

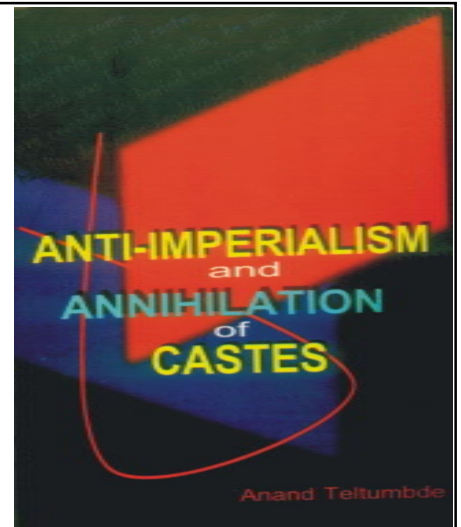
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EDITOR: P. Govindan Kutty
Mobile No. : 93886 22939

E-mail: admin@peoplesmarch.com
peoplesmarch@indiatimes.com
peoplesmarch2000@rediffmail.com

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Salwa Judum — ‘peace campaigners’ or “wolves in sheep clothing”?

It is now a clearly stated policy to use innocent tribals as cannon fodder in their war against the Naxalites — of the State Using Tribals to kill Tribals. While the elite officers sit in their air-conditioned chambers the poor tribals are to be used to kill their own brethren. This will operate at three levels: First, there has been massive recruitment of tribals into the para-military forces and creation of special tribal battalions. Second, tribal armed vigilante forces are being set up in the villages themselves headed by paid SPOs (Special Police Officers). Third, lumpens and ousted feudal elements are being mobilised through Salwa Judum campaigns of terror and horror to displace entire villages and destroy their natural habitat. It is a vicious concerted attack at destroying the incipient revolutionary movement at the instance of the imperialists and compradors whose huge mining interests are at stake. Just in this last one year they have signed MoUs (Memorandum of Undertakings) to the tune of Rs.4 lakh crores in just the three states of Chhathisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. Most of these mineral-rich zones are in tribal areas, many of which are under Maoist influence. The much touted development that the Naxalites are said to be against is the ‘development’ of this mineral mafia — both Indian and foreign.

Having failed to curb the revolutionary upsurge by traditional methods with the use of the para-military forces, they now seek this new policy together with the deployment of the army. As the Maoists hit back against these attacks by the forces of a decadent state, the enemy plans to sharpen its instruments of coercion to levels unheard of even in British times. And this is being done in close coordination between the Centre and the States no matter which party wields power — so-called ‘left’, right or centre.

Offensive of the Centre

There has been high pitched activity at the Centre to tackle what the media calls the “naxalite menace”. This is being undertaken under the direct guidance of the imperialist, particularly the US. The high-profile Bush visit to AP and meeting with women of the Self-help Groups is just one indication of the importance attached

to counter-insurgency. Bush sought to give legitimacy to the on-going massacre taking place in AP though this visit. Also it is well known that the World Bank is pouring in vast sum into the naxalite areas, in order to wean away the masses from the Maoists, through such self Help Groups and other such ‘development’ projects.

April 13th is to witness the highest level meeting of Chief Ministers of naxalite-affected States to be chaired by the Prime Minister himself. The media reports that this is normally chaired by the Home Minister, but to give it greater significance it is being chaired by the PM himself with the Home Minister in attendance.

On March 31st there was a high level meeting of the Coordination Committee presided over by the Union Home Secretary, Duggal. Here the Salwa Judum was given official recognition when Duggal said that “local resistance groups would be trained in self-defence and given police protection. Their role in containing the Naxalites was discussed at length at the meeting.

The meeting attended by the Chief Secretaries of the 13 affected States and a number of central ministries chalked out a four-pronged strategy — to strengthen the Railway Protection Force, the Government railway Police, the State police and intelligence agencies. As a first step all States were asked to fill the vacancies in the police force of 17,000. Jharkhand recently recruited 11,000 and will be recruiting 1,000 more. AP will recruit yet another 6,000.

Besides this the meeting decided to step up the ‘reform’ programmes to wean away the masses from the Maoists. It decided to extend the SRE (Security Related Expenditure) for naxal areas for another 5 years. For this Rs.250 has been sanctioned. The States were asked to speed up land reforms and for the implementation of the all the development schemes of the Central government in these areas — like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Bharat Nirman, Backward Districts Initiative, and the Prime Minister’s Rural Roads Programme.

Just a fortnight earlier, on March 13th the government presented in the Lok Sabha

a Status Paper presenting a 14-point plan to crush the Maoists. These include: (i) that the States adopt a collective approach and pursue a coordinated response, (ii) there be no peace dialogue at the State level unless they lay down arms, (iii) political parties should strengthen their base in the naxal-affected areas, so that the youth could be weaned away from the path of naxal ideology, (iv) efforts would continue to be made to promote local resistance against the Naxalites but in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security to prevent such actions that took place on the Salwa Judum, (v) States to improve their police response, pursue effective and sustained police action against Naxalites and their infrastructure jointly and individually, (vi) acknowledged that it was not just a law and order problem, (vii) replicate in other states the successful AP surrender and rehabilitation policy, (viii) claiming that the police achieved better results in 2005, they said to improve and strengthen the State police forces particularly in Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, and Maharashtra by improving actionable intelligence collection and sharing mechanisms and strengthen their police forces on the pattern of the Greyhounds of AP, (ix) modernization of the State police, revision of security-related expenditure, supply of mine protected vehicles, long-term deployment of the CRPF, deployment of the SSB along the Indo-Nepal border, revision of the guidelines to permit 40% recruitment in Central forces from the border areas and naxal-affected areas and (x) taking up land reforms in a big way in the affected areas. It claimed that it had already provided Rs.2,475 crores for 55 naxal-affected districts under the BDI (Backward Districts Initiative).

After the presentation of the status paper the Union Home Ministry immediately organised a crucial meeting of the Railway Board Chairman and top officials of the CISF and the Railway Protection Force. This was then followed by the Coordination Committee meeting on March 31st.

Then a week later, on March 6th, the government finalized a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) in consultation with the

States with an objective to formulate operational plans and undertake intelligence-based inter-state joint anti-naxal operations in specified inter-state border areas. Such areas will have a separate inter state Task Force to facilitate need-based intelligence driven joint operations.

Much earlier at the very beginning of this year the CRPF has decided to carve out its own “anti-extremist, specialised and fully-equipped wing along the lines of the AP Greyhounds”. As many as 11 companies of the CRPF have been trained in the Army Jungle Warfare School in Assam. There will be sustained operations and greater mobility functioning as the Greyhounds do in AP. Greyhounds in AP get a higher insurance cover and 35% more pay as compared to their counterparts. Today there are 23 battalions of the CRPF that are in anti-naxal operations. They have been provided 10 mine-proof vehicles, 105 medium machine guns and 30 automatic grenade launchers. Of these nine are in Bastar alone. The CRPF has also been allowed to raise its own intelligence wing with 1,200 personnel. NSG and two helicopters have also been given in Bastar.

The Central government has decided to constitute Inter-State Intelligence Support Teams (ISISTs) in the States of Chhathisgarh, Orissa, Bihar and Jharkhand to tone up the intelligence gathering and sharing mechanism. This will be comprised of security officers of the states and the CRPF.

Similar steps have been taken at the state level to intensify the actions against the Naxalites.

Actions in the States

The CPM government of West Bengal has under arrest the largest number of senior leaders of the Maoist party. They have built up an Indian Reserve Battalion which has received training in AP. Recently they have recruited 10, 102 more into the Sashastra Seema bal and established 259 posts on the Indo-Nepal border and 25 on the Indo-Bhutan border. This SSB has seized 263 weapons and arrested 26 Nepali Maoists.

The chief Minister of UP says the government has mounted major efforts to control the naxals. They have formed an anti-naxalite cell to be headed by an IG (Varanasi zone). The cell has men drawn

from intelligence units while a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) has also been formed. One mine-proof vehicle has been provided to each of the districts of Chandauli, Sonebhadra and Mirzapur and 38 bullet-proof Gypsies were also being procured. He added that “*locals are being prepared to fight off naxals in their areas*”.

The Chhathisgarh government besides numerous other measures passed in the Assembly the draconian Special Public Safety Act 2005. This, according to civil liberties organisations, throttles free speech (or what remains of it), legitimate dissent, and threatens any and every mass organisation. The Act provides for imprisonment of up to three years for persons who are not members of, but make contributions to ‘unlawful’ organisations. It provides sweeping powers to a District magistrate to notify, and take occupation of a place being used for ‘unlawful’ activities. The DM would also be empowered to seize all movable properties in the place and evict persons. Such all encompassing powers would be ideal for the mining interests who seek to seize Adivasi lands for a song!!! “*Unlawful activities*” have been loosely defined and includes committing acts, uttering words, writing or making visual presentations that may “*create risk*” or “*danger public order, peace and public tranquility*” or “*impede the administration of law or institutions*”.

In Bihar and Jharkhand they have stepped up repression on an unprecedented scale. Here too like the Salwa Judum in Chhathisgarh they have formed similar type of vigilante forces in the villages called the Sendra. They have massively extended their intelligence network; and they are undertaking long range patrolling and introducing a large number of CRPF. In Jharkhand too they are recruiting on a big scale tribals into the para-military forces. In Bihar for a period they also sent the elite NSG (National Security Guards).

In Maharashtra on Oct 20 2004 five innocent tribals were given a life sentence by the TADA court, though they were arrested as far back as Feb.10 1992. Actually the arrest took place to hide a police error when two groups of police force fired on each other. They blamed the tribals for the firing and as being sympathizers of the Naxalites and were arrested under TADA. Till today hundreds of Adivasis are

languishing in jail from Gadchirolli district under the TADA. These include women, youth and elderly. Kept at distant places these tribals live in horrifying conditions in the jails and their relatives are forced to go hungry merely to pay for the transport to see their relative in jail and attend to the court hearings.

‘Neutrality’ of Liberals

The Maoists have been selflessly fighting and giving their lives for the new society and the upliftment of the oppressed, including the most oppressed tribals. Generations of neglect and inhuman exploitation of the tribals are for the first time ever coming to an end. Though living in grinding poverty they were fleeced by one and all — whether the authorities, the police, the forest officials, the trader, the moneylender, or even their ‘own’ village elders. All this has now come to an end in those areas of Maoist influence.

It is the duty of any person with the smallest human values to support this gigantic emancipation process and roundly condemn the state force for the repression unleashed on them. The Salwa Judum is a known military campaign and was accompanied by horrifying terror, displacing thousands and putting them into defacto concentration camps. But what was astounding was that when the Maoists hit back on Feb.28 blowing up a truck many rushed to the defence of the state forces condemning the Maoists for the killing of tribals. The conflict is not between violence and non-violence; but between justice and injustice. It is on the latter that one has to take a stand. And as for violence it is endemic in every aspect of the existing system; unfortunately it is only when the oppressed hit back that the issue of ‘non-violence’ suddenly occurs.

It is no doubt sad that tribals are being pitted against tribals in a war that is essentially between the oppressed and the draculan rulers. But this is part of government policy where tribals are to be used as cannon fodder in their war against communism. It is this that should in fact be condemned. Whether tribals are recruited into the CRPF, IRB, or as SPO sort as the front paw of their recent attacks in the name of Salwa Judum, it is this policy of using tribals to kill tribals that should be roundly condemned by any democratic or progressive. But after the Feb. 28th incident

even Amnesty International, which had been totally silent against the horrors of the Salwa Judum, issued a statement condemning the Maoist action.

But to a discerning the reality is known for what it is — nothing but a military operation in a civilian garb. Even such a pro-business paper as the Economic Times saw through this which the so-called Human Rights organisations, like AI, could not see. In its Editorial of March 2nd the ET said, while condemning the Maoists : “ *Policing which failed miserably to anticipate and prevent the assault, would, in any case, only fix the problem temporarily. A more enduring solution has to be political. Salwa Judum, an anti-naxalite movement is certainly not such a response. The experiment — launched by the local Congress MP Mahendra Karma, blessed by the BJP-led state government, and celebrated by sections of the national media — has only complicated the matter. Armed Salwa Judum activists have countered Maoist violence with their own brand of terror. The Judum, for all practical purposes, functions as a militia of the oppressive local elite even as it claims to express spontaneous local rage against the naxals..... The State must withdraw its patronage to the ‘movement’ and declare it illegal. The point is to change traditional social relations that engender such violence. It must be kept in mind that the wretched of the earth take to violence when justice, governance and democracy fail them*”.

If a staid business paper like the Economic Times can see that far why is it

that our liberals sometime act so befuddled? Later the same paper states that it is the Union Home Ministry that is providing the funds for the Salwa Judum ‘movement’. Of course not all are like the Amnesty International and some top intellectuals have condemned the Salwa Judum.

Even before the Feb.28th action a group of leading scholars working on Bastar sent a letter to the PM and the Chief Minister of Chhathisgarh expressing concern for the violence going on in Dantewada district. In their letter they questioned the Government policy of providing military and financial support to the ‘Salwa Judum’ against the Maoists and their sympathizers. In the course of the ‘Salwa Judum’, villages that refuse to participate had been burnt, their goods and cattle looted and crops destroyed. They said that even by then 15,000 to 30,000 people have been displaced. They added “*we gather that the administration plans to relocate them in permanent settlements attached to police stations..... The government policy had resulted in Adivasis in the area facing the permanent destruction of their culture, besides losing their customary rights over their land and forest resources.*” The scholars urged the government to ensure that the killing and looting stopped immediately, and the people were enabled to return to their villages. The signatories include: Nalini Sunder, Professor of Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics; Walter Huber, Professor of Communications and English at Reitaku University in Japan; Chris Gregory, Reader at the Department of

Anthropology, Australian National University; Navjot Altaj, Artist; Madhu Sarin, development planner; Nicolas Prevot, ethnomusicologist at the University of Paris and Samuel Berthet, political scientist at the university of Nanes.

Now what more evidence can their be that these Salwa Judum hoodlums are nothing but the front paw of the para-military when they were openly supported and backed by the Home Ministry in the high profile March 31st meeting. They have even gone so far as to devise an insurance plan for the killed hoodlums. Is then any more proof required for understanding who the SJ people are — “peace campaigners” or “wolves in sheep clothing”?

To remain neutral in this heroic battle for justice means to defacto support the enemy. Many a liberal give the impression that the innocent tribals are being caught in the cross-fire between the Naxalites and the State. The battle is in fact between the people and the moneybags; the people are being led by the Maoists, while the moneybags are utilising the government and its armed force to crush the people. It is a liberation struggle from centuries of oppression and exploitation. There is no neutrality in this epic being played out in the very heart of our country. The time has come for all progressives to take a stand — for freedom and justice or for the continuing of the dark rule of the moneybags and their corrupt agents. All progressives must come out openly to roundly condemn the state policy of using tribals to kill tribals.

April 10 2006

People's War Intensifies in India

{This article is based on the numerous reports appearing in the media and also the public documents and booklets brought out by the CPI(Maoist) and numerous other organisations. ..Editor }

- Sharad

The unity of the MCCI and the PW and the formation of a united CPI(Maoist) party in India has primarily led to the ability of the new party to intensify the people's war in the country in the face of a quantum leap in government counter-insurgency operations. This has been possible due to the unifying of the PLGA of the MCCI and the PGA of the PW and the formation of a single unified Command and Commission structure. It is not just the spectacular attacks of Madhuban (simultaneous raid on four targets), or the raid on the Girdhi Armoury, or the sensational Jehanabad jail break, or the recent take-over of a township in Gajipati in Orissa, or the seizure of 18 tonnes of explosives in DK, but the hundreds of minor and major actions by the guerrilla forces that have proved the resilience of the newly united Maoist party in India and its ability to strike back at the State forces of the state. It is this ability that has sent the moneybags into panic and is forcing them to have meeting after meeting under the auspices not only of the Home Minister but also of the very Prime Minister himself. In just the one-and-a-half months of March and April 2006 they have held five such top-level meetings culminating in the April 13th meeting of Chief Ministers chaired by the Prime Minister and with the Home Minister and other top officials present. It is only a matter of time before they call out the army, which is already indirectly involved in the training programmes in counter-insurgency.

But, whatever may be the preparation of these mercenary forces, there is no force that can crush the just struggle of the people as long as they stay on the revolutionary path. Today, under imperialist globalization, with conditions deteriorating beyond all limits, and the rulers not tolerating the smallest dissent, more and more people are seeing the necessity for armed struggle to achieve their rights and gain justice. The talk of Maoist violence is all humbug, state violence and the violence of this system is everywhere — dalits virtually breathe it every second; women face it through patriarchal brutality, the kind of which we do not see in any other country; slumdweller in their thousands

are being forcibly evicted; over 4 million tribals have been displaced and now an equal number face the same fate due to the huge mining concessions and other 'development' projects; in just the past 5 years some 40,000 farmers have been pushed to suicide, and millions are hovering on the brink; the smallest, even totally peaceful protest by workers are faced with police firing and lathi-charges; even the middle classes are not being spared with traders shops being forcibly broken down; the list could go on and on. The question is not of violence vs non-violence but whether it is just to take up arms against a most violent and brutal state or not. Whether the monopoly of violence should only be with the moneybags. This is the questions all should ask. The Maoists say it is just to take up arms as part of the overall process to change a brutal and violent system.

The Maoists fear no sacrifice; hundreds, nay thousands, have given their precious lives for the advancement of the revolution and the people's cause, they fear neither death nor Statebullets nor the horror chambers of the Statedungeons. They fight not only for the liberation of the oppressed of the country but for the liberation of all mankind. They fight for a new communistic order. They learn from the errors caused by the setbacks in Russia and China and vow never to repeat those errors, in order that the idyllic society of the future can come into being.

A new dawn is breaking; a new light is rising over the horizon; with the gun in one hand and the pen in the other, the guerrilla marches forward amidst the vast ocean of humanity, towards the bright future of justice, equality and liberation.

Let us take a brief glimpse into some of the heroic actions of the guerrillas over these past 18 months since the unity.

(A) The People's Militia Comes of Age!

The Maoists often take various military campaigns in order to counter the government's armed forces. The most striking aspect of the Maoists TCOC (tactical counter-offensive campaign) during the last 18 months is the presence

of People's militia forces – the Maoists termed it as the basic forces of their PLGA – in big numbers, in almost all or their actions. As the reports indicate the members of the People's Militia have displayed their mettle in both big medium and small operations of the Maoists, proving on the way that this force has come of age. Reports from various areas further indicate that this force, apart from participating in the actions undertaken by the main and secondary forces of the PLGA, has also planned and successfully executed many retaliatory actions of various types, not only against local reactionaries but also against Central Para military forces and state special armed police forces. Though these militia members are mainly armed with traditional weapons like bows and arrows, muzzle loaders, etc. they are causing sleepless nights to the police and para-military forces, through their non stop harassment actions. Not only that, they are slowly developing skills in the use of modern weapons. They have already acquired some mastery in the deployment of claymore mines and directional mines.

Here we give some reports, which clearly illustrate the death defying courage, creativity and dedication of the members of the People's militia.

An example was the militia scared Venkiah Naidu and burnt down, the helicopter he used. On January, 29th 2005 a helicopter carrying the Ultra-reactionary BJP leader Venkiah Naidu force landed due to fuel shortage in the forest area near Paraliya village of Gaya district in Bihar. The local people Militia unit which got that news from the people immediately set out for that spot. But by that time it could reach that spot, Venkiah Naidu ran away from that place. The militia then burnt down the helicopter with petrol bombs.

Bihar-Jharkhand Bandh

The B-J bandh in January 2006 against the growing atrocities of the State, seriously affected road and rail traffic in the two states. They blew up tracks, held railway staff hostage, damaged power and communication systems, attacked police stations, and hit at the police/para-military forces. Several important trains had to be diverted, particularly on the Howrah-Delhi

route. A police out-post was blown up in Banka district and rifles seized. A Police Station and a DSP residence was attacked in Chatarpur in Palamau district. In Jharkhand one RPF personnel was killed in West Singhbhum district. Rail lines were damaged in Jharkhand too at several points and the NH33 road was blockaded.

Heroic tales from the Dandakaranya

The people's militia units in the Maad area of Dandakaranya, waged a continuous battle of harassment for three days against a batch of 60 paramilitary police personnel, who came on election duty to Beengonda village. The police set up their camp at a local school. The local militia members divided themselves in batches and conducted harassment firing on the camp day and night on batch after the other. The police forces were so terrified that they did not dare to venture out even to procure drinking water. They went on firing blindly in all directions, spending more than hundred mortar shell and thousands of rounds of ammunition. But the militia stood undeterred even amidst such a rain of bullets and shells and continued its firing. One policemen was injured in their firing and when a helicopter came to evacuate him, the militia hurled a grenade on the helicopter, but it missed the target.

The Kotram militia of South Bastar area initiated a 'Bhoomkal Abhiyan' to defeat the 'Salva Judum' goons. On June 20th, a 2000 strong mob of 'Salva Judum' goons raided Kotram Village Byramgarh area and retreated after destroying the house of local mass organization functionaries. Meanwhile the local militia of 40 members divided themselves into two batches and laid in wait for the retreating murderers. As soon as the goons reached the ambush spot, the militia members launched a surprise attack on them, with their bows and arrows and killed eight of those goons.

The Tumiri incident narrated below underlines the timely initiative, creativity and courage of the militia. A team of militia members set up a landmine on a road near Tumiri village of Jedurgonda area, to ambush police patrol batch. They were anticipating that the police batch will march down the road, but that batch came from the forest area behind the spot where the militia was waiting. The alert militia members were able to see the police approaching from a distance without loosing courage

they retreated to the other side after exploding the mine. The police batch taken by surprise fired for sometime and continued their march, this time taking the road towards Chintanar village. Meanwhile, another two members of the militia, who were at a distance hearing the sounds of the explosion and gunfire both of them decided to wait in ambush near the road hoping that the police will retreat toward Chintanar and all that they had were just two balti (bucket) Bombs. Within a short time their expectation was fulfilled, as they saw from a distance the police batch coming. Though they had only two balti bombs, they found out a way through their creativity to cause much harassment to the police. They gathered dry leaves from the road side and heaped them at one place; then they placed their bombs in that heap. They then again placed dry leaves from the heap to the end of the road to act as a fuse wire. When the police batch came about 50 yards near the leaves heap, the militia members set fire to their self created fuse wire of dry leaves and the bombs exploded, creating great confusion amongst the policemen. They immediately took prone positions on the road and resorted to blind firing. After some time they returned to their police station, putting a stop to their patrolling.

A militia commander dares death to recover a fuse wire and flash. This is the story of death defying courage shown by a commander of the people's militia squad in the Jegurgonda area. This squad, during an ambush, exploded a mine on a police party, which was coming on foot. The mine exploded before the police reached the spot, so it did not cause any loss. The police

immediately opened rapid fire on the militia positions. All the members of the militia retreated except the commander. He remained firmly at his core position trying hard to retrieve the fuse wire and flash used in the explosion. He started rounding up the wire even though bullets were wizzing over his head. The police started advancing towards his position as they were not getting any return fire. After coming about 40-50 yards near his position, the police started firing shells. One shrapnel from the shell wounded the big toe of the commander. But even then he did not loose his courage. He took another 4-5 minutes to recover the wire and the flash and then safely retreated during a lull in the police firing.

The above are but a few of the scores of incidents that are taking place in almost all the areas, where the Maoist peoples war is going on. These incidents amply illustrates the fact the Maoist were able to further mould their 'Peoples Militia' in to force that has to be reckoned on its own in these fifteen months after the formation of their unified CPI (Maoist) Party.

Countering the Vigilante Forces

Apart from this direct state terror, the ruling classes unleashed an even more savage campaign of massacring the people in Maoist strongholds through such campaigns as 'Salva Judum' in Dandakaranya, 'Janjagran Abhiyan' in Orissa, 'Sendrai' in Jharkhand and 'Gaon Bandhi' in Maharastra by setting up vigilante gangs. Various States are conducting these campaigns, gathering lumpen and reactionary elements, forming them into vigilant groups with names such 'Nagarik Suraksha Samiti' (Jharkhand), 'Gana



Suraksha Samiti' (W.B.), 'Shanti Sena' (Orissa) 'Narsa Cobras' / 'Kakatiya Cobras' in AP etc. equipping them with arms. In DK, these armed vigilant gangs have been on the rampage for the past year, raiding villages considered as Maoist strongholds, beheading the leaders and members of revolutionary and democratic mass organization, burning down entire villages, looting everything they can lay their hands on and committing atrocities on women. The savagery of these goons can be gauged from the fact that in just a four month period, they murdered more than 100 people including the women, children and the aged and burnt down about 70 villages. The aim of these campaigns is to terrify the revolutionary masses into submission as the state failed to wean away these masses from the revolutionary movement by its reform schemes.

The countering of these vigilante forces utilising the lumpens and feudal elements has been a major success of the militias who live in the villages and are part of the village life. It is they who are the most alert against these anti-people forces and know best how to deal with them. Together with the main forces and also independently they have been able to hit telling blows at the vigilante elements and safeguard the people's victories.

But, all these campaigns failed miserably in either containing the Maoists or in subjugating the revolutionary masses. On the other hand it was the Maoists, and revolutionary masses, who dealt stunning blow after blow though the counter offensive campaign, with a well coordinated and simultaneous military operations in various states. Through their operations they were successful in not only containing the state's brutal onslaught but were also able to extend their People's War to newer areas like UP and Uttaranchal (Uttarkhand). Thus they won a political victory too.

(B) Some reports received on the Maoist's TCOC in various

States:

Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, the PLGA forces of the Maoists dealt telling blows on the Central Para-military forces and states special armed police forces. During the past 15 months period they killed more than 40 men of the above forces and inflicted severe injuries on over 30 men, through such actions, raids,



ambushes and attacks. Simultaneously they captured around 200 weapons and 26000 rounds of ammunition. Out of all these actions, the booby trap explosion at Diridag in Chatra district and the raid on Home guards training centre in Girdhi stand apart.

The Diridagal incident : The Maoists utilizing the police forces weakness for looting money, set a trap for them in Dirdagal village of Chatra district. First they arranged a booby trap explosive inside a steel locker. They then placed it inside an abandoned house of an ex-Jamindar in Diridagal village. Then they spread the word that Naxalites were using that building and have kept about one crore rupees in a steel locker. They made sure that the word reached the ear of the local informer. The informer dully rushed to the Seemarie police station. On the morning of 9th October a big contingent of the police (50 CRPF and 20 State Armed Policemen) descended on the village overjoyed at the prospect of looting such a big amount. They searched the house and found the locker on which a paper was pasted saying that it contains about one crore rupees. The police immediately tried to pry open the locker, and all their joy evaporated in seconds as the locker exploded killing 12 policemen including the commandant of the CRPF on the spot and seriously injuring 25 others.

On March 5th the PLGA killed about 8 jawans of the CISF near Bokharo and took

large quantities of arms and ammunition.

Girdhi Raid : on November 11, the PLGA guerrilla launched a daring surprising raid on the Home Guards training centre and managed to capture 185 weapons and 25000 rounds of ammunition after overpowering the armed personnel stationed there.

On March 15th PLGA forces seized the Barkakana-Dehri-Mugalsarai passenger train with about 100 on board. They held the train the whole night and the police forces did not dare to come. They seized the train at 7.30 pm and left the next morning with the walki-talkies of the guard and the driver. This was a part of a retaliatory action against the killing of their commander, Jagannath Koiri, in Palamu on March 3rd.

Bihar

In Bihar the Maoists went on spectacular offensive smashing the state's suppression campaign, wiping out around 50 policemen including the SP of Monghyr district and capturing a large quantity of arms and ammunition. In addition they burnt down one helicopter. All this amidst the intensive combing operations being conducted by thousands of para-military and state's armed police forces, specially deployed for months together to contain the Maoists, in the name of ensuring free and fair elections for the Bihar Assembly (Bihar went to polls twice in 2005). The Maoists, moreover took the battle to the state's strongholds, towns, by successfully laying seize on Madhuban and Jehanabad

and launching simultaneous attacks on several political, economic and military targets, through their operations code named 'operation Dhamaka' (Madhuban) and "Operation Jail Break' (Jehanabad).

Operation Dhamaka – Seize of Madhuban : On June 23rd around 150 members of the Maoist PLGA forces, carried out a daring raid on Madhuban town of Champaran district in North Bihar, they launched simultaneous attacks on a half a dozen targets, dealing lightning blows and within minutes captured almost the whole town. They attacked a police station killing two policemen and seized all the weapons and ammunition stored there. Another formation of the guerrillas surrounded the Banks and seized about 12 lakhs in cash. One formation struck against the local circle inspector's office and snatched four weapons. Yet another formation of the Maoists attacked the house of a notorious landlord, a mafia gang leaders and an MP of the RJD. As he was away at that time, they destroyed his house and a petrol pump nearby owned by him.

'Operation Jail Break – The Seize of Jehanabad' : on November 13th, a strong column of the PLGA forces, comprising of around 1000 members laid seize on Jehanabad town (a district headquarters) from all sides on November 13th, taking the town into their hands for almost three hours. Dividing themselves into formations they launched well coordinated simultaneous attacks on the police lines, police stations, Government offices and on the jail. In this path-breaking historic seizure they captured some weapons and freed over hundred of their fellow comrades incarcerated in that Jail. Moreover, they killed ring-leaders of the notorious Ranvir Sena, one of them being the mastermind behind the massacre of dalits in Lakshmanpur Bathe.

As we go to the press reports have just come in of a senior police officer of the rank of DSP having been killed on April 3rd at Majhara village of Rohtas district by Maoist guerrillas.

Dandakarnya :

The state's suppression campaign was more ferocious and focused in Dandakaranya Zone than other places. The central Govt. in an unprecedented move rushed one Naga Para-military Battalion to



Dandakarnya, in addition to other CRPF battalions. Here the state's campaign was not only aimed at the extermination of the Maoists but also of terrorizing the fighting revolutionary masses into submission through murder and mayhem. Towards this end the state govt. launched a savage 'Salva Judum' campaign, wherein marauding vigilante armed gangs raid villages, killing people, looting everything and burning down whole villages. This murder campaign has been going on for the past four months, and more than hundred people have been murdered so far.

A report of a fact finding team of civil liberties organizations has confirmed that the 'Salva Judum', touted as a spontaneous uprising of the people against the Maoists in Dantewara district was actually a state managed vigilante enterprise and that its raids has led to many deaths and displacements of the people in the Bhairamgarh, Geedam and Bijapur areas of Dandakarnya. It also confirmed that around 45,000 people from 420 villages were now living as refugees in temporary camps as repeated raids by 'Salva Judum' forces, State security forces and para military Naga Battalion stationed in Dantewara, on villages that refused to participate in the 'Salva Judum' campaign. The State forces resettled entire villages after destroying everything forcing people to move to 'camps'.

But the Maoist PLGA forces and the

revolutionary masses of Dandakaranya courageously repulsed these campaigns, inflicting heavy losses on the state's armed police forces and central para-military forces, through a series of raids, ambushes etc. Not only that, they inflicted such heavy losses on the 'Salva Judum' vigilante goons. The local people's Militia played an exemplary role in all these actions in particular; it not only protected the villages from 'Salva Judum' goons, but also inflicted severe losses on them.

Besides this in the midst of the Salva Judum terror the PLGA had a number of sensational action hitting at the life-line of the Bailadilla mines of India's comprador bourgeoisie. On Feb. 9 2006 8 CISF jawans were killed in an attack on an explosive depot in Hiroli, Dantewada. About 18 tonnes of explosives were carried away and also 14 SLRs. On March 5th the Bansi station was blasted and the railway staff taken hostage, disrupting the life-line to the port which exports all our iron ore to Japan. On March 8th a conveyor belt in the Akshnagar mines was burnt down. On March 20th there was a blast in a pump-house in Bachel. On March 21st seven huge explosions destroyed crushers in a private quarry. Later in a similar action the decamped with large amounts of detonators. They also ambushed the most ruthless Naga forces, killing nine and injuring many. This Bailadilla mine made a massive profit last year sucking the blood of the poor of the



region and destroying the ecology of Rs.2,100 crores. No wonder the top officials went running to the meet the Chief Minister. This mine produces 15.75 million tonnes of iron ore annually, all of which are exported to Japan. On March 24th 06, in a landmine blast the Maoist killing 14 traders and seriously wounding 3 in the Kanker region of Bastar.. They were said to have been returning from a Salwa Judum meeting.

During the last 18 months, the Maoists guerrillas of Bastar wiped out about 100 policemen and injured more than 50 inclusive of para-military forces, Special state commando forces of Chhathisgarh and Maharashtra. Of all the actions of the Maoists, the Tadoki innovative landmine blast and the blasting of a mine proof vehicle of the CRPF at Padedda village need particular mention.

The Tadoki incident: The PLGA guerrillas of North Bastar area killed two CRPF constables and injured another in an innovative way on 5th May, at Tadoki village. Tadoki is a small village in North Bastar area. On May 5th, a weekend shandey (marketplace) was being held in that village. Anticipating that the police personnel will certainly visit that place as a part of their patrolling, a team of the local PLGA arranged a landmine under the shade of a tree. Soon a police patrol party arrived there, when three among them came under the tree for shade, the guerrillas exploded the mine killing two and injuring the third.

Blasting of a 'Mine-proof' Vehicle: The PLGA guerrillas of South Bastar Proved that the so-called Mine-proof vehicle is not such a mighty secure vehicle and that it is as vulnerable and fragile as any other weapon in the hands of the reactionary state, once it has to face the might of the revolutionaries innovative methods. On September 3rd, a team of the PLGA exploded a landmine under a mine-proof vehicle in which personnel of the 87th CRPF battalion were traveling at Padedda village in Dantewada district. The vehicle was completely destroyed due to the effect of the blast and 24 CRPF men including one special security officer died on the spot. This incident really sent shockwaves among the security forces, as they were astounded that the much touted mine-proof vehicle was blown up with ordinary explosives.

Andhra Pradesh

In AP, the state government launched a multi-pronged offensive against the revolutionary and democratic movements from January 2005 onwards. On one hand it unleashed an intensive massive combing operation, targeting not only the top leaders of the Maoist party but also other revolutionary organizations like the CPI (ML)[Janashati] on the other hand it let loose murderous vigilant lumpen gangs like 'Kakatiya Cobras', Narsa Cobras' etc. to finish off leaders of revolutionary and democratic mass organizations.

Undeterred by such a massive campaign of suppression, the Maoists retaliated with their own TCOC. They launched such actions, raids, and harassment attacks on police stations, ambushing the combing police forces, punishing informers, annihilating the notorious leaders of the Congress(I) and large scale destruction of the properties of the Central and State Govt. and of ruling class exploiters and their agents. The Maoist attacked 10 police stations during this period, out of which 8 were harassment actions. They killed more than 20 policemen seized around 20 weapons. On April 27th, a special action team of the PLGA made a daring attack on the Prakasam district SP, Laddha, with a directional mine in the heart of the district headquarter town, Ongole. The S.P. survived as his bullet proof vehicle was hit at the front. A special action team of PLGA attacked and killed a notorious liquor baron and Congress (I) MLA Narsi Reddy in Mahboobnagar district on 15th August.

Orissa

Over 400 Maoists — 200 PLGA and 200 villagers — stormed the town of K.Udayagiri on March 24th 06 of Gajipati district with simultaneous attacks on the State Armed Police camp, the jail, the Police Station, the treasury, the tehsil office and blasted a telecom tower. The raid began a 5 am. and ended by 1.30 pm. they released the 40 prisoners in the sub-jail, killed five policemen and seized a large cache of arms (official figures say 25 SLRs, a pistol, an LMG, and one AK-47) and took hostage the Officer-in-charge of the police station and the jailor. The two officials were released after 11 days on humanitarian grounds, even though the five demands put forward by the Maoists had not been met. Being low level official the authorities did not even consider it necessary to

negotiate. The officials came out with lots of praise for the Maoists at the type of treatment that were given; but, they were then immediately whisked away by the police.

Chhathisgarh

On February 27th 05 a 15-20 member team of PLGA guerrillas launched a successful surprise attack on Butgaon Police Chowk, which lies at a distance of 40 km. from the district headquarter of Sarguja. They seized 3 SLRs, 4 .303 Rifles, 350 rounds of ammunition and some cash. On January 8th, the PLGA guerrillas laid an ambush on the Ramanajganj-Chandralonagar Road and exploded a landmine under a police vehicle going towards Indrapuri Khori. One Thanedar (in charge of PS) and two havaldars (policemen) died on the spot. The guerrillas seized 2 SLRs and some ammunition. A thanedar was killed during a fierce encounter between the guerrillas and police on May 23rd at Manipat, in Ambikapur district.

West Bengal

On Feb.26 06 in spite of the intense repression brought by the West Bengal CPM government on the Maoists and the arrests of hundreds, including top leaders, the Maoists hit back. Contingents of the PLGA ambushed a caravan of combing the Bhelpari area of Midnapur district killing four and severely injuring another seven in a mine blast. In spite of its big network of police informers and agents built through its party network they have no clue as to the PLGA forces. There have also been a number of attacks in Purgalia district and killing of police informers (CPM activists) in many parts of the State.

Advancing People's War Only Answer to People's Woes

It is quite evident from the above reports that the Maoists succeeded in containing the first ever, well coordinated countrywide encirclement and suppression campaign against them, and inflicted heavy blows on the states forces during the course of their tactical counter offensive campaign. Moreover they threw in a challenge by taking the battle to the ruling class strongholds, the towns. Thus gaining a political victory, one can also observe from their series of military actions that they have vastly improved their military capabilities after the formation of the unified CPI

(Maoist). One can see from the ease with which they could successfully carry out such big campaigns like 'Operation Dhamaka' 'Girdhi Raid' and 'Operation Jail Break', in which hundreds of their forces participated, even a thousand in the Jehandabd operation, the Udaigiri action in Orissa involving 400, the numerous actions in Chhathisgarh in spite of the terror of the Salwa Judum, etc – that they trained their forces well, and that the leadership has enhanced its capabilities in maneuvering and coordinating in carrying out such massive operations.

Most important of all the participation of the members of the people's militia, in hundreds in all their big operations is an indicator that the Maoists have vastly extended and strengthened their base among the oppressed masses of the country. The courage, dedication and strict discipline shown by the people's militia members, in all big and small actions, the numerous actions the militia members conducted on their own initiative, amply demonstrates that this wing of the PLGA of the Maoists has come of age. This augers well for the future of the India's New Democratic Revolution in India.

Now, it is precisely these actions that are creating terror in the hearts of the ruling classes so much so that they are now crying for blood, demanding the govt. go all hog to permanently exterminate the 'naxalite menace'. The reactionary news media, which, until a month back, was running story after story about the 'great People's revolt in Chhathisgarh' against the Naxalites in the Maoist area, and about their impending doom is now full of articles urging the government to speed up its act for the annihilation of the Naxalites.

All this is an ample indication that the Maoists were able to deal telling blows on the rulers with militarily and politically. A fine development in the course of the country's march towards a New Democracy. And as the excruciating poverty of the masses intensifies and as more and more sections come under government fire, more and more people will realize the necessity and the justness of the armed struggle. The hypocrisy of the slogan of non-violence will be seen by all to clearly mean "keep the monopoly of violence in the hands of the moneybags and rulers".



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voluntary force and militant agitation if their demand is not met within a stipulated period, they are totally unprepared and reluctant to mobilize the people into struggle on the issue.

Now the two major players in the game, the Congress and the BJP, are challenging each other to spell out its stand first. This you-first, you-first game continues to this day. Meanwhile, the Congress MLAs hailing from Telangana region have been demanding that the Congress High Command should declare its stand in favour of separate Telangana. The people of Telangana, vexed by the betrayals and fraud perpetrated by all these political chameleons and hypocrites, are waging struggle in their own way under the leadership of the Maoists or with their support and are preparing for bigger battles ahead.

At the time of writing, the 45-day-long Assembly sessions have just commenced. The Budget this year, no doubt, will have the strong imprint of the World Bank even if it is prepared by its local satraps in Hyderabad. The World Bank, which had

advanced massive loans during the regime of Chandrababu Naidu to various projects in the state, had made the state of Andhra Pradesh an experimental state by initiating reforms in every sector with the aim of weakening and eliminating the revolutionary movement and spent massive sums on infrastructure towards that end. It had coerced the central government to yield to its demand of dealing directly with the state governments, and has succeeded in trapping the state further into its stranglehold. It is clear that it will leave no stone unturned to see its neo-liberal model state implement its every diktat and unleash the worst form of authoritarian rule on the 8 crore people of the state.

And confronted by the explosive situation in the state arising from the World Bank-dictated policies, the fascist regime in Hyderabad, with the active assistance and guidance from Delhi and Washington, is preparing for a blood-bath to suppress the ongoing people's war. But the same explosive situation is bound to lead to an intensification and expansion of the people's war despite the tall claims by the YSR-Jana Reddy-Swaranjit gang that it will be wiped out within two years. ■ ■

FAKE ENCOUNTERS CONTINUE

The so-called encounter near Malakondapenta village in Racharla mandal of Prakasham district on February 5th shows the extent to which the fascist YSR regime can go to eliminate the Maoists. On the morning of the day when the encounter was said to have taken place the CPI(Maoist) issued a statement that three of their comrades were picked up two days earlier, were being tortured brutally and might be bumped off by the notorious police and the SIB any moment. It demanded their immediate release. Hours after the statement news poured in about a fierce exchange of fire between the Maoists and the elite Greyhounds forces near Malakondapenta and that three Maoists were killed in the encounter. Thus even the exposure of the arrests had not deterred the police raj of YSR from killing the arrested Maoists in a concocted encounter.

In the specific incident of February 5th, the two comrades—Koteswara Rao alias Sreedhar and Sudhakar were picked up from Badvel in Cuddapah district on the 4th while the third comrade, Eeswaramma, who was in her late Fifties, was arrested from Mydukur in the same district on the 3rd. they were brutally tortured until the afternoon of 5th and when news of their arrest was flashed in the electronic media they were shot dead.

The killing of old-aged Eeswaramma reveals the frustration and anger of the greyhounds and the SIB at their failure in their year-long operations in Nallamala. Eeswaramma had dedicated all her four children to the revolutionary movement and one of them, his son Prathap, is a member of the Divisional Committee of Nallamala Forest Division. The anger of these brave jawans against her children is translated into anger against their mother. She too was brutally tortured and killed. The YSR government also wants to send a signal to all mothers that they too will not be spared if they allow their children to join the Maoists. No doubt, Eeswaramma will remain an inspiration to women for all time and many more mothers are bound to dedicate their sons and daughters to the revolutionary movement and even become direct participants like Eeswaramma. ■ ■

Whither the Narmada Bachao Struggle?

As we go to the press the NBA (Narmada Bachao Andolan) are on the 14th day of their fast in Delhi. The farce of the three central ministers visiting the site of the displaced (they returned within one day) and reporting to the Prime Minister is over. The non-violent strugglers were yet again arrested, beaten and dragged by the hair. The dam continues to be built higher and higher inundating more and more villages — on this occasion 35,000 families in three states. Huge funds have been expended, contractors, financiers, bureaucrats and politicians have made crores, but the displaced have barely been given a pittance. The agony of the victims is sought to be drowned in the ecstasy of those who have made their fortunes milking this Sardar Sarova Project. The moneybags could not care for the fasters — in their view better dead than the continuous nuisance value to their dreams of making their fortunes.

The ongoing two-decade long Namada Bachao struggle has no doubt brought into focus the massive displacement of villagers, particularly tribals, by such large projects. It has created an awareness about their plight. The NBA activists have faced consistent lathis, tear gas, arrests, etc. Even during the present hunger strike in the heart of Delhi a massive force of 1,200 lathi wielding police swooped down on the sleeping activists, whisked away the three on fast and roughed up and dragged by the hair the 100 activists present. Not only that, all have been charged with rioting, criminal assault and obstructing public officers on duty.

It is true that big dams are a disaster, not only ecologically but in the huge destitution caused to villagers uprooted in the catchments areas. The struggle is no doubt just and the masses should be supported in their demands that they have consistently been putting forward. But the question that arises and that needs serious attention is that what have they really achieved over these two decades? Has this path of non-violence given them any real relief let alone the stopping of the dam or restricting its height? What is the meaning of the political vultures who have been flocking to the venue of the hunger strike — particularly the likes of the hordes

of CPI/CPM who are fully in favour of big dams and the existing model of imperialist-dictated development but show 'sympathy' to the fasters? Is it to really give support or capitalize on the popularity being gained by the fasters for their vote banks?

And just besides the NBS activists lie another set of fasters — victims of the Bhopal Gas Disaster. This equally lengthy non-violent struggle of over two decades is facing the same fate as that of the NBA. In this biggest industrial disaster the world has ever seen the culprits go scott free, while the victims are yet to get their compensation. Meanwhile, Union Carbide, continues its profit-making machine (now under a different label) while the victims continue their agonized lives decapitated by the poisonous gases.

On this occasion the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) on March 8th issued an order allowing the height of the Sardar Sarovar dam to be raised from the present 110.64 metres to 121.92 metres — a rise of 11.3 metres or as much as 35 feet. This would result in the displacement of 35,000 additional families in the affected states of MP, Gujarat and Maharashtra. In MP the government failed to rehabilitate the thousands already affected; nothing has been done for an estimated 24,000 families in 177 villages who will be displaced if the height is raised as planned. Maharashtra's 3000 families facing displacement have also not been rehabilitated. In Gujarat those already displaced have been reduced to penury owing to the poor quality of land in the resettlement sites.

Earlier too the thousands of families displaced have not been rehabilitated and some have merely been given a paltry cash compensation.

While the Gujarat government can pay thousands of crores to the dubious financiers of the project as interest they are not prepared to give even a pittance to the displaced. According to a CAG report (2002:57) the average annual debt liability works out to a gigantic Rs.945 crores. The Gujarat government has stepped up its allocation to the SSP to a huge Rs.3,730 crores in 2000-01 — the year the Supreme Court allowed the dam construction to go ahead, on the condition of rehabilitation

six months prior to the submergence. The Courts as usual are in total favour of the contractor lobby and the supposed "rehabilitation" could be interpreted in any way — even the few thousand rupees given could be accepted as "rehabilitation".

Not only are the governments on the side of the moneybags but so also are the courts. This can be seen in all recent judgments whether it is the SSP, the Bhopal Gas Kand, the eviction of slum dwellers, or whether it is judgments against striking workers, the indebted peasantry, the dalits, etc. The people can never expect justice from this judicial system which is openly in favour of the rich and powerful.

So, the example of the NBA struggle, as with many others, has conclusively shown that the people cannot get justice either through non-violent protest or through legal action. In fact on many occasions peaceful agitators have been mowed down in cold blood as were the tribals of Kalinganagar, the peasants of Rajasthan or the workers of Gurgao. On the other hand many projects in Chhathisgarh have been stalled for years (like the proposed iron ore mines at Raogarh) due to militant opposition of the masses led by the Maoists.

Today, it is quite clear to all that the NBA path of non-violence is at a dead end and it is time for all those associated with it and similar agitations to seriously reflect on what went wrong. Particularly the NBA had whipped up large support not only throughout the country but also internationally. Yet it could not achieve even its minimum goals.

The reason for this is an incorrect understanding of the forces they are dealing with. The monstrous rulers and the moneybags who prop them up may be very civil in appearance but they are nothing but rakshases when their interests are hit. Touch even one paisai of their profit and they are ready to kill. They have contempt for all such peaceful struggles and could not care about them. They pour scorn on such passive, impotent attempts to try and counter them. They only fear the masses that are united and ready to take them on in the only language they know —

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The New Pension Scheme—another onslaught on the people

Rashmi

On 1st January, 2004, a New Pension Scheme (NPS), was introduced by the government. This scheme is a defined contribution (DC) scheme in contrast to the defined benefit (DB) scheme which was in force earlier. According to this, the pension earner would be contributing towards the pension that he/she gets after retirement.

While the original intent of the NPS was to provide an opportunity to the majority of India's employed to save for their retirement, the government decided to extend this contributory pension scheme to its own employees. In line with this decision, the government notified the new pension rules for people who would join the central government service after January 2004. An estimated 200,000 central government employees are already covered by the NPS and fifteen state governments have also formally adopted this scheme for their own new employees. The states are: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal.

The new scheme is being hailed on the grounds of saving a huge cost of pension liabilities of the government. The Standing Committee on Finance (SCOF) has called India's pension reforms, an urgent necessity.

The first scheme of this kind, wherein the employees are made to contribute towards their own pensions, was introduced by Chile in 1980 under the guidance of the World Bank. Other Latin American countries like Argentina and Uruguay followed. Predictably, the next in line would be the Asian countries like India. And the Indian government, which has been prostrating before the World Bank in all other matters, has done nothing different in this regard.

The NPS is in effect, curtailing the existing pension facilities. According to an all India survey conducted for the Ministry of Finance, just about 19% of those about to retire in the next decade, or those in the age group of 51-60 years, are covered by some formal retirement scheme. And less than 2% of those not covered pension schemes will be able to support themselves at even vastly reduced levels of expenditure after their retirement. Leave alone extending

the pension scheme to people uncovered yet, such as the senior citizens of the informal sector, the government introduced a policy, wherein even the sections covered by the pensions, would have to contribute towards it.

Also, as per the proposals given in the new scheme, private fund managers will also be provided access. These fund managers would be licensed by the PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority). The PFRDA Bill, tabled in the last budget session, has not been passed yet, but the intention of the government is quite clear. This would mean that the savings of the people would be channelised into private companies and stock markets. Although, the individual employee would have a choice with regard to which fund manager to opt for, but the ultimate result would be the same.

First, the government curtails its responsibility towards its employees by making them save for their own pensions, and on top of it these savings would be used for fuelling the profits of foreign and Indian big capital. Like all other new reforms, NPS too will serve the interests of big capital at the cost of the working people.

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violently. But, for that it requires a much greater readiness for sacrifice on the part of the leadership; very often it is this that they are not ready for.

Today, the question of displacement is going to be one of the biggest issues facing the country with gigantic comprador/imperialist projects (mining, dams, national parks, urban beautification projects, hitech parks, etc) coming up all over the country. Lakhs and lakhs are being displaced and crores more will be displaced in the days to come. The impact on the country is going to be colossal. There is an urgent and burning need for all progressives, democrats and revolutionaries to come together and actively resist not only these projects but the very model of development — a product of imperialist dictates. ■

SBI Uncompromising Strike for Pensions

On April 3 two-and-a-half lakh employees of the State Bank of India began an indefinite strike for a just pension. The strike was total with even the officers joining in. The unions have said that the pension ceiling has been kept unchanged at Rs.4,250 per month based on the salary structure of the 1992 revision. Though the salary was revised in 1997 and 2002, the pension ceiling had not been hiked. They demanded that there be a hike in pensions on par with other organisations where they pay pension amounting to 50% of the last salary. Given the pension law the government is in no mood to give into the demands of the bank employees.

For 14 years the Finance Ministry, dictated by its IMF masters, has been opposing any hike in the pensions of the SBI employees. In fact even as far back as in 1983-84 the retired staff of the SBI had to approach the Supreme Court to claim 50% of their last salary. This was again repeated in 1987. subsequently when another industry level (Fifth Bipartite) came into force, negotiations within the SBI for upward revision in pensions were held but recommendations put up by the management were not considered by the Finance Ministry. A repeat action was performed by the Finance Ministry in 1997 and the pension lay static at Rs.4,250 for nine years. Meanwhile the ceiling in the banking industry was raised 3-4 times commensurate with the periodical upward revision in wages of bank employees.

On this occasion, in the light if the new pension bill, to reduce the pensions, the FM was even more adamant not to buckle under employee's pressure. But it was the uncompromising battle of a totally united staff that forced the FM and government to accept all their demands after a lengthy 7-day strike which paralysed a large section of banking and finance of the country (the SBI is the largest bank in the country). What is ironic is that at the beginning of the strike not one of the parties and their unions, even the treacherous CPI/CPM, supported the strike. It was only in the face of the militancy of the employees that after about three days into the strike the AITUC/CITU gave lip support to it and the demands of the employees.

France in turmoil—where is it heading?

—Rashmi

For over a month now, France has been in ferment with the students and workers staging massive demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes, demanding the withdrawal of a new labour law which gives greater flexibility to the employers to fire young people. The latest nationwide strike (this article was written on 6th April) on the 4th of April saw nearly 700,000 people turning out in Paris. The eight kilometer stretch between Place de l'Italie and Place de la Republique was thick with people. In 192 demonstrations across the country over two million people jammed the streets, saying 'no' to the CPE or the new job contract and the half-hearted compromise offered by the President, Jacques Chirac. Meetings between the ruling UMP Party and the unions were supposed to begin on the 5th April.

This contract was introduced on the 8th of March and made into a law on 2nd April. Even before 18 March, nearly 1.5 million people had participated in 160 demonstrations throughout the country. Of the 84 state run universities, 64 had remained closed for two successive weeks till that time. In a symbolic development, the riot police had used force to evacuate the historic Sorbonne University in Paris, the center of the May 1968 uprising.

Soon after the protests began, the university students were joined by the school students. As on 20th of March, nearly 313 high schools were shut and the number tripled to 814 in a single day. By 22nd of March, the ministry stopped releasing the figures! According to FIDL, union of secondary school students, some 25% of the country's 4370 *lycees* (secondary schools) were hit by total or partial closures. The major trade unions have also joined hands with the students in protests against the contract. 'Left' opposition parties and two thirds of the public are also opposing the law. The nationwide strikes on 28th and 30th March also attracted about 700,000 people on each day.

The televised address by President Chirac on 31 March attracted cat-calls from the protestors who had gathered in Paris' Place de Bastille which is incidentally also the place where the 1789 French Revolution had begun. The protests also became



violent at places with the protestors smashing store windows, damaging cars, attacking the office of a Member of Parliament and throwing bottles at the police. Unfortunately the immigrant population was not extensively involved in this agitation. It should be remembered that last October and November, it was the same people and youth staying in the suburbs of France who had taken to the streets against the social and economic discrimination unleashed against the immigrant population of the country; then the oppressed amongst the whites did not come out in active support.

The student demonstrations in Paris and other cities on March 23 resulted in 630 arrests and till date, more than 2500 people have been arrested in connection with the anti-CPE movement. Violent incidents occurring at the protests have been made a further pretext for police repression and the youth were shot at with the police paint guns to mark them as targets. A 39 year telecommunications worker went into coma after the riot police hit him on the head with their truncheons before stomping on him.

What does the CPE say?

Contrat Premiere Embauche (CPE) or the 'First Job Contract' is a new employment contract for those under 26 years of age, which increases the trial (or apprentice

type) period to two years and also says that during this period, the employer can terminate the contract without any explanation. For termination after the first month, a notice of two weeks needs to be given and after six months, a notice of one month is required. Brought in by the Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin on 8th of March, it was ratified by the country's Constitutional Council on the 30th of March. This is the state body that decides on the constitutionality of the new laws. Finally it was made into a law on the 2nd of April.

Due to the pressure of widespread protests, President Chirac did announce some modifications to the contract on 31 March but that does not change its essence. The President announced that he would promulgate the new labour legislation but would also introduce another bill in the parliament watering down certain clauses viz: the trial period of two years would be reduced to one year and the employer would need to give an explanation for breaking the contract. However, the opponents are of the opinion that these modifications make no difference to the basic law which would make the unemployment situation even more grave. The protestors point out that the law was pushed through the parliament without any debate and has dubbed the law as the 'Kleenex Contract' as with this in place, the

young workers can be dismissed and discarded like a facial tissue.

It is noteworthy that more than 20% of the youth in France remain unemployed which is the highest in Europe. This rate is as high as 50% amongst the immigrant youth which was one of the reasons for the turmoil last October. The youth unemployment rate is double that of the national average of 9.6% unemployment.

The Global Assault on Workers

Although the protests were polarized around the CPE, the real discontent runs far deeper. France is plagued by extremely high unemployment rates and over the years the French households have seen their real incomes dwindle. The economy is sluggish, the national debt is on the rise and job creation stagnant. The gap between the rich and the poor has risen significantly, a fact underscored by the ferment, last October. The jobs are being cut on the one hand but the profits by the companies continue to show high records.

As far as the French and the European bourgeoisie is concerned, the only way to succeed against their economic rivals in US and Japan and the rising trade threat from China is by intensifying the exploitation of the working class. All over Europe, the governments are imposing same type of 'labour-induced market reforms'. The aim of the CPE is no different from the Hartz IV laws introduced in Germany against which there was a massive worker's movement and is in line with the social reforms insisted upon by the European Union Commission, the European Central Bank and big business internationally. In the meeting of the EU leaders held in Barcelona on 15th March this year, labour reforms was high on the agenda.

This universal assault on workers' living conditions and democratic rights is inseparably linked to the imperialist policies of the US and Europe. Therefore it is not surprising that the entire European ruling elite has lined up behind Chirac and Villepin over the CPE struggle. The French ruling elite, like its equivalents internationally, has been driven by the processes of the capitalist globalisation to impose ruthless free market reforms, including privatization, cuts to social services and welfare spending and also attacks on workers' wages and conditions. There is a consensus within the French ruling establishment that the gains

secured by the working people in the decades after the second world war, must be reversed and the workers must be subjected to the discipline of the 'free market'. To maintain French capitalism's international competitiveness against the rivals in the US, Europe and Asia, wages and conditions must be systematically driven down. And this is exactly what the CPE aims to do.

Rich Legacy of Struggles

The 1789 French Revolution is etched in history. The 1968 uprising against Charles de Gaulle shall also be remembered for years to come. Even if one were to look at the more recent past, the French students and workers have stood up in protest against the policies of the government, time and again.

The present struggle marks the continuation of a series of struggles seen in France in the past decade against the state's efforts to dismantle the social gains conceded to the working class in the post war period. In 1994, the students countered the controversial plan of the then Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, which allowed the employers to pay the young workers, less than the minimum wages. In 1995 again, a mass strike erupted against Prime Minister, Alain Juppe's attacks on social programmes, public sector workers' pensions, health benefits and conditions. At the peak of that struggle, an estimated 2.3 million workers had participated. Large sections of the working class resisted the free market reforms of Juppe's successor, the Socialist Party's Lionel Jospin who launched a series of privatizations and attacks on social spending. In 2003, French workers protested against the attacks on pensions and the public education system again, this time in millions against the right-wing government of Jean-Pierre Raffarin. And the unrest amongst the immigrants last year also reflects the discontentment against the discriminatory and exploitative policies of the government. Besides these, there have been extensive and militant agitation by the truckers and farmers.

The Present Movement

As has been said earlier, the present struggle is the continuation of the struggles of the French people against the reversal of gains made by the working class in the post war period. Whether it is the right, center-right or the social democrats, all the

governments in France have essentially toed the interests of big capital and in the process launched a series of attacks on the working class. Although a revolutionary potential exists in the present struggle, unfortunately the leading student and worker organizations participating in it have limited it to an anti CPE struggle and linked it to a struggle against the capitalist system itself. According to the Communist Party of France (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), the leaders of this struggle, "*refused to regard the state as the tool of the dominant class ...decided to regard it as a neutral intermediary between the government and itself*".

The capitulation of the trade unions is visible in the fact that 5 major unions-CGT (General Confederation of Labour), CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labour), FO (Workers Power) and two management unions, CFTC & CFE-CGC met the Prime Minister, Villepin and have since tried to present this meeting as the vehicle through which further pressure can be placed on the government to withdraw the CPE.

The political perspective of the student unions is no different. Bruno Julliard, the charismatic leader of the largest university student union which has close ties with the Socialist Party, summed up his position as, "*The call for resignation of government is not a demand that I share... I do not want to inflict a defeat on Dominique de Villepin...we are asking for a discussion- neither side should lose face.*"

It has to be recognized that apart from the ruling UMP, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party have for nearly a quarter of century, played a critical role in helping impose austerity measures demanded by big business, first under Mitterand and then under Jospin. They initiated many of the cheap labour schemes that opened the way to the CPE. These parties are wedded to a reformist perspective that leads inescapably to capitulation before the ruling elite. Hence, it is not surprising that the prominent 'left' parliamentarian of the Socialist Party, Arnaud Montebourg, declared in regard to the present struggle, "*We are worried about where all of this is heading.*" Due to their regular betrayals they were badly routed in the last elections, which saw major gains on the fascist party.

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In India's 'Richest' State, Suicides & Starvation Stalk the Countryside

— Arvind

Starvation deaths in the tribal belts, suicides in the cotton tracts of Vidarbha and child malnutrition and deaths throughout the State — such is the dismal picture of one of the richest States of the country, Maharashtra. One can imagine the state of affairs in the other States where data may not be half as well documented. The following reports have been coming in the main-line media and is based on official and semi-official data. These are normally understatements; the actual reality would be far worse. Besides, living the stark reality is far more horrifying that what dry statistics can reveal.

The life in Maharashtra's countryside and slums is to be compared to the malls and multiplexes coming up in the elite enclaves of the urban rich. It is two worlds; two countries. There is little in common between them. And in this age of globalization these two worlds are getting further and further apart. One, a fairyland of wealth; the other an abyss of destitution. One, being more and more sanitized from the filth and muck around; the other being marginalized/ghettoized more and more. With all government funding, planning, 'vision' statements, investments, subsidies, projects, and economic focus being geared towards the formers, the countryside and slums get merely the crumbs off the elite table. Market economics of globalization demands this warped development, no matter how cruel it may be for the masses. And since market economics is the main agenda today, things can only get from bad to worse in the days to come.

Maharashtra has also been a supposed test-case for the much propagated Employment Guarantee Scheme which is now sought to be introduced in the entire country as the panacea to rural poverty. Maharashtra has had this for over three decades now. But what is its impact on the rural poor is there for all to see. Surveys have shown that 50% of the funds are eaten away in corruption, and even of the balance, the target group of the poor rarely got much benefit under the EGS.

Suicides Reach Epidemic levels in Vidarbha

There are 2.5 million cotton producers in the eight districts of Vidarbha. Suicides (official) are now at two to three a day. The

agrarian crisis in Vidarbha has now spun out of control. Vidarbha's mainly cotton growers have been hit by rising cost of inputs and the crash of output prices. They have also been ruined by the collapse of rural credit. About 90% of households are indebted to the loan sharks, of which only 5% are taken from the cooperatives and banks, usually because of a previous default. The bulk have to depend on the rapacious moneylenders who extract approximately Rs.500 interest every four months on every Rs.1,000 borrowed. (Tehelka 17/12/05) since 2000, most of the moneylenders are also traders, loaning seeds and fertilizers, and then taking away the crop at highly reduced prices. The moneylenders have been seizing not only the farmer's lands but also their household goods. They have also been crushed by fake seed dealers due to the mindless deregulation of the distribution network.

The situation is reaching nightmarish proportions with farmers committing suicide by the hundreds each year, the main cause being DEBT. The Maharashtra government is callous beyond limits. Not only does it plays down suicide statistics it is introducing Hitlerian measures to crush the rural population ruthlessly. And as for the opposition, most of the worst hit districts have Shiv Sena MLAs. So explosive is the situation that the Sena MLA from Akola had to perform the theatrical stunt of 'attempting suicide' in the Nagpur Assembly; earlier he had been chased out of villages where farmers had committed suicide.

The Maharashtra government first said that only 140 farmers had committed suicide in the five years from 2001 to 2004. Later it raised the figure to 523. In October this year it said that 300 farmers had committed suicide in just one of the 11 districts — Yavatmal. Of these only 11 had received compensation. Obviously this too is an understatement, as to be defined as a "farmer" the land must be in that person's name. Now the official figure is another 524 suicide death for just the one year 2004. One reason for such understatements is that if the land is in the old father's name the son's suicide will not be counted as he will not be a 'farmer'. Also, as is normal, many suicides are put down as natural deaths. It is estimated that in the last decade

3,000 farmers have committed suicide.

Until November 2005 only 168 farmers have received the promised Rs.1 lakh compensation. The government's regulations to claim the compensation makes it near impossible for a family to get it. A family has to fulfill 42 conditions, ranging from a Below Poverty Line ration card to the loan having been taken from a bank or cooperative, to qualify for compensation. These conditions are ridiculous and obviously only those will get it who can grease the palms of the local official and sarpanch. The end result is that only a small proportion of the loan amount will remain in the hands of the victim.

In Maharashtra until today the entire cotton crop has been bought by the Cotton Federation and private sale was banned. **When hundreds have already been taking their lives the Maharashtra government this year has reduced the price of cotton by a massive Rs.550 from Rs.2250 per quintal last year to Rs.1700 this year. This amounts to a massive price reduction of 22%. If inflation is counted at the modest rate of 10%, it means a reduction in price of over 30%. When hundred were taking their lives when the price was Rs.2250 one can just wonder what would be their fate this year when they are given the measly Rs.1,700, which is well below the cost of production. The government admits it costs around Rs.2,200 to produce a quintal of cotton. This amounts to nothing but wholesale slaughter of thousands of innocent farmers and their families. But this is not all.**

The Cotton Federation deducts previous loans and interest thereon before paying the sale price. It also pays the farmer late and in installments. So, many farmers resort to distress sales at a price of Rs.1,400 per quintal and also to the private moneylender for loans. But, so what if hundreds of peasants are taking their lives, cotton must go cheap to the big business textile and garment industries so that they can maximize their profits. The Federation supposedly set up for the farmers is a highly autocratic body which has not had an election since it was set up in 1972, with farmers having no say in its decisions and has been a mere tool in the hands of the powerful textile lobby.

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Marxism and Revisionism

V.I. Lenin

{In response to the call commemorating 50 years of modern revisionism issued by four international Maoist parties and printed in the last issue of the magazine People's March will carry regular articles on the subject for the entire year. We have all seen mighty revolutions like that of the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, etc destroyed not by enemy guns but by the cancer of revisionism that ate into the body politics of the Party, government and society, subverting the socialist system and re-establishing horrendous bourgeois rule. Even those that have not achieved state power have been subverted enroute by party leadership turning revisionist. Revisionism is the biggest threat to the communist movement worldwide and has to be countered at every step forward in the revolution. It takes varied forms and invariable comes in varied garb; it puts forward Marxism, minus class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat; it negates the soul of Marxism — the seizure of power by armed force. We start this series by reprinting an abridged form of the Lenin's article written as far back a 1908 which gives a succinct and precise definition of revisionism. Editor }

There is a well-known saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which conflicted with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, indicates the tasks facing this class and demonstrates the inevitable replacement (by virtue of economic development) of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine has had to fight for every step forward in the course of its life.

Needless to say, this applies to bourgeois science and philosophy, officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the propertied classes and to “coach” it against internal and foreign enemies. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Marx is attacked with equal zest by young scholars who are making a career by refuting socialism, and by decrepit elders who are preserving the tradition of all kinds of outworn “systems”. The progress of Marxism, the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class, inevitably increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which becomes stronger, more hardened and more vigorous every time it is “annihilated” by official science.

But even among doctrines connected with the struggle of the working class, and current mainly among the proletariat, Marxism by no means consolidated its position all at once. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 1840s on) Marxism was engaged in combating

theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the early forties Marx and Engels settled accounts with the radical Young Hegelians whose viewpoint was that of philosophical idealism. At the end of the forties the struggle began in the field of economic doctrine, against Proudhonism. The fifties saw the completion of this struggle in criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the sixties the struggle shifted from the field of general theory to one closer to the direct labour movement: the ejection of Bakuninism from the International. In the early seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the late seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the workers' parties in effect built their programmes and their tactics on Marxist foundations. The revived international organisation of the labour movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and causes of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this trend by coming forward with the most noise and with the most purposeful expression of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia where—owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population weighed down by the relics of serfdom—non-Marxist socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the programme of the municipalisation of all land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our Social-Narodniks are more and more substituting “amendments” to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of their old system, which in its own way was integral and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the sphere of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial “science”. The professors went “back to Kant”—and revisionism dragged along after the neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the platitudes that priests have uttered a thousand times against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling indulgently, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been “refuted” long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a “dead dog”,^[2] and while themselves preaching idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the

revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing “artful” (and revolutionary) dialectics by “simple” (and tranquil) “evolution”. The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and their “critical” systems to the dominant medieval “philosophy” (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them, trying to make religion a “private affair”, not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

What such “amendments” to Marx really meant in class terms need not be stated: it is self-evident. We shall simply note that the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement to criticise the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov. This must be stressed. all the more emphatically since profoundly mistaken attempts are being made at the present time to smuggle in old and reactionary philosophical rubbish disguised as a criticism of Plekhanov’s tactical opportunism.^[1]

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that in this sphere the “amendments” of the revisionists were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by “new data on economic development”. It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while they proceed very slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and weaker, and that cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to eliminate them altogether. It was said that the “theory of collapse” to which capitalism is heading was unsound, owing to the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx’s theory of value, too, in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.^[2]

The fight against the revisionists on these questions resulted in as fruitful a revival of the theoretical thought in international socialism as did Engels’s controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were analysed with the help of facts and

figures. It was proved that the revisionists were systematically painting a rose-coloured picture of modern small-scale production. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale production not only in industry, but also in agriculture, is proved by irrefutable facts. But commodity production is far less developed in agriculture, and modern statisticians and economists are, as a rule, not very skilful in picking out the special branches (sometimes even the operations) in agriculture which indicate that agriculture is being progressively drawn into the process of *exchange* in world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural economy by constant worsening of diet, by chronic starvation, by lengthening of the working day, by deterioration in the quality and the care of cattle, in a word, by the very methods whereby handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society; and it is the task of socialist political economy to investigate this process in all its forms, often complicated and intricate, and to demonstrate to the small producer the impossibility of his holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity for the peasant to adopt the standpoint of the proletariat. On this question the revisionists sinned, in the scientific sense, by superficial generalisations based on facts selected one-sidedly and without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole. From the political point of view, they sinned by the fact that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to adopt the attitude of a small proprietor (i.e., the attitude of the bourgeoisie) instead of urging him to adopt the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat.

The position of revisionism was even worse as regards the theory of crises and the theory of collapse. Only for a very short time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of refashioning the foundations of Marx’s theory under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Realities very soon made it

clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thereby intensifying class antagonisms to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is heading for a breakdown—in the sense both of individual political and economic crises and of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system—has been made particularly clear, and on a particularly large scale, precisely by the new giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the appalling increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this has resulted in the recent “theories” of the revisionists having been forgotten by everybody, including, apparently, many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals had given the working class must not be forgotten.

As to the theory of value, it need only be said that apart from the vaguest of hints and sighs, *à la* Böhm-Bawerk, the revisionists have contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever on the development of scientific thought.

In the sphere of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the working men have no country. For, they said, since the “will of the majority” prevails in a democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these arguments of the revisionists amounted to a fairly well-balanced system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal-

bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of “democratic” capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. “The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing”—this catch-phrase of Bernstein’s expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will

always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another.

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No thinking socialist who is in the least informed can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the two trends in Marxism Germany France, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, and the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia, is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the immense variety of national conditions and historical factors in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the “division” within the present international socialist movement is now proceeding along the *same* lines in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when heterogeneous trends in the various countries were struggling within the one international socialist movement. And that “revisionism from the left” which has taken shape in the Latin countries as “revolutionary syndicalism”,^[4] is also adapting itself to Marxism, “amending” it: Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx who is understood wrongly to Marx who is understood rightly.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national peculiarities and of degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new “middle strata” are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism

(appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world-outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad workers’ parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and always will be so, right up to the changes of fortune that will take place in the proletarian revolution. For it would be a profound mistake to think that the “complete” proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential for bringing about such a revolution. What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology, namely, disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx; what now crops up in practice only over individual side issues of the labour movement, as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on this basis—is bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution will sharpen all disputed issues, will focus all differences on points which are of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and will make it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends, and to cast out bad allies in order to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie. ■ ■

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Yet, there is a section of protestors which believes that “*it is necessary to go beyond the CPE*” and that there is a need to “*have to make a break with the capitalist system.*”

What has to be understood is that the Villepin government must be brought down but replacing it with the official ‘left’, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party will not resolve anything.

The source of the UMP government’s attacks on the working class and the youth

is the historic failure of the capitalist system itself. Capitalism is in crisis, not just in France or Europe or US but on a global scale. In the epoch of global capitalism, none of the issues raised by the CPE can be resolved simply within the existing capitalist system. Today the working class in France and elsewhere is confronted with transnational corporations that relentlessly downsize and shift jobs to the countries where labour is cheaper. The anti-CPE movement must be guided in its economic demands and political direction by

revolutionary politics. The movement should not limit itself to the withdrawal of CPE but should become a movement which unites workers of all nationalities, races and religions throughout Europe against the capitalist and imperialist policies of their governments. Meanwhile, there is a most urgent need for the immigrant black population and the oppressed amongst the whites to unite and jointly launch their battles and not separately as has been happening. ■ ■

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Besides, it was the government itself that has pushed the farmers into the arms of the moneylenders. It was the withdrawal of bank guarantees by the Maharashtra government that pushed them into the clutches of the moneylender. Way back in 1935 the British set up land development banks that loaned farmers money at lower rates of interest. The Maharashtra State Cooperative Agricultural Rural and Multipurpose Development Bank (MASCARDB) gave long term loans while the district LDBs (funded by MASCARDB) gave short term and medium term credit. MASCARDB had 20 lakh members and have been lending up to Rs.200 crores annually till 1996/97. Of this Rs.190 crore came from NABARD under a state government guarantee. But in 1996 the Shiv Sena government turned off NABARD funding. By November the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank ran out of resources and was put up for liquidation. As a result of this the peasants are being pushed deeper and deeper into the arms of the moneylenders who charge anything from 30-50% interest at the minimum. As a result only 8-10% farmers have access to institutional credit. Private money-lending has to be registered according to the Bombay Moneylenders' Act; but of the over one lakh moneylenders in the State, hardly 5,000 are licensed.

Meanwhile the State Government has helped boost private traders who lift the farmer's produce at rock-bottom prices. Also there is no restriction on the dumping of cotton from America and elsewhere and the import duty on cotton is a mere 10% while that on sugar is 60%, on rice it is 80% and on second hand cars it is 180%. The low prices is partly due to the crash in international prices where the US alone subsidizes its 25,000 cotton producers to the tune of \$ 4 billion i.e.Rs.70 lakhs a year for each farmer!!!

In addition input costs have been going up each year. Bt cotton area has increased by 30% due to the massive promotion of these seeds by high-level advertising by Ministers, officials and film stars. Some film stars have earned lakhs through this promotion; all recovered from the farmer through high costs of the seed. This implies even higher input costs. And some of them have sown two, even three times in the

same season after being hit by crop failure. The situation is explosive.

In 2004, upto 80% of cotton growers harvested BT, genetically modified seeds produced by Monsanto. When actor Nana Patekar, the brand ambassador of Monsanto, toured this region last year to promote BT, his public meetings had a huge impact. Farmers went for BT in a big way. The seed, with prices ranging above Rs.1,600 a packet (compared to the normal hybrid variety of Rs.450 a packet) have demonstrated no sustainability in the parched environment of Vidarbha. This year the fungal infection *Lal Rog* stuck the fields. The withered cotton, branches red in colour, make a depressing sight. In the shadow of the failed harvest, stands an entire family, emaciated and hungry. *"Monsanto's claim that a test application would involve minimum pesticides and maximum yield has proved fatal"* says a representative of a local peasant organisation. Meanwhile, while the cotton farmers have been destroyed even further Monsanto and film actor Nana Patekar have made a small fortune. Both should be treated as criminals and lynched by the masses. It is they who should be forced to pay the farmer's debts.

But the government is not merely looking the other way it has resorted to Hitlerian measures. The state government passed an Act that will make irrigation water charges one and a half times more expensive for those farmers having more than two children. They will also be barred from taking part in local body polls. Now liquor will be freely sold in shops and stores. Further, according to the Water regulatory Bill passed by the Maharashtra Assembly this year, farmers must pay Rs.580 per acre of water every month!! Besides, there is no dearth of government funding and subsidies, but these are all for the 'welfare' of the bosses of the co-operative movement and their ilk. Vidarbha is in fact the hunting ground for money-grabbers of all types.

As we go to the press the horrifying effects of the low cotton prices and other factors are already coming forward. In the five months from Sept to March 2006 the number of suicide deaths is three times that of last year. Since June last year the official figure is 400. In October the figure was 20; in November it was 52; in December 72; in

January this year it was 68, in March it peaked at 77. It is from October that the government reduced the price of cotton by Rs.500 per quintal!!

The government has totally abdicated responsibility with a conscious bid to kill the cotton farmers. It has consciously pushed the farmers into the arms of the private traders. Last year there were 411 official centres to procure cotton; this year there are only 185. In this season the Cotton Federation had purchased a mere 6.3 lakh quintals compared to 185 lakh quintals last year. The private traders are paying a mere Rs.1,600 per quintal which is hundred rupees less than the reduced MSP price. It is distress sales. Not only that, the cost of inputs have gone up by 25% over last year; and due to disease of the Bt cotton total production is expected to be down 50 lakh tonnes. The farmers have been hit from all sides. We can expect the suicides to spiral in the coming months. The government could not be bothered as big business is getting cheap imported US cotton, with import duty at a mere 10%. *{The data on cotton is based on articles appearing in The Hindu by P. Sainath}*

As though the debt woes are not enough the Maharashtra farmers are also beginning to face the horror of electricity privatization. In February farmers from far-flung areas of Maharashtra had planned to lay siege to the Mantralaya. The "Gophan Morcha" (sling-shot procession) was to highlight the inadequate power supply in the rural areas, which has aggravated after the privatization process was begun.

After the trifurcation of the Maharashtra State Electricity Board, power distribution has been so erratic that consumers in Southern Maharashtra have been agitating against the newly-formed Maharashtra State distribution Company (MSDC). Protest rallies have become frequent in both rural and urban areas with consumers resorting to stone-throwing and gheraoing of the MSDC.

Farmers complain that load-shedding is frequent and unscheduled. Besides, they allege that they are charged exorbitant bills despite load-shedding.

Ever since its formation the MSDC has been facing periodical agitations and attacks on its offices. Protests are being reported from several parts of the state. In Ichalkaranji powerloom owners recently stormed the

MSDC's office over frequent power cuts. A similar incident was reported from Kasaba Bawada on the outskirts of Kohlapur. The protesters not only broke up the furniture but also severed the connections and damaged files. In Sangli irregular power supply has hit the waster supply system. Farming operations have been affected in rural areas with transformers and electric motors getting burned, thereby putting additional burden on the power consumers. Rasta roko and attacks on the MSDC's offices have become commonplace in the area.

Suicides: The Tip of the Iceberg

But suicides are only the last resort of the frustrated. There will be lakhs and lakhs living on the brink, in deep debt, but trying to somehow survive. Today one major added expense is illness. With the government resorting to massive cuts on the public health system and the cost of medicine skyrocketing a large party of rural family expenses are going on healthcare. In a survey it has been estimated that 21% of all Indians have stopped seeking medical aid as they cannot afford it. They live in perpetual illness only to finally pass away. Ofcourse, their death will be put as a natural cause.

The collapse of rural credit, soaring input costs and falling output prices, disease and destitution were themes greeting the NCF team everywhere. Vidarbha's farm community stands exhausted. There was a suicide death by a farmer every 12 hours while the team was in the region. There have been many more

since they left. The toll has been mounting since June. There were 29 reported in just the one month since Sept 26th.

The tale of Vidarbha is a tale being repeated in all regions of the country. In the developed countries farmers are subsidized so that they live well. But this is not so in the backward countries like India. Here neither is there the motor of capitalist/ industrial growth that can give employment, nor are the farms able to be drawn into scientific farming. The backward semi-feudal relations in the country is the main reason for this where the peasants have no capital, are confined to small plots of land, and are looted by the rural elite (moneylender, trader, landlord if there, officials, etc). And over-and-above this have come the horrors of the green revolution and then globalization. While not basically touching the relations of production the capitalists/imperialists have drawn even the impoverished peasantry into their clutches and are extracting the last drop of blood from their already emaciated bodies.

For the Indian peasantry all roads lead to hell. For them revolution is the only possible relief. The revolutionary movement in Gadchiroli is not far off. Ironically the least effected are the tribal belt is the regions of naxalite influence in Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Bhandara. Here the people are no longer exploited by their employers and fleeced by one and all, from the officials, to the traders, to the police and the rural elite of landlords and moneylenders and even the doctors. In

these areas wage rates are relatively higher due to their struggles, the exorbitant interest rates no longer exist on loans, they can no longer so easily be fleeced by the forest officials, police, traders, doctors, bureaucrats, etc. Therefore relatively their condition is far better than that of their fellow tribals in the districts of Amravati, Yavatmal, Nandurbar, Dhule, Nashik and Thane.

After the Shetkari Sangathan of Sharad Joshi betrayed the farmers, falling at the feet of the WTO/IMF/WB combine, the movement has been in the doldrums. But the last week of November witnessed a series of dharnas and sit-ins. And this movement drew not only farmers but also playwrights, professors, teachers, journalists and many others. A new awakening is taking place. Due to the opposition the government was forced to give some temporary reliefs, but the bulk of these will remain only on paper as they target only the moneylenders who wield power and fear in the countryside.

Today the major beneficiaries of the destitution of the cotton farmers are the textile and fashion industry. Spending crores on their high profile fashion week and designer clothes, such vulgar display of fashions were only possible due to their super-profits squeezed out of the blood of the cotton farmer's destitution. Cotton being the major input for the entire textile and fashion industry, the huge drop in prices is a bonanza for this sector. The glitter of fashion week is built on the horrors of the starving cotton farmer. Villagers throughout Vidarbha have put up boards "kidneys for sale", "village for sale". ■ ■

Child Deaths & Malnutrition

According to the Sample Registration Survey of the Government of India the total number of child deaths between July 2004 and June 2005 was 1,20,000. According to a Committee set up by the State Government in August 2004 between 1.20 lakh and 1.75 lakh children died in the State every year due to disease. The report added that nearly eight lakh children were threatened with Grade 3 or 4 malnutrition. It estimated that 82,000 children died every year in the rural areas of the State, 23,500 in the tribal areas and 56,000 in the slums. In 1998 itself a report by the CDSAG (Child Death Study and Action Group) said that the government was severely under-reporting child deaths — in 1998 there were an estimated 1,75,000 child deaths but only 30,000 were officially reported.

The child deaths itself is merely the tip of the iceberg where underneath there is extreme poverty, disease, hunger in the entire families. Grade 3 & 4 malnutrition in children create permanent damage to the child — both to its brain and body structure. Such children grow up mentally slow and physically weak even if they get proper food later (which is itself rare).

The situation in Mumbai's slums is not much better where about 60% of the population live. The unhygienic conditions there are probably far worse even than in the rural areas due to over-crowding. With no jobs now available the vast majority are forced to eke out a precarious existence as unorganized labour living from hand-to-mouth. Here too, according to a study by some university professors, 750 children die of malnutrition each year. Ofcourse, thousands more will die of disease. For all this there are no records as anyhow the bulk of such extremely poor are treated as illegal and not in any records. They also face the terror of continuous eviction, with the Comprador's and imperialist dream to turn Mumbai into a Singapore.

growth, the stock index will boom even more, the captains of industry will applaud; but the Vidarbha farmers and the bulk of the entire rural populace will wonder what the euphoria is all about. ■ ■

Andhra Pradesh: World Bank becomes the de facto Ruler

Several sensational stories continue to fill the pages of newspapers ever since the completion of the AICC session in the third week of January this year, their tenor increasing with every passing day. The district SP of Prakasham even demonstrated before the media audience how blasts can be triggered off from a distance using wireless remotes. Using 10 kg of gelatine packed in a scooter he detonated it and showed how there was no trace of the scooter after the blast. This exercise was meant to convince the media that the Maoists can trigger off blasts anywhere in the state using this sophisticated technology.

Even earlier, there were, of course, stories of how Action Teams set up by the Maoists were planning attacks to create disturbances during the three important programmes that were scheduled in January in Hyderabad—the 93rd Indian Science Congress, *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* and the 82nd session of the AICC. They spoke of a possible nexus between the Maoists and Pakistan's ISI. They even alleged that the Maoists had assured the leaders of Islamic organizations in Hyderabad that they would render them all assistance in carrying out "terrorist actions" in the state.

All these stories are being floated by YSR's police state and the Congress-led imperialist (especially US) stooge government in the Centre only to malign the Maoists, paint them as terrorists having links with the ISI who are planning to create grave insecurity through reckless actions. By doing so, the central and state governments aim at unleashing the most brutal state terror on the Maoists, sympathizers of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary masses. Going through grave crisis in all spheres and having lost confidence of the people in such a short period after assuming power, the Congress government is bent upon crushing all democratic movements and, like all the preceding governments, has targeted the real opposition to its rule, the CPI(Maoist), so that the democratic movements will be deprived of genuine leadership. Paradoxically, the ministers and police bosses claim day in and day out that the Maoist movement in Andhra Pradesh is finished but at the same time, bring in

more security forces, appeal to the Centre to send even more forces and funds, plan to acquire helicopters and pilotless aerial vehicles, and continuously increase their police forces and the crack greyhounds forces. In the first week of February, they announced the setting up of two more greyhounds centres, one in North Andhra and another in Rayalaseema. So much is their fear of Maoists even when they are in jail that they kill arrested revolutionaries and their sympathizers instantly.

At the AICC meeting held in Hyderabad in January this year, the Home Minister Shivraj Patil declared that tough measures are being taken to deal with the Naxal "problem" even while his government considered it to be a socio-economic problem. It asked the various state governments to deal with the issue with an iron hand and assured them of all help from the centre. At the meeting of the district SPs, a decision was taken to concentrate on the suppression of the Naxalite movement in the summer season by taking advantage of the thin forest cover during the season. In the first week of February, the chief Minister met the notorious blackmailer David Mulford, the US Ambassador to India, in Delhi and held private conversation with him in strict secrecy. Obviously the discussion between them must have been the question of security for the visit of the international terrorist and butcher George Bush in the first week of March and suppressing the Maoist movement with the advice and assistance from the US imperialists. The DGP too met US officials and held secret parleys just before he left for his 10-day visit to Australia. No wonder, soon after these secret talks with their masters from Washington, the state government commenced its summer offensive in full swing from the first week of February.

In just one week from February 5, the police claimed to have engaged the Maoists in six encounters in Nallamala guerrilla zone in which six Maoists had died. However, fact is that only three of these were real encounters which took place in Prakasham district and one greyhounds constable was seriously injured in one of the encounters while there were no losses in the other two. In a fake encounter staged on February 5th,

three Maoists were killed after they were picked up from different places and tortured for two days. Their bodies were thrown near Malakondapenta village in Nallamala forest. Two more were killed in two separate incidents in Guntur district. One deputy commander of the platoon, Bhaskar alias Yalamanda was killed in the Guthikonda forest in Karampudi mandal. On the next day, another militant, Dokka Kotaiah, was arrested and killed near Morjampadu village in Machavaram mandal. Upon getting information about the movement of the PLGA squad, 10 batches of greyhounds, consisting of 40 each, are being swiftly engaged to encircle and wipe out the squad. Combing of the area is going on by selecting one or two pockets and trying to clear them. Helicopters are being used for surveillance. In one incident in Nallamala forest near Rudraram village in Giddalur mandal in Prakasham district on February 8, greyhounds had to turn back after fierce resistance by the PLGA soldiers in which one of the greyhounds constable was seriously injured. They had to airlift him to Hyderabad. It is one of the very few real encounters as almost all the Maoists and Janashakti Naxalites, almost 120 of them, who were killed after YSR took over office, have been victims of fake encounters.

The cold-blooded killings of arrested Naxalites, elimination of leaders of democratic organizations and civil liberties activists, and a reign of terror on the revolutionary masses is imperative for the YSR government notwithstanding their pompous claims in their election manifesto that there would be no fake encounters in future and that a judicial enquiry would be conducted to go into all the fake encounters that took place during the TDP regime. As reported in these columns several times previously, the state of AP had been transformed into a police state at least by the mid-1980s and is continuously being further fascised over the years. Fake encounter killings and suppression of democratic rights of the people had peaked during the reign of Chandrababu Naidu and, barring the brief interregnum during the period of talks from June-December, the situation began to grow even worse since January 2005.

Whether it is YSR or some other

ignoramus, whoever might be in power, the crisis-ridden economy in the state and the vice-like grip of the World Bank on the state does not allow much democratic space to the people to express their dissent in real terms. Like a Shylock, the Bank wants its pound of flesh, no matter if thousands die of hunger or commit suicides, and if the democratic rights are trampled underfoot most brutally. And YSR, with his blood-stained factionalist background, like his predecessor Chandrababu Naidu, is a good muscleman for the Shylock. Caught in neck-deep crisis and a series of scandals, YSR's cabinet naturally depends on the Bank to give the government a breathing space by advancing massive loans. By the time YSR leaves office in another three years, loans would pile up so much that whoever comes to power then would become an even more loyal agent for the Bank. Such is the vicious cycle in which the state is trapped.

Militant Struggles Rock the Government:

Today the situation has become so explosive that every other day we witness people protesting against the anti-people policies of the YSR government and the unfulfilled promises and assurances by the Congress. For instance, in the past two months alone, there were protests by peasants against the move by the government to scrap the free electricity scheme for the *rabi* season if paddy was sown obviously upon the instruction of the World Bank (however, the government had to step back due to the massive protests). The farmers also rose against the decision of the government to supply the measly 7 hour electricity in two and even four instalments and the struggle is still continuing (it is worthwhile to note that the Congress, in its election manifesto, declared it would ensure 12 hour power supply for irrigation). There are protests against the decision making it mandatory for all farmers to fit capacitors and foot-valves to their pump sets before March 31st, and on several such issues.

The MRPS, representing the Dalit sub-caste of Madigas, threatened to disrupt the AICC session in January if their long-pending demand of classification of reservations for dalits was not met and it was only after the Chief Minister personally assured the leaders of MRPS that it would recommend the issue to the Congress high

Command and see that it is passed in the Parliament that their massive rally was withdrawn at the last moment. Dairy milk producers came into the streets against the authoritarian order of the government scrapping the unions on February 4th. Even elected sarpanches, MPTC and ZPTC members clashed with the police when their peaceful procession was lathi-charged causing grievous injuries to many, including several women, on February 2nd; they were demanding that they be given their traditional power to issue checks as it was scrapped by the government through an ordinance (the government had to ultimately backtrack from its decision and was forced to restore the checkpower of the representatives of local bodies on February 15th). Teachers took to the streets in Chittoore district and several of them were grievously injured when the police resorted to brutal lathi-charge not leaving even those who had fallen down. The long-dormant student community too went on strikes on several issues in many parts of the state.

And most of the irrigation projects under the much-trumpeted *jalayagnam*, which boasts of providing irrigation to one crore acres in the state, are caught in deep controversy. Opposition to Polavaram and Pulichintala projects has been growing stronger by the day. Almost all the parties have now joined hands in opposing some of these projects. The CPI, CPI(M), TRS and even the TDP, have undertaken padayatras, meetings, and demonstrations against the Polavaram dam or for decreasing its height. They have also tried to utilize people's anger against the GO increasing the capacity of Pothireddypadu head regulator.

There were protests throughout the state against the busfare hike announced by the govt on February 7th. News of the government entering into an agreement with Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd for handing over 25,000 acres of prime agricultural land in Nalgonda district for laying the gas-pipeline met massive protest from the affected villages. YSR in Hyderabad and Ambani from Mumbai, hastily denied any such deal as having taken place and tried to reassure the people. The proposed prestigious industrial corridor from Vishakhapatnam to Araku has been facing growing opposition from the

people, particularly the adivasis. 10,000 acres in this beautiful tract of land stretching from Vishakhapatnam to Araku, a tourist attraction in the Eastern Ghats, has been handed over to Jindal, the aluminium baron, for mining bauxite.

There are also protests against the plans to extract uranium from Peda Adiserlapalli mandal in Nalgonda district. The hitherto unknown adivasi hamlets of Pedagattu and Nambapur suddenly became news due to the discovery of huge deposits of uranium amounting to 1.12 crore tons. The Uranium Corporation of India Ltd (UCIL) had asked for the acquisition of 1316 acres of land for extracting and enriching the uranium ore. The mines are said to last for 20 years at the rate of extraction of 1250 tons per day which give 686 kg of enriched uranium. To extract the uranium 22 ½ tons of explosives are required every month. And also 22,50,00 litres of water every day. The uranium project brings disastrous consequences to the Nagarjun Sagar dam situated a few kilometers away and on the people living in the districts of Krishna, Guntur, Prakasham and Khammam. In the past three years three meetings were held by the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board to gather public opinion on the issue. In all the three meetings people expressed their strong opposition and apprehensions against the project. Bypassing the feelings of two crore people living in the area under Nagarjun Sagar ayacut the central ministry of forests gave the green signal to the UCIL. People from the region and various states as well as prominent environmentalists and anti-nuclear scientists undertook a padayatra for five days from January 3-7 this year coinciding with the 93rd Indian Science Congress taking place in Hyderabad. Among those who attended the protest march were: nuclear physicist Dr. Surendra Gadekar from Gujarat, Rajan Naidu, a human rights activist from London, Ramakrishna from Citizens for Alternative to Nuclear Energy (CANE), Shukla Sen of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace from Mumbai, Balagopal from Human Rights Forum, and several activists from all over the country and abroad. Extensive signature campaign was taken up and mass protests against the uranium plant are being planned by the people.

It is interesting to note that it was the same YSR who opposed the uranium plant

when he was a leader of the Opposition and had lectured in the Assembly on how dangerous the consequences would be if the extraction was permitted. Just as he went back on every promise made prior to the elections, this hypocrite and double-dealer now finds the uranium plant essential for the progress of the country, no matter if crores of people and animals are affected, and land, water and air are polluted by the radiation!!

YSR's Congress govt—surpasses TDP's Naidu in kowtowing before the World Bank:

The most important of all, the role of the World Bank, is being called into question by various sections of the people who feel cheated and betrayed by the complete reversal of the promises made by the Congress during the elections. They have not forgotten YSR's vehement attack against the TDP's sell-out to the World Bank and his promise that, if voted to power, the new government would review all the projects of the World Bank agreed upon by the TDP regime and will not take loans with such humiliating conditions. YSR had not only not reviewed the nature of Bank "aid", but had strengthened the bond with the Bank agreeing to the most humiliating conditions, even surpassing Naidu. He has gone all out to attract the imperialist MNCs and the CBB houses to the state by offering them land, power, water, cheap labour and other incentives.

The major loans taken, or in the process of taking, from the World Bank by the YSR government are: Rs. 3000 crores for the modernization of the Nagarjun Sagar multi-purpose project, Rs.1000 crores for the maintenance and protection of dams, Rs.1200 crores for the development of municipalities, Rs.1600 crores for Economic Restructuring, and several thousand crores for Polavaram and other projects. These are greater than the funds obtained during the 9-year rule of the TDP. The Bank has made it mandatory for the government to implement water reforms if it has to obtain the loans for irrigation projects. The Central Finance Minister and World Bank's trusted agent, P. Chidambaram, as well as the Bank, had instructed the state government to increase water cess. The Bank had further demanded levying a special water cess on the peasants to meet the expenses for the construction and maintenance of the dams.

It had instructed the government to set up a Water Regulatory Commission to supervise the usage of water and implementation of water reforms.

Without even letting out a whimper, the YSR government had agreed to increase the water cess, set up a water regulatory commission, increase the registration fee, and so on. The Water Regulatory Commission will have the authority to supervise the usage of water, collection of user charges and to increase the water cess. The water regulatory commission will come into existence within six months and this is being done secretly fearing opposition from the people. The World Bank wants every drop of water to be assessed and like a Shylock, it wants to squeeze the peasants for the loans that it is advancing for the irrigation projects. The setting up of the Regulatory Commission has been the demand of the Bank for the past 5 or 6 years, but the previous TDP regime had not gone beyond setting up Water Users' Associations. What CBNaidu hesitated to do, the new agent YSReddy has taken it up prostrating before the feet of the Bank. All the minor, medium and major irrigation projects as well as tanks will come under the supervision of this Commission and the government will abdicate all responsibility of subsidizing the water. There is also a "suggestion" from the Bank that the Commission be given the authority to advise the peasants as to what crops should be grown on which soil. The peasantry will be at the mercy of the Bank and the big Corporate firms that impose user charges for every drop of water used. Water, under YSR, will soon become a high-priced luxury out of reach of the already suffering peasantry in AP.

And in return for the loan sanctioned to the Municipalities, the Bank had ordered the scrapping of the Rent Control Act. Huge "Aid", no doubt, at a huge cost for the people who will be further flattened by the huge burden of debt translating into heavier taxes, cess, tariffs, cuts in subsidies, denial of democratic rights and the very right to life!

YSR's Jalayagnam—paving the way to hell:

The so-called *Jalayagnam* of the YSR government requires a total amount of almost one lakh crores against the initial projected estimate of Rs.46000 crores. It had

allotted Rs.10,000 crores in the past two budgets and promises an equal amount during the current budget and another Rs.30,000 crores in the next two budgets. The *jalayagnam*, the government claims, is aimed at providing irrigation to one crore acres of land in the state. Obviously it is a pipe dream of the rulers and they are completely dependent on World Bank loans to raise the required funds. And even more obvious is the fact that it has to abide by all the conditions imposed by the Bank such as complete scrapping of the free electricity scheme, increase in power tariff, water cess, busfares, further cuts in subsidies, user charges for health, education etc., closure of local industries, provision of incentives to the entry of MNCs, cutting down staff strength in government departments, RTC, and other corporations, privatization of all and sundry, clamp-down on the strikes ruthlessly, enacting fascist measures to create "Law & Order", suppression of the Maoist movement with an iron hand through cold-blooded murders and suppression of all democratic rights, and so on. And all these measures are being implemented in an aggressive manner by the YSR regime just like the Chandrababu's regime.

As imperialism needs authoritarianism and fascist rule to implement its policies and increase its loot and superprofits, all democratic norms are given a go bye in the process. YSR virtually runs a one-man dictatorial rule with no consultation in the Assembly or even the state cabinet let alone taking the public opinion on the crucial issues. He had unilaterally taken decision to break the talks process with the Maoists after the first round in October 2004, entered into agreements with the World Bank with regard to the loans related to the Economic Restructuring, allotted contracts to his near and dear ones, Party bigwigs, and those close to the Congress party, and had even met the notorious Mulford after his blackmailing remarks and held secret conversations on how to place the state's resources at the feet of the US. It is holding secret parleys with the World Bank regarding the third instalment of the loan to the tune of Rs. 1400 crores and has refused to divulge the details of the agreement.

It declared that there would be no free electricity to farmers who sow paddy in the

rabi season but had to backtrack only after massive protest by the peasants all over the state. Then it ordered that all the farmers should fit capacitors and footvalves to the pumpsets by March 31st failing which their connections would be withdrawn. Even these the farmers have to buy from the market at exorbitant rates. Farmers are gheraoing officials and attacking offices demanding that the govt should supply these instruments at subsidized prices. Thus attempts are being made to tax the farmers through so-called regularization of power and thereby increase the state revenues. The Congress had promised in its election manifesto that it would give 12 hour uninterrupted power supply for irrigation. But it had continued the same 7 hours of supply that was prevalent during TDP regime. In fact, this was one important reason why TDP was defeated in the polls and Congress came to power. But now the YSR government had not only gone back on its promise of giving power continuously for 12 hours but even the 7 hour supply is being given in two instalments. This had given rise to massive protests from the peasants.

With a proposed cost of Rs.13,500 crores, Polavaram project is said to irrigate a mere 2.95 lakh acres! And at an unimaginable cost in terms of human suffering due to displacement, submergence, destruction of natural forests and animal life, destruction of the adivasi society and culture, and the natural beauty of Papikondalu, an attraction for tourists. It completely submerges 275 adivasi villages, displaces around 2 lakh adivasis in the three districts of Khammam, East and West Godavari. Khammam district is the most affected with 205 villages being submerged. It submerges a land area of 1,10,567 acres of which 8000 acres is natural forest. Once the project is completed it will submerge upto 95 km stretch of land and a total area of 601 sq km thereby affecting areas in neighbouring Chattisgarh and Orissa too. The YSR government has commenced work on the project in gross violation of the Constitutional laws like 1/70 Act in the Scheduled Areas, provisions of the Panchayathi Raj Act, Bachawat Award regarding the inter-state water disputes as areas in Chattisgarh and Orissa will be submerged, and so on.

The central environmental ministry had

given its permission in end October. Permission given by the ministry of environment and forests to the project is like the thief giving himself a god conduct certificate. The Polavaram project is similar to the Sardar Sarovar project in Gujarat which had displaced lakhs of people with no rehabilitation to the majority. Of the Rs.1400 crores demanded by the government of MP for rehabilitation the Gujarat government had given a measly 100 crores. The plight of the displaced people is indescribable. As a result of the issues involved the Gujarat government is unable to increase the dam height to 110.64 metres since January 2004. The case will be no different with regard to the Polavaram project. In accordance with the Supreme Court directive to the Gujarat government issued in the beginning of this year, it should not try to increase the height of the dam until even the temporarily displaced persons are given land and jobs as compensation. The Gujarat government is yet to implement this decision.

It is clear that the AP government will also face the same problem even if it succeeds in constructing the dam. Due to the pressure from various sections an Experts Committee has been appointed by the government to recommend the optimum height of the project and the report is due. The project is confronting massive opposition from various organizations like Adivasi Sankshema Parishat, Tudum Debba, Adivasi Gram Committees and parties such as CPI, CPI(M), TRS and even the TDP. Those opposing the project are demanding that no work should commence until the report of the committee is submitted. Several organizations have now taken up struggle armed with traditional bows and arrows demanding scrapping of the project or decreasing the height to prevent submergence.

Another important aspect is the problem the project poses to the Telangana region as it is situated on the river Godavari. Without having any worthwhile projects to irrigate Telangana the waters are being used to irrigate the relatively developed Coastal region and to provide power to the Big Business houses. This makes future construction of dams in Telangana region difficult. In fact, the low-cost Ichampalli project in Telangana has been languishing for years due to sheer neglect and step-

motherly attitude of successive governments and now the construction of Polavaram dam has made the people of Telangana restive. Several small dams across Godavari and Krishna rivers would irrigate the entire land in Andhra Pradesh but the rulers, with the advice of the World Bank and the CBB, are interested in having huge projects for their needs of electricity not to speak of the huge profits involved in the construction of these massive projects.

An amusing joke doing the rounds in AP is YSR's claim that the adivasis themselves are keen on having the Polavaram project. He wants the world to believe that people, may be due to their suicidal tendencies, would very much like to drown themselves!! Why has the YSR government taken up the Polavaram project in spite of massive opposition and huge destruction of human, plant and wild life and providing irrigation to just less than 3 lakh acres? The secret lies in the pressure from the imperialist MNCs and the CBB houses which want electricity from this multi-purpose project and irrigation is only a secondary aspect. For the benefit of these vultures, their paid agent is determined to crush any opposition to the project and cause death and destruction in a vast area. And this secret is carefully hidden from the people. Even the Project Design is not placed before the Assembly or the people in spite of repeated demands from the opposition parties as well as allies.

The problems of displacement and lack of timely and proper rehabilitation plagues other projects initiated by the government. Survey for acquisition of over 10,000 acres of land has been completed in Kurnool and Anantapur districts for the construction of the canal for the Handri-Neeva project and will be acquired within a month. But no moves are made to compensate the peasants for the lands. Several thousand more acres are to be acquired for the 607 km main canal and 597 minor canals covering the four districts of Rayalaseema. The projects involving a sum of Rs. 1305 crores in the first phase and 1880 crores in the second phase is also a money spinner for the big contractor-bureaucrat-politician nexus.

Another issue that had drawn the ire of the peasantry is the proposed increase in the capacity of Pothireddypadu head regulator. The TDP undertook a padayatra

for 20 days in Jan-Feb this year demanding the scrapping of the GO providing for increase in the capacity of Pothireddypadu. The increase would divert the Krishna water to Rayalaseema region and deprive the peasantry of water in the five districts under Krishna delta and Nagarjun Sagar ayacut areas.

Sham Opposition of the so-called Left:

The so-called Left parties such as CPI and CPI(M), which have been wagging their tails before the Congress ever since their combined victory in the 2004 polls in the state and the centre, are clearly in a big fix. The UPA government at the Centre and the YSR government in the state had completely bulldozed all their demands and protests against pursuance of anti-people policies. The Common Minimum Programme adopted by the UPA constituents after they came to power in May 2004 had been consigned to the scrap-heap from the very moment it was agreed upon. There has been hardly any issue on which the so-called Left's opinions were given any credence. While the central government had gone ahead with the privatization of the profit-making Mumbai and Delhi airports, allowed entry of FDI into the retail sector thereby ruining the local producers, retailers and wholesale traders, decreased the interest rates on Provident Fund, swapped down the objections of the Left concerning the privatization of profit-making PSUs, increased the petro prices five times and is thinking of increasing them again, refused to recall the US Ambassador for openly blackmailing the Indian government by dictating that it should vote against Iran in the IAEA, shifted completely into the American camp by voting against Iran, and so on, the Left had only let out a few whimpers.

Likewise, in AP, it became a passive onlooker as the YSR government went ahead with its anti-people policies in a ruthless manner negating every promise it made prior to the last Assembly elections, and had only let out a few noises as YSR proved himself to be as loyal and trusted an agent for the World Bank as his predecessor Chandrababu Naidu. The so-called Left has been making noises on the Polavaram project, bus fare hike, suppression of the democratic rights of the people, and so on but has preferred to keep the government in power at the Centre. Its

opposition to fake encounters has proved to be only fake as cold-blooded killings of arrested revolutionaries and unarmed sympathisers and even democratic intellectuals continues unabated. There is not a word from these sham communists for a judicial enquiry and their support to the Congress government makes them accomplices in the fascist suppression being let loose by YSR's police state. This should be no surprise going by its notorious history in West Bengal since Naxalbari, and also in today's West Bengal, where it is in power, its real ugly face is revealed through its cold-blooded killings of revolutionaries and sympathizers of the revolutionary movement.

While it is trying to mobilize the masses against the World Bank projects, loans and on issues like Polavaram project and busfare hike, it is at a loss to explain why it is continuing its support to the UPA government. This broker which tries to mediate between the government and the people, acts as a safety valve for letting out the anger of the people into peaceful parliamentary channels. It is forced to take up mass mobilizations when its very credentials are at stake. It had once served the TDP as a tail and now is wagging its tail before YSR. Though barking occasionally in anger that its appeals are completely thrown into the dustbin, the Left has been basically protecting the Congress compradors in the name of fighting BJP's communalism. BV Raghavulu, the AP State Secretary of the CPI(M) and a politburo member, had agreed that his party can only play the role of a speedbreaker i.e., slow down the pace of privatization and liberalization or try to give it a human face but cannot stop it. But these brokers are unable to act even as speedbreakers given the pace at which the neo-liberal reforms are proceeding and all the provisions in the common minimum programme are abandoned.

Telangana and the TRS:

The TRS, which won a significant number of seats in the last Assembly elections on the plank of separate Telangana, is characterized by internal rifts, vertical splits, and dissension. At least six MLAs had left the Party and floated a new Party. Every few days, heroic statements are made by its leaders, KCR and Narendra, that they will launch a massive agitation if

the demand is not met within such and such a deadline, which, of course, goes on extending. They claimed that they are building a one lakh-strong Telangana Jagaran Sena, a voluntary organization of youth which will spearhead the agitation if the Congress High Command does not meet the demand. They justify their clinging on to the posts in the central government by claiming that it is helping them to lobby within the UPA. Every now and then grand meetings are organized with pompous names but the fact is the Congress had completely sidetracked the issue and relegated it to the backseat.

During the recent AICC session in Hyderabad, there was not even a mention of the issue despite assurances by the TRS to their cadres that the Congress was going to announce its decision. The much-publicised UPA sub-committee on separate Telangana, which was set up soon after the UPA government came to power, has not submitted its report yet although the TRS was fooling the people for almost an year that the report would be out any day and at the most by the end of December last. At the time of the AICC session the TRS once again set a deadline that the UPA sub-committee should submit its report within two months but the Chairman of the Sub-committee, Pranab Mukherjee, phoo-phooed the demand and said that he was not bound by any deadlines. Worse still, he called for a Consensus on the issue which alone could lead to a final decision.

The issue of Consensus had long been expressed by YSR knowing very well that the CPI, CPI(M) and the TDP were opposing separate Telangana. It is a subtle way of saying that there can be no separate Telangana and placing the onus of responsibility on other parties who oppose the issue. At that time, the TRS claimed the question of Consensus was the personal stand of YSR and that the UPA and Sonia Gandhi were favourable to the idea of a separate state. Now when Pranab Mukherjee himself uttered the same formula, these shameless leaders are claiming that Mukherjee had spoken in their favour! These self-seeking politicians have now increased their pace of lobbying with the BJP as they know that without a majority vote in the Parliament the issue will be defeated. And, despite all their talk of a

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Book Review:

Anti-Imperialism and Annihilation of Caste written by Anand Teltumbde

May 2005

Pages 288; Price: Rs. 165

Attempt to Fuse the Dalit (anti-caste) & Revolutionary Movements

— Dr. Gupta and Arvind

The book under review titled *Anti-Imperialism and Annihilation of Castes* written by Anand Teltumbde is dedicated to the great anti-imperialist martyr, Bhagat Singh whose 75th death anniversary is being celebrated this year throughout the country. The quintessentially Dalit {a term now used to generally include all scheduled castes, instead of the degrading term 'harijan' coined by Gandhi} emancipation, the role of imperialism and of Indian Marxist practice till date, have been addressed with élan and professional skill. Notwithstanding the fact that many of the propositions contained in this book were addressed by recent scholars and cited here, the presentation is rewarding for a reader curious to know and determined to demolish the menacing caste system plus Brahminism. This book is an attempt at drawing on Marxism and Ambedkar's views with a view to shedding light on the problem and seeking a solution.

While doing so the book seeks to look at the flaws in the histories of both the communist and dalit movements and tries to draw lessons. In the process it draws many a positive conclusion while also presenting some faulty hypothesis. Yet, overall the orientation is positive and throws much light not merely in understanding the caste /dalit question as it exists today but, more importantly, in trying to find a solution to it. There is a scathing criticism on the past practice and present of the 'Left' (broadly categorised here) and also dalit movement and politics. But, the approach of the criticism is positive, whether one agrees with it or not, as it is done with the intention, not merely for finding fault, but to seeking rectification. It also concretely suggests the nature of the rectification in its last and concluding chapter.

In this review let us then look at the major points, both positive and negative in order to take such serious study forward in this most complex aspect of Indian society.

The book concludes with the following

statement:

"On the part of the dalit movement, it ought to be clear that caste can never be used as a category for emancipation project. Caste is intrinsically divisive; it tends to highlight differences among people to keep them away. Class, on the other hand tends to integrate people along their existential similarities. Even while pursuing their anti-caste agenda Dalits must transcend castes so as to unite all Dalits. This process can then easily extend to other democratic people who would come forward to reinforce the anti-caste struggle. The caste identity only serves to blur the identities of friends and foes. Both could come wearing the same caste label. Only the class perspective can bring in the requisite polarization of forces for effective struggle for dalit emancipation."

Then, a few paras earlier, regarding the communists it states in the conclusion:

"If one takes into account the amount of attention Lenin paid to the Russian peasantry, the ignorance of Indian peasantry by the Indian communists could only be said as criminal. Later, the Chinese revolution showed the way how in an industrially backward country, the democratic revolution could be accomplished. The relevant classes for the ensuing revolution of the communists in India shall thus largely comprise the landless laboureres and the poor peasants. Dalits, constitute a large part of this rural mass of people. If one analyses in caste terms, some upper castes, although they belong to the same class as Dalits, would find it difficult to delink from their caste fellows who may constitute a different and even adversary class. In normal terms, caste consciousness is found to be far stronger and mutable than class consciousness. In order to transform them as a reliable ally in the revolution, it is imperative either to weaken their caste consciousness or strengthen the class consciousness. In any case unless the hold of castes is loosened, they will not easily ally with the dalits as fellow

strugglers. Dalits too have castes among them but being on the same side of the caste divide, they could be relatively easily overcome. Dalits, besides being natural proletariat are thus a reliable mass for any revolutionary project. Because of the historical rift created by the early communists between the dalit and communist movements, the Dalits have not joined the revolutionary forces in large numbers. It certainly constitutes one of the major reasons for the weakness of the revolutionary forces in the country. The historical lesson is largely clear: until Dalits come to shoulder revolution, the communist project will remain a distant dream in India."

From these two quotes we see that whatever be the criticisms the approach is not only positive but seeks a practical solution to a problem left over by history.

The major two flaws in the book are: firstly, its understanding of imperialism and the struggle against it in the Indian context; secondly, not being able to draw a distinction between Marxism and revisionism and painting all under the general category of "left". The major positive aspects are: its depth of analysis and not looking at things superficially as is the trend nowadays; its critical analysis, yet positive approach, to both communist and dalit practice; its attempt at analysis from a Marxist perspective numerous aspects of history, class and caste, nationalism and patriotism, anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism, and imperialist globalisation in the present context.

We will, in this review, first of all look at the positive points in the book, then the two major negative flaws and then summarise the other aspects of the book. We shall deal with the latter two points at length as if rectified the book can become an even more valuable text on the subject.

Positive Attempt to Seek Annihilation of Castes

Despite some faulty formulations the book is a serious attempt to understand caste oppression, particularly untouchability, within the framework of

revolutionary change. He sharply criticises the lacuna in both the communist (particularly revisionist) as also the dalit movements.

On the question of reservations he takes a dialectical approach by supporting it while also sharply criticizing its negative impact. He says that the structural imbalance caused in society by the caste hierarchy and particularly untouchability creates the need for reservations; yet he points out that reservations do tend to create a class that have faith in this system and thereby blunt class consciousness.

On the question of elections he is rightly critical of the electoral farce in India as one of the many pillars propping up the caste system. He says "*The caste and community identities play a big role in these electoral strategies. It is through these strategic processes the ruling classes have effectively pulverized dalit politics into numerous factions, all engaged in internecine battles for their survival*".

On the question of history he has raised many questions regarding the relationship of British rule and dalit oppression, while at the same time uncompromisingly opposing the present imperialist globalization as highly detrimental to all, including dalits.

On the question of class consciousness he has tried to interpret the Leninist understanding in the Indian context of the influence of casteist thinking. He says "*Caste as the defining feature of this pre-capitalist society, continued to colour the class consciousness of the new classes*". (Page 94) He adds "*The social structure under capitalism in India therefore appears to have preserved the caste structure to an amazing degree: the traditional business and commercial castes having become the capitalist entrepreneurs and the lower castes having realigned to fit the job slots closer to their caste occupations*". Yet again he adds (Page 101), "*Caste and class consciousness are basically antagonistic. Caste consciousness seeks to divide, searching for micro identities of kith and kin-kind, whereas class consciousness seeks to unite people on the basis of their existential situation into a broad front to struggle for some radical change.*"

On the question of feudalism he has

correctly tried to delve into the difference between classical European feudalism and that which developed in India. In Chapter 7 "On Caste and Class" he has further sought to present some of the understanding of Marxist scholars and Marx's understanding of the Asiatic Mode of Production. On page 186 he adds that "*... capitalism in India never clashed with feudalism; rather it ensconced itself with the latter's support. Not only did it not contradict castes, but also it made skilful use of them in dividing labour, it adjusted itself with the caste-based occupational structure wherever possible and created new caste occupations within the capitalist organisation.*"

On the question of approach to the caste question he has correctly criticised the economic determinism of the CPI/CPM type 'communists'. He has elaborately brought out their mechanical thinking

In conclusion he says, "*The anti-caste struggle should be oriented to annihilation of castes which is an essential part of the democratic revolution in India. The anti-imperialist struggle is oriented to freeing the country from imperialist control which is a part of the democratic revolution. Both these struggles thus converge to the same goal — the goal of democratic revolution.*"

Question of Imperialism in India

Generally, there is a righteous anger against Brahminism and casteism among all anti-caste, anti-Brahministic oppressed and emanates from the ghastly and deeply entrenched system of birth ascribed castes perpetually determining or depriving them of the economic resources, social and cultural existence as well as maintaining an oppressive and oppressed condition in perpetuity. The writer Telumbde expressed his anti-caste, anti-Brahministic pronouncements borne out mostly by facts and references drawn from Marx, Lenin, Ambedkar et al. Yet some of the theses of the writer are evidently hastily drawn and are not theoretically well-grounded.

The case in point relates to his bid to bring to center stage Brahminism as imperialism, supposedly matching perfectly with Lenin's generatively brilliant analysis on finance capital based imperialism. The writer takes it for granted, on which basis he does not care to elucidate, that Brahminism is not only an

all-pervading imperialism it even outsmarted the British colonial regime (in fact the Brahminical and other feudal elite were the first capitulators). The writer admits it being the principal contradiction in the Marxist sense and for him the imperialism of Brahminism remained as crucially more menacing than the gigantic British imperialism. His allusion to the abstract entity of British imperialism several times is palpably misleading. Instead of delving deeper into the nitty-gritty of the social fabric under British rule in its entirety the writer chose the easy route to tackle the tricky problem by prioritizing Brahminism as the first enemy, underrating colonial exploitation in all concrete forms as a secondary abstract phenomenon.

The perpetual blunder of those so-called Marxists as well as caste leaders lay in the former overlooking the enormous caste system while the latter ignored the imperial system. Telumbde seems to have landed in the same misleading trap. A scientifically revolutionary Marxism demanded a programme during the colonial period with a multi-pronged attack on both the British regime and the caste system itself (as a part of the anti-feudal struggle). And obviously a Marxist would have striven for emancipation from the British Raj as the foremost enemy of the period while simultaneously going in for the emancipation from the yoke of Brahminism and the caste system and the entire semi-feudal structure. That the then 'communists' did not see the significance of an anti-feudal programme is now an established fact. So, as a corollary, the so-called Marxists virtually kept out of their agenda the very crucial question of the Varnashram system enveloping the lives of the millions, reducing many millions of the toiling masses to a perennially pariah status. The writer rightly referred to what Marxists like Godelier had posited caste as being both in the structure and super-structure of the Indian socio-economic, cultural set-up. It was a class-caste society binding the two categories inseparably with one or the other aspect expressing itself vocally and tangibly in the emerging context. It is now an indisputable fact that the wrong understanding of the CPI mechanically tried over decades to address class only from a revisionist approach and

even the anti-British struggle was compromised for this reason. The great Tebhaga, Telengana struggles could not be taken forward due to the economic non-revolutionary positions of the official CPI line. And the question of fighting untouchability was not even on their agenda. Teltumbde has of course justifiably refuted the mechanical approach of economic determinism that Engels warned against.

To resume the question of Brahminism as imperialism that is said to have preponderated over British imperialism as Teltumbde argues, one is surprised to find such a proposition since Brahminism is not a material, objective structure in the sense imperialism is considered. It is basically a question of feudal ideology of keeping down the toiling masses in the form of endogamous castes through creating a dangerous belief system and practice eternally glorifying the *Karma, dharma, jati* position. There is a long-standing, debate among sociologists and anthropologists (Cultural and physical) as to how the caste system evolved. Some recent scholars like Morton Klass et al have challenged the deeply entrenched view that caste was imported by the Aryans. Teltumbde has rightly stressed the need for attacking Brahminism but as a Marxist student of history and anthropology we have to draw a line of demarcation between Brahminism and casteism. It is an irrefutable fact that Brahminism is more often than not fused with casteism. Yet there lies an obvious difference between the two where Brahminism is the ideology and caste the structure. The caste system gains its sanctity from religion which has taken a Brahminical form. But Brahminical thinking affects other aspects of society as well, not just caste — such as patriarchy, attitude to labour, etc.

Let us now put in brief what imperialism is in the Leninist sense. Many people use the category imperialism eclectically without any sound basis. Obviously it is not merely a narrow reference to economic and political domination. Lenin sharply criticised such a narrow view of Kautsky merely subscribing to oppression and exploitation of the weak, backward countries by the advanced and powerful ones. In the Leninist sense modern

imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism when the process of capitalist accumulation assumes a world scale character; resulting from the interlocking of banking capital and industrial capital and the emergence of a financial oligarchy. In such a stage the markets have already covered every corner of the world and need for the re-division of the markets resulting even imperialist countries getting locked up in wars for extending their markets and spheres of influence. The characteristics of such a stage of imperialism are: Export of capital, centralised production and distribution in great trusts or cartels, merger of banking and industrial capital, scrambling for extending power of influence by the capitalist countries for re-division of world markets, wars, etc.

Teltumbde's formulation virtually negates all the Leninist formulations in general, although he claims that he has followed Lenin's theory of imperialism in order to justify his theories on caste imperialism. If Brahminism or caste, as he states, means imperialism in the Leninist sense as the writer would have us believe, then we have not only to take a tunnel view we have to dismiss the crucial question of imperialist wars. The question here is not a dogmatic upholding of Lenin's theories vs a 'creative' interpretation. The question is linked to the strategy and tactics of revolution and future practice. There is no meaning in calling Brahminism by another name such as imperialism. By doing so Teltunmbde in effect seeks to downplay the struggle against imperialism, while recognising its pernicious nature today. Merely because the revisionists in their obsession with-anti-imperialism negated the anti-feudal struggle, including the struggle against caste and untouchability, does not mean that by merely redefining imperialism the problem will be solved. The problem lies elsewhere in the petty-bourgeois, economic determinist and liberal outlook of the then so-called communists (actually revisionist) and their refusal to advance the anti-feudal struggle, or for that matter even lead an uncompromising struggle against the British imperialists. Though at one particular time one aspect of the struggle will be principle that does not negate the other aspects of struggles. Besides, in India without a democratic awakening

(built around the anti-feudal struggle of which caste and untouchability are a part) there could be no consistent anti-imperialist struggle. As Teltumbde rightly points out elsewhere, when narrow caste thinking dominates there will be little response to a call against foreign domination — as in the casteist mould, caste exclusiveness narrows one's thinking and social interaction to within one own caste — or rather sub-caste. Through such a narrow outlook no anti-imperialist consciousness can be built.

The writer stresses on the fact that territorial imperialism is no longer the prevailing mode. The writer finds himself in a haze of argumentation though occasionally he accepts that in the indirect neocolonial system finance capital retains control of the lion's share of their profitable resources. His confusion leads him to say that imperialism "*is an abstraction and therefore it is not amenable to precise description*" (P.50) reducing the whole system of imperialism to "*the relationship of a hegemonic state to peoples or nations under its control.*"(P.51) This abstraction and mere relationship as concept, although accepting somewhere the basic question of indirect control of resources by a hegemonic imperialist power, spurs the writer to theoretically ignore territoriality (as a predominant feature) as such. The writer makes such sweeping conclusions like "*the notions of geographical territory are not fundamental to the existence of empire of imperialism.*"(P.54) and that "*imperialism, in the territorial sense is now dead*" (P.54) We have the living example of Iraq, Afghanistan, etc and we see US imperialism acting unilaterally to promote its own TNCs. Both conquest and imperialist control are still very much territorial, even though it gives the appearance of being general. The writer compounds his problem in course of his overstressing abstract, relationship, etc. by approvingly referring to Edward Said's view on the lingering presence of imperialism "*in a general cultural sphere as well as in specific, ideological, economic and social spheres*". [P.57]. This theory of preponderance of imperialism in the cultural sphere has received enormous criticisms as a post-modernist scheme embodied in the so-called Cultural Studies with Said as a leading soul. What is

stressed in such studies is the cultural side of imperialism, as basic and fundamental against the Marxist view of imperialism pin-pointing basically economy and politics, as then in the cultural field. Though there is a dialectical relationship with each impacting on the other, this order of precedence is obviously Marxist not the other way round. The writer, with such a view, actually wants to posit caste system / Brahminism as a system of imperialism.

With territorially placed at a secondary or at inconsequential position the writer considers after Ambedkar, each caste as “a nation in India” The writer does not stop at that he goes on to say that caste is imperialism with such sweeping comments and misplacing the enemy he announces “...caste imperialism a more combatable phenomenon at this stage of development than that of external imperialism —” (p59)

So many questions spring out from such propositions. If each caste is a nation then which is to be considered as the starting point: caste or sub-caste? And if such fantastic order is conceived then how to explain the conglomeration of various castes / sub – castes claiming a Dalit identity? The same problem arises in respect of castes / sub castes of the upper caste-varna layers claiming Kurmi identity or such other caste identities.

Brahminism and the caste system (particularly untouchability) is pernicious and inhuman in itself and has to be fought against and destroyed as part of any democratic revolution and there is no need to try and paint it further black by putting the imperialist label on it. To do so only confuses the issue and the methods to be evolved in fighting and destroying it.

Question of Revisionism & Marxism

The author throughout the book refers to the ‘left’ or ‘communists’ in general. This is a layman’s approach towards a political phenomena, and given his extensive quotes from the Marxist classics one would not have expected the writer to fall into the trap. The problem with such an approach is it tends to put all communists as faulty and not distinguish between the two. By so doing Teltumbde is unable to draw a distinction between those who are intrinsically wrong and opposed to genuine radical change and those who are for a total destruction of the system (including caste) and yet may tend to err.

As early as 1908, Lenin in his essay “*Marxism and Revisionism*” had said “*And the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the 1890s) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself. Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this trend by coming forward with the most noise and with the most purposeful expression of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, revisionism.*” He added “*Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism.*” Of course through the ages revisionism has taken varied forms and has had various characteristics — the essence of course is pushing off bourgeois ideology and politics in the garb of Marxism. They may go under any brand name, whether CPI, CPM, CPI(ML), etc, if they do not advance the class struggle for the seizure of power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat as the key question they degenerate into revisionists. This is more clearly seen when they gain power as can be seen in West Bengal or Kerala in India of China internationally. But even before such overt and crude manifestations they can be seen for what they really are to the discerning eye.

Often the liberal sees the writings of the Marxists as that of just another important intellectual and does not treat it as a science — albeit a social science. As a result they tend to take from Marx what is convenient to their overall framework while negating its essence and the entire doctrine. Often the revisionists pose that the ‘orthodox’ Marxists are dogmatic, rigid and not open to change. But, in reality dogmatism is the enemy of Marxism as, like any science, it is practical, creative and continuously develops — but in so doing it does not lose its scientific essence.

So in India, the CPI and CPM were (and are) revisionists, so one cannot even expect them to have a correct understanding on caste or for that matter any other phenomena. It is not they may not use the Marxist tools to understand, on some issues they may do it well (just as a bourgeois scholar may also do it well); the point however is not merely to understand the world, but to change it. That is where they err and their understanding therefore

has these limitations. Of course on the caste question they even did not do that properly.

Teltumbde has rightly charged the Indian Marxists with negligence and avoidance of the caste question and Brahminism. What appears to be a wrongful generalization is that the writer brackets the revolutionary Maoists with the CPI, CPI(M) etc. though he has quoted positively from the 1995 Conference document of the CPI(ML)(People’s War) the tendency is to lump all together. This has gone so far as to imply that Maoists use dalits as cannon fodder (page 249). A cursory investigation into the facts of those who have been martyred would have disproved this. In fact this is the propaganda of the ruling classes to push a wedge between the Maoists and the vast dalit sections joining them. It is surprising that the author too should fall into their trap!! The facts of the matter are that the Maoists are deeply rooted in the most oppressed sections, unlike the revisionists, so it is natural they have deep links with the dalits and tribals in the areas where they have firm roots as AP, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Of course he tries to ‘excuse’ this supposed error by saying “*The communist parties are not a paragon of virtue outside the society; they too would reflect in some degree the state of society we live in. What is expected of them as the revolutionary vanguard is that they are aware of these societal proclivities and consciously guard against them. As for these complaints, they can only be assessed on the criterion of commitment to revolution. Even though a revolutionary party cannot be expected to run things on a caste line, it could still incorporate measures to prepare dalit cadres for taking up leadership positions, not as a caste or class bias but to orient its politics along the interests of true proletarianism.*” There is of course need to do this but there is no need to distort the reality to press this point.

The reality is that inspite of all the limitations, where the Maoists have any strength and deep roots in the masses, they have great respect amongst the rural dalits. In AP there is a strong base amongst dalits; in Bihar it is well know that it is only under Maoist leadership that the dalits have fought back the cruel upper caste

domination and their varied senas. The heroic revolutionaries belonging all castes, and not just dalits, have given their lives for the revolution and not one communist-baiting dalit organisation has been able to give facts and figures to establish this much-touted propaganda of the ruling classes aimed at driving a wedge within the Maoist ranks. It is in fact the Maoists who have retaliated against the dalit atrocities like Karamchedu, Tsundur, etc in AP, hit massive blows at the upper caste senas in Bihar and stood by the dalits in time of adversary. Though there is a big segment of dalits that are, as yet, outside the Maoist fold there cannot be any comparison with the revisionists who, till recently, did not even consider casteism and untouchability as an issue. And today when they do see it (or are forced to see it due to dalit assertion) they seek to only use this for their vote banks.

There may be many a lacuna in Maoist practice, as none are perfect and there is always room for improvement in any project, there can be no comparison between the revisionists and the Maoists (i.e. communists) even on the caste question. In fact even the ordinary dalit activist recognise the difference even though they may be critical of both.

Some Point for Clarification

Firstly the communists (here when we use the term 'communists' we do not mean the revisionists but the genuine communists, i.e. Maoists) do not see merely imperialism as the main enemy — it is primarily three targets of revolution; i.e. imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucrat capitalism. Of these three, at the present, semi-feudalism is seen as the principle contradiction. While all reactionaries, including the imperialists, consciously prop up the caste system as it is an ideal tool for exploitation, the caste system is primarily part of the feudal/semi-feudal structure. As the latter is the principle target of revolution, quite naturally the destruction of the castes system would come within that framework. Here we are not once again adopting any economic determinist formulation of trying to say that smashing feudal authority would automatically destroy the caste

system and untouchability; it is a dialectical relation — smashing feudal authority will weaken the caste system, and attacking the caste system and untouchability will help undermine the very basis of feudal authority. And as for imperialism the author quite rightly states that what has to be attacked primarily in the anti-imperialist struggle is their agents, the compradors, within the country. It is only by cutting off the legs of their props within the country that the imperialist edifice will come crushing down.

The other point that needs clarification is on the question of reform and revolution. Unfortunately the terms reform, reformer and reformism tend to be used loosely giving rise to the confusion. Communists generally refer to the non-revolutionary methods adopted within their camp as reformism. In this case it has a negative context. On the other hand a reformer or social reformer is seen as a progressive who seeks change though no doubt in a limited framework. And the term 'reform' when related to the former has a negative meaning while when related to the latter it is seen as progressive.

One last point of clarification is the distinction communists draw between 'patriotism' and 'national chauvinism'. The latter is reactionary and counter-revolutionary and in the Indian context it is interwoven with big-nation chauvinism (to push the ruler's expansionist policies) and Hindu chauvinism (to push their fascist agenda). 'Patriotism' in the Indian context should be more preferably said as anti-imperialist. In the Indian context the term 'patriotism' can be confusing as it has the connotation of being against the nationality movements and their just struggle for their right to self-determination including secession. India is not a nation, it is a multi-national country and any coercive and forcible attempt to assimilate any nationality into the 'Union' is undemocratic and to be opposed.

Having clarified some point on which some confusion seems to be reflected in the book, it must be remembered this muddling of issues is primarily the handiwork of the revisionists and some 'left' intellectuals. Finally, let us end this

review by reiterating some of the positive aspects.

Conclusion

Finally, it must be clearly asserted strongly and forcibly that in India the practice of untouchability is a horrendous, degrading, vulgar and inhuman practice and should not be tolerated even for a second. No genuine democrat, let alone a communist, can be silent on it. To turn a blind eye to it under whatever pretext, as the revisionists did, is nothing short of willful appeasement of upper-caste and brahminical sentiments. Without eradicating it, and the cancer of caste from which it emanates, there can be no complete democratic transformation of the country. That is clear.

The most positive aspect of this book is that it looks at everything from the point of an activist (not just an academic) with a view to change, even though at times it tends to see conditions statically. For example the backwardness in the anti-imperialist consciousness in the country today is seen as something in the very structure of society and gives the impression it is difficult to change and ignores the great anti-British consciousness that developed throughout the country during the pre-independence period. It quotes profusely from the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, not abstractly, but to add weight to the issue being addressed. It also draws on the writings of a number of other scholars on the subject, including Ambedkar.

Teltumbde's book is really a contribution to the literature against the menacing caste system and the necessity to eradicate it. The tenacity of the writer in presenting his viewpoint, the skill and effort taken in presenting the findings of various scholars, the serious attempt to effect the practice of the of the ongoing anti-caste movements, the depth of the study, etc, make this book a welcome addition and valuable contribution. One should go through this book to understand the importance of the fight against untouchability and destruction of the caste system in the overall democratization of society and the democratic revolution. ■ ■

Draculan Clinical Trials & Indian Guinea Pigs

It is a horrifying scenario. The cancer patient is given a new line of treatment with painful injections into the tumor on their tongue. This is repeated the next three or four days. After a week, when the injections have taken effect, they are called for surgery. The unsuspecting patient signs the documents unaware of what is written in it. The doctors remove not only the tongue but also large parts of the jaw. The patients are then discarded while the tumors are sent to the John Hopkins University, USA. This experiment is repeated on 26 more patients. The doctors/hospital calmly make a massive Rs.23 lakhs from the 'tongue export'. JHU and the company associated with the trials, Erimos Pharmaceuticals, get valuable information for a new drug that could earn them billions.

This is no story from a horror film, but a real-life account of experiments carried out on human guinea pigs in 2001 in the Regional Cancer Centre in Thiruvanthapuram, Kerala. The drug was the M4N tested on humans even before being tested on animals. The doctors were the Institute Director, Krishnan Nair and Dr. Manoj Pandey. The patients who were then neglected by the hospital lived agonized lives. Many died. Devassykutty lay paralysed and bed-ridden in a tiny house, with a tongueless mouth. They are now penniless. Saraswathy Amma has constant and unbearable pain. Gopalan developed another cancerous growth very near where earlier one was removed surgically. Gopalan filed a case which was dismissed on flimsy technical grounds. He died one year after filing his case.

Ironically after these failures and gruesome methods these two doctors were recently awarded a prize worth 1,000 euros for their efforts.

Not only that, in a highly retrogressive judgment on August 5 05 the Supreme Court, in the Dr. Jacob Mathew case, has de facto made filing any case against doctors/hospitals impossible. The judgement categorically lays down that an investigation officer should not proceed

against doctor without obtaining an independent and competent medical opinion, preferably from a doctor in government service. In addition the court directed that a private complaint is not to be entertained unless the complainant has produced a credible opinion by another competent doctor to support the charge of negligence.

With such a judgment the ruthless doctors/hospitals can now have a field day fleecing patients and experimenting on them.

This decision has in fact cleared the way for the planned boom in clinical trials in India by imperialist TNCs. India is set to become a massive human laboratory. Earlier, in 2005, the government amended Schedule Y of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to allow multinationals to conduct clinical trials on their own or in collaboration with local comprador companies. It has also lifted the customs duty on research supplies. Also all procedures for regulatory approvals have been relaxed. In this way the government has facilitated the entry of the TNCs to experiment on Indians. The global clinical market is a huge \$10 billion and growing at a fast pace of which India earns \$200 million. This is expected to grow to \$1.5 billion by 2010.

Not only will Indians be used as guinea pig but the trials will cost a fraction of what they would in the US. Besides, India's highly skilled medical professionals and sophisticated medical infrastructure makes it an ideal haven for the TNCs. By changing the laws the government has prostrated at the feet of this international drug mafia, led by Pfizer.

With all these changes in the law there has been a veritable influx of foreign companies in this line. In just the year 2005 there has been a gigantic 300% increase in clinical trials in India. Since the change in the laws Contract Research Organisations have mushroomed across the country, providing services, ranging from the translation of consent forms to the identification of people willing to be part

of the trial. Pfizer has invested \$ 13 million in research in India and it is at present conducting 20 clinical trials in the country. Eli Lilly India has about 17 projects going on in about 40 hospitals across the country and Glaxo has started seven trials recently and plans to shift one third of its trials to backward countries. Companies like Ranbaxy are conducting trials on behalf of MNCs. A US government web site has shown that in India, while in the beginning of the year 2005 US companies were conducting 8/9 trials, by November 2005 the figure had jumped to 50. It is a veritable gold rush!!

It is clear that in this offensive of global capital the imperialists will not leave any sphere for their loot, including the use of Indians bodies for their medical research. The gory details of the effect of such experimentation may never get fully known as these are conducted in total secrecy. Particularly after the Kerala exposures they will make sure that such exposures are not repeated. But through this the international drug mafia (not the hard drugs ones but the so-called legitimate companies) will make gigantic profits, while their 'Indian' accomplices will get the crumbs. The courts, including the highest are acting in complete compliance with the drug mafia's interests. India is set to become the biggest human laboratory in the world.

And in this conspiracy against the Indian people the Indian government has been totally compliant, changing the laws to suit foreign pharma interests. Senior doctors and top hospitals act in collusion. Those who suffer are the people of the country. Today, no patient can be sure while entering a hospital, public or private, whether they will be experimented on. Though mostly it will be the poor and uneducated who will be the victims, no one is safe from these predators. The governments policies have to be roundly condemned and opposed. While the Congress/CPM ruling alliance has taken the lead in introducing such policies the other parliamentary parties are totally silent. Only a vast movement of the citizen can effectively counter such horrific policies.

US Dictates Terms, India Meekly Complies

With the Bush visit we have already seen how the Indian ruling classes fell at his feet. But this was only a culmination to the consistently servile policies of the Indian rulers to the US (and its allies) interests. The bonding between the US TNCs and the Indian comprador big business houses has gone so far that during the Bush visit the CEO-Forum of ten such from US and India put forward a vast number of humiliating suggestions for implementation in India's economic policies which fully serves US interests. Instead of rejecting it outright the Planning Commission has set up as many as 24 commissions to look into each of the 'suggestions'. With the head of the country and the head of the Planning Commission ex-employees of the IMF/ World Bank can one expect anything different? But this bonding was to be seen even earlier as a run up to the visit.

It is not just US High Commissioner's arrogance to dictate Indian policy and issue threats, but the Indian ruler's servility that allows for such open display of imperial authority. Till now what was done behind closed doors is taking place openly. Such is their confidence of the Indian ruling elite dancing to their tune. First Mulford openly threatens that if India did not vote against Iran at the IAEA meeting the US would retaliate. Then he openly castigates the Left for opposing foreign investment in the retail sector.

Then the British High Commissioner, Michael Arthour, warns the Indian government against sale of military aircraft to Myanmar after the offer of BN-2 Islander aircraft was made by the Chief of Naval Staff to Myanmar. He warned that any such sales could impact the Navy's plans the fighter

on the aircraft carrier INS Virat and also supplies and spares for helicopters.

Then the US tells India to back off from the oil deal with Syria. In December last year the ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) and China National Petroleum Corporation teamed up to purchase a 37% stake in the Al-Furat oil and gas field from Petro Canada for \$573 million. The US stated that "*the US strongly opposes such investments in Syrian resources*". In blatant arrogance it added that the US encourages India "*to send the Syrian government a tough message that the international community — in which your nation plays a crucial and growing role — expects Syria to improve its behaviour before other States can resume normal dealing with it*".

Not only that, the US is directly intervening in the political appointees. The removal of Natwar Singh and now Mani Shankar Aiyer at US behest is linked to the fact that they were closer to the other imperialist powers and for promoting the Iran oil pipe line. Aiyer's conflict with the Chairman of the ONGC, a total stooge of the West, was also along the same lines. It is not surprising that on the eve of the removal of Mani Shankar Aiyer, the Chairman of ONGC, Subir Raha, on Jan 19th signed an all-encompassing deal with the Shell Company. The agreement was for the joint exploration and production of oil and gas, cooperation in international projects, joint development of coal bed methane gas, export of petroleum products, joint participation in the petro chemical plant in Hazira and many more points of cooperation. Now the Indian rulers have once again bowed to US dictates to vote the US sponsored resolution at the IAEA against Iran when three other countries had

the guts to vote against and another five abstained. The resolution goes against the very rules of the NPT, drafted by the imperialists and signed by Iran. India, has the audacity to dictate to the Iranians not to enrich uranium even for peaceful purposes when itself is a nuclear power.

Not satisfied with the present level of political intervention in the country the US is all set for a massive physical intervention in order to increase its diplomatic pressures even further. In what Condoleezza Rice terms "transformational diplomacy" the US has planned a massive influx of officials into the country. As a first step in addressing the changing world, Rice said that the US will begin a major repositioning of American diplomatic personnel across the world, including moving 100 positions from Europe and the headquarters in Washington to countries like India and China. Rice also pointed out that there are nearly 200 cities worldwide with over one million population in which America has no formal presence. Where establishing new consulates is not immediately feasible, Rice said Washington will go with a more economical idea called an American Presence Post (APP). Under the plan US diplomats will move outside the embassy to live and work and represent America in an emerging community.

In this context new American consulates and posts are on the cards in Hyderabad, Bangalore and Ahmedabad. Steps are also being taken to send scores of officials to the diplomatic corps in India. It sounds more like the colonial days!! With this influx we can expect more arm-twisting and greater intervention of the US in every sphere of the country's life. ■ ■

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create divisions among the adivasis and pit one section against the other, to create police informers among the adivasis as the cent percent support the Maoists enjoy among the adivasis has made it almost impossible for the police to undertake their suppression campaigns successfully until this day. To hide these real aims they are trying to paint this campaign as one led by the adivasis. **Mahendra Karma and his gang are as much representative of adivasi aspirations as the neo-liberal Tony Blair and his gang for British labour. And, likewise, the Salwa Judum campaign is as much a campaign for peace as is the global campaign of terror unleashed by butcher Bush.** Just as there are criminals, sadists and deliberate liars who aggressively support Bush's wars of aggression in the name of global peace, so are there criminals, sadists and liars who call this terror campaign of Salwa Judum a peace campaign.

The dubious role of the media controlled by the big financial barons, is exposed before the people by its criminal silence on the atrocities committed by the

Mining Concessions & Salwa Judum

It is ironic that in the very month that the Salwa Judum was launched, June 2005, in that very month Tata signed the MoU with the Chhathisgarh government for a steel plant at Dantewada. A report in the India Press in Sept 2005 stated: *Tata Steel appears to have zeroed in on Salepal village in the Bastar district of Chhathisgarh for setting up its 5 million-tonnes per annum steel plant, which according to managing director B Muthuraman, is going to cost Rs12,000 crore. According to a senior state government official, the application of the company seeking 3,500 acre for the plant and another 2,000 acre for a township is "under review". For grant of captive iron ore mines, the company has asked for iron ore 'deposit number 1' of the Bailadila range in the Dantewada region of the state. The iron ore found in the region has a very high iron content averaging 60-68 per cent. The water from Shabri river is going to be the lifeblood for the proposed steel plant and the township. According to the MoU the integrated plant's first phase will see the installation of a 2 million tonne capacity which is likely to be completed in 4-5 years from the date of obtaining the statutory clearances.*

police-Judum goondas and concoction of lies that Salwa Judum is a 'spontaneous uprising' of the adivasis and about the alleged killings and abductions by the Maoists. The media personnel hold interviews with people in stage-managed shows arranged by the police (reminding us of the embedded journalists during US invasion and bombardment of Iraq) in the

so-called relief camps and churn out stories against the Maoists day in day out. Depiction of the incidents such as happened in Kotrapal and Taadimendry on last June 18 and 19 respectively as massacres by Maoists when hardly anyone was killed in these incidents will make even the master liar-Goebbels-turn in his grave.

Strongly Condemn the Sentences Passed on Revolutionaries of West Bengal

CPM's efficiency was evident at the speed at which they got the fast-track courts to pass sentences on top leaders of the CPI(Maoist). Not even a year has passed and the punishment of life sentence is already given in just one of the cases for which they have been falsely charged. With daily hearings at the Midnapur courts the judge passed life sentence on two comrades and as a 'concession to his age and frail health' the judges passed a five year sentence on Politburo member comrade Sunil Roy (alias Shome). Central Committee member and West Bengal State Secretary, Patit Pawan Haldar (alias Tapas), and also Santoshdev Nath were both given life sentences.

The 'crime' of these three comrades was that they fought on the side of the oppressed against an inhuman system to makes the bulk of the population live in destitution. This was their real 'crime' in the eyes of the ruling classes. Such a massive sentence on just one of the cases

slapped on them is bound to arouse the anger in the entire country against this openly biased judicial system and their political accomplices. No poor or revolutionary can ever get justice from the present legal system, which at the lower level is nothing but an extension of the police system, and at the higher level acts as a toy in the hands of the imperialists, compradors, feudals and their hangers on.

While the rich and powerful get away with murder the poor and their true representatives must face the brutality of the courts. Today this is glaringly visible to all. No wonder soon after the passing of the judgment com. Shome stated the people of the country will never tolerate this horrendous judgment and the country will burn.

People's march strongly condemns this judgment and calls for the unconditional release of revolutionaries thrown into the jails by the Indian ruling classes. ■ ■

The CC, CPI(Maoist) calls upon the democratic organizations and individuals and the entire oppressed people of the country to condemn the state-sponsored Salwa Judum terror campaign in Dantewara, Bastar and Kanker districts of Chattisgarh and to support the just resistance of adivasi masses. We call upon the people of these districts to resist the Salwa Judum goondas and the police and paramilitary who force them to participate in this terror campaign. We appeal to the media to investigate the facts and not base on the lies and stories fabricated by the police, paramilitary and Ramansing government that will only encourage and justify their brutal terror campaign. We warn once again that our retaliatory actions and defense war will further intensify if the police, paramilitary and Salwa Judum goondas do not stop their mass terror. It is the central and state governments that are entirely responsible for the bloody consequences.

Ganapathi,
General Secretary,
CC(P), CPI(Maoist).

Press Release:

**Condemn the brutal state-sponsored Salwa Judum terror campaign against the Maoists and the revolutionary masses of Chattisgarh!
Our retaliation is only against the police-paramilitary-Congress-BJP gangster combine that is perpetrating gory massacres of innocent adivasis!!**

On 28 February, in the attack by the people's militia and the PLGA led by CPI(Maoist), around 25 Salwa Judum activists were killed near Errabore village in Konta block of Dantewara district. The central and state governments, the police bosses, Mahendra Karma—the leader of the criminal gangsters carrying on brutal terror in the name of Salwa Judum—and the media unleashed a campaign that the Maoists had killed innocent adivasis. Unfortunately some civil rights organizations too fell prey to this false propaganda and had described the attack as an attack on innocent tribals without even conducting minimum investigation. Though there were two or three civilians among the dead for which we express our heartfelt regrets, our attack was targeted entirely against the Salwa Judum activists and the special police forces who have been running amok burning entire villages considered to be the strongholds of the Maoists, destroying houses and property of the activists of *sangams*, murdering the adivasis who are active in the revolutionary movement, raping women, forcing entire villages to be evacuated and organizing forced surrenders of the *sangam* members. In the preceding fortnight our heroic PLGA annihilated almost a dozen personnel of the notorious Naga Battalion and injured several more in various incidents in Dantewara district. None but the spokespersons of the exploiting classes can think that we, the real representatives of the adivasis and the oppressed people, can ever launch attacks on these very same people. We appeal to those genuine but misinformed sections to conduct investigation at the grassroots level and declare the truth to the world.

The irrefutable truth is that the so-called Salwa Judum campaign is not a campaign organized by the adivasis for peace, not a revolt against the Maoists, but a consciously organized terror

campaign by the UPA government at the Centre and the BJP government in Chattisgarh and directly led by Chief Minister Raman Singh, Home Minister Ramvihar Netam and the ex-Congress Minister and opposition leader, Mahendra Karma. Eight Battalions of central forces are mustered along with a massive police force in the state to conduct this *peace march*. Ruias of Essar Steel, Tatas, Mittals and several comprador houses, big contractors and the feudal forces had poured in huge funds for the campaign. The worst type of anti-social lumpen elements, rapists and murderers who were punished in the people's courts, some tribal elders who had lost their traditional privileges due to the awakening of the adivasis, the big traders, and the people from the villages that fall outside the organizational influence of the Maoists have been mobilized in this brutal war against the adivasis in the interior villages that are the strongholds of the Maoists for over two decades.

The atrocities committed by these criminal gangs are indescribable. During the past nine months since June, when this state-sponsored terror campaign began, over 60 villages were burnt to ashes and 20,000 people were forced into the concentration camps maintained by the government in the name of relief camps. The plan is to create Vietnam-type strategic hamlets with a view to flush out the fish from water. At least 150 adivasis were murdered in the most brutal manner by the CRPF-Naga Force and the Salwa Judum gangs led by Mahendra Karma. 50 women were raped. The media, which today cries foul when some Salwa Judum activists are killed by the Maoists, has maintained criminal silence when these savage acts were going on. We cite a few of these ghastly crimes committed by the Salwa Judum-police gangs. On August 28, Naga Jawans and Judum goondas cut the head of a 12-year-old boy in Aakva village. On September 2, they shot dead 10 people, including a 12-year-old boy, who were

hiding in the jungle near Arial village 2km from Mirtul. On October 10, a 14-year-old boy, Barsa Sonu, was caught and shot dead after brutal torture in Paralnar village by the police. On October 3, they murdered Koval, president of *Janathana Sarkar* of Mankeli village, and abducted his 14-year-old son Raju, whose whereabouts are still not known. Even more gruesome is the murder of two women in the village of Mukavelli. One of them was pregnant and the savage police-judum goondas, not content with killing them, tore open the womb of the woman and pulled out the foetus. A 1 1/2 -year-old baby nearby was also shot by Insas rifle. One Anganwadi worker, Soniya, was beaten up by the Naga Jawans, tied up with ropes and dragged to the police station. There are several such bizarre stories of police-judum atrocities. If in one village a young boy's head is chopped off and hanged on the door-post of his house, in another village the beheaded body of an old peasant is exhibited in the village centre, with a note warning that the same fate would befall those who do not surrender. Thus, anyone suspected of being a supporter of Naxalites or a Sangam member is brutally tortured, beaten and in many cases killed.

The Salwa Judum is thus a campaign of mass terror conducted with the aim of facilitating the plunder of the natural resources of Chattisgarh by the big comprador business houses and the imperialist MNCs. It is a campaign aimed at smashing the organs of people's democratic power popularly known as *Janathana Sarkar* that have come into existence in hundreds of villages in Dandakaranya and to reestablish in their place the old oppressive institutions and the exploitation by the feudal forces, forest officials, bureaucrats, contractors and the police, which were uprooted by the Maoist movement. It is a campaign to

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