

# *Operation Green Hunt - India's War on the People*



*A selection of articles from Democracy and Class Struggle*

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# **SOLIDARITY WITH INDIA'S INDIGENOUS TRIBES FIGHTING AGAINST SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION AND INTERNATIONAL MINING EXPLOITATION.**

90 million tribal people of India have stood up once again, in their long history of self-defence and resistance, against extreme discrimination by the Indian caste-based social hierarchy, and recently, by the international mining companies.

The indigenous tribal people in India are known as 'Adivasis', literally meaning 'original inhabitants'. They make up about 9% of the total population of India, the highest concentration of indigenous peoples in the world. In terms of government administration, they are grouped as 'Scheduled Tribes' (STs), for the declared purposes of administering certain specific constitutional 'privileges, protection and benefits' for peoples considered historically disadvantaged and 'backward'.



The proclaimed constitutional protections can hardly be effective in an administration and judiciary, which is run almost exclusively by people from the upper caste. The struggles for survival of Adivasis - for livelihood and existence as peoples - have today intensified and spread as never before in Indian history.

## **Origins of apartheid-type social discrimination.**

The tribes of India have suffered from extreme apartheid-type social discrimination for centuries, since the beginning of the Hindu caste system, believed by many researchers to have been introduced after the arrival of the Aryans in India around 1500 BC. The Aryans conquered and took control over parts of north India, subdued and enslaved the then existing communities and pushed the indigenous people southwards or towards the jungles and mountains in north and eastern India.

The Aryans devised some social rules under the cloak of religion, described in some ancient scriptures, which allowed only them to be the priests, the warriors and the businessmen - three upper groups of the social hierarchy, known respectively as the 'Brahmins', the 'Kshatrias' and the third group from artisans and traders, the 'Vaisyas'. These three groups constitute about 17% of the Indian population today. (However, it is to be remembered that many from these upper castes belong to the exploited class today.) The indigenous locals constituted the fourth and lowest caste, the 'Shudras' - the then farmers and labourers of the society, constituting about 40 % of the population today.

Outside of these groups, having no place in the caste society at all, there are the so-called 'untouchables', forced to perform unsanitary jobs like sweeping, removal of dead bodies, leather works etc. and even barbaric jobs of cleaning other people's excreta, constituting about 16% of the total population. The Indian social hierarchy has evolved as an agglomeration of thousands of small-scale social groups, whose identities are preserved by practising caste-

endogamy. This practice remains virtually unchanged in India today. The indigenous Adivasis, from the earliest small-scale communities, dependent on hunting, gathering, and traditional agriculture, remained outside this process of agglomeration altogether, and are also treated as outcastes, though not as untouchables. Of course, it goes without saying that any form of social relationship with the 'outcaste', including the Adivasis, is unthinkable.

Hindus, including untouchables and Adivasis, make up about 82% of today's Indian population.

Being pushed to the hills and forests over the centuries, the Adivasis belong to their own territories, which are the essence of their existence and way of life. In most parts of the pre-colonial period, the Adivasis governed themselves outside of the direct administration of a particular local or central ruler.

While the Adivasis in the central part of India were fighting for their survival, the picture was somewhat different in the north-east, whose colonial incorporation with the mainland took place much later.

### **Adivasi rebellions against colonial exploitation.**

During the colonial rule the British actually strengthened the caste order in the image of their own class system. Introduction of private land property in 1793 and colonial capitalism broke the traditional tribal economy based on use value as well as the relationship between the hierarchy and tribal communities.

The history of Adivasis is full of heroic rebellions against British colonialism in which they could not be subdued. Following each struggle, the British had to accede to their immediate demands. These are remembered still today in the songs and folktales of the Adivasis, but of course ignored in the official text books written by the upper caste.

### **Recent systematic displacement from traditional dwellings and migration to urban areas.**

71% of the total forest cover in India is inhabited by the Adivasis. Several Forest Acts, though reduced the rights of Adivasis to mere privileges granted by the state; nevertheless, were important concessions achieved by the Adivasis by fierce struggles waged persistently against the British.

A process of systematic displacement from their traditional dwellings has now started in the states of Madhya Pradesh in central India, Orissa in the east and Andaman Islands. The "Land Acquisition Act" of 1894 paved the road of colonisation of any Adivasi territory in the name of 'public interest'. Over 10 million Adivasis have been displaced to make way for development projects such as dams, mining, industries, roads, protected areas etc. Though most of the dams are located in Adivasi areas, only 19.9% (1980-81) of Adivasi land holdings are irrigated as compared to 45.9% of all holdings of the general population. Income to the government from forests rose from Rs.5.6 million in 1869-70 to more than Rs.13 billions in the 1970s. There are more than 40,000 Adivasi women working in domestic jobs in Delhi alone.

### **Mining boom and the international mining bonanza.**

Approximately 24 types of mineral deposits, including iron, aluminium, copper, chromite, gold, diamond, lead, manganese, zinc and coal occur in Adivasi areas contributing some 56% of the

national total mineral earnings in terms of value. About 85% of all working mines reported by the Indian Bureau of Mines in 1991-92 exist in Adivasi areas.

Since 2006, the Indian government has allowed 100 percent direct investment by foreign companies. Western mining vultures have jumped at the golden opportunity to get at massive reserves for key minerals and a large, built-in market ready for them. India now ranks among the five largest markets in the world for coal, iron and aluminium. The Indian government has surrendered almost 16% of coal and 20% of iron ore of the entire country to compradors such as Tata, Birla, Essar, Jindal and Mittal and MNCs such as Vedanta, POSCO, Holcim, Rio tinto, BHP Billiton, De Beers, and Ras Al Khaimah RAK, etc.

Hundreds of outrageously anti-Adivasi MOU's have been signed. International firms like De Beers and Broken Hill Properties, both with appalling human rights and environmental records in countries like South Africa and Papua New Guinea respectively, have acquired huge prospecting rights in the states of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. Rio Tinto, another large company with similar records, has diamond and gold prospecting rights in Madhya Pradesh.

The Indian state, subservient to imperialism, has sold out at a very cheap royalty the hills, waterways and forests to foreign companies, e.g. Vedanta, the Holding company of Sterlite, a British Multinational Corporation. The productions of iron ores, bauxite, coal and chromium have rocketed in recent years, yet these have contributed a mere 2.5 percent to the country's GDP in the last ten years, and yielding much smaller revenues for the government than it should have been. The state gets a paltry sum from selling bauxite, which is about 0.04% of the London Metal Exchange depending upon the grade and the amount of aluminium in the ore.

Even Adivasi villages have not been spared; 1,10,000 acres of lands have been surrendered to the corporate giants. It is estimated that more than 1 million Adivasis will be evicted in the coming days. Comprador capitalists are the greedy vultures circling the forests of central India.

### **Denial of traditional self-governance.**

The Adivasi territories got divided amongst the states formed on the linguistic basis of the upper caste society, while the Adivasis are denied traditional self-governing systems through the same principle of linguistic states.

Though Article 350A of the Indian Constitution requires receiving primary education via mother tongue, in general this has not been implemented. The Anthropological Survey of India has reported a loss of more than two-thirds of the spoken languages, most of them tribal.

### **Dignity of Adivasis in modern India.**

The shameful term of 'Criminal Tribe' was devised by the British rulers through the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871; the act was repealed in 1952. But no fundamental change in attitudes to Adivasis by the caste society is visible. Despite the Bonded Labour Abolition Act of 1976, Adivasis still form a substantial percentage of bonded labour in the country.

The upper caste people continue to refer to the Adivasis as 'jangli', a derogatory term meaning "like wild animals from jungles" - uncivilised or sub-humans. The majority of the population still is led to regard them as primitive or at best bringing them to the lowest rung in the social ladder. This is especially evident with the rise of the recent fascist Hindutva forces.

## **Adivasis fight back.**

Following their long traditions, the Adivasis are vehemently fighting against displacement and against each corporate giant that tries to swallow their lands and livelihood. Vedanta has completed building its aluminium factory, but is still unable to touch the bauxite hills. One Tata iron factory has come to a grinding halt due to a mass resistance. Jindal is still unable to set up mines and extract its desired gold and diamonds.

In their struggle for survival, against severe social and international mining exploitations, the Adivasis have found the Maoists and the Naxalites taking up their cause. No wonder, the Indian ruling classes have concentrated their attacks through a massive mobilisation of the Indian state's huge military might with deployment of nearly 100,000 personnel under different organisations. The Indian state has declared a civil war called 'Operation Green Hunt' to crush the Adivasi rebellion and the armed Maoist volunteers. Army headquarters and air bases are being constructed inside the dense jungles. Army men are being trained in anti-guerrilla warfare. US satellites are being used to spy the jungles.

**The Co-ordination Committee of Revolutionary Communists of Britain** will endeavour to win the support of the working class and national minorities of Britain for the Adivasi struggle. We salute the heroic Adivasis, and the Maoist and other Naxalite volunteers in the frontline.

Stop the war of the Indian state on its people!  
Long live the Adivasi struggle of India!  
Long live the Communist Party of India (Maoist)!  
Long live the Naxalbari movement of India!

**Statement issued 14th February 2010**

## In Conversation with Ganapathy, General Secretary of CPI (Maoist)

*Q: How do you envisage the linking of this struggle with a general struggle in India in terms of class? Chairman Mao after 1935 took the Long March to Yen-an created a base for national level and part of which was the united front with the Chiang Kai-Shek. Thereby it became the main national power in China. How do you envisage becoming to a national power in India?*



**A:** In China, in which condition Long March to Yen-an took-place and created a base and a part of it formation of a United Front with Chiang Kai-Shek for national level is different to our present situation of New Democratic Revolution (NDR) of India. Chinese revolution had took-place in first half of the 20th century. Since then several significant changes have occurred in the world. Those are, firstly emergence of a Socialist Camp and its subsequent down fall, secondly downfall of colonialism and emergence of neocolonialism, thirdly emergence of so-called parliamentary system as the common political system throughout the world, fourthly, a long gap emerged in the revolutionary upsurge after success of revolutions in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos in spite of some upsurges and significant struggles in several countries. If we look into the entire world history, after emergence of working class on the globe, it is confronting with the bourgeoisie class and all other reactionary forces and seized power from them in Paris for a short-while and then in Russian, China and several European countries for a long time and shocked the entire globe. In this trajectory, there were various ups and downs in the World Socialist Revolution but nonetheless the struggle continuous. It is like waves at times and it slowed down, but it never ceased. So we have to see any revolution of a country in the light of historical context.

In relation to our revolution, first of all I would like to introduce our history in a short account to understand the present condition correctly. Our unified Party, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was formed on 21st September 2004 by merging two Maoist revolutionary streams of India, the Communist Party of India(Marxist Leninist) [CPI (ML)]and Maoist Communist Centre (MCC). Our great beloved fore-founder leaders and teachers, Comrades Charu Mazumdar(CM) and Kanhai Chatterji(KC) who led an ideological and political struggle ceaselessly for a long time against revisionism and modern revisionism of Communist Party of India and CPI(Marxist).

Through this struggle only backbone of the revisionist parties' had broken down which resulted in a breakthrough in the Indian communist movement. By the result of this great struggle in all spheres by comrade CM and other genuine Maoists, the great Naxalbari armed peasant uprising broke-out like a Spring-Thunder. Then a new history began. Then onwards our two great leaders upheld the red banner of Naxalbari and lead the New Democratic Revolution. The revolutionary movement spread like prairie-fire to almost all parts of the country in a different scale. During this revolutionary course in a short period two Parties, CPI(ML) and MCC were founded on 22nd April 1969 and 20th October 1969 under the direct leadership of comrades CM and KC respectively. Due to several historical reasons we failed to form a unified Maoist Party at that juncture itself. But our basic ideological and political line, path and strategy of the revolution, and several other basic positions on important questions which we confronted at the same time were basically same.

The Indian ruling classes unleashed a reign of terror on all revolutionary movements starting with the Naxalbari armed agrarian uprising. At the end of 1972, after the arrest and martyrdom of comrade CM and even prior to it we lost a large number of leaders and cadres in the hands of the

enemy. Due to these loses we suffered a countrywide setback. Prior to the martyrdom of comrade CM, intensive internal political and ideological struggle started against right arch-opportunist clique SNS and others in 1971 itself. Party had disintegrated into several groupings due to our serious tactical mistakes, state terror, severe losses, lack of proper leadership and negative effect of two line struggle within the Communist Party of China. Since 1972 July to 1980 our Party, the CPI(ML) was dominated by several splinters most of them lead by right and left-adventurist leadership and disarray spread over. But on the other side, under the leadership of MCC armed agrarian revolutionary peasant struggle in Kanksha took-place and it suffered a setback in a short period due to state terror but steadily expanded to Bihar, and to some extent to Assam and Tripura.

We uphold basic ideological and political line of a genuine Maoist Party, learned lessons from practice, seriously engaged in the class struggle and firmly stood for correct positions on several ideological and political questions which confronted in the country and international arena. Due to these positions only from CPI(ML) Stream, on 1978 the CPI(ML)-Party Unity(PU) and on 22nd April 1980 CPI(People's War)(PW) emerged. Due to this only once again we, MCC, PW and PU Parties build armed agrarian revolutionary movement in different parts of the country, particularly Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. We strengthened our Party, revolutionary mass movement and armed struggle considerably in 1980s and 1990s which culminated in the great unity and formation of our new party in September 2004. Since 1977 a large number of genuine Maoist forces had merged and consolidated in the CPI(ML)[PW], MCCI and CPI(ML)-PU and also still this process is continuing to some extent after the formation of the new Party. But in this period most of the right and left Maoist groups had been gradually disintegrated and disappeared and some of the right groups still exist even though they are weak. Still a tiny section of Maoist forces exist but they are suffering from sectarianism for a long time.

We opine that our struggle within the CPI and CPM is an integral part of the great struggle conducted in the International Communist Movement headed by the Communist Party of China under the direct leadership of comrade Mao. We also opine that the internal struggle with in the CPI(ML) which took-place for several years is connected directly or indirectly with the internal struggle of the CPC even before and after Mao's demise. Modern revisionist Deng clique which usurped power in China damaged much not only to our Party and revolution but also to the world revolution. We firmly stick to Mao Thought and opposed Deng clique and Lin Piao clique. Our experience clearly shows that Indian revolution had influenced a lot with the positive and negative developments of International Communist Movement (ICM).

We, the Indian Maoist Party has traversed through a tortuous path for a long period. After formation of Unified Party, most favourable situation emerged for the advancement of revolution. We lost this good chance between 1969 and 1972. The biggest boon of this merger has been the result of synthesis of over 35 years of experience of Indian revolution. It has given us enriched basic documents in terms of strategy, tactics and policies. Our merger brought about a significant change from two different parties working in distant separate areas or small pockets to a Party with an all India character. Before merger, in-spite of both Parties having CC, there was a serious limitation to them in functioning as Central Bodies with all India perspective. But after merger, our understanding further enriched about the uneven development of the country and uneven development of the revolutionary movement. Now we can plan at an all India level in a better way. It is not at complete but at least the disadvantages have been done away with. A clearer and enriched line has emerged in terms of both India and world context. And other aspect in this advantage, is that it had its effect internationally too. Before this, mostly we could not see this much of international support. But, still it is nascent, nonetheless it had developed. In recent years, we suffered several losses. Despite which we have to think how to avoid this much of losses. But our CC has said that we should avoid mistakes to avoid losses and boldly face the enemy and go ahead.

At present in our country other Maoist Parties are not in a position to provide leadership to the masses due to their right deviationist line and limited strength. The progressive and democratic forces are lacking any revolutionary basic program of action and also at present they are having a limited area of influence. Besides all these limitations no party has people's armed force to defend. I reiterate that at present no one Party or Organization is capable enough to be a rallying centre for all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic forces and people.

Hence, at present juncture our Party can play a significant role in rallying all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic forces and people. Because our party has an all India character, good political militant mass base in several States, a People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) fighting enemy in several States and emerging New Democratic People's power in Dandkaranya [an area in central India which comprises predominately tribal districts of five states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa], Jharkhand and some other parts of India. We have a clear-cut understanding to unify all revolutionary, democratic, progressive, patriotic forces and all oppressed social communities including oppressed nationalities against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. Our New Democratic United Front (UF) consists of four democratic classes, i.e. workers, peasants, urban petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. If we wish to form a strong United Front then it must be under the leadership of proletariat, basing on worker and peasant alliance. If we wish to form a strong United Front then it must be supported and defended by the People's Army. Without People's Army people have nothing to achieve or to defend. Hence enemy is seriously trying to eliminate our Party leadership with the aim of destroying a revolutionary and democratic centre of Indian people. So the condition has matured further to rally around one centre and revolution could go ahead under the leadership of the CPI(Maoist).

At the same time, the world economic crisis, the anti-people and pro-imperialist policies of the Indian ruling classes and the rising state repression, infuriated the masses in the country increasing the revolutionary scope now that there is a single revolutionary party. For a long time, since Comrade CM's martyrdom, India was lacking a single revolutionary platform. Even in the international scenario, there were many cleavages in the Maoist movements. In this particular juncture the emergence of our Party provides new hope to the people.

I want to say that the Party has no illusion about the so called parliamentary system and knows well Indian state's might as well as we clearly know our limitations and shortcomings, even after unity [formation of Communist Party of India (Maoist)] and the weaknesses of Maoist forces in the country and other countries.

The favourable revolutionary conditions, the widespread bitter class struggle rising in Indian society and the development of the armed struggle are being keenly observed by the enemy who is taking it most seriously. So, no opportunity is being given to these struggles by the Indian ruling classes who are also compradors of imperialism. So immediately in the context of world revolution also putting together the experiences of Philippines, Peru, Nepal, and India, imperialism is most concerned about the development of a bitter class struggle emerging in India. In the present situation of world, if the Maoist revolution in India can advance to a new stage, it will become a grave threat to world capitalist system. That is why imperialism, particularly America has taken these developments seriously.

So, on the one side, there are more favourable conditions for revolution, and on the other side there is enemy's full onslaught to suppress the revolution. In this situation, our entire plan is to fully utilize the favourable conditions while resisting the enemy which will determine our plan.

In this context, at present, main hurdle in the way of Indian Revolution is the all-out war unleashed by the enemy. This war is principally against Maoist movement but not limited to this

movement and aimed enough against all revolutionary, democratic, progressive and patriotic movements and the movements of oppressed communities of our society including oppressed nationalities. At this juncture, all these forces have to think together how to face this mighty enemy and for this how to unite to go ahead.

How can we resolve the problem of all-out war? For resolution of any problem, we have to analyze it deeply to identify the root cause of the problem. Firstly, why this war? Who's imposing it? On whom it is imposing? What is the nature of this war? How long it continues? Can we accept this war or not? Who should counter it? How to counter it? What is the aim of resistance to war? etc.

This war is meant for destroying the revolution which is gradually emerging as an alternative political power to the existing reactionary political power in the country and plundering massive minerals and other rich natural resources of the vast areas of Adivasi people and other local people from Lalgarh to Surjagarh. They are imposing this war on those who are against this war, i.e. Maoist revolutionaries, Adivasi and local people of the vast forest areas, workers, peasants, urban middle class, small and medium bourgeoisie, Dalit, women, religious minorities and oppressed nationalities, democratic organizations, progressive and patriotic forces who comprise more than 95% of the population. It is completely an unjust war. This war is imposed by the Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie, Feudal forces of this country and imperialists, particularly America. These are real looters, plunderers, corrupters, blackmailers, hoarders, scamsters, murderers, conspirators, oppressors, suppressers, autocrats, fascists, most reactionaries and number one traitors. These reactionaries plan to continue this war for a long time till they achieve their goal.

Any Maoist, democrat, progressive, patriot, and people will not accept this unjust war imposed by the rulers. People will completely oppose this unjust, most cruel, inhumane and treacherous war. It will be defied by all people of our country and people of world. This unjust war is totally against the interest of the people and the interest of the country. People will unite and counter this unjust war by waging a just war. People will never tolerate any kind of unjust war. In the history of entire class society people never tolerated any kind of unjust war forever but they fought back every unjust war by paying price of their own blood and ultimately won it. Immediate aim of this just war is to defeat the unjust war completely and then advance towards changing present social conditions which are giving scope to unjust wars. If we look at the political developments of the country, this inhumane all-out war is giving a tremendous scope to unite vast masses of people and certainly it will become counter productive to the ruling classes.

After 15th August 1947 we never saw such integration of Indian economy, defence, internal security, polity, culture and entire state with the imperialists, particularly with the US imperialists. Nuclear Deal and several defence deals, glaring interference after terrorist attacks in Mumbai on 26th November 2008 and Union Home Minister Chidambaram's visit to US and crucial agreements related to internal security are some glaring instances. Due to this significant change the Indian expansionists are playing a crucial role in the South-Asia. The fundamental contradiction between imperialism and Indian people has further sharpened. It will give great scope to unite people against imperialists and fight back imperialism.

From several decades entire Kashmir and North East are under military and paramilitary domination. On the other hand drastic change has been seen in internal security due to role of military in the internal security. Indian army was deployed at the time of historic Telangana armed agrarian revolution (1946-52) and for a short-while [in 1971] in some pockets of West Bengal after great Naxalbari peasant armed uprising of 1966. But today in long term perspective, the Indian army is being reorganized. Under the dictates of global war against terror, three years back Indian army has declared its new policy [Doctrine of Sub-conventional Warfare] to deal

with internal security and needs of the modern war with other countries. Under this restructured plan Indian army is training a large number of its forces according to needs of wide-spread counter-insurgency operations. Now onwards Indian army is being used in a vast area of our country against its own people in the name of internal security. If it [Indian Government] is really a people's government, how can it use its own army against its own people? The Indian state is functioning as an autocratic and fascist rule in the garb of democracy. All the gains that were made by revolutionary and democratic people's struggles are being challenged by the fascists. But this will also force the vast masses of the people to unite and resist with whatever means to defend and ultimately it will also become counter-productive to the ruling classes.

We must also talk about the current world economic crisis, particularly crisis of US imperialists and other imperialist countries. This crisis is in certain aspects even deeper than the great depression of 1930s. But capitalism does not die on its own without a revolution. Now to come out of this crisis imperialism will try to increase exploitation of working class and middle class of its own countries and increase plunder of third world countries. Multi National Corporations (MNCs) and Comprador Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie (CBB), the collaborators of imperialists are concentrated on the large tracts extended from Lalgah in Bengal to Surjagarh in Maharashtra. To exploit this rich region, primarily Adivasi (tribal) region, state and central governments have signed 100s of MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding). Indiscriminate loot of this region will destroy environment and bring long term ecological changes. The most oppressed community of Indian society, the Adivasis and local people have come under a great threat. Probably for the first time in the world, such huge populations of indigenous people are being threatened. A new situation is being created and with a concrete program these oppressed sections must advance. It is evident that without the emancipation of these people, we cannot advance nor the Indian revolution succeed. Our Party is working on this problem and more and more people will unite and fight back the arch enemies of the Indian people, namely the imperialists, CBB, feudals and fascist state.

People of North Eastern oppressed nationalities and Kashmiri are fighting for their liberation from decades. They have advanced to some extent and faced unprecedented sufferings. But they did not succeed and still they are continuing their fight. While we have had some successes in guerilla warfare, they (oppressed nationalities) see some hope in the Maoists. There is a new hope that if the Maoist revolution advances, it will hasten the national liberation struggles also. In this context, in accordance with MLM (Marxism Leninism and Maoism) the Party had always maintained the position of the right to self-determination including secession of all oppressed nationalities. They (oppressed nationalities) understand this policy and their fight need to be strengthened. This has to be utilized to unite with them and try for a united front. For instance, when the Naga forces were deployed in Chhattisgarh or when the Mizo battalions were placed here, there were some protests in Nagaland and Mizoram respectively by soldiers' own family members as well as by the democratic people. They said that they oppose the war on people; they don't want to send their children for suppressing other people. Strategically it is creating a better condition to unite people of all nationalities, workers, peasants, middle class and national capitalists, and the suppression going on everywhere on the people is gradually becoming counter-productive to the rulers itself.

Overall, enemy has declared all-out war on the people in the name of internal security, and in the name of danger from Maoists. We are relatively strong in several rural areas of the country. But at present our forces are weak, we are weak in urban areas, and we are also weak in workers and among petty-bourgeoisie. People's army too is weak and its weapons are inferior to the enemy. These are our weaknesses in general. To strengthen the people's army and work in urban areas are some of most important urgent tasks. The Unity Congress of our Party has clearly announced a strategic plan and has given enriched documents for improving in these fields. On the other hand, social contradictions are sharpening very fast. Along with above urgent tasks, our Party is

concentrating to unite more and more people. If we succeed in this, we can make a leap in the revolution. We are hopeful about the emergence of a united front. In this new situation, it is one of the foremost tasks of Indian revolution. We strongly feel that it is not only our task but the task of all revolutionary, democratic, progressive forces.

Along with this, contradiction within the enemy classes are sharpening. It can be seen in Nandigram and to some extent in the Lalgarh struggles. We are utilizing this contradiction and it is necessary to utilize everywhere to advance the class struggle. We are also working with other democratic organizations and people and some individuals belonging to ruling classes on different issues of the masses by forming tactical fronts. We and all fighting Parties, Organizations and people have to understand the importance of unity between them and formation of a united front. We are providing impetus to unity of the people and building a strategic united front and tactical fronts. This strategic united front will be between the oppressed people against imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism. In spite of intensification of the contradiction between imperialism and Indian people our country is not attacked by any imperialist country or has not become a direct colony by any other means. So, at present our condition is different from that of China in mid 1930s in which CPC formed an anti-imperialist united front against Japan imperialism.

**Q: *How would the Party deal with the difficulties in the formation of the united front and along with the objective conditions, what does the party think about the subjective conditions in today's scenario?***

**A:** Comrades, as the first aspect, Maoist party would like becoming a centre for the people of the country and their development, represent their aspirations. We are representing above 95% of population. There is more favorable objective condition for uniting people and people also want a party that will serve their interests. We are not working for partial reform within the bourgeois and exploitative system. We are fighting for the socio-economic demands of the people as well as for the qualitative change of the very basic structure of the society. If we succeed in clearly explaining it to the people, we will succeed to mobilize and organize them in the war and will win.

Whenever protracted people's war, as well as national liberation war had been fought, experience shows that without mass base, army, liberated area, people did not succeed in forming a strong united front. In course of revolutionary struggle, forming army and establishing base areas we can form several tactical united fronts and even fragile strategic united front. We have to strive hard to mobilize masses in the war against their enemies and build own army and establish stable base areas and march forward to build a strong united front.

**Q: *What are the ways and methods to win-over friends?***

**A:** For broadest possible unity, we cannot have sectarian approach towards friends of NDR [new democratic revolution]. At present several forces are lined up against the enemy. We have to let them develop too. In the united front on some issues, there would also be representatives of oppressive classes. We can not expect them join our ranks, which is a long way ahead. Right now we need to firmly stick to our strategic goal, and for that tactically we need to remain flexible.

More clearly, there are two different kinds of United Fronts. One, between people, and the other between people and enemy (a section/group/ persons from enemy classes) using the contradictions among the enemy. Party has to do that. This scope is there to some extent on some issues. We call it the indirect reserves of the revolution which can be used carefully. If we have clear understanding that they are not our class allies, then we would not have right opportunist

deviations. We need united fronts of this kind for the success of the revolution. The Indian Left largely, like CPI and CPM, had trailed behind the bourgeoisie and degenerated.

Last aspect is each class has a separate class interest and a world view. The united front in this sense is also a struggle front. But overall if the struggle is against the main enemy, then this struggle becomes secondary, while unity becomes primary. The real issue is how this struggle and unity can be balanced and used effectively. The enemy classes will never side with the people. Even after the seizure of power, struggle will continue within the society for a long time. So, united front and class struggle should continue simultaneously. For that it is an utmost important task is to concentrate on the ideological and political education of the masses. If we can do this successfully, then we can win-over those sections too and allow them to join our ranks. These parties also have people under a corrupt leadership. If we can win-over the people through political and ideological struggle, we can win-over large number of their primary membership. Revolutionary breakthrough is linked to this process. The Chinese and Nepalese Party have developed through leaps and bounds by doing the same. Both the cadre force as well as the army can expand through this politically and ideologically also. If this dialectical relationship between the united front and the political and ideological struggle can be handled carefully, we will succeed in forming a strong united front and isolate the main enemy.

Ideologically the bourgeois class influence can be removed on the basis of the historical lessons of Marxism as a scientific theory. By doing this, we can win-over people and even change their world outlook and transform them with Marxist outlook.

We have talked about our basic understanding of a united front. About the subjective conditions the revolutionary intellectuals and democratic people are aligned in a favorable position for people. But this has to be made practically beneficial. The second question being the fierce repression, how can all this be achieved?

We recognize that we are a small Party still. But our real strength lies in Marxist ideology, the classes it represent, its line and policies. And to achieve united front what are the methods? CBB, landlords and imperialists are the enemy against whom vast masses need to be united on the basis of mass line and class line. If we keep to the interests of the masses and use both the mass line and class line correctly, we will definitely succeed and develop from a small force to a big national force.

***Q. But practically how do you do it?***

**A.** I talked about our strength even while we are physically small. I described where our main strength lies. But physical strength is also needed to fight. We need powerful army and strong mass base along with strong Party. This is practically a must. If this is not there, no matter how strong we are ideologically, it would lead to failure. So, we have to grow. For this, while facing the enemy repression, we have to use the correct tactics. In our assessment, enemy is going for all-out war. But it is creating its own trap. If we can understand that and effectively handle our guerilla war, we will succeed.

In practical terms there are two issues. One, Ruling class contradictions: There exist old contradictions in the society and new contradictions that will emerge among the ruling classes that must and should be utilized for the advantage of the people. Not only to defeat enemy and for immediate gains, but for a longer revolutionary purpose, this is required. We should strengthen our mass base and fronts which are the main shields of our power. Comrade Mao said that for developing army and war people are the decisive. We must mobilize the vast masses against the enemy and utilize the contradictions of the enemy to smash them one after another.

Second, while waging guerilla war in Andhra we had a setback; but we have not completely abandoned; nonetheless it is a setback. From Godavari valley (in Andhra Pradesh) to Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand to West Bengal border, we have to intensify and expand guerilla war. Enemy must be resisted by our forces but it must be according to our advantage basing on the concrete situation. At present we have to utilize cleverly the tactics of hit and run basically. We have to develop guerilla war into mobile war and guerilla army into a regular army. We need active involvement of people. Our strength lies in the people. The enemy will strive to limit us to armed confrontation only. And they want to limit us to a limited area. They are dividing our areas into various sections and encircle us. But we can also chase their base camps like honey bees by mobilizing the people. In areas where the enemy camps are located, even in those villages, we have Revolutionary People's Committees where work is still going on. Hundreds of people built up ponds in complete knowledge of the security forces in the camps.

So as the enemy is splitting our masses, we are also trying to expand our base, and trying to encircle the enemy camps/bases. We have to keep in mind the strategic importance of guerilla war. They are bringing 1 lakh (100,000) soldiers. They have decided to bring and deploy Rashtriya Rifles (a special contingent of Indian army's counter-insurgency force) from Jammu and Kashmir. But still Lalgarh to Surjagarh means crores (one crore equals ten million) of people. If we succeed in actively mobilizing the masses to fight back the enemy forces, then we can make this very war a basis for revolutionary change. It is definitely a challenge before us but we are confident that there is an advantage in the long run which cannot be achieved in a short period. But unlike what the enemy wants, to finish this in a short period, we want to stretch this war and transform the situation to our advantage favorable to the revolution.

They are trying to limit our area, while we are attempting to expand. They are building Gram Suraksha Samithis to fight so-called anti-socials and thereby doing their best to contain us. But people are inviting us. Even new, less experienced cadres who are meagerly armed are being asked to visit these areas by the people. For example, Sonebhadra in the Orissa, the villages invited us themselves. Then again our plans to expand from Raigad to Nayagad in the form of Operation Ropeway under which the Nayagad Raid was orchestrated enabled us to expand into this area in as little as 8-10 months. So, the Nayagad raid not only had military significance but also political significance as there was strategic reasons behind the raid. Then again Operation Vikas was undertaken to expand into the Manpur (Chattisgarh) area in the plains. And people are inviting us and their confidence is on the high. If we expand in this way, we will grow definitely and expand the guerilla war. If we proceed like this and successfully stretch the war, then in the longer run the political and economic situations are bound to change and under pressure the state will crumble. Presently, the state is willfully spending in military expenses, but as the war stretches and expand in to newer and newer areas, the more it will spend in the longer run it would lead to failure. We are waging our war with this strategic plan.

I already explained the second aspect of this question in my answer to your first question.

**Q: *Is it possible at this juncture for the Party to be at the centre of United Front? For instance, while working in Delhi where the Party is weak, how does it envisage an united front?***

**A:** It is an utmost important task to keep the Party in the centre of united front. I already answered first aspect of your question in my answer to your first question.

About my second aspect for your question, in Delhi if you could do that it would be easier to work. But that is not the condition today. So, the party after analyzing the situation, decided to keep the party in centre through various other means possible. There are other means – through other Maoist forces, democratic and other progressive forces. And therefore, in places like Delhi, where there is limited scope for the Party directly, we have to work in other ways. Our forces

must rise to the occasion, deploy capable forces for united front, identify the most reliable forces and organize a joint understanding at any important place. Different arrangements need to be made. Other democratic, progressive and Maoist forces need to be brought together and in the interim they should be made to lead.

**Q: *The situation in the early days of the Lalgarh movement was such that intellectuals in large numbers came out in support of the Lalgarh movement. But of late, the intellectuals have had differences in terms of the later stages of the movement, and the focus has been shifted to such issues as opposition to laws like Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). How do you perceive the situation?***

**A:** If I had the latest state committee report, it would have been easier for me to answer this question. But still I would like to say that initially there was lot of support among urban intelligentsia. Now depending upon the enemy's onslaught and the nature of struggle, it will also lead to changes in reaction to the support base. Some people may also go over to the opposition side of the Lalgarh movement. In Bengal, our influence in the Civil liberty groups and in urban areas is not much strong. We need to do more to develop this. We need to strengthen our work in urban areas. A lot would depend on our work there and the development of Lalgarh movement to a higher stage. There is a lot of difference between working among the basic masses and working among intellectuals as the latter involves several complex factors. In this context, if the intellectuals are united around any issue, even being UAPA, considering that it is not in contradiction to the larger struggle, it would be positive for us. Those who cannot come to directly support the violent phases of the movement can come together in other issues like that. So, demands may change but these must be slogans of the people. And both Lalgarh and new slogans need to be balanced.

I would say that the Party will definitely take positive criticisms from any quarter of people even those who may not agree with our basic line but stood up for people. We welcome criticism from people to rectify our mistakes and strengthen our Party. The movement against UAPA is bound to be used in immediate and long term interest of the people. And in general terms, as such any mobilization in this field in the longer run is not contradictory to the interests of the Party.

**Q: *Where do you place democracy in the working of the Party? Meaning the right to strike, the right to dissent, and the right to freedom of expression.***

**A:** This is a very important question; however there is no confusion in our Party. We need a new democratic state in which other than CBB, the landlords and imperialists all others will have real or genuine freedom. Other than enemies of the people, for everybody there would be real or genuine democracy. In addition, I may say that while preparing Policy Program of Revolutionary People's Committees (RPCs)/Jantana Sarkars, we have studied the experience of Graam Raajyaas of historic Telangana armed agrarian revolution, Policy Program of Chinese Soviets, People's Barrio committees of the Philippines, Revolutionary People's Committees of Peru, United Revolutionary People's Councils of Nepal and also studied the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In accordance with above we have all the fundamental rights including that every voter has the right to recall any elected person. Even has the right to bring any one in position of authority who works against interest of the people to court in order to prosecute them.

In terms of the four great freedoms declared by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution, other than the character posters on the wall, all the rest freedoms have been ensured by the Policy Program of the RPC/Janathan Sarkar. As the level of development in the Janatana Sarkar advances we would also follow the freedom for character posters. According to the constitution no physical punishment for political opposition will be allowed, anybody had right to politically differ and even unionize. The Indian state is trying to control dissent and therefore people want

revolution. We would not repeat the same mistake. Besides, for any mistakes in prosecution, the person has the right to appeal to the village Revolutionary People's Committee, to higher levels and even to the Party. For instance, in one of the extension areas, there was an incident where in collusion with the Inspector General of Police, 33 members belonging to two villages became agents of the enemy. In this context our comrades went and handled the issue. While villagers wanted to give capital punishment to the main agent of the police, party interceded to give a chance to that person to realize his mistake.

**Q: *In a united front, everybody might not join. Some Maoist outfits and democratic organizations can even remain outside. How will you handle that?***

**A:** Those in opposition are people's enemies and more than 95% of the oppressed people would be against them. But even 5% is a big number in the Indian context. Our Party believes that over the course of the protracted peoples' war it gives scope to destroy the enemy's political power both directly as well as culturally as many followers are helped to transform. In China, Madam Sun Yet Sen till the last day was in power, although never a member of the Party. They can stay only as long as they serve people and have support of the people. When socially and politically they will become irrelevant, they will automatically vanish. It is possible for them to win in elections if such parties have support of the people. This provision is there in our policy Program of RPCs too even other persons belonging to other Parties/Organizations can join RPCs if they are voters and they have right to be elected to RPCs. This being our understanding, it has to be practically practiced on ground too. We have to develop this sphere. Nepal had made some advances in this respect.

We give scope to small and medium bourgeoisie to grow with some restrictions so that they may not become anti-people, and black marketing, stock piling and speculating can be controlled. We only restrict big capital of CBB and foreign. For instance in 1998-99 the government had stopped small traders to deal in forest products, so as the Khirjas (local traders) protested we fought for them in a movement, though we stopped usury and have controlled indiscriminate exploitation, we are not stopping products from outside to come in. This is capitalist development of one kind, but we are controlling it. It is needed to develop the people's economy. If traders did not cooperate, how would we have survived? Under the Janatana Circar, the trade and industry department is handling the small traders so that the bourgeois outside cannot take advantage. So full freedom continues even if there are collaborators attempting to win them over. It is only in life and death context, that physical punishment is allowed. However right now, while facing repression and war, we are in a complex situation which has to be acknowledged.

**Q: *What is your party's stance on talks?***

**A:** In general people and Maoist revolutionaries do not want violence or armed confrontation with anybody. In unavoidable condition only they take-up arms and resist their enemies and they are waging liberation war by learning from the history. So, we see this as a war of self-defense. In this context of all-out war, we must recognize that the state of Andhra Pradesh has 130 thousand forces, there are 45 thousand forces in Chhattisgarh (to soon increase this by more than 20 thousand forces), 160 thousand forces in Maharashtra. Thus each state has a police force which is more than the national level forces of many European countries. The most cruel and dangerous special forces have been trained by the state along with various anti-people draconian laws. Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh along with Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have between them more than 700 to 800 thousand of police forces. Out of this, 250 to 300 thousand police forces are directly engaged against the people. And alongside 100 thousand central paramilitary forces have been deployed in these areas. Here people are combating against a stronger force than the movements in North East and Jammu-

Kashmir. This is a brutal and violent repression campaign aimed at the suppression of the political movement of the people, and for exploitation of the minerals.

In this context, if possible we can hope for some respite. Longer the respite is better for people. Democratic work needs this context. But while government is holding automatic gun on one hand, one cannot talk about this. People will keep fighting. While pumping bullets people never drop weapons and people never surrender. All democratic, progressive, patriotic forces need to unite and fight against the all-out war on the people by the central and state governments. To put concisely the main demands that the party has placed in front of the government for any kind of talks are 1. All-out war has to be withdrawn; 2) For any kind of democratic work, the ban on the Party and Mass Organizations have to be lifted; 3) Illegal detention and torture of comrades had to be stopped and immediately released. If these demands are met, then the same leaders who are released from jails would lead and represent the Party in the talks.

### ***Introduction on the Development of our Party***

Since Jan Myrdal wrote the book “India Waits” in 1980s in which he talked about the movement there have been several developments in various aspects both political and military. It was since then, that we saw the development of a perspective, taking into account the concrete Indian specificity. There were only few experienced leaders that were left from the days of Com. CM. Many had gone into right deviation, some into left deviation and only few had come here. So, largely it was a new generation, a new youth, and to turn them into experienced cadre, a lot of time had to be invested. When you Jan Myrdal had come here in 1980, the party was still undergoing this problem.

It was only another 6-7 years, that proper leadership would emerge in the context of PW. When JM visited AP in 1980, that time there was only CPI(ML) state committee along with the Tamil Nadu State Committee. There was also a Central Committee but of course only confined to these two states, its scope was limited. The MCC was working in Bengal and Bihar in that period; however in Bengal it was very weak. In the same way PW was working in AP and Tamil Nadu, but in TN it was very weak. It is a retrospective observation of work in these two centers, in these two regions. Com. Kobad Gandhi and some other comrades from Maharashtra later joined PW. In MCC Com. KC started some work including Assam but in a very limited way. Now we have presence in 20 states but the Party is still very weak in many of these areas. So there is an uneven development under the protracted people’s war where according to our strength there are different levels of the movement in different regions. In this context, we must observe the development and the role of a revolutionary party which is important and which I will say.

Comrades, in 1980s the Party was trying to emerge from a setback. It was trying to reorganize and consolidate. On the one side, there was the problem of sectarianism and on the other hand, the mass base was largely lost. So we had to revive every thing both in terms of mass struggle and military. Accordingly, our tactics also changed. At that time it was mainly the anti-feudal struggles and the anti-imperialist propaganda-agitation that had been launched to create an anti-state opinion and open movements in the urban areas.

Previously, under Com. Charu Mazumdar the line had been to disregard mass organizations. Later we rethought and after going through an intense self-critical review, we acknowledged that there were some mistakes in the earlier years and on that basis, in order to advance, we rebuilt the movement. The Self-Critical Review was made in 1974, it was by 1977 August that forces within the party were convinced. And in practice it was reaffirmed by Party AP State Conference in September 1980 that marks the beginning of a new practice.

It was since then, that we saw the development of a perspective, taking into account the concrete Indian specificity. There were only few experienced leadership that were left from the days of Com. CM. Many had gone into right deviation, some into left deviation and only few had come here. So, largely it was a new generation, a new youth, and to turn them into experienced cadre, a lot of time had to be invested. When you had come here, the party was still undergoing this problem. It was only another 6-7 years, that proper leadership would emerge in the context of PW.

First a revolutionary party needs a leadership for understanding national and international conditions, as well as the economic and political conditions to make tactics accordingly. Some of the perspectives that I talked of, in the post-80s period, if we add those experience, we would see that in later years we had made some developments in this sphere of understanding.

Secondly, a revolutionary party needs to organize people and lead class struggle. From the strategic perspective plans were made and spots were selected and some development was made since 1980s in terms of people struggling under leadership of the party which came up as a concrete development.

Thirdly, for a revolutionary party, it is important to organize armed struggle. The CP Reddy group had the name of the CPI(ML) and was part of the PCP under the leadership of SNS. It was only they who had some squads in the Godavari area at that time which you had visited. People's War had started some armed squads in the shape of peasant squads only then, while they already had 60-70 armed cadres by that time.

Later as we developed class struggle according to the idea of area wise seizure of power, to build people's army, the PW here and the MCC there started making armed guerilla squads at the levels of 5,7,9,11. Some platoons and guerilla zones thereby emerged. In some areas just before the 2004 merger, even companies emerged. The erstwhile PW had People's Guerilla Army while MCC had People's Liberation Guerilla Army. In the merger process we found the PLGA under CPI(Maoist). The next stage is battalions moving progressively towards the formation of PLA. Depending on the basic tenets, we have evolved the higher stages of political and military power and the political power of the people. The vision was there even before the 80s. MCC was also there. But practically it was only achieved in terms of concrete development after the merger.

There are two more developments that I would like to point out. A party which in practice is evolving tactics or policy involving a large mass in its rank and files has to practice involving people in thousands and lakhs (a lakh equals one hundred thousand). In practice, while facing the problem and while rectifying the mistakes there were bitter internal and external struggle. It is only through the process of this bitter ideological and political struggle that we have reached today's position. After the rectification and review of 70s, the PW had emerged and it had to face grave internal crisis in the form of 1. Sectarianism and dogmatism in the mid-80s, and 2. the hurdle posed by the leadership of Com. Kondapalli Seetharamiah in the beginning of 90s. Then again, the clashes between MCC and PW had been a bitter and unforgettable experience, a black chapter in history. In order to face ideological and political challenges, the party tactically evolved two approaches: discussion and review and struggle. All three times the party emerged successfully from the crisis. The MCC also in the same way emerged from its own internal crisis. A section of it intended to continue the fight, they were also differences pertaining to Maoism and dogmatism through which it emerged successfully. The PU too fought against forces that opposed protracted people's war and agrarian revolution and emerged successfully. The PW and MCC even at this stage get smaller while the Vinod Mishra and Satya Narain Singh groups get stronger and influential. While VM moved to left opportunism, SNS moved into right opportunism. And in practice, they split and finally faced virtual liquidation with extremely nominal presence today.

Earlier, along with the fight against revisionism we faced the problem of having a line that only talked of seizing state power and that other political questions like the nationality question, the women question, the dalit (untouchables or scheduled castes) question and the question of religious minorities would automatically be addressed. However, later we rectified this stand and merged both immediate slogans and ultimate slogans together. This was a must for the success of NDR and development towards it. While various other ML groups only raised immediate slogans and thereby went into reformism, we for a long time only gave the ultimate slogan. But now, by putting together both immediate and ultimate slogans we move towards better development.

For Party education, there are several Party Magazines at Central, State and District level. Around 25 of them are Party's. Several others are Mass Organizations' Magazines, e.g. centrally we are publishing People's War/Laal Pathaaka, an Ideological and Political Magazine simultaneously in English and Hindi and in other languages; Awami Jung, a Military Magazine in different languages; Maoist Information Bulletin in English. In DK we are publishing following Magazines 1. Prabhath (Hindi, Party Political Magazine) 2. Viyyukka (Ideological and Political Magazine, in Gondi/Koyam) 3. Padiyora Pollo (Military Magazine, Gondi/Koyam) 4. Sangharsharath Mahila (KAMS Magazine, in Hindi) 5. Jhankar (Literary and Cultural Magazine in multi-lingual) At Division/District level in Gondi/Koyam: South Bastar Division: Pituri (Rebellion); West Bastar Division: Midangur (Fireplace); Darbha Division: Moyil Gudrum (Thunder); North and South Divisions of Gadichiroli: Poddhu (Sun); Maad and North Bastar Joint Division: Bhoomkal (Earthquake); East Bastar Division: Bhoomkal Sandesh (Rebellion Message). Other than this the Janatana Sarkar also has made a Magazine called Janatana Raj (People's State).

There are also study classes that are organized with study notes and syllabus. Political classes are organized at different state levels, some times rectification campaigns are organized for 4-6 months to one year when the history of the Chinese, Philippines and Peru revolutions are discussed for political and ideological training. There are military instructor teams for military schools and Awami Jung as the military magazine of Central Committee.

The Party in the DK area faces the problem of illiteracy and lack of primary education and so we organized the MAS (mobile education) for the purpose of primary academic education of party cadres. Hundreds of cadre have been trained since its beginning. The mass organizations also run academic programs with their own syllabus which is made in consultation with the leadership and committee members.

### ***Introduction on the Development of People's Army (at present called People's Liberation Guerilla Army)***

I request you refer our central documents for complete picture of our army development in specific conditions of the country and in which international situation it is formed. I request you to give attention on this due to its vitality in any revolution

### ***Introduction on the Development of UF***

In terms of mass organizations, we over the years, developed in several fronts including peasant, women, students, youth, civil rights groups, literary and cultural groups, children, nationality, workers, employees and so on. The stronger the party in a state, the larger the organization and the fronts. In the weaker areas there are fewer mass organizations at the state level in accordance with the strength of the party. Right now, the party has mass organizations both at the state and all India level, and the idea is to represent the four-class organizations in accordance with the four-class alliance and other sections too. With the emphasis is being to mass organizations, we presently have 30-40 of them working in various fronts. During by the 80s MCC had few mass

organizations working secretly in a limited scope. In AP the peasantry, the students and the literary-cultural sections along with the youth had some influence but now with the development of our understanding different mass organizations from village level to the state level to the all India level exist. In the 9th Congress of the PW it was decided to develop mass organizations and united fronts which would be issue-based and tactical. At some issues even enemy classes and local leaders could come together in immediate and medium terms. These developed further after the merger. So the class struggle needs to be waged at sectional, underground as well as open levels. Legal opportunities needs to be utilized, there are some mass organizations working with MLM general guideline, while there are some that are working under complete cover even with others.

### ***On International Relations***

In the 1980s beginning both MCC and PW had been regional in scope, because of which we failed to a large extent in connecting at the larger international movements. However mid-1990s onwards, both Parties and particularly after the formation of the CPI(Maoist) is now playing a role internationally too. We are participating in international debates and sending delegations to international forums though much progress needs to be made in this front. It is nonetheless better than in the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of RIM, MCC had joined it in 2002. The PW however opposed to join in RIM as it believed that it is only after thorough deliberations, understandings and discussions that such an international platform could be evolved in order to avoid a sectarian approach. Therefore the PW did not join the RIM, while MCC went ahead. After merger, though it was decided that whatever the new Party decided would be put to practice. And since then as per the decision of the whole Party, it kept itself out of RIM. We kept outside RIM which by now has become virtually defunct.

It is important for the success of the Indian revolution as an inseparable part of great world socialist revolution to actively defend MLM, fight imperialism and support the class struggle throughout the world and also take the support of the International Maoist Parties/Organizations/Forces, proletariat and people. For this purpose, we maintain fraternal relations with Maoist and anti-imperialist forces. We believe that it is both important to extend help as well as take international help for the success of any revolution but because of the ongoing repression. Overall, I once again say that we stuck to basics of MLM. We invite critical suggestions from any Maoist Party/Organization.

We believe that CPI(Maoist) is a detachment of world proletariat revolution. If it succeeds, we would say one part of the world would succeed – it is not independent. It would work as a part of the world socialist revolution and it is strictly related to the success or failure of the world socialist revolution. More working class struggles in the imperialist/capitalist countries will have a favorable impact on Indian revolution.

*-by Jan Myrdal & Gautam Navlakha. Jan Myrdal is a Swedish author, political writer, journalist, and advocate of anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and popular liberation movements; Gautam Navlakha is the editorial consultant of EPW (Economic and Political Weekly) and also a leading democratic rights activist attached to People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), Delhi.*

# War Against the People and the Historic Lalgarh Movement

Prof Amit Bhattacharya, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India

The Indian ruling classes and the central government they have set up to serve them have very recently declared one of the most unjust and brutal wars against the people which is quite unprecedented in the history of our country. Such a massive mobilization of armed forces, paramilitary forces, police forces and air forces totalling around 1 lakh personnel, along with US-Israel military assistance of various types only highlights the magnitude of the war.



They have identified the Maoists as the 'greatest threat to the internal security of the country since independence' i.e, the security of the Indian ruling classes. The entire forested region in central and eastern India have been divided into seven Operating Areas, which they want to 'clear' within the next five years of all resistance, including that by the Maoists and other Naxalite organizations. A massive amount of money to the tune of Rs.7300 crore has already been earmarked for meeting the cost of this war.

Needless to state, this war against the people is being waged in the interests of foreign capital and domestic big comprador capital. Hundreds of MoUs have been signed between imperialists and domestic sharks and the central and state governments that would further intensify the process of plunder and loot of our vast natural resources and bring more displacement and add to the misery and ruin in the lives of the impoverished people of our country. Lalgarh, nay, the Jangal Mahal region, is a region that, as the central home minister Mr. P. Chidambaram declared, would be treated as a laboratory to undertake experiments in dealing with this 'greatest internal threat' and then to utilize that experience for crushing resistance in such states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Orissa. We propose to deal with the great Lalgarh movement that has already found its rightful place in the history of just struggles of our country.

The ongoing struggle in Lalgarh, nay, Jangal Mahal has already completed one year in early November 2009. This struggle is totally different from any other recent movement in our country. If Singur faced the initial experience of defeat, Nandigram could take pride in having tasted victory in course of a long bloody battle against the anti-people 'left-front' government and terror perpetrated by the hermdads backed by the ruling CPI(M). The struggles waged in both Singur and Nandigram were directed against the land-grab movement resorted to by domestic big comprador capital and foreign imperialist capital. In both Singur and Nandigram, the parliamentary parties played some role, although in the case of the latter, the Maoist party that rejects the parliamentary path did play some role. In the case of the Lalgarh movement, on the other hand, parliamentary parties were actually rejected by the people and the Maoist party played a major role.

In one sense, the Lalgarh movement began in a different context. It started as a response against the brutality perpetrated by the police on 5 November 2008. It was, at the same time, a fight against age-old deprivation and humiliation and for the assertion of dignity and the rights of the people. However, if one takes into account the land mine attack on the WB chief minister on 2 November 2008—the day the corporate house of the Jindals inaugurated the Shalboni steel plant (it was a SEZ), then that event possibly acted a catalyst that started a snow-balling process. In that sense, it started as a response to the land-grab movement also, like those in both Singur and Nandigram.

The Lalgarh movement can be divided into Five phases: A) From 5 November 2008 to the day the dates for parliamentary elections were announced. B) From that day to 16 May when results were declared throughout the country. From 17 May 2009 to 17 June just one day before 'Operation Lalgarh' was started. D) From 18 June 2009 when the joint forces started moving into Lalgarh to 26 October when decisions were taken by the PCAPA to form the people's militia. E) From the formation of the 'Sidhu-Kanu Gana Militia' on 27 October till date. The day coincided with halting the Rajdhani Express by the members of the PCAPA demanding the release of Chhatradhar Mahato, release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of joint forces.

Each of these phases has its distinctive features. If one studies the movement, one will be able to see that it was not just a movement against land grab or just for the assertion of the rights of the adivasis or against age-old humiliation suffered by the tribal people; it was more than that. And that broader aspect gradually unfolded itself as movement rolled on. One of those major aspects of the movement is their advocacy of a pro-people new model of development—a model that definitely shows the imprint of the Maoist party. This aspect of the movement hardly received any attention from the urban intellectuals. Let us take up that neglected, but very important aspect first.

### **New Model of Development**

The model of development the Indian ruling classes and their political representatives have adopted ever since they came to power in 1947 was the policy of dependence on foreign capital and technology, which actually means the selling out of our country's economy, water, land and vast natural resources to foreign imperialist capital and domestic comprador big capital for rapacious plunder and loot. It was the Naxalbari movement and the CPI(M-L) led by Charu Mazumdar that first raised the demand for radical land reforms, opposition to and the confiscation of imperialist capital, and at the same time formulated the blueprint for alternative model of development. That programme could not be implemented by the Communist revolutionaries of the first phase of struggle for reasons into which we would not enter at present.

At a later period, the Maoists put into practice an alternative development programme in the Dandakaranya area covering mineral-rich states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. The main elements of this programme are the rejection of foreign capital and technology, self-reliance, equitable distribution of resources and property among the people, distribution of land to the tiller, all-round development in the countryside based on people's initiative and voluntary labour, and the weeding out of foreign influence and control over our economy, society, culture and politics.

As in Dandakaranya, such attempts are being made even at the rudimentary level in the Jangal Mahal area of West Bengal. This is evident from the following newspaper report captioned 'Welcome to India's newest secret state' by Snigdhendu Bhattacharya: "Here across a 1,000 sq.km area bordering Orissa in West Medinipur district, the Maoists over the last 8 months have quietly unleashed new weapons in their battle against the Indian state: drinking water, irrigation, roads and health centres...carefully shielded from the public eye, the Hindustan Times found India's second 'liberated zone', a Maoist-run state where development for more than 2 lakh people is unfolding at a pace not seen in 30 years of 'left front' rule. Apart from taking over the organs of the state and most notably the executive and the judiciary, the Maoists here have built at least 50 km of gravel paths, dug tube-wells and tanks, rebuilt irrigation canals and are running health centres, with the help of local villagers" (HT, 10 June 2009).

Another daily reported under the caption "Lalgarh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Maoist) Rise and rot of a rebel 'state'" that the People's Committee-Maoists began the following schemes: Jobs for landless—work in development projects in lieu of Rs.60-80 per day; building kutcha roads, culverts and water reservoirs and digging deep tube-wells; bringing medical teams from Kolkata; lending money to repair and build cheap houses (The Telegraph, 24 June 2009).

The first attempts were made by the PCAPA soon after it was born. It set up village committees each of which consisted of 5 men and 5 women, where decisions were taken on the basis of mutual discussion. That was followed by the formation of women's wings and youth wings of the committee. These were democratic bodies some of which bear the imprint of the old adivasi society and some, particularly the women's wing, is new and signified the true empowerment of women.

In June 2009, before the deployment of the joint forces for 'Operation Lalgarh,' a team comprising seven students belonging to the Democratic Students' Union, JNU, New Delhi and two journalists visited Lalgarh and adjoining areas for an on-the-spot investigation. That report throws some light, even if at a rudimentary level, on the development programme initiated by the people. Since then, many new steps were taken in this direction, as is reported by different sources. However, because of the existing situation and the imposition of Section 144 against entry into the region, joint fact-finding missions could not be undertaken, despite attempts from several quarters. So this report is the last published on the region. Let us state some of the features.

**A) Agriculture and Land Distribution:** Anyone going to Jangal Mahal would be able to realize that the much trumpeted 'land reform' programme of the 'left-front' government does not have any presence there. In areas where trees have been cut to introduce land reforms, nothing has been done and vast tracts have been allowed to be converted into waste lands. Although the WB government through an act of 2004 vowed to distribute these lands among the landless adivasis, nothing has as yet been done. On the contrary, the WB government and the CPI(M) that rules it had decided to hand over thousands of acres of those lands for the setting up of a SEZ to the corporate house of the Jindals whom they are committed to serve as its most trusted lackeys against the interests of the people. Faced with such government apathy and deprivation, it was quite natural for the people of Jangal Mahal to organize under the banner of the PCAPA to initiate true land reform programme.

The Committee initiated a programme to ensure full rights of the adivasis over forest land to the landless with adequate facilities for irrigation. Opposing the government policy of welcoming multinational seed companies the PCAPA opted to build seed cooperatives through the promotion of organic fertilizers prepared with either forest ash or cow-dung.

Another important step is land distribution. The village committee decided to ensure 1 bigha [0.13 hectares in West Bengal, or 1/3 acre] of land for the landless and 15 kathas [0.10 hectares] for peasants with less land and no land for those having 5 bighas or more. The JNU team visited Bansheria village and were witness to a land distribution meeting. However, one problem was that land was not in an arable condition due to the senseless plantation of eucalyptus trees by the state government as part of its 'social forestry' project that was promoted by the World Bank. The plantation of such eucalyptus trees was aimed at drying up the land so as to facilitate future extraction of mineral resources from the region. It is a nefarious anti-people conspiracy deliberately hatched by corporate foreign capital and domestic capital with the backing of both the central and state governments.

In order to undo the damage to the soil, the people decided to grow fruits and vegetables there for at least two seasons before it becomes fit hopefully for paddy cultivation again. Side by side, it was also decided that the lands of 'new landlords' such as those of the CPI(M) leaders like Anuj Pandey, Bimal Pandey or Dalim Pandey—the rural bosses-rogues-cum-moneylenders who had amassed millions by expropriating the wealth and land of the peasants as also by swindling money from governmental projects— would be confiscated and distributed among the real owners.

**B) Irrigation:** In the dry Jangal Mahal belt, where rainfall is scanty, special attention is needed. However, one cannot see anything of the sort. The government has built a huge canal that runs from Mayurbhanj in Jharkhand to Midnapur town so as to provide water to the field when the rainy season was over. However, because of faulty construction, the huge canal remains dry throughout the year and the pipes that open to the fields remain completely choked. The Committee, in response to this governmental mal-development, started building small check dams and lock gates that would store the water during monsoons and preserve water flowing down from natural streams. Such a check dam was in the process of construction at Bohardanga village when the DSU team visited the place.

**C) Construction of Roads:** If one goes to the Lalgah villages, one will be struck by the absence of roads worth its name. During the monsoon the roads are muddy and water-logged and virtually impossible to walk on. Transferring patients, pregnant women or dead bodies become difficult tasks. The villagers of Adharmari complain that the transportation facilities are pathetic and during monsoon, the village gets totally cut off from the world outside. The same is true for many other villages as well. The Committee took up this issue and constructed roads with red-stone chips which are locally available at a cheap price. The construction was done through voluntary labour, as in the Dandakaranya region.

It is an example of participatory development where human resources are mobilized for developmental work for the people. During the Yen-an phase (1937-45) of the Chinese revolution, this principle of Mao Tse-tung was applied in many regions and helped in unleashing the creativity of the masses. In villages such as Korengapara, Shaldanga, Bahardanga, Papuria, Darigera etc, it was the villagers themselves who took part. This was unlike the earlier

government projects where helplessly witnessed from a distance their development funds being siphoned off by the corrupt CPI(M) party members and government officials. According to Chhatradhar Mahato, the spokesperson of the PCAPA, unlike the state which builds 1 km of road spending Rs.15,000 [\$320], the Committee could build 20 kms spending only Rs.47,000.

**D) Water, Shelter and Health facilities:** A dry and arid region that Jangal Mahal is, it is difficult to get drinking and irrigation water. The Committee took initiative to set up mini tube-wells and install submergible pumps. The people also gave voluntary labour to facilitate irrigation. The Committee also took steps to ensure that government projects like the Indira Awaash Yojana reached those who needed it most. There was hardly any medical facility in the whole zone. The Committee took the initiative to set up health centres at Kantapahari, Belpahari and Chakadoba. It was a people's health centre with an ambulance van and a team of doctors from Kolkata. Nearly 1,500 persons visited the centres everyday for treatment. These health centres are now under the occupation of the joint forces and converted into paramilitary camps.

**E) Education, Culture and Social Awareness:** In the charter of demands placed by the Adivasi Moolbasi Janasadharaner Committee and published from Purulia, the adivasi people demanded promotion and spread of the Santhali and Kurmali languages and alchiki script. In fact, a large number of indigenous languages have gone into oblivion due to the domination of one or two languages. Quite naturally demands have been raised for the recognition of the Santhali language. This year (2009), 21st February—observed as the 'Language Day' in both West Bengal and Bangladesh—was observed as a Black Day. It was an expression of protest against the cultural domination by the Bengali language.

In fact, as has been reported in the press, as a result of globalization and the domination of one language over another, thousands of indigenous languages had already gone into oblivion and many more are awaiting the same fate all over the world. These developments take place before our very eyes, but we hardly pay any attention to them. In fact, the Lalgarh struggle has put forward the demand for the restoration of the nearly extinct languages of the people. The reality is that in areas where people's struggles are very strong, the possibility of the regeneration of local languages is a reality, and the local artists, writers and singers make their marks in respective fields of activity. In this way do extinct languages appear again. Dandakaranya has had the same experience.

Traditional weapons comprise an integral part of the adivasi culture. Thus if any restrictions are imposed on the display of such weapons by the government, the adivasi people would treat it as an infringement on their traditional culture. On 5 June 2009, the Kolkata police put a restriction on the display of such weapons at proposed rally to be organized jointly by the CAVOW—an all-India women's organization— and the women's wing of the PCAPA. The women's wing has also initiated campaigns against consumption of liquor, superstition, pornography and domestic violence. The Matangini Mahila Samiti(MMS) has earlier took steps in this direction in Nandigram.

**F) People's Court:** The system of justice that prevails in our country is, needless to say, meant to serve the ruling classes. In Lalgarh, the people set up their own court—the People's Court. Here decisions are taken by the people and punishment, if any, is meted out. There was much criticism from some quarters (civil rights activists and others) against such a system of justice.

**G) Fight against Environmental Pollution:** Environmental pollution caused by three sponge-iron factories came under the Committee. These three factories had been causing immense pollution in the area for the last 15 years. There was a mammoth gathering of more than 12,000 people on 7 June 2009 at Lodhashuli village near Kharagpur town where decisions for the boycott of the factories was taken.

It is clear that the Committee had integrated local day-to-day issues with the broad struggle against state repression. Needless to say, this would not have been possible without the active participation of the Maoists. This has been an entirely new experience in the history of West Bengal. It did not happen in the first phase of the Naxalbari struggle. Without the active participation of the broad masses of Jangal Mahal, this alternative model of development at Maoist initiative, could not be implemented.

### **Intellectual Reaction to the Maoist presence and the role of the Maoists**

It is crystal clear that the intellectual response to the Lalgarh struggle is basically different from what we had seen during the Singur and Nandigram struggles. Here, they did not stand up to state repression in the way many people expected them to do. On the contrary, they have become very critical of what have been going on in the region. Those who came forward at the early stage later retracted and kept mum. Meanwhile, the tide was blowing for a 'change'; the total isolation of the CPI(M) got reflected in the elections, and one section among the intellectuals found it more attractive to keep closer to the prospective winner—the TMC—in the approaching elections and receive bouquets and cushy jobs as 'biddwajjans' (learned personalities). (However, as later events have shown, some of them did not have either the wisdom or the minimum courage to stand up to state repression and constant intimidation coming from the corridors of power. In the face of such timid response from this section of intellectuals, the present writer feels the absence of late Samar Sen much).

In fact, artists and writers who visited Lalgarh and met Chhatradhar Mahato after the beginning of 'Operation Lalgarh' seemed to have been particularly concerned with extracting a statement from Chhatradhar Mahato condemning Maoist violence and also openly distancing the PCAPA from them, as only then would they be in a position to mediate between the state and the PCAPA. One well-known prize-winning writer informed us through an article published in a Bengali daily Bartaman that the destruction of Anuj Pandey's palatial building was the outcome of a secret understanding between the CPM and the Maoists, as that would fetch a massive amount of money for the CPM boss from the insurance company. In this way, she exposed her appalling poverty of thinking; at the same time, she also sought to tarnish the heroic struggle of Jangal Mahal and humiliate the people fighting for their dignity and for justice. One can only pity such intellectuals. What is important for our purpose now is that the response of this section of the urban literati depends on the part played and influence exercised by the Maoists in the Lalgarh struggle.

### **Main points of criticism**

First, the people of Jangal Mahal had been continuing their movement quite well. It is the Maoists who entered the scene from outside and made a total mess of everything and misguided and derailed the movement. It is their violent activities that brought joint forces into the scene. The result is that the people are now being sandwiched between state terror and gun-toting Maoists or 'non-state' actors, as civil rights organizations such as the APDR are fond

of describing it. The most bitter attack, however, came from the two Delhi-based historians—Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar. In a journal they wrote an article in the most malicious manner, some portions of which are as follows:

“Maoists have done incalculable harm to the movement. Their activities and intentions are shrouded in mystery, their secret terror operations express total indifference to human lives, their arms deals lead them...into shady financial transactions with rich and corrupt power brokers...They come into an already strong and open mass movement, they engage in a killing spree discrediting the movement, and then they leave after giving the state authorities a splendid excuse for crushing it” (Economic & Political Weekly, June 27-July 10, 2009).

Second, it is the Maoists who have derailed the movement towards a violent and undemocratic path. These are the main points of attack, although there are other minor points. For the time being, we will concentrate on these points.

### **Maoist presence**

Chhatradhar Mahato has stated that the People’s Committee consists of different political forces, the Maoists included. The Maoists have mass base. They are in their place as we are in ours. The Maoist leader, Kishenji made a press statement that they had been working in Lalgarh from the 1990s. In fact, from the historical point of view, the MCC had been active in the region from the 1980s and the CPI(M-L) People’s War in places such as Belpahari, Garbeta, Shalboni, Lalgarh, Banshpahari, Ramgarh, Sarenga etc from the mid-1990s. The issues over which they fought were as follows: against corruption in the panchayets; to ensure proper distribution of grants coming through government projects such as forest preservation samiti which rightfully belong to the adivasis; against the felling of trees useful to the people; for raising the price of kendu leaves etc.

People in the urban areas can still remember the extent of police repression in the zone from 2001-02. Behula Kalindi and Sulochana Kalindi of Belpahari were forced to undress by the raiding police party to enable the police forces ascertain their sex. When Jaleswar Soren was not found in his house, his ten-month pregnant wife, Sulekha Soren was taken away and sent to Midnapur central jail which the government calls ‘correctional home’ on charges of waging war against the state. Pyalaram Mahato, an 87-year old man who was even unable to walk alone as his jail-mates would testify, was charged with the ‘offence’ of being a People’s War squad member. A woman named Meena Sardar of Belpahari was so traumatized by what the raiding police party did to herself, her mother and her house that she lost her mental balance; when she was released on bail after spending months in jail, she became totally mad, stayed at her home with her mother by becoming a ‘liability’, and ultimately died in that state without any treatment. One can distinctly remember also how Prof. Kaushik Ganguly was arrested and beaten up at police lock-up, how Abhijit Sinha, a government official, was haunted by the fear of being arrested and tortured by the police and how he died near railway lines under mysterious circumstances in 2002.

The Jhinka jungle that has become news during ‘Operation Lalgarh’ for being a Maoist hideout, is the area where the body of the People’s War activist, Ashim Das @ Kanchan was found with marks of wound on all parts of the body some years back. It was, according to the findings of civil rights bodies, a case of fake encounter killing. Many village houses were destroyed, ravaged

and looted by the police and paramilitary forces. People were beaten brutally as if such acts of torture were the birthrights of the state forces, property was looted, kerosene oil was dropped into wells which were the only source of drinking water for the villagers, grain was mixed up with cooked rice, house-deeds, documents, ration cards and other things were simply taken away never to be returned. Civil rights bodies such as APDR had published many fact-finding reports of such despicable acts done by the WB police forces. However bitter it might sound, the fact is that a large section of city intellectuals paid no attention to these things at that time and were only too concerned with receiving patronage from the West Bengal government.

The reality is that the Maoists did not fall from the sky, nor did they come from a different planet; their social root lies in the soil of Jangal Mahal, however disturbing it might sound to the (a-)historians and sections of those 'learned personalities'. The list of proclaimed Maoist 'offenders' that the police forces have furnished will show that with the sole exception of Kishenj who hails from Andhra Pradesh, all others are sons and daughters of the soil—either adivasi or non-adivasi. Some of them are Sasadhar Mahato, Jagori Baske, Karan Hembrom, Bimal Mandi, Jyotsna, Tarit Pal, Sudip Chongdar and Sumitra Sardar. (HT, Kolkata Plus, 26 June 2009). According to reports, all of them did political work in the region at one time or other. Thus the statement that the Maoists are external to the movement, that they have just entered the scene all on a sudden and taken control of it, does not have any factual basis at all.

As to the 'sandwich' theory circulated by sections of the intellectuals and the media, it can be said that the advocates of this theory hereby have actually been portraying the masses in a way that they are devoid of any thinking of their own, that they are like unthinking, unfeeling robots who can only follow, but cannot lead. In this way, these urban intellectuals, themselves keeping a safe distance from the actual field of battle, pose as being possessed of all earthly knowledge and from whom the 'ignorant' adivasis must learn the art of how to conduct the movement. The sooner these 'learned' fellows come to their senses the better.

### **Peaceful 'democratic' movement and armed 'undemocratic' movement**

The Lalgarh movement has given rise to debates that are old in states such as Andhra Pradesh, but new in states such as West Bengal. Such issues had come up time and again from within human rights organizations and 'civil society' whenever armed resistance developed or revolutionary armed struggles gained in strength. The issue has been hotly debated earlier within the APCLC (Andhra Pradesh), PUCL, PUDR, APDR, BMC (WB) and very recently within Lalgarh Aandolan Samhati Mancha (Lalgarh Movement Solidarity Forum) or Lalgarh Mancha (Lalgarh Forum). According to some intellectuals, the 'peaceful and democratic' movement of the adivasi masses of Lalgarh was derailed by the Maoists and it took a violent turn as a result.

The view that comes up is that democratic struggle should be peaceful, and when it takes a violent turn and the people get armed, then it loses its democratic character. To them, 'democracy' is identified with order and peace, and if there is disorder and violence, then it becomes un-democratic. Needless to say, such ideas have been very carefully and successfully planted by the state propaganda machinery through media and other means and well-known historians as also intellectuals have become victims of such campaigns.

History, however, proves otherwise. It is not the people but the state which is armed to the teeth, and it is the state again which uses all conceivable methods of violence to keep people under subjugation. Peace-loving people are thereby forced by the state to raise the banner of

armed resistance, as the real perpetrators of violence leave behind for them no option other than that.

History is replete with many such examples. The great slave revolt under Spartacus against the might of Rome in 73BC that shook the slave empire to its foundations was not at all a peaceful affair; on the contrary, it was armed and violent in nature. Was it undemocratic in character? The great peasant rebellion in Germany under Thomas Munzer in the 1520s was clearly armed and violent. Was it also undemocratic? The great Taiping peasant rebellion in mid-19th century China (1851-64) also was one of the greatest peasant revolts and very much an armed affair. Was it undemocratic? The history of British India is also full of examples of armed anti-colonial struggles such as the Great Revolt of 1857 or those by Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen, Bagha Jatin, V.G. Pingle and many others. Many revolutionaries courted martyrdom with the aim of making our country free from colonial subjugation. Could those movements be branded as 'undemocratic'? The reality is that all these struggles represented the genuine interests and aspirations of the Indian people and were just and democratic in character.

In the class society of today, class contradictions, conflicts and sometimes, class wars are inevitable. The ruling classes had always exploited the majority of people, killed and maimed them, perpetrated terror and, in this way, extracted the sole right, the legitimacy to perpetrate terror against the people whom they pretend to serve. Names such as the 'Greyhound', 'Cobra', 'Scorpion', 'Jaguar' and many other state-trained police-butchers only betray the violent character of the Indian state. Whenever, in response, the oppressed people themselves take up arms, break that state monopoly over the means of violence and 'legitimacy' enjoyed by the state to control masses, the ruling classes raise the bogey of law and order and utilize that legitimacy to drown people's movement in pools of blood. If anybody calls that resistance struggle 'terrorism', then that 'terrorism' definitely is of a different character.

That reminds one of Mark Twain, the American writer. At the centenary year of the French Revolution in 1889, he wrote a novel entitled *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. The Jacobin period or the period of Danton and Robespierre during the French Revolution has been branded by many as the 'Reign of Terror'. While criticizing such a view, Mark Twain wrote:

"There were two 'Reigns of Terror', if we would but remember and consider it: the one wrought murder in hot passion, the other in heartless cold blood; the one lasted mere months, the other had lasted a thousand years; the one inflicted death upon ten thousand persons, the other upon a hundred millions; but our shudders are all for the 'horrors' of the minor Terror, the momentary terror, so to speak; whereas, what is horror of swift death by the axe compared with lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty and heartbreak? What is swift death by lightning compared with death by slow fire at the stake? A city cemetery could contain the coffins filled by that brief Terror which we have all been diligently taught to shiver at and mourn over, but all France could hardly contain the coffins filled by that older and real Terror—that unspeakably bitter and awful Terror which none of us has been taught to see in its vastness or pity as it deserves".

Mark Twain was not a revolutionary; however, his inquisitiveness and sensitivity helped him arrive at a truth. In the late 1920s, Mao Tse-tung talked about terror of two types, while he analyzed the Hunan peasant uprising. One was white terror or counter-revolutionary terror; and the other was red terror or revolutionary terror. He wrote:

“A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an act of insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep-rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for hundreds of years. The rural areas needed a mighty revolutionary upsurge, for it alone can rouse the people in their millions to become a powerful force”.

These facts are not unknown to the writers, historians and others who ruminate about their craft and actually keep a safe distance from the field of battle; however, whenever it comes to connecting them with the present situation, they fail to seek truth from facts, their logical mind ceases to respond, their sense of history suddenly loses its steam, and they betray their utter inability to grasp the essence of that historic struggle.

It has become obvious that the Lalgarh struggle has posed a serious problem to the civil rights movement, democrats and sections of the urban intellectuals. When the masses were attacked and tortured, when they protested through processions, meetings, petitions and other ‘democratic’ methods as permissible by the government, and did not raise the banner of armed resistance, the city-bred intellectuals stood by their side and raised their voice. There was no problem in Singur and Nandigram; in the case of the latter, despite the presence of armed resistance, as the mainstream TMC party was also active there. But the Lalgarh story was entirely different. Here the urban literati are confronted with the emergence of the resisting warrior masses and in their presence, are at a loss what to do, what position to take. This is an entirely new situation, unlike any in West Bengal for many years. This entirely new situation has placed them in a dilemma, and they are yet to cope with and digest it and then take a position on it. That is why we find sections of the APDR, APCLC, PUDR, editors of some little magazines and others condemning both state and ‘non-state’ violence in their statements, articles and public speeches. The transformation of the ‘repressed masses’ into ‘warrior masses’ have reduced them to such a pitiable condition!

On 16 September 2009, one English daily organized a thought-provoking discussion in Kolkata with the caption ‘Surely the Maoist is not one of us’. Most of the speakers sought the genesis of the Maoist emergence in the ‘failure of the system to deliver’. Let us quote a few lines from the report: “When a landlord takes away a villager’s wife, keeps her in his house to sexually abuse her and orders the husband to go away when he pleads with him for returning his wife to him and his two children, what is he supposed to do? Mouth platitudes about non-violence and peace? ‘Or take up arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them?’ In one such case a youth in Andhra Pradesh went straight into the jungle, organized a group of about 25,000 people, killed the landlord and ended by being Maoists”. This is part of the speech delivered by Prof. Hargopal from Andhra Pradesh, which only corroborates the view that it is the oppressive state that breeds armed resistance (The Statesman, 17 September 2009).

There is one important point on which we believe most of the people will be in agreement, the Maoists included. This is related to the death of civilians, of medical staff, government officials on polling duty in the Jangal Mahal region over the last few months or common innocent civilians. As to the deaths due to mine blasts of the medical staff and polling officials in the

Belpahari area of West Medinipur some months ago, the Maoists have tendered apology time and again as those civilians were mistaken as security forces. One may note here in passing that Kshudiram Bose, the revolutionary from Bengal, made a similar mistake when he killed the Kennedy couple, instead of the notorious magistrate Kingsford back in the 1910s and was hanged by the British rulers. These acts—even though done unknowingly—were rightly criticized by cross-sections of the people. In the recent period, another such act took place, this time in Jharkhand. One intelligence official, Francis Induwar, was beheaded by the Maoists. That raised a hue and cry among the central home department and media in varied magnitude. While the Maoists later, as reported in the press, made self-criticism for adopting such a method of exterminating an enemy. However, this particular act needs a bit more consideration.

First, the first two instances were clear cases of mistaken identity, but the third one was not. It is related to the method of killing, and not the killing as such. The region in which he was killed is a tribal belt, and sharp weapons such as axes, knives etc are used by the tribals as their traditional weapons. Let us simply cast aside for the time being the veil of 'civilization' from our person and for a time keep in mind the hard reality that in the name of this very 'civilization' as created by capitalism and its clients in countries like India, the ruling classes had over the decades only perfected the methods of torture on people, prisoners and all dissident voices not only in Vietnam, Afganistan or Iraq, but also in Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and other states that would put to shame even some of the most brutal characters in history. While most of us will, in all likelihood, disapprove of the adoption of such a method of beheading for killing a 'foe', one can legitimately ask the ruling elite, sections of the media and the security forces whom they train up for committing unheard-of-barbarity on their own people whether they—the perpetrators of violence—themselves have the moral right to raise such moral questions at all.

Second, this part of criticism appears to me to be quite amusing and self-contradictory. As has been pointed out before, sections of the urban literati and some civil rights activists have expressed their disapproval in the taking up of arms (meaning firearms) even for self-defence by the adivasis of Jangal Mahal. The urban literati would rather accept their wielding of traditional weapons, but not the firearms. If that is the case, then what is the harm in beheading a person as in that case traditional weapons rather than firearms were used.

Let us now pass on to another aspect. The major section of the 'civil society' of West Bengal has learnt to accept state-sponsored violence as natural and somewhat legitimate, in the sense that it can be taken for granted. To them, therefore, the perpetration of state terror against the people of Lalgurh is the legitimate application of legitimate violence (we include in it arrests, interrogation, long period of incarceration, not to speak of torture in police and jail custody); they had never questioned or challenged the legitimacy of that state-sponsored violence. What they are concerned about is that there should be no excess and the casualties should be less. They talk only about legality, about laws being trampled down, but hardly talk about justice. They do not question the system; they only tell the government to abide by rules and not to deviate from them. To them, governments are elected and thus have broad support of the people, and that these do not have any class character of their own.

But when the Lalgurh masses dared to take up arms in response to that state-sponsored violence and used the same weapon against the state machinery and the CPM hermdads to pay the oppressors back in their own coin, and renounced the 'democratic and peaceful' path as

looked at by that section of the 'civil society', then that resistance struggle which is legitimate and just from the people's point of view, came to be considered impermissible under the law and would merit criticism and even condemnation from their side.

To some people, there is hardly any difference between state-sponsored violence and 'non-state' violence and both are condemnable; in the eyes of some APDR people, 90% condemnation is to be reserved for the former and 10% for the latter. The same is the attitude of some of the editors of Bengali little magazines/periodicals such as Aneek—as is evident in signature campaigns—which quite religiously devotes some pages in its issues to the condemnation of the 'non-state' 'senseless' violence committed by the Maoists or the resisting warrior masses of Lalgarh.

The pertinent question here is: could the violence committed by the state against the people and that done by the people against the state agents be the same? Would they also denounce—even if not in the same breadth—the 'violent' struggles as championed by Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen or the peasant rebels in Telengana? Would they condemn the heroic armed resistance and national liberation struggles of the people of Vietnam, Afganistan or Iraq? Every year, the Indian state is spending millions on the modernization of its forces whose main purpose is to subdue and crush people's movements, while lakhs of people are dying every year out of malnutrition and hunger. Have they ever challenged the legitimacy of the state to rule? Have they ever demanded large-scale demobilization of armed forces and paramilitary forces and the diversion of that massive amount of money to the cause of people's real development?

Struggles can be of different types—just and unjust. If they make no distinction between just struggles and unjust struggles, between the violence perpetrated by the state forces and hermands/salwa judum goons on the one hand and the violence committed by the armed people, on the other, then they would have also to denounce the long tradition of people's heroic armed resistance down the ages both in our country as also outside.

The struggle in Jangal Mahal is not a spontaneous movement; it has been a politically conscious movement, as its process of unfolding made it clear. By now, it is obvious that the Maoists have been playing a major part in it. The urban literati should not grudge it, because who is to lead and guide the movement, what form that movement would take is to be decided by the sons of the soil themselves, and not by those who keep a safe distance from it.

The movement is coming out with new features, new methods of struggle at regular intervals—participation by the broadest masses, ingenuity, alternative model of development, formation of people's militia ('Sidhu Kanu Gana Militia' drawing its name and inspiration from the past, from the names of two Santhal leaders of the mid-19th Santhal rebellion in colonial India), women coming into leadership and probably also taking part in policy-making—all these and many other things have made the movement stand apart from others that preceded it. The direction that it is taking drives home the fact that some concrete political ideology, a fair amount of knowledge about military strategy and tactics and seasoned political brains stand behind it as guiding spirits. Without the active role of the Maoists, the movement would not have taken such a shape. This constitutes its main strength.

At the same time, the presence of the Maoists and the resisting warrior masses is also the reason why sections of the urban literati keep aloof from it. It appears that had the adivasi people kept aside firearms (AK-47s, landmines etc) and took up their traditional weapons (bows and arrows, axes etc) to stand up to the combined assault of the CRPF, COBRA, Straco, BSF, EFR, Greyhound, American satellite, state intelligence, army, Air force and of course, the CPM hermits and in that totally unequal war inevitably lost the battle, these intellectuals would have derived silent pleasure (or if not so, would have been stimulated to take the field), and like during Nandigram, would have given the call for a big procession (silent, of course!) with candles and with giant banners again demanding 'Hang Butcher Buddhadev' (or Butcher Chidambaran also?), and would have again derived much pleasure by seeing their own faces in newspapers and TV channels. Lalgarh would thus have turned into a second Nandigram. It would have been defeated.

And like the peasant rebellions in China, which were utilized by ruling classes throughout ages to initiate dynastic changes due to the absence of new productive forces and correct political ideology, the Lalgarh struggle would also have been utilized, as Singur and Nandigram struggles have been utilized recently for election battles, to initiate 'change' in the way sections of the urban literati, not to speak of the parliamentary political parties, envision it. Whether one likes it or not, the struggle of Lalgarh has moved in a different direction. This constitutes its strength. For those who long for a society where human values would triumph over the lust for profits, the Lalgarh struggle holds the promise of hope for the future.

Today, the Lalgarh struggle is not confined within the borders of Jangal Mahal region. It has extended far beyond, providing inspiration to people of other states; it has also been accepted as the new symbol of defiance and resistance by the democratic and freedom-loving people in other countries of the world. Movements in solidarity with the Lalgarh struggle have already developed in the urban areas of West Bengal as also in other states; solidarity gatherings, meetings and conventions have also been taking place in foreign countries such as UK, Greece etc. The central government has joined hands with the American intelligence and state governments and initiated the 'Operation Greenhunt' against the people of our country—in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and other states in the name of combating the Maoist movement.

The central home minister, P. Chidambaram did not mince words when he said that they were treating the Lalgarh operation as laboratory for experimentation and that his policy would be one of 'zero tolerance' towards the Maoists. It is a clear threat to the people; it means state-sponsored genocide and brutality to be perpetrated against the people. They are doing it because they have already pledged (through MOUs etc) to hand over vast stretches of our country full of natural resources to the hands of domestic and foreign big capital for rapacious plunder and loot, and those who are resisting this plunder—Maoists and others—have been singled out for attack and extermination in the name of 'development'. The people of Lalgarh have stood up against this with their heads held high. Today or tomorrow, all the intellectuals, human rights activists, teachers, artists, writers and other democratic people would have to take some stand. Should they allow our country's natural resources to be sold out to corporate capital by the central and state governments which would bring more ruin to our country, or should they stand up as true patriots to oppose it?

Over the last decade and more, there had been much military collaboration, besides collaboration of other types, between the American and Israeli governments, on the one hand, and the Indian government, on the other. The American FBI has opened its office in the capital, if not also in other Indian cities, many years back and joint military exercises between the American and Indian armed forces have been taking place regularly in Mizoram and other areas. American and Israeli military officials are keeping regular contacts with their Indian counterparts.

And if armed resistance of the Indian people and Communist revolutionary movements develop further despite the massive armed mobilization by the central and state governments for the 'Operation Green-hunt'—and I am not talking only of Maoist insurgency—then, as it appears now, a time will not be long in coming when the people of India would have to confront American soldiers on the Indian soil. Confronted with such an eventuality, how would the civil rights activists, intellectuals, editors of little magazines and other sections of urban literati react? How would they respond when they would see people of their own country, their brothers and sisters dying, falling down but rising up again and putting up armed resistance against the foreign aggressors like that in Indochina in the wake of the American imperialist aggression? Would they condemn that people's armed struggle then also, as some of them are doing today, on the ground that that struggle smacked of violence? Would they behave and act like patriots, or would they act like unthinking robots and still keep on murmuring that the aggressors also have their right to life?

In 1932, one year after the Japanese aggression in China, Soong Ching Ling, the wife of Sun Yat-sen and one of the leading personalities of the China League, a civil rights body, wrote an article on the duties of the League. China at that time was torn by civil war between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang and was controlled by a number of imperialist powers in one way or the other. In that article, she dealt mainly with the plight of the political prisoners in China (the overwhelming majority of whom were the communists), voicing demands for their unconditional release. When confronted with the question whether the China League supported the revolution (meaning Communist revolution), Soong Ching Ling made it clear that the League stood for the ultimate victory of the people and the assertion of their rights, and that victory could be attained only through revolution. Urban literati and civil rights activists in India may find the essay quite illuminating.

Let us now come back to India. Many of us living in India still do not know who to look forward to for guidance and leadership; but what many of us do feel is that how we live today is far removed from how we ought to live, that the present system has already outlived its utility, has been failing to deliver and that some fundamental change is necessary in the interests of the majority of the people. Is Lalgarh showing the way?

It is high time that we should raise our collective voice against this unjust war waged by the central and state governments against our own people, and also demand large-scale demobilization of armed forces and paramilitary forces and the diversion of that massive amount of money from the nefarious goal of committing genocide on our people to the task of creating a new society fit for human living.

## **A perspective on Resistance to Operation Green Hunt by Comrade Ajith, secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) Naxalbari**

*A Perspective on the Resistance to Operation Green Hunt - By Comrade Ajith, Secretary - Communist Party Of India (Marxist - Leninist) Naxalbari (Participant in the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement)*

The Central government has deployed a huge military force targeting a wide area ranging from Jharkhand to Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to West Bengal - Odisha. This is the spearhead of a massive attack to suppress and eliminate the revolutionary movement advancing in this area, led by the CPI (Maoist). This suppression campaign has been named Operation Greenhunt. The Home Minister P. Chidambaram and top officials of the Manmohan Singh government have openly talked about using the Air Force and carrying out so-called surgical strikes. There are reports that advanced military-technical support and equipment from the US and Israel is being used.



These murderous plans of the UPA government has the open support of most parliamentary parties. The Congress, BJP and CPM are its main proponents. They are united in an unholy alliance against the people. This unity of ruling class parties and their anti-people suppression campaign has, on the other hand, triggered off an unprecedented polarisation. A wide range of progressive, democratic forces and personages have come forward to condemn and oppose Operation Greenhunt. They are joining up, along with revolutionary forces, to form broad platforms to mobilise people and resist the government's plans. They have rightly judged that Operation Greenhunt is nothing other than a "War on the People". This development is a very important advance. It has already forced the Central government to change its offensive public stance, even though it continues with the suppression campaign.

There are many reasons motivating such a wide array of forces and people with differing political views and interests to come together against Operation Greenhunt. The most important one among them is the recognition that this suppression campaign, though immediately directed against the revolutionary war led by the CPI (Maoist), is the spearhead of a broader plan to attack and eliminate a wide range of resistance movements going on all over the country. They include movements against privatisation, displacement, environmental destruction, and many others.

They are obstacles in the plans of the UPA government to open up the whole country to the ravages of globalisation. This is why, the Central and State governments devote funds and forces to suppress them even while they cut down on social services with the plea of resource shortage. The struggling masses are aware that they are fighting crucial battles. So they keep up stiff resistance despite facing repeated state attacks. This is also why these struggling forces, their supporters and democratic, progressive sections quickly understood the deeper implications of Operation Greenhunt and joined up against it. This is the crucial political

significance of the broad countryside movement emerging against the “War on the People”. It carries the potential to develop into a broad alliance against the people's enemies, internal as well as external. The question of its perspective thus becomes all the more important.

The dominant perspective right now is one that considers the need to clear out the Maoists and their followers from these mineral rich regions as the main motivation behind Operation Greenhunt. It is argued that their strong presence is holding up several crores of mining and power projects lined up by TNC's and Indian compradors. Hence the huge push to drive out the Maoists and secure these regions. This view is influential within the Maoist camp also.

Well, it is certainly true that a number of monopolies like Tata, Mittal and Vedanta are just waiting to plunder the resources of these areas. A good part of it is slated for export as raw material to imperialist countries. The only thing preventing this right now is the people's war and politicised Adivasi masses led by the CPI (Maoist). But to reduce Operation Greenhunt to this or even mainly consider it from this angle would be wide off the mark. It is like missing out US imperialism's world strategic aims in the Iraq war and seeing it mainly as a war done for oil. The question of control over resources is certainly involved. But this is neither the sole issue, nor even the main one. The important thing to be grasped is the political, strategic aim of Operation Greenhunt. What is the ground reality?

The Adivasi masses of these regions have established control not just over its resources. They have taken control of their destiny, their lives, into their own hands. They are building a different society- vibrant with their tribal traditions, yet modern enough to imbue new values. They are not doing this for their own selves alone. No, they see it as part of a larger project concerning the whole country. They have been able to do this and achieve such a lofty vision with the force of arms, led by a communist party guided by Marxism-Leninism- Maoism.

We, as Maoists, believe that this is precisely why all this became possible. Therefore, for us, the resistance to the “War on the People” is a matter of defending this people's war by all means. But, obviously, this is not how it is viewed today by quite a number of forces and individuals who have courageously stepped forward to resist. Defence of the people's war cannot be made a basis for a broad unity that includes them. Does this mean that protection of resources or Adivasi rights remain as the only basis? No. We could make the real state of affairs existing in the Adivasi regions of India as a starting point.

Protection of scheduled Adivasi areas was promised by the Indian Constitution six decades ago. Later, the Panchayat Raj Constitutional amendment promised a large dose of autonomy. All of this has been blatantly violated by the Central and State governments. Such Constitutional safeguards have become empty shells under which the most inhuman trampling of Adivasi way of living and habitats take place. Even the highest courts have either failed to prevent this or promoted it, as seen in the Narmada dam agitation. But here, in a large part of India, tribal peoples are making control over land, resources and society a reality, through struggles. This is an immediate fight to end exploitation, oppression and block aggressive moves of big corporates and the state. More importantly, it is a long term struggle projecting a different type of living.

What is this life? Sustainable development; people's friendly education; growing emancipation of women; a halt to domination and plunder of foreign and Indian exploiters; a new culture that rebuilds Adivasi traditions anew instead of mocking them. The illuminating fact is that all of this is being created by Adivasi tribes who are despised as 'primitives' by so-called mainstream society. The 'backwards' are teaching the 'forwards'. This hits at the very pillars of Brahmanism, the core of all reactionary anti-people thinking in our country. The motivation this could give to the numerous oppressed and exploited sections in the country is a real threat for the rulers.

Leaving out or minimising this political significance and limiting the resistance to a defence of resources or Adivasi human rights is not good. Unity should be achieved on the highest possible level. The country and the people need it. While all can debate on the rights or wrongs of the particular forms of struggle or political colouring, the defence of the achievements made by the Adivasi people, of the way of life they are building, can certainly be incorporated in the basis of a resistance forum against Operation Greenhunt. This much is already evident from the articles, media discussions and comments of notable intellectuals. We owe it to the future generations to defend the right of a people to decide their own destiny.

# Indian State Wants to Destroy the Maoist Development Model

## An Appeal to Thinkers, Intellectuals, Artists and Writers

by Satnam and Buta Singh



The Indian state has amassed troops in central India on an unprecedented scale, to swoop down on the people. It is the latest of the wars launched by the Indian State against the people living in this country. The government says that it has to move against these areas as Maoists hold sway over it and it is not under the control of central or state authority.

In fact the natives of these jungles have been living there for thousands of years and have protected these forests as they ensure life to them and is their only source of livelihood for survival. These tribals are the most poor and wretched in our land. Popularly called adivasis, they are the oldest inhabitants of our country, still living in an ancient age. For thousands of years they have lived an archaic life.

In all these years, no one has been able to subjugate them. The British Empire tried to do this in 1910 but their marauding armies were repulsed and forced to beat a retreat. The resistance of the tribal people against the British forces was led by the great warrior Gundadhur. This is popularly known as the Bhoomkal Baghawat. Earlier, they had fought the British under the leadership of Birsa Munda in the famous Munda Rebellion in the nineteenth century.

Since then, no regime has dared to attack and attempt to subjugate them, whether they were the British or the post-British rulers sitting at Delhi. They have remained a free people all along, with their own culture, customs and a unique way of life. The central and state governments have been exploiting their forests and mineral and metal resources at an unbridled pace but have never done anything to provide them with basic requirements like drinking water, education, medical facilities etc. The loot of their resources has been enormous, to the tune of billions of rupees every year, with all the money going to the industrialists, bureaucrats, politicians, contractors and the police. All this was going on smoothly, till the the tribals awakened to their rampant exploitation and inhuman oppression and took to the path of resistance.

This resistance has been characteristic of their traditions and in accordance with their nature as an independent people. Their struggle is to put an end to this onslaught which has made their life, hell like. That is why they identified with the ideology of revolutionary Marxism which promises a world free of loot, exploitation and oppression. That is why they found common cause with the revolutionary Maoist rebels, who want to put a stop to every kind of exploitation and tyranny and build an egalitarian, humane society, free of any kind of discrimination.

Of course, as is well known by now, they are living on lands which are blessed with the richest

minerals, metals and other natural resources like iron, coal, bauxite, manganese, corandum, gold, diamonds, uranium etc. The Indian state has never considered that tribals have a right to their land and jungles, and have constantly tried to usurp them in various ways. The State wants to further intensify this exploitation now, and has invited the foreign imperialist companies and Indian big industrial houses and their collaborations, to set up new projects on these lands.

The Indian government has signed Memorandums of Understanding to the tune of lakhs of crores of rupees with the foreign and Indian industrial houses for this purpose. The contents of these MOU's are secret and confidential and people have no access to them! The current offensive of the Indian state is to wrest back these areas from the control of these people and hand it over to these Companies. All this is being done in the name of development. But this development in fact is in no way the development of the material conditions of the life of the tribals and the people living around these areas. This is amply demonstrated in the earlier projects like Bailladilla, Balco, Bokaro, Bhilai, Jaduguda and numerous others.

Quite recently we have seen the people of Nandigram, Singur, Kashipur, Kalinga Nagar, Lalgah, Pullavaram, Tehri and Narmada Project areas resisting the setting up of car factories, dams, huge mining pit centers, SEZ's and other projects which have nothing to do with the development and well-being of the masses of ordinary toiling and poor in these areas or in the country elsewhere. It is meant to enrich the already handful of rich, who live a parasitic life, or to fill the coffers of foreign imperialist capitalists whose only religion is to loot, plunder and exploit. The people here have struggled and fought against the state for their rights over their lands and against the capitalist sharks on whose bidding the government acts.

The government has deployed lakhs of armed forces to destroy the resistance of the people, especially at places where it is strong and formidable and hampers the capitalists from acquiring resource rich lands. When government says it wants to take back the areas controlled by Maoists, in fact, it wants to smash the resistance of the people and snatch their lands to offer these to the mining giants, industrialists and super rich businessmen. Maoism is nothing but the rebellion of the people against injustice, notwithstanding whether the government calls them terrorists or whatever. Millions of people in these regions identify themselves with the cause of the Maoists and when millions become a movement for a just cause, they can't be called terrorists.

The state admits that there are 223 districts out of a total of 600 where Maoists are active. This means that there are 223 districts where the people espouse this ideology and want an end to exploitation. That lakhs are support this resistance or are up in arms. That it has become a people's movement. And what of the people in the remaining districts? Are there not workers, peasants, students, employees, petty shopkeepers and toiling masses who have no stake in this system, want a change for the better, and have the same dreams? If the 223 are up against injustice and the rest have the same aspirations then the state loses the right to use the invective of terrorism.

**What the Indian state wants to destroy is not just the Maoists, but the aspirations of millions upon millions in this country, the dreams of every oppressed Indian.**

It is using the media and all the propaganda machinery available, to denigrate and destroy this. To destroy the resistance of the down-trodden, their movement for change, which is the only thing that can bring them real happiness, in this wretched land of ours called Hindustan. This land, of the hungry. Of the exploited. Of the peasant who commits suicide. Of the youth facing a bleak future. Of the worker who is being laid off and kicked out of the factories. Of the employees of the organized sector who are losing all the rights gained over the years when their jobs are being contractualised. Of the government employees who have been booted out with a few crumbs in the name of VRS or Golden Handshake. Of the petty shop keepers and traders, whose enterprises are being gobbled up by the malls and the SEZs. This is the land crying for justice.

If Maoists are branded by the Prime Minister as the biggest internal threat to the country, then the rulers must think about what they have given to the people in the last 62 years of independence. Why have things come to such a pass? They have been ruling and organizing society and have utterly failed in the six long decades that they have been at the helm. The present state of affairs is their doing. Not that of the Maoists. Their development strategies have backfired and that can't be blamed on the resisting people and the Maoists. The Maoists have come into the picture only recently, but what has the state been doing about the promises it made to the people at the time of independence? Where has the promise of a Tryst with Destiny vanished? The promise sworn by Jawaharlal Nehru from the ramparts of Lal Quila on the midnight of 14-15 August 1947? People are not to be blamed for that promise not being kept, nor are the Maoists.

So now, Operation Green Hunt is not being executed just because the government wants to wipe out the Maoists in an all out war, in the name of fighting terrorism. It is their attempt to annihilate the yearning of the people, their struggles, their resistance, their resolve for a better life, whether they are led by the Maoists or not. And when the tribal heartland refuses to cow down before such an attack, it deserves admiration.

The state intends to bring in the might of the Air Force against its own people. This is the result of the 60 years of misrule and the anti-people policies, they have been imposing. The people have never given them a mandate to carry out these policies. Over these years they have only opposed these policies through petitions, protests, strikes, sit-ins, struggles, resistance and also through hunger strikes and work to rule agitations. And god knows how many times the so-called people's democratic state has fired on the protesters. How many times they have killed people. How many millions they have cane-charged and how many millions they have put into jails, not to speak of the thousands of custodial deaths and mass scale encounter killings. They never stopped the repression.

All these decades, rather than listen to the grievances of the people, this state, which swears by the non-violence of MK Gandhi, has been resorting to never-ending violence. Like a mafia. Yet, the resistance continued and revolts grew.

**And now it has created the borders within, against its own countrymen.**

The current attack on the poor in central India is nothing but an enhanced and more deadly

version of the same state violence that has continued since 1947. It is meant to break the fight back of the people there, the fight of the poorest of the poor, of the tribal peasants, and workers working in the mines. It is meant to tell others everywhere in the country, not to stand up for their rights, not to oppose the policies of the state though they go against the interests of the people and the country.

The centre of resistance is being encircled not just to break it, but also to destroy the new things which the people have created during the course of their struggles and which they have toiled hard to build. The government has started a vilification campaign against those who refuse to budge, who refuse to kowtow and who refuse to be further misled by the never ending empty promises of development and progress. They know that this development is not for them. For a government which has discarded the ideal of a welfare state can't genuinely embark on a thing which it has abandoned at the behest of imperialist capital, the World Bank and the WTO.

### **People's Development Committees in the Dandakaranya**

The people under attack have built their own local government, the Jantana Sarkar, at various levels, taking their future into their own hands, for a real trust with destiny.

Let us have a look in brief, at what the people have built through their Development Committees in the villages in Dandakaranya, and what the State wants to destroy. It will give us a glimpse of what the Maoists hold as a vision for the progress and development of our country – development which is indigenously and self reliantly built, one which is people oriented and is constructed in the course of the people's democratic participation, and one which cares for this land and its resources. Such development which will free us from the stranglehold of imperialist capital and its dictates. A course of action which can only be executed by the truly patriotic.

\*The biggest reform undertaken is that of land. They have distributed lakhs of acres of land among every peasant household. And no one is allowed to keep more land than one can till. Thus doing away with unnecessary hiring of labour in agriculture. Even the Patels who used to oppress people and fleece them through unpaid labour have been allowed to retain land they can manage with their family's labour. No non-tribals are allowed to own land there.

\* Women are also given property rights over land.

\*They have developed agriculture from the primitive form of shifting every one or two years, to systematic settled farming. They were taught to sow, weed and harvest the crops. They cultivate both their own private lands as well as co-operative fields for community use. The development of agriculture is being done without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

\*They have introduced a wide range of vegetables like carrot, radish, brinjal, bitter gourd, okra, tomato etc., which the tribals of remote areas had never seen or tasted.

\* They have planted orchards of bananas, citrus fruits, mangoes, guavas etc.

\* They have built dams, ponds, and water channels for breeding fish and for the purpose of irrigation. All this has been done through collective labour and the produce is distributed free to every household.

\* They have dug wells for safe drinking water. The industrial projects have destroyed underground water resources, and streams have been polluted to such an extent, that the fish and water life have died as also the vegetation around it. Many fruit trees have stopped flowering around these water resources.

\* They have set up rice mills in a number of villages. These mills have freed women from the daily pounding of paddy for extracting grain. Many of these mills have been destroyed by Salwa Judum which was launched by the government, which talks so much about development in these areas.

\* They have built a health care system which reaches every tribal peasant in every village. Each village has a Medicine Unit which has been trained to identify diseases and distribute medicines to the villagers. The health of the tribals rates only second in priority to the fight against exploitation and oppression.

\* The women participate equally in these developmental activities. Special attention is paid to the issue of patriarchy and that is why they come forward equally to defend their rights and lands.

\* They run schools. The schools built by the government are completely non-functional and are usually used by the police and paramilitary forces when they raid villages. That is one reason the people pull down these pucca structures which have become symbols of repression.

\* They have published books and magazines in the Gondi language. As a result, it is for the first time that this language has found a place in the written world. Songs, articles and anecdotes written by the Gond people are published in the magazines brought out by the movement. These are the initial steps to develop this ancient language which has been neglected, just as the people have been. Though there is no existing script in Gondi, they use devnagri script.

\* The remunerative prices for Tendu leaf collection and wages for the cutting of bamboo and timber is fixed by the Maoist movement taking into consideration the interests of the tribals.

\* Trade in the movement area goes on without hindrance. The traders are not allowed to cheat the tribals in haat bazaars. The movement announces remunerative prices for the jungle produce and paddy which the traders agree to. The presence of guerrillas ensures fair trade practices. On the other hand, the traders feel happy that there is no danger of theft or robberies in the movement controlled areas and they can move about there, freely.

\* They have their own justice system. People's Courts are held to settle various disputes among

the people, as well as with the oppressors.

\* Theft, robbery, cheatings, murders for property and personal gains have vanished.

\* Sexual harassment and rape by the forest department, the contractors and the police has become a thing of the past. Now the women walk freely in the jungle whether it is day or night.

\* Democratic functioning has been introduced at the village level onwards. The Gram Rajya Committees (now called Revolutionary Peoples Committees) function at the head of various committees like Development Committees which look after agriculture, fish farming, education, village development, Medicine Units etc.

\* The women and children have their own organizations in almost every village. The tribal peasants have their separate organization, with units in every village.

\* Almost every village has units of People's Militia which take up the responsibility of defense of the village.

\* Cultural organizations thrive in these jungles as the tribals have great affinity for cultural activities. These organizations propagate through songs, dances, plays and other art forms, on all the issues whether local, national or international.

\* The movement has been able to prevent starvation deaths in its areas.

### **Salwa Judum – the Privatization of State Violence**

Salwa Judum was a terror campaign launched by the government, where the police recruited tribal youth at Rs.1500 per month as Special Police Officers (SPOs). The SPOs were given arms and let loose on the villagers in the movement areas. They burned, killed, raped and forced people to flee their homes, with the help of paramilitary forces and specially trained Naga Battalions standing guard.

Salwa Judum restricted and destroyed trade in these areas by closing down the haat bazaars and trying to demolish their economy to force the tribals into submission. From 2005-07, this went on for two years. They destroyed standing and harvested crops, burned or poisoned the grain and other jungle produce kept by the tribals for exchange in the haat bazaars to procure other essentials of life. Even all this could not force the tribals to submit. Rather than surrender, they lived on bamboo seeds.

The bloody campaign of Salwa Judum killed hundreds of tribals, burned hundreds of villages, raped hundreds of women, forcing about 50,000 tribals to live in enclosures called relief camps, set up by the police, which the tribals ultimately fled. This campaign forced about 30,000 people to flee their villages for other provinces. Lakhs of people were forced to leave their homes and to roam in the interiors of the jungles. In fact the government tried to destroy their whole

economy and sources of livelihood even threatening to poison open water sources in the forests.

**But the resistance continued. It could not be broken.**

### **And Now**

Bitter with its failure to make the people yield to them, the government has now embarked upon Operation Green Hunt, a military campaign with nearly one lakh personnel. Under various pretexts, the Indian Air Force is weighing its wings to swoop down on the forests, in spite of promises to the contrary by the Prime Minister.

We have been told that Maoists are the biggest internal threat to the country. Who are these Maoists? They are just the people themselves who have taken to the path of resistance, to struggle against the various Indian governments, who one after the other, do not allow them a life of dignity or one of peace. The state is attacking its own people threatening to wipe them out, if they don't vacate the lands they have lived on for centuries. And we know about the term collateral damage – the killing of the civilian population in a war.

Salwa Judum killed the people without a declared war, now they intend to kill on a much huger scale. They want to break the back of resistance by killing people. They want to hand over the resource rich lands of the tribals to the greedy foreign capitalist lords. They want to destroy the alternate development what the people have created with their enormous toil and persistent struggles.

Let us think. Let us awake. Let us spread the word. Let us awaken the people everywhere else. Let us raise our voice against injustice. Let us tell the government that it must stop this war against its own people and instead listen to them, respect their aspirations and attend to their demands.

**This is an unjust war which the government has declared on its own people. It must stop.**

## India for the selective assassination of its own citizens

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Recent statements from Indian leaders and police officers gives away the new strategy on the war on Naxalism. To make the movement "headless" by carrying out selective assassination of its leaders with the help of Israeli operatives

Plucky savyness combined with unnecessary bravado has recently marked the attempts at media interface by some Maoist leaders. There are benefits to reap and a price to pay, as a result. On the one hand, it has been a long time coming for the Maoists to come out of their jungle bases and give press conferences, or invite selected correspondents to visit their bases under armed escort. They correctly understood that their political program (and not their military campaign only) needed to be promoted and publicized. They realized that innovative tactics needed to be implemented to popularize their struggles and their demands and acquire some mainstream presence. It took them a long time to also realize that when you wish to take on the state of India, that you must at least marginally capture the imagination of some of those who read papers, surf the net, hang out in cafes and do occasionally get agitated about issues of justice, honesty and righteousness. Such people cannot be ignored. In fact their chatter can eventually affect the mood of the nation. For too long the media in India has been significantly successful in disorienting, deflecting and mesmerizing the minds of urban folks into imagining a country that is not up to par because it is behind the West in so many ways. This state of stupor persists, but there is now an increasing awareness in some circles at least, that India's postures about its growth, success and international stature can overnight become a hollow dream, if the word gets around that India has treated its first citizens with violence, deprivation, displacement and eventual genocide. The hollowness behind the growth figures, much of which has limited authenticity when seen in terms of the high current account deficit, high unemployment, incredible rise of prices, is also becoming evident even among the India-shining crowd. Despite all the bravado that Kamal Nath and Montek Ahluwalia indulge in, in Davos (after all they would all be seeking International jobs, very soon) the baseline figures of India's economic progress are quite undermined with the phenomenal rise in poverty, illiteracy, infant malnutrition, farmer suicides and poor potable water facilities and sanitation related fatalities. It is an interesting development that one of the Government's own bodies has declared that the assault on India's tribals "is one of the largest land grabs since Columbus", –that brigand, pirate and drunken sailor, who landed somewhere, near the Bahamas and declared he had found India.



Well, a section of India's population-I daresay a large section– also needs to discover India. And, they are doing so. And it is because of that, there are some magazines on the net, and on print, that are taking the time to trek into the Naxalite bases and interview their leaders. Not everything is lost to the vacuous, hold the crotch, ape the West, get BPO-fever generation, MCed by the Shahrukh, Infosys, IPL and Kingfisher cultural nexus.

Initially, the Maoists' planned to let some of their spokesperson come overground. This experiment failed, as the Governments of West Bengal (GWB) and India (GOI) wasted no time in slapping them with Unlawful Activities charges and put them in the slammer. No one talks about them anymore, other than the struggling Civil Liberties organizations. They are forgotten. Fortunately for the Maoists, there are a large number of academics and sympathetic journalists, ( as opposed to the band of poets, actresses and intellectuals who made a half hearted attempt to raise their voices on Lalgarh and then withdrew into their shells in no time at the first threats from the GWB) who have taken it upon themselves not to be intimidated and have spoken out in fairly clear terms both on TV and as well on the web and print media on the hypocrisy and superficiality of the mainstream media's analysis (or extreme lack of it) in parroting the GOI's and GWB's mendacious piety about non-violence, abjuring arms, law and order and "foreign hand."

In India, except for the alternate press and in most cases Tehelka, the media engages in sensationalist lies or they repeat the lies of the government and they get away with it. In India, an Inspector General of Police blatantly concocts lies about the wealth and assets of Chatradhar Mahato and also gets away with it, without anybody seeking litigation against spreading such falsehood. In India, the police go after the wives, husbands, children, brothers and sisters of those who are absconding or have launched cases against the police. In India, police chiefs openly boast about how to make a cold blooded execution look like an encounter and the Home Minister meets with those same experts to discuss democracy. In India, judges make pronouncements on corporate crime, based on whether it is good for India's image or not! In India, an 80-year old woman's breasts get chopped off and an 18-month old child's fingers get lopped off by anti-Naxalite vigilantes and the press orders a martini with a twist and watches the sunset over Juhu.

Well, the Maoists have broken some ground in bringing to the surface the mess that lies below the pink obscenity that is the Indian parliament, where over one hundred and fifty criminally accused thugs occupy seats. The Maoists leaders have been audacious and dignified in giving interviews after much planning and deployment of their own security measures. It was necessary, because otherwise the Arnab Goswamis and the Barkha Dutts and their unapologetic clones were having a field day, dishing out report after report about the murderous Maoists, without analyzing what had been going on for several years, both at Abujmarh and Lalgarh. For too long they were unable to convey their message to middle and upper class readers and net surfers about what they were fighting for. Now there is sudden mainstream discussion, on MOUs, Schedule 5 and 6, Abujmarh, Dantewada, Bastar and sites have sprung up all over the world that follow the Indian state's war against its own people.

It is now time for the Maoists to take stock of the situation. The Indian state was caught off guard, both on the ground and in the airwaves. They sent in their khaki-pant wearing, Enfield rifle toting constables after the Maoists and they came back soon, pissing in their pants. Then they sent in their AK-47 and Insas-rifle toting para-military forces after the Maoists. They also have come back with their tails between their legs. Then they deployed Special Forces with reptilian and canine names like Cobra, Greyhound or some other fearsome moniker like Garudas. Their boats were sunk and their anti-mine vehicles were blown up and their helicopters beat a hasty retreat.

## Enter the Israelis

It has been known for several years that India has acquired over 4,000 Galil 7.62 mm super sniper rifles, and night vision sights, laser range finders and other targeting equipment. This is not an infantry rifle, but the ammunition is the same as an Indian INSAS and an AK-47, purchased from Rumania. This is also all separate, of course from thermal imaging equipment, satellite transmission of such images and use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, better known as drones. All from Israel in the main. In fact India takes up more than 50% of Israel's arms exports. It has also been known that India manufactures under license the Russian gas-fired, super sniper semi automatic Dragunov SVD59. Now comes the report of a special training session involving at least 30 top ranking officers who have just completed special training under "foreign" instructors. Nothing works in Indian media lingo than "foreign hand." But of course, in this case it does not matter, because the foreign hand is only for a good cause! These trainers are not bearded Jihadists or Asiatic desperadoes in the north east with Chinese made grenades. A report from the PTI states the following.

### **“Special task force to tackle Maoist insurgency”**

**Kolkata:** The Maoist-infested states, including Jharkhand and Maharashtra, have set up a special task force in their bid to jointly tackle the Naxal problem, a senior West Bengal police officer said.

West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and some other Maoist-hit states have selected 30 officers for the special task force to deal with the Maoist problem, he said.

The 30 selected officers had undergone a month-long training programme at Ghatsila in Jharkhand. Some foreign army officials, who have experience in tackling guerrilla warfare, also imparted them training, the police officer said.”

Mr. Chidambaram had one of his associates state recently in a press conference that the strategy of his initiative is to render the Naxalites "headless." In other words he stated very clearly, that the target is to eliminate the leaders of the Naxalites. As per the same report, “a highly placed official in the security establishment told IANS earlier this week, "We believe there could be around 50 such leaders scattered all over. We are targeting them to make the entire movement headless and make a serious dent," the official said.”

In a special report cited by the BBC, the following was also stated by a security official, “So we are specifically targeting the Maoist leadership and you will see a lot of special operations based on specific intelligence.”

The official said that "almost all the states are doing their bit, and that a special operation in West Bengal earlier this week – in which Maoist military wing chief Koteswara Rao narrowly escaped arrest – was a good example of that. ”

It is significant that Ms. Mamata Banerjee, the Central Minister and self-appointed Bengal-saver, (and stand-up comedian, live theatre activist who attempted suicide with a black shawl and danced on JP Narayan's car) and who one walked in lock-step with LK Advani, was ready to beg and plead to the Naxalites to come and negotiate with her. She must be in on Mr. Chidambaram's deadly game plan.

She also knows that by the time of the next polls in West Bengal, if she cannot make a settlement in the continuously expanding Naxalite terrain, she will have a hard time putting up candidates to fight the CPI(M). She wants to make a deal with the Maoists, while all along claiming that they do not exist! She is a mockery of her own self and a pivotal Quasimodo for PCC.

### **Selective assassination**

Selective assassination, use of UAVs, missile attacks on selected homes and sniper fire has been a hallmark of the Israeli Mossad and Defence forces, not only in Gaza and the West Bank, but also in different parts of the world including South America, Iran and Europe. For the past several years it is now well-known that India has entered into very close collaboration with the IDF and over 32 non-disclosure arms and security agreements have been signed with them. The Mossad has titillated gun-and ammo freaks and underhanded counter-insurgency nutjobs with their secretive killing techniques. Assassination and murder that goes undocumented, unprosecuted and never brought to light, when the Mossad is involved. The CIA fumbles, trips and gets blown up. Not the Mossad. That is why India has chosen them to deploy dirty tricks on India's citizens. Perhaps, Mr. Chidambaram would like to take out the Maoists leaders one by one and he has realized that it will not happen by sending in 100,000 troops and anti-mine trucks or IAF helicopters. So the next tactic is to walk away from the roads and get special forces trained to go into the jungles and "live there like guerillas" and seek the Maoists in their hideouts. Therefore high power sniper rifles, night vision sights have become necessary. The "headless" statement should be studied carefully. I am wondering if it is actually code word for carrying out assassinations.

The report went on to further state the following: "The force would be named soon and it will be pressed into action as and when the training programme is completed," Director General of Police of West Bengal Bhupinder Singh told PTI.

"More officers would be recruited to strengthen the force after the completion of the training of the first batch," the DGP said.

They were given training on how to use highly sophisticated weapons and taught the technique to detect explosives, he said. They were also told how to survive in deep forest areas for longer period of time, the officer said. The main objective of the force will be to stay in forest areas near the base camps of the Maoists and to gather detailed information about their activities and their strength, Singh said."

It would be propitious of these Maoist leaders not to fall into the traps being laid out by the security forces.

## Interview: G. N. Saibaba, General Secretary of the Revolutionary Democratic Front of India

11 January 2010. A World to Win News Service. In the following interview, conducted in London last November, G. N. Saibaba, General Secretary of the Revolutionary Democratic Front of India, gives his views on Operation Green Hunt, an Indian government offense against Maoist revolutionaries in the hills and forests of central and eastern India. It has been excerpted and somewhat condensed.

**Q: Why has the Indian government decided to escalate its offensive against the revolutionaries in India on such a huge scale right now?**

A: The particular context actually expresses the hidden agenda of the Indian government. During the past five years, it has been very busy making agreement called memorandums of understanding, MOUs, with many foreign and domestic companies, but mainly for foreign investment. These agreements are mainly for large-scale mining projects and industrial projects in special economic zones. Vast areas within India, both rich agricultural fields and areas rich with minerals like Jharkand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal were agreed upon.

But in the past five years one could see widespread resistance to land acquisition for these projects, with or without the leadership of the Naxalites [Maoists], both in the areas where these minerals are found and elsewhere. As a result, most of the revolutionary forces working in these areas have gone from strength to strength, and the Indian government recognises that the Communist Party of India (Maoist) benefited most from the resistance to the land acquisition process. This is clearly mentioned in Home Ministry reports.



Now after five years of this resistance, when the government understands that none of these agreements have gotten off the ground due to the resistance of these movements of the people, now in the name of flushing out the Naxalites or Maoists they want to actually acquire this land. They want to go to war with the people, and in the name of fighting the Naxalites, whom they also call terrorists, the has been banned under a particular law called the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, the UAPA, an amended colonial act. Using this kind of terror tactics and colonial laws, they have already created an atmosphere where they have demonised these people. Now they have declared a war, but their real intention is to take over the vast areas that are under the control of the revolutionary movement to a large extent, and in other regions where there is resistance with or without Naxalites. They have used organs of repression before, torturing the people, terrorising the people and creating the Salwa Judum, a kind of private army created by the authorities. But none of these low-intensity warfare techniques promoted by the U.S. worked. So now they want to launch a full-scale war. Their hidden agenda is to hand over these natural resources, land and forests, to the multinational companies. That is their real agenda.

**Q: Could you tell us a little more about tribal people in these area?**

A: The tribal people or adivasis live in the areas and the hilly regions of central and eastern India and some other areas. They have their own economy, their own culture and traditions, and religion. They are outside the Hindu caste system. Traditionally they have never really become part of what is called mainstream India. Their economy remained based on food gathering, animal husbandry and primitive agricultural methods. They revolted against the British and never allowed them to take over their lands. After independence in 1947, the Indian government came up with a constitution that provided specific laws and provisions recognising their distinct cultures. There are hundreds of tribes. Each tribe has its own identity and mechanisms, with a tribal economy dependent on forest produce. The Constitution does not allow the Indian government to apply the same laws there as in the rest of the country, and the specific conditions have to be taken into account, though the Indian government has always violated this.

They are the poorest of the poor, and in the past years at least 20 million of them have been displaced for various projects. Their experience is that their brethren who have been displaced from their areas have never been able to go back – it is a lot like what happened in the U.S. with the Red Indians, or what happened with the aboriginal people in Australia and New Zealand. They are almost 100 million people, and most of them are now facing destitution and decimation.

Traditionally the tribal people took up arms. They had a great history of armed struggle against the British. The Naxalbari uprising [the 1967 peasant rebellion from which the Indian Maoist movement emerged, named after the West Bengal village where it started] was a tribal uprising. Later Marxist-Leninist groups in India chose and entered these areas to organise these adivasis, after studying the history of the armed rebellions, and because they are the most backward regions where the Indian state could not penetrate.

Of course the Marxist-Leninists and the Maoist movements are not limited to these areas in India, though they are there predominantly. There's one part of the story about Indian revolutionaries that holds that they represent only adivasis – they do represent adivasis, but it is not restricted to that.

The Lalgarh movement in its present phase started as a spontaneous movement against police repression and the West Bengali government and the CPI-Marxist. [Contrary to its name, the so-called Communist Party of India-Marxist is a reactionary party. It runs the state of West Bengal and is part of the central government. It is infamous for its attempts to violently suppress the people and imprison and kill revolutionaries] . The has been there for the last 12 years, organising among the Lalgarh people. A major development project was planned there, and the West Bengal chief minister, along with the project officials, went to inaugurate the project. As they were returning, the Maoists tried to blast his car but he escaped. The government used that as a pretext for sending a huge number of troops there in the name of catching the Maoists responsible for that blast. But the troops resorted to major atrocities against the tribals, and this provoked mass resistance. So since the Maoists were already there, this resistance grew from village to village.

The kind of movement that developed is very interesting – it's a mass movement involving everyone of all ages, from child to the elderly, women and men. Each village formed a committee, a People's Committee against Police Atrocities. Each committee is composed of five

women and five men. This happened initially in 1,100 villages, and then spread to 2,000 or even more today. A cluster of villages will have another committee, sending one woman and one man from each smaller committee.. So there is this other committee that also has an equal representation of men and women, and each decision to take a rally or protest or arms, everything is decided by the committee. And the committees are responsible for the general welfare of the village. All the committees sit together and decide on what date will a rally be held, when or if they must take up arms, with the elders sitting there, and the general body of the village.

The Maoists have existed there, and were part of the villages. This mass formation is at the forefront always. The Maoists gave quiet training, whatever was needed – though the local tribals who are themselves Maoists are leading sections.

Lalgarh comprises only a small part of a region as big as Great Britain – and the movement spread throughout this region. The initial demands of the tribals was that those police officials who were responsible for atrocities should be punished. And they decided the form of the punishment: the officials should come to the villages and apologise, particularly in the face of the victims, things like that. Then when the entire existing administrative structure was thrown out of the region, they started constructing a new society, building roads, digging wells, distributing land, creating collective agricultural formations – this all happened within a year. They have started schools, hospitals, they've invited doctors and nurses from outside. They are trying to build self-reliant means of establishing everything, crops, vegetables, schools, hospitals, cooperatives, developing agriculture collectively. The women's movement came within this when they didn't get an equal opportunity in it. This is a new social movement and it's taken this kind of shape. At the back of it the Maoists are there, and they are no one other than they themselves, unlike what the Indian government is saying that they're infiltrating from outside, which is totally untrue. At the most, a few people are there from outside, the rest of the leaders are from there own community.

**Q: So you are saying that this movement and the Maoist leadership is out to change the world, to build an embryo of a new revolutionary society – isn't one of the goals of the Indian movement to go in and smash that kind of revolutionary dream?**

A: When I talked of the new society taking shape in Lalgarh, there are other larger experiments taking place in other parts of the country, especially over the last decade. In Chhattisgarh, Orissa, parts of Jharkand – these are all tribal areas, and they have had consistent movements for more than two decades. The Maoists entered these areas about 30 years ago, and in the last twenty years they have built up movements in vast areas. The area around Lalgarh is in fact small compared to all this. They have already built new societies throughout these areas I named above. And the government clearly wants to smash the revolutionary alternative in these areas. They clearly declared that they wanted to expand to other areas only after showing a model of a new society in these particular areas. And they have declared that they can influence the vast majority of masses of India by showing a new society already working there.

The first attempts were started in Chhattisgarh where thousands of villages were freed from the exploiting classes, the feudal classes and their ruling elements, the police, the army, the state, and people have elected governments in village after village, called revolutionary people's councils, thousands of villages in Chhattisgarh and Jharkand, hundreds of villages in Orissa,

thousands in Andhra Pradesh, and they still have their own governments, they are directly elected by the majority of people. The few handfuls of five or six ruling class elements who decided to remain will not have the right to vote; they have to accept the government of the people. This government has different departments for health and education. They have started producing food grains, establishing agricultural cooperatives. The people decide themselves, all the decisions are referred back to the people's committees, and all the committees, including the militias and armed forces and so on, will work under the control of the people's government.

After some years of this experiment, for the first time one could see that irrigation projects are made, in huge numbers, whereas the government of India in six decades never paid any attention to irrigation projects there. Drinking water projects were made, hundreds of schools have been started, health care systems at the village and higher levels have been made, the illiterate adivasis were trained by experienced doctors from outside and inside, for each village there's one barefoot doctor in a cluster of villages, and the healthcare clinics are working continuously. The educational system includes regular schools, makeshift schools – which move from time to time when the children have to work in some other area – and adult schools. They have their own syllabus. The syllabus is framed according to scientific models using outside and internal educational experts, and a grade by grade syllabus is made. All the world-famous scientific models of study material, including audiovisual material, have been translated into the tribal languages and then used in the education.

Further, for the first time in the history of these regions, they have surplus grain – not only for the revolutionary army, which is called the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army, but for the people too. Even now if the Indian military offensive blocks these areas for several years they will not have a problem due to this surplus grain, and in addition they have fish ponds and other income-generating activities. These villages and their governments have started exporting to other markets as well, keeping the surplus for their own consumption, and using the surplus they have accumulated to build other development projects. This is the way in which their self-reliant economy is developing, which is not dependent on imperialism or on any other outside areas. This is the way that they wanted to show that socialism, a new society, can emerge from these kinds of areas, so that the entire country can take inspiration for socialism.

**Q: What about these accusations that these movements are blocking the economic and overall development of the Indian people?**

A: The Maoists don't view these so-called development projects as beneficial to the people. They see this particular kind of development as for the superprofits of the multinational corporations through the superexploitation of the people's labour. They will degrade the land, and lead to the people being thrown off the land. So this is pro-imperialist development which benefits a section of the ruling classes in India and the imperialists, monopoly capital. The Indian government has announced that the movement is blocking these projects and will be harmful to the people of the region and the entire country. But it is development for the corporate sector, and the people are offering an alternative vision of development, and they are doing it practically, on the ground. There is no case of real government development programmes being blocked by the Maoists. For example, if the government tries to build a school or hospital, then the Naxalites will never block it. Or if they are building something for the people's economy – but of course the government has no intention of carrying out development projects for the benefit of the people. In addition to these projects for the benefit

of the multinational corporations, the only other kind of development projects the government plans are vast projects for roads in the interior areas, to bring in the army and security forces, which definitely the people stop and block.

The question is, what development model has the Indian government adopted for the past 60 years? It is a pro-imperialist development model, which serves the imperialists by giving resources and raw materials to them.

It is better for the people of India and the whole world if the minerals remain underneath the hills and the forests, for two reasons. One, if you want to mine these minerals you will have to displace the adivasis and you will not have any system where they will be fully rehabilitated. And the ruling class has no right to displace them – it is their natural habitat. Second, another major reason why the minerals should not be exploited is that not only will the people be displaced, but that these are vulnerable fragile forest and hilly areas, and if you exploit them there will be irreparable damage to the countryside. It will cause major upheaval for climate change and warming, and the Indian subcontinent would never recover. It would have a major impact on the entire subcontinent. So for environmental reasons and the reasons of people's lives, these should not be exploited. But there are ways in which these minerals could be mined in minor ways, ways that would not aggravate the situation and displace the people. They could be used in small quantities for the benefit of the people, but that would have to be decided by the people of the region themselves, and not by outsiders.

**Q: How do you answer the charge of terrorism that the Indian government is hurling against the Maoists?**

A: The Indian government has come up with a law stating that they are terrorists. But there is widespread acceptance that the Maoist movement is a people's movement, and there is no acceptance among the people to call them terrorists. It's a charge that is totally untrue, for there is no activity they conduct that could be called terrorist. They are working for the people and for their liberation. They do not want the country to be split into parts, except for Kashmir and some states where national liberation movements are very strong. This is a social and political movement, it is based on a political ideology, Marxism, which at its present stage is called Maoism, and they want to conduct social transformation by defeating the ruling classes, the comprador bourgeoisie and bureaucrat bourgeoisie and feudal class that are ruling this country, and to establish an egalitarian society. So they are the most humanist people, with a particular class ideology, working class ideology, and they are a political force. This is the real opposition to the ruling classes in India, which is building an alternate development model, and so they cannot be called terrorist. The Indian government wants to influence the middle classes and broader strata by calling the Maoists terrorists.

Very recently the Prime Minister of India, when declaring this war, also admitted that the Maoists have huge mass support, including from the urban areas, but at the same time he is declaring war. So this is a major contradiction that can be shown to the people, and the government has been forced by the people to admit that the Maoists have this support from the people and the intelligentsia. The Home Minister, who comes out every day with a statement against them and the Naxalites, has acknowledged that the government cannot deal with the Maoists in the same way as it does certain other organisations that he has termed terrorist. There is a big contradiction in the government's statements: while agreeing that there

is mass support and making this distinction with other groups that they call terrorists, they at the same time talk about the Maoists as terrorists.

Thousands of prominent people from all over the world have signed a petition against the Indian government's offensive.. It has been handed to the PM and released to the press. There is a vast protest that is being galvanised in every city and town in India, hundreds of conferences have been held against the military offensive, demonstrations are being held all over the country.

The Maoists are appealing to these people, saying that if they have these differences they should be sorted out amongst the people, but this is a time to come together against the state offensive. So there is a debate.

**Q: Could you say something about the role of the U.S. and the West in regards to this offensive?**

A: The Home Minister, the minister responsible for internal security, had gone to the U.S. and stayed there for a whole week. He stayed in an office of the FBI and according to reports in the U.S. and Indian media spent four days there. And after he returned from the U.S., he said that this military offensive was very necessary in order to conquer, hold and develop the regions. This is the same slogan as is used by the U.S. military generals in Afghanistan, and is now being used to refer to this war being prepared against India's people.

Four years ago, when the Memorandum of Understanding was signed, two members of the U.S. military establishment went around these areas, that is, the Maoist strongholds, to conduct a survey. Before that they came to Mumbai, where they met with U.S. consular officials, along with Indian industrialists who were partners in these projects. A major meeting took place there. They then went to Chhattisgarh. When it came out in the newspapers that these military strategists were travelling around this area, a big hue and cry erupted, and they had to cut short their trip after two days, and then they left.

Soon afterwards, the Indian government announced that the Salwa Judum militia would fight the Maoists. They unleashed terror and caused the emptying of 700 villages. Interestingly, these were villages that were in plans signed for major projects. They wanted to vacate more. They displaced 300,000 tribals, burning down many villages, thousands were killed, and the rest were herded into camps and the like. Very interestingly, the major companies that had big stakes in U.S. investment, could not establish anything in those areas because control of those areas fell back into the hands of the Maoists within months.

The latest evidence of U.S. involvement is that the Indian government has conceded that the U.S. is providing logistic support for this war. What does that mean? They are using the U.S. global positioning systems in order to mobilise their troops and to locate the Maoists in the forests. The U.S. is helping to map the deployment of forces on the ground, and while they're doing this, from time to time the U.S. is providing support for the movement of Indian forces, according to Indian government statements. I don't think U.S. support is just limited to mapping

deployments and the like, it is much more than that.

Recently Prime Minister Mahmoan Singh went to the U.S. and met with Obama. That led to a new agreement to buy huge amounts munitions and other military supplies from the US, in the amount of 18 billion dollars.

Israel is providing drones. It has also trained a huge number of Indian forces, and is continuing to do this. Last month the U.S. and Indian armies held joint military exercises in the heart of India, the centre of the country, which lasted more than a month. The press reported that the Indian armed forces have gained training from the experience of the U.S. military's wars in different parts of the world. So U.S. support is more than just logistical – the joint exercises, this arms deal, the Israeli involvement in training the forces, and supplying the latest military technology, usually provided by the Israelis, but recently by the U.S. as well.

## The 'Sandwich Theory'

by Radha D'Souza, Department of Law, University of Westminster, London, UK.



I was piqued by the phrase 'sandwich theory' when I first heard it from Delhi students. They were referring to the views of a section of articulate, influential, middle India in the wake of the controversies over Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh and now Operation Green Hunt. The 'theory', if we may call it that, holds that the Adivasis and rural poor are caught in the crossfire between armed Maoist 'terrorists' on the one side and a militarised Indian state on the other (see Report of the Independent Citizens' Initiative on Chhattisgarh for example). It is the duty of middle India, according to the 'sandwich theory', to 'rescue' the hapless Adivasis and rural poor from the armed combatants. Both combatants have ulterior motives: the Maoists wish to take political power through the barrel of their guns, and the India state wishes to grab Adivasi lands and natural resources and hand them over

to corporations, foreign and domestic. Thus, the 'sandwich theory' sees middle India as the saviour of the nation as envisioned in the Indian Constitution. The apparent neutrality of the theory is appealing to many. Equally, many are uneasy about 'sandwich theory' not least because it frames the question as one of 'violence versus non-violence' and forces them to given a 'yes' or 'no' answer with little room for debate (e.g. NDTV, 'The Buck Stops Here' 23/09/09, 07/10/09, 20/10/09). The privileged statuses of the proponents of this theory, the positions they occupy in academia, media, institutions of governance, and such, adds to the scepticism of privilege that many even in middle India have developed over the years since Independence. Although there is widespread opposition to Salwa Judum and Operation Green Hunt, their understanding of it divides middle India. The 'sandwich theory' merits reflection, therefore.

### Democratic Values and 'Sandwich Theory'

Middle India values democracy, and most will agree that, in principle, democracy demands respect for every man, woman, and child, rich or poor, urban or rural, of any caste or nationality. Respect for all entails crediting all human beings with basic intelligence by virtue of being human. Democracy is based on the belief that all people possess the capacities to determine their destinies. If this is true, then the 'sandwich theory' is fundamentally undemocratic.

Most people in middle India today agree that the Adivasis and rural poor have real and legitimate grievances against the economic policies of successive governments. According to the 'sandwich theorists' the Maoists exploit their grievances to further their own ends. This precludes the possibility that at least a section of the Adivasis and rural poor may have chosen to go with the Maoists. The argument denies the Adivasis and the rural poor their agency, their capacities to determine what is and is not good for them, and basic intelligence to decide whom they wish to support and why. The attitude implicit in the 'sandwich theory' masks the latent authoritarianism that lurks beneath the facade of compassion for the poor. Of course, the Adivasis and the rural poor do not articulate their political choices in the language of scholars

from Harvard and Oxford, IIT and JNU, or theories of democratic development, civil society, post-communism or post Marxism, but that is not to say they are passive victims without self-determination. By portraying them as hapless victims of Maoists and the State alike, middle India can avoid engaging with the Adivasis and rural poor as political equals.

The representation of Adivasis and rural poor as voiceless victims is not new, however. It is an idea that has been developed and refined in India at least since independence. The development discourse at the end of the World Wars was about 'poverty'. It was a crude concept, a rough and ready term. Soon it became apparent that, like 'the invisible hand of the market', the mysterious ways of development rewarded the few and impoverished the many. As disenchantment with development grew, the 'poor' was replaced by a more nuanced, exotic sounding term: the subaltern. The subaltern are untouched by modernity, outside the pale of civil society, innocent, an idea perilously close to the 'noble savages' of colonial thinkers. The subalterns are people whose aspirations cannot be understood without being interpreted and represented by middle India. From subaltern to victim is a quick and easy step. As long as the Adivasis and rural poor remain victims, middle India is not required to speak in its own name, about its own interests and aspirations; it is enough to interpret for "them". How true is the picture that the Adivasis and rural poor are victims caught between the combatants in Operation Green Hunt?

### **Who Exactly Is 'Sandwiched' Here?**

Throughout India's modern history, since the advent of colonisation, two adversaries have remained steadfast and undeterred in their opposition to each other. During the colonial era and in the post-Independence era, 'tribal rebellions' and 'peasant uprisings' were the volcanoes that erupted from time to time and rocked the edifice of state power. When the rebellions and uprisings subsided they continued to bubble away beneath the surface, forming the volcanic fault-line upon which Indian society is founded. On their part, the Adivasis have shown remarkable consistency. Their demands have never wavered from: 'jal, jangal, jameen' (water, forest, land). The rural poor have echoed their demands with as much consistency. Indeed, it may be noted in the passing, that indigenous people the world over have never wavered from that singular demand of 'jal, jangal, jameen'.

Against this, the state, colonial or post-Independence, has shown remarkable consistency in its responses to the demands of the Adivasi and the rural poor. They have responded with guns and bayonets, mobilised the full might of the state, imprisoned, tortured, raped, and plundered the Adivasis and rural poor, and sentenced many to death. Remember Kista Gowd and Bhoomiah within living memories of many of us? The state has been equally consistent in its demands for more land, more resources, and more cheap labour. This extraordinary consistency of the two combatants has thrown everyone in between, middle India, into turmoil from time to time. Some have sided unequivocally with the Adivasis and the rural poor. They have been branded variously as extremists, insurgents and terrorists and met the same fate as the Adivasis. Others have sided unequivocally with the state, colonial or otherwise, and proactively participated in mobilising the state machinery against extremists, insurgents, terrorists, whatever. Yet others have felt hemmed in and 'sandwiched' between the two adversaries. Thus, it is middle India that is 'sandwiched' and feels beleaguered by the combatants.

In substance what happened in Kalinganagar, or Singur, or Nandigram or Lalgarh, or now in

Narayanpatna follows in the same traditions, but middle India dithers to call them tribal rebellions or peasant uprisings. The current debates echo similar debates during the freedom struggle: M.N Roy's spat with Lenin on the 'agrarian question', Aurobindo's conversion from violence to non-violence, debates over Bhagat Singh and Chauri Chaura, to name a few. The 'sandwich theorists' are surprisingly ahistorical in their approach to the current stand off. Many go along with the state's representation that the Maoist movement began as recent as 2004, a representation based on realignments within the movement. Everyone knows notwithstanding the peaks and troughs, the Maoist movements, whether we like them or not, have a longer history than 2004. There is a significant difference, however, between the situation that confronts middle India today and the situation it had to face during the freedom struggle and post independence period. That difference has to do with 'globalisation'.

### **Middle India and the Freedom Struggle**

The Boer Wars, the Scramble for Africa, and other colonial conflagrations culminated in the World Wars between imperialist nations with Britain at the helm. The freedom struggle was directed against British imperialism, at a time when Britain was militarily strong but a declining economic power. A wide cross section of classes, communities, nationalities, castes in Indian society between the Adivasis and the State joined the freedom struggle, each with their own demands and their own aspirations. Industrial expansion occurred during that interim period of the World Wars. An emergent industrial class that profited from the World Wars also aspired for political power, and joined the freedom struggle. The debates about violence and non-violence, extremism and liberal democracy, social justice and rule of law, and other such questions were part of a wider process of forging a social contract between the multifarious classes, communities, castes, tribes, nationalities, religions, linguistic groups. The social contract was later embodied in the Constitution when India became a republic.

The social contract was based on a vision of the Indian nation. It was a vision that included all and opened with the words 'we the people'. It promised to all 'justice: social, economic and political'; it promised the Adivasis protection of their water, forests and lands, land reforms to the rural poor, offered special status to different nationalities, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Kashmir, jobs and collective bargaining rights to urban workers, linguistic reorganisation of states, rule of law and constitutional democracy, and most importantly adopted as its motto: 'satyam eva jayate' (truth alone prevails). That vision of a nation is at the heart of the dilemma that confronts middle India today.

Independence of India was inaugurated with partition at two ends of the nation and the Telangana uprising in its belly. The Telangana uprising, like other Adivasi and peasant struggles, was put down by the Indian army, and many were tortured, imprisoned and executed. Middle India was confident that with a new Constitution in place, the causes of tribal rebellions and peasant uprisings would be consigned to history. The imprint of the Communist Party of India, the largest opposition party in India's Constituent Assembly that drafted India's Constitution, was writ large in the social contract. Middle India believed in their vision of the nation. Given the time, India would be a nation founded on social justice, equality and non-discrimination.

When the Naxalbari and Srikakulam uprisings erupted two decades later, it was clear that something had gone terribly wrong with that vision; that the social contract on which modern India was founded was wilfully broken. When the police and army cracked down on Naxalbari

and Srikakulam tribals and peasants, as they always did, the state justified its actions in the same vein as today. The fight was not against tribals and peasants, but against armed Maoist insurgents, it was about violence and non-violence, the state argued. But middle India refused to be 'sandwiched'. Thousands of students and youth joined the Naxalbari and Srikakulam tribals and peasants. They were abducted, imprisoned, tortured, killed and Indian English added a new meaning to the verb 'encountered' after the faked 'encounter' killings. Even those opposed to the Maoists' ideologies and methods refused to be 'sandwiched'. People of the stature of Jayaprakash Narayan, V. M Tarkunde, Sathyaranjan Sathe, Samar Sen, to name just a few, insisted that the Maoists were idealists, impatient, ideologically misguided — they were anything but criminals and terrorists. Above all the 'rule of law' applied to Maoist as much as anyone else, they insisted. No one accused them of being terrorist sympathisers for that reason, not even the state. Post-Naxalbari, middle India was dismayed, frustrated, angry, and disappointed with the state for breaking the social contract. They still held on to the vision of the nation that was forged during the freedom struggle, even when the vision was slipping away. 'This is not the India our parents and grandparents fought for', the post-Independence generation seemed to say.

Many social justice movements emerged. The democratic rights movement in modern India grew and expanded as more people were 'encountered'. They insisted that the Courts, as guardians of the Constitution, had a duty to ensure it was enforced against all the parties to the social contract. 'Law is on trial', Justice Bhagwati, the former Chief Justice of India, warned in his Law Day speeches. A novel jurisprudential theory called the 'episulatory jurisdiction' was innovated. Any one without means could drop a post card to the Supreme Court complaining of violation of her Constitutional rights and they would be heard. Paradoxically these interventions had the effect of entrenching systemic discrimination and exclusion of the Adivasis and rural poor in the heart of constitutional democracy: the judicial system.

The interventions of middle India were based on a view that denied Adivasis and the rural poor their agency. They were hapless victims, the voiceless subalterns, so "we" the saviours of the nation had to do something, and of course "we", middle India, would prove that rule of law and the constitution could be made to work for "them". Take Public Interest Litigation (PIL). Writ after writ was issued by courts for implementing regular laws. The petitions called upon the state to implement minimum wage laws, health and safety laws, laws against bonded and child labour, resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced people. The Courts became involved in administration and law enforcement but rarely punished any state official for failing in their statutory and constitutional duties. As the boundaries between the executive and the judiciary became murky PILs sent a clear message that state officials could get away with violations of constitutional and statutory duties.

PILs did not work for the 'subalterns' whose jal, jangal and jameen were acquired for building modern India, whether they be public sector companies like the National Thermal Power Corporation, the Narmada dam, or Konkan railway. Simultaneously PILs set the precedent for unilateral judicial interventions. It was clear that the Courts, at least, would not be an impediment to the state's vision of development even if it excluded half the population.

Take Lok Adalats, an idea canvassed by middle India and later legislated into the statute books. Lok Adalats dispensed with procedural rules of evidence and civil and criminal procedures in

cases involving the poor, ostensibly to cut down backlog of cases and expedite justice to the poor. In effect, it entrenched a system in which different procedures would be followed for the rich and for the poor. The rich would get a proper judicial hearing following rules of evidence and civil and criminal procedures; and procedural laws would be dispensed with for the poor. After all, cases of the poor were for paltry sums anyway. Never mind that to the poor the paltry sums meant a great deal. Equality in the eyes of the law?

The post-Naxalbari, post-Emergency period saw a ballooning of NGOs, voluntary organisations, and 'civil society' organisations accompanied by criminalisation of politics. Nearly forty percent of Indian MPs and MLAs are supposed to have criminal records involving serious crimes like murder, extortion, abduction and rape according to citizens groups like National Election Watch and Association of Democratic Reforms. *Satyam eva jayate*? The political spaces of the Adivasis and rural poor, usurped by criminalisation, was contested by the NGOs and voluntary organisations. Middle India came up with an amazing proposition: all politics was anti-poor, corrupt and criminalised, therefore, we can be a democracy without politics. Of course, as the Adivasis and rural poor, being subalterns, could not speak, it fell on the NGOs or voluntary groups to interpret for them.

As middle India tried desperately to salvage the vision of a nation forged during the freedom struggle, the Berlin Wall collapsed, the Time magazine announced 'Communism was dead' on its cover pages, and Fukuyama declared history itself had ended.

### **Envisioning the Nation under 'Globalisation'**

Once again, India is in a situation comparable to the early twentieth century. Like Britain in the early twentieth century, the United States which assumed the leadership of imperialist nations after World War II, is economically weak and reliant on militarism it can ill afford. Once again, the loosening grip of imperialist reins offers Indian industrialists and financiers an opportunity to expand their operations. The lure of ten percent growth based on many more nuclear plants, mining corporations, industries, special economic zones, and speculative investments promises them a whole new world, if only they would dare to conquer it. The new world of their dreams requires conquering the Adivasis and the rural poor. Where will they go? What of the social contract? This much is clear even to middle India.

'Globalisation' erodes the idea of a nation, however. Indeed it is premised on the idea that nations no longer matter, and if they matter at all, they do so only on the condition that they are homogenised and adapted to the global marketplace. There is no longer an industrial, propertied, elite in India, therefore, that is interested in joining ranks with middle India to renegotiate power with imperialists. Instead all negotiations on power have shifted to the international arena; they will happen henceforth in the UN, the WTO, the G8 summits, and the World Economic Forums. The pesky Adivasis persist with their *jal, jangal and jameen*. Having accepted the 'inevitability' of 'globalisation' middle India is left without the conceptual tools to envision a nation, to flesh out self-determination. How should the India of their dreams look like? And what is the 'down payment' they are willing to put down (to use the language of WTO trade negotiators) to secure their vision of an India of their dreams?

The UN's World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 was a turning point. Al

Gore the then Vice President of the United States declared at the Summit that aid and development assistance to the Third World would from then on be channelled through NGOs and aimed at 'good governance'. 'Good governance' resonated with 'responsible government' of the colonial era. What did Al Gore and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development ramify for the Adivasis and the rural poor?

The language of discourse changed in India. Indian NGOs and voluntary organisations were awash with funds. More importantly, they were armed with new ideological and conceptual resources developed by international organisations: ideas of 'empowerment', 'democratic development', 'good governance', 'civil society participation' and such. In fairness many applied the funds to save the social contract. But the social contract was never about 'democratic development', 'empowerment' and 'good governance'. The social contract was about self-determination, equality, redistributive justice, power-sharing and equity, about satyam eva jayate, not transparency.

More NGOs and voluntary organisations, more funding for the non-governmental sector, more 'empowerment' and 'good governance' programmes did not equate to more representation of the Adivasis and rural poor. If anything it was the opposite. The more funding became available for NGOs and voluntary groups, the more the Maoist influence increased. Yet, there are no social theories, no quantitative or qualitative research methods that can establish any correlation between the two.

The NGOs and voluntary groups took up all the issues that the Adivasis and the rural poor raised: the model of development, traditional water systems, land management, forest conservation, corruption, criminalisation of politics. They balked at one central question: the question of political power. This was the only question that the Maoists took up. Middle India wants the Adivasis and the rural poor to trust their word when they say middle India is with the Adivasis and rural poor. How should the Adivasis and rural poor do this when they are reduced to voiceless subalterns, when they are no longer political subjects with agency? Moreover without a vision of a nation, even many in middle India are not forthcoming with that implicit trust.

### **Middle India Caught in the Crossfire?**

The Indian state has once again framed the issue, as it has always done, as one of violence versus non-violence. In a 'globalised', privatised world, populated with NGOs, the Indian state does not have to resort to state propaganda via Doordarshan to make its claims. In a privatised, 'globalised' world state claims are made through private agents committed to 'globalisation'. For example consider the 'sandwich theory'. Numerous NGOs and private organisations have promoted the theory. For example in January 2005 the Observer Research Foundation under its International Terrorism Watch Programme held a two day workshop on 'the Naxal challenge'. The trustees of this foundation are eminent journalists who have been part of Congress and BJP governments at various times. They published a book from the workshop proceedings titled *The Naxal Challenge: Causes, Linkages and Policy Options*. The editor of the volume, at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, specialises in Naxalism which falls under the research cluster 'Terrorism and internal security'. The blurb for the book is written by the former governor of Jharkhand and a chief of army staff. The question of whether the Maoists should be seen as terrorists at all is foreclosed in the way the debate is framed.

Well-resourced organisations set out the assumptions underpinning the debate, the terms of the discourse which middle India must follow, not least because they are bombarded with research, publications, high profile media coverage, all based on the assumptions presented by think-tank organisations. The Independent Citizens' Initiative report on Salwa Judum by influential citizens, some of them close to the powers that be, echoes a similar 'sandwich theory' position. Their position is nowhere comparable to that of Jayaprakash Narayan or V.M Tarkunde. For the latter, their positions against non-violence stemmed from a vision of the nation based on the social contract of the freedom struggle; it included the Maoists as much as the Adivasis. Today, the positions against non-violence are based on a conception of India as an emergent global power that needs to put a human face on 'globalisation'.

Add to this the terms for the numerous research grants, project funding, and overseas assistance given to NGOs requiring them to conform to liberal democracy, parliamentary processes and judicial norms. Where is the room to say that these processes were tried, tried over and over again for at least six decades, they have failed, and that the parliament, the judiciary and the executive have thrown the social contract to the winds of 'globalisation'? What new vision of the nation can middle India forge?

The Adivasis and rural poor insist it is a matter of jal, jangal and jameen as they always have. The Maoists, their ideological, political and military shortcomings notwithstanding, and there are many of those (see exchanges between Sumanta Banerjee and CPI Maoist EPWs 02/09/09, 19/09/09, 14/11/09), stand unequivocally on the side of the Adivasis and rural poor, whatever their motives. Middle India insists it is possible to put a human face on 'globalisation'. To the contrary, the new wave of struggles in Kalinganagar, Singur, Nandigram, Lalgurh challenges them to renegotiate the social contract, a challenge that requires a renewed freedom struggle, forging new alliances, and new conceptions of development and decolonisation. 'We too fought for freedom', a Santhal says in a recent film on Lalgurh. Indeed they did. How do we answer that question? By saying the Maoists are bad boys? By saying the Santhals are subalterns that need middle India as their interpreters?

### **India's Foundations on a Fault-line?**

The social contract forged during the freedom struggle was premised on a false assumption. It was based on the assumption that it was possible to build a modern liberal democratic, capitalist nation without colonisation. There has never been, and can never be, capitalism without colonies, though its forms can change, and has changed since that fateful day when Columbus set sail looking for the 'riches of the Indies'. 'Globalisation' is forcing middle India to colonise her own people. This is nothing new. It happened under British Rule too. Since the days of Siraj-ud-daula, the various Nawabs and Rajas, a section of the Indian elite has steadfastly stood by imperialists, helped them run Empires, and made a buck for themselves. J.S Mill observed that India was the great experimental laboratory for the Empire. When the fortunes of Empires fluctuate, it forces middle India to take a stand. It is happening today. The nation-state structure and constitutionalism makes it difficult for middle India to rationalise colonisation of her own people. What should middle India do? Launch a new freedom struggle? Forge a new social contract? These are difficult questions by any measure. How much easier to flog the Maoists using imperialist labels like 'war on terror' to mask their own inability to re-envision the nation? How much easier to ride the 'globalisation' wave on the moral high tides of non-

violence? Middle India is wistful. If only the volcanic fault-line on which modern India is founded will go away; if only the Adivasis will put on hold their insistence on jal, jangal, jameen.

**P.S**

It is to the credit of Indian people that all the bombardments, physical, moral and intellectual, notwithstanding, large sections of middle India remain deeply sceptical about 'sandwich theories'.

# Kisenji Interview on Armed Struggle, Peace Talks and People's Democracy

"I Am the Real Patriot [Desh Bhakt]"

Tusha Mittal, Tehelka, November 13, 2009

In this interview, underground Maoist leader Kishenji speaks on issues such as peace talks, armed struggle, the party's sources of funding, the difference between people's democracy and India's formal democracy, and the goals of the CPI (Maoist).



With unmistakable pride, he says he's India's Most Wanted Number 2. CPI (Maoist) Politburo member Mallojula Koteswar Rao alias Kishenji, 53, grew up in the interiors of Andhra Pradesh reading Gandhi and Tagore. It was after understanding the history of the world, he says, that he disappeared into the jungles for a revolution. During search operations in 1982, the police broke down his home in Peddapalli village. He hasn't seen his mother since, but writes to her through Telugu newspapers. After 20 years in the Naxal belt of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh,

he relocated to West Bengal. His wife oversees Maoist operations in Dantewada [a district in southern Chhattisgarh]. Now, at a hideout barely a few kilometres from a police camp in Lalgah, he reads 15 newspapers daily and offers to fax you his party literature. If you hold on, he'll look up the statistics of war on his computer. Excerpts from a midnight phone interview:

## **Q. Tell me about your personal journey. What made you join the CPI (Maoist)?**

**A.** I was born in Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh (AP). In 1973, after a BSc mathematics degree, I moved to Hyderabad in to pursue law. My political journey began with my involvement in the Telangana Sangarsh Samiti, which has been pressing for a separate Telangana state. I launched the Radical Students Union (RSU) in AP. During the Emergency in 1975, I went underground to take part in the revolution. Several things motivated me: Writer Varavara Rao, who founded the Revolutionary Writers Association, India's political atmosphere and the progressive environment in which I grew up.

My father was a great democrat and a freedom fighter. He was also vice-president of the state Congress party. We are Brahmins, but our family never believed in caste. When I joined the CPI (ML), my father left the Congress saying two kinds of politics can't survive under one roof. He believed in socialism, but not in armed struggle. After the Emergency ended in 1977, I led a democratic peasant movement against feudalism. Over 60,000 farmers joined it. It triggered a nationwide peasant uprising.

The Home Minister has agreed to talks with CPI (Maoist) on issues like forest rights, land acquisition and SEZs [Special Economic Zones]? Why did you reject his offer? He's only asking

you to halt the violence.

We are ready to talk if the government withdraws its forces. Violence is not part of our agenda. Our violence is counter violence. The combat forces are attacking our people every day. In the last month in Bastar, the Cobra forces have killed 18 innocent tribals and 12 Maoists. In Chhattisgarh, those helping us with development activities are being arrested. Stop this; the violence will stop. Recently, the Chhattisgarh DGP [Director-General of Police] called the 6,000 Special Police Officers of Salwa Judum a force of pride. New recruitment continues. These people have been raping, murdering and looting tribals for years. Entire villages have been deserted because of the Salwa Judum. The government can say whatever it likes, but we do not believe them. How can they change policy when they aren't even in control? The World Bank and America is.

**Q. On what conditions will you de-escalate violence?**

**A.** The PM should apologise to the tribals and withdraw all the troops deployed in these areas. The troops are not new, we have been facing State terror for the last 20 years. All prisoners should be released. Take the time you need to withdraw forces, but assure us there won't be police attacks meanwhile. If the government agrees to this, there will be no violence from us. We will continue our movement in the villages like before.

**Q. Before it agrees to withdrawing troops, can you give the State assurance you won't attack for one month?**

**A.** We will think about it. I'll have to speak with my general secretary. But what is the guarantee there won't be any attack from the police in that one month? Let the government make the declaration and start the process of withdrawing. It shouldn't be just a show for the public. Look at what happened in AP. They began talks and broke it. Our Central Committee member went to meet the AP Secretary. Later, the police shot him for daring to talk to the government.

**Q. If you really have a pro-people agenda, why insist on keeping arms? Is your goal tribal welfare or political power?**

**A.** Political power. Tribal welfare is our priority, but without political power we cannot achieve anything. One cannot sustain power without an army and weapons. The tribals have been exploited and pushed to the most backward extremes because they have no political power. They don't have the right to their own wealth. Yet, our philosophy doesn't insist on arms. We keep arms in a secondary place. We faced a setback in AP because of that.

**Q. The government says halt the violence first, you say withdraw the troops first. In this mindless cycle, the tribal people you claim to represent are suffering the most.**

**A.** So let's call international mediators then. Whether it's Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal or Maharashtra, we never started the violence. The first attack always came from the government. In Bengal, the CPM [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] cadre won't let any non-party person enter villages under their control. Police has been camping in the Lalgarh area since 1998. In such a situation, how can I press for higher potato prices and drinking water? There is no platform for me to do that. When the minimum wages in West Bengal were Rs 85 per day, people were being paid Rs 22. We demanded Rs 25. The Mahabharat [war] began when the

Kauravas refused to grant the Pandavas even the five villages they asked for. The State refused our three-rupee hike. We are the Pandavas; they are the Kauravas.

**Q. You say violence is not your agenda, yet you've killed nearly 900 policemen in the past four years. Many of them came from poor tribal families. Even if it is counter violence, how is this furthering a pro-people goal?**

**A.** Our battle is not with the police forces, it is with the State. We want to minimise the number police casualties. In Bengal, many police families actually sympathise with us. There have been 51,000 political murders by the CPM during the last 28 years. Yes, we have killed 52 CPM men in the last seven months, but only in retaliation to police and CPM brutality.

**Q. How is the CPI (Maoist) funded? What about the allegations of extortion?**

**A.** There are no extortions. We collect taxes from the corporates and big bourgeoisie, but it's not any different from the corporate sector funding the political parties. We have a half-yearly audit. Not a single paisa is wasted. Villagers also fund the party by voluntarily donating two days' earnings each year. From two days of bamboo cutting in Gadchiroli we earned Rs 25 lakh. From tendu leaf collection in Bastar we earned Rs 35 lakh. Elsewhere, farmers donated 1,000 quintals of paddy.

**Q. What if a farmer refuses to donate?**

**A.** That will never happen.

**Q. Because of fear?**

**A.** No. They are with us. We never charge villagers even a paisa for the development activity that we initiate.

**Q. What development have you brought to Maoist-dominated areas? How has life improved for the tribals of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand?**

**A.** We've made the people aware of the State's real face, told them how rich people live and what they're deprived of. In many of these areas the tendu leaf rate used to be one rupee for 1,000 leaves. We got it hiked to 50 paise per leaf in three districts of Maharashtra, five districts of AP and the entire Bastar region. Bamboo was sold to paper mills at 50 paise per bundle. Now the rate is Rs 55. But these victories came after we faced State resistance and brutality. In Gadchiroli alone, they killed 60 people on our side, we killed five.

The also sends medical help to 1,200 villages in India almost daily. In Bastar, our foot soldiers are proficient doctors, wearing aprons, working as midwives in the jungles. We don't give them arms. We have 50 such mobile health teams and 100 mobile hospitals in Bastar itself. Villagers go to designated people for specific illnesses: for fever go to Issa, for dysentery to Ramu and so on. There is so much illness in these areas that there are not enough people to pick up the dead bodies. We give free medicines to doctors for distribution among the people. The government doesn't know that the medicines come from their own hospitals.

**Q. If the State sends civil administration to the Naxal belt, will you allow it?**

**A.** We will welcome it. We want teachers and doctors to come here. The people of Lalgarh have

been asking for a hospital for decades. The government did nothing. When they built one themselves, the government turned it into a military camp.

**Q. What is your larger long-term vision? Outline three tangible goals.**

**A.** The first is to gain political power, to establish new democracy, socialism and then communism. The second is to make our economy self sufficient so we don't need loans from imperialists. We are still paying off foreign loans from decades ago. The debt keeps increasing because of the devaluation of our currency. It will never be repaid. This is what the World Bank wants. We need an economy that works on two things — agriculture and industry. First, the tribals want land. Until they own their land, the State will exploit them. The people should be entitled to a percentage of the crop depending on their labour.

We are not opposed to industry; how can there be development without it? But we should decide which industries will work for India, not America, not the World Bank. Instead of big dams, big industries, we'll promote small-scale industries, especially those on which agriculture depends. The third goal is to seize all the big companies – from the Tatas to the Ambanis, cancel all the MoUs [Memoranda of Understanding], declare their wealth as national wealth, and keep the owners in jail. Also, from the grassroots to the highest levels, we will create elected bodies in a democratic way.

But look at the history of communist governments the world over. They became as oppressive as the ones they overthrew. There are ample examples of coercion and absence of dissent in Maoist regimes. How is this in the best interest of the people?

These are all stories spread by the capitalists. People in the villages are dying by the hundreds, but all our doctors want to live in the cities. All our engineers want to serve Japan or the IT sector. They reached their positions using the nation's wealth. What are they doing for my country? The State cannot insist you become a doctor. But if you do, it should insist you use your skill for two years in the villages. How oppressive the State is depends on who is controlling the reigns of power.

We want to have a democratic culture. If there is no democracy, ask the villagers to start another revolution and overthrow us. In an embryonic form, we already have an alternative democratic people's government in Bastar. Through elections, we choose a local government called the revolutionary people's committee. People vote by raising their hands. There is a chairman, a vice-chairman, and there are departments – education, health, welfare, agriculture, law and order, people's relations. This system exists in about 40 districts in India at present. The perception that Maoists don't believe in democracy is wrong.

What exists in India today is formal democracy. It's not real. Whether it's Mamata Banerjee, or the CPM, or the Congress party, it is all dictatorship. We negotiated the release of 14 adivasi women in Bengal to show the world who the State is keeping in jail; to expose their real face.

**Q. If you believe in democracy, why do you shun the democratic process that already exists? The Maoists in Nepal contested elections.**

**A.** To create a new democratic State, one has to destroy the old one. Nepal's Maoists have

compromised. What elections? There are 180 MPs with serious criminal charges. More than 300 MPs are crorepatris [someone who is worth more than 10 million rupees]. Do you know the US Army is already conducting exercises at a base in Uttar Pradesh? They openly said they can take the Indian Army with them wherever they want. Who allowed them this audacity? Not me. I am opposing them. I am the real desh bhakt (patriot).

**Q. What kind of nation do you want India to be? Pick a role model.**

**A.** Our first role model was Paris. That disintegrated. Then Russia collapsed. That's when China emerged. But after Mao, that too got defeated. Now, nowhere in the world is the power truly in the hands of the people. Everywhere workers are fighting for it. So there is no role model.

**Q. When communism hasn't worked elsewhere, why will it work for India? China now admits Mao's theories were fallible. In Nepal, the Maoists are already seeking foreign investment.**

**A.** What the Maoists in Nepal are doing is wrong. Following this path will only mean creating another Buddhadeb [the "Marxist" Chief Minister of West Bengal] babu. We have appealed to them to come back to the old ways. Wherever socialism or communism took root, imperialism tried to destroy it. Of course, Lenin, Mao, Prachanda – all have weaknesses. After winning the Second World War, Lenin and Stalin replaced internal democracy with bureaucracy. They disregarded the participation of the people. We will learn from their mistakes. But capitalism too has had to stand up after being shot down. How can you say that capitalism has been successful? Socialism is the only way out.

**Q. But in power, you could be as fallible as the Nepal Maoists or the CPM?**

**A.** If we change, the people should start another krantikari andolan (revolution) against us. If the ruler — no matter who — becomes exploitative, then the people need to stand up to demand their democracy. They should not have blind faith in a Kishenji, or a Prachanda or a Stalin. If any neta or party deviates from their own ideology, then end your faith in them and revolt again. The people should always keep this tradition alive.

**Q. Have you ever faced any personal dilemmas? Is violence the only way you can mount pressure on the State?**

**A.** I believe we are trying to do the right thing. We are waging a just war. Yes, there can be mistakes along the way. Unlike the State, when we make mistakes, we admit it. The beheading of Francis Induwar was a mistake. We apologise for it. In Lalgah, we are trying different strategies. We have recently made concrete development demands and given the government a November 27 deadline. We've asked for 300 borewells and 50 make-shift hospitals. I have also knocked on the doors of Left Front parties – Forward Bloc, RSP, CPI and even CPM. I'm even in touch with ministers within the Bengal government. I've spoken to the Chief Minister himself.

**Q. The CM office has rubbished this.**

**A.** I have spoken to the CM. I told him to stop State brutality and said we have mailed our development demands. He said he is under pressure from his own party and from Home Minister Chidambaram.

**Q. Why isn't the police able to catch you?**

**A.** In eight states, there are day and night search operations on for me. I'm India's Most Wanted Number 2. In 1,600 villages in Bengal, people are currently on night guard to ensure the police can't find me. There are 500 policemen in a camp 1.5 kilometres from where I am right now. The people of Bengal love me. The police have to kill them before they can get me.

**Q. The Home Secretary recently alluded to China giving you arms. Is this true?**

**A.** Clearly, he doesn't know the basics of our philosophy. To win a war, you need to know your enemy. Our position is diametrically opposite to China. I thought Chidambaram and Pillai were my competition, but never imagined I have such low-standard enemies. They are flashing swords in the air. Victory will be ours.

**Q. What is your opinion of the Lashkar-e-Taiba? Do you support their war?**

**A.** We may support some of their demands, but their methods are wrong and antipeople. LeT should stop its terrorist acts because it cannot help accomplish any goals. You can only win by taking the people along with you.

## 'To establish a liberated area':

Interview with Koteswar Rao, CPI (Maoist) underground leader.

BY SUHRID SANKAR CHATTOPADHYAY



KOTESWAR RAO, alias Kishenji, is a politburo member of the banned CPI (Maoist) and is in charge of the party's operations in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Orissa. He was drawn into the revolutionary movement when he was doing his B.Sc. (Mathematics) in Karimnagar, Andhra Pradesh. He became a full-time member of the CPI-ML (People's War) in 1974.

"We plan to spread our movement to north Bengal, the plains of Bihar, the central districts of Orissa and eastern Chhattisgarh," he told Frontline in an exclusive telephonic interview in which he talked about the Lalgarh movement, the Maoist programme of individual killings and future plans of the Maoist movement. Excerpts:

**Do you think the movement in Lalgarh is the fallout of the Singur and Nandigram movements rather than a heritage of the Naxalbari movement?**

The movement in Lalgarh is the fallout of the Naxalbari movement, but the movements in Nandigram and Singur also had an impact on the Lalgarh movement and the people of Lalgarh. Such a long and sustained movement on a political issue has never taken place in the history of independent India. The main reason for this is the increase in political awareness among the masses.

At the same time, there is, on the one hand, a worldwide economic crisis and, on the other, Indian multinationals seizing the land and property of the common people. These, too, had a role to play in the eruption in Lalgarh.

And of course the Nandigram and Singur agitations, in which we were also present, are certainly big factors. At present, it is not possible to carry out just a peaceful agitation in West Bengal; along with peaceful agitations there must be huge rallies and meetings involving the direct participation of thousands of people.

**There is a view that the Lalgarh movement is a spontaneous tribal movement that became so big that the CPI (Maoist) had to get on to it or be left behind. Your comments.**

It is not as if we started doing our groundwork in the region yesterday; we have been doing our groundwork for a long time. The Maoist role and leadership in the area has been a continuous process. But, at the same time, the PCPA [People's Committee against Police Atrocities] and the Maoist movement are not the same, and it would be incorrect to say that the people of the region have been influenced only by Maoists; they have been very much influenced by the PCPA, too.

**But if there were no arrests following the assassination attempt on Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on November 2 last year, would you have been able to build such a strong movement?**

Not something like this. It would have developed in a slow process. But the reaction of the people worked to our advantage – much more than it did in Nandigram or Singur. We didn't have any demand other than that the police apologise to the people, but the State government did not agree to it. We were left with few options.

**Did you at any point think that the movement might not need you?**

Yes, I did. We expected a movement after November 2, but nothing so big. I expected the strength of the movement to be around 50 per cent of what it eventually became. But the movement itself has undergone a qualitative change over the months. Earlier, when the villagers protested, they assembled in large numbers with their traditional bows and arrows. Then the combined forces entered the region and many villagers fled.

Subsequently, they all returned and now they are not fleeing anywhere. They are standing their own ground and collecting weapons to strike back. So tell me, where do you think this spirit to retaliate is coming from? Whom do you think the villagers are supporting now?

**In 2007, it was decided that the CPI (Maoist) would broad-base its activities and not focus only on individual killings like the earlier naxalite movement. But Maoist killings are being reported almost every other day. So in what way is it different from the old programme?**

At that time, annihilation of the class enemy was the only form adopted to bring about the revolution. We have changed that. We say that annihilation is one of the forms. This was not invented by Maoists; we have seen in history that the masses have always allowed it. To us, annihilation is one aspect of our total movement.

It was not a regular feature earlier as you claim. It became a regular feature only after the combined forces entered the region. If you recollect, before the deployment of Central forces, we held a Jana Adalat [people's court] for 30 CPI (M) people in Madhupur [near Lalgah].

More than 12,000 villagers attended the trial. The public wanted the death sentence for 13 of those under trial. But Bikas [the Maoist commander of operations in Lalgah], after hours of persuasion, finally managed to convince the public that the time was not right to mete out such a punishment. Finally, the public agreed that those 13 people be just made to wear garlands of chappals and apologise. The other killings took place only after continued disregard of repeated warnings that were sent to the victims both by us and by the people of the region.

The victims were not just police informers, they practically marched with the combined forces. It is not that we killed only CPI(M) people, we killed members of the Jharkhand Party, too, for helping the combined forces and for joining the Gana Pratirodh [People's Resistance] Committee; and I would also like to add that there is no difference between the Salwa Judum and the Gana Pratirodh Committee.

We killed the main leaders of the committee. Of the six main leaders of the Gana Pratirodh Committee, three were from the CPI(M) and three from the Jharkhand Party. Here again, we

killed them after repeatedly requesting them to desist from forming such a committee. They did not listen to us and we had no other alternative.

The annihilation policy of old and what we do today are not the same. Along with individual assassinations, there are also other forms of actions that we undertake – different kinds of mass movements, social boycotts of culprits, and various developmental works.

In fact, recently, in Shankabanga village [in Purbo Medhinipur], we dug a seven-kilometre canal for irrigation. We have done similar work in many villages.

**The CPI (Maoist) had announced that it will spread the movement to new areas following the general elections this year. Which are the areas that have been identified?**

North Bengal, the plains of Bihar, the central districts of Orissa and eastern Chhattisgarh. All these are backward areas where multinational companies are trying to penetrate, and the State governments are signing memorandums of understanding with them. The strategic location of these areas will also help us in our movements.

The movement in Orissa is one of the most upcoming movements by our party and it will facilitate a combined consolidation of our movements in the neighbouring States of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, bringing as many as 15 districts under our control.

**Tell us something about your plans in West Bengal.**

Very simply, to establish a liberated area. We decided in 2007 that this [the Jangalmahal] would be a guerilla area. Since then we have progressed a lot, we have already reached out to more than half the population of the region and made it politically aware. I can tell you only so much. Our politburo does not allow us to divulge the tactical aspects of our programmes.

But is there widespread recruitment into your movement from the region? There has to be recruitment, or else how will the movement grow?

**There are reports of fresh plans by your party to try and assassinate the Chief Minister, and even storm Writers Buildings. Your comments.**

The media need sensational news, and the police need to justify their fat salaries. Do I really need to elaborate? As I have repeatedly said, to kill Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee was not my decision. It was the decision of the people of Nandigram, the people of West Bengal, and even sections of the liberal bourgeoisie.

**Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, who earlier extended her support to the PCPA's movement, seems to have distanced herself from it. Your comments.**

I have been asking Mamata Banerjee for the last three months to make her stand clear. After the general elections her fortune has soared, but what about the fortune of the "Ma, Mati, Manush" [Mamata's political slogan of Mother, Earth, and People]? Their situation remains the same. What Mamata Banerjee is doing is indulging in opportunistic politics.

With the State and the Centre now planning to launch a much stronger attack, do you not think that your movement, as it stands today will endanger the lives of thousands of innocent and apolitical villagers?

The state should think about that. People like Manmohan Singh, [P.] Chidambaram and Buddhhababu are responsible for the situation as it stands today. Ultimately, they are the ones responsible for the killings. We still want peace, it is the government that does not.

**So are you willing to sit for dialogue with the government for the sake of peace?**

You are probably the 210th person to ask me this question. Chidambaram and Buddhhababu have clearly said there will not be any dialogue; they have already arrayed their forces for war, and still you people from the media keep harping, „You will all not survive this“. This is clearly to break the spirit of the common people. I do not understand why you all are continuously asking me this question. It really is not possible for me to provide routine answers to such routine questions. I am standing in a battlefield here.

## Why “Operation Green Hunt” Will Fail



The government says there is no ‘war’ against Naxals – yet it’s preparing for one. However Operation Green Hunt is a disaster in the making. Why? Because the government has so far failed to identify the root of the Naxal problem - namely itself.

As with numbers – P Chidambaram has his way with words too. “We do not wage war against our own people” said the enlightened Home Minister; this even after it became evident that the Naxals were on a warpath against the Union of India, their orgy of mass killings and beheadings continuing unabated. But away from the preying microphones, the minister wasn’t exactly walking the talk; on the contrary, he was busy charting out the largest military operation against the Naxals ever undertaken by any government.

True that Chidambaram’s ambitious plan of a virtual blitzkrieg against the Naxals was pruned down by the CCS – but even in its abridged form, it’s a mobilization of massive proportions. Sample this – New Delhi is sending twenty-seven thousand troops to the Naxal hit areas, six (or more) Mi-17 choppers will provide air support (with special forces GUARDS on board), a special forces school and a brigade HQ to be set up in Chhattisgarh (add to this the local state forces and specialized anti Naxal forces who will join in) The Home Minister might not want to admit it – but the ‘war’ it’s denying is set to break out in November.

The first theatre of action is likely to be Gadchiroli in Maharashtra and Kanker in Chattisgarh ... forces will try to push the Maoists into ‘Abuj Marh’ (literally means ‘unknown jungles’ in the local dialect) area of Chhattisgarh, it’s an old Maoist stronghold and its here that Naxals are trained to this day. It’s here where the decisive battle may be fought. Now all this sounds great on paper – but the only problem is that – the forces don’t know who they are supposed to be fighting against (!!!!) Since the distinction between a Maoist and a tribal is vague – the job of dealing with them becomes all the more challenging. So it brings us to three questions that must be answered by the government, before any more blood is spilt.

First Question- Will ‘Operation Green Hunt’ be successful? Honestly the answer is a big NO. Call me a Naxal sympathizer, but like me, if you ever face the brutal wrath of the local police in heartland India - your world view will witness a paradigm shift within seconds. I was in West Bengal last July – covering the offensive launched by the state administration to counter the Naxlas in Lalgarh. It was here, during one of the shoots that my cameraperson and I were chased down a road in Midnapore district by the West Bengal police and hit with sticks.

Our crime??? We had dared to shoot the police breaking down doors and hauling up village youngsters for ‘questioning’. (What happens in these ‘questionings’ I don’t need to tell you) When journalists could be treated like dogs by the police – I began to grasp the plight of the local villagers who don’t have a voice – or redressal system of any sort. The moral of the story is

very simple – between the two evils of Naxalism and Police, the tribals choose the former. Atleast Naxals don't rape, maim and kill without reason.

### **Second Question – Who started the Fire?**

There is little debate that the government did; and every time we refer to the Naxals as a 'menace' we add credence to the theory that naxals are some sort of alien virus that came and ravaged our picturesque countryside that was otherwise peaceful, plentiful and prosperous. Let me make it clear, I abhor the mindless philosophy of the naxals and their warped world view – but unlike a myopic government I also see Naxalism as a manifestation of popular discontent - created by the laxities in the system, sadly Naxalism has thrived because these glaring shortcomings have not been addressed.

The Home Minister says that he will follow a 'clear and hold' policy – which in less flashy terms – means that once the area has been cleared of Naxals, the government will provide development to the area. It's a brilliant idea – only if it had struck the government in the course of the last 62 years, then things would not have come to such a head. Its ironic, but the Naxal 'menace' may finally bring some development to these impoverished regions of India.

On my tour of Lalgarh – this is one saying that I came across time and again - "That in the night if you hold your hand to your face in this region – you would not be able to see it - Its so dark" This axiom actually hits home the point of how backward (or pitch dark) many regions of this nation can be. Here Sensex, Liberalization, Nuclear Deal, etc don't mean a thing– because words like Education, Clean Water, Medicines and Property Rights are still struggling to make inroads. The mandarins in North Block need to see the abject condition of the tribals and the exploitation of the villagers in heartland India to appreciate why tribals support the Maoists.

Why would tribals armed with ancient bows and arrows want to take on the might of state and central paramilitary forces in Lalgarh and elsewhere? Either they are crazy or their levels of desperation are such that they don't mind dying. Sadly the government thinks that the tribals must be crazy.

Third Question – What is the course of action to follow then? Well to begin with, stop foolhardy adventurism against the Naxals. A little respect for your enemy enables you to plot a faster and more comprehensive win. For instance, the government thought (foolishly) that arming villagers against Naxals was a brilliant idea...now after years of denying it – the government admits that the Salva Jadum ended up doing more harm than good. Even the NHRC notes that Jadum members along with security forces were responsible for "widespread arson, rape, forced disappearances, suspect encounters and extrajudicial killings"

Once the forces have learnt to give some respect to the lives of people – work can start to give them some fundamental rights and development too. The corrupt administration has to be revamped to usher in progress at the grassroots level. Poor governance resulted in rise of Naxalism, that's a fact that even the government has accepted now. End of debate.

The Tribal Bill exists only on paper – States like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have not even acted on it. When you don't give a tribal his basic rights and tell him to stay away

from the forests that he's always depended on – you are effectively making him a Naxal sympathizer/Naxalite – it would be interesting to see how the government wants to combat this situation with FORCE (???)

True that these measures will take time – but then the problem was not created overnight, six decades of neglect cannot be swept away with one security sweep. The Home Minister perhaps should know this by now.

And talking about security sweep – the most decisive push against the naxals till now had been Lalgah. The Lalgah experiment was even described as a success in many quarters. It certainly did not look like success to me when I was there – and certainly doesn't look like one when I study data coming out of the region.

For instance – since June 18, 2009 (when the Naxals had been pushed out of the region)

- 82 people killed (ofcourse most of them CPM carders)
- 15 CMP office ransacked in broad daylight
- 100 houses (again mostly of CPM carders) – ransacked / burnt
- Thousands of people chased away from their homes.

If this is the situation AFTER the security crackdown – the efficacy of force becomes only too obvious. The government should use force where it works – namely along the borders. Here it should use its head.

## **The Co-ordination Committee of the Revolutionary Communists of Britain - Solidarity Statement with Indian Comrades**

**The Co-ordination Committee of the Revolutionary Communists of Britain** calls for the immediate release of Kobad Ghandy, Ravi Sharma, Anuradha, Sri Chhatradhar Mahato, Raja Sarkhel and Prasun Chatterjee and all Maoist and other political prisoners in India.



Operation Green Hunt is an attack on the poor and indigenous peoples of India to pave the way for the continuous displacement of millions of people to serve the comprador capitalists and their international backers from Britain and USA.

The United Nations has just condemned India for its food policy whereby 30 million additional people have been made hungry since 1990's as a result of government policies and 46% of children are undernourished.

These are the realities of India's neo liberal policies exposed by the Indian Maoists.

We the Co-ordination Committee of the Revolutionary Communists of Britain express our solidarity with Indian comrades in their battle for social justice and will do our best to let the whole world know the barbarities of the current ruling elite perpetrated against Indian peoples.

We will expose the false propaganda of neo-liberal India's so-called economic success, which is nothing but prosperity for the few and poverty for the many.

*Statement issued 1st November - London 2009*

**CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS OF BRITAIN (c/o BM Box 2978, London WC1N 3XX)**

