

# People's Truth

*Voice of the Indian Revolution*



**Revolutionary  
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Martyr  
Comrade  
Anuradha  
Gandhi-  
CC Member  
CPI (Maoist)**

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## Homage:

# ANURADHA GANDHI: A MARXIST THEORETICIAN & GREAT LEADER OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

ON April 12 2008 Anuradha (alias Narmada, Varsha, Janaki, Rama) passed away after an attack of falciperum malaria. With this the Indian working class lost one of its ablest and topmost woman leader who with sheer hard work, deep ideological and political study, and revolutionary dedication rose from the ranks to become a member of the Central Committee of the C.P.I (Maoist); the oppressed women of India lost one of the greatest champions of their cause, one who, for more than three and a half decades, relentlessly organised them, led them into struggles against oppression and exploitation; the Nagpur *dalit* masses and workers of the unorganised sector lost a leader who stayed among them, awakening and organising them; and the *adivasi* masses of Bastar, especially those of South Bastar, worst affected by the genocidal *Salwa Judum*, lost their beloved *didi*, who worked among them for years sharing their weal and woe; and the students and intellectuals lost a revolutionary role model, who gave up the comforts of a middle class life in order to integrate with the oppressed masses.

She was just 54 at the time of her martyrdom. She had just returned after spending a week in Jharkhand taking classes amongst the tribals on the question of women's oppression. After getting high fever on April 6<sup>th</sup> she was not able to get proper medical attention due to the difficulties of underground life. The local pathologist said there was no malarial infection in the blood and so she was treated for stomach upset by a local doctor. It was only on 11<sup>th</sup> after another blood test that she realised that she had falciperum malaria. Though even on that morning she appeared fine, inside, the falciperum bacteria had already affected her lungs, heart and kidney which had already been weakened by systemic sclerlosis. Though she was admitted in a hospital immediately, barely within an hour her systems began failing. Though she was put on oxygen and later life-support systems, the end came the next morning. While on oxygen she was conscious and her eyes wide open. The same soft eyes with her depth of expression, though in acute pain with

probable knowledge that she was sinking.

The degeneration was catalysed by the fact that she had an incurable disease, systemic sclerosis. This auto-immune disease first affected her hands and slowly attacked the inner organs. Detected two years ago and probably in existence since the last 5 years, it had already affected her lungs and heart beat. Yet, with her commitment to the masses and revolution she worked with the same ardour as earlier. She rarely spoke of the disease and took on even the most strenuous tasks. Her commitment to the cause of revolution was unshakable no matter what the ups and downs. Being with the incipient revolutionary movement right from her college days in the early 1970s in Mumbai, she gave up a career as a brilliant lecturer, and dedicated her entire life to the revolution. At the 9<sup>th</sup> Congress-Unity Congress of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) she was the single *mahilla* comrade to be elected to its Central Committee.

In this span of about 35 years work with the Indian revolutionary movement she has contributed much to the building of the revolutionary movement in the country, not only organisationally, but also politically and ideologically. She was one of the founders of the CPI (ML) Party in Maharashtra. Though her prime focus was in Maharashtra (both the Western and the Vidharbha region) her work also contributed to the building of some all-India organisation and even of the Dandakaranya movement. Even at a late age of over 40, and after serving as a senior professor teaching sociology to post-graduate students at Nagpur University, she moved to live with the tribals of Bastar staying with the armed

squads for three years.

She started her political life at Elphinstone College Mumbai in 1972 which became the hub of radical left-wing activities in the 1970s, primarily due to her initiation. Earlier she had visited the Bangladesh refugee camps and had gone to the famine hit people with a group of students during the horrible famine in Maharashtra of 1972. Deeply moved by what she saw there, and being a very sensitive person, she began taking part in college activities and social work with the poor. While active amongst students she came in touch with the student organisation PROYOM (Progressive Youth Movement), which was connected to the then Naxalite movement. She soon became its active member, and later one of its leaders. She also worked in the slums through which she developed her first interaction with *dalits*, the *dalit* movement and the horrors of untouchability. She was a participant in the radical *Dalit* Panther movement of 1974;



and in the 3-month long Worli clashes with the Shiv Sena. Her sensitive nature drew her to the agony of *dalit* oppression and led her to seek answers to it.

She read voraciously and gained a deep knowledge of Marxism. Later, in the post-Emergency period she became one of the leading figures in the country in the civil liberties movement and was one of the initiators of the CPDR (Committee of Protection of Democratic Rights). In 1982 she moved from Mumbai to Nagpur and while teaching at Nagpur University she actively participated in, and played a leading role in the trade union and *dalit* movements in the region. In the process she went a number of times to jail. With State repression increasing she was forced to go underground. Later, at the call of the Party she went to Bastar to work among the tribals, and on returning she took up the responsibility once again of building the revolutionary movement in Maharashtra. Since the last 15 years she has been working in the underground, building the Party and Maharashtra as well as leading the women's wing of the Party, until her sudden and untimely demise.

## Early Life

Anu was born into a family that came from the CPI of the 1940s and 1950s. Her parents, the Shanbags, were married in the CPI office of the undivided Party in Mumbai and active in the Party till the mid 1950s. Her father was, in the 1950s, in the Defence Committee taking up the legal cases of the communists arrested in the Telangana struggle and later became a well known progressive lawyer of Mumbai; the mother is an active social worker who, even at this late age, is active with a women's group. It was in this liberal atmosphere that the children grew up. Anu grew to become a revolutionary, while her brother is a noted progressive play-writer and theatre artist of Mumbai. In her school days Anu was a brilliant student of the J.B. Petit School at Santacruz, always topping in her class. Here, she also learnt classical dancing. With her parents from a communist background, Anu was open to all ideas and views, including communist, and encouraged to read.

It was within this environment that she could easily get attracted to revolutionary politics when she came in touch with it in her college days. Those were the days when the communist movement was

sweeping the world. The youth throughout the world was reverberating with the great impact of the Cultural Revolution in China and the historic advance of the Vietnamese people in their war with the US imperialists. Within this international ferment, Naxalbari exploded over India and inspired an entire generation, not only in India, but all of South Asia. All this had its impact on the young Anu. As already mentioned she joined the radical student organisation, PROYOM, and later went on to become one of the founder members of the CPI(ML) in Maharashtra. In 1977 she married a fellow comrade. She was one of the most important persons to initiate the revolutionary movement in Mumbai and then again a prime factor to spread the movement to Vidarbha in the early 1980s. Particularly notable is the fact that she was the comrade who was primarily responsible for bringing the *dalit* issue in Maharashtra onto the revolutionary agenda.

## Growth as a Renowned Revolutionary Mass Leader

During the late 1970s, Anuradha was in the forefront of the countrywide civil liberties movement. In the early 1980s, with the formation of the CPI(ML)(People's War), and the spread of the revolutionary movement to Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, there was talk of the need to spread the revolutionary activities from Mumbai to Vidharbha. Here too she was one of the pioneers, giving up her job in the Mumbai College and her high profile public life and shifting to Nagpur; a place totally unknown to her. Her focus of activities in Vidharbha was primarily trade union work and amongst *dalits*.

In the trade unions she worked primarily amongst construction workers and led many a militant struggle. Most notable was the lengthy strike at the Khaparkheda (30 kms from Nagpur) thermal power plant being constructed, of about 5,000 workers. This ended in police firing and curfew being declared in the region. She was also involved in organising the '*molkarins*' (house servants) of Nagpur, workers in the MIDC companies at Hingna (Nagpur), railway workers, *bidi* workers in Bhandara, powerloom workers at Kamptee (15 kms from Nagpur), and other unorganised sector workers, and later shifted to Chandrapur to help organise the coal-mine

and construction workers there. Most of these unorganised sector workers had defacto no basic trade union rights and were totally ignored by the traditional unions. She also developed links for joint activities with other progressive trade union leaders of the region from not only Nagpur, but also from Chandrapur, Amravati, Jabalpur, Yeotmal, etc. In these struggles she was arrested a few times, and had spent a number of days in Nagpur jail. In spite of her job, she became a renowned revolutionary trade union leader of the region.

Besides this, she was even more active within the *dalit* community organising and awakening them against caste oppression and for their liberation from this oppressive system. She was in fact one of the pioneers amongst the revolutionary Marxists to have addressed the issue of *dalit* oppression and caste discrimination at a very early stage itself. She had read extensively Ambedkar and other sociological writings on the caste question. Unlike the traditional Marxists she fully identified with *dalits* and in fact moved her Nagpur residence to one of the largest *dalit bastis* of Maharashtra, Indora. Though this was a stronghold of most of the *dalit* leaders and a hotbed of *dalit* politics, large sections of the youth soon began getting attracted to the Naxalites. Particularly the cultural troupes she helped organise had enormous impact. She grew to become the open face of the Maoists in the *dalit* movement; and became one of the major public speakers at most *dalit* meetings in Vidarbha. Though vehemently opposed by the *dalit* leaders, with her deep study of Ambedkar, *dalit* issues and caste oppression, she could stand her ground, with widespread support from the youth.

Besides, all this, she was also instrumental in building the revolutionary women's movement in Nagpur. She stood out as a shining example for all progressive women who played an active role overcoming all the patriarchal constraints of society around. She inspired a large number of women not only in to the women's organisation but also in to the Party.

She wrote profusely on the topic in both English and Marathi, presenting a class view-point to the issue and countering not only the numerous post-modernist trends on this issue but the

## LETTER FROM A SENIOR COMRADE WITH A LONG ASSOCIATION

During the last month, whenever I have had occasion to write to anyone about Anuradha, I have been at a complete loss for words on ways to express the depth of my sorrow and anguish at her so untimely death. The shock of it all, the fact that one will never again see her bobbing her head, tilting it like a dancer, the unguarded display of emotions and thoughts on her so expressive face — it has become really very difficult to accept this reality. What a loss to the Party and all of us, her colleagues and friends. A life abruptly cut short just as it was poised for new flights after decades of hard solid work, just when the new responsibilities were unfolding before her; a kind of rare plant which was once again on the verge of bloom at an age when most had become dry and sterile.

When she was there, I took her so much for granted. A dependable, reliable person always there when a hard difficult task we all hesitated to undertake and was to be done. Now that she is gone her importance, her significant contribution hits you — hits you because we are all the weaker; poorer owing to her absence.

The importance of com. Anuradha goes far beyond what she contributed organisationally. Her life and work has a visible social significance and impact rarely enjoyed by an underground communist activist. To my mind very few communists in the recent decades has had such a wide reach, an appeal which went far beyond the organisation and the immediate masses organised by it; an ability to bridge many disparate social groups with the revolutionary movement as Anuradha did. It is in this quality that lies her uniqueness and it is this quality which will serve the Party and movement long after she has physically died. She had appeal not only for the basic masses — workers and peasants — but also the intellectuals of all hues: students, lawyers, educational professionals, researchers, *dalit* activists and even non-*dalit* Marathi progressive circles. She also represented the communist women activist in the feminist milieu. Standing firm on the bedrock of communist ideology and practice, her physically diminutive frame stretched across and built links with all these sections.

wrong Marxist interpretations of the *dalit* and caste questions. The most elaborate article on the issue was a 25-page piece in Marathi that appeared in *Satyashodhak Marxvad* (the organ of Sharad Patil from Dhule) explaining a Marxist stand on the *dalit* question and linking *dalit* liberation with the task of the new democratic revolution in the country. Till today this article is quoted by many. Many years later it was she who prepared the original draft on the basis of which the erstwhile CPI (ML)(PW) prepared the first ever caste policy paper within the Marxist movement in India. In this draft she outlined that in India the democratisation of society is inconceivable without smashing the elitist caste system and fighting all forms of caste oppressions, most particularly its crudest form against *dalits* in the form of untouchability. Much of the views expressed by her then in the mid-1990s, have now been adopted by the CPI (Maoist) in its recent Congress.

Besides these two fields of work there were many notable events that occurred in which she played a pioneering role while in Nagpur. Particularly we mention two such examples; which had an indelible revolutionary impact on the consciousness of the people of Vidharbha. The first was the Kamlapur Conference of 1984; the second was the JNM Cultural programme led by Gaddar, in 1992.

The Kamlapur Conference was organised deep in the forests of Gadchiroli by the incipient Naxalite movement in the

region. A massive campaign, led by Anuradha, was carried out all over Vidarbha to attend the Conference, while the armed squads did a huge mobilisation within the forests. Though the Conference was ruthlessly crushed by the police, hundreds and thousands of people began flocking towards Kamlapur — a small village deep in the forests. The revolutionary message from Kamlapur reverberated throughout the region for months. The proposed Gaddar programme in Nagpur, which too was crushed by ruthless police action, had an even greater impact. People still recollect the diminutive Anuradha climbing onto a motor cycle to address the large crowd gathered on the streets outside the college hall which had been sealed by the police, in spite of a High Court order allowing the programme. Though thousands of police had surrounded the hall and occupied all approach roads to it, there was a big gathering, including a large number of journalists, lecturers, writers, lawyers, and even senior faculty members. All were lathi-charged as soon as Gaddar appeared. Though the programme did not take place this was head-line news for nearly two months. Both these events had a major impact on spreading revolutionary views widely all over Vidharbha and it was she who was the main architect of both these programmes.

In spite of all these activities she was a very popular teacher amongst her students showing a high level of responsibility

towards them, not missing a single lecture. Like any task she took up, she would be thorough and conscientious about it. So, she was much loved by her students, and respected by her professor colleagues. But later, due to intense police pressure the Party felt her affectivity would be more from the underground. And so, since about 1994 she has functioned continuously from the underground; braving all the difficulties of underground life.

During her one-and-a-half decade in the Vidharbha region she had an enormous impact on the region in bringing revolutionary politics to the area. Not only did she, together with others, build a revolutionary working class movement, and powerful revolutionary movement among *dalits*, but she also helped build the revolutionary student movement and attracting a vast cross-section of intellectuals, including senior professors, journalists, noted playwrights and top advocates of the region. Soon after coming to Nagpur, after the death of revolutionary writer of AP, Cherabandaraju, she got his poems translated into Marathi and an anthology containing those poems was released at a function by the most renowned Marathi poet of the region. The Marathi translation of the poems sold extensively all over Maharashtra, creating a major impact. Among the many fields she worked, her most effective impact was taking revolutionary politics amongst the *dalits* and arousing them to a revolutionary consciousness.

She was one of the most prominent leaders of the civil liberties movement in the post Emergency period and played a prominent role in the famous Civil Liberties Conference held in 1977 at Delhi, demanding the release of political prisoners. The conference included such leading lights as V.M.Tarkunde, Govinda Mukhoty, VaraVara Rao, Subba Rao, Sudesh Vaid and even some ruling class elements as George Fernandez and Arun Shourie. She continued this role through the 1980s inspite of all her other activities.

She also played a role in the formation of the AILRC (All India League of Revolutionary Culture) formed in 1983. She was one of the main speakers at the Sindri (near Dhanbad) Conference of the AILRC in 1985, together with KVR, Gaddar, VV. Rao, Bali Yadav, and others. Many in the region remember her fondly from those days.

### Call of Bastar

Having carried the revolutionary message of the Dandakaranya movement to the rest of Vidharbha, she, without flinching, responded to the call of the Party to shift base to Bastar. In the second half of the 1990s she spent three years living with the squads amongst the Bastar tribals. Carrying a rifle and in military fatigue she spent the next three years of her revolutionary life amongst the *adivasis* of DK. She went out of her way to gather many a study on the Gond tribals to the Party leaders of DK. She always maintained that these three years were one of the most fulfilling in her life where she learned about the lives and struggles of the Gond tribals of Bastar. She keenly studied their lives and how the movement was built. She particularly focused on the lives of the women, their organisation, the KAMS (*Krantikari Adivasi Mahilla Sanghathna*) and the women in the squads. She also learned how to wield the gun and as part of the squad she carried one for her self-defence. In fact, on one occasion she had a very narrow escape when the police came within feet of where they were resting. Their firing missed her and the retaliation by her squad allowed them to retreat without any loss of life.

She spent most of her time there, in the Byramgadha area which, recently, has been in the limelight for facing the brunt of the *Salwa Judum* attacks. Her tenacity in staying with the squads astounded and

impressed even the local tribals who would time and again mention how at this late age she had managed to come and stay there.

During this period she also spent much time in taking classes, mainly for the growing leadership amongst tribal women. She took classes on women's health issues, women's oppression and the new democratic revolution, on imparting general knowledge, on imparting the rudiments of Marxism, etc. She helped draft handbills and wrote numerous articles in the local Party magazine.

Towards the last part of her stay she was given independent charge of the West Bastar area covering what is known as the National Park region. This too is a region which is affected by the recent *Salwa Judum* onslaught. While she was there she guided and developed the movement in the area.

She was there during the peak of the 1997 famine in which hundreds had died of starvation in other areas. Here, with the Party seizing grains from the hoarders and distributing it, the damage was much controlled. During this period, attacks of malaria, the terrible dry heat of summer, coupled with the famine conditions took a toll on her health. It was only her enormous commitment to the cause of the people, and tremendous will-power that kept her going under even these worst conditions. Besides, her nature was such that she never showed any of her own sufferings.

After returning from Bastar she took up Party responsibilities in Maharashtra while continuing an underground existence. For the last decade she has contributed to building the revolutionary movement in Maharashtra, besides playing a major role in the Mahilla sub-committee of the Party since 2001.

### Party Life

Anu's commitment to the oppressed masses was unflinching. It was this concern for the well-being of the poverty stricken masses that drew her to revolutionary politics. Unable to tolerate the poverty and humiliation that the poor faced, she sought answers. The terrible humiliation that *dalits* faced due to untouchability and other forms of inhuman discrimination drew her to study the caste question in India and Ambedkar's writings and own the cause of the *dalits* from a very early period. At that time *dalit* issues were not the fashion as it

now is, and was anathema in most Marxist circles. Even as a student she joined in the Marxist study circles run by the then incipient Party. She was one of the chief architects of the building the revolutionary movement in Mumbai in the 1970s. She played a premier role in the revolutionary student movement and building up the Party core within it. She was a founder member of the CPI (ML) Party in Maharashtra. Popularity and fame never went to her head and she easily switched to a new low profile role as per the needs of the Party. When the need grew to develop a political movement in Vidarbha after the initiation of the Gadchiroli armed movement, she willingly volunteered to shift from her home base in Mumbai and move to a place where she did not know even a single person.

There, she soon managed a part-time teaching job with post-graduate students in Nagpur University. She was an ordinary member of the Party when the CPI(ML)(People's War) was formed in 1980 and after she moved to Nagpur she played a leading role in building the Party and revolutionary movement there. Later, she became a member of the Vidharbha Regional Committee of the Party. As a VRC member she played an important role in building the Party in the region.

After coming back from Bastar she was elected to the Maharashtra State Committee of the Party. Later she was also given additional responsibility as part of the Central *Mahilla* Sub-committee, ever since it was established. She attended as a delegate to both the 2001 Congress held by the erstwhile CPI(ML)(PW) and the Unity Congress-Ninth Congress of the CPI(Maoist). She was the only delegate to be elected to the Presidium of both the Congresses, which conducts its proceedings. At the 2001 Congress of the PW she was elected as an alternate member to the CC. At the time of her martyrdom she was a member of the highest body of the CPI (Maoist), it's Central Committee, with independent charge of the Central *Mahilla* Sub-Committee and also a member of the CC's South Western Regional Bureau. As part of her role in this Sub-Committee she played an important role of drafting the Women's Perspective of the Party. At the time of her death she was working on studying the problems women comrades

were facing in the Party, the varied forms of patriarchy they face, and devising a rectification plan that would help the growth of women comrades, so that they can grow to take greater leadership responsibilities. In fact her very last task was taking a class of the leading women activists from Jharkhand, mostly from tribal background, to explain the Women's Perspective of the Party. Her untimely and premature death will have a serious impact on the revolutionary movement in the country and particularly on the development of women's work in the Party as also the development of work in Maharashtra.

### **Anu, an Exemplary Communist**

Almost child-like, her face was a mirror of expression of her emotions/feelings; pretence, falsehood, intrigue, ego, etc, were anathema for her. And this nature never changed through all the traumatic decades of revolutionary life. It was her extremely high level of honesty towards herself and others that attracted all genuine people towards her; even those who disagreed with her views. She had a natural ability of mixing and integrating into any environment ... whether it is of tribals, *dalits*, and construction workers or of top academics, intellectuals of the country. Her simplicity and child-like innocence, together with her enormous liveliness made her a most likable person.

She was totally selfless, uncaring about her own comforts and even of her health, with a lot of concern for others. She was exceedingly hardworking, with a very strong sense of discipline. She was the type of person that if she took up any task all could rest assured it would get done. She had a strong sense of responsibility towards people and any task what-so-ever, however trivial it may be. This was reflected in her teaching work, political work, or anything she took up. It was reflected in her attitude towards her students, colleagues, comrades, or, in fact, any person she was associated with. And one of her best and most lovable qualities was her high sense of principles. She was an extremely principled person standing up for what she believed in and not a person to adjust her beliefs according to the views of others, however senior, or for the sake of some petty gains. So, people could trust

her implicitly. Yet, she had the modesty to be a willing learner.

While being creative and not stereotype in her thinking, she was always firm on the Party line and Marxist ideology and never compromised with views she felt incorrect, no matter who was presenting them. It was this steadfastness that allowed her to stay with true revolutionary forces till her very last, through all the ups and downs in her over 3½ decade long revolutionary life. Yet, she had the positive approach of seeing the positives in others, even with those she differed with, and showing respect to all, no matter what her differences. Though impatient at times she never bore grudges against others. In that way she acted as a solid and steadfast anchor for the Party, through all its ups and downs, particularly in Maharashtra. She never knew fear and even in the face of death, during the last moments of consciousness her eyes had the same softness and tenderness as was in the normal days. She took up the most arduous and dangerous tasks at very critical changes in her political life — this was reflected in her ability to give up her high profile public life when she was in Mumbai and overnight shift to Nagpur where not a sole knew her; then again she could give up her University job and image of one of the most popular leaders of Nagpur and go underground and join the squads in Bastar; even in her very last days when the bulk of the Party leadership was arrested in Maharashtra, it was she who held the Party together though it was high risk with the police specifically hunting for her.

And all these qualities shone through her personality even as a woman activist in this highly patriarchal and feudal atmosphere in the country. As a person she had all the qualities of what a real human-being and comrade should be like. All these excellent qualities enabled her to become a true and genuine communist. Her loss is an enormous loss for the revolutionary and democratic movement of the country; and more particularly for its progressive and revolutionary women.

### **Ideological and Political Contributions**

Anuradha played many roles in the long span of her revolutionary life from being a mass leader to an underground Party organiser. She was associated with the

formation of VPS (*Vidyarthi Pragati Sangathan*), CPDR, AILRC, NBS (*Naujawan Bharat Sabha*), Stree Chetna, AMKU (*Akhil Maharashtra Kamgar Union*) and numerous other mass organisations, primarily in Maharashtra. But whatever her role she was a consistent and prolific writer. She was closely associated with the revolutionary student magazine, KALAM, which achieved a countrywide image. This magazine was brought out in both English and Marathi. She was the main person behind the revolutionary Hindi magazine, *Jan Sangram*, brought out from Nagpur. She contributed regular articles, under various pseudonyms, to the revolutionary magazines, like Vanguard, People's March, etc. She wrote for the local Marathi Party magazine *Jahirnama* and for a period was in charge of its publication. She also wrote many theoretical and ideological pieces particularly associated with the *dalit* and women's question. Besides, she conducted many a polemic on this question with both, those taking a *dalit*/post-modernist view on the question and with Marxists who took a hostile view. This she wrote in both English and Marathi. As already mentioned it was she who wrote the original draft for the policy paper on the caste question in India by the erstwhile CPI (ML)(PW). This was the first such policy paper by a revolutionary communist party. More recently she wrote a polemical/analytical piece on bourgeois feminism, bringing out its various manifestations. She was also instrumental in the preparation of the Women's Perspective of the CPI (Maoist) adopted recently by the Party. It was she who drafted many a March 8<sup>th</sup> statement of the Party.

**Her major ideological contributions have been the enrichment of the Marxist understanding on the caste question and dalit oppression and also various facets of the women's movement, particularly a detailed analysis of bourgeois feminism. She was also instrumental in playing a major role in framing the Women's Perspective of the Maoist Party.**

There was not even a short time when she was not writing something linked with the movement. She was a regular contributor to many magazines in English, Hindi and Marathi. Many of her articles and writings have also been translated into other languages. She also spoke a number

of languages being fluent in English, Hindi and Marathi, with a good knowledge of Gujarati and even understood Telugu, Kannada and Gondi.

## CONCLUSION

Anuradha's contributions to the Indian revolutionary movement, and particularly the movement in Maharashtra, have been substantial. She had the rare qualities of being not only an effective leader in the field, but combining it with significant ideological and political contributions. And as her long-standing comrade said, she had that uniqueness in being able to

connect with a vast spectrum of people and thereby bridge so many social groups with the revolution. Most important of all, she had many of the qualities any genuine communist should inculcate — extreme straight-forwardness, modesty, selflessness, disciplined and hardworking, and unwavering commitment to the revolution. Finally, her liveliness and child-like simplicity made her a most lovable person, leaving an indelible impact on anyone she met, even once.

Besides this she was a good mass leader, an effective Party organiser and an ideologue who wrote extensively and

particularly helped enrich the Marxist understanding on the caste/*dalit* and women's question.

To grow to such heights in this deeply patriarchal society, is a source for enormous inspiration to all women comrades and activists. Her life and work will remain as an important chapter in India's revolutionary movement and will continue to inspire people to the cause of revolution. Though her untimely death extinguished a glowing star, the rays will linger on to illumine the path towards a just and equitable new order. Anuradha will continue to live on in our hearts. **PT**

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## “YOUR STORY HAS GOT TO BE TOLD”

Dear Anu,

The bars are almost an inch thick ..... Yet the sunbeams come dancing in each morning. And now that it is summer, they are strong, bold..... fiery?

Like that day we walked against the University Bill. You remember? Hot sun beating down, you prancing up and down the length of the *morcha*. My first *morcha*, my first impression of you — a sub-five foot bundle of energy, a little jump with every punched fist slogan hitting the sun. Height is hardly a hurdle when you've decided to smite the sky.

First impressions don't necessarily last. But years and decades didn't much alter this first image. Some years later, I would hear you speak at meetings, rattling off facts, figures and ideas at machine-gun speed. I got to know your ideas — and learnt you were one of the better known champions of the thought. But I couldn't picture you in the mould of thinker. Perhaps that was too *paani-kam* — at least when you've decided to not only interpret the world, but to change it. Thoughts, then, had not only to be formulated and explained, they had to be fought for — on sundry battle-fields.

And what that combatant approach meant to you came home to me one February evening at that room of yours in Laxmi Nagar at Nagpur. Fresh from Mumbai, I wanted the windows to shut out the biting chill ..... and you had that story of the explorer, who conditioned himself for the attack on the South Pole.

Did the conditioning help when, many years later you criss-crossed the Bastar

jungles, rifle slung over your shoulder? Must have; or those arthritic knees wouldn't have allowed you conquer those hills. But more than the physical conditioning it must have been the conditioning of sustained warfare on those various fronts — students, slums, civil liberties, trade unions, women, anti-caste, cultural and some more.

As for conquering hearts, you hardly had any problem. Fighting people are the same everywhere and you would easily connect through the common idiom of struggle. And where language could have been barrier, you easily leapt across, picking up a new tongue in a matter of weeks. So, besides English, Marathi and Hindi, you covered Gujarati, Gondi and even more than a smattering of Telugu.

And the other day, after going through Krishna Bandyopadhyay's narrative in EPW, I couldn't help wondering how your narrative would read. All your experiences of dealing with those subtle patriarchies of us men comrades. Of those experiences while being activist, leader, organizer, guerrilla, committee member, policy-maker; particularly all those tests and trials unique to the women who, have opted to serve the revolution, were also thrust within the onus of its leadership.

I can ofcourse only 'know' of those experiences in a most refracted and reflected manner. Like I know how easy it would be for our male minds to do mental arithmetic comparing your performance against the yardstick of the best of the men comrades. And how difficult it was to not consider as reprimand what from a male

*saathi* would be sage advice. How a man's anger can be glorious and female anger merely petulant; male tears so profound while the female variety seem to resemble blackmail. And how the woman has perhaps to struggle not to be force-moulded into those masculine aspirational stereotypes that have gained pre-eminence in the revolutionary psyche.

Anu, I know you would be the first to interpose that things are changing. Rectification campaigns against patriarchy and growing percentages of women in membership and leadership are hewing, if not hacking at the pillars of male domination, both inside and outside the movement. But also, you, better than others would know how, when things change, there are also the things that insist on remaining the same. And that demands those repeated surges to rectify. And that demands that you and/or other sisters tell the story from your vantage point.

You've seen things not only from your experience but also through the eyes of those thousands of activists you've encountered in every corner of the country. You've participated in formulating policy for women and led its implementation. Your story then will have the difference. It's a story that has got to be told.

And that's what I wanted to write to you about in that week of April when Krishna told her story in EPW. To ask you to try to tell the story that would talk across the decades to Krishna's story. A story to tell ten thousand stories ..... to talk to Krishnas, Anus and such countless girls and boys of the years to come. **PT**



But Anu, before I could even figure out whether it would be possible to reach to you, the newspaper told us that cerebral malaria had martyred you — that very week.

The flood of memories descended in waves and pushed out the occasional tear. And each seems still to scream for telling the story — your story, her story, our story. A story that, without being moralistic, will draw a hundred morals, without being

incendiary, could fire up a million minds. An Anu's story that will be told some day by some Anu.

And Anu, the bars are almost an inch thick. But they're not built to withstand the flames from a million minds and a billion souls. As thousands and now lakhs of new activists firmly trace your footsteps, and beyond, to scale new horizons, bars and other barriers, and their keepers, scatter and scurry them. Around the world, and in

India too, imperialism and their agent rulers in crisis are retreating before angry raised fists of peoples, announcing their refusal to be ruled in the old way. In ways we may have not imagined, they're giving birth to the tomorrow we've dreamt of ..... and we'll be there.

Your,  
Chotu (from Jail)  
May 2008

PT



## **Red Salutes to CPI(Maoist) Central Committee Member and great revolutionary intellectual comrade Anuradha Ghandy! Let us emulate Com. Anuradha's great revolutionary qualities—her undaunted spirit, staunch determination and selflessness!!**

On April 12, 2008 the oppressed masses of our country and the Indian revolution lost an exemplary Communist leader and a brilliant revolutionary intellectual—comrade Anuradha Ghandy—known to the revolutionary camp as comrade Narmada, Janaki and Rama. On that fateful day this beloved leader of the CPI(Maoist) had breathed her last, at the age of 54, after a severe attack of falciparum malaria. Comrade Anuradha, had just returned from Bihar-Jharkhand region after attending to some Party work there and she did not realize that the fever she was suffering from was due to the deadly cerebral malaria. The negative result in the blood tests had only misled her and the doctors and delay in taking malaria dose resulted in this tragic episode. Comrade Narmada was cremated on April 12. The CC, CPI(Maoist) pays its humble red homage to this seniormost woman member of the Central Committee and vows to fulfill the revolutionary ideals for which she had laid down her life.

Comrade Anuradha had started her revolutionary career in the early 1970s as a student of Eliphinstone college, Mumbai. She is one of the founder-members of the CPI(ML) in Maharashtra. And in the span of over three decades she had been in the forefront in several fronts: student movement, civil rights movement, women's movement, workers' movement, *dalit* movement, *adivasi* movement, literary and cultural movement. She never remained a spectator to any act of injustice and to the spontaneous struggle of any section of the masses. Her spirited and courageous fight

for the rights of the *adivasis*, landless labourers, *dalit* masses, women and unorganized labour will forever be remembered. She played a prominent role in organizing the intellectuals of Mumbai and other parts of the state to build a movement for democratic rights and civil liberties. She was a leader of the All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC) from Maharashtra and is well-known in revolutionary circles as a talented writer and fiery orator. Comrade Anuradha was a prolific writer and contributed immensely to the magazines of various fronts. She wrote fluently in three languages—English, Hindi and Marathi. She worked in the city of Mumbai, Nagpur, Surat and several parts of Maharashtra. She served as a member of the Vidarbha regional committee and Maharashtra state committee and was elected to the central committee of the CPI(Maoist) in the Unity Congress (9<sup>th</sup> Congress) held in January 2007. At the time of her martyrdom she was also in charge of the Party's central subcommittee for women.

Comrade Anuradha was known for her exemplary communist qualities: she stood steadfast in the most difficult times, was always spirited, hard working, and led a very frugal and simple life with the goal of declassifying herself. Her frail health had not deterred her from carrying out any task and duty entrusted to her. She was suffering from sclerosis but none suspected that she had serious health problems for she never let others know of her problems. When she was in Dandakaranya for three years, she

was a great inspiration to the cadres there: she used to walk long distances without ever complaining despite her health problems and she integrated with the cadres and masses with great ease. It is not easy for urban-based petty-bourgeois intellectuals to integrate with the illiterate poverty-stricken masses but comrade Anuradha did this with great ease.

Comrade Anuradha was known for frank and fearless criticism of weaknesses, shortcomings and mistakes in the Party's policies and practice. She had strong views and put these forth without any hesitation in various Party fora. She contributed a lot in making the Party understand the women's question in the correct light and in realizing the lapses and weaknesses of the Party in the women's front. She was forthright in her criticism of anyone in the Party, irrespective of one's position in the Party, if she saw something wrong.

Comrade Anuradha will live forever in the hearts of the Party's rank and file and millions upon millions of the Indian masses. She will remain an eternal inspiration to all those who aspire for a victorious revolution in our country, and a catalyst driving us towards the ultimate goal of establishing a classless society. Let us emulate the indomitable spirit, dynamism, simplicity, diligence, dedication and communist values of comrade Anuradha. Let us pledge ourselves once again to fulfill the great ideals for which comrade Anuradha had laid down her life.

SPOKESPERSON CPI(MOAIST)

PT

## Facilitating Imperialist And Comprador Plunder! Robbing Telangana Of Its Rightful Share Of Water!! Destruction & Devastation Of Adivasi Life!!!

**T**HE Congress government in Andhra Pradesh, headed by Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, announced an ambitious scheme termed as *Jalayagnam* (drive for irrigation water projects) under which major and minor irrigation projects will be constructed all over the state, at an estimated cost of one lakh crores. According to government's claims, this scheme when completed will provide irrigation to an additional one crore acres of land in the state. A big propaganda campaign has been going on since then that the Congress party will transform the state as golden Andhra Pradesh in a decade by completing these projects come what may. Notwithstanding the tall claims of Y. S. Reddy and his government, a deep study of the major projects being executed at a hectic pace reveals the fact that the main purpose of these projects is to satiate the industrial water needs of the comprador houses and the MNCs, to provide them with cheap river and canal transport facilities, to further safeguard the interests of the coastal Andhra feudal lords, who along with the powerful coastal comprador class constitute the deciding section of the Andhra ruling classes and on the way benefit mega construction companies. Ofcourse some additional irrigation capacity will be provided, mostly in the already well irrigated coastal region while permanently robbing Telangana region of its rightful share of Godavari waters. This entire drive should be seen in the backdrop of the ever intensifying globalisation onslaught to understand its real implications.

The Polavaram Project (or Indira Sagar as named by the Congress rulers) is a case in point. It is the biggest project in this drive and will easily rank as one among such gigantic projects in the country. This project will be built on the Godavari River at Polavaram in West Godavari district at a cost of about 16,000 crores (the cost is escalating by the day). The stated objectives of this project as per the state government are, to provide additional irrigation to 2,91,000 ha (7,19,400 acres); to provide assured drinking water and

industrial water needs of Visakhapatnam; to generate 960 MW of electricity and to divert 80 tmc (thousand million cubic meters) of Godavari water to the Krishna river basin to stabilize that basin and use the Krishna water thus saved to provide additional irrigation to Rayalaseema region. Two lined canals will be built to take the water. The Left Main Canal will be 181.5km long and will end at Visakhapatnam. This canal is contemplated to irrigate 1.62ha of land in East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts. The Right Main Canal will be of 174 kms length and is contemplated to irrigate 1,29,259ha of land in West Godavari and Krishna districts, besides diverting 80 tmc of Godavari water to the Krishna basin. Though the Supreme Court issued a temporary stay order preventing the AP government from proceeding with the construction of the dam, the government went ahead and forcibly acquired land both for the project site and the canals. Canal works are going on at a fast pace as there is no stay order on their construction and as the state government knows well that permission from the Apex court is just a matter of time..

This project, like all such other mega projects, SEZs and industrial corridors coming all over the country in the wake of globalization, will come up at an enormous cost in terms of human sufferings, due to displacement, submergence, destruction and devastation of *adivasi* society and culture and destruction of vast tracts of forests, mineral resources, wild life and the submergence of Papikonda Wild Life Reserve.

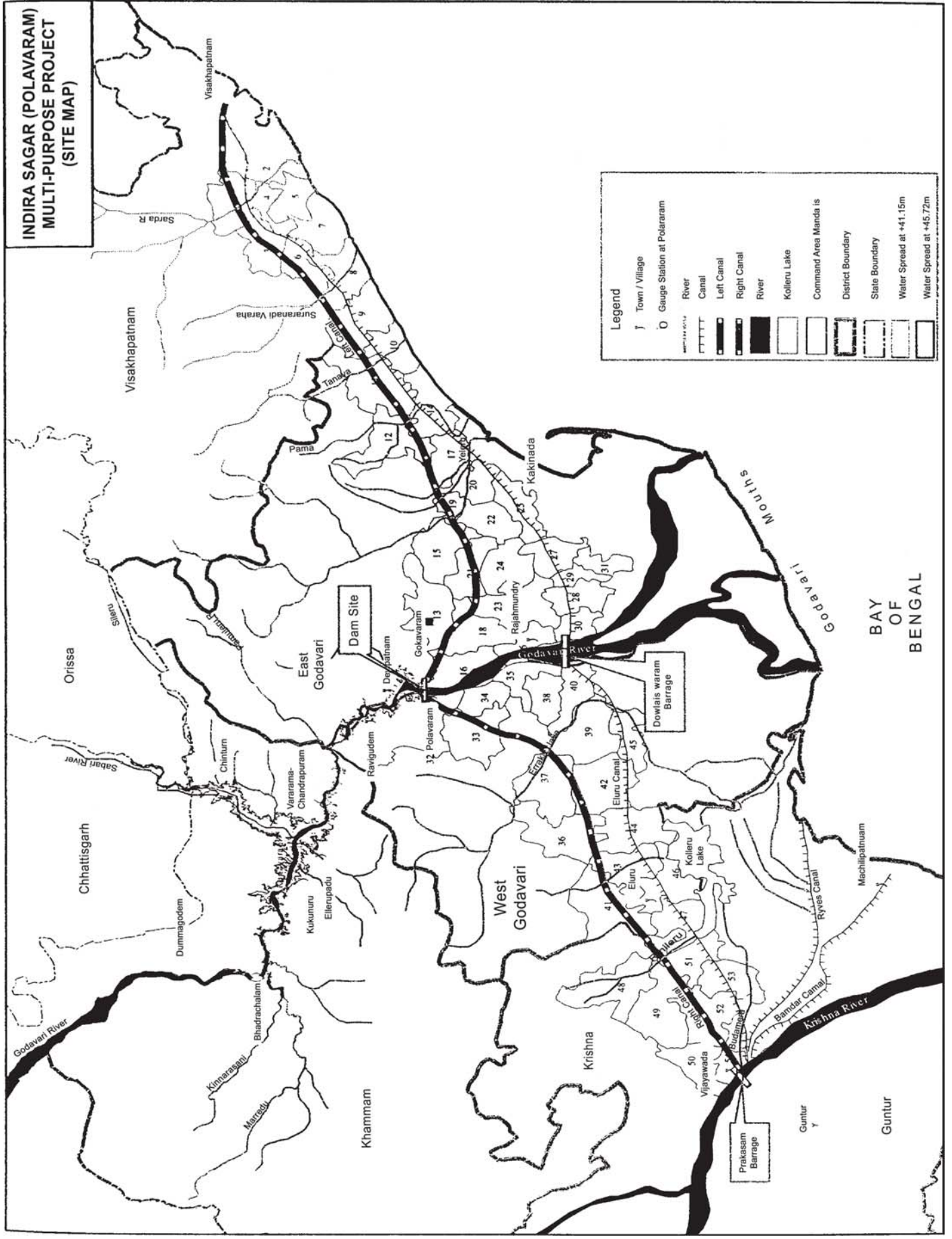
### Distruction & Devastation Of *Adivasis'* Lives And Livlihoods

Around 300 villages of the *adivasi* areas of East and West Godavari districts and Khammam district of Telangana, besides some villages of Chattisgarh and Orissa will be completely submerged. Around three lakh people will be displaced, out of whom 53.17% are *adivasis*. *Adivasis* and dalits account for 65.75% of the displaced. The natural resources, cultural systems, traditional knowledge of all these people are closely

linked to the land they inhabit. With the loss of the land, minor forest produce, tubers, common property resources that support human population and livestock, etc, the very existence of these communities will become unsustainable.

Here it is necessary to know something about the life and livelihoods of the *adivasis* to realize how much of devastation this project will entail. All the villages that will be submerged are located in the scheduled area. The terrain is hilly and covered by forests, much of it reserved forest. Most of the tribals, i.e. *adivasis* cultivate land for which they have no title that can stand the tests of the law. In fact, if it comes to the question of providing proof, the land may well be found to belong to some non-*adivasis*, since most of the land records were tampered by non-*adivasi* immigrants by bribing government officials. As such majority of the affected *adivasis* stand no chance of getting even the nominal amount of compensation the government pays. Another important factor is that, the *adivasis* obtain their livelihood and support from the forests for which no compensation will be paid in law. They gather and market a variety of minor forest produce like Tamarind, *Tendu* leaves, *Mahuva* flowers etc, and in certain seasons that is their only source of livelihood. Moreover, the forest provides them with a variety of fruits, tubers etc. Once they are evicted from the forest, these sources of livelihood and life will be irretrievably lost. As they know only primitive methods of agriculture, as they depend more on the bountiful presents mother forest offers them for their sustenance, and as they know no other way of life than the one they have been leading for generations, they will be at sea once they are evicted and their lives will be completely shattered. No amount of compensation can bring back the cheers in their lives and they will be condemned to live a life of penury, taking up odd jobs that may occasionally come in their way. According to conservative estimates one *adivasi* family will be displaced for every hectare of land to be irrigated by this project.

**INDIRA SAGAR (POLAVARAM)  
MULTI-PURPOSE PROJECT  
(SITE MAP)**



**Legend**

- Town / Village
- Gauge Station at Polavaram
- River
- Canal
- Left Canal
- Right Canal
- River
- Kolleru Lake
- Command Area Mandals
- District Boundary
- State Boundary
- Water Spread at +41.15m
- Water Spread at +45.72m

## Environmental Disaster

According to the government of AP, 7,964 acres of forest land will be submerged. All these are natural forests. Their submergence means, countless medicinal plants and invaluable biodiversity will be lost, with the destruction of the forests, soil erosion in the upstream areas will result in siltation in the river thus endangering the dam itself, many wild life species will disappear and the Papikonda Wild Life Sanctuary, spread over 360 sq km, easily the most scenic spot and a big tourist attraction, will be submerged.

## Trampling Of All Laws of the Land

The state government has once again proved that all the Laws that were enacted to protect the forest dwellers are nothing but mere pieces of paper which the rulers can throw in to the dustbin without any bother, as and when they wish. The area to be submerged by the dam comes under the Fifth Schedule of the constitution and by submersion the nature of the villages in the area will change.. As per Section 6 of that schedule, only the President of India has the power to alter or modify Scheduled Areas. The state government did not even bother to seek the President's permission. The government also sidestepped the *Panchayat Raj* Act by not obtaining the consent of *Grama Sabhas* to acquire land in Scheduled Areas. Not even a single *Grama Sabha* adopted a resolution in favor of the Polavaram project. The public hearing for Environmental Clearance was a sham drama as the hearings were held at five places on the same day and the effected people were prevented from speaking by officials and the police forces; moreover the police brutally attacked the people and dispersed them.

## Robbing Telangana Of Its Rightful Share Of Godavari Waters

Godavari is the second longest river in the country. About 70% of its basin falls in Telangana area of AP while the coastal areas account for the remaining 30%. It was a long pending demand of the people of the Telangana region that they must get their rightful share of the Godavari waters, as most parts of Telangana are rain-scare areas, which can only be served by Godavari waters. The Devadula, Inchampalli,

Yellampalli, Dummugudem and Sriramsagar flood flow projects are the main projects proposed on the Godavari river to serve this area. The scheming Andhra coastal ruling classes already deprived the people of both Rayalaseema and Telangana of their rightful share of waters of river Krishna — lions share goes to the coastal region. This just and legitimate demand for Godavari waters became more vocal as the struggle for a separate state intensified. As such the state government, then headed by Mr. Chandrababu Naidu appointed a Godavari Waters Utilization Authority in 1999. Nobody knows what happened to this Authority since then. It is but an age old trick of the ruling classes to appoint such committees and bury the issue once there is a let up in the heat. But the struggle of the people of Telangana went on intensifying despite such and other cheap tricks and a time came when the powerful coastal Andhra feudal – comprador ruling classes realized that formation of a separate Telangana state is inevitable and they made hasty plans to rob as much of Godavari waters as possible. And Polavaram dam is one such a scheme. Most of the submergence area of this project falls in backward Telangana region but it will not get even a drop of water out of this project. Moreover, it takes away 335 tmc of water. Another 120 tmc of Godavari water is being diverted to the Krishna basin (to a tail pond below Nagarjunasagar dam on that river) from a point at Dummugdem, through seven, we repeat seven lift irrigation schemes, surely an unparalleled record in any part of the world! (More on why such huge quantities of water are being diverted to Krishna River, later) With these, the Godavari basin areas of Telangana which constitute 70% of the basin would have only about 225 to 250 tmc of water for all the above projects. One will understand the enormity of this water robbery when one comes to know that Telangana has just 16% of the irrigated area in cultivable lands while the share of the coastal regions of AP is 60%! Telangana has just 1,36,000 ha of land under irrigation where as just the four coastal districts of AP - Krishna, Guntur, East and West Godavari – have 7, 60, 000 ha under irrigation, which is 63.5% of the total.

## Is The Polavaram Project Intended to Create Additional

## Irrigation facilities As Claimed?

The government claims that this project will provide irrigation to an additional 7.2 lakh acres. But the reality is otherwise. The government in order to boost up the acreage resorted to utter falsehood by including the *ayacut* (command areas) of other irrigation projects in the proposed *ayacut* of this project to arrive at this figure. Already there are some schemes, namely, Chagalnadu Lift Irrigation Scheme, Yeluru Scheme and Torrigadda scheme, which provide for irrigation to 1. 26 lakh acres to the same *ayacut* as is claimed to be irrigated under the Polavaram project. Apart from these, two other schemes, the Pushkara Lift Irrigation Scheme and Tadipudi Lift Irrigation Scheme will provide irrigation to 3.92 lakh acres of the same *ayacut*. The Pushkara and Tadipudi canals will be running parallel to and along the same contour alignments as the proposed Polavaram canals. Besides this, Polavaram will actually submerge about one lakh acres of irrigated land. A government representative agreed that most part of the water will go for the stabilization of the already irrigated Godavari delta areas. When all these things are taken in to account, the Polavaram project may at the most provide additional irrigation to less than one lakh acres only.

## The Peasants Have to Pay a Heavy Cost

To get this water the peasants have to pay a heavy cost. Both the canals are being dug to a depth of about 20 mts from the ground level. That means water has to be supplied to the fields through lift schemes which will consume heavy amounts of power. The peasants will have to bear these power charges by way of user charges as the ruling classes have been collecting such charges as a part of World Bank dictated policies.

## For What Purpose and for Whose Benefit?

Now the question arises – for what purpose and to benefit whom are the ruling classes going ahead with the construction of the dam which will devastate the lives of about 3 lakh *adivasis* and *dalits*, destroy extensive tracks of forests and wild life, damages biodiversity, robs Telangana of its rightful share of Godavari waters and

eat away vast sums of people's money? For whose benefit the rulers are in a hurry to finish this project trampling all the laws they themselves made? Is it to solely benefit the peasantry? Is it to stabilize the Krishna delta and to provide additional irrigation facilities to the parched Rayalaseema region of the state? The following facts will reveal that the main purpose of this project is to provide river and canal navigation and to cater to the water requirements of the proposed Visakhapatnam – Kakinada – Vijayawada Industrial Corridor. A huge Special Economic Zone (said to be the largest in the country) is already under construction near Kakinada.

1). The first point is the location of the Polavaram project. Polavaram lies at one end of the vast Dandakaranya area which has enormous mineral deposits of various types and rich varieties of timber and bamboo. The ruling classes have already launched a civil war there, aiming to wipe out the Maoists and thus facilitate the unhindered loot of this natural wealth. Paper Mills down stream have been transporting their wood requirements through Godavari River since decades. The Godavari basin areas of Telangana have rich deposits of coal and other minerals like limestone.

2). A meeting of the Central Water Transport Board took place in Noida, near Delhi during December, 2004. The then Krishna delta SE, Mr. I.S. N. Raju attended this meeting on behalf of the AP government. The Board accepted his proposal for the construction of a water transport route from Visakhapatnam to Chennai. According to this plan, the existing Buckingham Canal from Prakasam Barrage at Vijayawada to Chennai will be deepened further. The two Eluru canals - one from the same Prakasam barrage to Eluru and the other from the Dhowleswaram *Anicut* near Rajahmundry on the Godavari River to Eluru – too will be deepened. The Samarlakota (a town near Kakinada port) – Dhowaleswaram canal will also be deepened to facilitate water transport. As mentioned earlier, the Left Main Canal of the Polavaram dam ends at the port city of Visakhapatnam and the Right Main Canal will end at Vijayawada. Terminals for loading and unloading of goods will be built on the river and on the canals at Polavaram, Bhdrachalam, Mukthiyala, Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Tadepalligudem, Eluru,

Vijayawada, Peddaganjam and Nellore. Further the Union Minister for Transport Mr. T.R. Balu has categorically stated on July 4, 2005 that the canals are mainly intended for water transport.

3). The two canals of Polavaram were originally supposed to be built with the size of 10,000 cusecs discharge but the government all of a sudden enhanced their capacity to 17, 500 cusecs, that is twice or three times the actual requirements of the *ayacut*. Accordingly, the canals are being built with about 20Mts depth and 100 Mts width. Roads along the banks of both the canals are also on the way.

4). Major and minor ports are being built at such places as Gangavaram (near Visakhapatnam), Vodarevu (near Chirala in Prakasam district) Krishnapatnam (in Nellore district) – all these are very nearer to the terminals being built on the canals as mentioned above. All weather roads are being built to connect some of the upcoming ports to the National Highways, where such connectivity is lacking.

5). Now coming to the point of diverting Godavari waters to the Krishna river. 200tmc of water will be diverted through two schemes, Polavaram project and Dummugudem Lift Scheme, as mentioned above. As per the claims of the government this is being done to stabilize the Krishna delta, to maintain a tail pond below Nagarjunasagar dam to keep the Hydro-electric Power station going on in the lean seasons and to provide additional irrigation to the water starved Rayalaseema region. But facts stand otherwise. The Krishna delta has faced a crisis only once in the last fifty years and the recent crisis on a few occasions is due more to the need of maintaining the water level at Prakasam barrage to fulfill the water needs of the Vijayawada Thermal Power Station than to a real shortage of water availability. Anyhow, another project to stabilize the Krishna delta, the Pulichintala Balancing Reservoir, down stream of the Nagarjunasagar dam, is nearing completion. This will more than adequately meet the needs of the Krishna delta in times of crisis. Moreover, the water impounded in the tail pond will be pumped back in to the Krishna after power generation. The government claims that by diverting 80 tmc of water to the Krishna basin, irrigation can be provided to the drought prone areas of Rayalaseema (by impounding the same

quantity of water at the up-stream Srisailem project, above Nagarjunasagar). But, under the Bachawat Award, any diversion of water from the Godavari to Krishna basin by Andhra Pradesh, the upper riparian states of Karnataka and Maharashtra are entitled to stake a claim of the diverted waters, so these states will get an additional share of 35 tmc of Krishna water and AP has to do with 45 tmc, which in fact has to be shared by the Krishna basin areas Rayalaseema and Telangana. Thus, this diversion leaves little water for Rayalaseema. In reality, the Krishna water is being diverted to the Chief Minister's own district of Cudappah, by surreptitiously increasing the capacity of the Pothireddipadu head regulator of the Srisailem Dam to 60 thousand cusecs from 40 thousand (this regulator releases water to the right canal flowing towards Rayalaseema) to meet the water needs of the mega Cement Factory, his son is setting up and of the big steel mill his crony and now a minister in the Karnataka BJP ministry, Mr. G. Janardhana Reddy is setting up and not for irrigation purposes.

Then the question arises, why is such huge quantity of water being diverted? The Prakasam barrage at Vijayawada has no capacity to hold this additional water. Here, we must come back to the Vijayawada – Chennai Buckingham Canal. Until a couple of decades back this canal used to be a very busy water way, with country boats transporting goods from one point to another. But with the construction of dams upstream in the Krishna River, the water availability in the canal became seasonal, thus putting an end to the boat transport. Now, with the government's plan to dredge it deeper to facilitate navigation, the water diverted from the Godavari will be utilized to keep the flow for most part of the year. As water navigation is the cheapest option for transporting the goods, it will be a great boon to the corporate predators, as they can now transport the rich mineral and timber wealth of the Dandakarnya area and of Andhra Pradesh to several ports dotting the coast line from Visakhapatnam to Chennai.

### **Serving Comprador and Imperialist Interests and not Irrigation, is the Sole Aim of Polavaram Project**

So, it becomes quite clear from the

above that the Polavaram Project, being built at a huge human and monetary cost, is not at all for irrigation and that its main or sole purpose is to cater to the industrial water needs of the SEZs, mega industries of the imperialists and their Indian agents and tourist resorts that are about to come up all over the AP coast line and to provide them with the cheapest way of transport of goods – river and canal navigation. This is nothing but a part of the grand design to

develop infrastructural facilities that will serve the interests of the big comprador houses and the imperialist MNCs. These corporate predators require these, as these will facilitate easy access to immense forest, mineral and other resources in this area, while the same could then be transported at cheaper costs to ports the coast.

**Stop this Ghastly Crime**

It is high time for the democratic and

revolutionary forces to come forward and join hands in tearing away the smoke screen of irrigation and development behind which the rulers of AP are perpetuating this ghastly crime of destruction of the lives and livelihoods of 3 lakh *adivasis*, of permanently robbing Telangana of its rightful share of Godavari waters and to launch a powerful movement of people from all walks of life, particularly of the people of Telangana, to stop this outrage. **PT**

**YSR’S JALAYAGNA HAS NO PLACE FOR DALITS AND ADIVASIS BUT THEIR FUNDS ARE WELCOME**

**T**HE much touted *Jalayagnam* scheme of the Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy government in AP has no place for *dalits* and *adivasis*, though thousands of acres of their meager land possessions are being forcibly procured for the various major and minor irrigation schemes. Not only that, the government is using the sub-plan fund allocations made for SC, ST development to complete the project works. It is these sections who constitute the majority among those displaced by all such irrigation projects – those displaced by Polavaram testify this. But when the projects are completed they will have little or no land under the command areas of

those projects. The SCs possess only 7% of the total cultivable land in the state. And they possess only 3% of the total irrigated land. This situation holds good not only for the newly launched projects, it is the same in the earlier projects too. For example, the Godavari delta has 10 lakh acres of *ayacut*, but *dalits* constitute 75% of the agricultural laborers of that area. A project under construction in Adilabad district, which was named after the legendary *Gond* leader, Komaram Bhim, is intended to provide irrigation to 24,500 acres. Only 267 acres of *adivasi* land and 705 acres of *dalit* land will come under irrigation through this project. While the total *ayacut* of the

Maddivalasa project in Srikakulam district is 24,700 acres, *dalits ayacut* in this will be less than 700 acres. The Peddagadda project in Vijaanagaram district has an *ayacut* of 12,000 acres but, the *dalit* lands in this are only 240 acres. The Veligallu project in Cuddapah district is intended to provide irrigation to 24,000 acres, the *dalits* land covered under it will be only 1,200 acres. While the *dalits* and *adivasis* will get little or no benefit from the projects under *Jalayagnam*, the government diverted hundreds of crores of rupees that were allocated in this years budget under SC, ST sub-plan to the ongoing projects. (see box)

**Dalits Share in the projects:**

Scheme	Total Ayacut (acres)	Dalit land come under Irrigation	Scheme	Total Ayacut (acres)	Dalit land come under Irrigation
Taipudi	2,06,000	4,700	Devadula Ist phase	1,23,000	5,000
Aalisagar	55,973	370	Gutpa	38,792	1,092
Matthdivagu	8,500	9	Vattivagu	24,500	390
Maddivalasa	24,700	685	Peddagadda	12,000	40
Jhanjhavathi	24,640	2,954	Muniyeru	16,427	701

**This year allocation under SC sub plan (in-crores)**

Galeru- Nagari	176.50	Pulichinthala	40.50	Ellampalli	63.18
Pulivendula branch canal	63.68	Veligonda	72.92	Srisailam Left Canal	71.28
Sriramsagar flood canal	97.00	Handri- Neeva	192.78	Telugu Ganga	95.58
Polavaram	123.12	Tadipudi	14.58	Neredu Barrage	40.39
Nettempadu	54.27	Kalvakurthi	72.58	Godavari lift scheme	318.13
Sriramsagar-2	93.42				

**ST sub-plan under Chief Engineers (In crores):**

Srisailam	30.84	Telugu Ganga	61.74	Sriramsagar	13.86
Godavari Lift Schemes	167.32	Cudappah	103.51	North Andhra	26.23
Ongole	37.94	Ananthapuram	80.24	Polavaram	92.40
Mahaboobnagar	89.88	Karimnagar	64.74	Kurnool	66.88

# CONDEMN THE BRUTAL FIRING AND CONTINUING ATROCITIES ON THE AGITATING GUJJARS BY THE BJP GOVERNMENT LED BY THE FEUDAL RANI OF RAJASTHAN!



## EXTEND TOTAL SUPPORT TO THE JUST AND DEMOCRATIC DEMAND OF GUJJAR PEOPLE!!

**PT** **T**HE brutal massacre of over 40 people and injuring several more belonging to the Gujjar community at Sikandra in Dausa district, Karwadi in Bharatpur and other places in Rajasthan by the fascist BJP's Vasundhara Raje government on May 24 brings to one's mind memories of the brutalities during the British colonial rule. By enacting another Jallianwalabagh, Vasundhara Raje has earned notoriety as the Lady Dyer of Rajasthan. Not content with the cold-blooded killings of innocent Gujjars, the Maharani of Rajasthan has threatened to kill more if they dared to continue their militant agitation. And moreover, this very murderer has filed case of murder against the leader of the Gujjars, retired colonel Kishori Singh Bainsla. The CC, CPI(Maoist), demands that Vasundhara Raje and the concerned police officials should be tried for murder of scores of innocent people, a judicial enquiry be

conducted into the killings and atrocities by the police and para-military forces, compensation of Rs. 10 lakhs be given to the families of the deceased, and the just demand of the Gujjars to include them in the ST category be immediately met. The CC, CPI(Maoist), extends all support to the just demands of the Gujjars and calls upon the entire party cadre and the people at large to actively participate in the ongoing agitation of the Gujjar people. It hails the fighting people of the Gujjar community for displaying utmost steadfastness and unity in the face of the brutal onslaught by the fascist BJP government.

The deployment of the para-military and the Indian Army to cow down the agitators, cutting off food and other essential supplies to the Gujjar villages are barbarous acts which no civilized society can allow. Only a feudal ruler such as Vasundhara Raje and a comprador-feudal party like the BJP can think of such uncivilized action on its

own people. It is the duty of all democratic forces and the people of the country to condemn these strong-arm tactics of the BJP government in Rajasthan and to demand the immediate restoration of the food supply to the agitating Gujjars, withdrawal of the Army and para-military forces from the state and to come out in support of the agitation of the Gujjars.

The BJP government has shown its double standards by promising to ensure ST status for the Gujjars during the elections to the state Assembly but went back on its promise once it came to power. The people should condemn this ugly vote bank politics of the BJP and all other parties which play with the lives of the people for their own narrow sectarian interests.

AZAD

SPOKEPERSON

CPI(MAOIST)

May 27, 2008

**PT**



## Fight against the back breaking price Rise! Build up vast and militant people's movement! Expose the anti-people policies of Indian ruling classes!

**PT** **T**HE present sharp surge in the essential commodities' prices is unprecedented. The official figure of inflation 9% itself is the highest in the last thirty years. Wheat, rice, oil, vegetables and other essential items have become beyond the reach of ordinary people.

The unprecedented price rise is the result of more and more tying of India to the imperialist economies. Already the neoliberal policies dictated by imperialist agencies – World Bank, IMF, and WTO, played havoc and the ruthless pro-imperialist policies together with cruel feudal exploitation brought the Indian economy to the brink.

The price rise is so sharp and stark too, the financial managers of the ruling classes had to admit: "the inflation rate has reached the unacceptable levels". The UPA government has started taking some eye washing measures and the Left and BJP

began some agitations with an eye on the coming General elections. UPA government is more worried about the consequences of price rise on its electoral fortunes rather than its consequences on the living conditions of the people. IMF is too cautioning the Indian government about the possibility of "social unrest". Perhaps IMF is having the nightmares of the people's revolt in Argentina in the last decade against its policies which had totally ruined that country.

As long as the means of production, marketing is under the control of imperialists, CBB and feudals, price rise cannot be controlled. It is the motive of profit, plunder and loot that drives all these leeches. Liberation of India from the hold of imperialists, CBB, and feudals is only the solution for all the economic ills that are plaguing the country.

CPI(Maoist) calls upon people of India to fight back the price rise which is playing havoc with the lives of vast masses of India. It calls upon the party rank and file to rally round vast masses in a big way to fight and expose the UPA and all other parliamentary parties who are all responsible for this state of affairs. People have to fight in militant forms, as extraordinary situation requires extraordinary forms of struggles. Already people are raiding on food go downs to seize grain. We call upon party ranks and people to expose not only the UPA government but the Left and other parliamentary parties, who are also second to none in implementing all the anti people policies. With revolutionary greetings.

AZAD

Spokes person,

Central Committee, CPI (Maoist)

**PT**

## BJP VICTORY IN KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: A SUBSTANTIAL FILLIP TO COMMUNAL FASCISM

**T**HE Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) was just able to scratch up a majority in the elections to the Karnataka Assembly, thus realizing its long cherished dream of coming to power on its own in any one of the southern states. In this bitterly fought elections everything from money power, muscle power to the invoking of religious and caste sentiments played the decisive role while basic issues confronting the oppressed masses were either completely ignored or at the most got passing mention by all the political parties in the electoral fray. Thus, these elections, in a way, exposed the elections going on in this so-called biggest or greatest democracy to be a farce where money and liquor pore like torrential rain, and caste and religious chauvinistic feelings are whipped up openly and these play the decisive role, while peoples' aspirations and their basic needs get trampled upon.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party, capturing 110 out of the 224 seats. The Congress party came second with 80 seats and the Janatha Dal (Secular) receded to the background with 28 seats. The BSP, CPI, CPI (M) and the Janatha Dal (United), all failed to wrest even a single seat. Though statistics on vote shares show a slender margin for the victors in many seats, the fact to be reckoned with is the alarming presence of the well-oiled machine of the *Sangha Parivar* brisling with enormous funds. This victory symbolizes the victory of the neo-liberal communal fascist forces. After the victory of the fascist killer, Narendra Modi in Gujarat, the Karnataka victory will further embolden the communal fascist elements.

### Role of Money Bags, Liquor, Temples- *Maths* and Caste

Money and liquor inundated Karnataka right from the onset to the end of the entire electoral process. All political parties in the election fray spent enormous amounts brazenly, surpassing all previous records; religious and caste sentiments were roused openly thus mocking the electoral rules of the country and in that

way exposing the Election Commission as a toothless wonder set up only to legitimize all this farce going on in the name of a democratic exercise. Media reports say that on an average each candidate of the BJP, the Congress and the JD(S) spent in the region of at least 5 to 6 Crores. In quite a few constituencies, most notably for the nine seats in the iron ore rich Bellary district (where the BJP won 8 seats) and in almost all urban centres, the money spent by each candidate leaped up to at least 15 to 18 crores. In a state where the majority of the population has to wage a bitter battle to have two square meals a day, the major contenders in the 224 constituencies spent a whopping amount of Rs. 4,000 crore, according to a conservative estimate! This huge amount of black money was necessary it seems to show case the triumph of the Indian democratic process!! The big mining mafia of Bellary along with the real-estate dons played a key role in bankrolling thousands of crores for the BJP. Incidentally it was the same mafia who purchased 6 independent MLAs on behalf of the BJP, thus securing a workable majority for it in the Assembly. Along with money, liquor also played its role in inducing the voters, particularly of the economically and socially weaker sections. More than a hundred people died in Bangalore suburbs after consuming spurious country liquor supplied by candidates. The real-estate dons not only spent money but also became candidates, mostly of the BJP.

Apart from money and liquor what made it easier for the BJP was the open support extended by various *Maths* (religious seats) of both *Madhwa* and *Lingayath* (a *Saivite* caste) faiths. In fact, these *Maths* turned in to centres of the *Sangha Parivar* campaign. The *Sangha Parivar* has been actively flaring up anti-Muslim sentiments in southern coastal Karnataka for more than a decade. In the *Lingayath* heartland of Hubli too it created communal tensions quite often by trying repeatedly to capture the *Idgah Maidan*. And it calculatedly used this religious polarisation to full advantage. It fielded as many as 71 *Lingayath* candidates and utilized the services of *Lingayath* preachers extensively.

### The Role of the NegativeVote

The BJP's communal neo-liberal agenda deflects attention from the root causes of the socio-economic ills of the people. But during the election campaign it utilized the raging discontent of the people, due to the sky-rocketing of the prices of all essential commodities. Zooming inflation has hit the poor in a harshest manner. Utilizing this widespread discontent among almost all sections of the people, the BJP played its cards well passing the blame to the Congress led UPA government at the centre, while maintaining a studied silence on the root cause of this problem, the neo-liberal agenda being implemented in India under the imperialist controlled globalisation programme which it accepts as its own agenda. In Bangalore city, where its performance outshined all other parties, it harped on the issues of the discontent of the middle class over the poor infrastructure and the performance of the previous governments. It played the martyr, utilizing the deep anger of the people towards the opportunistic policies pursued by the father- son duo party that goes by the name of JD(S). Thus playing all such tricks it was able to turn a section of the voters who were dissatisfied with the Congress and the JD(S) to its side and managed to emerge as the single largest party.

### The Dangers Lying Ahead for the People of Karnataka With BJPs' Victory


No matter what the BJP promised to the electorate, its neo-liberal agenda cannot but accentuate unemployment, inflation, casualisation of jobs, growth of economic disparities and all such ills of imperialist dictated globalisation of which it is as strong a votary as the Congress. What is ominous is that this is the neo-liberal policy under the basic *Sangha Parivar* ideology of odious communalism. The BJP wants a fusion of communal fascism with the neo-liberal socio-economic agenda. For all its tall claims of pure nationalism it has no nationalistic economic programme, neither



has it any secular agenda. Its aggressive communal moves on a major scale will be witnessed in the unfolding days as it knows very well that though it came to power, its lead over its political rivals is only marginal. Thus it will try to build up its Hindu vote bank by flaring up communal crusades against the minorities, especially the Muslims in the way systematic pogroms were carried out in Gujarat under the killer, Narendra Modi. The Baba Budhangari issue and the Idgah Masjid are already hot spot for RSS-style fanaticism. Since

Muslims and Islam are bracketed by the imperialists the BJP and the *Sangha Parivar* will receive favorable response from the US and other imperialists. The BJP victory is a warning call for all the democrats and revolutionary people of India.

The people have been voting for one party or the other, though they firmly believe that all these parties are parties of the exploiters. The Maoists waging a war for the establishment of an alternative system devoid of exploitation and where the oppressed masses will be the real rulers,

have so far not been able to project their alternate system among the people at large. In Karnataka they wield influence only in a small pocket in Malnad in the Western Ghats. So the people are participating in the elections as it appears to them as the only tangible option. Once the Maoists succeed in projecting the alternate system that is taking shape in some parts of the country among the vast masses of the people, the people then will definitely confine all these ruling class parties to the dustbins of history. 

## BEEFING-UP OF INDIAN STATE'S ANTI- MAOIST MACHINERY

**T**HE highly powerful but beleaguered Indian state, the reactionary political parties and the Prime Minister of the country are all at one with the view of militarily crushing the ever intensifying revolutionary Maoist movement in India. A deep despair for failing to keep down the agitating crores of exploited Indian masses spurs the existing system—maintaining reactionary brains to depend more and more on brute forces and violence. The Para-military forces, AP type Grey Hound forces, special armed police forces, commandos etc, prove ineffectual in the state's perception and so a special National Task Force is being set up to tackle the Maoist movement in the country. A notable thing is that, of late various government bodies and committees too refer to the acutely distressing conditions of the people in rural India, lying at the roots of people's assertion for a change in the system. Instead of looking after it, the UPA government supported by the so-called Left parties has preferred a military solution. A Special National Task Force is to be set up, headed by Tamilnadu's Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), Mr. K. Vijayakumar, the man instrumental in the killing of Veerappan and a notorious officer with training in Jungle Warfare.. The task force is assigned the duty to streamline and synergize anti-Maoist operations across India and also to co-ordinate between different states. This Central force with extraordinary powers will have senior officers from intelligence agencies, central para-military forces and state police forces. The Home Ministry has appointed Mr. Durgaprasad, a retired IAS officer and an expert on armed campaigns against Andhra Maoists, to train the task

force personnel.

The whole plan of farming a central anti-Maoist task force took shape in December 2007, when the Prime minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh had a hours-long meeting with the Chief ministers of West Bengal, Jharkhand,, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh etc. It was the consensus opinion of the Chief Ministers to hand over powers to the centre to deal militarily with the Maoists. The Prime minister demanded that more power should be vested with the centre to tackle Maoists in various states. The Law and Order problem is said to be a state subject as per the Constitution and the CPI (M) like parties on other occasions cried hoarse against the centre's intervention and for more powers to the states. And now for the surging Maoist movement against the exploiters, against displacement, against imperialist intervention, against atrocities on *dalit*, *i.e.* against the whole system, the parliamentary political parties and their state governments agreed to the nefarious designs of the centre. Delighted with this development the prime minister has now coined the concept of a "Federal Crime" and argued that combating the Maoists can not be "effectively discharged by a single agency of any particular area". With that notorious concept of "Federal crime" the Indian state gets more centralized, though under a façade of federalism. It is worthy of mention that during the dark days of "Emergency" the Indira Gandhi government introduced in 1976, by way of an amendment, the "Provision of Entry 2A of List One" ( the Union List) where by the centre was legally empowered to deploy the armed forces or the para-military forces "in any state in aid of the civil power". Yet,

then too the consent of the concerned state government was implied. Now the centrally controlled Special National Task Force shall have the right of intervention in any state in the name of flushing out terrorism or for "Federal crime". The formation of the Special National Task Force is a dictatorial move of the centre with the compliance of the states ruled by a wide spectrum of political parties ranging from the CPI (M) to the BJP. These parties may be vocal in demands for increasing the share of state's taxes, duties etc. but they are in complete agreement with the center-state system to crush the Maoists and any other revolutionary or democratic movement of the people with the help of Special National Task Force of the centre along with other para-military forces.

Since the Indian state and its imperialist masters, especially the American imperialists, consider the Maoist movement as the greatest threat to their very existence, apart from the formation of the SITF, the Air Force is now being pressed in to operations against the Maoists in India. The Air Force Base at Barrackpore near Kolkata, which is the center of the Eastern Command, is slated to play a crucial role in fighting the Maoists forces, particularly in the states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar. The air force base in Barrockpore is being upgraded with station helicopters. " After the Maoist attack in Nayagarh in Orissa, IAF choppers from Barrackpore rushed to the spot for combing operations" confirmed Air Marshal S.K. Bhan, Air Officer commanding-in-charge, Eastern Air Command.

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## INTERVIEW WITH COMRADE AZAD, SPOKESPERSON OF THE CC, CPI(MAOIST) ON THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NEPAL

**Q:** *The results in the April 10 elections to the Constituent Assembly in Nepal have been overwhelmingly in favour of the Maoists, a development least anticipated by even the keenest observers. How does your Party in India, the CPI(Maoist), look at the election results in Nepal?*

**Azad:** As mentioned in my press release on behalf of my Party's central committee last week, the election results in Nepal have demonstrated the overwhelming anger of the masses against the outdated feudal monarchic rule in Nepal, against the Indian expansionist's bullying and domination of Nepal, against US domination and oppression, against comprador-feudal parties which allowed this to continue and betrayed the masses for too long. The results are a reflection of the growing aspirations of the Nepali masses for democracy, land, livelihood and genuine freedom from imperialist and feudal exploitation. It is these aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the masses that had completely trounced the parties that had either supported the King and/or the Indian ruling classes or hesitated to come out strongly against feudal, imperialist oppression and Indian intervention in Nepal. The royalists could not win even in a single constituency out of the 240 constituencies where direct elections were held. And leaders of the so-called mainstream such as Madhav Nepali, Sujata Koirala were rejected outright which came as a great shock to the ruling classes.

Hence, when an alternative like the CPN(M) came to the fore, with its open commitment to abolish the feudal monarchy once for all, abrogate all unequal treaties signed with India by the former ruling classes of Nepal, and ensure democracy and equality for the oppressed sections of society such as Dalits, adivasis, national minorities and women, the masses enthusiastically veered towards the Maoists. To put it in a word, the people of Nepal had come out resolutely against constitutional monarchy, Indian expansionism and US imperialism; the results reflect the growing aspirations of the Nepalese masses for land, livelihood and democracy.

Our Party looks at the election results in Nepal as a positive development with enormous significance for the people of entire South Asia. We send our revolutionary greetings to the people of Nepal for rejecting outright the monarchic rule and the comprador-feudal Parties during the April 10 elections to the Constituent Assembly. These results point to the real aspirations of the Nepalese people and should serve as a guide to the CPN(M) for its future course of action.

**Q:** *What do you think are the reasons for the impressive results in favour of the Maoists in the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Nepal?*

**Azad:** As far as we can see there are six major reasons:

**One,** the masses of Nepal had enough of King Gyanendra's autocratic and authoritarian rule. Constitutional monarchy is indeed an anachronism even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century leave alone 21<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, people of Nepal had put up with such a rotten, reactionary feudal rule too long a time. And when they found an opportunity to throw it out they grabbed it. There was never such an opportunity during earlier elections as all the parliamentary parties were either loyal to the King or displayed nominal opposition to the King. It is only the CPN(Maoist) which had shown its firm commitment to abolish the monarchy once for all and had come to the fore as an alternative to the bourgeois-feudal parties.

**Two,** the masses of Nepal had enough of bullying, intervention and domination by Indian expansionism. There is a general atmosphere of suspicion regarding the motives of the Indian ruling classes in Nepal. The people of Nepal had suffered too long under the obnoxious unequal treaties signed by successive rulers of Nepal with the Indian government such as the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the Mahakali Treaty, and so on. The Indian rulers have always had an eye on the natural wealth of Nepal, its rich natural gas reserves, hydro-electric potential, forest products etc. Along with imperialist exploitation, oppression and plunder, the Indian CBB too is seen as an

obstacle for the development of the local industry and trade. Besides this, Indian ruling classes have been continuously interfering in the political affairs of Nepal. They supported the monarchy all along and in the past few years took up the so-called two-pillar theory of supporting the King as well as the Nepali Congress. They gave training, supplied arms to the Royal Nepal Army, and sent all sorts of aid to contain the Maoist revolutionaries in Nepal. All these despicable acts had only fuelled the anger of the masses against Indian government. Now when an opportunity presented itself before them in the form of the CPN(M) they naturally voted for it which should be seen as a vote against Indian domination. None of the other Parties showed the guts to confront India. It was only the CPN(M) which categorically assured the people that it would do away with all the unequal treaties with India, ban obscene Hindi films, stop recruitment of Gurkhas into the Indian Army and provide them with alternative employment, and so on.

**Three,** the masses of Nepal had enough of the exploitation, oppression and intervention of the US imperialists. Throughout the rule of King Gyanendra and even until today after the humiliating defeat of his loyalist parties in elections, US imperialists has stood by his side rendering all aid to perpetuate his rule and to brutally suppress the Maoists. They had placed the CPN(M) on its list of terrorist outfits. This is a grave insult to the people of Nepal who view this as unwarranted meddling in Nepal's affairs. By supporting the discredited King the US imperialists became even more discredited and hated by even those who had no anti-imperialist consciousness or opposed to US imperialism as they see it as a protector of the feudal monarchy.

**Four,** the promises made by the CPN(M) to establish a democratic, federal, secular Nepal with freedom, democracy and equality for all the oppressed sections of society such as Dalits, adivasis, national minorities and women had an electrifying impact. For the first time, these oppressed sections were given considerable

representation in the elections. Under such conditions, the oppressed masses came out enthusiastically in support of the Maoists. Women's turn-out, it is said, was equal to, and may be even greater than that of men—something unimaginable in a feudal country like Nepal.

**Five**, the most important factor is the positive impact created by the decade-long people's war led by the Maoists on the overall balance of forces in Nepal. The Maoists had established control over almost three-quarters of rural Nepal. Through the people's revolutionary governments in the countryside they had carried out several reforms which brought the masses closer to them. The people's war had raised the political consciousness of the masses, enhanced their assertion, and roused their democratic aspirations. The growth of the mass movement for a Constituent Assembly all over Nepal is a logical offshoot of the decade-long people's war. In such a context, most of the Parties which had been staging only shows in the name of fighting for a Constituent Assembly became irrelevant in the eyes of the people.

The impact of armed struggle should not be underestimated. For instance, even in India if we see, the united Communist Party won an overwhelming majority of seats (31 out of 32 seats) in the elections to the state assembly in Telangana region in 1957. This, in spite of the fact that the CPI had withdrawn the Telangana armed struggle so much was the impact of the anti-feudal armed agrarian struggle on the people of Telangana.

**Lastly**, though a less important factor, mention must be made of the support of the local capitalists and a section of the traders who, even though are opposed to the Maoists in general, think that bringing them to power is the only guarantee for peace in Nepal. The local capitalists and small traders aspire to grow and develop in an atmosphere free from the hegemony and strangulation of imperialist and Indian expansionist capital. This they know none of the comprador-feudal parties can deliver and the only hope is with the Maoists.

**Q: Now that the Maoists have come to power will they be able to carry out the promises made?**

**Azad:** This is the most difficult question

to answer. The immediate problem for the Maoists is to secure a coalition of forces that can meet the target of two-thirds majority in the Constituent Assembly in order to incorporate their radical reforms into the new Constitution. But to achieve two-thirds majority they have to rely on the reactionary comprador-feudal parties such as NC and social democratic UML. Needless to say, it is impossible to carry through the promised reforms with such a hotch-potch combination of forces. These Parties in the coalition will not be willing to be a party to the programme of the Maoists and will, moreover, try to subvert any radical changes which are aimed at curtailing their own class interests.

**It is a fundamental tenet of Marxism that no radical restructuring of the system is possible without the militant mobilization of the vast masses into bitter class struggle.** It is impossible to make genuine changes in the system through measures initiated "from above", i.e. through state decrees and laws. Whichever Party may be in power, not excluding the most radical Maoists, it can only make laws at best, but to implement these it is imperative to mobilize the masses and advance class struggle against exploiters and oppressors. Without this the liberation of the vast majority of poor is an impossible task. And for the CPN(M), even enacting the much-promised laws will be an almost impossible task given the present coalition in the CA. No ruling class will give up power without putting up a bitter struggle and carrying out counter-revolutionary activities against the oppressed class. **Hence the real, bitter and most cruel struggle for power will now unfold following the elections. The reactionaries will oppose every change tooth and nail. And, lacking a majority in the Constituent Assembly, the Maoists will be powerless to affect radical changes in the Constitution. Either they have to compromise and adjust with a section of the reactionary forces thereby sacrificing the class interests of the oppressed in whose interests they had come to power, or, they have to mobilize the people and intensify the struggle through all means, including armed insurrection, in order to implement genuine democracy and establish people's power. There is no other**

**alternative.**

We must not forget the experiences of Indonesia, Chile, Nicaragua and other countries where the Communist Parties had come to power but were either thrown out in counter-revolutionary coups accompanied by counter-revolutionary massacres of Communist cadres, or threw out the Party in so-called elections as in the case of Nicaragua. The experience of Nicaragua is very much relevant in the context of so-called multi-party democracy. The Sandinistas, in spite of their massive pro-people democratic reforms while in power, and in spite of having a strong and powerful Army, were thrown out in the elections through a conspiracy of the US imperialists and all the reactionary forces. The CPN(M) and the people of Nepal should learn from these experiences and defeat the conspiracies of the reactionary forces to stage a come-back through devious ways.

**Q: How do you envisage the future scenario in Nepal? Will India and US imperialism adjust to the new reality that had emerged in Nepal and support the Maoist government or will they create hurdles?**

**Azad:** We will be living in a fool's paradise if we think that imperialist America and expansionist India will be comfortable with the Maoists in power in Nepal or that they will adjust themselves to the new reality. Though they will have no other go but to continue diplomatic relations they will also continue to create an adverse situation for the new government if it does not obey their dictates. The fact is that the US rendered all help to its stooge parties in Nepal to defeat the Maoists. It tried its best to keep the monarchy alive as the King was the most reliable pillar for its rule by proxy in Nepal. And as for India, it received a slap in its face when its chief stooge—GP Koirala and his NC—tasted an ignominious defeat. Most of the stalwarts of NC were trounced and swept away in the flood of people's fury as their traitorous deals with India have by now become well-known to the Nepali people.

However, India has gained in another front. In the Tarai region it supported the two Madhesi parties which won a considerable number of seats with the backing of India. **India will use the Madhesi trump card to create disturbances in Nepal**

if the new regime does not toe its line. Already Madhesi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) led by Upendra Yadav has demanded that the Maoists should make their stand clear on the demand for Madhesi autonomy (Ek Madhes Ek Prades) and had asked the Maoists to discontinue their relations with international forums like the RIM and CCOMPOSA. Both US and India will try by various means to bring the new government to toe their line. They can, for instance, hit at Nepal's belly—its economy—by paralyzing industrial production, blocking trade and supply lines thereby creating food shortages and shortage of consumer goods; in other words it can squeeze Nepal through an economic blockade. This it will do if it thinks the new regime is going too far. As it is, the situation in Nepal is already too delicate with almost 10 hours of load-shedding even in capital Kathmandu and a shortage of all essential commodities. Its powerful neighbours can alter the balance through economic blackmail which could lead to growth of social unrest and massive protests against the Maoists. **Acute shortage of essential items and rising prices can lead to disenchantment with the fledgling regime and a dip in its popularity thereby giving an opportunity to the discredited parties to re-establish themselves. Thus the situation in Nepal will remain extremely delicate and unstable even though the Maoists had won an impressive electoral victory.** Comrades Prachanda and Bhattarai know this well and hence they have been appealing for India's cooperation. They had gone on record saying that there will not be stability in Nepal without India's cooperation. The fact that Nepal is a small country sandwiched between two powerful and big neighbours—India and China—and that it is a target for the US imperialists makes the governance quite a difficult proposition. **Hence the Maoist face an extremely difficult task ahead in balancing all these forces and carrying on with their people's agenda through land reforms and indigenous industrialization towards a new democratic economy.**

**Q: Then do you mean the electoral victory of the Maoists and their capture of state power through parliamentary means is a futile exercise, and that it cannot bring the desired radical change**

*in the social system?*

**Azad:** I don't exactly mean that. The control of state power, if they really can control, does give the Maoists a means to defend the gains accrued during the long years of revolutionary war and to affect radical changes in the social system. But this will be difficult to achieve through the type of state power that has fallen into the hands of the Maoists at the present juncture. In fact, even in classical revolutions as in China, where the Communist revolutionaries had seized power through an armed revolution, Mao had warned of the danger of the rise of a new class by virtue of their positions in the state machinery. After Mao, the state had degenerated into a machinery of oppression and suppression of the vast masses. **The lesson that we Communists had learnt from this experience is that the Party should concentrate on organizing the masses and mobilizing them to rebel against all types of injustice and exploitation perpetrated by state and Party bureaucrats.**

In Nepal, where the Maoists have come to power in alliance with a section of the reactionary ruling classes, it is an even more urgent task of the Maoists to continue the class struggle by organizing the masses against all forms of exploitation and oppression. In this the Young Communist League appears to have been doing commendable work which is a reason why it is feared as well as hated by the other parties. To the extent possible, the Maoists could use their relative control over the state to help the masses in their struggle for freedom, democracy and livelihood. **Basic change could be achieved through continuation of class struggle for which, the state can, at best, render some help.**

**Q: Sitaram Yechuri of the CPI(M), among several others, have said that the Maoists of India have to learn from Nepal's experiences and take the parliamentary road to come to power. What does your Party say in this regard?**

**Azad:** Why Yechuri alone? Even the DGPs of Jharkhand, AP and other states where Maoist movement is strong had said that before. Just two days ago the SP of Warangal, Sajjanar, notorious for his cold-blooded murders of the revolutionaries,

was saying the same thing. Leaders of other reactionary ruling class parties had been harping on the same theme ever since the revisionists began participating in parliament in our country. Some like former RAW chief Thorakan have said that the Maoist victory in Nepal would have a demonstration effect on the Maoists of India.

Firstly, those who say this forget that the situation in Nepal and India are completely different. In Nepal the immediate political task before the entire Nepali masses was a struggle against the monarchy which circumstance had brought about a measure of unity among the various parliamentary parties and broad sections of people. The King himself, with the active guidance and aid from US imperialism had created a situation where all forces had to close their ranks and wage a struggle for democracy. The fact that hardly two per cent of the Nepali population supported the monarchy, as revealed by a 2008 Survey report, shows the basis for such a united struggle of the Nepalese people and the CPN(M) utilized such a situation. In India, it is a fight against the semi-colonial, semi-feudal social system of which the parliamentary system is part and parcel. All the major parliamentary parties are representatives of the comprador-feudal classes, obey the dictates of imperialists, and hence stand in the counter-revolutionary camp. Here the immediate task is struggle for land, livelihood and liberation for the vast majority of the masses.

Secondly, Yechuri and others, in their desperate attempt to laud their parliamentary line, consciously underplay and hush up the experiences of Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua etc. In this context, it is very much relevant to cite the experience of Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, the Sandinista National Liberation Front took over power in a popular rebellion in 1979 by overthrowing the long dictatorship of Somoza family. The Sandinistas brought massive changes in the economic, social, political spheres, achieved significant successes in land reform, literacy, health programmes, and so on. The US imperialists under Ronald Reagan armed, trained and gave all sorts of aid to the mercenary private armies called contras to fight the Sandinistas and created economic

problems by enforcing trade embargo on Nicaragua. The Sandinistas agreed to hold elections in 1990 after peace negotiations with the UN but they lost to the right-wing coalition of 14 opposition parties. Massive US funding and support from the reactionary classes of the Nicaraguan society, combined with the grave economic crisis, led to the defeat of the Sandinistas despite many revolutionary and progressive changes they brought in favour of the poor and oppressed sections of society during their rule. That the Parliamentary system can bring a fanatic mass murderer like Narendra Modi to power is enough to understand the limitations of the Parliamentary road to power.

Lastly, these social democrats also underplay the tremendous impact of the decade-long people's war in Nepal on the lives and consciousness of the Nepali masses which led to the victory of the CPN(M). As pointed out by the CPN(M) in its Commitment Paper for the Constituent Assembly released in March 2008 just prior to the elections: *"None can imagine today's political transformation without the contribution of the Maoist people's war. The class, ethnic, regional, sexual and Dalit consciousness that has emerged in the country today and that the country has been constitutionally declared a federal republic, the credit mainly goes to the 10 years of People's War. Had there been no 20 thousands of People's Army developed in the course of People's War none could imagine that monarchy would have kneeled down so easily."*

Yechuris, Karats and Buddhadebs have over 40 years of experience in the Parliamentary pig-sty. But what basic changes have they brought in the system? Their parliamentary cretinism has done no good for the masses. The rich have grown richer and poor poorer even in the states where these revisionists have been in power. Without their support the ruling UPA government headed by Manmohan Singh would not have dared to carry out the anti-people policies. They had correctly dubbed themselves as *"a barking dog that doesn't bite"*. **They agree that they are powerless to do anything more than acting as "speed-breakers", as described by one of their spokespersons, in the path of the anti-people onslaught by the UPA government**

**at the Centre. The fact is, they are not merely speed-breakers. They actually act as political brokers intermediating between the vast masses and the reactionary rulers trying to bring about class harmony in place of class struggle.** In the states where they are directly in power they have become no less exploiters and oppressors than the Congress and the BJP. Singur and Nandigram are their laboratories for carrying through their pro-imperialist, pro-comprador big business policies. And in this they have become even more brutal thanks to the vast army of social fascist gangs at their disposal. These political prostitutes spin one theory after another such as *"the bigger evil versus the lesser evil"*, that they have no power to stop the SEZs across the country, unless, of course, they come to power at the Centre to justify their hob-nobbing with Congress at one time, TDP at another and such antics. But in the same breath they hypocritically say that without SEZs, privatization, foreign investment, etc., West Bengal and Kerala cannot go ahead with industrialization, and so on.

No wonder, imperialist and comprador capital is very impressed by the performance of the Indian "Left". NRI industrialist Lord Swaraj Paul, who is the chairman of the Caparo Group which is setting up a component unit in Singur, was all praise for the CPI(M) and its leader Buddhadeb when he visited West Bengal as the head of a delegation of the United Kingdom branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. **These social fascists have now become the blue-eyed boys of the World Bank, Tatas, Salems, Swaraj Pauls and the people of India will fare no better under a CPI(M) government at the Centre.**

There is little wonder they have been asking the Indian Maoists to follow suit. Our Party firmly believes that a basic change in the system cannot be achieved through the parliamentary path but through class struggle. In our country this takes the form of armed agrarian revolutionary war. We, of course, do not reject other forms of struggle and organization, besides armed struggle and armed organization, and you would have realized this if you are a keen observer of our movement. This is of no consequence to our Mr. Yechuri who only dreams of

seats in the Parliament like any other ruling class party. We, on the other hand, invite everyone opposed to imperialism, feudalism, comprador bureaucrat capitalism and the neo-liberal policies of the reactionary ruling classes of India, to come forward to wage a united militant struggle instead of whiling their time in an impotent anti-people Parliament and acting as lobbyists and power brokers. For revisionist chieftains like Yechuri, who are bogged down neck-deep into the morass of parliamentarism and bourgeois lobbying, such a revolutionary alternative is naturally an anathema.

The task before the revolutionaries is to destroy and reconstruct the entire economic, social, political, cultural institutions that sustain the status quo and hamper any radical reform. Just coming to power through Parliament cannot lead to a restructuring of the system. There are several other so-called independent institutions like the judiciary, the election commission, the human rights commission sponsored by the imperialists, the media, various artistic, cultural and even religious bodies, non-government organisations, and so on all of which can be transformed only through a upheaval of the masses and not through Parliamentary reforms.

**Q: Prachanda had earlier said that he would be the first President of Republican Nepal but a few days ago he changed tack and declared that he would head the ministry. Do you think it is correct for anyone in a Communist Party to be the head of the government, chief of the Party and army at the same time?**

**Azad:** We too had seen his statements in this regard. He still says he wants to be the President if it is acceptable to all i.e. by political consensus. As such, the present Constitution of Nepal has no provision for an Executive President. It will take another two years for the Constituent Assembly to adopt the newly drafted Constitution and to arrive at a final decision on this. Hence comrade Prachanda might have reconsidered his earlier decision and decided to become the Prime Minister.

Now the question is not whether the Party chief should be President or Prime Minister. Who should lead a government or any other body is for their Party to decide. But we have a different opinion altogether.

We think that the principal concentration of the Party chief and the main leadership should be on developing class struggle and not get immersed in the administration of the state. If we believe that the role of the Party is to continue class struggle until the final stage of Communism then we can appreciate our viewpoint. The lesson that we draw from the historical experiences of revolutions and the most important lessons of the GPCR is that once the Party has led the revolution to final victory it had also laid the basis for the rise of a new class of Party and state bureaucrats. When the Party and state completely coalesce then it will be terribly difficult to fight the rise of bureaucratic class and to mobilize the people against the wrongs done by the state. Hence it is very much essential that the party leaders do not lose touch with the masses. They should integrate with the masses, and organize and guide them against each and every form of exploitation and oppression. In Nepal, where the Maoists have to share power with a section of the comprador-feudal classes, this task becomes even more crucial.

**Q: Prachanda and Bhattarai had declared that they are willing to invite FDI and to create a business-friendly environment in Nepal. They also said that they would encourage capitalism. Is it correct for a Maoist party to invite foreign investment and develop capitalism?**

**Azad:** Firstly we must understand the reality of Nepal. It is an extremely backward, semi-feudal country that lacks the minimum infrastructure and industrial production. It is a part of the Fourth World, if we can call it so. The UN has placed it in the category of Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Hence the first task in Nepal would be to liberate the vast masses from the feudal clutches and develop industry on that basis. As regards developing capitalism in Nepal there need not be any objection from revolutionaries as long as it is national capitalism and is properly regulated to meet the needs of the masses and is directed towards the growth of the internal economy and not for exports or for serving the imperialists. **But if the encouragement is for inflow of foreign capital it will be detrimental to the interests of the country in the long run. The foreign capital would begin to control the economy of Nepal even if the**

**Maoists are the major partners in the government just as it had done till now. The Maoists could consider encouraging indigenous capital and help its growth while gradually eliminating foreign capital.** Both Prachanda and Bhattarai had a meeting with businessmen under the aegis of the Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI) as soon as the results became clear. There is pressure from businessmen for an investment-friendly environment, maximisation of profit, tax reforms, new flexible labour laws and a positive industrial policy.

In the past Maoists had opposed private institutions in health and education sectors. But now Prachanda has promised private-public partnership will be encouraged in health and education sectors. Bhattarai has promised to remove whatever hurdles that may arise in the private sector. We have been hearing reports of talks between the Maoist leaders and the officials of World Bank. If these reports are true then it could have dangerous consequences on the future of Nepal. Depending on FDI and adopting a pragmatic approach towards industrialization of Nepal in the name of overcoming the country's economic backwardness will only lead to opposite results and will only strengthen the hold of the imperialists and continue the prevailing backwardness. The key aspect for the development in any backward country is not just investment of capital but the expansion of the home market. This can only be achieved by raising the purchasing power of the masses. Once this grows it will act as the motor for the industrial development of the country.

**Q: How do you foresee the future fraternal relations between your Party and the CPN(M)? Given the fact that the Indian state does not want the Maoists of Nepal to maintain relations with the Indian Maoists, and the demands by MJF in this regard is a clear indication of growing Indian pressure, will fraternal relations between the two Parties continue as before?**

**Azad:** We believe and desire that fraternal relations between the CPI(Maoist) and CPN(Maoist) should continue as before. As long as both the Parties stand firmly committed to proletarian

internationalism, international pressures and internal pressures will not come in the way.

Of course, there is bound to be increasing pressure from various quarters on the Maoists of Nepal to cut off their relations with other Maoist Parties. Particularly India and the US will exert utmost pressure in this regard. We do understand the complexity of the situation. However, we must keep in mind that every Communist Party is a detachment of the world proletariat. And any proletarian Party will place national interests subordinate to the interests of the world proletariat. Comrade Prachanda had correctly said that ideological ties between the two Parties will remain intact. And we believe the ideological debates and discussions have to continue. The various international fora such as CCOMPOSA should continue with their aims and activities in spite of the new situation that had arisen.

Besides, we will continue to deepen people to people ties between our two countries and oppose any form of interference and domination of Nepal by the Indian expansionists. We will promote solidarity for the Nepal people and revolution amongst the people of India on a wide scale. All this is our proletarian internationalist duty. We expect the same from our Nepal comrades.

**Q: What do you have to say about comrade Prachanda's comment in his interview to *The Hindu* that "for the Indian Maoist party, its leaders and cadres, these efforts of ours provide some new material to study, to think about and go ahead in a new way. Our efforts provide a reference point."**

**Azad:** As Marxists we must study critically any phenomena, particularly new experiences. Yet, we should not come to hasty conclusions but must carefully observe the outcome of such efforts. All these need to be assessed from a class viewpoint and not a non-class approach. Marxism is a science and it gives the tools to analyse all social phenomena scientifically. This we need to do for the experiment in Nepal or any other. Of course, we have already many historical precedents, these too should be considered and the Nepal experience seen as part of this and not in isolation.

**Q: Finally, is there anything you want to say to the people of Nepal and the CPN(M)?**


**Azad:** Our Party, CPI(Maoist), sends its revolutionary greetings on behalf of our CC, entire Party rank and file, and the people of India to the CPN(Maoist) and the people of Nepal for their categorical rejection of monarchic rule and the comprador-feudal Parties through the elections to the Constituent Assembly. We understand the Himalayan task confronting our fraternal Maoist Party in Nepal—the twin task of running and reforming a reactionary state machinery while advancing the class struggle to achieve complete victory of the revolution.

We wish to appraise them that the real battle for the transformation of the lives of the people of Nepal and the economic-social-political system of Nepal begins now. **Lack of vigilance even for a moment could prove dear to the Maoists as well as the people of Nepal as vultures within and outside their country are only too eager to maintain the existing social order and itching to destroy all the gains achieved by the people and the Maoists.** We wish to remind the CPN(M) and the people of Nepal regarding a warning we had given in November 2006 when they decided to become part of the interim government. I

repeat what we said then: *“The agreement by the Maoists to become part of the interim government in Nepal cannot transform the reactionary character of the state machinery that serves the exploiting ruling classes and imperialists. The state can be the instrument in the hands of either the exploiting classes or the proletariat but it cannot serve the interests of both these bitterly-contending classes. It is the fundamental tenet of Marxism that no basic change in the social system can be brought about without smashing the state machine. Reforms from above cannot bring any qualitative change in the exploitative social system however democratic the new Constitution might seem to be, and even if the Maoists become an important component of the government. It is sheer illusion to think that a new Nepal can be built without smashing the existing state.”*


Control of the Army is very crucial at the present juncture of Nepal’s history. If it is not freed from the control of the royalists, imperialist stooges, and other reactionary forces and firmly placed under people’s control then there is immediate danger of sabotage and counter-revolutionary coup with the active assistance and guidance of imperialists and Indian expansionists. **It is**

**an urgent task before the CPN(M) to organize and consolidate the masses, build a vast people’s militia to defend the masses from attacks by the exploiters and oppressors, train up the army with a pro-people democratic orientation, and release the huge, latent potential of the masses which will serve as the driving force for advancing the revolution in Nepal to the next stage.** We earnestly hope that the CPN(Maoist) will fulfill these tasks and continue the class struggle to achieve real liberation of Nepal from imperialism, feudalism, Indian expansionism and advance towards socialism and Communism.

Our Party will wage uncompromising struggle against the machinations and expansionist designs, the intervention and bullying and acts of subversion of the Indian ruling classes in Nepal and assure that we shall stand firmly by the side of the CPN(M) and the people of Nepal in their fight for genuine freedom and independence. In the long run it is only the victory of the revolution in India that can ensure real equality and mutual respect between the two countries. And our Party will step up its efforts to advance the revolution in our country to its ultimate victory. 

## THE AMERICAN MILITARY BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

The US military base in the Philippines is being further strengthened under the notorious “Cooperative Security Location” programme of American imperialism. Most such bases fall in the ‘serious secret’ category. According to the disclosed estimates of the Pentagon, such bases are spread over seventy countries (the actual figure far surpasses this) across the globe. And now another 100 military bases are on the cards to maintain US hegemony in the world. Such bases require the protective hands of the countries concerned and there exists a permanent committee formed by the US Congress to oversee the whole programme of strengthening the US bases. *Asia Times* in its 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2005 issue referred to a top US official while disclosing such a dreaded fact that the number of US bases (inclusive of both secret and semi-secret) are about 5,458. This number further zoomed during the past few years in East, Central and South Asia, particularly with an eye to contain Chinese and Russian powers. With such a large number of military bases, the frequent joint military exercises of US armed forces with the forces of countries like India, Pakistan etc, immensely facilitate the US hegemonic designs in various regions. US imperialism has maintained its military supremacy for the past 110 years over the Philippines. The revolutionary communist movement scared the US. When huge anti American demonstrations rocked the Philippines in 1992, a formal ban was put on the American base there. Yet, as the Philippines was strategically important to the US, it not only refused to bow to the demand of the Philippines people, moreover it continued to station a huge contingent of its armed forces to the region of 30 to 40 thousand. The successive reactionary governments of the Philippines not only allowed those forces but also held frequent joint exercises and military operations with them. These puppet governments even went to the extent of showing criminal indifference to the terror killings and atrocities on its own female citizens perpetuated by the brutal US armed forces.

There is need for a worldwide movement to kick US military bases out of all countries, including the Philippines. In South Asia too US bases exist in many countries and US troupes have been training Indian and Nepalese forces to crush their own people. The people of India must join with the people all around the world to kick out such aggressor anti-people force and free their countries from the US imperialist stranglehold. 

## RED SUN: TRAVELS IN NAXALITE COUNTRY BY SUDEEP CHAKRAVARTI

Penguin/Viking Pages 320; Rs. 495

THE Maoist movement in India is one of the oldest and longest-sustained revolutionary movements in the contemporary world. Spanning a period of over four decades beginning with the first earth-shaking volcanic eruption in a tiny village in Naxalbari it has become part of folk-lore in some regions in the country. It had risen, phoenix-like, every time the political pundits had confidently pronounced its certain demise. Top political and police brass had time and again boasted that they had "finished off" the revolution which they claimed as having been "imported from abroad". They asserted that Maoist revolution is something alien to the conditions in Gandhi's India where, they claim, people are not prone to violent ways. The latest in this long list of liars, wishful thinkers and vicious propagandists is Mahendra Karma, who declared amidst much fanfare in June 2005 that he would decimate the Maoists within a year through his state-sponsored terrorist campaign christened as *Salwa Judum* (peace campaign). When his armed gangsters and the state's khaki-clad goons took a beating in the hands of the Maoists this scab of the imperialist-big business-feudal combine kept on barking over the past two years that he would finish off the Maoists within a short time. However, nailing all these lies and disgusting boasts by the mediocre politicians and police officials ruling the country, the resilience and growth of the Maoist movement had surprised many skeptics who see the Indian state as an almighty behemoth that can snuff out any armed resistance.

Surprisingly, given the great international significance of revolution in a vast country like India—the second most populous in the world—very few scholars have attempted any serious research into this social phenomenon and books dealing with this protracted insurgency are very few. But of late, several research scholars belonging to various persuasions and

particularly so-called independent agencies have suddenly jumped into the fray. There is very less objectivity and realistic analysis in most of these writings. Many of these have begun to paint a scary picture of rapidly-growing "*Red Terror*" which is supposed to undermine development measures undertaken by the government. They talk of Maoist movement spreading at an alarming speed to the majority of the states in India. Agencies like the ORF, SATP, Institute of Conflict Management, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, etc began taking keen interest and a plethora of articles have been appearing in various magazines. Some websites too have sprung up both in support of, and decrying, Maoism in India.

In *Red Sun*, published by Penguin (Viking) Books India in early 2008, the author, Sudeep Chakravarti, makes an attempt to understand and present the phenomenon of the Maoist movement in India. It is not, as the writer himself claims, a history of the Maoist movement, but a travelogue which tries to understand the Other India, as he christens it. The positive side of the book is the writer's attempt to present the conditions of the vast majority of the common people—their grinding poverty, excruciating indebtedness, horrific tales of their destitution and displacement by so-called development — leading to extreme helplessness and heart-rending suicides. The writer had tried to focus on the aspirations of the majority in India that had been left out of every development scheme and model touted as great boons for the poor by the Indian ruling classes. Overall, the writer has been able to present, in a lucid manner, the explosive socio-economic milieu that gave rise to, and continues to nurture, the Maoist movement in India. And as a travelogue, this aspect often comes forcefully through conversations with people from various walks of life. He logically anticipates the inevitable spread of the Maoist movement to the urban areas since similar conditions had pushed the

vast majority of the urban poor into utter wretchedness.

### Good exposure of state-sponsored terror campaign in Dandakaranya:

The exposure of the state-sponsored terrorist campaign in Dandakaranya through the so-called *Salwa Judum* comes out forcefully in the book. It is here that the writer is seen at his best and he boldly exposes the havoc created by the state-sponsored vigilante gangs combined with the state and central forces. There is some amount of depth in the writer's presentation of the movement in one of the crucial regions of the Maoists. He vividly describes the war theatre, the explosive situation and the strategies and plans of the state. As far as the writer's description of the Maoist movement goes this is the best part in the entire book. Well, if one has time constraints one can either have a cursory glance at the remaining pages of the book or just drop them altogether after going through the first hundred pages or so. For, after this, the presentation of the movement elsewhere is shallow and based more on hearsay.

None of the movements in other regions such as Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, or Andhra Pradesh has any in-depth analysis and reflects lack of real interaction with the actual players. Even the conversations with such an eminent personality in the revolutionary camp like VV lack punch and analysis. The principal weakness of the travelogue is that the writer had traveled more along the periphery of the war zone and has hardly any interaction with the Maoist fighters and leaders in any of these regions. Whether this is deliberately done, or the writer found no opportunity to meet the Maoist revolutionaries in the battle-field, is not clear. With the right contacts—and the writer claims to have many such contacts—it is, of course, not difficult to meet underground cadre of CPI (Maoist). He had sought to make up this weakness by meeting people belonging to various legal



organizations which profess to be revolutionary such as Kanu Sanyal and CPI (ML)-Liberation.

The excerpts from the Fact Finding Report by a team of democratic intellectuals which was released to the media in December 2005 and from the Report of April 2006 entitled '**When the State Makes War on Its Own People**', Mahendra Karma's statement on the aim of Salwa Judum ("*Unless you cut off the source of the disease, the disease will remain. The source is the people, the villagers.*"), presentation of the full text of Bijapur SP DL Manhar's instructions on the wireless to his men which was taped by the Maoists, the story of local journalist Kamlesh Paika, conversations with KR Pisda, Collector of Dantewara, abuse of journalists in the most filthy and uncivilized manner by Alok Awasthi, additional director in Chattisgarh's Directorate of Public Relations, etc are well brought out. The aim of *Salwa Judum* as admitted by the government in the official document is also quoted exhaustively. The most chilling story of the evacuation and setting afire the village of Darzo in Mizoram by the Indian Army during the early 1970s as part of the sordid plan of resettlement of the villages is very much relevant in the context of the *Salwa Judum* campaign and the planned resettlement of the tribals in Dantewara. The comparison with the Mizoram of the 1970s is a commendable job.

At several places in the book, during conversations with the revolutionaries, bureaucrats and police officials, the activities and viewpoints of the two opposing forces in this class conflict are brought into sharp contrast.

Some of the remarks by top political and police brass make interesting, and at times, disgusting, reading. For instance, the health minister of Jharkhand, Bhanu Pratap Shahi, says in an interview: "*One vasectomy in a Naxalite dominated village means that many potential comrades less...when you have too many mouths to feed and too little food to eat, you may turn into a Naxalite. All I want is to minimize the number of mouths.*" The cynical revelation by an officer of the military intelligence of how he and his team had hacked off the heads of six

militants just to petrify their Islamic colleagues and to serve as a spiritual insult makes chilling reading. "*Then we heard these human rights chaps were coming. So we put the heads back on somehow, crudely stitched them up. We didn't bother with matching head and body.*" (p 78) That cynical laughter of the officer while narrating this ghastly incident shows the general sadistic mindset of the police and security establishment, whether it is in Kashmir, North East, Dandakaranya, Jharkhand, AP or elsewhere. Their proposed solution to the Naxalite issue is such outright murders and fascist suppression, despite their occasional declarations, if only to please and appease civil rights activists and liberal-minded intellectuals, that the issue is more a socio-economic one rather than a law & order problem. *Khadi* and *Khaki* bandits are all one and the same with regard to this.

The bogey of Naxal surrenders is also well depicted by the author. Chattisgarh's DGP OP Rathor (who died of heart attack on anti-terrorist day) bursts out venom against the Naxals: "*Bloody nuisance. There's no Marxism, Leninism or Maoism about them. When I was young I at least sensed some ideology about the Naxalites. But these chaps (now) are nothing but thugs and extortionists*" (p 263). The Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Government of Chattisgarh, BKS Ray, shows the same abysmally crude attitude and approach towards Naxalite movement. "*These people are just thugs and extortionists. That's why in Chattisgarh you have a spontaneous popular movement against them—these tribals are fed up of the Naxals*" he says. Why the tribals were not fed up with the Naxals for 25 years and why all of a sudden they became restive is something this arrogant bureaucrat will never be able to grasp or explain. And why will the tribals be angry with Naxals, even if one accepts the allegations of the rulers that they are extortionists, since the tribals have nothing to lose and everything to gain? Is it not only the big contractors, bureaucrats, traders and industrialists who have big property amassed through primitive methods of exploitation of tribals and loot and plunder of the entire

region that actually fear the Maoists and try to snuff it out with all means at their disposal? No wonder, this bureaucrat with a police mind set can only think of extermination of Maoists as the solution ('*sabko khatm karo*' [kill all] he says over the phone to the police officials.) It has become a fashion for every police officer and political bigwig to express nostalgic feelings about the Naxals of yesteryears as if they really believed Naxals were sincere in the bygone times and had become a nuisance now. They say they were an educated lot in earlier times but now have lumpen elements in dominance. The fact is today Naxals have the real oppressed classes behind them which is why it is becoming increasingly difficult for the reactionary ruling classes to suppress them. The change in the composition of the Naxalite movement shows the maturity and grass-roots strength of the movement.

#### **Ideological biases:**

As is natural in a class-divided society, the presentation in the book, and the conclusions drawn, are subject to the limitations set by the class and social background of the writer besides the inescapable influence of oft-repeated verdicts on the movement by earlier writers of various hues. It is not easy to wriggle oneself out of the shackles of ruling ideology, culture and long-inculcated values that continue to reinforce upon one's mind ever since one's childhood. Some of the remarks of the writer bring home this point. For instance, referring to a revolutionary writer's, speech at the *Tehelka* summit in November 2006 in Delhi, the writer says: "*Democracy, with all its ills, allows him this public space. I hope he realizes the irony that dogma and undemocratic institutions have no space for others, tolerate no dissent. Mao didn't. The bloom of a Hundred Flowers turned into deepest tragedy. Maybe when the Maoists talk about New India, they really need to talk about gentler Maoism—possibly an oxymoron—as their counterparts have done for Nepal's fragile peace.*" (p292)

The author also cites some instances of punishment given to informers in DK, Jharkhand, Orissa

by the "dreaded Jan Adalat, or People's Court, which is little more than kangaroo court" and concludes that "These acts are as gruesome, and gratuitous, as what the Maoists accuse state security of."

Another comment or rather conclusion of the author without any analysis runs thus: "In Dantewada, democracy is quite dead, on both sides of the battle line." Surprisingly, he cites the game of *chor-police* (cops-and-robbers) played by tribal children to arrive at such an obviously biased conclusion!!

The author's ideological biases can be seen also from his bland statements regarding the future post-revolutionary society and about Maoist China. He says: "What would it be like if ever revolution were to succeed in India, enough to impose its imprint beyond tribal and caste-rolled areas? Most probably, instant justice, dogmatic and puritanical life, Soviet-style post-revolutionary rot, vast May Day parades." And he goes on: "Perhaps even brutal China-style state control and a repeat of the Cultural Revolution of Mao himself, that ended up killing and damning millions of unbelievers." (p 210)

He concludes: "From available historical evidence, a Maoist state might do little else but backslide all of India's hard-won victories despite the mire of grand corruption and the utter small-mindedness of administration." (p 211)

Needless to say, this writer, as any other writer without living links with the lives of the oppressed masses and the movement, has also become a victim to the almost inescapable influence of the imperialist and ruling class ideological biases as regards comrade Mao and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, post-revolutionary societies, and so on. From the opinions expressed by the writer such as the above one cannot but come to the conclusion that he prefers the status quo in place of a new revolutionary order where, he imagines, freedom will be the first casualty

#### Some factual errors

There are a few minor factual errors in the book which could have been avoided with a little more diligence and care by the writer. Mistakes such as mentioning

Chundru in place of Chundur or Tsundur (p 114), Piyas instead of Riyaz (p 206), Dr. Ramachandran instead of Dr. Ramanatham (p197) referring to the elderly former Vice President of APCLC who was murdered in his clinic in Warangal by police in 1985, referring to Darshan Pal as a Professor when in fact he is a medical doctor (perhaps the title Dr has misled the writer into thinking that he must be a professor),

Another problem with the presentation is that several allegations are made regarding the activities of the Maoists by some police officials and political leaders while no opportunity is available to the former to refute these allegations. When an author quotes these officials it will also be the bounden duty to get the response from the Maoists. Or else, it would mislead the people and amounts to gross injustice to the other side in the ongoing war. For instance, the superintendent of police of Dantewada district, Prabir Kumar Das, alleges that Maoists are against development and do not allow bore-wells to be sunk in their stronghold villages. He is quoted as saying: "When we entered an area 50 kilometers from here, deep inside, we found they had broken hand pumps. Initially, we thought it was to deny police water. Later, when we went to areas we hadn't been to before, there too the pumps were broken. Villagers told us that they were asked by the Maoists to drink only from wells and other natural water sources." (p 77) The rationale of the Maoists, behind this move, is attributed to their perception of bore-wells as a sign of oppression (!) "Hand pumps were provided by the state or NGOs with state funding; they were a sign of oppression, and therefore taboo" says this gentleman. Nothing could be farther from truth. This even goes against common sense which the top police brains in India pitifully lack. How can the Maoists (the police can at least get their own mineral bottles), survive if they break the hand-pumps? If the author had verified the facts by touring the areas deep inside it would have been really useful in exposing the deliberate concoctions of the police chief. And all this is only to justify the brutal

state-sponsored terror campaign in the name of *Salwa Judum* with the pretext that the villagers are fed up with Maoist attempts to block development schemes and such trash.

Some good photographs and charts would have enlivened the narration and made the book more meaningful and popular. I do not know why the author hasn't taken the trouble to compile some photographs when it isn't much difficult to get them.

The writer comes to the conclusion that Maoist movement would soon encompass the urban areas and mobilize the vast masses of the have-nots living in the most distressing conditions in the slums and factories. He rightly says that all the material conditions for the spread of Maoists to the urban areas exist there. He includes entire sections from the document of the CPI (Maoist), *Perspective of Urban Areas*, as an Appendix and quotes extensively from this document to prove how the Maoists will emerge as a strong urban force too.

The author also tries to place his own theories of In-Land, Out-Land, City States etc. which he says will characterize the country's social scenario in the future. Or in other words, that India will increasingly be divided into two: one inhabited by the haves and the other by have-nots with continuous friction between the two. Although the essence of his thesis will be the unfolding reality—the pointers to this division are already emerging with the fast multiplying expressways, multiplexes, shopping malls, super fast trains, amusement parks, high cost of education, housing and health, drastic cuts in social welfare schemes, and so on—the emerging scenario will be one of acute class struggle with the vast majority of the Indian population locked up in bitter struggles, armed and unarmed, against the exploitative set up, and fascist state dictatorship becoming the norm. In this cruel, bitter class war the Maoist movement is certain to gain ground and advance towards the goal of liberation of our country from the clutches of the imperialist marauders, decadent feudal forces and comprador big business sharks.

PT

## SALWA JUDUM FROM CHATTISGARH TO MANIPUR

THE UPA government, leaning on the 'Left' crutches, is now busy extending the Indian ruling classes' age old programme of pitting one section of the people against the other in their drive against the people, waging nationality or revolutionary armed struggles. A civil war enforced by the state through a counter-revolutionary operation named *Salwa Judum* has been going on in the state of Chattisgarh for the past three years with the state arming and actively encouraging a section of the population in killing hundreds of *adivasis*, burning down their villages, committing heinous atrocities against women and forcibly bundling people in to camps. All this to crush the people's revolutionary movement led by the Maoists. This genocidal campaign is the product of simulated bonhomie of the BJP-Congress. The Congress leader, Mahendra Karma, who is a past master of such savage drives, justified the *Salwa Judum* operations against the rising of the people.

The Indian state tried this tactic in Kashmir. It failed to bring about the desired result. In Chattisgarh too it is facing the same fate, as the people's revolutionary forces led by the Maoists are dealing blow after blow on the forces of the *Salwa Judum*, inflicting heavy losses. But the crisis driven ruling classes can never learn a lesson from such beatings and persist in continuing the twin operations of using the armed forces and of arming a section of the population in their desperate bid to crush the revolutionary and nationality struggles of the people.

The Central cabinet has now officially endorsed the *Salwa Judum* Campaign. The 'left' supported UPA government's recent submission before the Supreme Court during the hearing on the brutalities of the *Salwa Judum*, smugly dismissing the piled-up charges of civil rights organizations, is a pronounced threat to the right of the

people to rise against chilling exploitation and resist state terrorism. Despite waves of protest from various quarters, the Indian state, the central and state governments of all hues have struck to the conspiracy of pitting one section of the people against the rising vast masses of people. Manipur is the latest one to embark on this course.


The chief minister of Manipur, O Karam Ibobi Singh has now decided to arm a section of the villagers, provide armed training to about 500 in two villages, Heirok in Thoubal district and Lilong Chajing in Imphal West district, to fight the state's war against the Manipur rebels fighting for self determination. This disastrous decision comes in the wake of Mr Singh's earlier audacious verbiage demanding the brutal death of all rebels for the so-called great duty of saving Manipur.

Such an ominous master plan is an extension of the *Salwa Judum* programme. Democratic and sensible people of Manipur have justly come out in strong protest against such a draconian plan to pit a section of terrorized, poverty stricken Manipuris against the rebel Manipuris waging many decades of armed struggle, with massive popular support for the right to self determination. Just before this decision, the centre sent a high level team to direct the Manipur government to implement a *Salwa Judum* in Manipur. The fascist Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was in vogue in Manipur with the military having been given *carte blanche* to commit any sort of barbarity. The deluge of popular protests led by women after the rape and cruel killing of Manorma in 2006 against the armed forces and for the abrogation of the AFSPA is indelibly fresh in the minds of the Manipuris. The current *Salwa Judum* of Manipur has already evoked protests from the villagers who were roped into the state's counter-

insurgency operation.

The Indian state's terror machine is over active to build up a vast network of informers in all the areas of resistance alongside the armed operations. Simultaneous with other measures, counter-revolutionary groups and organisations, raised from a section of the people and armed and trained by the state are in operation in many states. In the Jharkhand-West Bengal border NASUS, a communal gang organised by the police, Jharkhand *Mukthi Morcha* etc, have been on the rampage, killing the Maoists and their sympathizers, raping women and terrorizing the people in all possible means. The CPI(M) is now organizing GOSUS, another criminal gang with logistic support from the police in West Midnapur district of West Bengal, to fight the rising Maoist movement there.

Arming a section of the people, burning down villages and forcibly herding people into concentration camps etc, are actually the tactics adopted by the British Imperialists in their war against the revolutionaries, the Malaya (now Malaysia) Communist Party during the 50s of the last century. It was known as Brigg's plan, named after the butcher and commander of the British forces. The Indian rulers, walking in the shoes of their imperialist masters, have been using these tactics right from the days of the Great Telangana Peasant Armed struggle.

Since the armed explosion of the people everywhere in India grew out from the extreme poverty, deprivation, oppression and exploitation by the state controlled by the exploitative classes, the revolutionary movements shall wade through all the repressive hurdles to translate the professed aims and objectives in to a reality. 

## ON THE INDIAN ECONOMY & THE FUTURE

**Question by PT: *The GDP is growing at a rate not seen in post 1947 India at 8 to 9%. What then is the problem with this model of growth compared to the earlier period what is referred to as the mixed economy? What is the Maoist view on this?***

**Arvind:** What they say that the higher the rate of growth rate the higher will be the employment generation in the country. The higher the employment the higher will be the purchasing power and the standard of life of the people. But, the past decade experience itself has shown this to be false. There has been jobless growth and except in the service sector, all spheres have in fact seen an absolute decline in employment. This can be seen in agriculture, manufacturing and even in the employment in the public sector. Not only are employment opportunities declining but also their wages/salaries are being badly hit by extensive contractualisation of labour and also high inflation of necessities. In other words there is a drastic drop in the purchasing power of the masses. The major basis of the present growth rate has come from a gigantic increase in the wealth of the rich and particularly the super-rich, the import-export sector, the financial sector and the so-called ICE (information, communication and entertainment) sector. Today the service sector accounts for 55% of the GDP but only 0.5% of the employment of 20 lakhs. On the other hand agriculture now accounts for not even 20% of the GDP but it has 70% of the employment. Even in the manufacturing sector, employment has dropped by 3% in the last decade. Such warped development is unsustainable. The real benefit from this model has been to create Mukesh Ambani types who is now the richest man in the world, one lakh millionaires and a growing upper class eating off the crumbs of the super-rich. For 90% or more of the population it entails greater and greater poverty.

**Q. *But then are you saying that the Nehruvian model of the mixed economy, where growth rates were a mere 3-5%, was better than the present, which has been introduced in this era of globalization, liberalization and privatization.?***

**A.** If at all comparisons are to be done what is going on now under the LPG model is outright plunder, loot and robbery, reducing the masses, and particularly the rural population, to a state of destitution never seen before in these six decades of post-1947 rule. The over one-lakh peasants who have committed suicide in the last decade is only the tip of the iceberg. And the situation for the masses is deteriorating by the day. Massive retrenchment is taking place in all PSUs and all jobs are being contracted out. In the earlier model though conditions were very bad, now things are much worse. The point is not which of the two is better, as it is the same people who have adopted both these systems; both were needed for the growth and development of big business at their particular times. Soon after 1947 the Tata, Birla type big business houses themselves promoted the public sector through what was the Bombay Plan (or Tata-Birla Plan) as they needed cheap raw material for their industries and also the development of an infrastructure at public expense. So these big business houses milked the exchequer for funds, depended fully on government banks for their funding (PSU banks held majority shares in their companies), used taxpayers money for infrastructural development and robbed the raw materials cheap (also developed through huge capital expenditure by the government which they were not prepared to put in). So, one can say the big business houses as also the existing foreign industries grew with such gigantic doles from the government in the so-called mixed economy. Now once having set up massive empires with government props, these same big business houses are demanding privatization and liberalization without government interference as they now need the freedom to grow at break-neck speed and govt regulations (particularly in the sphere of labour) act as a restriction. Now the LPG policy facilitates maximum growth of their wealth; then, the Nehruvian model helped maximisation of their wealth. It is the so-called Left that has created this misnomer of the socialist (or mixed) model versus the supposed capitalist

model. Both are capitalist models demanded by their needs at different times. Also imperialists have played a role in the models chosen. After the Soviet Union degenerated into an imperialist country their influence on the country in the 1970s and early 1980s had a temporary impact on the model of development. But then, this did not reduce British/US investment and also coincided with the needs of big business as outlined in the Bombay Plan.

**Q. *The country has so far seen only these two models of development. All discussions in the financial and academic spheres only compare one or the other. Now you say that both will not help the country. That is the problem with you Marxists you can never see anything positive in any policy. Everything is negative..... then and also now. Is this not some form of nihilism?***

**A.** However much we may wish good, that will not come unless there are realistic policies to achieve it. What I have said in the last answer is merely portraying the reality. Tell me is the reality any different from what I have said, so that you could accuse me of nihilism etc. But we should not run away from the reality. The fact is that two centuries of colonialism played havoc with the country and destroyed all that was growing. From this state of ruin the country was taken over by the elite but the imperialists merely retreated to the rear and these masters also have been changing. But it is they who have been calling the shots both then and now. So, the country and its people continue go towards ruination. No doubt the elite have gained then; they gain now on a scale they never dreamed of before. But we are not talking of their gains; when we say country, we mean the mass of its people. They have always lost out on any new policies which are made by the moneybags, for the moneybags and in their interests. One must understand there are certain laws that govern these systems and they have their internal dynamics; however much we may wish something good mere good intentions cannot achieve those positive results unless the inner dynamics of the system

is understood and then changed in a way that can deliver the positive results that we seek. The problem with many an NGO, social worker, liberal, etc they seek change, but do not wish to see how this can be achieved as they do not delve into the laws that govern the system. So they rest content with mere palliatives.

**Q. If it is neither of these two models, then what is the solution to the ills of the country?**

**A.** To this Question the answer cannot be given in just a few words as what you are asking is a full-fledged alternative for all the ills of the country. The answer to this would require an entire book and not a few lines as this entails not only the economic welfare of the masses that constitute the country (which ofcourse is the starting point) but also the social, political, cultural, health, etc development of the masses. That would require a very exhaustive answer. Besides, we have no magic wand for all the ills of society. As Marxists we understand the laws that govern society and seek to apply these to our country and the situation prevailing here. With further experience gained through both the practical movement of the day and also the experiences around the world, and taking cognizance of the changes continuously taking place, our knowledge further grows. But, while saying so we must understand that the laws of development of society discovered by Marx and Engels and further developed by Lenin, Stalin and Mao, gives the only scientific basis for understanding society. No, doubt, like in the natural sciences, with the discovery of further laws of understanding society and change, this science too will develop. Anyhow now to come to the point that you have raised. We will give a very brief picture of the change we envisage. If the economy must grow the starting point must be that there must be extensive industrialization all over the country; not a few pockets of industrialization in an oasis of backwardness. This is not possible unless the purchasing power of the masses is enhanced and they have the capacity to buy goods that will act as the motor for industrialization. It is the expansion of the home market of the country that has to be the starting point. Once this is achieved other steps follow. But how is

this to be done? Today over 70% of the population of our country live in the rural areas in utter backwardness and poverty weighed down by varied forms of feudal, semi-feudal and now 'modern' forms of exploitation and loot. According to a study over 77% of the population live on Rs. 20 per day. Here, the land Question is central. Coming out of this archaic form of existence, through distributing land on the basis of land to the tillers and then moving on to cooperatives, destroying the moneylender/trader/politician/bureaucrat nexus that robs them in every conceivable way, and extricating the farmer from the more recent trap of the imperialists, etc is the only solution. No half-baked step can help an iota. Once the huge rural population is freed from the chains of backwardness and market fetishism and start bettering their standard of living the demand will develop for goods, leading to industrialization all over the country. The capital for this initial phase of industrialization can come from taking back the wealth looted from the country and people by TNCs, big business houses, bankers, politicians, mafia, et al. The loot has been enormous so there will very little problem as the amounts looted and that have to be taken back are huge.

**Q. But what you are suggesting here is a socialist model; that has been a total failure where it was experimented as in Russia and China. Why should it work here?**

**A.** There is no doubt that all the great socialist revolutions that had taken place during the last century had been reversed by the end of the century. That is true. The reasons for the reversals have been studied to some extent; they have to be gone into in much greater depth while building new socialist societies. While that is true it is also true that the serious problems people face have not been solved by capitalism and cannot be solved by capitalism. The reality today proves that. In fact in this stage of imperialism the system is in continuous crises, moving from one crisis to another. And in this phase of imperialist globalization, the bubble-type economies it is generating due to the necessity of depending excessively on speculative capital (due to a lack of outlet for investment in industry

and manufacturing) has made the system even more fragile. In 2000 the IT bubble bust; now the housing bubble has bust in the US, precipitating a worldwide financial meltdown. Besides this, the capitalist/imperialist system results in the massacre of millions through genocides as has happened in Africa and Latin America in the last decades and wars as is happening in Iraq, Afghanistan, etc. Besides, it silently kills lakhs each day through hunger, starvation, disease, etc. In the coming days, with the economic/financial crisis likely to deepen horrifying conditions can be expected. An attack on Iran is imminent precipitating enormous chaos and suffering worldwide. The holocaust may look mild in comparison. So capitalism does not have any answers for the unbelievable suffering of the people. So, what is the alternative then? Society has not given any other answer besides socialism. All the erstwhile socialist countries took gigantic leaps in their societies and for their people while it lasted. This cannot be denied. That there has been a setback in the socialist experiments will help enrich future revolutionws. Besides, the laws of social development show that the inbuilt causes for the recurring crises of capitalism are insoluble; and that development, if it is to take place can only take place in the direction of socialism. So, however painful the path, real development of societies is possible only in the direction of socialism. In a country like India which has not even reached real capitalism and is mostly bogged down in extreme backwardness it would first have to go through a democratic revolution to free it from the chains of semi-feudalism and imperialism. That is what the genuine Marxists in the country are attempting.

**Q. If yours is just another economic model where is the need for all that violence that is taking place wherever the Maoists are active?**

**A.** What the Maoists say is very clear; i.e. a thorough democratization of the country ..... its economy, its polity, its culture, and all social relations. Here it necessary means depriving the feudal elements of their power and land and big business and TNCs of their ill-gotten wealth which has reached vulgar levels of opulence. Quite naturally the gigantic

sums extracted by politicians, bureaucrats and all their hangers-on will also be seized. Without this there can be no re-organisation of society on a genuinely democratic basis. There are unfortunately no short-cuts. Those that have tried like the parliamentary 'Marxists' and NGOs (see Narmada Bachao movement) have failed miserably. Because we are principled and uncompromising it is the state that is intolerant of such forces. Why us who Question the entire system; they were even unable to tolerate a top RAW official (i.e. someone from their own class) who brought out details of corruption in the top hierarchy. He has been hounded, threatened and is likely to be arrested. So it is the government and their imperialist backers who are not willing to tolerate the slightest opposition to their freedom to loot the people and the country. They first try and buy them through corruption and if that is not possible they come down with a heavy hand. But, unlike others the Maoists do not buckle under and equip themselves to retaliate. They know to what levels of viciousness these reactionaries can go (and have gone) and so prepare for that in advance.

**Q. Well now let us come to the present. What do you have to say about the enormous amounts being invested in mining, infrastructure, SEZs etc. Will this not lead to some level of the modernization and industrialization of the country?**

**A.** Yes, lakhs of crores are going into these projects by big business and TNCs. The amounts involved are mind-boggling. Just recently Laxmi Mittal has signed MoUs with the Orissa and Jharkhand governments for 12 million ton per annum steel plants in each of the states involving a huge investment of \$ 10 billion each. All such MoUs give massive tax and other concessions to these giant magnates by the respective governments; though they are never prepared to give a paisa to the starving masses. That is why much secrecy is maintained about the details of these agreements. They are never disclosed publicly, not even to the people who are affected. Parts of Orissa for example, the people have faced starvation deaths for decades, but the government has done little about it. But to financial magnates

like the Mittals who are in no need for concession, due to their vast wealth, are granted every possible gift. What is the logic of this? It is nothing but the class system that demands this; no doubt the ministers and bureaucrats will get their commission. But that too is part of this system. From the smallest to the biggest deals worldwide are done through giving kickbacks. But with each development project thousands will be kicked off the land, deprived of their only source of livelihood pushing more and more people each day to the brink. All the new projects are with hi-tech machinery so the local people can never have any hope for employment. And the number employed will only be a microscopic fraction of those displaced. This can be seen with all the projects, whether mining, SEZs, dams, infrastructure or urban development. According to reports the SEZs are all set to grab a huge 1,750 sq kms of land displacing 1.14 lakh farming households and 82,000 labouring households; i.e. a minimum population of one million people. Where will all these people go for their livelihood? Today, a huge 1,000 megawatt power plant requires barely 50-100 people to run it. TISCO has nearly halved its staff (from 70,000 to 40,000) but production has been increased five-fold. Then take the massive retail chains that are coming in. The second biggest employer in the country after agriculture is retailing with 12 million retail shops in the country and 4 crore people dependent on it. At a conservative estimate it is expected that 4 to 6 lakh families will be displaced by these retail chains (EPW; Feb.12 2005). So, what we have as the end result is not 'development' but retrogression with an ever-growing pool of destitute people. Besides giving windfall profits for business, how does it benefit the people of this country. Not only is it destroying the people but also the ecology. This model of development has already destroyed much of our soil (green revolution), forests, water resources and even the health conditions of the country. Yet, it pushes on in the same path at an even faster pace. One can only imagine the havoc it will create with the environment of the country. So, the present model of development is a

prescription for disaster. Ofcourse, meanwhile the moneybags will make their pot-full of wealth and stack it safely in foreign safe havens.

**Q. But it is said that this development will be much like the industrial revolution which created much deprivation initially but later took the countries on the path of industrialisation. So, if this is so, surely this industrialization will in the long term be good for the country and its development.**

**A.** This is also the argument of the CPM when they came to the defence of their projects after Singur and Nandigram. But it is not the reality. Here the model of development is not like during the industrial revolution. No doubt in both cases the rural base is feudal (or semi-feudal as in India); but during the industrial revolution there was no imperialism (and compradors) to suck away all the surplus and then the level of technology was intrinsic to the level of development of that time and so able to absorb the displaced population. This is not the case here in India. The projects mostly displace people and are not able to create much employment. The few jobs that will get generated are only for the well-educated urban middle class. So, if we look at it from the long-term it will mean crores thrown out from the land as a result of mining projects, big dams and infrastructural development with no alternative source of employment. In the urban areas the development taking place in the malls, huge retail chains are all set to displace the massive population (second only to agriculture) that survive on small retailing. So, with displacement to take place in crores, with jobs being cut due to extensive contractualisation of labour, and with the agrarian crisis deepening ..... a nightmarish situation is developing in the country. What is taking place is not development; it is retrogression. Ofcourse if you look at the situation from the eyes of the power-that-be, India is shining with high GDP growth rates, stock-market booms and private sector profits sky-rocketing. The glossy TV and print media only focuses on this latter aspect of India, pushing the real India into oblivion. That is why middle classes are not realising the gravity of the situation, and are getting carried away

by the media propaganda. And the crumbs thrown off the table are lapped up by a section of the middle classes who create public opinion for the present model of development.

**Q. *If that is the case you should not be opposing the industrialization but should be demanding jobs for those displaced. Also we see no future on the land as agriculture has become totally unviable. In fact in some places entire villages are asking for projects to buy up their village. In such a situation where agriculture is unviable what is the logic of clinging on to that small plot of land. Surely going for industrialization is the solution, if it can be done in a more humane way?***

**A.** To demand for jobs is one thing; but what we must realize whatever may be the promises of the government in the present model they will not be able to provide locals with jobs. Let alone the rural displaced population, in fact even the next generation of middle classes will not be able to get stable jobs except probably in the police and the army. All PSUs which provided the main source of stable employment are cutting jobs on a huge scale, contracting out all their work; also there is strong pressure from the IMF to do this, in order to cut the fiscal deficit. So, the present model will not be able to provide the jobs as propagated by the supporters of this model, including the CPM and the particularly vocal West Bengal Chief Minister. According to a study by Team Lease Services (Outlook Apr 9 07) there will be a 15-fold increase in unemployment by 2020. Now come to the Question of the viability of the land. Who has made it unviable? Experiments have shown that even one acre of land, with sufficient water, and a few cattle is sufficient to support a whole family for a year if scientifically used. So, today why is even 5 acres said to be unviable. Reason is due to continuation of semi-feudal backwardness the poor peasant has never been able to come out of the clutches of the landed/moneylender/trader/politician/bureaucrat combine; thereby keeping him in a continuing state of impoverisation. Then added to this has come the commercialisation of crops to serve imperialist and CBB interests, which initially gave the rich peasant some profit but is now ruining the entire peasantry

due to uneven terms of trade (between the output and the cost of inputs), destruction of the soil, lack of irrigation, etc. Finally it has been made unviable due to the hefty drop in investment by the government in agriculture (According to the RBI the Centre's expenditure on agriculture fell by 20% between 1990/91 and 2004/05 and on irrigation and flood-control by 15%). All these three factors have destroyed the peasantry even further and made agriculture unviable. If one goes away from this model through getting out of the clutches of the semi-feudal looters and the imperialist/CBB dictated market economy, rejuvenate the soil through avoiding chemical fertilisers and pesticides and through scientific methods of watershed management and re-forestation, and through systematic irrigation of the land..... the land can not only be made viable, it can produce even a surplus. So in fact the non-viability of the land is part of the overall model of this method of development.

**Q. *You Marxists always speak of crisis creating a situation for revolution but your crisis never seems to come?***

**A.** Well it did not require a crisis to kill over a lakh farmers by suicide and push crores to the brink; it did not take a crisis to displace millions of people by the warped development policies; it did not require a crisis to reduce the health conditions of the masses to the levels at which has reached today, which is probably today the biggest silent killer; it did not take a crisis to massacre hundreds through state terrorism on revolutionaries, nationalities, muslims, dalits and any struggling people. Even without a crisis all this is happening. You can just visualize what would happen when a crisis strikes. But, today the international economy is exceedingly fragile as proven by the recent sub-prime crisis in the USA; major banks in the US, Britain, EU, Japan were on the verge of collapse and were only saved by the government pumping in huge funds to bail them out. Even according to the head of the IMF the real impact of the sub-prime crisis will strike in 2008. The war clouds are gathering with increasing threats to Iran. Oil prices have peaked at \$ 92 per barrel and is likely to shoot through the roof in the case of war with Iran. All major

economies like those of Europe, Japan are stagnating with unemployment at peak levels. The US has the biggest budget and trade deficits ever and the dollar has dropped to its lowest level ever (1.4 dollars to the euro). There is fervent military exercises as to be seen in the development on the Quadriangle (led by US and comprising Japan, Australia and India) on the one side and the SCO (Russia, China and Central Asian countries) on the other. The writing is on the wall.

**Q. *What do you have to be say about the current high rate of inflation?***

The worldwide high rates of inflation are nothing but one more reflection of the growing crisis in the world economy with its reflection in India. The latest figure for India of 11% would actually be around 20% if we take retail prices and prices of basic necessities. It is destroying not only the poor but also the middle classes. The main cause for this is the nature of the crisis-ridden world economy where the TNCs and big business are not willing to cut their super-profits and agri-business is making fortunes. Besides speculation in futures (in basic commodities), hoarding, the skyrocketing prices of oil (now at the unbelievable \$140 per barrel and likely only to go up), the conversion of vast amounts of foodgrains to bio-fuels, etc. are all adding to the price rise. This is bound to go up as the days go by as the economic crisis is only deepening.

**Q. *So what then is likely to be the immediate future?***

**A.** While big business will continue to make fortunes while more and more people will be pushed to destitution. At the international plane wars and devastation will be the order of the day. Already 7 lakhs have been butchered in Iraq, thousands in Iran, and now an impending attack on Iran. We can expect devastation on a huge scale all over the world and particularly in India where the rulers are bent on tying the country to the apron strings of the most brutal terror in the world — the US. The country and our people face two alternatives — horrors of acute distress on a scale rarely seen before or the agony of revolution. The former gives no hope while the latter gives birth to a new bright future. The pain and agony is that of the birth of a new society born from the womb of the present will usher in a just and equitable order. 

## HOW ACCOUNTABLE IS THE PEOPLE'S PARTY AND PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

**A**CCOUNTABILITY is a major point of discussion in politics. Politics means power. The authority gained through power gives a means to be unaccountable to anyone. Any mistake, misappropriation could be mystified with 'power'. All the so-called reforms taken up to cleanse the electoral system and the bureaucracy prove to be a fiasco. This is the case with the 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

But the case is different in a people's party and with the real people's governance. In the Dandakaranya Special Zone there are instances where not only representatives but also the leaders of the people's government were recalled for the guilt of misappropriation of the government (*Janathana Sarkar*) funds. There were also cases where persons in responsible positions were recalled on account of moral mistakes. In one of these cases the people made a complaint against the president of the local government; the judicial department investigated into the matter and found the person guilty. It convened a '*gram sabha*,' the mass meeting of the concerned villages in the *Janathana Sarkar* and put the facts before them. People expressed their opinions. They protested against the misdeeds of their leading representative. Applying the regulations of the *Janathana Sarkar*, they suspended the guilty person. Such persons are kept under people's observation for a period of time, after which they would be co-opted back into the *Sarkars* if proved to have rectified themselves.

Apart from this, there is one incident that needs to be mentioned. This incident shows the sincerity and openness of both the people's party and the people's government and the way in which the downtrodden masses exercise their democratic authority without any fear or compulsion. In this incident the '*Janathana Sarkar*' imposed a fine on the people's party in a murder case.

It is an area where the mode of production is relatively less developed, almost in the food gathering stage. There is no irrigation and no vegetable cultivation. There is no academic education, scientific education and not much knowledge about the outside world. Blind beliefs are in the rule.

In such an area, mass organizations were formed, Militias were formed. The leaders of the village in discussion were not yet strong enough to guide all aspects of the people's lives. This situation led to an untoward incident.

A man was beating his wife daily. He drinks liquor, comes home and beats her. She runs for her life and takes shelter in some one's house. This is no secret in the village. But he is not afraid of anyone. There was no check on this person. There were no warnings from anyone, even from the women's organisation, since it was not active enough.

At a point, the wife lost patience. She met the militia comrades and spoke out her woes. She asked them to threaten her husband hoping to solve her daily difficulty in this way. The militia commander, who in fact is enough militant in the actual sense took this to his heart. But this was not the only reason. It was feared that the wife beater practices witchcraft.

This is one blind belief strongly prevalent among the people of this particular area. Some people are believed to have been causing illness through 'some' means, of which no one can provide any objective evidence. The militia commander too did not yet gain enough ideological and political consciousness to dismiss away such wrong superstitions.

So he decided otherwise. He took along two of his associates and went to the wife beater's house. He did not take much time to implement his decision. He did not try to convince the man. He entered into a quarrel and killed him in the heat of rage. There ended the

matter.

Here ensued a discussion. The matter was reported to the local party committee, the *Janathana Sarkar* and other related committees. The Militia is guided by the Party and supported by the *Janathana Sarkar* in different aspects. The Party Committee called the militia commander and told him that this was a mistake and that he should only educate the people about their misdeeds and wrong beliefs. There are other kinds of punishments if the need arises. Death is no solution.

The area level *Janathana Sarkar* (comprising of around 100-150 villages) discussed the matter in its meeting. It resolved to fine the Party for this mistake. This was informed to the concerned party committee. The Party Committee had a thorough discussion and reviewed the whole matter. It owned the responsibility for the incident. It suspended the militia commander.

Com. S, the in-charge, Divisional Committee Member of the area said — the party and the mass organisations are taking propaganda activity against the age old blind beliefs. The cultural organisation is enacting plays and skits on this issue. Anyway it is a long process of scientific and political education. The Party discussed the matter in the party committee and *Janathana Sarkar*. There are one or two other such incidents too. So the Party took up a special campaign on these matters. It is also discussing this in the village level committees, mass organisation and all sorts of units.

The Party is confident that it will overcome this situation in a period of time.

This kind of accountability and admission of mistakes is possible only in a sincere, true revolutionary party and a people's democracy of the same kind. It is this accountability that is giving more and more confidence of the masses for the party and for people's democracy. **PT**