focus following the decision on OBC reservation, a Parliamentary Standing Committee has found that the participation of the SCs and STs in higher education is “abysmally low” compared to their percentage in the population. The Parliamentary Committee on Human Resources Development said the enrolment of the SCs in higher education ranged from 8.6% in 1990-91 to 11.3% in 2002-03 while that of the STs was from 2.1% to 3.6% [Hindu, May 28’06].

Even if a microscopic percentage of the SCs and STs make their way into higher education, services, etc. they receive all types of obstruction and become a butt of joke for the inherent Brahministic mindset of the upper caste students and colleagues. If one studies the arguments of the upper casteists people in regard to the current debate on reservations for the OBCs one should obviously conclude that the same Brahministic logic can be stretched to dismiss reservations of the SCs and the STs. Sooner or later along with the continuing atrocities on the Dalits by the upper caste landlords and their goons a pressure tactics shall be pursued to abolish the reservations for the SCs and the STs. Their arguments are basically against reservations per se.

#### **Meritocracy a Myth**

The question of OBC reservation in the IITs, IIMs and central universities has once again stirred up a hornets’ nest with the Brahministic elitist class sounding the alarm on declining merits. The colonial white Britishers also expressed similar opinion on the freedom loving colonized Indians as unfit to rule for efficiency in administration.

India has had enough of such meritocracy over half a century since the Transfer of Power with upper caste administrators, doctors, engineers, etc. in existing system with problems galore. Corruption, nepotism, fraud and vulgar servility to the imperialists is the general trend. However, a small number of them has shown honesty and skill in the respective fields. What is at issue or what the upper caste elite makes uproarious noise about is how come the other caste-class of Indian society can make a claim of attaining merit. Over centuries Manuvad taught us that knowledge and power is the preserve of the Dwija. For so long the Dwija people have been able to control the administration, seats of learning, land, capital and what not. Those people have preached the most undemocratic Brahministic definition on knowledge and merit. And with such understanding this Manuvad ordained that Sudras (the present OBCs) and Dalits are meant for manual labour from tilling the soil, to weaving to carpentry to burning of corpses to carrying night soil. Reservation does the work to break in a small way the so-called birth ascribed skills of the oppressors and brings about some mobility in profession. It can neither eradicate casteism nor poverty. It is not its purpose. And here the Brahministic elite section howls with the Manuvadi logic for fear of losing the monopoly in education or services. Merit is not gene based and the Dwija blood alone does not afford to acquire merit in education and such other fields. Examples are galore to dismiss such logic. An Ambedkar or a Meghnath Saha or such tall personalities are not exceptions. However, we here only touch upon the merit in the professions beyond manual labour. Every profession, manual and non-manual demands some skill or knowledge. Those who are crying for free competition among all categories of castes for the entry into higher studies and also services do know it pretty well that with the schooling in ordinary educational institutions (the rich upper castes generally manage to enroll their wards in special institutions to build up a professionally sound career) the SCs, STs and OBCs in general lose out in open competition. Their much-hyped slogans like “Reservation the Menace”, “Reservation for the Death of Merit”, etc. are ploys of the followers of Manuvad masquerading as innocent democracy-loving do-gooders of our

society. They can not accept the entry of Shudras and the Dalits into their well-preserved domain. And here lies the conflict between Brahministic Manuvad and democratic outlook in a jati-varna based society where the levels of economic exploitation and deprivation have close correlation with the social layers of jatis, particularly of the lowly placed jatis. Brahministic Manuvad wants to continue with the traditional division between the manual and mental labour in the name of free competition.

It is intriguing to note the studied silence of the upper caste protestors as regards the system of capitation fees to enter medical, engineering and such other streams. Lakhs of rupees is paid to various institutions to buy the seats and one can presume that the monied people of the upper castes are the main beneficiaries of such advantage. Even the so-called Left Front government does not lag behind in such seat selling. In such cases the question of ‘merit’ is simply forgotten. Last year in West Bengal 105 students were enrolled for the MBBS degree course on payment of Rs. 10 lakh per head. For this ‘merit’ a minimum mark of 50 percent in Higher Secondary was enough and no joint entrance examination was required. The upper casteist protesters who so much clamour for ‘merit’ had never raised this issue. Nor have they raised the issue for the quota for NRIs. This is an all India phenomenon. And the Manuvadi upper caste people only want to thwart the entry of the OBCs to their domain of ‘merit’.

#### **Economic criteria, a Ploy to Help Upper Castes**

Some people show a curious keenness to concede reservation with the conditional stress on skimming off the ‘creamy layer’ from the purview of reservation. Apparently there seems to be some logic in such argument which is so much inclined to provide reservation to the economically worse candidates. The CPI(M) Polit Bureau in its statement on May 17, 2006 repeats the old argument in the following words “while the CPI(M) is for reservation, it has maintained that distinct from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, there is differentiation among the other backward classes. Reservation should benefit the poorer and needy sections among these communities.” Like the CPI(M) we also find a major section of the

media and elite who so long wanted to preserve the upper caste status have now become votaries of reservation for the poor and needy class from among the OBCs. Many of them do covertly nurture the same opinion in regard to the SCs and STs suddenly discovering class divisions among them.

After much dilly dallying in order to woo the OBCs and the upper castes inside the BJP the party ultimately agreed to take a middle path seeking inclusion of the economically backward among the upper castes, besides the OBCs, within the ambit of reservation benefits as opposed to reservation only for OBCs. [The Statesman 31 May'06].

We are here concentrating on the OBCs and the question of 'creamy layer'. It is really a foregone conclusion that for the concerned elite institutions only the affluent OBCs shall now grab the reservation facilities. Similarly from amongst the upper castes only the comparatively rich sections shall be able to continue with studies in the central government controlled institutions. For the reserved seats in various institutions and services meant for the SCs and STs generally the more organised and economically a little better placed among them can think of joining such institutes or services. Yet after so many years the SCs and STs fail to fill up the reserved seats for the lack of enough numbers of candidates from them. So if the economic criterion is imposed the SCs and STs will be seldom represented to those institutes or services.

Similarly if economic criterion is made binding on the OBC students it will amount to negating the ground reality that the institutes which have come under sharp focus now require quite sound economic condition of the candidates. To raise the question of needy and poor sections of the OBCs for those institutes known for rich upper caste centres would mean virtual rejection of the entry of the OBC students to those fields.

By reservation we mean democratization of space and imposing the question of economic slabs right now would defeat the very purpose of reservation. Until and unless the well fortified areas controlled by the rich upper castes get tangibly broken with the entry of the so-long deprived SCs, STs and OBCs any question of economic

slab or the new love for the poor and needy among the letters is meaningless.

### **Topsy Turvy of Parliamentary Parties and Rejection of Education for Shudras**

Though the Constitution speaks of the need for reservation for the OBCs not only in services but also in educational institutions, even after 55 years justice is denied to the OBCs. In 2005 when both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha passed the Constitutional Amendment Bill to ensure reservations not only in government institutions but also in private institutions all political parties from the BJP to the Congress were apparently agog with enthusiasm in their support to the Bill to prove themselves as champions for the cause of the OBC students. The chameleon like colour changes of all such parliamentary parties became all too evident when Kalyan Singh announced 27% reservation for the OBCs in the central educational institutes in order to consolidate his OBC vote-base. The true Brahminical mindset came to the fore in respect of those bourgeois, communal and pseudo-left political parties either covertly opposing such reservation or taking the side of the anti-reservation stir or making strange arguments that will neither antagonize the anti-reservation violent protests of the upper castes students and their mentors nor will they alienate the OBCs. Such double talk, double role and masking their faces to woo the vast number of the OBCs are all crass hypocrisy of the Indian parliamentary parties. Even the present proposals of the Congress are nothing but a desperate bid to garner OBC votes particularly with a mind to the upcoming UP elections; their patch up formula is in order not to alienate the upper caste votes.

Historically speaking, during British rule, 150 years back, the very limited effort to provide education to the OBCs and SCs was violently opposed by the Brahminical elite section. It was the genuine demand of the advanced sections of the OBCs and the colonial government intervened and then immediately retreated from its move. Then emerged on the scene the great social reformer of Maharashtra, Jyoti Rao Phule who tried to impart education to the OBCs (Shudras), SCs (Ati-Shudras) and women. Phule faced stiff opposition from the Brahminical community. He was even forced to leave his home. Yet Phule

remained undaunted, opened schools for those socially and economically unprivileged and for all such efforts he had to face a Brahmin elite that employed goons to kill him. Yet the intrepid social reformer carried on his task of giving education to the OBCs, STs and women amidst violent opposition from the upper caste elite section. Even when the colonial government took small efforts to extend elementary education to the children of the so-called untouchables (obviously the move was in British interest of divide and rule), violent protests were made by the dominant upper caste sections. Such violence was witnessed in Madras, Central Provinces and Bombay Presidency.

The UPA government later showed its true colours by submitting to the upper caste anti-reservationists. Manmohan Singh said "The government will find a viable and credible way to protect the interests of all sections of society [Telegraph 26 May 2006]. With the huge mobilization of forces by the upper caste students, their mentors, media help the UPA government which can not risk losing its upper caste support base found the counselors in the CPI(M) to retreat from its position. The CPI(M) Bengali daily *Ganashakti* wrote on 24 May 2006 that Mr. Prakash Karat met the P.M on 22 May and suggested a way out of the crisis by retaining reservation, raising the seats and building up a consensus. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee became wiser by such precious suggestions and announced the increase in the number of seats so that the 27% reservation for the OBCs does not reduce the seats of the upper castes in the central education institutions. According to Mr. Mukherjee's estimate to keep the unreserved seats intact the government is required to spend a sum of Rs. 10,000 crore in total. What a cruel joke, a joke born out of the CPI(M)'s brains and is now being implemented by the UPA government.

We strongly oppose this move. The whole amount of an estimated Rs. 10,000 needs to be spent for the education of the poor masses, a big section of whom is comprised of Dalits and the tribals.

### **Caste, Reservation and the Opposing Stands**

Caste is clearly an Indian phenomenon. It resides both in the structure and the super structure in the Indian socio-economic structure. The jati-varna system has since

many centuries back perpetually ordained to keep the society sharply divided between the small sections of upper castes to be engaged in mental labour and the vast toilers comprising Shudras and Ati-shudras (the present day OBCs and SCs respectively) only to keep on the production process and all the menial jobs. The class aspect of pumping resources from the latter has so long been mediated through the jati-varna system. The upper castes have always controlled the means of production and despite the introduction of the capitalist sector in India the caste-class scenario has not vastly changed. And the close correlation between caste and class is still found in castes, particularly amongst the vast Dalit masses in India.

The question of seat reservation, special scholarships, and special advantages for the exploited and oppressed backward castes is not new. Simultaneously with the anti-Brahmin movement, particularly in the South during the colonial period, paved the way for reservations in that part of India. In many parts of India reservations for the OBCs (along with for the SCs and STs) are in vogue. In the four South Indian states reservation for the OBCs was legally accepted through massive pressure from those sections even in the British period. It is worth mentioning that the very small percentage of the upper castes is violently opposed to the reservation since they mostly control administration, judiciary, industries, land, etc. It is the perpetual fear of those upper castes, their parties and mentors that their traditional powers, authority and control over wealth might be at stake. It is absolutely true that the reservations can not bring about any perceptible change in the socio-economic set-up. But what it can bring about is enlargement of the democratic space to an extent by allowing the centuries old oppressed castes and classes to make a dent into the centres of the upper castes.

Marxist Leninists support this process in their fight against the domination of upper castes and classes. They launch struggles on the common basic demands of the people, they do not hesitate to launch social reform movements or to extend support to such movements linked to the fundamental task of breaking down the exploitative system itself. They support the

reservation demand as a democratic demand against the Brahminical hold over society, against the control of the upper castes on all aspects related to mental labour and also against the caste-class domination based on the jati-varna system.

During the submission of the Madal Commission Report in 1991 all parliamentary political parties, except a few, displayed their pro-upper caste bias and fear of losing the upper caste vote bank. Upper caste violence and display of arrogance was at its peak. And now with the announcement of 27% reservation in the IIMs, AIMS, IITs, etc. the same upper caste frenzy has picked up proving enough about the virulent existence of caste in the so-called 'developed' areas in the main cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, etc.

Some people are influenced by the upper caste arguments to oppose reservation. They argue that reservations can not solve any problem and that reservations have so long done nothing to the Dalits and others. It is a half-way understanding. No Marxist can conceive of reservation as a solution to the myriad problems of the exploited masses. But it is a fact that a small section of Dalits, OBCs can have some upward mobility weakening the upper caste monopoly in services and education. This is the democratic aspect. Still others are there like the SUCI party which condemned the move to provide 27% OBC reservation in central universities, medical colleges, IITs, and IIMs. It invokes the people to "*protest against the most reprehensible policy of education*" [Proletarian Era, May 17, 2006].

It is not our argument to shelve those pertinent issues in the name of reservation announced by none but a ruling-class Congress leader. It is also not to be forgotten that it is a demand of the OBCs for a long period of time and the Congress leader went forward to make it an issue for appeasing the OBC vote bank. The notorious BJP too supported the 93<sup>rd</sup> amendment but all such parties are now finding ways and means to make a so-called balanced approach appeasing both the upper castes and the OBCs, SCs and STs.

To conclude that we support the very limited scope of reservation and demand further reservation by extending it the private sector too not only to uplift the SCs, STs and OBCs but also to destroy the

monopoly of the upper castes in all the fields where mental labour or intellectual faculty has been considered to be a sole preserve of the upper castes over centuries. We also recognize the limits of the reservation policy and even its negative impact — that of creating an elite within the ruling classes and creating illusions amongst a section of the middle class of the oppressed castes that they can get justice in this system. The latter effect can be negated by education and showing the limits of the reservation policy.

At the same time we appeal to the upper caste middle-class people and their children to fight Brahminical ideology and accept the democratization process, however limited this may be, to enable the vast backward masses to come forward, to stand on an equal footing with the so-called forward castes in the fields of education, services, etc. It is absolutely wrong to think that the percentage of reserved quotas will completely banish them from those fields as some media or people with vested interests are vocally preaching. They must be made to understand that this 'agitation' is merely a ruling-class ploy to divert the middle classes and enhance upper caste hatred. They should understand that the root cause for the lack of jobs and educational facilities is not the reservation policy but due to the backwardness of the very semi-colonial, semi-feudal system itself. The desperation of the middle-classes seen in the upper caste protests is due to the very limited number of seats and jobs. They should be made to understand that it is only by smashing the existing system and building a new democratic system will the motor for development and growth assure extensive educational facilities and more jobs.

Also the oppressed castes must realize the limitations of reservations, which has got even more limited due to the policies of liberalization and privatization. They too must realize that all caste biases and equal opportunities can never be got from the existing system but by smashing it and building a true democratic system.

And in this process, while supporting the just demand for reservations the middle class from the upper castes as also those from the oppressed castes must join hands to smash the existing system and build a genuinely democratic society in India.



## Dismantling of the PDS — Another Imperialist Decision

*Sujan*

The govt. has been changed, but the imperialist dictated economic policies have been continuing. The abject condition of the poor people not only persists, it is further deteriorating. In this 'largest democracy of the world' millions of people including men, women and even children, go to sleep hungry every night. This has become a way of life and has been continuing uninterruptedly for many decades. The poorest of the poor people have to take wild shrubs, weeds and tubers to combat the pangs of hunger. In this wretched condition of 'food security' the UPA govt took decisions to raise the price and to reduce the quantity of rice and wheat under the PDS (Public distribution system). As usual the 'Left' partners of the UPA govt, a section of the Congress, DMK and others opposed this decision. The AIDMK even declared that they would not implement this decision. On January 19, 06 Mr. Sharad Power, the union agriculture minister, declared that the decision to enhance the price and cut allocation to all categories of beneficiaries had been "Put on hold". And further stated that "the decision will go through. I have to speak to political parties and build a consensus," Thus the decision had been postponed till the completion of the assembly election in the states. It can well be understood that the main reason of this postponement was the impending assembly election in five states and not for their concern about the dreadful conditions of the millions of poor people. The same reason has also prompted those who opposed the decision.

Now the elections are over. Now it is a time to build consensus. And that will be achieved inspite of 'left' phrase mongering, strong opposition, protests, etc. This mock fighting will come to an end, approving the pending decision of the ministry, may ne with some nominal amendments.

### **Implication of the decision**

This decision clearly indicates that the union govt. wanted to prune the food subsidy to the tune of Rs. 4,524 crores and impose this huge burden on the back of the most oppressed sections. The method of doing so has also been prescribed. That is by reducing the quantity of wheat and rice distributed through the P.D.S. and

Antyodaya Anna Yojana. This will result in 5 Kg less of food grain with each card holder of PDS compared to what they are now entitled to receive per month. This simply means to cut a portion of the meagre quantity that are being distributed to the below poverty line households and Antyodaya households i.e. 35 kg and 25 kg a month respectively. This very govt. when it came to power promised that it would give a human face to the imperialist sponsored economic policies. Now that has turned into a pathetic joke and the UPA govt continues to follow the same policy as the NDA. This decision is in accordance with that policy which will further push upward the number of starved and semi starved people.

This is a decision to further strengthen the very process of dismantling the P.D.S. This process was initiated in 2002 taking out from its purview all but the people living below the poverty line. Even those people, who are living below the poverty line, have not been covered entirely. The stark reality is that till to day hundreds of thousands of poorest of the poor people, inspite of their desperate efforts, are unable to have BPL cards. Right to food which is a fundamental right, still remains as illusive as before to these people. This decision of increasing the price and decreasing the quantity of food grain that are distributed through PDS will deprive more people of their fundamental rights, and PDS will become irrelevant to them. It is a ploy to dismantle the PDS and accommodate the imperialist demand at the cost of the poorest of the poor people.

This WTO dictated decision serves the interest of the five major MNCs who control global grain trade. These MNCs operate through the WTO and pressurize the govts of backward countries to dismantle what ever schemes are there to provide food security. It has already exposed that the food and agricultural policy is no longer controlled by the Union Govt. rather it is the dictact of the WTO controlled by MNCs that in being followed by the union

govt.

The neo-liberal policy of free trade and movement of agricultural produce, removal of the restriction on farmers of bringing their produce to procurement centres helped the multinationals and other private traders increase their exploitation. Even the parliamentary Standing Committee on food tabled its report on May 26<sup>th</sup>, have to state that MNCs and private traders "... entered the market in a big way and procured wheat in excess of their requirement leading to profiteering, hoarding and a black market". It has further stated that "... the government may find it difficult to manage and operate the Public Distribution System and replenish its dwindling stocks". Thus the successive union governments have served the MNCs well !!! And this decision will provide more service to them.

The distribution of less quantity of food grains, follows less quantity of procurement and this will limit the turnover of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). Consequently, the ability of the FCI to procure crops at a minimum support price will further dwindle. The union govt. surreptitiously following this path. In the last two years quantity of procurement, off take and stocks of food grains with the FCI have been declining.

	Year 2004 (in million tonnes)	Year 2005 (in million tonnes)
Procurement upto Nov. 23	25.5	24.6
Offtake, April - Sept.	20.1	18.8
Stocks as on Oct. 1st	18.0	15.1

While 22 million tonnes of food grain stock with the FCI is required to call itself "food secure", it has only 15.1 million tonnes of food grain. This gap is the result of the anti-people, pro-imperialist policy of the UPA govt to create provision for import. And now it is taking place. After 6 years India is importing 5 lakh tonnes of wheat. On January 1, wheat stocks were 62 lakh tonnes which was 20 lakh tonnes less than the norm. The entry of private traders, mainly MNCs and big comprador houses has already been ensured. And impending implementation of the decision will affect FCI adversely leading to its wind up to provide space for MNCs.

While the farmers are suffering from severe agrarian crisis and the poor people are being deprived of food security, the govt took this decision as a further step towards privatisation of the country's food front. MNCs will have better scope to exploit the country's food sector. The farmers' demand for remunerative prices of their output will be negated. Much needed food security for the poor people will be ignored. Consequently, the agrarian crisis will further accentuate leading to increase in the number of farmer's suicide deaths and poor people will starve to death.

### **Appalling Condition**

There were promises that the govts would provide food to every mouth and these promises have reiterating while number of hungry people has been increasing. This UPA govt is no exception. In their "national minimum common programme" this govt too promised to ensure "universal food security over time." Mr Manmohan Singh, the initiator of imperialist dictated "economic reform programme" assured that their main objective would be to "give a human face" to this draconian liberal policy. But those were nothing but phase mongering to woo the distressed people. The grim reality is that the right to food or food security continue to remain elusive to millions of country men and the UPA govt. remain as mindless as ever, though hunger causes havoc.

According a report published Tehelka January 14, 2006, 320 million people are going to bed without food and 10,000 people dying of hunger related pangs every day. This has been pointed out by experts. Further, 99 percent of adivasi families in Jharkhand and Rajasthan have to face chronic hunger in 2005. This condition still persists. Nevertheless, this govt. claims that it stands for "aam admi"! who are their "aam admi"?

Even the modest estimation of FAO stated that the number of the country's army of hunger grew by 13 million between 95-97 and 2000-02 and this constituted nearly there fourth of the newly hungry throughout the world. Other estimates give a more dreadful picture. Total number of hungry people, as it is referred to in the Hindustan Times January 04, 06, is about 200 million. India's first social development report released in New Delhi. recently

states that 26 percent or about 260 million (193 million in rural areas and 67 million in urban areas) of the country's population are still living below the poverty line. And the number of BPL families have been increasing. The percentage of total people living below the poverty line is 47.15 percent in Orissa, 42.60 percent in Bihar and 36.09 percent in Assam. UNICEF reported that one in three of the world's malnourished children are living in India and half of Indian children are undernourished. One can easily realize that the ground reality is far more deplorable.

Lack of food security is continuing and it manifests itself in the declining trend of per capital calories intake per day. In 1987-88 it was just above 2,200 calories and in 1999-2000 it came down to 2,150 per day. The food grain consumption also declined from 476 gram per day in 1990 to 418 grams per day in 2001. During the rule of the UPA Govt. this trend not only persists, even further strengthens. The recent reports indicate that due to food insecurity chronic malnutrition, severe under nutrition starvation deaths pervades the country. High infant mortality rate is the result of under nutrition.

The recent report of the Council for Social Development, Oxford, states that Orissa has the highest infant mortality rate of 83 deaths per 1,000 births. Madhya Pradesh has 82 and Uttar Pradesh 76 per 1,000 births. The worst affected are Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. The IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) is 85.2 among the Scheduled Tribes and 83 among the Scheduled Castes. The number of hunger deaths are increasing among these poorest of the poor people of the society. The reports of hunger death is coming from various parts of the country everyday. The State Govts, as usual, deny the facts. The ferocity of hunger has been so sweeping that it has killed thousands of lives in various states.

The Maharashtra State Govt. admitted to the High Court that between January and July of the last year (2005) 2,814 children had died of starvation. The vast majority of them were from tribal areas. The same situation persists in different states of the country. In this deplorable situation the union govt. took the decision to slash even a portion of the meagre quantity that is distributed through the PDS to the poorest

of the poor.

The ruinous effect of the economic reform programme is very much conspicuous in the rural India. It has devastated the agrarian economy. The crises of the agrarian economy is getting more and more acute. The peasantry cannot live on cultivation and they demand remunerative prices for their fruits of toil. This heartless decision is a step towards abolition of the minimum support price and the introduction of private trading of food grains controlled by MNCs. The plight of the peasants will become more deplorable. The economic reform policies have already claimed thousands of farmers' and peasants' lives. In the last few years, according to Ms. Vandana Shiva, more than 40,000 farmers and peasants committed suicide. The crises is so devastating and intensive that a large number of peasants/farmers want to give up agriculture. Latest NSSO data reveal that more than 40 percent of the farmers/peasants are keen on quitting agriculture. The rural despair has developed to such an extent that the peasants of six villages in Sangrur, Mansa and Bhatinda district of Punjab, the frontline agricultural state, have decided to put up their villages for sale. The heartless UPA govt. is not concerned about that.

### **A Govt. of "aam admi" ?**

Promises belied, "Universal food security" - remains to be a myth. The govt. of "aam admi" continues to serve the indigenous and foreign business, trading and commercial houses as well as financial speculators. So, going back on their promises to ensure "universal food security" the UPA govt. have decided to prune the food subsidies by Rs. 4,524 crores. This is almost the same amount that they gave up in the last year abolishing capital gain tax. The beneficiaries were domestic and foreign financial speculators on the stock market. The UPA govt. considers these speculators as "aam admi"! And they now plan to compensate that amount of money squeezing millions of destitute hungry people and distressed farmers/peasants.

Despair is a temporary phenomenon. It leads to socio-political unrest organized and led by the real aam admi, a formidable social force. This force has begun to assert and will continue to assert more powerfully.

**May 20 2006**

# Deliberate Misleading Official Estimates of Poverty

*Siddarth*

The Planning Commission of India has brought out misleading estimates claiming significant decline of about 10 per cent in poverty through indirect method by using data of the 55<sup>th</sup> Round of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). Now on the basis of such manipulations, the Government of India confidently claims that Millennium Development Goal (to halve poverty from 36 per cent of 1993-94 to 18 per cent by 2015) is achievable with a so-called satisfactory growth performance of the Indian economy. **Applying the Direct Method for estimating poverty from the same round of NSSO data for consumption and calorie intake suggests a staggering figure of under consumption and following the norm of 2400 kcal adopted by the Planning Commission for poverty in Rural India comes out to the level of about three fourth of its population. Instead of accepting this stark reality, official experts have manipulated the estimates extra ordinarily to bring down the poverty to the level of 26 per cent aimed at imposing their hypothetical arguments towards positive impacts of reforms and liberalization initiatives leading towards poverty reduction.** They could hardly realize that they cannot conceal their data for long in the age of speedy technological development of information. It is the character of the comprador elements who have been adopting every possible alibi and pretension to create illusions and justify their bosses, as they are the beneficiary of the policies both directly and indirectly.

Official estimates of the Planning Commission reveal that poverty has declined to about 10 per cent between 1993-94 and 1999-2000. This is even in poor and backward states like Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Many experts in the official line also do not agree among themselves (for example, Sen, 2001; Vaidyanathan, 2001; Kozel and Deaton, 2005). Consensus among them is that the present official estimates are not strictly comparable with earlier estimates without rationalization. Sen, Kozel and Deaton have tried to rationalize the indirect estimates of poverty in the framework of the ruling class. On the other hand, the superiority of the direct method has been pointed out by Nayyar (1991), Mehta and Venkatraman (2000) Patnaik (2004,

2005), Ram(2004). They have questioned the indirect method of poverty estimates and argued for direct methods of poverty estimates.

## Criteria for Official Estimates

If one goes into the details of the development of methodology adopted by the official experts, one looks back to the All India Labour Conference 1957, when the issues of identifying poverty line was raised. The Planning Commission of the Government of India constituted a Task Force of the Nutrition Expert Group in 1962 with a mandate to suggest desirable minimum consumption expenditure acceptable at the national level. In the light of the recommendation of the Nutrition Advisory Committee 1958 of the All India Council of Medical Research it was decided that minimum consumption expenditure should not be less than Rs. 100 per household with five persons for a month at the price of 1960-61 to meet the calorie for minimum nutrition and non-food requirement. In other words, per capita consumption expenditure should not be less than Rs. 20. Rupees 25 was suggested for urban areas and Rs. 18.9 for rural areas (Gupta, Singh and Dutta, 1982:260). However, this estimate suffered from limitations, as it did not explain categorically the basis and difference for rural and urban areas. Another study was of Dandekar and Rath (1971), which considered a per capita requirement of 2250 calorie per diem for rural and urban areas. On the basis of NSSO data for consumption expenditure, Rs. 170.8 per annum or Rs. 14.2 per month at 1960-61 prices for rural areas and Rs. 271.4 per annum or Rs. 22.6 per month for urban areas was considered sufficient. In order to weed out inconsistency in the estimates of the Planning Commission consumption expenditure was raised to Rs. 180 per annum or Rs. 15 per month for rural areas and Rs. 270 per annum or Rs. 22.5 per month for urban areas. Still this estimate ignored the variation in calorie requirement on the basis of age, sex, occupation, region, etc. Sukhatme (1965) estimated poverty on the basis of the recommendation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UNO and national Advisory Council but he rejected the criteria of average nutrition requirement later in his another exercise (1977) and estimated poverty on the basis of the minimum require-

ment of the *reference person*. However, in the absence of proper data and also because of official policy requirements average nutritional necessity remained at the centre stage.

Meanwhile, considering the criteria of the Task Force 1962 of the Planning Commission, regional estimates of poverty were brought out by Chatterji and Bhattacharya (1969), Bardhan (1971), Rudra (1974), and many others. Applying all India criteria for poverty estimates followed by Dandekar and Rath and using state price indices Rajkrishna worked out state level poverty estimates. He included public consumption expenditure for estimation of poverty and introduced a concept of augmented poverty line. Public consumption expenditure was kept in five subheads - health and family planning, water supply and sanitation, education, jail, police and judiciary administration, road and social welfare. Thus, per capita public consumption expenditure was included with per capita private expenditure in the 25<sup>th</sup> round of NSS (1970-71) and the poverty estimate was worked out for every state. This estimate also has serious limitation, as this assumed equal access to public facility for all classes and thereby underestimated poverty. The Planning Commission constituted another Task Force in 1977 to prepare a report on minimum needs and effective consumption demand. This Task Force in its report worked out daily calorie requirements on the mid value of monthly per capita consumption expenditure. On the recommendation of the Nutrition Expert Group 1968 considering variations in requirement by age, sex, specific occupation, worker and non-worker category, nature of work, status of women in general and pregnancy, child and adult, etc., 2400 calories for rural areas and 2100 calories for urban areas was fixed for poverty estimation. This was an effort to weed out inconsistencies in earlier estimates. On the basis of the data on per capita consumption expenditure including non-food consumption expenditure and corresponding calorie intake in the 28<sup>th</sup> Round (1973-74) of the NSS, Rs. 49.09 for rural areas and Rs. 56.64 for urban areas were fixed for poverty line expenditure (Gupta et. Al. 1982:264). But this also did not include the weight and physical efficiency (Tiwari, 1982:334). Needless to mention that esti-



mating poverty through the wholesale index has the risk of over estimation and the consumer index has every possibility of under estimation because of limited coverage. Despite these limitations, the agriculture labour consumer index with the base year of 1960-61 price index and industrial labour consumer index with the base year of 1973-74 price index, poverty estimates have been worked out adjusting with inflation. Thus, up dated poverty line expenditure is merely an adjustment of inflation with the old consumption basket of 1973-74. However, consumption expenditure data of NSS are available for corresponding rounds and one finds no cogent excuse for ignoring such data for estimating updated consumption expenditure and corresponding poverty estimates. Moreover, this is a head count poverty based on consumption and not income and therefore it is consumption poverty line, which includes consumption out of borrowing also. **Therefore poverty estimates are misleading.**

There are two sources for consumption expenditure to calculate poverty estimates—NSS and National Account Statistics (NAS). In case of NAS, consumption expenditure data are not collected separately, rather they are extracted from the data collected for NAS, whereas, NSSO collects consumption expenditure data separately. Consumption expenditure data of NAS increase faster by 1 per cent than that of NSS data, which create extra ordinary differences in poverty estimates (Minhas, 1988). Another study suggests that this difference increased from 5 per cent in 1957-58 to 38 per cent in 1993-94 (Kulshreshta and Kar, 2005). Consensus prevails that consumption expenditure data collected through NSSO are more reliable than NAS data (Sunderam and Tendulkar, 2001). NSS collected consumption expenditure data along with data of employment and unemployment till 1993-94 (50<sup>th</sup> round), which were discontinued in the 55<sup>th</sup> round (1999-2000). Now any analysis for relation between consumption and employment and unemployment needs a separate methodology. **Moreover there has been a methodological shift in data collection of consumption expenditure. Conventionally data for consumption have been collected based on 30 day recall method but in 55<sup>th</sup> round 7 day, 30 day and 365 day recall method was adopted on the basis of specific commodity. Therefore con-**

**sumption data between the 50<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> round are not comparable.** Consumption expenditure data based on 7 day recall method are 23 per cent higher than the 30 day recall method but they are less inconsistent than the data based on large survey of thin sample. Moreover, it has been argued and substantiated that there is no apparent deficiencies in data based on 30 day recall method (Deaton and Kozel, 2005: 8-9). Therefore, the 30 day recall method appears better and acceptable for this purpose.

#### **Official Poverty Estimates**

Official estimates of the Planning Commission indicate that poverty in India has declined from 36 per cent of 1993-94 to 26.1 per cent in 1999-2000. Earlier estimates available from the Planning Commission suggest that the level of poverty was 53.4 per cent in 1957-58 which came down to 49.1 per cent in 1963-64 but it further increased to 57.9 per cent in 1967-68. This was the highest official estimates of poverty in India. The NSSO has been bringing poverty estimates at regular intervals since 1973-74. The estimates reveal that poverty at the all India level has come down from 54.9 per cent in 1973-74 to 36 per cent in 1993-94. Poverty estimates for rural and urban India for the corresponding period were 56.4, 37.3 and 49 and 32.4 per cent respectively. Poverty estimates in 1999-2000 calculated by the Planning Commission of the government of India suggests a sharp decline in all India poverty to 26.1 per cent, in rural India 27.1 per cent and in urban India 23.4 per cent. However, methods adopted for the calculation of poverty in 1999-2000 are not comparable and remained controversial. Many experts in the official line also do not agree among themselves (for example, Sen, 2001; Vaidyanathan, 2001; Kozel and Deaton, 2005). Consensus among them is that present official estimates are not strictly comparable with earlier estimates without rationalization. Sen, Kozel and Deaton have tried to rationalize the indirect estimates of poverty but did not come out of the compulsions of manipulation in favour of the ruling class, which is not surprising. After all, the comprador has been working with a mandate to create illusions to promote the interest of capital and not of the poor. Despite all the efforts, they could not hide further that 74.25 per cent of the poor population have been living in the

rural areas.

If the poverty has declined significantly, there must be enough ground to substantiate the basis for its declining. There is hardly any disagreement that the majority of the people stay in the rural areas and are dependant on agriculture for their livelihood. The rate of change in per capita rural income has declined from 3.1 per cent during one decade of pre reforms (1981-82 to 1990-91) to 2.8 per cent during one decade of post reform (1991-92 to 1999-2000). Estimates of the government of India reveal that compound growth rates of area, production, and productivity of food grains declined. Growth rates of the production and productivity of non-food grains declined and overall growth rates of production and productivity of major crops have also declined. Percentage public expenditure on agriculture registered significant decline from 5.8 per cent in seventh five year plan to 5.2 per cent in eighth five year plan and 3.96 per cent in the ninth five year plan. **The Percentage of public expenditure on irrigation and flood control has also been declining in consecutive five year plans. Growth rate of industrial production for the period in reference has declined from 7.8 per cent to 5.7 per cent. Thus, material production of the Indian economy registered a sharp decline. If one looks at the employment scenario which is another source of income for the economy, growth rate of employment during 1983 to 1993-94 was 2.4 per cent whereas during 1993-94 to 1999-2000 was only 0.67 per cent. For the organized sector of agriculture growth rate was negative. Even the unorganized sector registered merely a 0.03 per cent growth rate in employment. Growth rate for Mining and Quarrying for the organized and unorganized sector remained negative. Employment elasticity for agriculture, which was 0.7 during 1983-93-94, turned to be almost zero during 1993-94 - 1999-00. If one takes the economy as a whole, employment elasticity for the pre reform period was 0.52, which declined to 0.16 in the post reform period. The Annual growth rates of employed workers have declined from 2.04 per cent to merely 0.98 per cent. Growth rate of total employment was 2.7 for the pre reform period, which declined to 1.3 per cent during the post reform period.**

Continued at page 22

# Uphold the Theoretical Weapon

Commemorating the centenary of the

(This is the second in the series of articles commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the struggle against modern revisionism. The article has been taken from Peking Review.... Editor)

By Lu Ming

It is exactly a century this year since the great teacher Marx wrote in 1875 his brilliant work *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in his tit-for-tat struggle against Lassalle's opportunism. In the period of some 15 years between completion of this work in 1875 and its first publication in 1891, there were serious struggles against opportunists. Applying in this work the most thorough, complete and comprehensive theory of development which is richest in content, that is, materialist dialectics, Marx examined the question of the imminent collapse of capitalism and the question of the future development of communism, expounded the differences between the lower and higher stages of communist society and unfolded the splendid prospects of the higher stage of communist society. Marx emphatically pointed out that in the transformation from capitalist society to communist society there must be a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat. For a century this programmatic work of scientific communism has always led and inspired the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and hundreds of millions of people all over the world.

Earth-shaking changes have taken place throughout the world in the last 100 years. Forty-two years after the *Critique of Gotha programme* was written, the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of the of the great Lenin, won victory in the October Socialist Revolution through an armed uprising and ushered in the new era of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the world. Thirty-two years after the October Revolution, the Chinese people, under the leadership of our great leader Chairman Mao and after protracted revolutionary war, overthrew the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, founded the People's Republic of China and established the dictatorship of the proletariat in China. Today the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed nations and people throughout the world are surging forward, shaking the entire moribund capitalist world and continuously winning new victories. Although the revolutionary road

is tortuous and capitalism has been restored in the Soviet Union, the homeland of the October Revolution, because the Khrushchov and Brezhnev renegade clique has usurped supreme power in the Party and state, this is but a brief interlude in the whole course of historical development. **The world is progressing, the future is bright and no one can change this general trend of history.** (Mao Tsetung: On the Chungking Negotiations.) More than once the practice of the international communist movement in the last 100 years has proved that the theories of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat expounded in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* are irrefutable truths. Having gone through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, we have gained a deeper understanding of this point after restudying this work in the light of reality.

## Brilliant Record of Struggle Against Opportunism

In the history of the international communist movement, the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* is a brilliant record of the struggle waged by Marxism against revisionism. In the 1870s the centre of the international workers' movement moved from France to Germany and the German workers' movement was developing vigorously. After the struggle against Lassalleism and directly educated and helped by Marx and Engels, the German proletariat at that time founded its independent political party – the German Social-Democratic workers' Party or the Eisenachers. Although the programme of this party did not completely discard the influence of Lassalle's opportunism, it kept, generally speaking; the spirit required in the general rules of the First International and basically followed Marx's revolutionary line. It was therefore supported by a growing number of workers. The Lassalleans, who were opposed to the Eisenachers and had once been very powerful, carried out an opportunist line and went all the way to meet the needs of the landlord and capitalist classes; they therefore steadily lost the support of the masses and ended up in extreme isolation. Under these circumstances the

Lassalleans in 1874 reversed their previous stand of refusing to become allied with the Eisenachers and eagerly sought a merger with them in a vain attempt to save their own tottering status.

Faced with this situation, Marx and Engels who always set great store by the solidarity and unity in the German workers' movement considered that there could be an alliance, but they repeatedly warned the leaders of the Eisenachers that there should be no bargaining about principles on the question of organizational unity. In a letter in March 1875 to August Bebel, Engels specially emphasized that there should be absolutely no concession to the Lassalleans in the theoretical sphere, which is of decisive importance for the programme, and that **"the first condition of union was that they should cease to be sectarians, Lassalleans."** But Liebknecht and others who were passionately seeking the merger ignored the advice of Marx and Engels and went their own way. They sacrificed principles and joined the Lassalleans in concocting a draft proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and was permeated with Lassalle's opportunist viewpoints. This draft was known as the Gotha Programme when it was later adopted at the congress that united the two groups. To express his attitude in principle towards this programme and prevent it from exerting a bad influence on the international workers' movement, Marx severely criticized the draft programme, article by article and sentence by sentence, before the Unity Congress and wrote *Marginal Notes to the Programme of the German workers' Party, that is, the Critique of the Gotha Programme.*

## Gotha Programme's Essential Parts—Liquidating Proletarian Revolution and Proletarian Dictatorship

Marx pointed out that the Gotha Programme was a **"thoroughly objectionable programme that demoralizes the Party."** Its essential parts were the acceptance of the Lassalleans' view of realizing socialism by relying on "state aid" and liquidation of proletarian revolution, as well as the acceptance of the Lassalleans' stand of founding a "free state" through efforts to win universal suffrage and liquidation of the proletarian dicta-

# of Proletarian Dictatorship

writing of “Critique of the Gotha Programme”

torship.

The Gotha Programme came out soon after the Paris Commune revolution in 1871. At that time Marx and Engels already had summed up the experience of the Paris Commune and put forward to the proletariat the world over the task of smashing and breaking the existing state machinery of the bourgeoisie and establishing proletarian state power after the Paris Commune. However, ignoring this important experience, Liebknecht and others even retreated to Lassalleanism by “**accepting all the essential Lassallean economic phrases and demands**” and Lassalle’s nonsensical opinions. “**The Eisenachers actually became Lassalleans,**” at least according to the programme.

The Lassalleans were pseudo-socialists and essentially bourgeois socialists. They **intended, under the pretext of reorganizing society, to preserve the foundations of existing society and hence the society.** (Engels: *Principles of communism.*) This is clearly revealed by Lassalle’s dogmas stuffed into the Gotha Programme.

From the very beginning the programme avoided mentioning ownership of the means of production and babbled about labour being the source of all wealth. This was one of Lassalle’s dogmas. Marx pointed out: Labour is not the source of all wealth and nature is just as much the source of wealth as labour. This is because the production of material wealth not only needs human labour but also subjects and instruments of labour. The popular saying that “labour creates the world” precisely takes these conditions as its prerequisite. Labour does not have supernatural creative power. Only in so far as a worker “**from the beginning behaves towards nature, and primary source of all instruments and subjects of labour, as an owner**” can he create wealth. In capitalist society, why must the workers sell their labour power to the capitalists and become the latter’s wage-slaves? This is precisely; because the means of production are in the hands of the capitalists and the working class has nothing but its own labour power. The programme engaged in empty talk about “labour,” but avoided mentioning a point of basic importance – to whom did the means of production belong – and thereby covered up the relations of exploitation and oppres-

sion suffered by the proletariat. Such a fallacy is out-and-out bourgeois stuff. After Khrushchev and Brezhnev came to power, socialist ownership by the whole people in the Soviet Union has degenerated into ownership by the bureaucrat-monopoly capitalist class. Picking up Lassalle’s long bankrupt fallacy, Brezhnev and his like also shout that “labour is the source of wealth” and demand that the Soviet people “work, work and work again.” Their aim is nothing but to cover up the fact of capitalist restoration; and the relations of capitalist exploitation, so as to squeeze more profits from the workers. This straw, however, cannot save the capitalist system and the Soviet revisionist renegade clique from their fate of destruction.

One “**outrageous step backwards**” in the Gotha Programme was to impose Lassalle’s “iron law of wages” on the German party and attribute the fight against capitalism to the “abolition of the wage system together with the iron law of wages.” The so-called “iron law of wages” is garbage Lassalle picked up from the bourgeois economists and all it says is that wages can only remain at the lowest level of living needed by the workers to maintain their existence and propagate offspring. If wages remain higher than this level for a long time and the workers’ living is improved, this will stimulate population growth and supply will exceed demand in the labour market. Consequently, wages will be forced to fall to the original level. That is to say, the natural law of population growth and any revolution waged by the working class cannot help improve this state of affairs. This kind of bourgeois theory has been thoroughly refuted in Marx’s *Capital*. The root cause of the exploitation and enslavement of the working class, Marx pointed out, is the wage-labour system based on capitalist private ownership. The working class can extricate itself from poverty and enslavement only through violent revolution and thorough abolition of the wage-labour system. Once the wage-labour system is abolished, its law will naturally cease to exist. Precisely as Marx pointed out: “**If I abolish wage labour, then naturally I abolish its laws also, whether they are of ‘iron’ or sponge.**” However, the draft programme evaded mention of the abolition of the wage-labour system but went round and round this so-called “iron law.” This is tantamount to asking the work-

ing class to give up revolution and wait for “state aid” to realize the Lassalle-type of socialism. The “iron law of wages” is based on the notorious Malthusian theory of population. With this reactionary viewpoint as the basis, one can only reach the conclusion of abolishing all revolutions. The reason is that “**If this theory is correct, then again I cannot abolish the law even if I abolish wage labour a hundred times over, because the law then governs not only the system of wage labour but every social system.**”

The Gotha Programme also trumpeted so-called “fair distribution,” “equal right,” undiminished proceeds of labour” and other Lassalle’s dogmas, and repeated the theory that “distribution decides production” in bourgeois economics. Marxism holds that the mode of distribution is decided by the mode of production. Only by abolishing capitalist private ownership can the capitalist relations of distribution be changed. The elimination of the private ownership of the means of production “**can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions.**” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party.*) Lenin stressed that the bourgeois state “**cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of ‘withering away,’ but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution.**” (The State and Revolution) Chairman Mao has summed up this basic principle in a simple formula, “**Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.**” (*Problems of War and Strategy.*) Historical experience has proved that this is a truth and the only road for the proletariat to gain liberation. From Lassalle’s “state aid” to “peaceful transition” advocated by old and new revisionists, they all betray this principle. Their fallacies are nothing but spiritual weapons for upholding the capitalist system and opposing proletarian revolution.

Striving for a “free state,” as the Gotha Programme called for, is the political programme of Lassalle’s opportunism. Marxism considers that the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms and the instrument by which one class oppresses another. After seizing political power, the proletariat will establish a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which aims not at bringing about “freedom” above classes but suppressing the resistance of the bourgeois-

sie and all other exploiting classes. Flaunting the banner of “free state,” Lassalle and his followers put forward a series of such bourgeois democratic demands as striving for universal suffrage. Their aim was to uphold the dictatorship of the big landlord and big capitalist classes.

### **Socialism Can Be Nothing but the Revolutionary Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

In criticizing the reactionary essence of Lassalle’s “free state”, Marx also pointed out: **“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period on which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.”** This scientific conclusion by Marx was an important development of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat after the publication of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

From capitalist to communist society there must be a period of revolutionary transformation and this is decided by the special features and historical tasks of the proletarian revolution. This revolution is the most deep-going and thorough revolution in human history and is fundamentally different from previous revolutions. For instance, the bourgeois revolution involves the replacement of one private ownership by another and of one kind of relations of exploitation by another, and capitalist relations of production may emerge within feudal society and develop over a long period of time. But this is not the case with the proletarian revolution, for socialist relations of production cannot possibly emerge within capitalist society. Only after the proletariat has seized political power through violent revolution can it establish socialist ownership of the means of production. Moreover, after the basic completion of the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production, it is still necessary to carry out continuously a thorough socialist revolution on the economic front and particularly on the political and ideological fronts. Therefore, the seizure of political power by the proletariat is only the beginning of the socialist revolution.

Socialist society is the elementary stage of communist society and it just **“emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and in-**

**tellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.”** To eliminate these birth marks of the old society and move to the higher stage of communism needs a considerably long historical period. In socialist society the means of production have been transformed from the private property of individuals into common property. To this extent bourgeois right has disappeared. But it still exists in other aspects. For example, the principle of to each according to his work **“is still – in principle – bourgeois right.”** Here, everyone who contributes the same amount of social labour may get back the same amount of social products. But because individual labour power may be strong or weak and the number of children one has varies, therefore the degree of well-being differs from person to person. This difference constitutes an inequality. At the same time, the differences left behind from the old society between workers and peasants, between town and country and between mental and manual labour still exist. The exploiting-class ideology and the old force of habit still cannot be eliminated at one swoop. During this period of revolutionary transformation, not only the overthrown exploiting classes attempt a restoration and the spontaneous forces of the petty bourgeoisie may engender new bourgeois elements, but as a result of the influence and corruption by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeois spontaneous forces, degenerates and new bourgeois elements – agents of the bourgeoisie – may also emerge from within the ranks of the working class and among personnel of the Party and state organs. Chairman Mao recently pointed out: **“Lenin said that ‘small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.’ They are also engendered among a part of the working class and of the Party membership. Both within the ranks of the proletariat and among the personnel of state and other organs there are people who take to the bourgeois style of life.”** As long as imperialism and social-imperialism exist in the world, the activities of domestic reactionaries always echo the activities of the international reactionaries to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat. All this shows that in the whole period of socialism, the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is protracted, tortuous and at times very sharp. In order to smash the re-

sistance of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, prevent capitalist restoration, eliminate classes, restrict bourgeois right and finally eliminate it after a considerably long period of time and realize communism, there must be a transition period politically in which the dictatorship of the proletariat has to be consistently upheld. Marx pointed out: **“This Socialism is the declaration of the permanence of class revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations.”** (*The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850.*)

The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the quintessence of Marxism. Throughout the historical period of socialism, upholding or opposing the proletarian dictatorship is the touchstone for the recognition of class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is also insufficient to recognize alone the overthrow of bourgeois rule, the expropriation of the expropriators and the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. **“The essence of Marx’s teaching on the state has been mastered only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a single class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the proletarian which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire historical period which separates capitalism from ‘classless society,’ from communism.”** (Lenin : *The State and Revolution.*) The Gotha Programme said nothing about the dictatorship of the proletariat, but called for striving to build a “free state” by legal means. This fully reveals its essence of opportunism. Inheriting Lassalle’s mantle, the Soviet revisionist renegade clique concocted the fallacy of the “state of the whole people.” Shouting that “the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer necessary before the withering away of the state.” This precisely proves that they are the sworn enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the struggle against modern revisionism and against opportunism in the Party, our great leader Chairman Mao has comprehensively summed up both the positive and negative historical experience in the interna-

tional communist movement and developed the Marxist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chairman Mao has profoundly analyzed the law of struggle between the two classes and between the two roads after the basic completion of the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production, put forward the great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and formulated the Party's basic line in the whole historical period of socialism. Chairman Mao clearly pointed out: **“Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period, in the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line.”** The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution personally initiated and led by Chairman Mao has further solved, in theory and practice, the most important current topic of how to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent capitalist restoration under the conditions of socialism. The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, which is now developing in a broad, deep-going and persevering way, is a political and ideological struggle in the superstructure in which the proletariat triumphs over the bourgeoisie and socialism over capitalism. This movement also aims at consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and persevering in the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Recently, Chairman Mao again issued an important instruction on the question of theory. Chairman Mao pointed out: **“Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential**

**to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation.”** He also pointed out at the same time: **“Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Such things have to be restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat. For these reasons of people like Lin Piao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system.”** This extremely important instruction of Chairman Mao's expounds in theory the historical tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat and profoundly analyses the social basis engendering the revisionist line. It is of great practical and far-reaching historical significance to us in further implementing the Party's basic line, consolidating and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, persisting in the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and doing a good job in the struggle of combating and preventing revisionism.

Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao were both renegades who had betrayed the dictatorship of the proletariat. They denied that the contradiction between socialism and capitalism is the principal contradiction in socialist society; they also denied that the proletariat must exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture, and that the dictatorship of the proletariat should impose necessary restrictions on the remaining part of bourgeois right. Lin Piao attempted to change fundamentally the Party's basic line and subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism, and following in the steps of Confucius, he dished up the reactionary programme of “restraining oneself and returning to the rites.” By attacking Chin Shih Huang, the first emperor of the Chin Dynasty, he made venomous attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat and clamoured for founding a “genuine socialist” state implementing a “benevolent policy.” His so-called “genuine socialist” state was the same trash as the “free state” of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique. What Lin Piao meant in fact was that he wanted the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and Rightists and his gang of new bourgeois elements to come to power so that he could found a fascist Lin dynasty.

The focus of contention between the Marxist line and Lassalle's opportunist line in the German Party was whether to uphold the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat or to liquidate them. Our struggle against the two anti-Party cliques of Liu Shou-chi and Lin Piao also was waged around the question of adhering to or opposing the Party's basic line and consolidating or subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat. This kind of struggle will still continue in the future. Therefore, it is a long-term task to earnestly study the basic Marxist theories on class struggle, proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. All opportunists are accustomed to creating confusion in theory. In his demagogic pamphlets, Lassalle mixed the correct things he got from Marx with his own incorrect things so as to confuse people. Swindlers like Liu Shao-Chi and Lin Piao also used the same trick. Our sight is insufficient to distinguish between true and false, so we must have the aid of the microscope and telescope of Marxism. An important reason leading Liebknecht to commit mistakes on matters of principle was that **“he has always been confused theoretically”** and was unable to draw a clear line of demarcation between Marxism and Lassalle's opportunism. This lesson merits our serious consideration. Theory is the basis of line. **“There can be no strong socialist party without a revolutionary theory.”** (Lenin: *Our Programme*.) To be a conscious proletarian revolutionary, one must earnestly study works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and by Chairman Mao, master the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method, and combine study with criticism and temper oneself and raise one's political level in the struggle of criticizing the bourgeoisie and revisionism. Chairman Mao recently called on us to **“do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works.”** We must follow Chairman Mao's instruction, conscientiously study the principal works on the dictatorship of the proletariat by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin and by Chairman Mao, raise our consciousness of class struggle and the two-line struggle and of continuing the revolution, more conscientiously implement the Party's basic line, do a good job in the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and strive to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and consolidate and develop the socialist economic base.

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There was a sharp increase in the marginal workforce from 2.78 per cent to 11.96 per cent. **The Participation rate in case of the main workforce has decreased from 0.18 to (-) 1.11 per cent but there is an increase in the participation of the marginal workforce from 0.61 per cent to 9.85 per cent.** This indicates that casualisation has increased sharply. If we look at the NSS data, growth rate per annum of labour force, workforce and of unemployed persons, it is evident from data that during 1983 to 1993-94, rate of growth of workforce was higher than that of the labour force. The rate of growth of unemployed persons was almost negative. Unlike the 1980s during 1993-94 to 1999-2000 growth rate of work force was lower than that of labour force. The growth rate of the unemployed number of persons remained high. It was of utter inconsistency of estimates that in the situation of discouraging employment and rising unemployment from (-) 1.19 to 5.26 per cent, official estimates of poverty was reporting a decline in poverty. On the other hand payment of interest as a percentage of national income has increased from 0.93 to 1.72. The share of profit and other outflow increased from 0.89 per cent to 2.18 per cent. Thus total outflow increased by more than double from 1.82 per cent to 3.90 per cent. Domestic saving and total investment in the economy declined from 21 per cent to 18.4 per cent and 23.4 per cent to 21 per cent respectively. These are the figures from the Ministry of Finance published in the various issues of the Economic Survey.

The Human Development Report (HDR) 2005 reveals that incremental growth has negligible impact on poverty reduction. Moreover, poverty is concentrated in the rural areas of backward states like U.P., Bihar, M.P., etc. It may be mentioned that the Human Development Index with nominal improvement in the year 2005 (0.602) from the position of 2004 (0.595) remained at the same position, i.e., at the 127<sup>th</sup> ladder, which is worse than previous years. In 2003 it was at 126<sup>th</sup> and in 2001 at 124<sup>th</sup>. It is an important indicator that economic reforms and economic growth could not render benefit towards improving the HDI. In other words, there has been negligible progress in per capita income, literacy, and life expectancy in India in the recent years. These

figures do not provide any basis for poverty reduction even later after 2000. Therefore, data relating to poverty need a careful scrutiny.

#### **Alternative Direct Methods for Estimation of Poverty**

The NSS publishes data on distribution of persons for monthly per capita expenditure in rupees and also distribution of persons for calorie intake by monthly per capita expenditure. These data are available for rural and urban areas in the Report Nos. 471 and 454 of the 55<sup>th</sup> Round. These data do not need any expertise to understand the distribution of expenditure. In order to acquire 2400 calories intake in the rural areas and 2100 calories intake in the urban areas data suggest that persons of the respective areas there is a fall in expenditure group of rupees 525-615 and 575-665 respectively. In order to get exact figures if one draws on the ogive curve to find out the cumulative percentage of the people up to this level, the rural areas depict 74.5 per cent of the people below the 2400 calories intake. Similarly if one takes the urban areas for per capita monthly expenditure persons with 2100 calories intake there is a fall in the expenditure group of 575-665. Drawing the ogive curve for cumulative percentage it crosses 50 per cent.

**We can find that official estimates have badly underestimated poverty.** For example if one takes even for the rural India Planning Commission it has come out with 37.27 per cent of poor persons for which implied calories per capita per diem comes to 1970 only. For the 1999-2000 estimates indirect estimates of the Planning Commission brought rural poverty to 27.1 per cent with Rs. 327.56 per capita monthly expenditure with which an individual can acquire 1890 calories per diem. According to NSS data average expenditure for acquiring 2400 calories intake needs per capita monthly expenditure to the tune of Rs.565. If one goes by NSS data and compromise at 2200 calories intake which required per capita monthly expenditure to the tune of Rs. 455, the figure of percentage of poverty at this ceiling of calories are 58 per cent. Even with a 2000 calories intake, which require a Rs. 380 per capita monthly expenditure the figure for poverty can not be less than 40 per cent.

Interstate variations are alarming. As high as 94.5 per cent people of Tamil Nadu are with less than 2400 calories intake, for

which they require Rs.970 against the calculation of per capita monthly expenditure of the Planning Commission which is merely Rs.307.64 and thereby only 20.55 per cent rural people are below the 2400 calorie intake norms. The second highest is rural Maharashtra with 92 per cent people with per capita monthly expenditure Rs. 870 to acquire 2400 calories against official estimates of Rs.318.63. With this amount they can hardly acquire more than 1760 calories intake. Third highest poverty stricken state is rural Assam with 91 per cent people below 2400 calories. Other states above 80 per cent rural people below 2400 calorie norms are: Orissa (80 per cent: average per capita monthly expenditure Rs. 475 against official estimates 323.92), West Bengal (81% with Rs. 575 against official estimates of Rs.350.17), Karnataka (82% with Rs650 against official estimates of Rs.309.59), Gujarat (83% with Rs735 against official estimates of Rs.318.94), A.P. (84% with Rs595 against official estimates of Rs.262.94), Kerala (82.5% with Rs 1105 against official estimates of Rs. 374.79). Similarly if one takes the estimates of other states, Bihar (77% with Rs455 against official estimates of Rs.33.07), M.P.(78.5% with Rs490 against official estimates of Rs.311.34), U.P. (61% with Rs455 against official estimates of Rs.336.88), Rajasthan (53.5% with Rs515 against official estimates of Rs.344.03), Punjab (58.5 % with Rs 715 against official estimates of Rs.362.68) and Haryana (47.5% with Rs.615 against official estimates of Rs.362.81). Thus, there is a huge under estimation of poverty. So long as calorie norms are accepted for poverty estimation one can hardly deny the ground reality of the score. However, official estimates have ignored the per capita monthly expenditure data with regards to calorie norms.

#### **Implications**

If this is the way to reduce poverty in order to achieve millennium development goals, this is a matter of serious concern. Under estimation of poverty has definite implications on policies and programmes. If the volume of poverty is reduced, budget allocations for poverty eradications and rural development will have weakened logic for state subsidies and special assistance. The grave danger posed by this approach is that it inevitably leads to misidentifying of the poor and subsequently to the adop-



# The Philippines: Killing Fields of Asia

James Petras, Robin Eastman-Abaya

*{We are reproducing this article that appeared in the April 29<sup>th</sup> issue of the EPW. The terror on the democratic movement in Philippines has been blacked out in the mainline media. People's march seeks to put the real situation before the people. The People's march strongly condemns the state terror of the US-Arroyo government and demands that the perpetrators be judged as international criminals. The people of India lend full support to the people of the Philippines and stands by them solidly ..... Editor}*

Since president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo joined the US global "War on Terrorism", the Philippines has become the site of an ongoing undeclared war against peasant and union activists, progressive political dissidents and lawmakers, human rights lawyers and activists, women leaders and a wide range of print and broadcast journalists. Because of the links between the army, the regime and the death squads, political assassinations take place in an atmosphere of absolute impunity. The vast majority of the attacks occur in the countryside and provincial towns. The reign of terror in the Philippines is of similar scope and depth as in Colombia. But unlike Colombia, the rampaging state terrorism has not drawn sufficient attention from international public opinion.

## State Repression

Between 2001 and 2006 hundreds of killings, disappearances, death threats and cases of torture have been documented by the independent human rights centre, Karapatan, and the church-linked Ecumenical Institute for Labour Education and Research. Since Macapagal Arroyo

came to power in 2001 there have been 400 documented extrajudicial killings. In 2004, 63 were killed and in 2005, 179 were assassinated and another 46 disappeared and presumed dead. So far in the first two-and-a-half months of 2006 there have been 26 documented political assassinations.

An analysis of the class and social background of the victims of this systematic state terror in 2005 demonstrates that the largest sector, about 70, have been peasants and peasant leaders involved in land and farm labour disputes. The military has invariably accused the murdered and disappeared peasants of links to or sympathy with the communist guerrillas or Muslim separatists. The victims include members of the national farmers' association, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), as well as Igorot, Agta and Moro indigenous minority peasant leaders involved in protecting their lands. One notorious massacre occurred in late November 2005 when 47 peasants and their legal representatives held an open, public meeting over a land dispute in Palo, Leyte in the Visayas. A large force of soldiers

surrounded and attacked the meeting killing nine peasants outright and arresting over a dozen. An additional 18 "disappeared" and are presumed dead. The "Palo Massacre" of the members of the San Agustin Farmers Beneficiaries Cooperative and Alang-Alang Small Farmers Association was at first presented by the armed forces as a military encounter with the New Peoples Army and a few homemade weapons were planted on the victims. In this, as in all other cases, none of the perpetrators have been punished and there has been no official investigation.

Workers and labour leaders form the next largest group of victims of assassination (at least 18), not including the disappeared and presumed dead. Members of a national labour federation, Kilusan Mayo Uno (May First Movement), Nestle's Workers' Union, Central Azucareara de Tarlac, Negros Federation of Sugar Workers, a leader of the Department of Agrarian Reform Employee Association, regional college employee union leaders and various militants in both

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of targeting, monitoring, and evaluation criteria, which are equally narrow and thus, carrying the many blind spots in the concept of deprivation into the operational phase of interventions (Saith, EPW, October 22, 2005). By implication corporate governance will have a free hand to exploit and expand profit for capital against the interests of the poor. The comprador state leadership with a subservient bureaucracy has been facilitating their imperialist masters. However, reducing the public exchequer will have another significant inherent implication also. The Comprador network of lackies, surviving on public expenditure leakages will have tough competition among them, which essentially aggravate continued infighting to expose each other.

There must not be an iota of doubt that these compradors occupying various positions from village to parliaments have been misleading the people in the name of

poverty eradication. All the so-called efforts of poverty eradication from the beginning of land reforms, providing irrigation, creating infrastructures, so-called green revolution and diversification of agriculture, target oriented development programmes for poor, etc., failed because of the inherent dishonest policies and their framework of implementations.

The ruling classes have been busy in their nefarious design of creating illusions and framing contradictory policies. On the one hand they have been facilitating their imperial masters with concession after concessions in the name of reforms and narrowing down the base resources for the state exchequer and on the other hand they formulate popular policies for employment generation and poverty eradication. Financial crises are the obvious results leading to a cut in subsidies and disinvestments. Now agriculture, which has been the base of subsistence for the poor and middle peas-

antry, has been opened for MNCs and TNCs through contract farming and the WTO. Blind motivations for 'modernization' and 'diversification' of agriculture without proper infrastructure have resulted in policies that have led to suicides of the peasants even in the high growth regions of the country. The breakdown of the institutional credit system has been giving strength to moneylenders for extracting exorbitant rates of interest from the peasants. Inability to repay the loan because of crop failure and lack of effective insurance cover has been forcing them (peasants) to commit suicide, which is nothing but a series of cold-blooded murder. Therefore, the only option left before the people is to get organized and resist the systematic design of exploitation and murders adopted by the ruling compradors and their imperialist masters at various levels from local to the all-India, towards rebuilding a new world, free from exploitation and inequality. ■ ■

the electrical company and bus company employee unions were murdered in 2005.

Earlier in 2005, 26 unarmed Muslim detainees in a military prison in Manila were shot protesting against their prolonged and arbitrary detention, lack of a trial date and horrific prison conditions. These men were mostly vendors and displaced peasants and fishermen living with their families in Manila. They were accused, but never convicted, of membership in the Abu Sayaf kidnapping gang.

Seven print and radio journalists and writers were killed in 2005 as well as seven attorneys and judges involved in human rights, labour and land dispute cases. Among the religious community, there were three targeted assassinations of clergy and seven church workers, all involved in advocacy work with the poor, peasants, workers and national minorities.

This listing of killings in 2005 doesn't include attempted assassinations, illegal detention and torture and unreported disappearances. The victims were killed by death squads controlled by the military with the aim of protecting the power of the large landowners and land-grabbers, timber and mining barons and company bosses with the connivance of the regime.

Another important group of victims, which overlaps with peasants and workers associations, are the 83 leaders and members of the popular left political party, Bayan Muna (The People First) and its "party-list" affiliates. Most were systematically murdered in the provinces outside of Metro Manila between 2001 and 2005 (67 in 2005 alone). Leaders and coordinators of allied party-list groups, such as the women's party Gabriela and the urban poor people's party, Anakpawis (Toiling Masses), have been murdered, disappeared or wounded. Elected officials from Bayan Muna, such a Tarlac City councilman, Abelardo Ladera, were shot in broad daylight, prompting defiant provincial funeral marches. His killing followed the notorious 2004 massacre of hacienda union workers in Tarlac and the subsequent systematic elimination of witnesses.

A breakdown of the 66 death squad killings of members and supporters of the progressive political parties in 2005 include 33 from the militant urban poor people's party, Anakpawis, and 30 from Bayan Muna.

Five members of Anakpawis and three from Bayan Muna have "disappeared" and are presumed dead in 2005. So far three Bayan Muna officials have been assassinated in the first 10 weeks of 2006.

Since 2003, the Philippines became the second most dangerous country for journalists after Iraq because of the staggering number of reporters killed by death squads or who simply disappeared. Most recently a radio reporter involved in exposing abuses at a local mine was kidnapped by death squads working for the mine owners in late February 2006 and is presumed dead.

State sponsored terror today is reminiscent of the worst days of martial law, under the dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1972-86). As during the Marcos years, the entire countryside is virtually under military control, sharply limiting the role of civilian administrators. A manual published by the Macapagal regime, entitled 'Knowing the Enemy' is used by the Armed Forces throughout the country to label legal mass organisations and civil rights groups, like the Philippine Association of Protestant Lawyers, as supporters of "terrorism".

The military death squad campaign has all the earmarks of US-sponsored "low intensity" warfare against the civilian population. The military "proscribes" or labels individuals and groups as terrorists on the basis of what it claims to be "secret intelligence" in order to criminalise their right to resist oppression and fight for self-determination and justify their elimination. The creation of these "lists" is outside of the process of judicial scrutiny and limits any legal protection for the victims or their survivors. Using the black propaganda of a psychological warfare operation, the victims and their associations are invariably described as "terrorists".

#### **Background**

A de facto civilian-military alliance has been ruling the Philippines, since with the declaration of martial law by Marcos in 1972. In the 1960s most economists considered the Philippines to be the most economically progressive nation in south-east Asia. With the advent of the liberalisation of the economy, it has become and remains one of the poorest and most socially polarised country in Asia, with a per capita GDP of US \$ 950, about half of Thailand's. With over 50 per cent of total

private assets controlled by 15 extended super-rich families, it is one of the most unequal societies in the world. In stark contrast to the rest of Asia, there has been no economic progress in the past two decades. The Philippines, with a population of over 85 million, has one of the highest unemployment rates (20 per cent) and an additional 30 per cent underemployed in the informal sector. Over 40 per cent of the households are unable to secure adequate shelter and food; these are the indigent poor. The once highly regarded public educational and health systems have sharply deteriorated due to massive government cuts in social spending and privatisation. The nation, whose research institutions produced the high yield "miracle rice", is now a net importer of rice and other food staples. Malnutrition is widespread, according to the World Health Organisation. Upwards of eight million Filipinos, unable to find decent work at home, are working abroad to support their families. "Better to die working in Iraq, than to stay home and watch your family starve" was the pitiful, but common slogan of Filipino workers clamouring for exit visas to perform menial work for the US occupation army in Iraq. As many as 4,000 Filipino workers are believed to be in Iraq.

In the years following the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship (February 26, 1986) by a military and church-backed revolt, the subsequent elected presidents have failed to stem the ongoing deterioration of the country. The new rulers like Corazon Aquino (1986-1992), and former general Fidel Ramos (1992-1998), simply favoured a new set of oligarchs and set the stage for the rise to power of a corrupt populist, Joseph Estrada. His "anti-oligarch" rhetoric brought him to the presidential palace in 1998 with widespread support among the poor. Estrada became an irritant to Washington and the traditional oligarchy by welcoming Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez in 1999 and for his populist social policies, such as handing out thousands of land titles to urban squatters.

US-designed, upper class-backed, street demonstrations supported by sectors of the military elite culminated in the ouster of Estrada in January 2001. The same forces hoisted his vice-president, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to the presidency. Macapagal is a US educated, neo-liberal



economist and favourite of the US embassy. This political putsch led to the expansion of US military basing rights and a new military agreement, quickly signed by Macapagal after a two-year delay during Estrada's presidency. With the rise of Macapagal Arroyo, Washington has a reliable client.

The newly "installed" Macapagal Arroyo quickly instituted a neo-liberal programme of privatisations, drastic cuts for public education and public hospitals and onerous value-added taxes, which impacted the poor and lower middle class. By 2005, the Philippine total external and internal debt ballooned to over \$ 100 billion and yearly debt servicing exceed 30 per cent of the budget. Even 8 million overseas Filipino workers (including a significant section of the educated professionals) sending home \$ 12.5 billion dollars of remittances in 2005 could not begin to cover debt servicing. The Philippines bears the dubious distinction of being the only country in Asia to have seen a drop in per capita GDP during and since the heady years of the "Asian Tiger" boom.

Macapagal Arroyo's family and cronies have been implicated in the same levels of corruption as that attributed to the deposed president Estrada. Mike Arroyo, the president's husband, remains in self-imposed exile in the US to avoid facing charges of graft and fraud. Macapagal Arroyo maintains her support among the military by offering lucrative concessions to favourite generals and key officials in the military leading to deep discontent among the junior ranks of the armed forces forced to survive on low wages. As a result, several mutinies of junior officers and soldiers occurred, the largest of which was the takeover of an upscale Manila shopping and apartment complex in July 2003 by 300 soldiers from the special forces and the more recent uprising of Marines in January of this year.

Military intelligence has been implicated in a campaign of bombings both in Manila and on the southern island of Mindanao, targeting markets, buses, commuter trains, airports and mosques. The Macapagal regime blamed a Muslim kidnapping gang, Abu Sayaf, and used the bombings as a justification for greater militarisation of the country. The curious timing of the bombings, for example, the December 2004

bombing of a Manila shopping centre, which killed 15, happened very soon after a devastating landslide burying almost 1,000 townspeople in a province near Manila, exposed the regime's incompetence in civil assistance.

Local journalists with sources in the military believe the campaign of bombings has been carried out by the regime itself to justify requests for more military "aid" from the US.

#### **The US Connection**

In December 2002 the US announced a significant expansion of its joint US-Philippine military training exercises. The first contingent of US troops landing on the southern island of Mindanao engaged in field operations against the Muslim separatists. In early 2003, then assistant US secretary of defence, Paul Wolfowitz called the Philippines the "Second Front in the War on Terror". Since then tens of thousands of Muslim villagers have been forcibly displaced and hundreds have been tortured, killed or disappeared. As a result, Muslim guerrilla activity has increased.

In October 2003, during a visit to the Philippines, Bush cited the country as a model for the re-building of Iraq. Forgetting to mention the US invasion of the Philippines in 1898 and 13-year pacification campaign when upwards of one million Filipinos died, Bush described the Philippines as a "model of democracy" – a bona fide death squad democracy.

The Bush administration's support for the Macapagal Arroyo regime has been reciprocated: A contingent of Philippine troops was sent to Iraq over the protests of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. These troops were only withdrawn when Iraqi resistance fighters threatened to execute captured Filipino labourers in Iraq: the Philippine economy is more dependent on remittances from its workers in west Asia than on US aid. The lucrative reconstruction contracts, which the Philippine elite had expected to be awarded for its services to the Bush administration in Iraq, never materialised. During 2006, another contingent of 5,500 US soldiers are scheduled to arrive in Mindanao and the number of joint exercises has doubled.

US troops are not confined to the separatist stronghold in the far south of the country. More and more "joint operations" occur in the central islands and

Luzon where the communist New Peoples Army (NPA) has been conducting a campaign against the government for 40 years over issues of land reform and oligarchic-imperialist control of the economy. With an estimated 10,000 fighters, the NPA is clearly viewed as a threat to US and local ruling class interests.

#### **Urban Popular Protests**

In 2004, Macapagal Arroyo narrowly defeated her rival in the presidential elections in a campaign marred by violence and fraud. An audiotape released in the spring of 2005 recorded the president discussing with a top election official the rigging of the election. Amid resignations of members of her cabinet and calls for her resignation from the general public, she narrowly escaped a vote of impeachment in November 2005.

Macapagal Arroyo's disastrous neo-liberal economic policies, the growing social and economic deterioration of the country, frantic attempts by the professionals to escape through immigration, moves by restive middle level officers and demonstrations by popular mass social movements put the Philippines back in the international news. In early February 2006, an even more devastating landslide brought on by rains and deforestation, buried almost 2,000 townspeople on the island of Leyte. The inability of the regime to provide even the most basic aid to the victims angered the entire nation.

On February 23, 2006, the eve of the 20th anniversary of the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of emergency banning all rallies, demonstrations and closing opposition media. She issued orders for the arrest of 59 individuals, including members of the Congress, military officers and social critics, on charges of rebellion against her regime. Rallies were planned to commemorate the end of the Marcos dictatorship and to protest the electoral fraud, corruption, economic mismanagement and human rights violations of the Macapagal Arroyo regime. Some rallies defied the president's decree, went ahead and were violently repressed.

Those charged with rebellion included six Congress people from leftwing political parties, a human rights attorney, retired and

**Contd. at page 35**

## “There is need for caution with the present tactics”

### CPN(Maoists) may be giving over-emphasis to the possibility of advancing the movement through the Constituent Assembly!

*(With the latest developments in Nepal and the tactics and Strategy now being put forward by the CPN(Maoist) and the continuous appeals by Indian Marxist and revisionists to the India Maoists to learn from the Nepalese Maoists, People's March has been trying to get the response of the Indian Maoists. At last we have received by e-mail a response from the spokesperson of the CPI(Maoists) which, to a large extent, gives their response. We are giving below an interview taken by our correspondent with comrade Azad, the spokesperson of the CC, CPI(Maoist) in end June 2006.)*

#### **PM: How do you look at the current developments in Nepal?**

**Azad:** We, in India, have been watching the ongoing developments in Nepal with great interest. The militant mass agitation by the people of Nepal against the reactionary, autocratic regime of King Gyanendra in April, in the backdrop of the powerful armed struggle, was indeed historic. The people of Nepal had inscribed a glorious chapter in the annals of Nepal by forcing the fascist King to relinquish his adamant stand and to concede power to the parliament. Particularly the one million strong mobilization in Katmandu in June and the lakhs mobilized in the districts indicates the growing influence of the Maoists in the country. Their influence to be encompassing even the urban areas. Our Party hails the historic struggle of the people of Nepal for democracy and a better society. However, the revolutionaries in India hope that the struggle in Nepal will go on until the overthrow of the King along with the so called parliament and capture of power by the revolutionary and democratic forces. We hope that the Maoists will be able to maintain their initiative to direct the ongoing political developments. They would need to remain alert in their alliance with the seven party alliance which wants to strike a compromise with the King and betray the aspirations of the people.

#### **PM: How do you view the tactics of the CPN(Maoist) in joining the interim government and promising to abide by the verdict of the constituent assembly?**

**Azad:** The situation in Nepal and the World is complex. Due to the weakness in the international communist movement we see many a people's war bogged down in a struggle for survival for decades. In this situation it is no doubt that the Nepalese party and people have made historic advances. But we feel there is need for

caution with the present tactics. We think that Maoists forming a government jointly with the comprador bourgeois-feudal parties such as the reactionary Nepali Congress, revisionist CPN-UML and the other parties of the ruling classes will not really work out as they represent two diametrically opposed class interests. It is a wrong interpretation on the question of the state in Nepal to expect a possibility of a peaceful transition from the CA to the NDR. One may bring some reforms from above and satisfy certain deprived sections of the people but it will never solve the basic problems of the people as you cannot smash feudalism and throw out imperialism from the soil of Nepal by utilizing the old state whatever embellishments one might do to give it a refurbished image. Nothing short of a revolutionary upheaval of the masses can achieve the above objective. No doubt given the huge mass mobilizations throughout the country and the efforts to create an even wider upsurge are positive preparations to take the revolution forward, but some of the statements in the interviews tend to give the impression that the CPN(Maoists) are giving over-emphasis to the possibility of advancing the movement through the Constituent Assembly and in alliance with the 7-parties. This can have dangerous implications.

The present emphasis of the CPN(Maoist) needs to be seen with caution particularly after they had brilliantly built up their people's army of 25,000, their Base Areas, the UF and their new Organs of Power, and had stated that they were in the phase of the strategic offensive to seize power. In the process they effectively defeated all efforts of the police and RNA to crush them, maintaining the military and political initiative. But now there is no reference even to the strategic offensive and how it is to advance. They ofcourse do refer to

this being a February revolution and that preparations must go on for the October revolution, but we are not aware this later fits into their strategic offensive plan.

#### **PM: And what about the dissolution of the revolutionary organs of power and merging of the two armies?**

**Azad:** These organs are the product of protracted people's war against the old state and they stand out as shining examples of people's democratic dictatorship at the local level brilliantly built by the CPN(Maoist) party. The immediate task and the tactics should serve to strengthen these organs and mould them into organs of uprising like the Soviets in revolutionary Russia and China. While consolidating these organs of power we need to strive to mobilize the masses in a big way into uprisings and strive to capture the cities leading to the final seizure of power at the opportune moment. In fact in the concrete situation in Nepal today the Maoists have really only two revolutionary options. Either they must intensify the mass upsurge, evolve the organizational forms of political power suitable for seizing political power at the national/all Nepal level or if that is not possible owing to an unfavourable balance of class forces the existing base areas should be consolidated and strengthened and steps taken to complete the democratic tasks and advance towards in the direction of the socialist tasks. It is possible that in this process two Nepals will emerge – a reactionary one based in Kathmandu and few cities and a revolutionary Nepal based in the countryside.

As regards merging the army within a reconstituted state army, it is even more dangerous. Mao said that without a people's army the people have nothing. The army is one of the main instruments of class rule. How can two diametrically opposed classes have a single army? By merging

the people's army with the reactionary army of the ruling classes (until now the faithful servant of the King) the people will become defenceless in case of a reactionary armed offensive by the enemy. We have experiences of several countries where the toiling masses suffered heavily due to the wrong line of the Communist party. In Indonesia we know of the cruel massacres of communists and their sympathizers carried out by the ruling classes due to the line of hobnobbing with the reactionary ruling classes whom they considered as nationalist and democratic forces. We also have before us the examples of Chile, Nicaragua and several other countries. One cannot rule out the possibility of the reactionary ruling classes carrying out a coup and reestablishing their monopoly over political power at an opportune moment when the revolutionary forces have been effectively disarmed or weakened. This has been the experience in several countries following the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War i.e France, Greece etc. But, of course, if the Maoists do not pose a threat to the interests of imperialism and the comprador bureaucratic bourgeois (CBB) and they get accommodated and incorporated into the system then they too would be received with warmth by the ruling classes. The invitation to the UN to supervise the cease fire and monitor the demobilization of the people's armed forces is also dangerous. The UN is essentially an instrument of imperialism and particularly American imperialism. It is bound to work in the interests of the reactionary ruling classes of Nepal and imperialism. Overall, the decision of the CPN(Maoist) to dissolve the revolutionary people's governments in the countryside and to merge the PLA with the reactionary army will unfold an irreversible process of losing all the revolutionary gains achieved till now.

**PM: The various parliamentary parties in India, not to speak of the Left parties like the CPI and CPI(M), have been hailing the line of participation in the interim government and parliamentary democracy taken by the Nepali Maoists and say that it will have a positive impact on the Maoist movement in India. How does your Party assess its impact?**

**Azad:** It is the wishful subjective thinking of these parties in India that the developments in Nepal will have a "positive" (what

they mean by positive is the Maoists shunning armed struggle and joining the so-called mainstream of parliamentary politics) impact on the Maoist movement in our country. Anyone who is familiar with the history of the Maoist movement in India, with the numerous ups and downs it had gone through in the past four decades after Naxalbari, knows how resilient our movement is. Even when confronted with great difficulties and odds against the revolutionaries, the genuine Maoists in India never vacillated or drifted from their line of new democratic revolution and achieving it through the line of protracted people's war. They had not only rejected the parliamentary path but also fought against the parties who wanted to participate in elections in the name of utilizing it as a tactic. Of course, there are some pseudo revolutionary parties, like the CPI(ML)-Liberation which had degenerated into parliamentary parties but these stand exposed before the people as revisionist parties in the guise of MLM.

No wonder, the various ruling class parties and the so-called left parties in India are elated at the change of stance by the CPN(Maoist) led by comrade Prachanda. They are naturally hailing the line taken by the CPN(Maoist) and are calling upon the Maoists in India to realize the futility of armed struggle and to follow the Maoists of Nepal by participating in the parliamentary pig-sty in India. As bitter enemies and opponents of revolution all these parties have been in the forefront in suppressing the ongoing people's war in India. The decision of the CPN(Maoist) to participate in the government along with the reactionary parties, declaring their commitment to the so-called rule of law and the future constitution, and to become actors in the ensuing game of parliamentary elections following the elections to the constituent assembly has come as a breather for the ruling class parties in Nepal and the parliamentary system of India.

In fact, in his interview with *The Hindu* last February, comrade Prachanda himself hinted at the "positive" impact that his line of multiparty democracy will have on the Maoist movement in India. It must have come as a great relief for the Indian ruling classes to hear comrade Prachanda speak of his Party's commitment to multiparty democracy and the message he wants to

give to the Naxalite movement in India by successfully establishing multiparty democracy in Nepal.

When asked what he would say if he were to meet the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, comrade Prachanda said:

*"We are fighting for genuine multiparty democracy but they are imprisoned there, in Patna, Siliguri, Chennai. If you release them all, a message will go out. And if you feel the Naxalite movement in India is a problem for you, we feel we are trying to deal with the problems in Nepal in a new way, so if you release our comrades and we are successful in establishing multiparty democracy in Nepal, this will be a very big message for the Naxalite movement in India. In other words, the ground will be readied for them to think in a new political way. Words are not enough; we need to validate what we are saying by establishing that democracy."*

It is really a matter of grave concern that comrade Prachanda, instead of demanding the expansionist Indian ruling classes to stop all interference and meddling in Nepal's internal affairs, only talked of how their tactics would bring about a change in the outlook of the Maoists in India. Needless to say, these remarks will not only be deeply resented by the revolutionary masses of our country who have seen the wretched system of parliamentary democracy in India but will also be proved totally wrong through their revolutionary practice.

**PM:** The CPM and one of its top leaders, Sitaram Yechuri, was focused as a messiah from India to play a role between the Maoists and SPA. After returning back to India he and his party advised the Indian Maoists to follow the line of the CPN(Maoist). How do you explain this when they seem hostile to the Maoists here? Apart from this Yechuri told the press that the Indian Maoists have planned to kill him and the secret regarding this decision was informed to him by the Nepali Maoists. What is your comment please?

The CPM is a party of the Indian ruling classes, representing the interests of imperialism, feudalism and the CBB in India. Their primary task seemed to be to bring the Nepalese Maoists into the parliamentary 'mainstream' which they also keep preaching to us in India. When we do not accede they have used the worst forms of state terror against us as in West Bengal.

There aim is the same in both countries — to pacify the Maoists in India with bullets and do the same with the Nepalese Maoists with sugar-coated bullets. Yechuri and the CPM in effect played a more affective role for the Indian ruling classes when the Congress was fumbling with the Karan Singh fiasco. But when he overdid his ‘diplomacy’ and was sidelined, he cooked up the conspiracy theory of the Maoists in India planning to kill him to regain some credibility and try and sow seeds of mistrust between the two Maoist parties. A true Chanakya!!

**PM: Why are you opposed to the tactic of multiparty democracy as proposed by the CPN(Maoist)?**

**Azad:** Firstly, we are greatly perturbed by the proposal put forth by comrade Prachanda in his various interviews that his party was committed to multiparty democracy which will be practiced not after the revolutionary seizure of power by the proletariat but within the semi-colonial semi-feudal society. The 2003 Plenum document was quite vague regarding CPN(Maoist)’s concept of multiparty democracy or political competition, i.e., whether it is applicable after the seizure of power by the revolutionary party or prior to seizure itself. It only says it is possible to organize political competition within the constitutional limits of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic state. However, the statements, interviews and documents released after the 12-point Delhi Agreement between the CPN(Maoist) and the Seven Party Alliance in November 2005 all point to the need for competition within the existing system after the Constituent Assembly is elected.

There is also confusion regarding the class character of the Parties with whom such political competition has to be conducted. While the 2003 document clearly stated that these forces will be anti-feudal and anti-imperialist in character, the post November 2005 documents and interviews of CPN(MAOIST) provide scope for such competition with the constituents of SPA who are basically comprador bourgeois-feudal in their character in spite of their role against monarchy, or, more specifically, against King Gyanendra’s autocratic rule. In fact, in the same document entitled “**Present situation and our tasks**”, presented by comrade Prachanda and

adopted by the Central Committee Meeting of the CPN (Maoist) in May 2003, it correctly described the nature of the parliamentary parties in Nepal in the following words—

*“In form it may appear as a triangular struggle involving monarchy, parliamentary forces and revolutionary forces, but in essence and if one looks from a class point of view, the struggle involving only two forces (reactionary and democratic forces) are seen. It has been practically proved that the differences between the autocratic monarchical and parliamentary groups are nothing other than that of share of power within the old state. It has been time and again proved in Nepal that monarchy in the name of nationalism (fake) and parliamentary forces in the name of democracy (fake) want to occupy the seat of power and betray the nation and the people on identical class basis.*

*“What we have been saying from a class and theoretical point of view and what has become all the more exposed in the present cease-fire and negotiation process is that it is the clash of interests between different international reactionary centers which is behind the mutual recriminations and contradictions between different reactionary groups in Nepal. As the royal army and the palace elements are being manipulated and protected by western imperialism, particularly American imperialism, and the main parliamentary forces by the Indian rulers who seek special hegemony in South Asia, they are having a continuous tug of war between them. Hence the whole Party should be clear that, in the background of political development particularly after the palace massacre, the idea of seeing either the monarchical or the parliamentary forces of Nepal as more democratic or more nationalistic than the other, will be specially harmful and wrong. It has become all the more clear in the present day Nepal that we can never have any ideological and political relationship with either monarchical or parliamentary groups except to manage contradictions in a particular situation.”*

While the above analysis of the class character of the parliamentary parties, their fake democracy and loyalty to various imperialist powers, is basically correct, it is indeed very unfortunate that the

CPN(Maoist) has not adhered firmly to that analysis from a strategic and class perspective. It is one thing to make necessary adjustments, understandings and tactical unity with these parliamentary forces and even with a section of the imperialists against the main enemy when conditions for such alliances become ripe. But to create illusions on the character of these parties or overlook their links with imperialists and Indian expansionists will do great harm to the revolution in the long run.

Moreover, we find that comrade Prachanda and the CPN(Maoist) had turned the tactics to the level of strategy and path of the world revolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, in his interview to *The Hindu* comrade Prachanda stressed that the Maoists’ commitment to multi-party democracy is not tactical but the result of a lengthy ideological debate within the party over three years. He said: *“our decision on multi-party democracy is a strategically, theoretically developed position and we are telling the parliamentary parties that we are ready to have peaceful competition with you all.”*

The CPN(Maoist) leader directly assured the comprador bourgeois-feudal parliamentary parties that his Party is ready to have peaceful competition with all of them. And by describing this decision on multiparty democracy as a strategically, theoretically developed position comrade Prachanda has brought a dangerous thesis to the fore—the thesis of peaceful coexistence with the ruling class parties instead of overthrowing them through revolution; peaceful competition with all other parliamentary parties, including the ruling class parties that are stooges of imperialism or foreign reaction, in a so-called parliamentary elections; abandoning the objective of building socialism for an indefinite period; and opening the doors wide for the feudal-comprador reactionaries to come to power by utilizing the backwardness of the masses and the massive backing from domestic and foreign reactionaries or the comprador bureaucratic bourgeois and feudal and petty bourgeois forces to hijack the entire course of development of the society from the socialist direction to maintaining the existing system (even if in a new form) in the name of democracy and nationalism. Whatever may be our good intentions for building a more democratic system, the laws governing class struggle

will not permit of such a system. History has proved this time and again from the days of the Paris Commune right up till the earlier revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

**PM: Then are you in favour of multiparty democracy at least after the seizure of power? If not what is the form of government you envisage after the revolution?**

**Azad:** The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist understanding regarding the form of government that will be best suited for the proletariat is the Commune or the Soviet or the Revolutionary Council that can best serve the proletariat and the vast majority of the masses as they act not as talking shops and mere legislative bodies but as both legislative and executive bodies. The representatives to these bodies are elected and are subject to recall any time the people feel they do not serve their interests. If we look at the very process of the protracted people's war it entails the setting up democratic power in the Base Areas of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal forces UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PROLETARIAT elected democratically at gram sabhas with the right to remove them also by the gram sabha. Here there is a close interaction between the power structures and the will of the people and therefore truly democratic. Once power is seized at the all-India level, till the transformation to the socialist stage all genuinely anti-imperialist and anti-feudal parties will be part of the new power, and the transition to socialism can only take place through continuing the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. This does not deny democracy for the masses at large but, as Lenin said, petty production generates a bourgeoisie daily, hourly and these elements will find their representative at all realms of state power, including the Party. Can anyone think of a better form of government and better form of exercising democracy in the real sense of the term?

*"To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics",* said Lenin.

This was said by Lenin over a century back.

Since then, particularly since World War II, the parliament and its related institutions have become even more corrupt and rotten to the core.

A good example of how the new power was built was the Paris Commune. The concepts practiced there were further worked out in the Soviets of the USSR, the communes in China and the experiments of the GPCR and is being sought to be practiced in the Base Areas being set up by the Maoists in different parts of the world.

Comrade Lenin also explained very lucidly how the Parliament functions even in the most democratic of the republics and, contrasting it to the Commune, showed how the Communes (or the Soviets in Russia and Revolutionary Councils in China) are the most suitable forms of government for the proletariat and the toiling masses.

*"The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the masses, their direct participation in the democratic organisation of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.*

*"The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."*

*"The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. .... We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries,..."*

**PM: And how do you ensure political competition with other parties? The**

**CPN(Maoist) claims that it is only by organizing political competition and institutionalizing the right of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary party in power that counter-revolution can be effectively checked.**

**Azad:** It is, indeed, surprising that the CPN(Maoist) should arrive at such a conclusion even after the proletariat is equipped with rich and varied experiences on the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, after it is armed with such an appropriate form, method and weapon as the cultural revolution and is in possession of a wealth of writings by our teachers—Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao—and by several Marxist writers on the subject of checking the degeneration of the Party, Army and the State; preventing the restoration of capitalism; and building a new type of state and society. To think that continuous proletarianization and revolutionization of the Communist Party can be ensured and that counter-revolution can be effectively checked by organizing so-called political competition or by institutionalizing the right of the masses to install an alternative revolutionary party or leadership on the state means falling into the trap of bourgeois formalism and undermining the real task of mobilizing the masses extensively to wage bitter class struggle against the old reactionary defeated classes and the new bourgeois class developing within the Party, Army and the Administration. It is difficult to grasp how alternative revolutionary parties can exist—especially since the communist parties have always understood that different political lines represented either a proletarian outlook or a bourgeois outlook.

The crucial point lies *not* in ensuring the right of the masses to replace one Party by another through elections, which is anyway the norm in any bourgeois republic or bureaucrat bourgeois-feudal republic, but ensuring their active and creative involvement in supervising the Party and the state, in checking the emergence of a new bureaucratic class, and themselves taking part in the administration of the state and society and in the entire process of revolutionary transformation. And it will be the foremost task of the Party to organize and lead the masses in checking counter-revolution and bringing about the revolutionary transformation in all spheres

through continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. And this is the most important lesson handed down to us by the entire historical experience of the world revolution, particularly by the GPCR. Moreover, is it possible for the Party of the proletariat to prevent the comeback of the defeated classes to power and check counter-revolution peacefully or by a coup by providing such an opportunity to them to compete in a “democratic” manner? Would the Bolshevik Party have won the elections in Russia after the revolution had it organized such political competition given its near-total absence in the vast backward countryside where the most reactionary ideas ruled the roost? In fact, the Bolshevik Party had to even dissolve the constituent assembly immediately after it captured power despite the fact that it was only a minority in it as the constituent assembly acted as an instrument of the reactionaries and became an obstacle for carrying out revolutionary reforms and for exercising proletarian dictatorship as in the Soviets. It is not just the case of Russia, in many countries, particularly in semi-colonial semi-feudal countries, where petty commodity production and peasant economy predominate, the feudal ideology, culture, customs and the force of habit among the majority of the population will make it possible for other non-proletarian and even reactionary parties under the anti-feudal anti-imperialist cloak to come to power relatively easily. Hence it will not be surprising if we find that the idealist and subjective proposal of the CPN(Maoist), though made with good intentions, ultimately becomes a convenient tool in the hands of the capitalist-roaders to seize power.

As regards political competition with other parties, we have the experience of China where several democratic parties such as the Democratic League, Peasants and Workers’ Party and others competed with the CPC and contested in elections to the various organs of power. Although these existed for almost a decade after the revolution the people rejected them when they refused to support socialism and tried to take China along the capitalist road. Political competition was encouraged in China, not in the form of participation in Western-type bourgeois parliamentary elections but in the elections to various bodies. Democratic parties and organiza-

tions belonging to the four classes that comprised the motive forces of revolution were to take part in the elections to the various bodies.

The CPC had strived to unite all the anti-feudal anti-imperialist parties and forces during the new democratic revolution and also after the seizure of power and establishment of people’s democracy or the people’s democratic dictatorship.

In his article **On the correct handling of contradictions among the people**, in 1957, Mao explained the policy of the CPC towards other political parties after the capture of power thus:

*“It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people. Mutual supervision among the various parties is also a long-established fact, in the sense that they have long been advising and criticizing each other. Mutual supervision is obviously not a one-sided matter; it means that the Communist Party can exercise supervision over the democratic parties, and vice versa.”*

In China many methods were evolved to prevent capitalist restoration and the rise of a new bourgeoisie in the Government and Party. Mao’s *let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend*; his *‘Three-thirds’ system of democratic representation which restricts the seats of Communist party members in all elected bodies to a maximum of one-third of the whole and gives two-thirds of the seats to members of other parties and non-party elements*; his putting six *political criteria for political parties to stand for elections*; etc; are only a few of the examples adopted. Democracy is not merely a formal putting a vote but must exist in the very living process of any organisation, with the leadership under the close supervision of the masses and cadre; this too is possible with only a general raising of MLM consciousness of the Party and the masses and intensifying the class struggle. In China there were many parties after the revolution sharing power, but the unity was on a principled basis, and was part of the front to deepen the class struggle

against the remnants of the feudal and CBB forces. In Nepal they in effect dilute the class struggle by forming a government with feudal and CBB elements.

The most important thing is that all the revolutionary bodies in the proletarian or people’s democratic state are elected and every person so elected is subject to recall which is not seen in the so-called parliamentary democracies.

**PM: Do you find anything wrong when the CPN(Maoist) says it will go to the new democratic stage via the bourgeois democratic or multiparty republic?**

**Azad:** No Maoist would say it is wrong to fight for the demand of a Republic and for the overthrow of the autocratic monarchy. And likewise, none would oppose the forging of a united front of all those who are opposed to the main enemy at any given moment. Needless to say, such a united front would be purely tactical in nature and cannot, and should not, under any circumstances, determine the path and direction of the revolution itself.

The problem with the theorization by the CPN(Maoist) lies in making the fight against autocracy into a **sub-stage** of NDR and, a tendency to make the sub-stage overwhelm (dominate and determine) the very direction and path of the revolution. The programme and strategy of NDR drawn up by the Party prior to its launching of the armed struggle, its targets to be overthrown, and even the concrete class analysis made earlier based on which the revolution had advanced so far, are now made subordinate to the needs of the so-called sub-stage of Nepalese revolution. The sub-stage of a bourgeois democratic republic appears, from their interviews and statements, to have become the all-determining factor.

As far as we know, we can say that the numerous types of state system in the world can be reduced to three basic kinds according to the class character of their political power: (1) republics under bourgeois dictatorship {in addition to these there are the fake republics in the backward semi-feudal, semi-colonial countries under the joint dictatorship of the CBB and feudal elements, backed by imperialism }; (2) republics under the dictatorship of the proletariat; and (3) republics under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes. In essence, the slogan of a bourgeois democratic republic given by the

CPN(Maoist) cannot but come under the first type of republic in spite of the participation of the revolutionary party in the state power along with the comprador bourgeois-feudal parties.

In his interview with the BBC correspondent, comrade Prachanda gave his vision of future Nepal in the following words:

*"We believe that the Nepali people will go for a republic and in a peaceful way the process of rebuilding Nepal will go forward."*

*"In five years' time Nepal will move towards being a beautiful, peaceful and progressive nation."*

*"In five years' time the millions of Nepalis will already be moving ahead with a mission to make a beautiful future, and Nepal will truly start becoming a heaven on earth."*

He further asserted that a democratic republic elected in such a way will solve the problems of Nepalis!!

*"We believe that with the election of a constituent assembly, a democratic republic will be formed in Nepal. And this will solve the problems of Nepalis and lead the country into a more progressive path."*

Anyone reading the above lines would think that **these views reflect more a nationalist sentiment than a proletarian class outlook.**

How will Nepal start becoming a "heaven on earth" after becoming a bourgeois republic? How can the formation of a democratic republic "solve the problems of Nepalis"? Can it free itself from the clutches of imperialism after becoming a republic in the present imperialist era? Does the CPN(Maoist), which claims to believe in MLM, really think that the "process of rebuilding Nepal will go forward in a peaceful way"? And is there a single instance in world history where such peaceful process of rebuilding has taken place? Does not the history of world revolution show that bitter class struggle, bloody and violent at times, continues even after decades following the capture of power by the proletariat? Then how could comrade Prachanda think of such a peaceful process of rebuilding Nepal even at this sub-stage? Do the parties belonging to the SPA really fight imperialism, Indian expansionism and feudalism in Nepal? Is there a guarantee that the CPN(Maoist) will defeat the bourgeois-feudal parties, with which it

wants to go for political competition, in the elections and ensure that Nepal does not drift into the clutches of imperialism and Indian expansionism? How could one believe that once the elections to the Constituent Assembly are over and Nepal becomes a Republic, not under the leadership of the working class party but may be under an alliance of a hotch-potch combination of Parties i.e., an alliance of ruling class and working class under CPN(Maoist), the country would free itself from feudalism and imperialism and become a "beautiful, peaceful and progressive nation"?

According to comrade Prachanda's opinion, "the reactionary class and their parties will try to transform this republic into bourgeois parliamentary one, where as our party of the proletariat class will try to transform it into new democratic republic. How long will be the period of transition, is not a thing that can right now be ascertained. It is clear that it will depend upon the then national and international situation and state of power balance."

This so-called transitional multiparty republic is sought to be transformed into a new democratic republic through peaceful struggle by means of political competition with reactionary class and their parties which try to transform it into a bourgeois parliamentary republic!!

Whatever be the tactics adopted by the CPN(Maoist) the most objectionable part in the entire matter is its projection of these tactics as a theoretically developed position which it thinks should be the model for the revolutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the name of fighting against dogmatism our comrades of CPN(Maoist) are slipping into dangerous territory.

Moreover, as long as the Party wages a consistent struggle against imperialism and local reactionaries and pursues the line of redistribution of land and wealth, nationalisation of all comprador, foreign industries, banks and foreign trade, it is certain to face opposition from the other parliamentary parties. And if it wants to be part of the parliamentary game it has to abide by its rules and cannot carry out its anti-feudal, anti-imperialist policies in a thoroughgoing way. Even the independence of the judiciary has to be recognised as part of the game of parliament and can cause obstruction to every reform which the Maoist party tries

to initiate after coming to power through elections. This is already being seen with the 8 point agreement being said to be illegal. US imperialism is even strongly demanding that the Maoist should participate in the constituent assembly only after they lay down their arms. The CPN(Maoists) have rightly opposed this position of the US and also Indian expansionists. **We expect that they will remain firm in this.**

Then there will be several institutions like the judiciary, the election commission, the media, various artistic, cultural and even religious bodies, non-government organisations, and also human rights organisations some of which are floated by the ruling classes, and so on. If one slips into the quagmire of the so-called multiparty democratic republic, one cannot escape from upholding these so-called independent institutions. Many of these can become hideouts of the reactionary forces and work for counter-revolution in diverse subtle ways. One cannot forget the subtle manner in which the western agencies infiltrated and subverted the societies in East European countries and even in the former Soviet Union.

**PM: Comrade Prachanda says that the tactics adopted by his party are based on the specificities of the political and military balance in the world as well as particular class, political and power balance in Nepal besides the experiences of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is your Party's opinion on this?**

Azad: **It is true that comrade Prachanda in his interview to *The Hindu* last February cited the above three factors for his party coming to the decision on multiparty democracy. In fact, this understanding could be seen in the CPN(Maoist) even before the said interview. For instance, in the CC meeting in August 2004, it began to be skeptical about the prospects of victory in a small country like Nepal when it is confronted by imperialism and there is no advancement of any strong revolutionary movement.**

**"In the present context, when along with the restoration of capitalism in China there is no other socialist state existing, when despite objective condition turning favorable currently there is no advancement in any strong revolutionary movement under the leadership of the**

*proletariat, and when world imperialism is pouncing on people everywhere like an injured tiger, is it possible for a small country with a specific geo-political compulsion like Nepal to gain victory to the point of capturing central state through revolution? This is the most significant question being put before the Party today. The answer to this question can only be found in Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and on this depends the future of the Nepalese revolution.”*

The same Plenum had also pointed out why the series of tactical steps like cease-fire, negotiation, political way out etc., were taken up.

*“There is no doubt that the imperialist forces are now in preparation for even more vicious assault as the Nepalese People’s War is in preparation for strategic offensive from its current position of strategic equilibrium. The entire complexities, opportunities and challenges of Nepalese revolution are the manifestations of this objective condition.....But, in Nepal, the development of revolution has reached a very sensitive stage of preparation for strategic offensive. It is essential to understand that the series of tactical steps undertaken by the Party such as cease-fire, negotiation, political way out etc. are based on this strategically favorable and tactically unfavorable world situation and the condition of strategic equilibrium inside the country.”*

It is true that the revolutions everywhere are confronting a tough situation especially after the setback of China. Tactically speaking, in the present-day world, the enemy forces are quite strong while our subjective forces are weak. World imperialism has unleashed a massive offensive on the revolutionary forces, national liberation movements and on the people’s movements everywhere. But this is only one side of the coin. At the same time, the objective conditions are quite favourable; imperialism, particularly US imperialism, is hated by the people everywhere and massive people’s movements are breaking out against imperialism, particularly US imperialism, throughout the world. Any revolution in today’s world has to inevitably face the attacks by the imperialists.

To face an enemy much bigger than the

revolutionary forces there is no question that it may and will require a great flexibility in tactics. Particularly when we are a sizable force such flexibility can more effectively be wielded for the achievement of our goals. But while doing so there is always a danger to lose sight of our strategic tasks of the seizure of power by armed force. From the statements being made by the CPN(Maoist) leadership it appears that that danger is there. Many statements being made and the interviews being given tend to negate some of the basic Marxist understandings regarding state and revolution. It may be said to have been made in the context of diplomacy; but its end result is to mis-educate the revolutionary and progressive camp. It is not expected from a Marxist statesman.

In the interview com Prachanda had gone to the extent of saying: *“We are ready to accept the people’s verdict, if they chose constitutional monarchy and multiparty democracy.”* It is indeed a great tragedy to see the Maoist party finally ending up in these political positions in spite of having de facto power in most of the countryside.

**PM: Comrade Prachanda says that the line of multiparty democracy applies to the Maoist movement in India too. How does your party see this?**

**Azad:** We saw his comments on this point in his interview with *The Hindu* correspondent. It says:

*“We believe it applies to them too. We want to debate this. They have to understand this and go down this route. Both on the question of leadership and on multiparty democracy, or rather multiparty competition I believe those who call themselves revolutionaries in India need to think about these issues. And there is a need to go in the direction of that practice. We wish to debate with them on this. If revolutionaries are not going to look at the need for ideological development, they will not go anywhere.”*

Such advice has been coming forth from the various ruling class parliamentary parties in India since long. The revisionist CPI and CPI(M), who swear by Marx and Lenin, regularly sermonise through their magazines, documents and statements, regarding the futility of armed struggle for seizing state power and achieving revolutionary social transformation. They desperately try to show how parliamentary

multiparty democracy is the best instrument for achieving this transformation as witnessed in West Bengal and Kerala. The CPI(ML)-Liberation, in the name of MLM, preaches the virtues of multi-party democracy and calls all those who do not wish to be tied to the parliamentary pig-sty as anarchists and adventurists.

It is good that the CPN(Maoist) wants to debate with the Maoists in India on the question of leadership and multiparty democracy. There have been interesting discussions and exchange of opinions and experiences between the leaderships of our two parties on the concept of leadership, on the question of personality cult and concentration of all power in the hands of one individual, etc. Our opinion has always been that it is necessary for a good section of the Party leadership to work among the masses and concentrate on building class struggle even after the seizure of power in order to prevent the degeneration in the Party functionaries, officials in the various state departments, particularly the armed forces, in the various units in the production sphere, and so on. We must encourage the masses to criticize the mistakes committed by the party and the party leaders even in the course of the revolutionary movement prior to the seizure of power. We must develop collective leadership rather than focusing on any one individual or delegating revolutionary authority. Dependency on one or few individuals instead of developing collective leadership and involving the entire Party membership and the masses in decision-making has been one of the causes that led to great reversals in Russia and China where, after the demise of outstanding proletarian leaders like Stalin and Mao, the CPSU and the CPC turned revisionist so easily.

We agree with comrade Prachanda when he says that *“from the lessons of the 20th Century communist states - we want to move to a new plane in terms of leadership - where one person doesn’t remain the party leader or the head of state.”*

In fact, this had also been one of the major points of debate during the inner-party struggle in the CPN(Maoist) during 2004-05 when comrade Bhattarai (Laldhoj), in his *Basic Questions for Inner-Party Discussion*, raised questions such as: *Is proletarian leadership a centralized expression of collectivity, or is it a person*



centered? Does the principal law of dialectics, viz. one divides into two, apply to the main leadership or not? How does the system of a single person occupying the top Party, army and the state posts, and that too for life, solve the question of generating revolutionary successors and of continuous revolution? Our party, the CPI(Maoist) wish to conduct a serious debate on these questions and also on the question of Prachanda Path and on the concept of path, thought and ism.

**PM: What would you say with regard to the concept of 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy as proposed by the CPN(Maoist) led by comrade Prachanda?**

**Azad:** What is new in the concept of 21<sup>st</sup> century democracy raised by the CPN(Maoist) and how is it qualitatively different from the democracy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? The CPN(Maoist) had also claimed that its “*decision on multi-party democracy is a strategically, theoretically developed position*” which is even applicable to conditions in India. One knows about bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy, that democracy too has a class character, which in a class-divided society democracy will serve the ruling class while exercising dictatorship over the rest of the people. In bourgeois republics the nature of democracy is bourgeois. It is meant to serve the bourgeoisie while oppressing the vast majority of the people. Its essence is bourgeois dictatorship. Likewise, in people’s democratic republics, the democracy is meant for all the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist classes while dictatorship is exercised over the enemies of the people and their agents. The qualitative difference between different types of democracies lies in their class character. But when the CPN(Maoist) says that there is a qualitative difference between the democracy of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries without any reference to the class character, it is not only unconvincing but also seems to be highly subjective.

One reason given is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there has “*been unprecedented develop-*

*ment in science and technology, particularly in electronic communication technology, in the world.*” How this unprecedented development has a bearing on the strategy of the revolutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century or on the nature of democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not clear.

It says that “*in the field of ideology, the central committee has attempted to draw a strategic outline of the world revolution based on the analysis of today’s world situation and mainly the new analysis of globalized imperialism and proletarian movement and has succeeded to present a totally new concept in relation to leadership and accomplishing revolution and preventing counter-revolution*” and “*in the field of politics*” it says, it has made a “*qualitative leap in the concept regarding political and military strategy and tactic established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.*”

We are still not clear what is this new concept and qualitative leap claimed by CPN(Maoist) except for their line of multiparty democracy and political competition which boils down to competing peacefully with the various reactionary and revisionist parties for power in a so-called transitional multiparty democratic republic.

**PM: Finally, where do you see the Nepalese revolution heading?**

**Azad:** We also do see reports that the PLA still maintains its fire-power and alertness. Also there is reference to the recent upsurge being the February revolution and the preparations going on for the October revolution. There are also reports of huge mass mobilization to win over new forces to the side of the revolution, including in the urban areas. Also the US imperialists and Indian expansionists (including their stooge, Yechuri) are openly trying to sabotage the alliance demanding as a prerequisite the laying down of arms by the Maoists. Besides, the Maoists have stated that they will not give up their arms and will maintain their own camps. All these are positive trends indicating the readiness of the Maoists to advance towards the New Democratic Revolution. There is need to beware from two situations: falling into any

traps laid by the ruling classes and their imperialist and expansionist masters; second to beware of a sudden coup and massacre of communists as witnessed in Greece, Indonesia, Chile and a number of other countries. Even a huge mass base in these countries did not stop such massacres. But we will expect that the CPN(Maoists) will steer the Party forward and advance the revolution for the seizure of power countrywide.

**PM: One last question. What is the message you would like to give to the revolutionary ranks of Nepal, India and the rest of the world?**

**Azad:** First we would seriously request the CPN(Maoist) and its leadership to reconsider some of its recent positions and learn from the history of past mistakes. The Nepalese party and people have a great history of struggle and sacrifice. Over 10,000 have lost their lives in the course of the present people’s war. We salute these heroic martyrs of the Nepalese and world revolution. We are confident that the great Nepalese people will advance the revolution forward facing the numerous twists and turns in the movement. There is no doubt that revolution today is no simple task; the path will be zig-zag.

We also call on the people of India to lend full support to the Nepalese revolution. But while doing so it is also the duty of the Indian and world proletariat to render friendly suggestions to their comrades in Nepal. After all, the interests of the Nepalese revolution are very much in the interests of world revolution, and more particularly of its neighbour, the Indian revolution. The revolutionary people of India are ready for any sacrifice in support of the Nepalese revolution. We are confident that we will march forward, together, against the obnoxious system of world imperialism and its local semi-feudal base.

**PM: We, on behalf of the People’s March wish to thank you for the interview on this so crucial issue in a neighbouring country.**

**Azad:** Thank You

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**Contd. from page 25**

active military officers and social activists. Most of the charges have no substance and are totally arbitrary. For example, Anakpawis (Toiling Masses) congressman Crispin Beltran, age 73, veteran labour leader and anti-Marcos activist, was arrested shortly after the emergency rule declaration, at first on the basis of a 25-year-old charge made during the Marcos dictatorship. When these charges were shown to have been dropped decades earlier, he was charged with rebellion.

This is the latest of a series of attacks on the part of the Macapagal Arroyo regime aimed specifically at destroying class-based political parties and trade union activity, including Bayan Muna and its coalition partners. The campaign of assassination and disappearances of 80 members of this party alliance between 2001 and 2005, including mayors and provincial elected representatives has finally reached the top elected representatives in the Philippine Congress. In 2006, repression turned from the countryside to the capital, from peasant leaders to Manila-based Congress people, media, working class and left party leaders. Of the 26 political assassinations in the first 10 weeks of 2006, three have been Bayan Muna officials. The arbitrary arrest of congressional representatives sends a signal to the legal left that the regime will not tolerate dissent or challenges to its policies even from within Congress.

**Contd. from page 35**

were deployed to guard the vital installations of the railways. However, total train traffic was jammed through the cooperation of the masses. In order to avoid inconvenience to the people there was advanced information given out calling upon them to support the campaign against the Salwa Judum.

The CPI(Maoist) appealed to the people of the country to oppose not only the SJ campaign but also similar campaigns being unleashed in various parts of the country.

In addition to this opposition a number of teams of intellectuals, journalists and civil liberty activists who have visited the

According to the Karapatan, the independent human rights organisation involved in documenting and providing legal support to victims of human rights abuses, the disappearances and assassinations are committed by death squads in some of the most heavily militarised areas in the Philippines. The death squads would not be able to act with impunity without the complicity of the military. Witnesses to the killings have themselves disappeared and the Philippine judicial system has failed to prosecute the intellectual authors or perpetrators. Nor has the military made any effort to investigate and arrest identified death squad leaders. Human rights groups provide evidence that death squads operate under the protective umbrella of regional military commands, especially the US-trained Special Forces. Macapagal's promotion of the notorious colonel Jovito Palparan, ('Butcher of Mindoro') to general, despite extensive documentation and testimony of gross human rights abuses points to the president's support for military-backed state terrorism. When Palparan was assigned to Central Luzon in September 2005, the number of political assassinations in that region alone jumped to 52 in four months. Prior to his promotion, the regions with the largest number of summary executions like Eastern Visayas and Central Luzon were under then colonel Palparan.

**State of the Resistance**

In the face of the disintegration of the economy and society, and the regime's use

of force to sustain its hold on power, faced with its gross incompetence in the face of several natural/ecological disasters, popular resistance has spread from the countryside to the cities. The popular mass organisations, involving peasant and indigenous minority farmers, industrial workers, teachers, journalists, civil servants, students, women, artists, human rights workers, lawyers and clergy have grown despite the campaign of state terror. On the 20th anniversary of the 1986 overthrow of Marcos, tens of thousands defied the state of emergency and marched in Manila and in cities throughout the country. Over 10,000 women defied police bans to march on international women's day. Students and teachers are mounting campaigns on the campuses around the country. Former presidents, business executives and clergy are calling for Macapagal Arroyo's resignation and a "smooth transition" within the elite, while the popular mass movements and their besieged political representatives are demanding justice for the victims of state terror, an end to US military presence, a repeal of the value added taxes, an increase in the minimum wage, land reform, a moratorium of debt payments, re-nationalisation of key economic sectors and consequential peace negotiations between the state and the NPA and Muslim separatists. That Macapagal Arroyo will eventually be forced to resign is, according to officials, a likely outcome. The question is when and by whom? ■ ■

area have opposed the Salwa Judum including the team of senior journalists like B.G.Vergheze, Ramchandra Guha and leading academic Nandini Sunder. There is a cry from all over the country to stop the state-sponsored terror amongst the tribals of Bastar. Over 50,000 have been displaced and virtually put in concentration camps in the named of protection. These are hell holes and terror camps along the style of the "strategic hamlets" set up by the US forces in Vietnam. They destroy the tribes and their culture and dislodge them from their natural habitat. International opinion has also come out in strong condemnation

of these actions by the so-called democratic government of this country.

The people of this country have a right to rebel against the atrocities perpetrated against them. They have a right to defend their lives and land against the rapacious sell out to MNCs and compradors for mining and other purposes. And if they are attacked with the brute armed might of the state they have the right to defend themselves with whatever means possible. The real terrorists are the robber barons who want to loot out country and their accomplices here. The people of our country will never allow it!!! ■ ■

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Also utilising the weakness of these mercenary forces to loot valuables the villagers put bombs to radio sets which go off on being turned on. In the process a number of the looters have been killed. In one example the militia left a radio on the road leading to Chinnapalli village in the Bairamgadh area. A to SJ goon and his accomplice were killed when they tried to rob it.

The government has always sought to target the Maad area which they claim is the Headquarters of the Maoists. But all their efforts have got thoroughly defeated. In Dec 2005 itself they conspired to extend the SJ campaign from Bairamgarh/Bijapur at one end and Narainpur at the other toward the Maad area going through Barsoor, Orcha, Chotadongar and Koilbeda areas. In this connection they stationed the Naga battalion at Narainpur and Pakhanjur. To create terror they burnt down the houses of the leading activists, arrested and brutally tortured some and gang-raped many a woman activist. They killed a number of mass leaders. In Jan.2006 the PLGA arrested about two dozen SJ elements recruited from the area who had also been given arms training. They were brought before a people's court. The people passed a death sentence on a few of the ring leaders and released the others after a stern warning. This was a major blow to the enemy plan to make an entry into Maad. Having failed in this attempt they got massive para-military forces to cross the Indrvati and went on a big campaign of burn all, loot all, destroy all, attacking village after village. Hired SJ goons from Bijapur were used to hold so-called mass meetings. In spite of threats and coercion, not a single local attended; not even the local traders and political leaders. Yet not a single person joined the SJ; on the contrary the local militia wiped out a number of SJ goons and para-military forces. Thereby their attack on Maad failed.

So we see that in the ongoing people's war in the DK the masses have been mobilised for the war. They are not mere sympathizers or spectators; they are actual participants in the war. It is by only involving the masses in the war in this way is it possible to conduct a real people's war. The revolutionaries of DK have set an excellent example. But besides the mass

participation the lead in the war has to come from the Main forces of the PLGA, who are the vanguard in the battle. We now give below some examples that have reached the outside world of these heroic battles (earlier issues have also covered other battles).

### PLGA in Forefront of the Battle

At the start itself the attack on the CRPF mine-proof vehicle in which 24 were killed (the action being led by a Mahilla commander) there have been followed by successful actions in Paded, Mendo, Vinjram, bailladilla, Chintalnar, etc. in which over 20 Naga/CRPF forces were wiped out and many more were injured severely. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition have been seized. **In all these actions thousand from the masses have participated making it truly a people's war.**

In North Bastar, 8 police were killed in the Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign since January 2006 and 55/60 police were injured. One SLR was seized. In South Bastar in the Murikinaar raid the PLGA forces seized 49 weapons including 4 AKs, 2 stens, 1 Insas, 14 SLRs, 25—.303, 1 LMG, one 2" mortars, 1 pistol. 2700 rounds were also seized. 11 police/SPOs died while 4 were injured. Also seized was one night vision goggle.

On Feb 6th, 10 Naga police were killed in Kothacheruvu near Bejji. Another 9 were injured. On Jan 29, the PLGA forces attacked the SPO camp in Gangulur and killed 8 SPOs/SJ goondas. Another 10 were injured. On Feb 9th, in Operation Akash the PLGA successfully conducted a raid . seized 14 SLRs, one 9mm, 20 tonnes of gelatine, thousands of detonators, cordex wires. In this incident, com Kiran who was earlier in 6th PL was injured. On Feb 11th, the militia attacked police and seized one SLR in Chintalnaar. On Jan 22, a militia squad attacked a vehicle coming from Bijapur to Avapalli bank and seized 5 lakhs and one DBBL.

When people began returning from the govt camps to attend the tendu leaf picking and other works, they were being forced to go back to the camps but the resistance by the PLGA encouraged them to stay back in the villages. The SPOs are finding it difficult to stay in the camps out of fear of attacks. Hence they are aggressively forcing people to return to camps. The Murikinaar attack has encouraged the people much and many SPOs are returning to villages and are

apologizing for joining the SJ.

This is just a sample of the attacks that have taken place by the PLGA forces. Others have already been reported in earlier issues and many are still to reach the media from which this information is gathered.

### Countrywide Democratic Opposition to the Salwa Judum

Besides, the democratic and progressive people of the state of Chhathisgarh took out a rally of 10,000 in Raipur at the end of December last year. When the Raman Singh government together with Mahendra Karma has tried to take out rallies in the cities in support of the SJ a maximum of 100 people attend. This is an indication as to who even the urban masses support.

In addition to all this it has been reported in the media that in response to a call of the Politburo of the CPI(Maoist) an all-India and international campaign has been conducted to condemn the brutalities of the Indian government and their international masters. A week long all-India campaign against the Salwa Judum culminated in an all-India bandh on Jan.26<sup>th</sup>.

On June 14/15 a 2-day *Chakka Jam* programme was called by the CC of the CPI(Maoist) in Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Chhathisgarh and parts of Bengal. The response to this call was good and large parts of these regions came to a standstill for 48 hours. Thousands of leaflets, posters banners were released and propagated by the respective state committees of the party. The atrocities of the SJ were this time focused well compared to the January programme. Particularly the towns like Tatanagar, Ranchi, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Daltanganj, Chaibassa, Chatra, Hazaribagh, Girdi, Gaya, Aurangabad, Patna, Gahtshilla, Purlia, Jhargram sub-division, Belphadi, Malkangiri to Behrampur and Sambhalpur sub-division, Jagdalpur to Bhopalapatnam, Dantewada, Kanker, Narainpur sub division, etc witnessed effective bandhs. According to a rough estimate of the media 50,000 trucks were affected, particularly NH-5, NH-6, NH-2 and some other highways totally witnessed *jams* of vehicles. No untoward incidence happened due to the voluntary cooperation and participation of the people.

In Bihar and Jharkhand officially the railways withdrew all the trains including freight trains. 70,000 para-military forces

Contd. at page 34

## Repression and Heroic Resistance in DK

As the massacre of innocent tribals continues with the toll now having reached 250 the masses of Bastar, under the leadership of the CPI(Maoist) have been resisting the fierce attack heroically. The rulers have sought to spread the Salwa Judum (SJ) campaign to the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. A campaign in the name of Lokyatra/Shantiyatra was taken up by the government covering Sironcha, Allapalli, Bhamragadh, Nadipalli and Kasansur and upto Gadchiroli via Tipragadh area. The leadership was given by one journalist Suresh Dwadeshivar editor of the Congress Lokmat newspaper. The so called Shantiyatra was basically packed with Congress and RSS elements. The campaign was escorted by police vehicles throughout and was thus exposed as a police-sponsored campaign. There was not much mobilisation for the shanti yatra unlike in Bastar. Baba Amte and a large number of intellectuals from Vidarbha opposed the campaign. Even the once leader of the separate Vidarbha movement (and later Congress minister), Jamantrao Dhote in a signed article in a daily paper condemned not only opposed this Yatra but also the very system of which he was once a part and gave support to the naxalite movement. The CPI(Maoist) Gadchiroli division organised a successful bandh against this campaign on March 30.

**Since the end of January the local Party in the area has taken a massive political and military campaign throughout the area. The political campaign has focused not only on the SJ and against the para-military forces but also against imperialism and feudalism. While a specific military campaign was taken from April to June.**

The political campaign included the following: On March 8<sup>th</sup> a widespread campaign was taken throughout DK against patriarchy in general and against the inhuman brutalities of the SJ hoodlums and paramilitary against women in particular. On March 23<sup>rd</sup>, in commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of Bhagat Singh an extensive anti-imperialist campaign was taken (see

separate report). On May 1<sup>st</sup> a DK bandh was called against the Black Act passed by the Chhathisgarh government which does away with every type of civil liberties of the people. On May 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> a DK bandh was called against the Salwa Judum. Also regular campaigns have been going on against the Raogarh mining project linking it to the very model of imperialist sponsored development.

For 40 days the SJ campaign was suspended after the Darbhagudem incident when the SJ hoodlums were blown up, but was revived in the second week of April. In the second week of April massive attacks were unleashed on several villages under the direct leadership of Karma who personally burnt houses. At least 800 houses were burnt in 10 villages — Gaganpalli, Otukendra, Banda, Heldad-banda, Etegatta, Palamadugu, Arjam etc. In the South in Bijapur and Byramgadhd blocs, SJ committees have been formed for 10-12 villages. Meetings are being held near Police Stations by mobilising people from nearby villages. On 8<sup>th</sup> May, 200 SJ goondas along with 50 policemen attacked Nallamadugu village near Konta and killed 3 members and burnt 50 houses. Since 12<sup>th</sup> April in Konta area 20 villages were attacked and 700 houses were burnt. In the camps in Dornapal, Errabore, Vinjaram and Kunta around 10,000 people are staying.

The Red Cross is helping the SJ goondas by supplying funds and medicines in the name of helping the victims.

But the masses have been heroically resisting this fierce attack, organised into their militias and in the PLGA. It is not only the higher formations of the Platoons and Company that have been fighting back; the militias of the youth have been using the most ingenious and creative methods to hit back. A few examples of this heroic resistance has filtered in to the press notwithstanding the systematic attempts to block out all information on the terror being unleashed in Bastar and the people's resistance.

### Every Village a Fortress

The people's morale is high due to their ability to successfully resist and thereby the people's war in this area has reached new heights. The 'Koya Bhoomkal Militia',

Mass Organisations and the people's government, led by the PLGA have been retaliating magnificently and have thereby achieved much successes.

The militia have killed a number of leading elements of the SJ. Particularly the most notorious Mahendra Karma's right hand, Ajay Singh (a man from UP) was wiped out on May 22, 06. On this day Ajay Singh and his hoodlums were going on motorcycles to oppose the Bandh call given by the CPI(Maoist) Special Zonal Committee. The militia tracked his movements. They then blocked his path by felling a tree. Then he and three of his accomplices were blown up by a pressure bomb.

**The real essence of the people's war is that now virtually every village has been turned into a fortress.** To protect their villages the masses and militia have used many an ingenious method like 'boogie traps', pressure bombs, and other such, to resist the enemy forces. These have become a nightmare for the terror squads of the government whether in uniform or out of it. People have been hiding their stock of grains in the forests to save it from loot and destruction of the govt. forces. In every village there are two to three sentry posts that function around the clock. They alert the village well in advance on seeing the enemy forces. Specific arrangements are made to first take care of the women, children and the elderly. Not only are the villages being defended even every house is becoming a fortress of resistance. Boogie traps have been laid even within the houses, like the deep pit 'boogie trap'. In some places 'pressure bombs' have been placed, known only to the villagers.

Besides these specific arrangements have been made to protect the martyr columns, erected in many villages. The enemy forces also particularly target these as symbols of resistance and the new power. so, for example, when they tried to destroy the statues of the three erstwhile CCMs, Shyam, Mahesh and Murali, in a village in the Indravati area a pressure bomb went off seriously injuring a jawan. Since then they keep a distance from these martyr columns!!!

**Continued on page 35**